GREEN RIVER REGION

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ACKNOWLEDEMENTS

The field data contained in these reports is the result of the combined efforts of the Green River Region Wildlife Division personnel including District Wildlife Biologists, District Game Wardens, Terrestrial Habitat Biologist, Green River Wildlife Technician, Wildlife Management Coordinator, Region Supervisor, and all other department personnel that participated in data collection. Gratitude is also extended to the Green River neighboring regions of Pinedale, Jackson, Laramie, and Lander for their assistance in collaboration of data collection efforts. The authors of this report wish to express their appreciation to all those who assisted in data collection.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR401 - SUBLETTE

HUNT AREAS: 85-93, 96, 101, 107

PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	35,399	25,000	24,000
Harvest:	2,551	732	750
Hunters:	2,634	866	900
Hunter Success:	97%	85%	83%
Active Licenses:	2,916	867	900
Active License Success:	87%	84%	83%
Recreation Days:	8,341	2,554	2,550
Days Per Animal:	3.3	3.5	3.4
Males per 100 Females	54	56	
Juveniles per 100 Females	54	68	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 48000 (38400 - 57600)

Management Strategy: Recreational

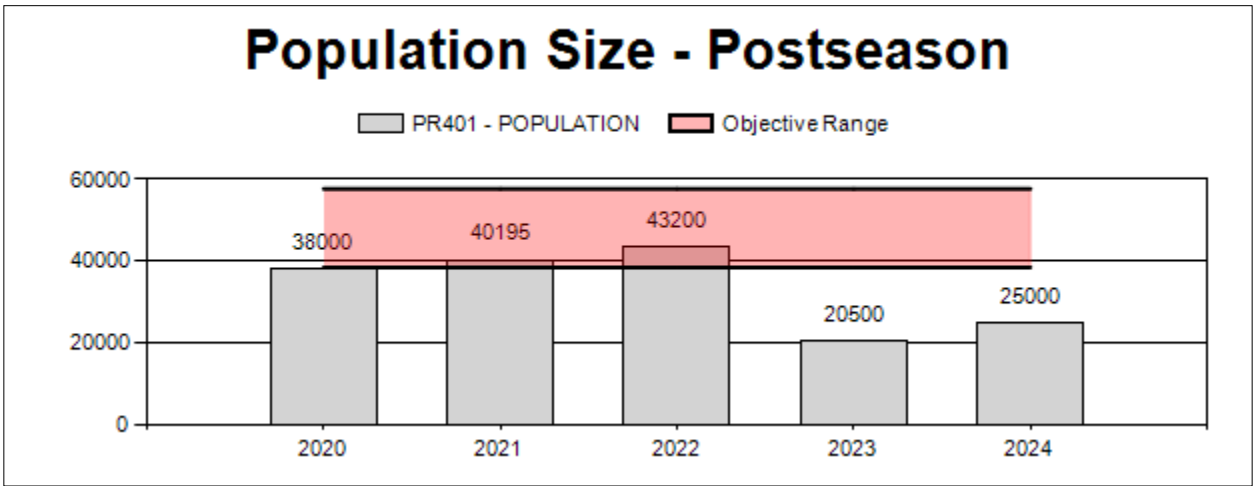
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -47.9%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 2

Model Date: 02/20/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	.1%	2%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	15%	16%
Proposed change in post-season population:	0%	-6%



2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR401 - SUBLETTE

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	38,350	515	2,132	2,647	24%	5,463	49%	3,077	28%	11,187	2,023	9	39	48	± 2	56	± 2	38
2020	41,000	801	2,348	3,149	26%	5,504	46%	3,351	28%	12,004	2,193	15	43	57	± 2	61	± 2	39
2021	43,469	717	2,675	3,392	28%	5,862	49%	2,822	23%	12,076	1,970	12	46	58	± 2	48	± 2	30
2022	48,300	649	2,337	2,986	26%	5,348	47%	2,949	26%	11,283	1,907	12	44	56	± 2	55	± 2	35
2023	22,600	355	1,003	1,358	25%	2,735	51%	1,281	24%	5,374	1,984	13	37	50	± 2	47	± 2	31
2024	27,500	356	1,194	1,550	25%	2,765	45%	1,891	30%	6,206	2,622	13	43	56	± 3	68	± 3	44

2025 Hunting Seasons
Sublette Pronghorn Herd (PR401)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
87	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	20	Any antelope
87	2	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 25	Oct. 31	15	Any antelope
88	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	35	Any antelope
89	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	20	Any antelope
89	2	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Oct. 10	Oct. 31	20	Any antelope
90	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	35	Any antelope
91	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	125	Any antelope
91	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn valid on private land and Bureau of Reclamation land within Sweetwater County
92	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	200	Any antelope
93	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	300	Any antelope
93	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	50	Doe or fawn valid on private irrigated land
96	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	75	Any antelope
101	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	35	Any antelope
107	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	75	Any antelope
107	0	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Aug. 20	Sept. 9	25	Any antelope, muzzleloading firearms and handguns only

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 86.0% Satisfied, 10.7% Neutral, 3.3% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:

The 2025 hunting season for the Sublette Pronghorn Herd contained only minor changes from what was offered in the herd unit in 2024. The first change implemented for the 2025 hunting season was that slight increases in the number of Type 1 licenses were put in place in hunt areas 91 and 92. This change was implemented due to increasing buck to doe ratios, and more robust population sizes observed in those hunt areas in 2024. In addition to the increases in Type 1 licenses, two hunt areas in the herd unit, Hunt Areas 91, and 93, also added in a small number of Type 7 licenses for the 2025 hunting season. These Type 7 licenses were put in place to address growing numbers of pronghorn on irrigated lands. These areas have had significant damage issues in the past and growing pronghorn numbers have landowners concerned about future damage in those areas. Beyond those changes, the 2025 hunting season for the Sublette herd was identical to the season that was offered in 2024, with northern portions of the herd continuing to offer very conservative seasons with a very limited number of licenses in order to help this herd recover from the losses it incurred during the 2022-2023 winter.

The modeled 2024 post-season population estimate for the Sublette herd was approximately 25,000 pronghorn; which is roughly 48% below its postseason objective of 48,000 pronghorn. While this number is still considerably below the herd's objective range, it is a significant improvement from the 20,500 pronghorn estimated to be left in the herd after the severe winter of 2022-2023; which caused this population to decline by roughly 50%, going from lower end of its objective range to being approximately 58% below objective in 2023.

Observed buck ratios in 2024 were 56 bucks per 100 does herd unit wide, which puts the observed ratios for this herd within the recreational management criteria for pronghorn herds. Based on model estimates, the average proportion of preseason adult males harvested for the last three years is roughly 15% of the preseason population; with the 2024 estimated proportion of adult bucks harvested being 10%, and the 2025 season being estimated to harvest approximately 15% of bucks older that one year old. It is important to note however that even with the 2023 line-transect survey, the true impact of the 2022-2023 winter on this population will not be fully known for several more years and that a conservative approach in regards to harvest should be taken until subsequent years of data verify the impact that license issuance rates have on the observed buck to doe ratios in this herd.

The observed fawn ratio in the Sublette herd was 68 fawns per 100 does in 2024. This compares to only 47 fawns per 100 does seen in 2023, and to a long term average for this herd of 64 fawns per 100 does. The low fawn ratio seen in 2023 was almost certainly a holdover from the impacts of the 2022-2023 winter, and the resulting poor body condition of doe pronghorn caused by the severe winter conditions. Given the observed fawn ratio seen in 2024, the model expects this herd to roughly maintain its current population size in 2025. It should be noted however, that the model predicts an unrealistically low fawn ratio for 2025, which prevents this herd from growing in its projections. If the actual fawn ratio in 2025 is higher than what the model is currently predicting, the Sublette herd should grow somewhat in 2025.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the Sublette Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2022, and will not be reviewed again until 2027.

Population Modeling:
Given the drastic change in the size of the Sublette Pronghorn Herd following the 2022-2023 winter, a fixed effects model was chosen to model this population. Fixed effects models allows for more radical single year variation than standard models can accommodate, this flexibility in survival estimates was required for the model to be able to account for the significant losses suffered by this herd during that abnormally severe winter. Given the predictability of pronghorn harvest rates, licenses were used as the effort variable for the model, and the model structure allowed for both reproduction and survival to be fixed effects. Even with all of this flexibility, model convergence was only tolerable with only 74% of the resulting Rhat values being less than 1.1. The selected model does track reasonably well with the bio-year 2020 and 2022 line transect estimates, and with a slow population recovery following the 2022-2023 winter. Following the 2024 hunting season, the model for the Sublette herd estimated the herd to be a little over 25,000 pronghorn (CL = 18,577 – 31, 163).

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn | PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR411 - UINTA-CEDAR MOUNTAIN

HUNT AREAS: 95, 99 | PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	6,227	5,219	5,647
Harvest:	584	395	400
Hunters:	677	479	475
Hunter Success:	86%	82%	84 %
Active Licenses:	733	486	480
Active License Success:	80%	81%	83 %
Recreation Days:	2,819	2,236	2,200
Days Per Animal:	4.8	5.7	5.5
Males per 100 Females	50	51	
Juveniles per 100 Females	41	57	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 10000 (8000 - 12000)

Management Strategy: Recreational

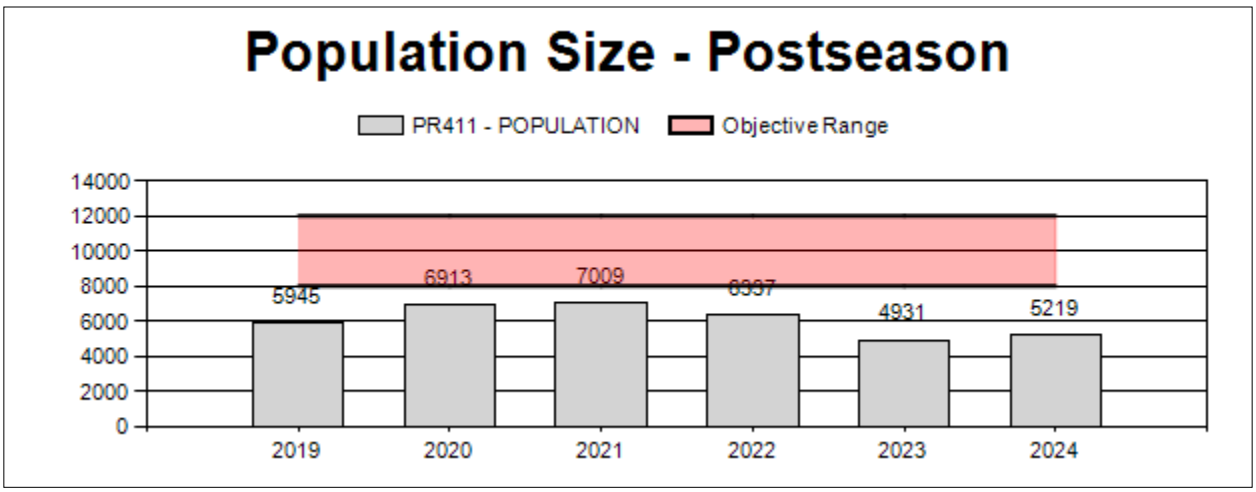
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -47.8%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 10

Model Date: 02/24/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	2%	2%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	29%	29%
Proposed change in post-season population:	1.07%	1.08%



2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR411 - UINTA-CEDAR MOUNTAIN

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	6,852	99	465	564	27%	1,168	56%	358	17%	2,090	0	8	40	48	± 3	31	± 3	21
2020	7,687	80	381	461	29%	786	49%	361	22%	1,608	0	10	48	59	± 5	46	± 4	29
2021	7,576	109	374	483	25%	1,054	54%	422	22%	1,959	0	10	35	46	± 4	40	± 3	27
2022	7,186	124	125	249	27%	407	45%	258	28%	914	0	30	31	61	± 8	63	± 8	39
2023	5,574	119	234	353	24%	806	55%	314	21%	1,473	0	15	29	44	± 4	39	± 4	27
2024	5,831	44	100	144	21%	276	41%	253	38%	673	0	16	36	52	± 8	92	± 12	60

2025 Hunting Seasons
Uinta-Cedar Mountain Herd Unit (PR411)

Hunt Area	Hunt Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
95	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	300	Any antelope
95	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	75	Doe or fawn valid on or within one-quarter (¼) mile of private irrigated land
99	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	125	Any antelope
99	2			Aug. 15	Nov. 30	25	Any antelope valid north and west of Wyoming Highway 410 and west of Uinta County Road 271
99	0			Sep. 1	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope, muzzle-loading firearms only.

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 85.3% Satisfied, 11.7% Neutral, 63.0% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:
Conservative seasons are warranted in this herd. Historical harvest pressure to alleviate landowner complaints, coupled with dry summers and difficult winters have resulted in low pronghorn numbers in this herd. The winter of 2022/23 was very severe in the western part of the herd, but was much better in the eastern portion. The winter was so severe that all additional doe/fawn licenses were eliminated for the 2023 season. We are currently well below objective. We are continuing moderate harvest for 2025. We added some limited doe/fawn harvest in 2024 on antelope causing damage on private irrigated lands in Hunt Area 95, but this is lower than what was offered historically due to much lower landowner complaints and lower numbers of antelope in those areas.

Hunt Area 95 is the least productive area in the herd, but tends to produce better quality bucks. Hunt Area 99 is historically much more productive and had more private landowner complaints. License allocations are in an effort to help us in moving this population toward objective while still addressing some depredation issues. However, we need more favorable weather conditions to boost this herds fawn recruitment and growth. The minimum male harvest goal of 25% has been met in this herd for several years. We provide a high amount of opportunity in this herd unit.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the Uinta Cedar Mountain Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2024, and will not be reviewed again until 2029.

Winter Severity:
We have had four severe winters in this herd in the last eight years (2016-17, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2022-23). Weather related impacts to pronghorn are less in this area than they are for mule deer. Pronghorn in this herd generally have the ability to migrate to lower elevation flats during severe winters. We have had some large scale mortality events involving motor vehicles especially

during tough winters. Movements of pronghorn in this area have become more difficult as human development and disturbance impedes annual movements.

Line Transect Surveys:
Population estimates with the Line Transect survey technique are very important for providing adequate data to model antelope herd populations. Without performing these surveys regularly, it is unlikely that the population models can perform reliably. We were able to fly a Line Transect survey in May of 2023. This is an end of bio year 2022 population estimate. Previously we have not had the budget to conduct line transect surveys in this herd since 2014. In the future, we will need to the fly these surveys more often to effectively model this herd. The most recent estimate was 7,727 (CL =5,363-10,936). The SE and confidence interval on the estimate are high. This is due to an effort to be efficient with survey money by reducing sampling intensity. The result was a less precise estimate. In the future, it is advised that we go to a more intense sampling scheme.

Population Modeling:
The WGFD uses PopR integrated population models (IPMs) to estimate populations for pronghorn. The 2024 postseason population estimate for this herd unit from the PopR IPM is 5,219 (CL =4,295-6,138) pronghorn. We are cautious of this model since the most recent Line Transect Survey had high variance. In the future it will be imperative that obtain precise line transect population estimates periodically to check the status of the herd and anchor the model.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR412 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

HUNT AREAS: 59, 112

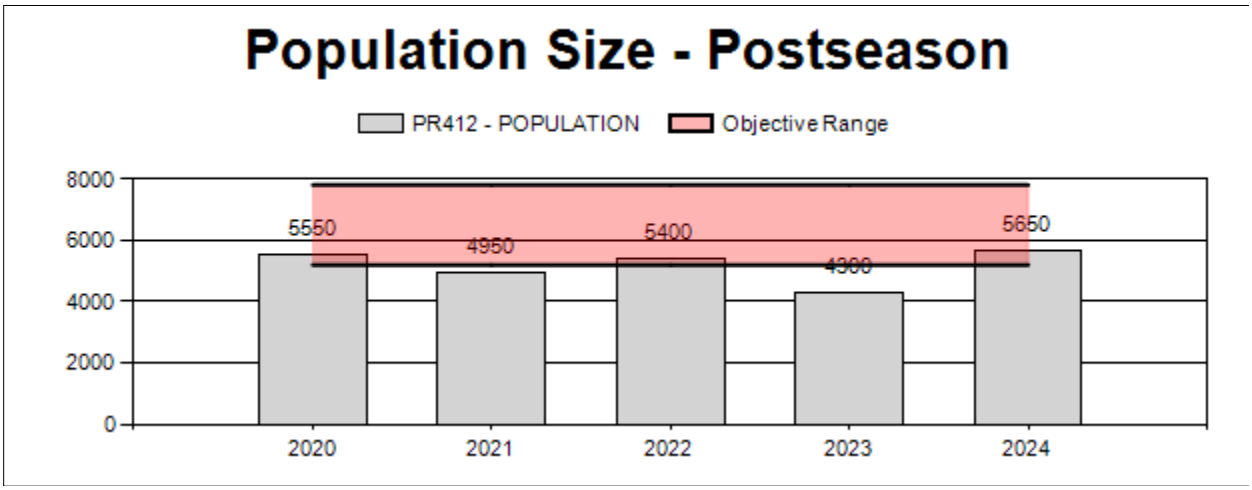
PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	5,050	5,650	6,000
Harvest:	289	130	130
Hunters:	329	164	150
Hunter Success:	88%	79%	87 %
Active Licenses:	339	164	150
Active License Success:	85%	79%	87 %
Recreation Days:	1,042	564	550
Days Per Animal:	3.6	4.3	4.2
Males per 100 Females	39	44	
Juveniles per 100 Females	37	62	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	6500 (5200 - 7800)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-13.1%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	10
Model Date:	02/20/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	18%	15%
Proposed change in post-season population:	9%	5%



2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR412 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	5,500	75	357	432	28%	941	60%	190	12%	1,563	1,205	8	38	46	± 4	20	± 2	14
2020	5,850	22	189	211	20%	545	53%	281	27%	1,037	1,220	4	35	39	± 5	52	± 6	37
2021	5,300	63	199	262	20%	725	54%	353	26%	1,340	1,195	9	27	36	± 4	49	± 4	36
2022	6,100	21	105	126	20%	355	57%	145	23%	626	875	6	30	35	± 6	41	± 6	30
2023	4,600	50	127	177	20%	534	61%	168	19%	879	984	9	24	33	± 4	31	± 4	24
2024	6,100	80	212	292	22%	657	48%	408	30%	1,357	1,644	12	32	44	± 5	62	± 6	43

2025 Hunting Seasons
South Rocks Springs Pronghorn Herd Unit (PR412)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
59	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	150	Any antelope
112	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 89.8% Satisfied, 5.9% Neutral, 4.3% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:
The 2025 hunting season for the South Rock Springs pronghorn herd maintained a very similar conservative season structure to what was offered in the herd unit in both 2023 and 2024. The only change that was implemented for the 2025 season was a slight increase in Type 1 licenses in Hunt Area 59, going from 125 to 150 licenses. Following extremely low fawn ratios documented in 2019, which caused the population estimate to dip below its objective range, doe harvest was reduced significantly in 2020 and then removed completely following the 2022-2023 winter. The significantly better fawn ratio of 62 fawns per 100 does observed in this herd in 2024 should result in some population growth for this herd.

Observed buck ratios in the South Rock Springs herd unit have been at the lower end of the recreational management range, and had been declining, especially during the period from 2020 to 2023, when the observed buck to doe ratio declined from 39 bucks per 100 does to only 33 bucks per 100 does. This trend was especially apparent in Hunt Area 112 which went from 43 bucks per 100 does in 2020, to only 32 bucks per 100 does in 2023. Fortunately, reduced Type 1 license issuance rates during the 2023 and 2024 hunting seasons appear to have halted this trend, with the 2024 pre-season observed buck ratio coming in at 44 bucks per 100 does for the herd unit as a whole, and 39 bucks per 100 does for HA112. The increase in the observed buck ratio in 2024, suggested that a modest increase in Type 1 licenses could be accommodated in HA59, which had an observed buck to doe ratio of 50 bucks per 100 does in 2024.

A line transect survey flown at the end of the 2023 biological year in May 2024 (Appendix A) resulted in a population estimate of 6,970 (4,572 – 9,318). Given the topography and patchy nature of pronghorn habitat in the area inhabited by the South Rock Springs pronghorn herd, line transect surveys are difficult to conduct in this herd unit, and survey results may slightly overestimate the true population size. Given the projected harvest and fawn recruitment rates, the model predicts that this herd should be near 6,000 pronghorn after the 2025 hunting season.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the South Rock Springs Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

Population Modeling:
Starting in 2021, this herd has been modeled using an integrated population model (IPM). For the 2024 biological year, that model produced a postseason population estimate for this herd of 5,656 (CL = 3,987 – 7,936) pronghorn. This is an increase from last year's estimate of 4,300 pronghorn, and is more in line with the 2022 estimate of 5,400 pronghorn. A line transect (LT) survey flown in late May 2024 resulted in an end of bio-year 2023 population estimate of 6,970 (CL = 4,572 – 9318), this LT estimate would suggest a larger population size than most of the IMP models ran could accommodate. The IMP appeared to have a difficult time reconciling the higher line transect survey population estimate with the declining buck ratios that were observed in this population during 2020 through 2023. Some of the models would produce drastically different Rhat values from run to run, therefore the recreation days effort variable was chosen with a structure that allowed reproduction, and both juvenile and adult survival to vary over time. This model produced tolerable Rhat values with 78% of them being under 1.1, the model does however align well with observed buck ratios.

Appendix A. PR412 Line Transect Results

Biological Year 2023 PR412 – South Rock Springs Pronghorn
Line-Transect Summary

Survey Dates: 5/24/2024 - 5/27/2024

Survey Cost: $6,169.50

Flight Service: Wyoming Aero Photo

Aircraft: Cessna 182

Weather Conditions:

Temperature (Degrees Fahrenheit): Varied

Cloud Cover (%): Varied

Wind Speed (MPH): Varied

Transect Limits: 41.52°, -109.45° to 41.00°, -109.80°

Transect Direction: North/South

Transect Interval (Minutes of Longitude): 1

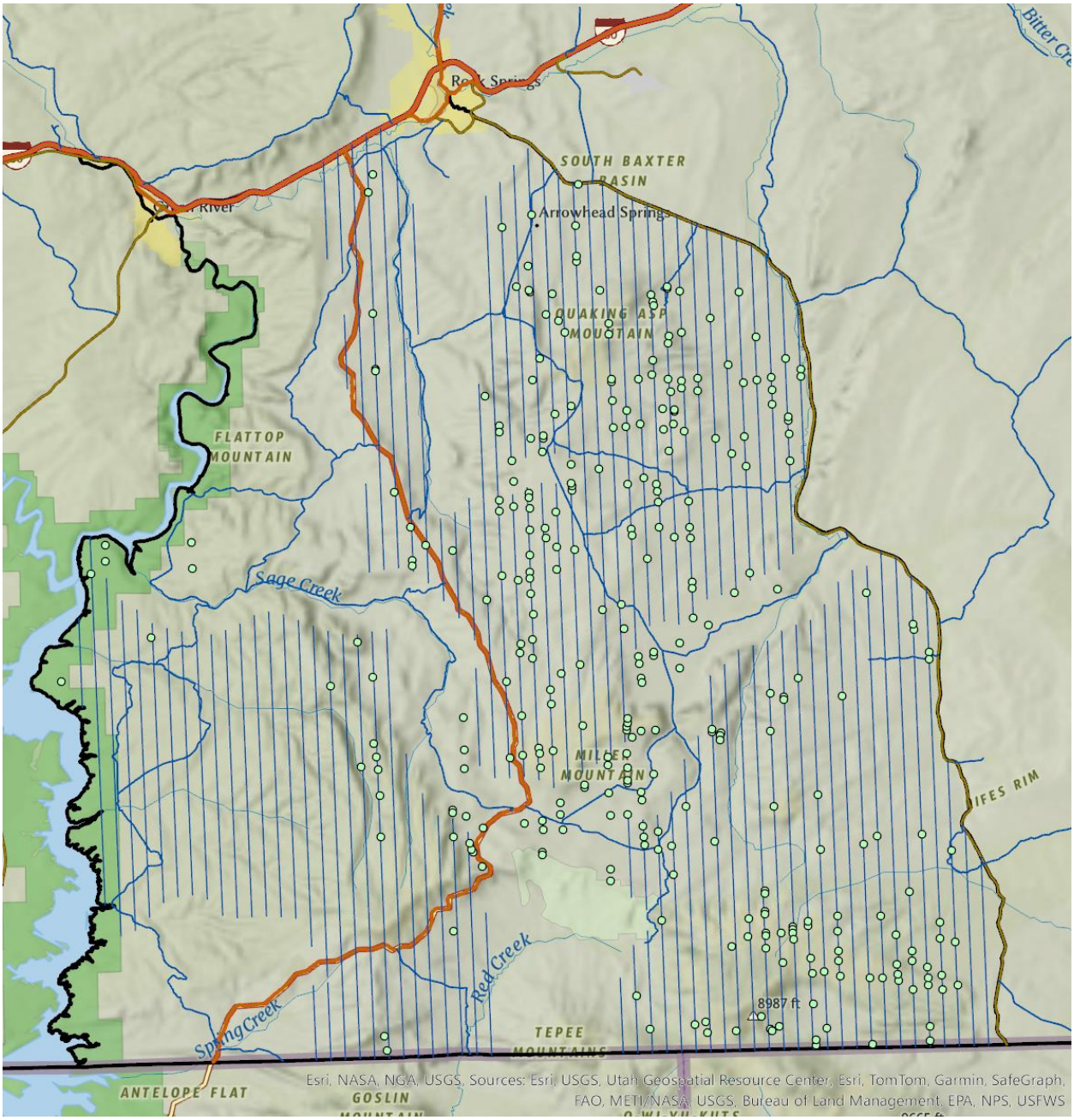
Transect Length: (Mi.): 1,381.95

Transect Altitude (AGL): 324.43 ft.

Occupied Habitat (mi2): 1,003

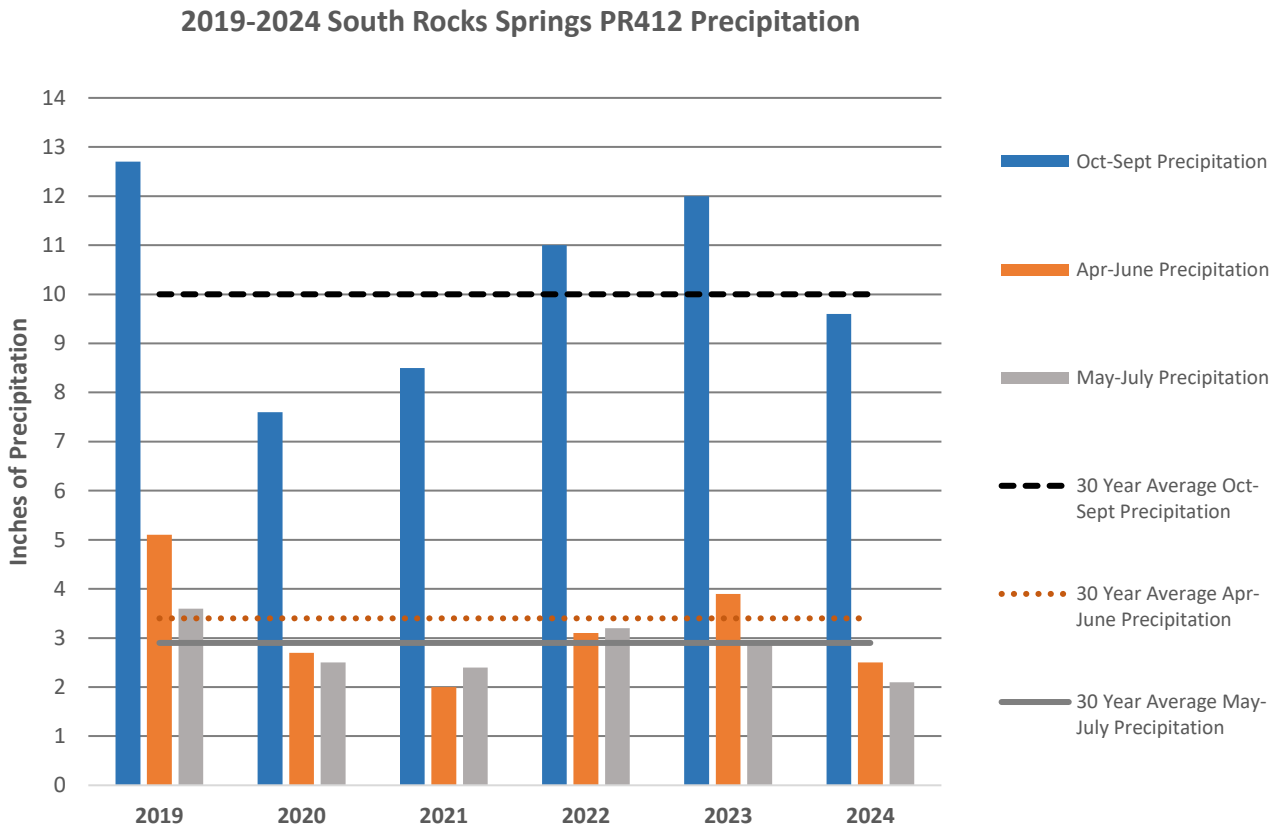
Density Estimate (Animals/mi2 with Confidence Intervals): 6.95 (4.56 – 9.29)

Population Estimate (with Confidence Intervals): 6,970 (4,572 - 9,318)


SOUTH BAXTER BASIN
Arrowhead Springs
QUAKING ASP MOUNTAIN
FLATTOP MOUNTAIN
Sage Creek
MILES MOUNTAIN
Red Creek
Spring Creek
8987 ft
TEPEE MOUNTAINS
ANTELOPE FLAT
GOSLIN
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Sources: Esri, USGS, Utah Geospatial Resource Center, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USFWS

Appendix B. 2024 Habitat Summary

Precipitation:
The Parameter-Elevation Relationships on Independent Slopes Model (PRISM) was utilized to estimate precipitation by calculating a climate-elevation regressions for each Digital Elevation Model grid cell (4km resolution) for the South Rock Springs Pronghorn Herd Unit during the period from October 2023 through September 2024 (water year). Annual precipitation was lower than the 30 year (Oct-Sept) average. Precipitation during the growing season (April-June) was below the 30 year average, and precipitation during the spring-summer period (May-July) was also below the 30 year average.



2.) Winter Severity:
Winter conditions on most winter ranges have been relatively mild and have remained generally open. Shrubs have consistently been available and snow depths have not greatly impacted movement or accessibility. Snow accumulation recorded in Green River, WY and Flaming Gorge, UT during the winter of 2024-2025 was variable for each month between November and February. Snowfall at Flaming Gorge was below the 30 year average during all four winter months. However, snowfall in Green River was above the 30 year average during November and February, but below average in December and January. Average 2024-2025 monthly winter temperatures (November-February) recorded in Green River and Flaming Gorge were colder than the long term average in November and January, but warmer than average during December and February.

3.) Significant Events:
Contracted crews hand cut and piled juniper trees on 695 acres of encroached shrub habitat in the Iron Mountain area during the summer months. These piled trees will be allowed time to adequately dry, and BLM fire crews will then conduct prescribed slash pile burns during winter months to complete the project.

4.) Habitat Monitoring:
Department personnel also conducted monitoring associated with past and future cheatgrass control in the Richard's Mountain burn scar, Gooseberry Creek burn, Red Creek, Currant Creek and Spring Creek areas.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn
PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR414 - BITTER CREEK

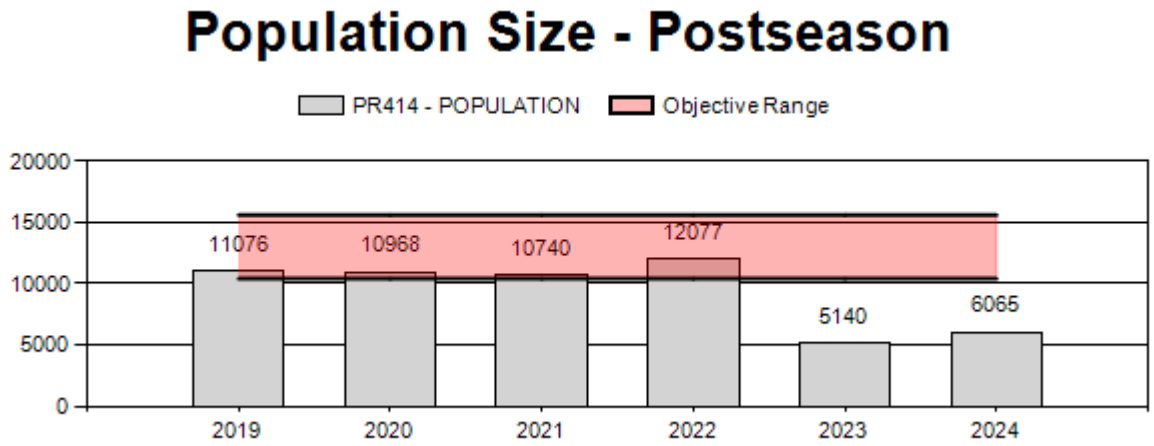
HUNT AREAS: 57-58
PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	10,000	6,065	6,800
Harvest:	403	207	145
Hunters:	471	247	175
Hunter Success:	86%	84%	83%
Active Licenses:	490	251	175
Active License Success:	82%	82%	83 %
Recreation Days:	1,671	848	700
Days Per Animal:	4.1	4.1	4.8
Males per 100 Females	59	48	
Juveniles per 100 Females	40	70	

Population Objective (± 20%):	13000 (10400 - 15600)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-53.3%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	0
Model Date:	2/27/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	1%	1%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	13%	10%
Proposed change in post-season population:	30%	12%



2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR414 - BITTER CREEK

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	11,660	63	473	536	31%	893	52%	284	17%	1,713	0	7	53	60	± 5	32	± 3	20
2020	11,449	50	395	445	27%	837	50%	383	23%	1,665	0	6	47	53	± 5	46	± 4	30
2021	11,223	91	495	586	30%	995	51%	355	18%	1,936	0	9	50	59	± 5	36	± 3	22
2022	13,072	94	452	546	28%	905	47%	477	25%	1,928	0	10	50	60	± 5	53	± 5	33
2023	5,612	61	192	253	33%	390	51%	128	17%	771	0	16	49	65	± 8	33	± 5	20
2024	6,735	57	256	313	22%	647	46%	454	32%	1,414	0	9	40	48	± 5	70	± 6	47

2025 Hunting Seasons
Bitter Creek Pronghorn Herd Unit (PR414)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
57	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
57	2	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope valid west of Sweetwater County Road 23S and B.L.M. Road 3310, and north and east of B.L.M. Roads 4411 and 4409
53, 57	7	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Nov. 30	75	Doe or fawn valid south of Wyoming Highway 70 and west of Carbon County Road 601 in Area 53, and on private land within one (1) mile of Carbon County Road 603 in Area 57
58	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 79% Satisfied, 13% Neutral, 8% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Harvest Data

After the severe winter of 2022-23, herd license quotas were reduced by about 60% and those quotas were maintained in 2024. Satisfaction and success rebounded slightly for the herd, but HA57 Type 1 license holders were still less satisfied at 77% than HA58 hunters at 85%. This improvement was likely due to pronghorn in HA58 faring better than HA57 during winter 2022-23; pronghorn with traditional ranges in HA57 may have migrated west into HA58 during that winter to locate areas with lower snowpack. Hunters in HA57 in 2024 provided many observations indicating this disparity as well. Very little field harvest data were collected in 2024 for the herd due to the low license quotas and difficulty in finding hunters to check. Incisors were collected from 9 harvested bucks; average age of those harvested bucks was 5.9 and none were less than 4.5 years old.

Buck and Fawn Ratio Data

Counter to 2023, fallout from the winter of 2022-23 was evident in buck ratios in 2024, which likely contributed to the lower hunter satisfaction. The buck ratio was 65 bucks per 100 does in 2023 and dropped below objective in 2024 to 48. This dip in buck ratios was unexpected even with the severe winter, as an average number of yearling bucks were still observed in 2023 and these bucks were expected to offset 2023 harvest more relative to the adult ratio in 2024. This decrease occurred also despite decreasing license numbers by 60% to 175 in 2023 and 2024. Remaining license numbers may not have been the cause, as neighboring Red Desert herds to the north and the Baggs Herd to the east saw similar decreases in buck ratios in areas where license quotas were decreased to just 25

over the last two years. Fawn ratios across the herd were a record high at 70 per 100 does, and animals exhibited a more normal distribution compared to 2023.

Population Trend
The post-season model estimate was 6,065, which, not surprisingly, was well below the herd objective of 12,000. However, this estimate was nearly a 20% increase over 2023's estimate; in reality, with above average over winter survival the increase may have been greater.

2025 Hunting Season
The excellent fawn ratio across the Bitter Creek Herd in 2024 bodes well for improvements to the adult portion of the buck ratio in 2026. However, additional years will be needed to improve the age class structure that the Herd is known for. For 2025, due to depressed populations, below objective buck ratios, and public sentiments in the Bitter Creek pronghorn herd, managers decreased the Type 1 quota by another 40% to 100 licenses.

Managers increased the Type 7 licenses to 75 for the small areas at the southern end of HA53 and HA57 where native habitats continued to be affected negatively by altered pronghorn distributions, and where concerns remained for potential damage to irrigated meadows. The season close date was extended to November 30 due to the license quota increase to help ensure opportunity for the increase in hunters. Pronghorn observed in this small restricted area in HA57 numbered 108 during 2024 classifications, with 86% being does and fawns and fawn ratios exceeding 100. This total was a 170% increase over numbers counted there in 2023. These HA57 pronghorn are isolated from the rest of the herd and stand little chance at contributing to improvement in the herd's distribution and number in the future. This lack of past and future contribution was due to the barriers of the innumerable woven wire fences across the river bottom that they refuse to navigate. They also have little desire to emigrate, as they have access to irrigated hay meadows during the growing season and adjacent upland sagebrush during winter.

Other Considerations
More normal distributions of pronghorn across HA57 occurred in 2024 compared to after the winter of 2022-23; however, densities were still relatively low. Overall, the Bitter Creek pronghorn herd winter ranges received average moisture in winter 2024-25; however, warm temperatures kept the snow depths very low. Counter to much of the rest of Wyoming, precipitation during the growing season in 2024 was above average, so range conditions were prime. As a result of these two factors, overwinter survival was excellent, as should have been buck horn growth.

Feral horse HMAs across the unit continued to be significantly above AML. Horse numbers outside of HMAs were high as well. Feral horses continued to be observed immediately adjacent to Highway 789, with a couple having attempted to cross recently. These feral horses affected pronghorn distribution and populations through exclusion from water and other resources and habitat degradation, and effectively reduced the carrying capacity of all wildlife across this area.

Management Objective Review
The current objective and management strategy for the Bitter Creek Pronghorn Herd was approved in 2015. For the 2025 (5-year) objective review, following an internal evaluation, the current objective and special management strategy for this herd will be maintained for the next five years.

Population model

Since the severe winter and associated mortality of 2022-23, past line-transect estimates provided no grounding for the model (PopR integrated population model), so low harvest rates/effort were the main driver for the model to be able to account for that winter. Abnormally high fawn ratios (70 fawns/100 does) and extremely low over winter mortality contributed to increases to the population. Allowing the model the freedom to estimate survival rates for both non-adult age classes seemed to align it better with managers' anecdotal observations, along with coarse estimates from the December 2023 mule deer sightability flight and pre-season classifications. The model was unable to account for the steep decline in the herd in one year; as a result, past years' estimates were not useful, nor were predictions for the next couple years. Due to the absence of prediction ability of the model, the "proposed" population estimate, harvest rates, and change in post-season population in the table above were obtained with basic calculations.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn | PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR419 - CARTER LEASE

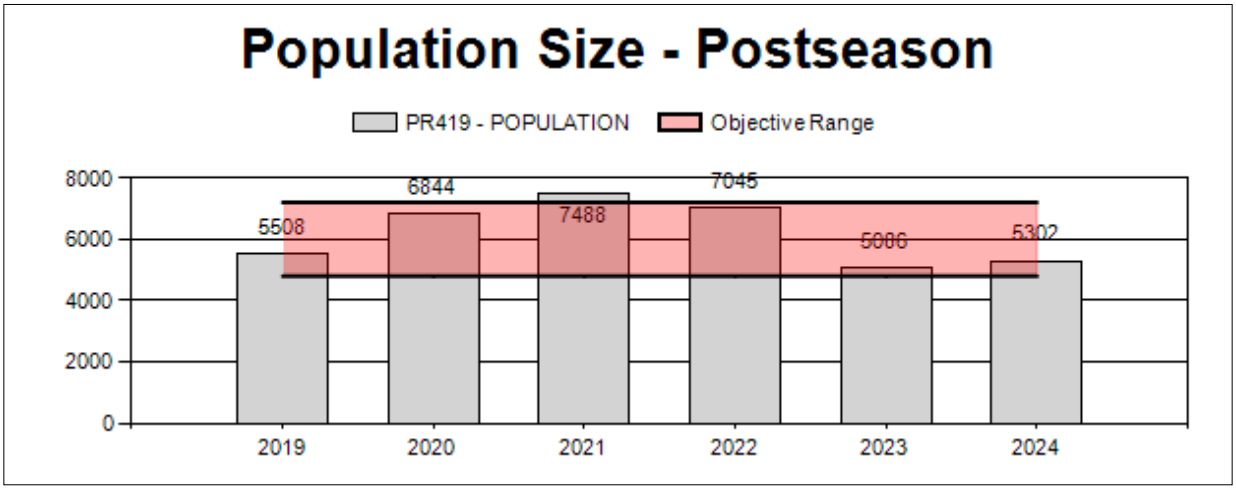
HUNT AREAS: 94, 98, 100 | PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	6,394	5,302	5,224
Harvest:	1,072	450	475
Hunters:	1,208	547	600
Hunter Success:	89%	82%	79 %
Active Licenses:	1,328	548	620
Active License Success:	81%	82%	77 %
Recreation Days:	4,617	2,063	2,100
Days Per Animal:	4.3	4.6	4.4
Males per 100 Females	51	68	
Juveniles per 100 Females	55	95	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	6000 (4800 - 7200)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-11.6%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	0
Model Date:	02/24/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	8%	8%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	24%	24%
Proposed change in post-season population:	1.16%	.99%



2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR419 - CARTER LEASE

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	6,272	73	505	578	26%	1,059	49%	546	25%	2,183	0	7	48	55	± 4	52	± 4	33
2020	7,487	69	356	425	26%	792	48%	439	27%	1,656	0	9	45	54	± 5	55	± 5	36
2021	8,165	57	201	258	20%	654	51%	375	29%	1,287	0	9	31	39	± 4	57	± 6	41
2022	6,836	117	208	325	26%	573	45%	372	29%	1,270	0	20	36	57	± 6	65	± 6	41
2023	5,868	57	137	194	25%	399	51%	192	24%	785	0	14	34	49	± 7	48	± 6	32
2024	5,958	37	156	193	25%	294	38%	294	38%	781	0	13	53	66	± 9	100	± 13	60

2025 Hunting Seasons
Carter Lease Herd Unit (PR419)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
94	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	400	Any antelope
94	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	75	Doe or fawn valid on private irrigated land
98	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope
100	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 81.0% Satisfied, 11.7% Neutral, 5.3% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:
In this herd unit, we are typically able to provide a significant amount of hunting opportunity due to the productive nature of the habitat. According to a recent line transect survey and the model; we are in the bottom end of the objective range. Recent dry summers and difficult winters have resulted in lower pronghorn numbers in this herd. The winter of 2022/23 was very severe in the western part of the herd but was better in the eastern portion. The winter was so severe that all additional doe/fawn licenses were eliminated for the 2023 season. We are adding some limited doe/fawn harvest in 2025 to address antelope causing damage on private irrigated lands in Hunt Area 94.

In Hunt Areas 98 and 100, we try to maintain low antelope densities. This is an effort to reduce browse competition for wintering mule deer. The area is an important winter range for the Wyoming Range mule deer herd. We hunt antelope very aggressively in these Hunt Areas to try and keep numbers low. We have to balance hunter success and hunter complaints in Hunt Area 100 with trying to keep numbers low. The minimum male harvest goal of 25% has been met in this herd for several years. We provide a high amount of opportunity in this herd unit.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the Carter Lease Herd was last evaluated in 2020. For the 2025 (5-year) objective review, the current objective and recreational management strategy will be maintained following an internal evaluation.

Winter Severity:
We have had four severe winters in this herd over a seven year period (2016-17, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2022-23). Typically, pronghorn are less affected by winter conditions than deer due to their ability to move to areas of more moderate conditions. Pronghorn in the eastern part of this herd generally have the ability to migrate to lower elevation flats during severe winters, but this is increasingly challenging. These crucial winter range movements become more difficult as human development and disturbance impedes these movements. Fencing and highways are particularly problematic especially in the western part of this population during winter.

Line Transect Surveys:
Population estimates with the Line Transect survey technique are very important for providing adequate data to model antelope herd populations. Without performing these surveys, it is unlikely

that the population models can perform reliably. We were able to fly a Line Transect survey in May of 2021. This is an end of bio year 2020 population estimate. Previously we have not had the budget to conduct line transect surveys in this herd since 2013. In the future, we will need to the fly these surveys more often to effectively model this herd. The most recent estimate was 5,764. The SE and confidence interval on this estimate are high. This is due to an effort to be more efficient with survey money by reducing sampling intensity. The result was a less precise estimate that is not as useful. In the future, it is advised that we go back to the previous sampling scheme.

Population Modeling:

Having a total Carter Lease Herd Unit model is problematic. This is due to much different harvest regimes and population parameters in Hunt Areas 98 and 100 compared to Hunt Area 94. Additionally, the line transect survey method does not fit well with the rugged terrain and very low animal densities found in Hunt Areas 98 and 100. The herd is also separated by a highway that is very restrictive to pronghorn movements. For these reasons, we only fly line transect surveys in Hunt Area 94. Even though there are low numbers of antelope in 98 and 100 it makes appropriately modeling the herd unit difficult.

The WGFD uses PopR integrated population models (IPMs) to estimate populations for pronghorn. A Hunt Area 94 specific PopR IPM is not available from Speedgoat so we have modeled the herd as a whole. We plan to evaluate this model in the future to ensure we are representing the population appropriately. The IPM estimates a herd unit post-season population of 5,302 (CI=4,669-5,841) pronghorn in 2024. We have some confidence in this model since we flew a Line Transect Survey in 2021, however the high SE is a concern. In the future it will be imperative that obtain reliable line transect population estimates periodically to check the status of the herd and anchor any model.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn
PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR438 - BAGGS

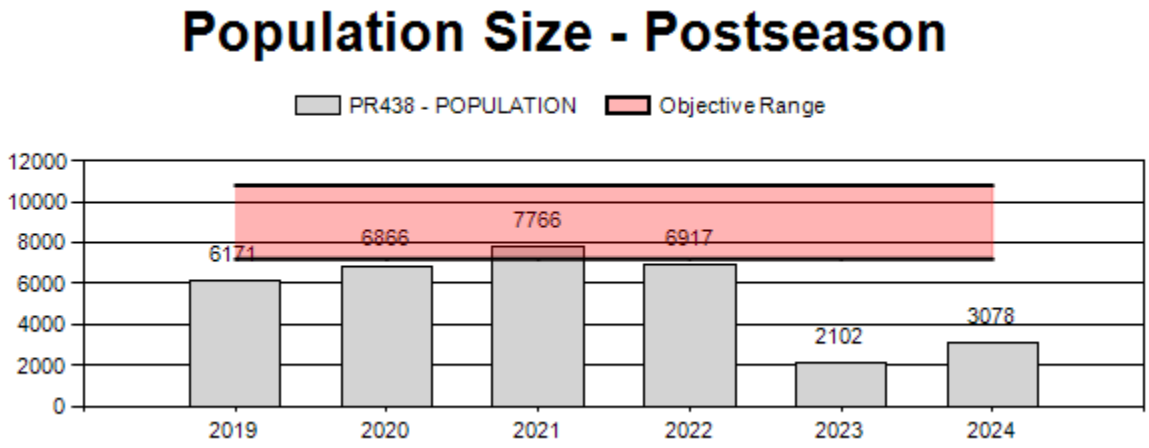
HUNT AREAS: 53, 55
PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	5,964	3,078	3,500
Harvest:	334	50	75
Hunters:	352	69	90
Hunter Success:	95%	72%	83 %
Active Licenses:	379	74	90
Active License Success:	88%	68%	83 %
Recreation Days:	1,119	163	250
Days Per Animal:	3.4	3.3	3.3
Males per 100 Females	54	35	
Juveniles per 100 Females	56	100	

Population Objective (± 20%):	9000 (7200 - 10800)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-65.8%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	2
Model Date:	2/28/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	1%	1%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	13%	10%
Proposed change in post-season population:	26%	12%



2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR438 - BAGGS

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	6,949	96	486	582	26%	1,174	52%	520	23%	2,276	0	8	41	50	± 3	44	± 3	30
2020	7,181	51	346	397	29%	611	45%	351	26%	1,359	0	8	57	65	± 6	57	± 6	35
2021	8,103	45	219	264	24%	496	45%	353	32%	1,113	0	9	44	53	± 6	71	± 8	46
2022	7,589	130	175	305	25%	538	44%	392	32%	1,235	0	24	33	57	± 6	73	± 7	47
2023	2,275	25	85	110	26%	230	53%	91	21%	431	0	11	37	48	± 8	40	± 7	27
2024	3,411	16	93	109	15%	313	43%	313	43%	735	0	5	30	35	± 6	100	± 12	74

2025 Hunting Seasons
Baggs Pronghorn Herd Unit (PR438)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
53	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope
53, 57	7	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Nov. 30	75	Doe or fawn valid south of Wyoming Highway 70 and west of Carbon County Road 601 in Area 53, and on private land within one (1) mile of Carbon County Road 603 in Area 57
55	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 73% Satisfied, 12% Neutral, 15% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Harvest Data

After the severe winter of 2022-23, the license quotas for HA53 and HA55 were reduced to 25 and 50, respectively. Not surprisingly, satisfaction and success in HA53 were quite low in 2024, but improved slightly since 2023. Satisfaction and success in HA55 remained quite high, due to higher densities of pronghorn and adult bucks there. Essentially no field harvest data were collected in 2024 for the herd due to the low license quotas and difficulty in finding hunters to check. Tooth boxes were mailed to all license holders, and those hunters submitted 15 sets of incisors for aging. Average age of harvested bucks was 4.9, and HA55 averaged 5.3 and HA53 averaged just 3.5.

Buck and Fawn Ratio Data

Pronghorn distribution following winter 2022-23 was heavily skewed, and that continued through the end of the 2024 biological year with only minor improvements. Over half of the pre-season classification sample in HA53 was observed along the Little Snake River corridor on mostly private lands. That area contained about 125 fawns per 100 does, and the remainder of HA53 contained only about 70 fawns per 100 does. During winter 2019-20 when snow was deep and crusted over, these pronghorn migrated across the river, over top of many fences, and across Highway 70 to seek areas with lower snowpack and never returned to traditional summer ranges. Densities remained higher than desired in that area in 2024, both in terms of summer range condition for livestock producers and for overlapping crucial mule deer winter ranges. Fawn ratios in HA55 were excellent at 104 per 100 does, and animals were more consistently distributed. The buck ratio was 35 bucks per 100 does, which was at the low end of the objective range for a recreational herd and declined from 48 in 2023. Buck ratios were disparate between the two hunt areas, with the observed buck ratio in HA53 at 28 and in HA55 at 50.

Population Trend

The post-season model estimate was 3,078, which, not surprisingly, was well below the herd objective of 9,000. However, this estimate was nearly a 50% increase over 2023's estimate; in reality, with above average over winter survival the increase may have been greater.

2025 Hunting Season
The excellent fawn ratio in the Baggs Herd in 2024 bodes well for improvements to the adult portion of the buck ratio in 2026. However, additional years will be needed to improve the age class structure and horn quality that hunters have come to expect in this Herd, despite it only being managed for recreational level buck ratios. As a result of the current buck ratios and the current lack of pronghorn distribution on publicly accessible areas, Type 1 license quotas for 2025 were left unchanged at 25.

Managers increased the Type 7 licenses to 75 for the small areas at the southern end of HA53/HA57 where native habitats continued to be affected negatively by altered pronghorn distributions and concerns remained for potential damage to irrigated meadows. The season close date was extended to November 30 due to the license quota increase to help ensure opportunity for the increase in hunters. Pronghorn observed in this small restricted area in HA53 numbered 126 during 2024 classifications, with 83% being does and fawns and fawn ratios exceeding 100. This total accounted for 26% of the classification sample in HA53 and was a 58% increase over numbers counted in the restricted area in 2023. These HA53 pronghorn are isolated from the rest of the herd and stand little chance at contributing to improvement in the herd's distribution and number in the future. This lack of past and future contribution was due to the barriers of the innumerable woven wire fences across the river bottom that they refuse to navigate. They also have little desire to emigrate, as they have access to irrigated hay meadows during the growing season and adjacent upland sagebrush during winter.

Other Considerations
Overall, the Baggs pronghorn herd winter ranges received average snow moisture in winter 2024-25; however, warm temperatures kept the snow depths very low. Counter to much of the rest of Wyoming, precipitation during the growing season in 2024 was above average, so range conditions were prime. As a result of these two factors, overwinter survival was excellent, as should have been buck horn growth.

Management Objective Review
The current objective and management strategy for the Baggs Pronghorn Herd was approved in 1994. For the 2025 (5-year) objective review, following an internal evaluation, the current objective and recreational management strategy in this herd will be maintained for the next five years.

Population modeling

Since the severe winter and associated mortality of 2022-23, past line-transect estimates provided no grounding for the model (PopR integrated population model), so low harvest rates/effort were the main driver for the model to be able to account for that winter. Abnormally high fawn ratios (100 fawns/100 does) and extremely low over winter mortality contributed to increases to the population. Allowing the model the freedom to estimate survival rates for both non-adult age classes seemed to align it better with managers' anecdotal observations, along with coarse estimates from the December 2023 mule deer sightability flight and pre-season classifications. The model was unable to account for the steep decline in the herd in one year; as a result, past years' estimates were not useful, nor were predictions for the next couple years. Due to the absence of prediction ability of the model, the "proposed" population estimate, harvest rates, and change in post-season population in the table above were obtained with basic calculations.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer | PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MD423 - UINTA

HUNT AREAS: 132-133, 168 | PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	9,130	8,353	9,110
Harvest:	418	348	400
Hunters:	1,498	1,267	1,400
Hunter Success:	28%	27%	29 %
Active Licenses:	1,505	1,268	1,450
Active License Success:	28%	27%	28%
Recreation Days:	7,863	6,854	7,000
Days Per Animal:	18.8	19.7	17.5
Males per 100 Females	24	23	
Juveniles per 100 Females	62	83	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 20000 (16000 - 24000)

Management Strategy: Recreational

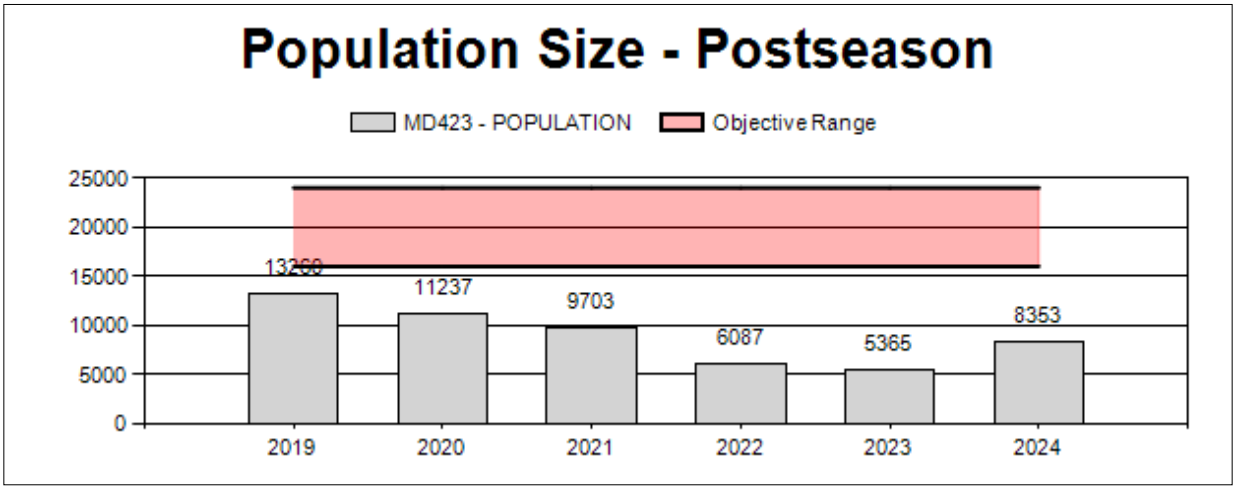
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -58.2%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 0

Model Date: 02/18/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	22%	10%
Proposed change in post-season population:	30%	9%



2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD423 - UINTA

		MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	13,260	54	76	74	9	0	213	13%	919	54%	563	33%	1,695	0	6	17	23	± 2	61	± 4	50
2020	11,237	27	66	59	38	0	190	11%	973	56%	586	34%	1,749	0	3	17	20	± 2	60	± 4	50
2021	9,703	60	25	29	8	0	122	13%	526	56%	297	31%	945	0	11	12	23	± 3	56	± 5	46
2022	6,087	143	102	47	10	0	302	15%	1,006	51%	676	34%	1,984	0	14	16	30	± 2	67	± 4	52
2023	5,365	5	24	17	2	0	48	14%	193	55%	111	32%	352	0	3	22	25	± 5	58	± 8	46
2024	8,353	36	24	22	7	0	89	11%	395	49%	326	40%	810	0	9	13	23	± 3	83	± 8	67

2025 HUNTING SEASONS

Uinta Mule Deer Herd Unit (MD423)

Hunt Area	Hunt Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
132	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 6		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
132	Gen – Youth only	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 12		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only
132	7	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn valid on or within one (1) mile of irrigated land in Sweetwater County west of Wyoming Highway 530 and north of Sweetwater County Road 1 and BLM road 4315
133	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 6		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
133	Gen – Youth only	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 12		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only
168	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 6		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
168	Gen – Youth only	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 12		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only
132, 133, 134, 135, 168	3	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	25	Any white-tailed deer

2025 Region K nonresident quota: 200 licenses

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 37.0% Satisfied, 28.9% Neutral, 34.2% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation: We typically try to offer a season that includes 2 weekends with 14 days of general deer hunting opportunity in this herd unit. This season structure is very conservative and the population is not limited by this level of hunting. Continuing to offer this type of hunting opportunity in light of having lower deer survival during tough winters is still biologically appropriate. This type of season will not limit future growth of the herd. However, due to low deer numbers there is a push from a vocal segment of the public for us to have a season length shorter than 14 days. In response to that, season length has typically been shorter than 14 days since 2017 due to several bad winters that affected deer populations. After the winter of 2022/23 we reduced the season to an extremely short 6 days and will continue this in 2025. This

season will only have one weekend of hunting opportunity. In addition to this season we will add a youth only season running from Oct. 1-12. This will give youth hunters the opportunity to hunt two weekends. We have a number of deer on irrigated fields along the lower Blacks Fork and propose to add a very limited amount of harvest through a type 7 hunt to address landowner complaints.

Season length and buck hunting management are social issues rather than biological issues. Season length changes in this herd unit have not affected harvest or hunter effort. In an analysis of season length data from 2010 to 2020 we found that season length does not correlate with average days hunted, harvest or hunter days. The average hunter hunted for 5.04 days over that period, regardless if the season was 10 days or 14 days. Shorter seasons do create more hunter crowding by forcing those hunters to participate in the hunt over a shorter time instead of spreading out in time when the season is longer. This has been even more evident since 2022 when we did not offer two full weekends of hunting opportunity. Hunting seasons offered for mule deer in this area have no biological effect on the herd.

The buck:doe ratio is dictated by previous years fawn recruitment and is also affected by hunting pressure. The ratio has rebounded from a low point in 2020. It is back up within the objective range (20-30) at 23:100. With the extremely high fawn:doe ratios in 2024 the buck:doe ratio will jump in 2025 due to large numbers of buck fawns becoming yearling bucks in 2025, indicating that hunter opportunity could be increased. As buck ratios are within the objective range we should remove antler point restrictions (APRs) in most areas to avoid negative genetic influences and to provide more hunter harvest opportunity.

The Region K nonresident license quota is at an all-time low. The quota was lowered several times in recent years and again in 2024 to 200. There is a history in this herd of significant public complaints about nonresident hunter numbers. It is very close to Utah and most nonresident hunters come from the Salt Lake City area. When they hunt, they come repeatedly throughout the season in large groups. This is unpopular with local hunters. In recent years, several private ranches that allowed public hunting through the WGFD PLPW program have opted out and become inaccessible. This has reduced the amount of land we have for hunters to recreate in the herd unit. This, along with severe impacts to the deer herd from recent bad winters have led us to reduce the nonresident quota in that past but further cuts are not warranted.

Management Objective Review: The objective and management strategy for the Uinta Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2024, and will not be reviewed again until 2029.

Chronic Wasting Disease Management: The Uinta herd was last prioritized for CWD sampling from 2019 to 2020. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). No positives were found during this surveillance period. Sample collection has been low since 2020 as harvest was reduced due to more conservative hunting seasons and low deer populations and no positives have been found. Historically, the herd has had two positive test results from targeted samples both taken within the city limits of Green River on the extreme eastern edge of the herd unit. To date, no CWD management actions have occurred in this herd unit.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the Uinta Mule Deer Herd, 2019 - 2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**0% (n=43)**	0% (2)	0% (5)	11%
2021	**0% (n=6)**	0% (1)	0% (1)	2%
2022	**0% (n=3)**	0% (0)	0% (3)	1%
2023	**0% (n=4)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	2%
2024	**0% (n=0)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	0%
2020-2024	**0% (n=56)**	0% (3)	0% (9)	3%

Winter Severity: This herd has been commonly experiencing difficult winter conditions for deer survival over the past 8 years. Winter ranges are at high elevations and severe winters can be very detrimental to deer populations. On average, severe winters historically occurred around once every five years. Prior to the 2016/17 winter, conditions were mild for five straight winters in this herd unit creating a situation where fawn and adult survival was high and populations were able to grow even with relatively low fawn production. The winter of 2016/17 was severe in most areas and the population in the western part of the herd unit declined drastically due to it. A mild winter followed in 2017/18. This helped the herd rebound slightly but in 2018/19 we had another very difficult winter. Then in the winter of 2019/20 we again had very tough winter conditions across the herd unit. Mortality surveys at the LeRoy winter range complex in spring showed high fawn and adult mortality over this period. It was also verified with poor yearling buck:doe ratios in the years following the bad winters. This was very harmful to the population to have three tough winters in the span of four years. Then, in the winter of 2022/23, we experienced a very severe winter and deer mortality that was incredibly high. Adult doe mortality estimates were over 60% in this herd. These conditions were record-breaking and we saw mortality levels that had not been documented before. In reviewing JCR data and old reports, it has not been documented where four bad winters occurred over seven year period, or a winter even close to as severe as 2022/23 in terms of deer survival. This has been an unprecedented impact to deer numbers in this herd.

Antler Point Restrictions: Antler point restrictions (APRs) had been used in Hunt Area 132 from 2007 to 2024, and a 3-point or more antler restriction has been in place in the entire herd unit since 2014. This has been at the request of a highly vocal segment of the public. Other members of the public oppose the restriction. The use of APRs for limited periods can be warranted when an area is below the buck:doe ratio objective. This is often caused by a lack of buck security cover and low fawn productivity. However, many portions of this herd unit do not typically require this type of management based on historically observed buck ratios.

During times of good doe condition and fawn production we see a significant numbers of 3 point yearlings and 4 point 2 year olds. Those deer have the best genetics and antler growth potential. It may be detrimental to the trophy potential of the herd to use APRs that select against those genetics on a long term basis. APRs should only be used in short duration to increase buck:doe rations and not long term. Antler point restrictions should not be used when conditions are favorable and we are meeting the buck:doe ratio objective. It may be politically unpopular to get rid of the point restrictions due to a misguided segment of the hunter populations believing that the regulation can improve population performance.

Aerial Surveys: An aerial survey to produce a population estimate had not been conducted in this herd prior to 2024. A comp abundance survey was conducted in December of 2024. Survey dollars were tight and sampling intensity was impacted by lack of budget. The survey resulted in a raw count of 810 animals and an estimate of 3,352 (LCL 2,051, UCL 4,653). This was much lower than recent estimates and field information had indicated so it was not used in the model. We flew an extensive elk flight in January of 2025 and found deer present in many subunits labeled as other in the comp abundance design. This information also indicates that the comp abundance estimate was biased low. We plan to fly an extensive sightability survey in this herd in the next two years and that should give us a good estimate to model with.

Population Modeling: WGFD managers use PopR integrated population models (IPM) to estimate populations for mule deer. We see significant differences in IPM results from the previous spreadsheet model estimates used. The 2024 postseason population estimate for this herd unit from the PopR IPM is 8,353(CL = 4,708-13,362). This is a large variation around the estimated. The IPM estimates are inconsistent from year to year and not tracking population trends well. There is also inconsistency on estimates between comparable model runs, high Rhat values and inability for the model to come to convergence. For these reasons, local managers feel that the IPM model is not functioning well for this herd. Hopefully, in the future we will be able to resolve these issues. The addition of a sightability population estimate may help.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MD424 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

HUNT AREAS: 101-102

PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	2,840	3,600	3,600
Harvest:	172	129	140
Hunters:	204	170	170
Hunter Success:	84%	76%	82%
Active Licenses:	204	170	170
Active License Success:	84%	76%	82 %
Recreation Days:	1,341	1,378	1,300
Days Per Animal:	7.8	10.7	9.3
Males per 100 Females	25	30	
Juveniles per 100 Females	46	53	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 8500 (6800 - 10200)

Management Strategy: Special

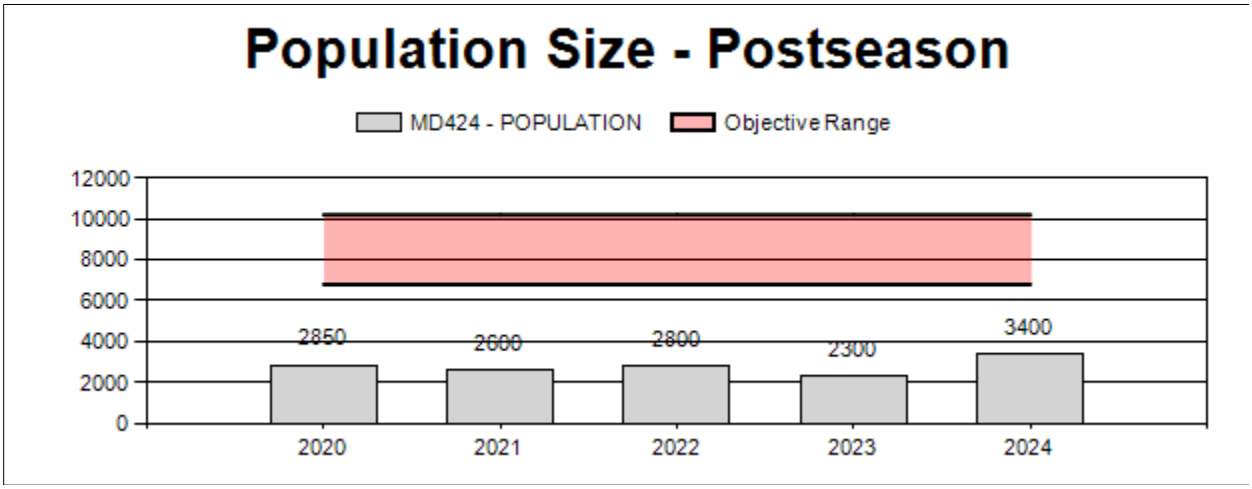
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -57.6%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 11

Model Date: 02/20/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	27%	20%
Proposed change in post-season population:	2%	0%



2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD424 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

		MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	3,650	5	18	18	1	0	42	21%	112	57%	42	21%	196	654	4	33	38	± 8	38	± 8	27
2020	2,850	41	90	54	4	0	189	13%	829	59%	383	27%	1,401	684	5	18	23	± 2	46	± 3	38
2021	2,600	30	40	29	3	0	102	14%	454	62%	178	24%	734	505	7	16	22	± 3	39	± 4	32
2022	2,800	16	43	15	1	0	75	16%	251	52%	153	32%	479	811	6	24	30	± 5	61	± 7	47
2023	2,300	13	5	10	2	0	30	12%	141	58%	73	30%	244	884	9	12	21	± 5	52	± 9	43
2024	3,600	25	49	35	4	0	113	17%	373	55%	196	29%	682	824	7	24	30	± 4	53	± 5	40

2025 Hunting Seasons
South Rock Springs Mule Deer (MD424)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
101	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	25	Antlered deer
102	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	150	Any deer

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 79.6% Satisfied, 8.4% Neutral, 12.0% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:
The 2025 hunting season for the South Rock Springs mule deer herd maintained the exact same conservative hunting season that has been offered in the herd unit since 2022. Type 1 licenses were reduced that year because of several years of low fawn ratios preceding that season. Since that time, observed buck to doe ratios below the special management minimum of at least 30 bucks per 100 does, as well as a modeled decline in the overall population have indicated that additional opportunity has not been available in this herd. While observed fawn ratios in the herd in recent years have been below what is probably needed to maintain the population, the observed fawn ratios for the last three years have been a significant improvement with 61 fawns per 100 does being observed in 2022, 52 fawns per 100 does in 2023, and 53 fawns per 100 does being seen during the 2024 classification flight. Fawn ratios in this range have not been seen consistently since 2015 and give optimism for this herd being able to regain some of the ground it's lost.

The observed 2024 buck ratio from December classification flights was 30 bucks per 100 does. This observed ratio brings this herd back into the special management objective range of 30 to 45 bucks per 100 does after the hunting season, and is the same buck to doe ratio that was observed in 2022. A classification flight conducted in December 2023 resulted in a post-season observed buck to doe ratio of 21 bucks per 100 does last year. It should be noted though that weather conditions during the time period of that flight were very mild, which resulted in deer being widely distributed, which made data collection difficult. Therefore, the 2023 observed buck ratio should be viewed with some caution as it may not have represented the true buck to doe ratio for that year. While overall deer numbers may be down and buck ratios are not as high as what's desired by the public; hunters were still able to select for older age class bucks during the 2024 season, with the average age of harvested bucks, based on hunter submitted tooth samples, in 2024 being 5.6 years old, which is the same average age that was observed in 2023; and only slightly below the 5.7 years old average seen in 2022.

Along with age and sex ratios, the December flight also produced a population estimate for this population (Appendix A). Subunits across the herd unit were randomly selected to be surveyed, with 22% of the high density subunits and 3% of the low density subunits being surveyed during that flight. The resulting population estimate for the South Rock Springs herd from that composition/abundance survey was 6,892 (CL = 965 - 12,820) deer.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the South Rock Springs Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management:
The South Rock Springs herd has limited CWD prevalence data available, and no CWD management actions have occurred. Despite limited data, the five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). This herd has not been prioritized for CWD surveillance because of the relatively small size of this herd, obtaining the necessary sample size to accurately determine prevalence would be unlikely.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested deer in the South Rock Springs Herd, 2020-2024

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) - *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI=95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**0% (*n*=2)**	0% (*n*=0)	0% (*n*=0)	1.06%
2021	**0% (*n*=2)**	0% (*n*=0)	0% (*n*=0)	1.14%
2022	**0% (*n*=3)**	0% (*n*=0)	0% (*n*=0)	2.19%
2023	**0% (n=1)**	0% (*n*=0)	0% (*n*=0)	0.71%
2024	**0% (*n*=3)**	0% (*n*=0)	0% (*n*=0)	2.38%
2020-2024	**0% (0-28.5%, *n*=11)**	0% (*n*=0)	0% (*n*=0)	1.43%

Population Modeling:
In 2021, WGFD managers began using PopR integrated population models (IPM) to estimate this deer population. Given the strong influence that license issuance rates have on the number of deer that get harvested in this herd, licenses was used as the effort variable for modeling this population using the default structure of constant adult survival and variable reproduction and juvenile survival. The 2024 post-season population estimate for the South Rock Springs deer herd produced by that model was 3,606 (CL = 2,483 – 4,920) mule deer. Model diagnostics suggest that the model had good convergence with the Rhat maximum point estimate being only 1.06, suggesting that the model was able to find an adequate fit for the available data.

Appendix A. MD424 Composition/Abundance Results

Biological Year 2024 MD424 – South Rock Springs MD Comp/Abundance Summary

Survey Dates: 12/06/2024 – 12/10/2024

Survey Cost: $17,710

Flight Service: Yarak Aviation

Aircraft: Bell 47 Soloy

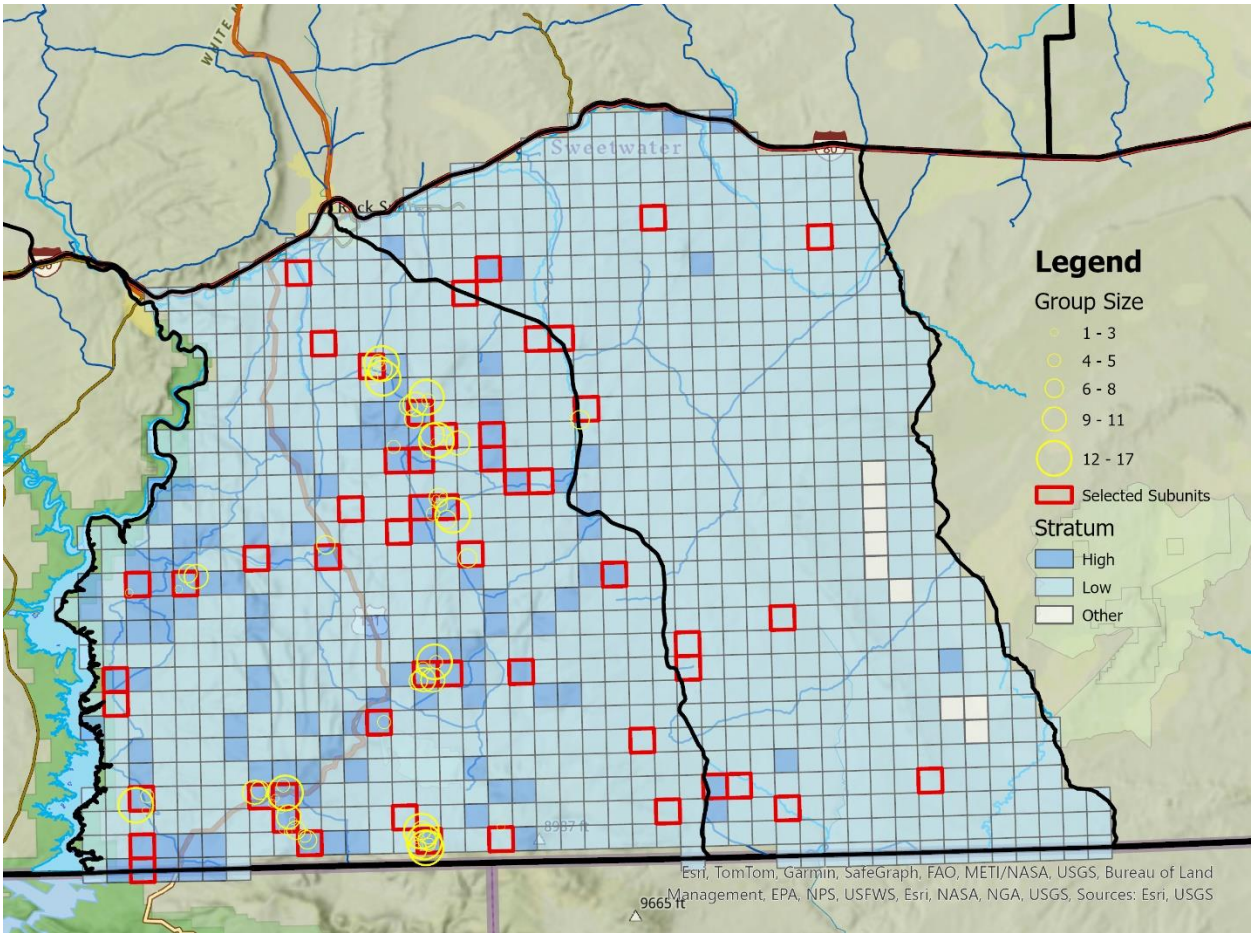
Sampling Design

DAU	Bio Year	Stratum	Subunits Available	Subunits Sampled	Prop Sampled
South Rock Springs	2024	High	124	27	0.218
South Rock Springs	2024	Low	883	26	0.029
South Rock Springs	2024	Other	9	0	0

Results

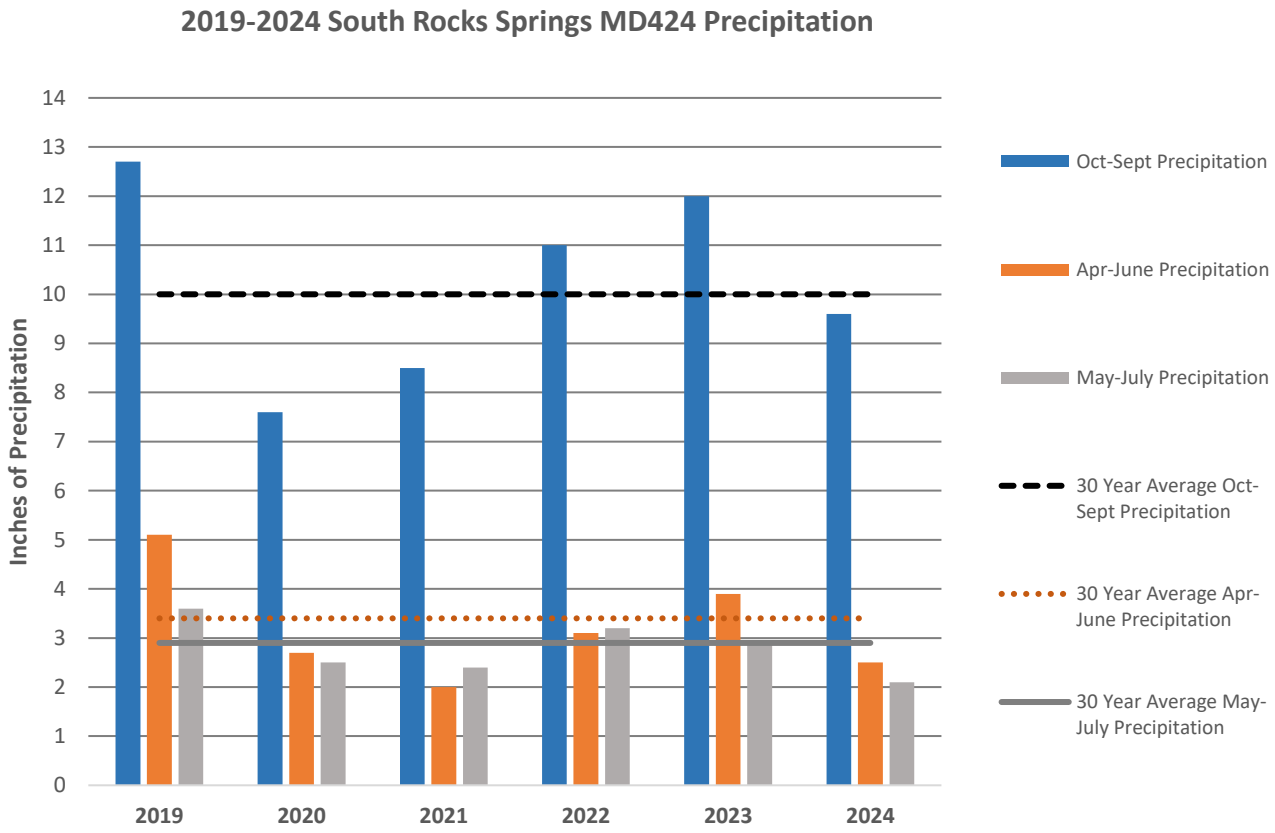
Species	BioYear	Stratum	Sampled	Available	Prop. Sampled	Raw Count	Estimate
Mule Deer	2024 - 2025	High	27	124	0.218	352	2154.96
Mule Deer	2024 - 2025	Low	26	883	0.029	105	4746.88
Mule Deer	2024 - 2025	Other	0	9	0	0	0
			53	1016	0.052	457	6901.844

Species	Survey Type	Bio Year	Demographic	Raw Count	Estimate	LCL	UCL
Mule Deer	Composition	2024 - 2025	Total Deer	457	6901.84	988.61	12815.08
Mule Deer	Composition	2024 - 2025	Does	250	3880.75	461.46	7300.05
Mule Deer	Composition	2024 - 2025	Fawns	142	2123.23	414.63	3831.82
Mule Deer	Composition	2024 - 2025	Total Bucks	65	901.82	66.78	1736.85


Sweetwater
Legend
Group Size
1 - 3
4 - 5
6 - 8
9 - 11
12 - 17
Selected Subunits
Stratum
High
Low
Other
Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USFWS, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Sources: Esri, USGS
9665 ft

Appendix B. 2024 Habitat Summary

Precipitation:
The Parameter-Elevation Relationships on Independent Slopes Model (PRISM) was utilized to estimate precipitation by calculating a climate-elevation regressions for each Digital Elevation Model grid cell (4km resolution) for the South Rock Springs Mule Deer Herd Unit during the period from October 2023 through September 2024 (water year). Annual precipitation was lower than the 30 year (Oct-Sept) average. Precipitation during the growing season (April-June) was below the 30 year average, and precipitation during the spring-summer period (May-July) was also below the 30 year average.



2.) Winter Severity:
Winter conditions on most winter ranges have been relatively mild and have remained generally open. Shrubs have consistently been available and snow depths have not greatly impacted movement or accessibility. Snow accumulation recorded in Green River, WY and Flaming Gorge, UT during the winter of 2024-2025 was variable for each month between November and February. Snowfall at Flaming Gorge was below the 30 year average during all four winter months. However, snowfall in Green River was above the 30 year average during November and February, but below average in December and January. Average 2024-2025 monthly winter temperatures (November-February) recorded in Green River and Flaming Gorge were colder than the long term average in November and January, but warmer than average during December and February.

3.) Significant Events:
Contracted crews hand cut and piled juniper trees on 695 acres of encroached shrub habitat in the Iron Mountain area during the summer months. These piled trees will be allowed time to adequately dry, and BLM fire crews will then conduct prescribed slash pile burns during winter months to complete the project.

4.) Habitat Monitoring:
Department personnel also conducted monitoring associated with past and future cheatgrass control in the Richard's Mountain burn scar, Gooseberry Creek burn, Red Creek, Currant Creek and Spring Creek areas.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer
PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MD427 - BAGGS

HUNT AREAS: 82, 84, 100
PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

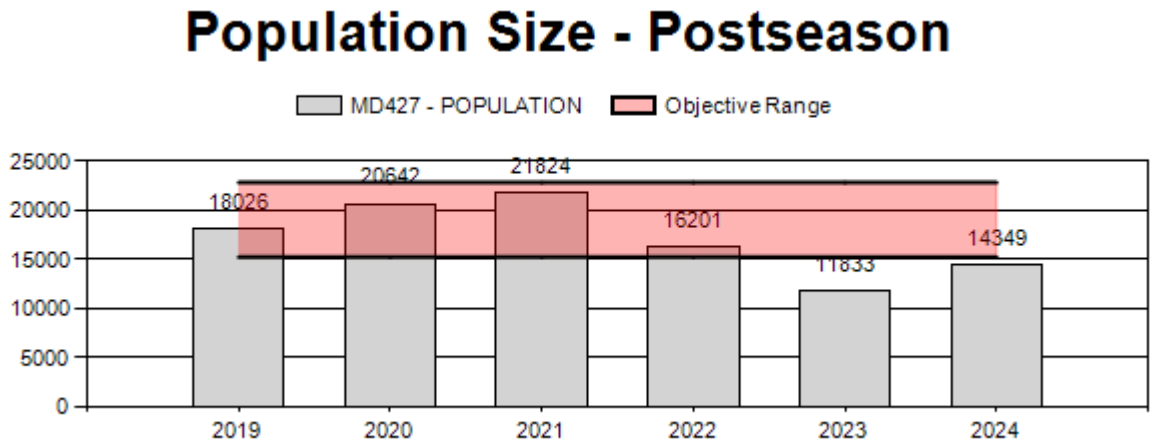
	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	17,705	14,349	16,000
Harvest:	1,152	654	350
Hunters:	2,660	1,891	1,600
Hunter Success:	43%	35%	22%
Active Licenses:	2,712	1,892	1,500
Active License Success:	42%	35%	23 %
Recreation Days:	14,021	9,859	8,000
Days Per Animal:	12.2	15.1	22.9
Males per 100 Females	26	20	
Juveniles per 100 Females	62	84	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 19000 (15200 - 22800)

Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-24.5%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	2
Model Date:	2/27/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	34%	15%
Proposed change in post-season population:	16%	12%



2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD427 - BAGGS

		MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	18,026	182	292	145	28	0	647	15%	2,257	53%	1,344	32%	4,248	0	8	21	29	± 1	60	± 2	46
2020	20,642	135	263	111	20	0	529	13%	2,107	50%	1,550	37%	4,186	0	6	19	25	± 1	74	± 3	59
2021	21,824	509	276	264	92	0	1,141	14%	4,251	54%	2,549	32%	7,941	0	12	15	27	± 1	60	± 2	47
2022	16,201	401	199	168	100	0	868	14%	3,165	52%	2,065	34%	6,098	0	13	15	27	± 1	65	± 2	51
2023	11,833	34	79	69	22	0	204	11%	1,151	63%	473	26%	1,828	0	3	15	18	± 2	41	± 3	35
2024	14,349	101	50	67	31	0	249	10%	1,223	49%	1,030	41%	2,502	0	8	12	20	± 2	84	± 4	70

2025 Hunting Seasons
Baggs Mule Deer Herd Unit (MD427)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
82	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 8		Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer
82	Gen-Youth only	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 11	Oct. 12		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only
82, 100	3	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	25	Any white-tailed deer
82, 100	8	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Jan. 15	25	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid on private land
84	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 14	25	Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
100	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 6		Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer
100	Gen-Youth only	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 11	Oct. 12		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only

2025 Region W nonresident quota: 600 licenses

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 46% Satisfied, 24% Neutral, 29% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Harvest Data

After the severe winter of 2022-23 and the subsequent extreme reductions in mule deer hunting opportunity in the Baggs herd, hunter participation, total harvest, success, and satisfaction dropped to the lowest recorded for the herd in 2023. Removal of the antler point restriction in 2024 while maintaining limited season dates led to modest increases to these metrics. In 2024, 1,892 hunters harvested 654 mule deer bucks for a 35% success rate, and satisfaction climbed to 46%. Much of the increase in harvest resulted from yearling bucks, which comprised about 1/3 of the total harvest. The proportion of Class III bucks in the harvest dropped to the lowest since managers started separating bucks into classes about a decade ago. This decrease was expected due to winter mortality in 2022-23, as well as the removal of the antler point restriction which decreased pressure on older age classes of bucks. Warm and dry weather in early October contributed to lower harvest for hunters that participated. Despite increases in most harvest metrics, managers received many complaints and satisfaction and success were still lower than what hunters have come to expect in the herd. However, due to knowledge of the severe winter in 2022-23, hunters were generally more understanding of the hunting conditions than they normally might be. Hunters participating in the HA100 season observed a 4-point antler restriction along with a 5-day duration. With very low deer densities and no migration inducing weather, all harvest metrics were much lower than HA82. As a result, comments on limited quota in HA100 have increased in the last two years, and more

education is necessary for hunters to understand the impacts of limited quota HAs to hunt frequency and the lack of positive impact to the deer numbers in those areas. In HA84, a limited quota area with only 25 licenses, reported success was extremely poor (14%). Mature Class III bucks continued to be difficult to find relative to several years ago; although counter to the last two years, two Class III bucks were checked in the field in 2024.

Buck and Fawn Ratios

The buck ratio observed in the December 2024 classification (20 bucks per 100 does) was an improvement over 2023 (18); however, the adult buck (>1.5 years old) component decreased from 15 to 12. This decrease was expected due to the lack of contribution of 2.5 year old bucks due to winter mortality in 2022-23. The yearling buck ratio was 8, which was higher than expected because of low fawn ratios in 2023, but likely reflective of high overwinter fawn survival in 2023-24. The proportion of Class III bucks (>25" spread) was 12%, which was fairly high for the herd (10-year average of 9%). Vulnerability to harvest for older age classes was reduced due to lack of antler point restriction; thus, the Class III buck ratio benefited. The fawn ratio observed during the flight was 84 fawns per 100 does, the highest ever recorded for the herd. Fawn ratios were consistently high in both northern and southern crucial winter ranges in 2024.

Population Trend

The post-season model estimate was 14,349, which, not surprisingly, was well below the herd objective of 19,000. However, this estimate was about a 30% increase over 2023's estimate; in reality, with above average over winter survival the increase may have been greater. This 2024 model derived estimate was comparable to the on-the-ground, flight-based estimate from early December 2024 of 15,000, despite the lack of statistical confidence in that on-the-ground estimate. The increase in the 2024 on-the-ground estimate since 2023 was also about 30%.

2025 Hunting Season

Given that the condition of a doe when a fawn is *in utero* plays the largest role in the size of a buck's body and antlers for its entire life, the light winter conditions and lack of a current fawn crop in winter of 2023-24 meant the fawn crop in 2024 had very high potential to produce quality bucks from that cohort. Because of that potential for quality and because fawn productivity hit an all-time high for the herd at 84 fawns per 100 does, managers proposed a 4-point antler restriction in HA82 for 2025 to reduce pressure on this presumed high quality yearling buck cohort. This 2025 antler restriction was planned in 2024 when the public generally accepted removing it for the 2024 hunting season, despite below-objective buck ratios and population size. Since a 4-point antler restriction is a significant decrease in the amount of hunting opportunity, managers increased the duration of the HA82 season by two days, to include the 7th and 8th. Adding two days to the hunting season, particularly since they do not fall on a weekend, would not impact buck ratios. The youth season was implemented on the weekend after the regular season closed and overlapped youth elk season in HA21.

The 4-point antler restriction was maintained for HA100 due to long term drought and low productivity of mule deer in that HA. This segment of the herd lacks the fawn productivity necessary for these off-and-on APRs to be effective. A four point restriction and relatively short season was the only feasible way to reasonably maintain a general license structure in HA100. For similar reasons, the HA84 quota was proposed to be maintained at 25 licenses.

Managers added a Type 3 white-tailed deer only season for HA82 and HA100 combined, as a result of local members of the public who expressed that desire. White-tailed deer in this area are essentially limited to the Little Snake River corridor and are currently managed for low numbers to reduce potential for damage and the potential for competing with mule deer. A long duration doe-fawn season existed already, but opportunity for bucks has been limited to the timing of the general mule deer season; this license type resolved that issue.

Other Considerations

Although the Baggs Mule Deer Herd-wide growing season precipitation data was modeled below average for 2024, anecdotal observations countered that. Though all seasonal ranges exhibited good growth, transition and winter ranges in particular seemed above average and remained "green" into late summer. Mule deer forage shrubs crucial for winter survival exhibited excellent leader growth, and winter range forage conditions through the 2024-25 winter were phenomenal. Overall, the Baggs herd winter ranges received average snow moisture in winter 2024-25; however, warm temperatures kept the snow depths very low. As a result of these two factors, overwinter survival was excellent, and mule deer body condition moving into the growing season 2025 should be above average.

Management Objective Review

The current objective and management strategy for the Baggs Mule Deer Herd was approved in 2015. For the 2025 (5-year) objective review, following an internal evaluation, the current objective and special management strategy will be maintained for the next five years (Appendix B).

Population Model

Abundance Estimate

Additional funding was supplied to the Baggs herd in 2023 to complete a sightability flight population estimate, the first estimate of its kind in herd history. With a return to the normal flight budget in 2024, the classification flight was structured as a pseudo-sightability flight with a composition/abundance survey structure. As a result, an on-the-ground population estimate was produced, but with much wider confidence intervals due to a much lower sampling rate compared to 2023. Over 2,500 mule deer were observed across about 25% of the crucial winter range and 6% of intermediate winter ranges. After accounting for remaining areas not surveyed and for mule deer that were missed within areas that were surveyed, an estimate of about 15,000 resulted. This year's estimate of 15,000 made sense, after accounting for some modest adult mortality since the 2023 sightability estimate, and after including the incredible fawn productivity in 2024.

The sightability estimate in 2023 was extremely timely, not just in providing additional information to managers on numbers and distribution, but also in grounding the IPM (PopR integrated population model) directly after the severe winter of 2022-23. In addition, even with very high confidence intervals, the 2024 abundance estimate helped model performance tremendously (Appendix A). In addition to the on-the-ground estimates, the model presumably was informed by high fawn ratios, low harvest, and relatively high effort. Allowing the model to estimate both non-adult survival rates seemed to align it better with managers' anecdotal observations and perhaps, most importantly, the two on-the-ground population estimates. Even so, the model was unable to account for the steep decline in the herd in one year; as a result, past years' estimates weren't useful, nor were predictions for the next couple years. In future years, model performance will deteriorate without more frequent and intensive data inputs like sightability estimates or survival data from collaring mule deer. Due to the absence of prediction ability of the model, the "proposed"

population estimate, harvest rates, and change in post-season population in the table above were obtained with basic calculations.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management

The Baggs Mule Deer Herd was prioritized for CWD sampling in 2023 and carried into 2024 to achieve large enough sample. Managers collected 99 and 121 adult buck CWD samples in those respective years for a prevalence of about 16%. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). This prevalence was cause for alarm since it was a considerable increase from the last time the herd was monitored for CWD in 2018, when prevalence was 8% out of a sample of 263 adult mule deer bucks. CWD positive mule deer were harvested in nearly all portions of the herd where deer occur during hunting seasons, although lower densities of CWD were apparent in northern portions of HA82 compared to areas closer to the state line. This distribution was logical since CWD has been present in immediately adjacent mule deer herds in Colorado for longer than the Baggs Herd, and since the disease and its prevalence have progressed northward over the last couple decades. To date, no meaningful CWD management actions have occurred in this herd unit. Targeting late season migratory mule deer bucks was proposed but not implemented in 2018 due to lack of public support. At the southern end of HA82 where CWD prevalence is higher, doe harvest was implemented for several years leading up to the severe winter of 2022-23, but those seasons were removed entirely after that winter. Public support for doe harvest in the Baggs herd has been decreasing for years, and has hit an all-time low since that winter.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the Baggs Mule Herd, 2020 - 2024.

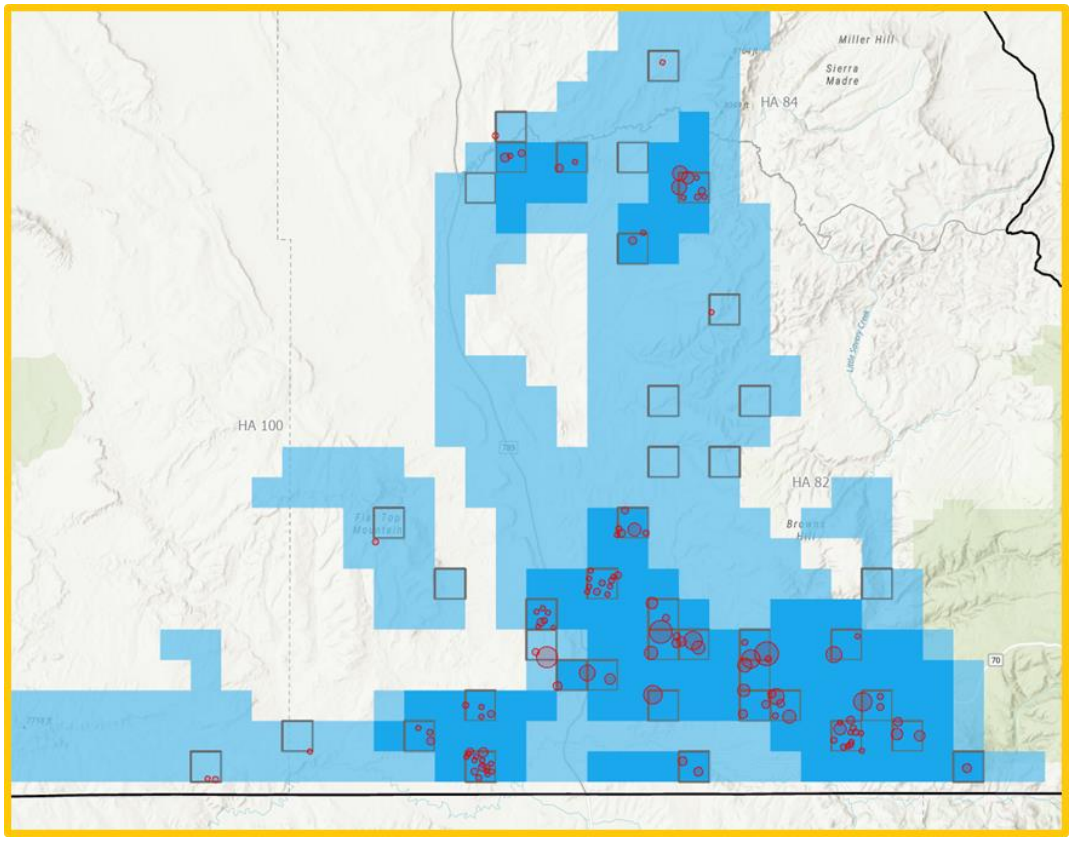
Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive Hunter Harvested Mule Deer, 95% CI, and Sample Size			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**5% (n=20)**	0% (n=3)	0% (n=6)	1.4%
2021	**19% (n=26)**	0% (n=2)	14% (n=7)	4.6%
2022	**22% (n=32)**	50% (n=2)	0% (n=2)	3.3%
2023	**16% (n=99)**	0% (n=4)	0% (n=0)	30.8%
2024	**16% (n=121)**	0% (n=18)	0% (n=0)	18.5%
2020-2024	**16% (10-21%, n=298)**	3.4% (n=29)	6.7% (n=15)	7.6%

Appendix A. Baggs MD424 Composition/Abundance Results, 2024

Survey Dates: 12/08/2024 – 12/9/2024

Species	BioYear	Stratum	Sampled	Available	Prop. Sampled	Raw Count	Estimate
Mule Deer	2024 - 2025	High	26	100	26%	2348	12034
Mule Deer	2024 - 2025	Low	16	269	5.9%	154	3453
Mule Deer	2024 - 2025	Other	0	1104	0%	0	0.00
			42	1473	2.9%	2502	15487

Species	Survey Type	Bio Year	Demographic	Raw Count	Estimate	LCL	UCL
Mule Deer	Composition	2024 - 2025	Total Deer	2502	15487	9446	21528
Mule Deer	Composition	2024 - 2025	Does	1223	7478	4789	10168
Mule Deer	Composition	2024 - 2025	Fawns	1030	6546	3620	9472
Mule Deer	Composition	2024 - 2025	Total Bucks	249	1465	958	1971



Baggs mule deer herd composition/abundance survey map for December 2024. Light blue areas represent Low stratum and dark blue areas represent High stratum. Sampled blocks are outlined in black, and observed deer groups are represented by red circles.

Appendix B. Baggs Mule Deer Objective Review Habitat Report

Overall Recommendation

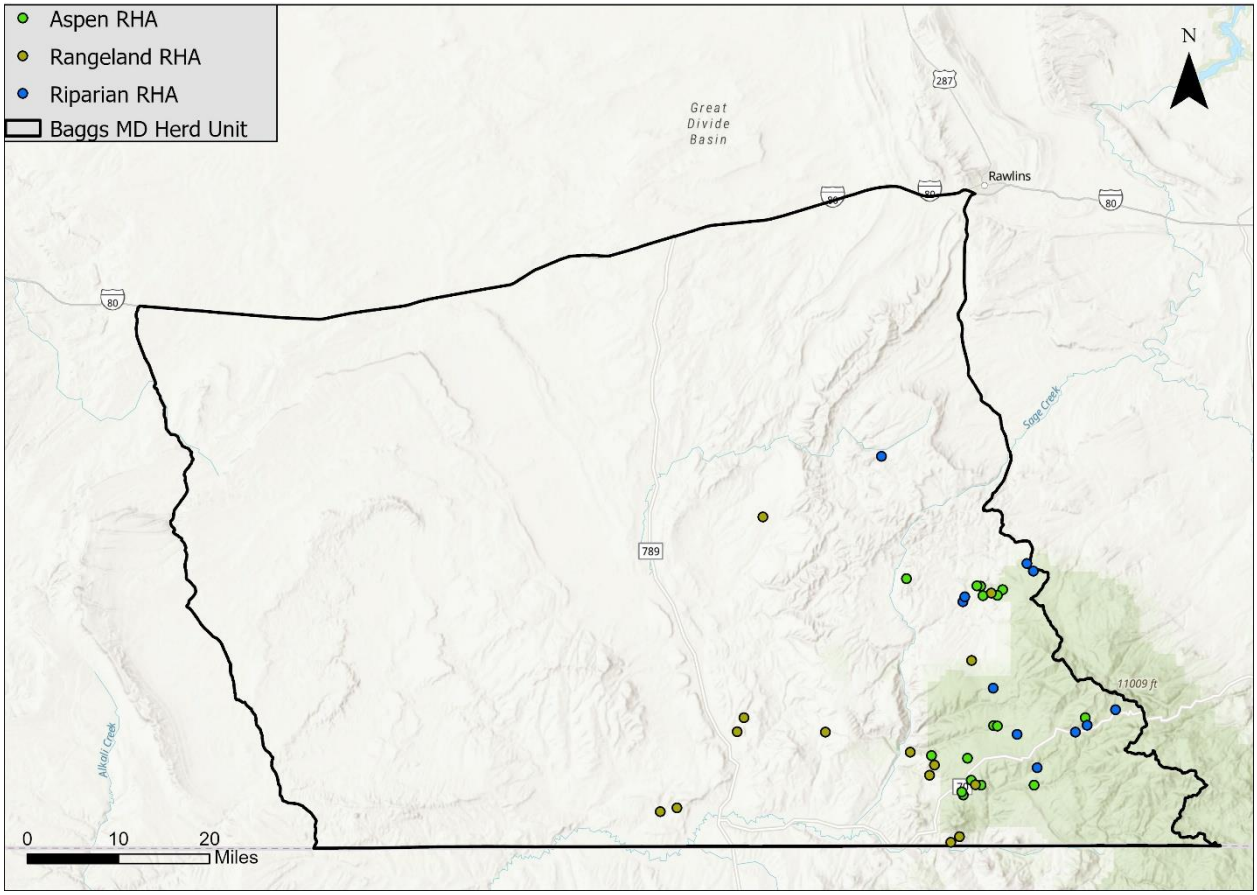
Habitat data collected from 2020-2024 is presented below. Based on these data, we believe the habitat resources are relatively in balance with the existing population objective of this herd and do not recommend any changes to the existing objective at this time. If habitat conditions continue towards a downward trend over the next five year review period, changes to the population objective may be warranted.

Rapid Habitat Assessments

In 2015, Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Department) personnel initiated the Rapid Habitat Assessment methodology to survey important mule deer habitats. This method strives to capture large-scale habitat quality metrics to better understand how the habitat is providing for the current population of mule deer. This effort provides a standardized habitat assessment to contribute to discussions on mule deer objectives and potential adjustments based on the general concept of carrying capacity.

Data from 2020-2024 was summarized to inform discussions surrounding the Baggs mule deer herd unit objective review.

2020-2024 Baggs Rapid Habitat Assessments



Rangelands (14 surveys, 3,793.21 acres)

Rangeland RHAs completed in the Baggs mule deer herd unit generally indicated rangelands were partially meeting mule deer habitat needs. One survey, completed on the south side of Battle Mountain and focused specifically on the south slopes, indicated roughly 471 acres of winter rangeland habitat were failing to meet management objectives. A downward trend in rangeland habitat conditions was noted in the majority of surveys due to lack of shrub age class diversity, late seral states, and presence of invasive species (mainly cheatgrass). Cheatgrass was documented on approximately 71% of the rangeland communities that were assessed from 2020-2024. Herbivory was mostly light throughout migration, summer, and winter range habitats although some summer range habitats were experiencing severe levels of herbivory.

Rangeland RHA								
Migration			Summer			Winter Range		
Acres		2,694	Acres		312	Acres		787
Seral State	Early	0%	Seral State	Early	0%	Seral State	Early	0%
	Middle	37%		Middle	0%		Middle	0%
	Late	63%		Late	100%		Late	100%
Herbivory	Light	68%	Herbivory	Light	56%	Herbivory	Light	97%
	Moderate	32%		Moderate	6%		Moderate	0%
	Severe	0%		Severe	38%		Severe	3%
Species Diversity	Low	18%	Species Diversity	Low	0%	Species Diversity	Low	60%
	Medium	42%		Medium	6%		Medium	3%
	High	40%		High	94%		High	37%
Invasives	None	34%	Invasives	None	15%	Invasives	None	0%
	Present	45%		Present	85%		Present	3%
	Mgmt Limiting	21%		Mgmt Limiting	0%		Mgmt Limiting	97%
Meet Objectives	Yes	0%	Meet Objectives	Yes	15%	Meet Objectives	Yes	0%
	Partial	100%		Partial	85%		Partial	40%
	No	0%		No	0%		No	60%

Aspen (16 surveys, 595.85 acres)

Due to lack of disturbance, aspen stands within the Baggs herd unit are mostly mid to late seral stands. Of the 595.85 acres assessed from 2020-2024, only 143 acres were classified as “proper functioning condition”. Overall species diversity was very high and herbivory was light to moderate throughout the majority of assessed acres. Invasive species (Canada and musk thistle) were only found in 4 of the 16 survey locations. All surveys locations were determined to be meeting or partially meeting management objectives although several areas were noted to have a downward trend in habitat conditions.

Aspen RHA					
Migration			Summer		
Acres		31	Acres		565
Seral State	Early	0%	Seral State	Early	0%
	Middle	100%		Middle	8%
	Late	0%		Late	67%
	Proper Function	0%		Proper Function	25%
Herbivory	Light	45%	Herbivory	Light	45%
	Moderate	55%		Moderate	41%
	Severe	0%		Severe	14%
Species Diversity	Low	0%	Species Diversity	Low	0%
	Medium	0%		Medium	14%
	High	100%		High	86%
Invasives	None	27%	Invasives	None	89%
	Present	73%		Present	11%
	Mgmt Limiting	0%		Mgmt Limiting	0%
Meet Objectives	Yes	28%	Meet Objectives	Yes	58%
	Partial	72%		Partial	42%
	No	0%		No	0%

Riparian (11 surveys, 169.97 acres)

Riparian RHAs generally indicated that riparian habitats were meeting or partially meeting mule deer habitat needs in the Baggs herd unit. Approximately 23 acres in migration/transitional habitats were not meeting mule deer habitat needs due to excessive herbivory on woody species, horizontal and vertical bank erosion, and lack of recruitment. Herbivory throughout the other areas assessed in the 2020-2024 period were light to moderate. Invasive species including Canada thistle, ox-eye daisy, musk thistle, and cheatgrass were identified in 5 of the 11 riparian surveys. Riparian areas assessed during this time period had both intact native herbaceous communities and mixed native/introduced communities with medium to high species diversity.

Riparian RHA					
Migration			Summer		
Acres		26	Acres		144
Riparian Herbaceous Community	Native	0%	Riparian Herbaceous Community	Native	60%
	Mix	100%		Mix	40%
	Introduced	0%		Introduced	0%
Herbivory	Light	0%	Herbivory	Light	53%
	Moderate	13%		Moderate	47%
	Severe	87%		Severe	0%
Species Diversity	Low	0%	Species Diversity	Low	0%
	Medium	87%		Medium	29%
	High	13%		High	71%
Invasives	None	0%	Invasives	None	52%
	Present	100%		Present	21%
	Mgmt Limiting	0%		Mgmt Limiting	28%
Meet Objectives	Yes	0%	Meet Objectives	Yes	18%
	Partial	13%		Partial	82%
	No	87%		No	0%

Significant Events

Habitat treatments were conducted throughout the herd unit over the past five years by cooperating natural resource agencies and the Department. Carbon County Weed and Pest and the BLM completed over 28,000 acres of aerial herbicide cheatgrass treatments. The Little Snake River Conservation District, BLM, NRCS, and the Department completed 2,517 acres of juniper mastication and 2,939.5 acres of shrub enhancements. During the 2020-2024 review period, approximately 35 miles of hazardous fences were converted to wildlife-friendly fence specifications on the Grizzly Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA). Additionally, 1,102 acres of sagebrush and bitterbrush communities were mowed on the WHMA in order to reduce canopy cover, diversify age class, and increase herbaceous understory production. Continued collaborative habitat efforts are planned for the future including wildlife-friendly fence conversions, large-scale cheatgrass treatments, juniper removal, mixed mountain shrub treatments, and aspen enhancements.

Weather

Since 2020, the Baggs herd unit has experienced moderate to severe drought conditions. Precipitation during the key growing months (April – July) has been below the 30 year average in 4 of the 5 years of the objective review period. The majority of precipitation in the Baggs herd unit occurs outside of the primary growing season, generally in the form of snow. During the review period of 2020-2024, winter conditions remained mostly mild with the exception of the winter of 2022-2023. Through fall and early winter, 2022-2023 winter conditions started mild, with no persistent snow accumulations. As winter progressed, conditions became severe and led to one of the worst winters the state has seen in many decades. Most SNOTEL sites at higher elevations within the Baggs mule deer herd unit reported above-average snowpack. Snowpack remained 30-100% above normal through early May. Not only was snowpack above-average at higher elevations

but lower elevation, winter ranges also had well above-average snowpack for much of January through early April, with 2-3 feet of snowpack regularly observed there. Given the extreme winter conditions, movement and foraging conditions were extremely difficult and led to extensive winter mortality.

LaVA

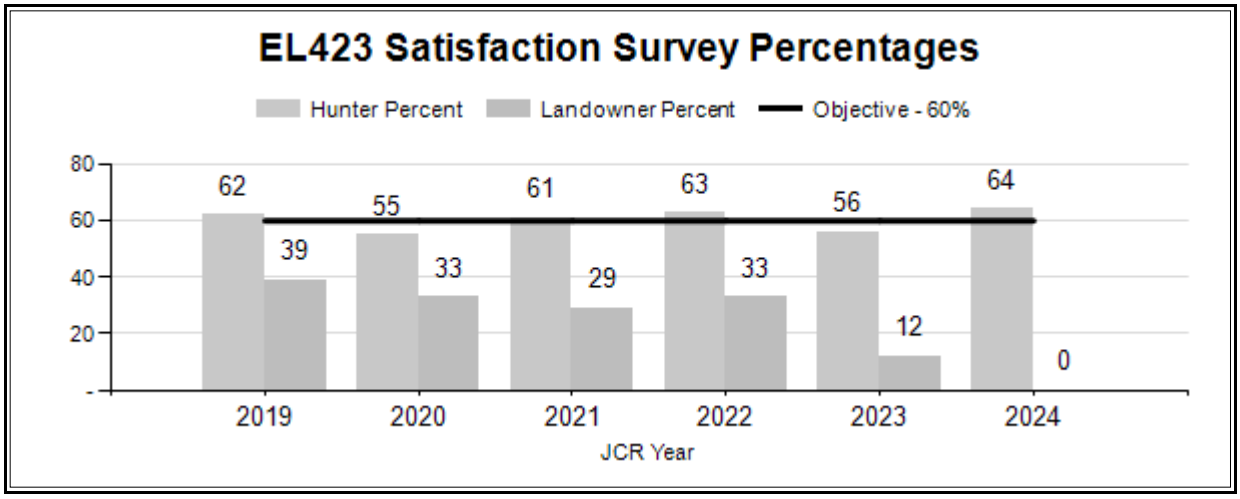
The Department began working with the US Forest Service and other federal, state, and local cooperators on planning the Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVA) project for the Medicine Bow National Forest in 2017. The LaVA Project was developed in response to landscape-level tree mortality caused by the bark beetle epidemic and other forest health issues. LaVA institutes conditional NEPA, creating a more efficient pathway for planning vegetation treatments intended to reestablish a more natural, healthy forest landscape. The Final Record of Decision (ROD) was released on August 13, 2020, allowing up to 288,000 acres to be treated over the next 15 years. The Department has remained engaged in the LaVA project and continues to propose projects across the LaVA project area, with a focus on increasing age class diversity, improving herbaceous understory conditions, and increasing forage quality and quantity.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk
PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025
HERD: EL423 - UINTA
HUNT AREAS: 106-107
PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	60%	64%	60%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	30%	0%	60%
Harvest:	630	904	1,500
Hunters:	1,641	1,776	3,000
Hunter Success:	38%	51%	50 %
Active Licenses:	1,759	1,965	3,500
Active License Success:	36%	46%	43 %
Recreation Days:	12,010	15,938	20,000
Days Per Animal:	19.1	17.6	13.3
Males per 100 Females:	0	20	
Juveniles per 100 Females	0	52	

Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	9



2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL423 - UINTA

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2020	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2021	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2023	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2024	0	204	101	305	12%	1,543	58%	796	30%	2,644	0	13	7	20	± 0	52	± 0	43

2025 Hunting Seasons
Uinta Herd Unit (EL423)

Hunt Area	Hunt Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
106	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
106	Gen			Nov. 1	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
106	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Nov. 15	Jan. 31	50	Any elk valid west of the Black's Fork River or north of Wyoming Highway 410; also valid in Area 105 west of the Bear River
106	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 31	150	Antlerless elk
106	4			Jan. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk valid on private land or west of the Black's Fork River or north of Wyoming Highway 410
106	7			Aug. 15	Jan. 31	700	Cow or calf valid on private land or west of the Black's Fork River or north of Wyoming Highway 410,
107	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
107	Gen			Nov. 1	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
107	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 31	200	Antlerless elk
107	4			Jan. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk valid off national forest within the Henry's Fork River drainage
107	7			Aug. 15	Aug. 31	50	Cow or calf valid in Sweetwater County
107	7	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Dec. 15	Jan. 31		Cow or calf valid off national forest within the Henry's Fork River drainage

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 64.0% Satisfied, 23.7% Neutral, 12.3% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:
In the tenth year of a satisfaction based objective, we are again not meeting the landowner satisfaction objective. We are meeting the hunter satisfaction goal with 64% hunter satisfaction. Hunter satisfaction is highly correlated to hunter harvest success, which correlates to weather conditions affecting migration and elk vulnerability in the fall. In 2024, 86% of the bull harvest was branch-antlered bulls. Even though landowner satisfaction has been well below objective, the 2024 landowner survey shows 61% of landowners are either satisfied with the current season

structure or would like us to be more conservative. However, for 2024 the landowner satisfaction was at an all-time low with all returned landowner surveys indicating they were unsatisfied with elk numbers. This has prompted us to make significant changes to antlerless elk harvest in 2025 and provide tools for landowners to get much more cow elk harvest if they are willing to do so. We also saw a much greater number of elk wintering in Hunt Area 106 which is why we are being much more aggressive with elk harvest in this Hunt Area.

The primary reason that this herd is not meeting objective is that Hunt Area 106 has a large portion of the area that is private land and is closed to public hunting and outfitted. Private landowners control access to most of the elk in the Hunt Area. This has created sanctuaries for elk to evade harvest during hunts. Due to this, the population has grown substantially in this part of the population in the last 10+ years. In the future we would like to see more cow harvest and more private land open to cow elk hunting in Area 106 to keep this population in check. We have significant changes for 2025 to try to increase antlerless harvest.

Hunters would like to see more elk in accessible public land areas in HA 106 and 107, so late antlerless hunts are designed to put less pressure on these areas. For 2025 we will attempt to increase harvest with more liberal hunt timing and license allocation outside of those areas. Hopefully this will maximize elk harvest and target elk causing damage problems and landowner complaints. The August 15 – 31 portion of the area 106 and 107 type 7 hunts is to address specific damage issues on private lands.

The HA 107 antlerless licenses are used to maintain pressure on elk on the Wyoming side of the state boundary during a hunt on the Utah side. Damage complaints on the HA 107 side of the herd unit are typically less even during severe winters. We will increase general cow hunting opportunity but maintain license quotas in Area 107 for 2025 to address those complaints and keep the population under control.

The Area 106 Type 1 hunt had 74% hunter success in 2024. Hunter success is influenced yearly by winter severity. The hunt is in addition to general season hunts in September, October and November so significant elk hunting opportunity is currently offered. This hunt is in place to help deal with late damage where Utah elk are migrating into Wyoming and damaging stored hay. The area is mostly private land and hunters have very limited places to hunt.

Management Objective Review:
This herd is slated for objective review in 2025. The Department will develop recommendations for a revised objective in June/July of 2025 in conjunction with a public review process. This proposed change is scheduled to be presented to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission at the September 2025 meeting.

Chronic Wasting Disease and Brucellosis Monitoring and Management:
To date, no meaningful CWD prevalence data is available within this herd unit, no positives have been found and no CWD management actions have occurred. This herd has not been prioritized for CWD surveillance. Brucellosis has not been present in elk in this herd. However, measures to reduce elk/cattle interaction are still taken and will continue. The 2024 seropositive brucellosis prevalence was 0%, with a sample size of 30 testable samples.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the Uinta Elk Herd, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2020	**0% (n=0)**	0%
2021	**0% (n=8)**	1%
2022	**0% (n=8)**	1%
2023	**0% (n=4)**	1%
2024	**0% (n=2)**	0%
2020-2024	**0% (n=22)**	1%

Aerial Surveys:
Elk aerial surveys in the Uinta Herd have historically been scheduled and flown in conjunction with Utah North Slope elk surveys. These are conducted by the state of Utah and Wyoming has partnered on several of these surveys. Timing and intensity has been variable and dependent on budgets and weather conditions. During these surveys there has been variable coverage in Wyoming and there had never been a comprehensive survey of elk wintering habitat in Wyoming. In preparation for the objective review and change to a population based objective in 2025 we conducted an extensive aerial survey for elk. Surveys were flown the first week of January 2025. We flew all habitat considered to be of reasonable chance to contain wintering elk with the conditions present. We coordinated survey timing with Utah and they flew their side of the border in Utah on the North Slope, Summit/West Daggett Unit. They did not fly the Chalk Creek Unit due to conditions. There were likely some elk missed in Wyoming due to not flying Chalk Creek elk that can cross the border into Wyoming just south of Evanston. The survey resulted in a raw count of 2,644 elk. On this survey we saw ratios of 13 bulls per 100 cows and 52 calves per 100 cows. This was a very high calf ratio indicating a very productive herd. The bull ratio and bull quality observed was very poor.

Damage Concerns:
This is an interstate herd shared with Utah. There are elk that summer in Wyoming but many elk that summer in the Uinta Mountains in Utah come to Wyoming to winter. Limited public land winter range is an issue for this herd. With winter range in short supply, conflict with agriculture producers can become an issue. Damage complaints occur on bad winters. Summer damage also occurs on crops in limited areas. Significant efforts have been made by field personnel to alleviate these problems. The strategy in this herd unit has been to minimize elk damage problems through harvest and hunting season structure.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

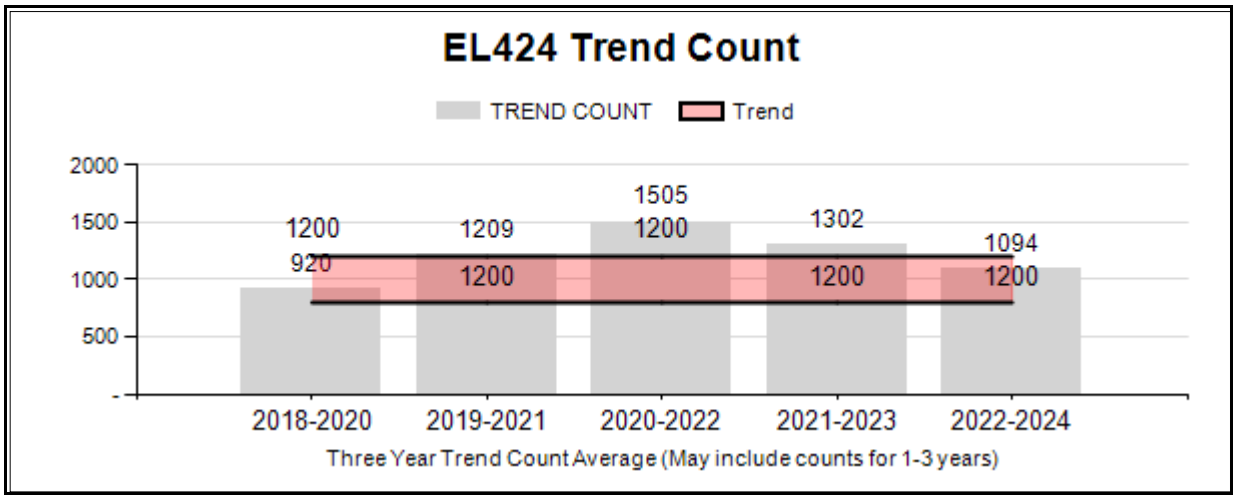
SPECIES: Elk
PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025
HERD: EL424 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS
HUNT AREAS: 30-32
PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Trend Count:	1,232	748	1,000
Harvest:	328	350	300
Hunters:	487	570	450
Hunter Success:	67%	61%	67 %
Active Licenses:	487	570	450
Active License Success	67%	61%	67 %
Recreation Days:	3,788	4,274	3,500
Days Per Animal:	11.5	12.2	11.7
Males per 100 Females:	25	25	
Juveniles per 100 Females	37	43	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	1,000 (800 - 1200)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-25.2%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	1

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Juveniles (< 1 year old):	0%	0%
Total:	0%	0%
Proposed change in post-season population:	0%	0%



2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL424 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	47	64	111	19%	376	63%	112	19%	599	526	12	17	30	± 0	30	± 0	23
2020	0	112	126	238	14%	987	60%	429	26%	1,654	521	11	13	24	± 0	43	± 0	35
2021	0	144	80	224	17%	846	63%	273	20%	1,343	383	17	9	26	± 0	32	± 0	26
2022	0	151	101	252	17%	888	60%	346	23%	1,486	501	17	11	28	± 0	39	± 0	30
2023	0	64	64	128	12%	694	66%	225	21%	1,047	423	9	9	18	± 0	32	± 0	27
2024	0	46	65	111	15%	445	59%	192	26%	748	437	10	15	25	± 0	43	± 0	35

2025 Hunting Seasons
South Rock Springs Elk Herd Unit (EL424)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
30	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	40	Any elk
30	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 6	Nov. 16	100	Antlerless elk
31	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	40	Any elk
31	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 6	Nov. 16	100	Antlerless elk
32	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	40	Any elk
32	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 6	Dec. 31	150	Antlerless elk
32	9			Sep. 1	Sep. 30	25	Antlerless elk, archery only

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 78.6% Satisfied, 13.7% Neutral, 7.5% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:
The 2025 hunting season saw few changes in license numbers across the South Rock Spring elk herd unit, with the only changes made being slight decreases in the Type 1 and Type 4 license numbers in HA31. The change to the number of licenses offered in 2025 was required because of the continued failure of the observed bull to cow ratio to reach the minimum allowed for a special management herd, and due to a continued decline in the apparent number of cow elk present in HA31 after several years of increased cow harvest in that hunt area.

As no dedicated mid-winter trend count flight has been conducted in recent years, the number of elk classified during the December classification flight has been used as a surrogate trend count number for this herd. During that flight in 2024, a total of 748 elk were classified, with 18 of those elk being observed in HA30, 309 elk were documented in HA31, and 421 elk were seen in HA32. This number brings the three trend count average for this herd to 1,094 elk, which is within its objective range of between 800 and 1,200 elk.

Based on hunter submitted tooth samples, the average age of harvested bulls in 2024 was 6.2 years old, which is up slightly from the 5.7 year old average reported for this herd in 2022 and 2023. The observed bull to cow ratio for the South Rock Springs herd from the December classification flights was only 25 bulls per 100 cows. While this is an improvement from the 18 bulls per 100 cows observed in the herd unit in 2023, this was the sixth year in a row that observed bull to cow ratios have been at the minimum of, or below the guidelines for a special management herd of between 30 and 40 bulls per 100 cows.

Along with the continued failure of this herd to meet its bull to cow ratio objective, 2024 saw a noticeable decrease in hunter success for both Type 1, and Type 4 licenses in Hunt Area 31. The overall success rate for Type 1 license holders was only 61% with over 22 days per harvest, and the Type 4 license holders experienced only a 52% success rate on their hunts. Given the open nature of the landscape and abundance of public lands where this elk herd lives, these harvest success rates are significantly below what is typically reported for this herd. Typically harvest

success rates of between 80 and 90% are seen on the Type 1 licenses; and while Type 4 license success tends to be more variable, harvest success rates of between 70 to 85% are usually reported for cow hunters in this area. Along with this reduction in the reported success rates for hunters hunting in HA31, a consistent trend in comments from the public has been that hunters have been having an increasingly difficult time locating elk in this hunt area over the last several years. After several years of increased harvest designed to reduce elk populations in the South Rock Springs herd, indications are that the elk herd has been reduced to the point that the herd is again within its objective range and therefore, both Type 1 and Type 4 licenses were reduced for the Little Mountain area.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the South Rock Springs Elk Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

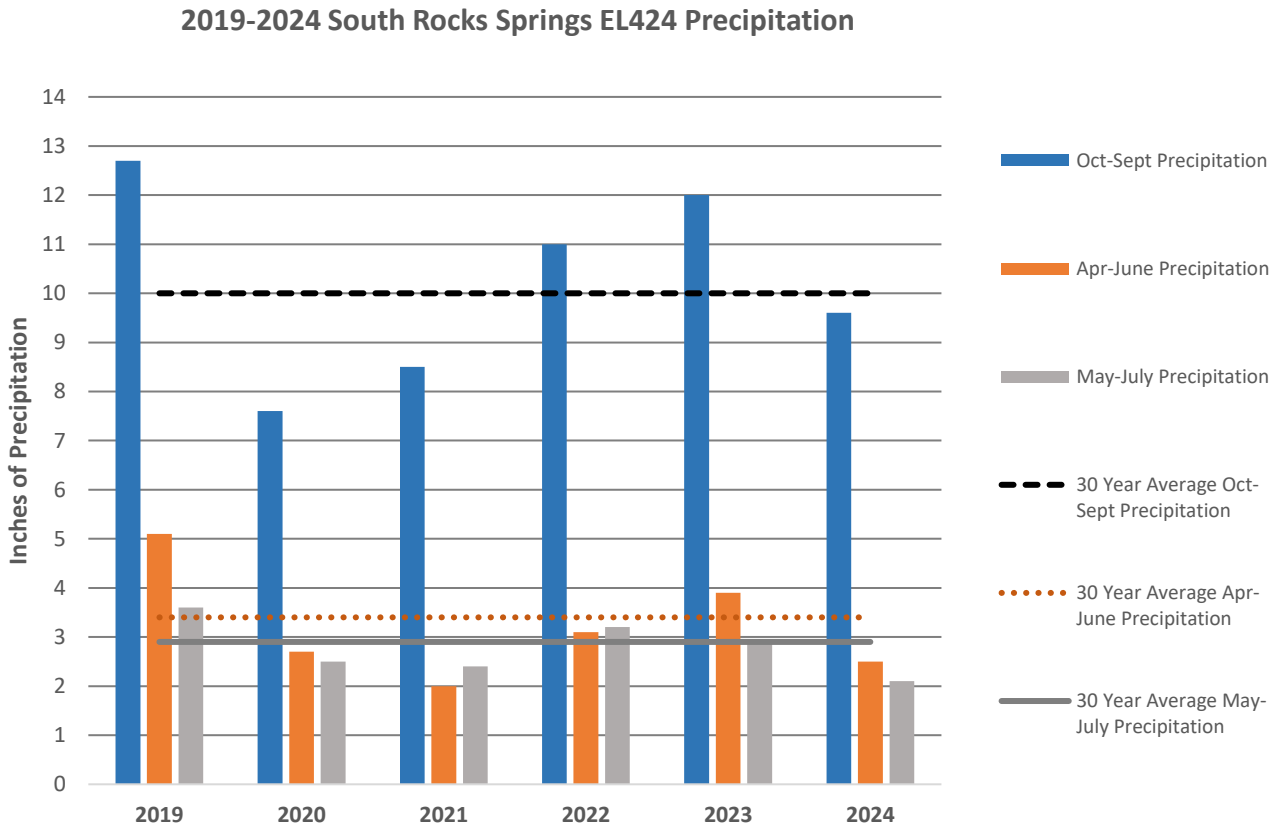
Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management:
The South Rock Springs herd has limited CWD prevalence data available, and no CWD management actions have occurred. Despite limited data, the five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). This herd has not been prioritized for CWD surveillance because of the relatively small size of this herd, obtaining the necessary sample size to accurately determine prevalence would be unlikely.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the South Rock Springs Elk Herd, 2020-2024

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*)	Percent of Harvested Elk Sampled
	All Elk (CI=95%)	
2020	0% (*n*=2)	0.69%
2021	0% (*n*=1)	0.33%
2022	0% (*n*=2)	0.56%
2023	0% (*n*=3)	0.78%
2024	0% (*n*=0)	0.00%
2020-2024	0% (0-36.9% *n*=8)	0.48%

Appendix A. 2024 Habitat Summary

Precipitation:
The Parameter-Elevation Relationships on Independent Slopes Model (PRISM) was utilized to estimate precipitation by calculating a climate-elevation regressions for each Digital Elevation Model grid cell (4km resolution) for the South Rock Springs Elk Herd Unit during the period from October 2023 through September 2024 (water year). Annual precipitation was lower than the 30 year (Oct-Sept) average. Precipitation during the growing season (April-June) was below the 30 year average, and precipitation during the spring-summer period (May-July) was also below the 30 year average.



2.) Winter Severity:
Winter conditions on most winter ranges have been relatively mild and have remained generally open. Shrubs have consistently been available and snow depths have not greatly impacted movement or accessibility. Snow accumulation recorded in Green River, WY and Flaming Gorge, UT during the winter of 2024-2025 was variable for each month between November and February. Snowfall at Flaming Gorge was below the 30 year average during all four winter months. However, snowfall in Green River was above the 30 year average during November and February, but below average in December and January. Average 2024-2025 monthly winter temperatures (November-February) recorded in Green River and Flaming Gorge were colder than the long term average in November and January, but warmer than average during December and February.

3.) Significant Events:
Contracted crews hand cut and piled juniper trees on 695 acres of encroached shrub habitat in the Iron Mountain area during the summer months. These piled trees will be allowed time to adequately dry, and BLM fire crews will then conduct prescribed slash pile burns during winter months to complete the project.

4.) Habitat Monitoring:
Department personnel also conducted monitoring associated with past and future cheatgrass control in the Richard's Mountain burn scar, Gooseberry Creek burn, Red Creek, Currant Creek and Spring Creek areas.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: EL425 - SIERRA MADRE

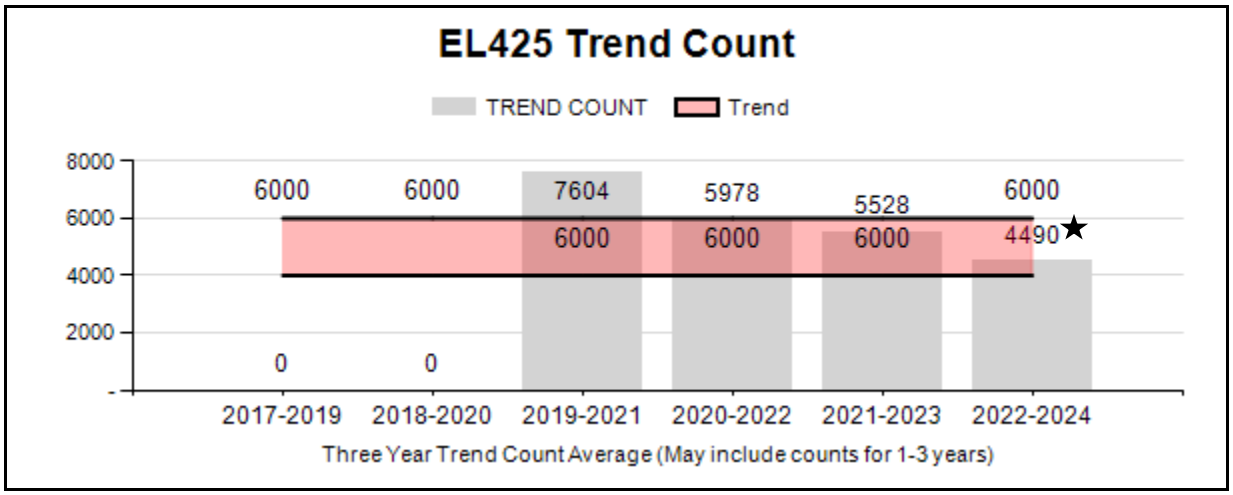
HUNT AREAS: 13, 15, 21, 108, 130

PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Trend Count:	5,528	0*	5,000
Harvest:	2,120	2,213	2,100
Hunters:	5,214	5,231	5,200
Hunter Success:	41%	42%	40%
Active Licenses:	5,514	5,640	5,600
Active License Success	38%	39%	38%
Recreation Days:	39,248	41,629	41,000
Days Per Animal:	18.5	18.8	19.5
Males per 100 Females:	31	33	
Juveniles per 100 Females	33	26	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	5,000 (4000 - 6000)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	0

*The Sierra Madre Elk Herd trend count was not evaluated in 2024 due to budget constraints.



*The Sierra Madre Elk Herd trend count was not evaluated in 2024 due to budget constraints; the 2022-2024 average of 4490 resulted from counts in 2022 and 2023 only.

2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL425 - SIERRA MADRE

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2020	0	22	37	59	17%	193	56%	92	27%	344	0	11	19	31	± 0	48	± 0	37
2021	0	501	513	1,073	24%	2,670	59%	797	18%	4,540	0	19	19	40	± 0	30	± 0	21
2022	0	234	256	490	16%	1,939	61%	730	23%	3,159	0	12	13	25	± 0	38	± 0	30
2023	0	269	419	688	16%	2,707	63%	893	21%	4,288	0	10	15	25	± 0	33	± 0	26
2024	0	60	137	197	21%	603	63%	157	16%	957	0	10	23	33	± 0	26	± 0	20

2025 Hunting Seasons
Sierra Madre Elk Herd Unit (EL425)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
12, 13, 15, 110	7			Aug. 15	Jan. 31	400	Cow or calf valid on private land
13	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
13	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	150	Cow or calf
15	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
15	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	200	Cow or calf
21	Gen-Youth only	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 11	Oct. 12		Any elk; youth only
21	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
21	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Nov. 20	200	Cow or calf
21	7			Aug. 15	Dec. 31	75	Cow or calf valid on private land
108	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 11	Oct. 31	125	Any elk
108	1			Nov. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk
108	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 11	Jan. 31	100	Antlerless elk
108	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 11	Dec. 31	300	Cow or calf
108	6			Jan. 1	Jan. 31		Cow or calf valid west of the Twentymile Road (Carbon County Rd 605 N)
130	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 23		Any elk

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 63% Satisfied, 21% Neutral, 16% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Harvest Data

Participation and harvest in the Sierra Madre Elk Herd hunts increased incrementally in 2024 to pre-2023 levels, with improvements coming from HAs 13, 15, and 21. Hunters seemed to quickly rebound from the potential of fewer available elk due to mortality during winter 2022-23. Non-resident Region S license holders did not seem to be result in higher hunter numbers, as pooled non-resident participation across all license types in this herd's hunting seasons was consistent with previous years. Success on active licenses on average for the herd was higher than last year when season structures and quotas were nearly the same, and a corresponding decrease in the number of days per harvest occurred. Interestingly, a lower proportion of cow elk (higher proportion of bull elk) was harvested in 2024 in all HAs compared to recent years, and this occurred despite the lack of "bull only" opener in HA21. These harvest proportions could

have been due to fewer available cow elk, improved bull ratios, and/or hunter selectivity. Some hunters did experience difficulty finding elk across traditional fall elk ranges, but others reported small groups of elk well distributed across the National Forest. Success in HA108 for Type 1 hunters was consistent with past years. Type 4 and 6 success decreased over 2023, but was still relatively high at 57% and 69%, respectively. This high success on active licenses has been atypical for Type 4s and 6s in recent past, where hunters were opportunistic with available elk. The late onset of winter weather conditions allowed increased access in HA108, but it did not apparently improve harvest much.

Trend Count

The mid-winter trend count objective for Sierra Madre Elk Herd (SMEH) was not assessed during the 2024 biological year due to budget constraints. The last trend count amassed 4,627 elk in January 2024. This flight made the assessment of the three year average objective possible for the first time. The three year average in 2023 was 5,528, which was within the objective range of 4,000 to 6,000 elk. Managers were able to classify about 1,000 elk from the ground in early 2025. While resulting bull and calf ratios fall within normal ranges, they were generally considered biased and not used for decision making.

2025 Hunting Season

Although minor adjustments were made to seasons in 2025, managers proposed no changes to HAs 13, 15, or 21 that would drastically affect harvest. Similar harvest to 2024 was anticipated for 2025. The "youth only" portion of the HA21 general season was moved to October 11-12 in 2025, which matched the "youth only" General mule deer season in HA82. This timing allowed for that opportunity to occur on a weekend when youth are more able to participate, and it also provided for a two day break for elk to redistribute prior to the regular General season opener. This same shift in 2023 helped increase general license success on the October 15 opener and reduced hunter complaints. The Type 6 season close date in HA21 was shifted to November 20 to standardize that date for the future. Finally, managers increased the HA21 Type 7 "private land only" quota to 75 to provide landowners a tool necessary to manage elk on the Little Snake River without having to add a license type or another area limitation.

Although hunter success in HA108 decreased, it was still high, and managers moderately increased each of the three license types in that HA accordingly. Managers continued to have concerns with the extremely limited access in HA108 due to the true checkerboard land ownership, and would be keeping a close eye on success and comments during future seasons. Quota increases in HA108 potentially lead to increased trespass issues for landowners, and as such is not a palatable way to keep success at 60% for those license types. Care must also be taken with increased quotas in HA108 because more hunters may lead to decreased harvest with pressured elk finding refuge on private lands within HA108.

An increase of 50 to a total of 400 was made in 2024 to the Platte Valley-wide private land only Type 7s to help address damage issues. Hunters using these licenses have harvested a handful of elk in HA13 and HA15 in past years, and the license provides landowners a tool necessary to manage elk migrating off the National Forest.

Brucellosis Testing

Blood samples from freshly harvested elk were collected in 2024 for brucellosis testing, mostly from HAs 13 and 15. None of the 26 samples that were collected in 2024 tested positive for brucellosis. Samples were also collected in 2023 from HAs 21 and 108; none of those 78 testable samples were positive for brucellosis either.

Management Objective Review

The current objective and management strategy for the Sierra Madre Elk Herd was approved in 2019, last reviewed in 2024, and is scheduled to be reviewed again in 2029.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Monitoring & Management

The Sierra Madre Elk Herd was last prioritized for CWD sampling in 2021. In 2021, managers for this herd across three administrative regions sampled 264 adult elk for CWD to estimate prevalence, and well over 300 total elk were sampled. Of those 264 adults, only one was positive for CWD for a prevalence estimate of 0.4% and a 95% confidence interval of 0.1%-2.3%. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). To date, no meaningful CWD management actions have occurred in this herd unit. Although, high harvest rates, and thus high turnover in all sex and age classes, inherently has helped maintain low CWD prevalence.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive Hunter Harvested Adult Elk, 95% CI, and Sample Size	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
2020	**4.8% (n=21)**	1.2%
2021	**0.4% (n=264)**	15.0%
2022	**0% (n=36)**	1.9%
2023	**0% (n=24)**	1.4%
2024	**0% (n=46)**	2.7%
2020-2024	**0.5% (0.1-1.8%, n=391)**	4.4%

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: EL426 - STEAMBOAT

HUNT AREAS: 100

PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	1,880	1,140	1,000
Harvest:	640	566	500
Hunters:	825	793	600
Hunter Success:	78%	71%	83 %
Active Licenses:	837	801	600
Active License Success:	76%	71%	83 %
Recreation Days:	3,886	4,675	4,000
Days Per Animal:	6.1	8.3	8
Males per 100 Females	51	55	
Juveniles per 100 Females	34	32	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 1200 (960 - 1440)

Management Strategy: Special

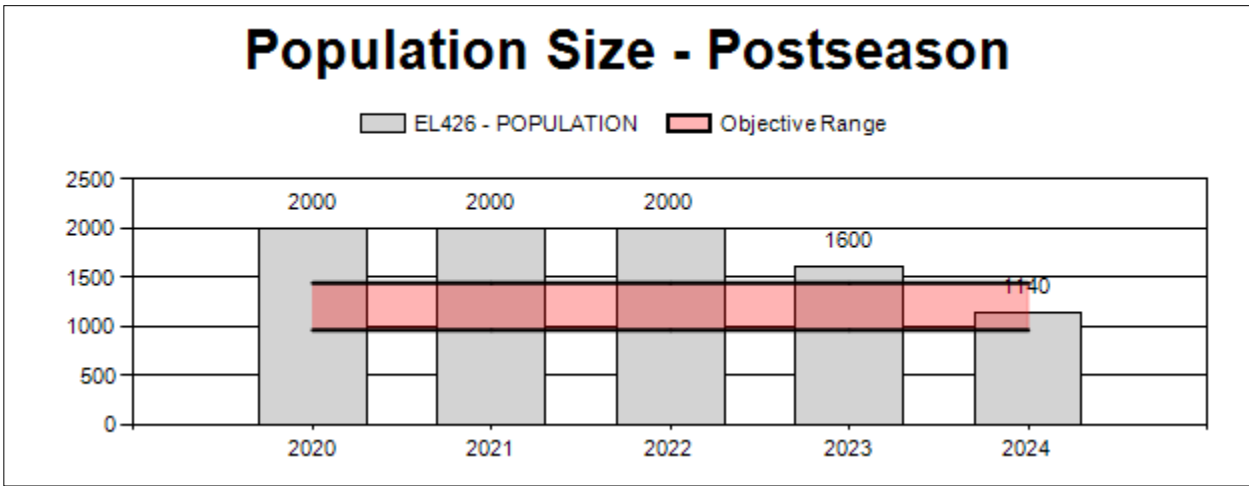
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -5%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 1

Model Date: 02/13/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	30%	30%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	90%	25%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-50%	-50%



2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL426 - STEAMBOAT

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	1,800	183	314	497	30%	949	56%	238	14%	1,684	718	19	33	52	± 1	25	± 1	16
2020	2,000	142	310	452	27%	861	51%	385	23%	1,698	616	16	36	52	± 2	45	± 1	29
2021	2,000	50	153	203	31%	356	54%	106	16%	665	750	14	43	57	± 5	30	± 3	19
2022	2,000	88	258	346	29%	703	58%	156	13%	1,205	590	13	37	49	± 3	22	± 2	15
2023	1,600	55	157	212	22%	498	52%	250	26%	960	519	11	32	43	± 3	50	± 3	35
2024	1,140	89	185	274	29%	502	53%	163	17%	939	557	18	37	55	± 2	32	± 2	21

2025 Hunting Seasons
Steamboat Elk Herd Unit (EL426)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
100	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 6	Oct. 31	200	Any elk
100	2			Sep. 1	Oct. 19	100	Any elk valid within two (2) miles of the Farson-Eden Irrigation Project
100	2	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 20	Nov. 9		Antlered elk four (4) points or less on either antler; any elk valid within two (2) miles of the Farson-Eden Irrigation Project
100	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 13	Nov. 9	100	Antlerless elk
100	5	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 10	Dec. 31	150	Antlerless elk
100	7	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	25	Cow or calf valid east of U.S. Highway 191, south of Sweetwater County Road 17 and Sweetwater County Road 15, and west of Sweetwater County Road 19

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 73.6% Satisfied, 13.3% Neutral, 13.1% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:
After many years of significantly increased harvest in the Steamboat Elk Herd, the 2025 hunting season saw reductions in several of the license types offered across the herd unit. The most significant of those changes were the reductions in the Type 4 and Type 5 licenses, taking the number of those licenses from a total of 425 licenses to 250 licenses. In addition to reducing the number of Type 4 and 5 licenses across the herd unit, the number of Type 7 licenses valid for the southcentral portion of the hunt area were also reduced in number, from 100 to 25; and the Type 6 licenses valid for the southeast portion of HA100 were removed from the license offering. Starting in 2016, license numbers across the herd unit were significantly increased after data from classification flights indicated that this herd was significantly above its objective of 1,200 elk. During that population reduction phase, over 5,100 elk were harvested across the herd unit. After nearly a decade of increased harvest, data from classification flights, along with field observations, comments from hunters and landowners, as well as model estimates indicate that this herd is nearing or has reached its population objective. Over the last couple of years, comments from cow

hunters, both from field contacts made during hunting season and from the harvest survey, increasing indicate that cow elk hunters are having a difficult time even locating cow elk. Along with this, the harvest survey has shown a decrease in harvest success rates for the Type 4, 5, 6, and 7 licenses, with the 2024 success rates being in the mid 60% range for the full price licenses, and only 29% and 52% success for the Type 6 and 7 licenses respectively. While at first glance, those success rates do not seem shockingly low for an elk herd, given the open nature and abundant public land found in the Steamboat herd unit, success statistics for this herd are typically more similar to what you would see in a pronghorn herd with success rates usually running above 80 percent. Because of this, license types targeting the female segment of the population were reduced across the herd unit to transition the management of this herd from population reduction to population maintenance.

During a postseason classification flight conducted in December 2024, a total of 939 elk were classified, this compares with 960 elk classified in 2023 and 1,205 elk in 2021. Of those 939 elk classified in 2024, 502 of those were adult cows, 163 were calves, and 274 of the classified elk were bulls. Of those 274 bulls, 89 were yearlings and 185 of them were two year old or older bulls. The resulting ratios from that flight were 55 bulls per 100 cows, and 32 calves per 100 cows.

Based on hunter submitted tooth samples, the average age of bulls harvested by Type 1 license holders in the Steamboat elk herd in 2024 was 6.6 years old, which is up slightly from last years reported average age of 6.1 years old, but is generally in line with reported average age of harvested bulls over the last several years.

The modeled post-season population estimate for this herd was around 1,200 elk after the 2024 hunting season. Assuming that harvest rates remain consistent with what has been observed in the past, the 2025 season should harvest somewhere near 400 elk. This level of harvest should keep this population near its population objective of 1,200 elk and may even further reduce this elk herd.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the Steamboat Elk Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2024, and will not be reviewed again until 2029.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management:
The Steamboat herd has limited CWD prevalence data available, and no CWD management actions have occurred. Despite limited data, the five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). This herd has not been prioritized for CWD surveillance because of the relatively small size of this herd, obtaining the necessary sample size to accurately determine prevalence would be unlikely.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the Steamboat Elk Herd, 2020-2024

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*)	Percent of Harvested Elk Sampled
	All Elk (CI=95%)	
2020	0% (*n*=12)	1.93%
2021	0% (*n*=27)	3.51%
2022	0% (*n*=11)	1.86%
2023	0% (*n*=14)	2.35%
2024	0% (*n*=17)	3.00%
2020-2024	0% (0-4.5%, *n*=81)	2.58%

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk | PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: EL428 - WEST GREEN RIVER

HUNT AREAS: 102-105 | PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

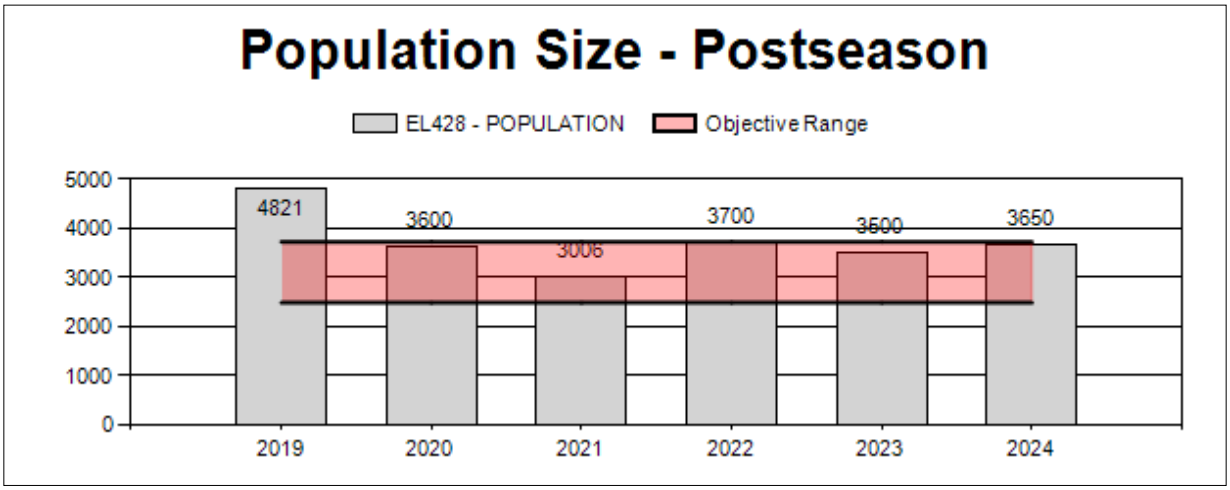
	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	3,725	3,650	3,400
Harvest:	1,368	1,549	1,750
Hunters:	3,639	3,903	4,200
Hunter Success:	38%	40%	42 %
Active Licenses:	3,928	4,469	4,700
Active License Success:	35%	35%	37 %
Recreation Days:	26,123	32,039	35,000
Days Per Animal:	19.1	20.7	20
Males per 100 Females	26	18	
Juveniles per 100 Females	33	39	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 3100 (2480 - 3720)

Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	18%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	0
Model Date:	None

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	25%	30%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	33%	30%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-5%	-5%



2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL428 - WEST GREEN RIVER

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	4,821	434	328	762	16%	2,908	63%	972	21%	4,642	0	15	11	26	± 0	33	± 0	26
2020	3,600	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2021	3,006	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2022	3,700	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2023	3,500	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2024	3,650	97	102	199	12%	1,091	64%	427	25%	1,717	0	9	9	18	± 1	39	± 2	33

2025 Hunting Seasons
West Green River Herd Unit (EL428)

Hunt	Hunt	Archery Dates		Season Dates			
Area	Type	Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes	Quota	Limitations
102	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 24		Any elk
102	Gen			Oct. 25	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
102	6	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 7	300	Cow or calf
102	7	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Dec. 15	Jan. 31	150	Cow or calf
103	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 24		Any elk
103	Gen			Oct. 25	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
103	6			Aug. 15	Aug. 31	250	Cow or calf valid on or within one-half (1/2) mile of irrigated land
103	6	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 7		Cow or calf
103	6			Dec. 15	Jan. 31		Cow or calf
104	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 24		Any elk
104	Gen			Oct. 25	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
104	6	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 7	500	Cow or calf, also valid in Area 105 in Lincoln County
104	7			Aug. 15	Aug. 31	200	Cow or calf valid on or within one-half (1/2 mile of irrigated land
104	7	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Dec. 15	Dec. 31		Cow or calf, also valid in Area 105 in Lincoln County
104	7			Jan. 1	Jan. 31		Cow or calf valid on private land or west of U.S. Highway 30 or east of Rock Creek within the Twin Creek drainage
105	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31		Any elk
105	Gen			Nov. 1	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
105	6	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	50	Cow or calf

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 60.4% Satisfied, 23.7% Neutral, 12.3% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:
For 2025, we will increase antlerless harvest. After flying elk classification surveys in January of 2025 we found high calf ratios indicating higher growth potential. This information prompted us to increase antlerless harvest to hold the population within objective. We have reevaluated harvest strategies and will offer higher quotas and longer seasons in multiple hunts in 2025 to hold the

population at objective. We will reevaluate our harvest plan after we get new aerial survey data in the future.

Elk damage situations exist on irrigated land in Hunt Areas 103 and 104. To address this we have Type 7 licenses valid in August. These licenses are only good on or within 1/2 mile of irrigated lands. Considerable numbers of elk have been wintering close to Highway 30 in Nugget Canyon. Several groups of elk have crossed into Hunt Area 105. There is concern that more elk may get pushed across the highway during late season hunts. When they do cross, they end up in an unintended sanctuary from hunting in Hunt Area 105. To address this we allow segments of 104 type 6 and type 7 seasons to also be valid in the northern portion (within Lincoln County) of Hunt area 105

In Hunt Area 105 we open the either sex general season on October 1st. This allows general hunting during the second half of the rut and provides a long season of 31 days. This season overlaps the general deer hunt allowing combination hunts. This intentionally puts more hunting pressure on elk in the area to address landowner complaints and increasing elk numbers there. We also have a November antlerless elk season on the general hunt and a type 6 hunt with 50 licenses to further address this situation.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the West Green River Elk Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

Chronic Wasting Disease Management:
This herd was last prioritized for CWD sampling in 2020. A good number of samples were collected at that time. Prevalence estimates and sample sizes for the most recent 3 year period are presented below (Table1). It is difficult to get samples from elk in this herd as many harvested elk are quartered or deboned in the field. This results in a low sample size and a wide 95% confidence interval. No positives have been found in this herd.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the West Green River Elk Herd, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2020	0% (n=82)	6%
2021	0% (n=72)	6%
2022	0% (n=36)	2%
2023	0% (n=11)	1%
2024	0% (n=7)	1%
2020-2024	0% (n=208)	3%

Fossil Butte National Monument:
In recent years, the number of elk moving onto Fossil Butte National Monument (FBNM) during the fall has increased, and is estimated to be around 600-800 animals. Radio collar data suggests a significant number of animals move onto the Monument in early September, immediately after the opener of the archery season. As with most lands administered by the National Park Service, FBNM is closed to hunting. As the number of elk on FBNM has increased, it has become increasingly difficult to manage this herd to objective while providing huntable numbers of elk for sportsmen.

Aerial Surveys:
Elk aerial surveys are scheduled to be conducted every three years in the West Green River Elk Herd. Classification data is also collected during these flights. All known occupied elk winter range is flown in Hunt Areas 102, 103 and 104. Some small parts of Area 105 are flown but not all of Area 105 is flown due to the large geographic area and very low elk densities. The survey was most recently flown in January 2020. Total numbers of elk observed were 4,647. The Idaho sightability model was used to estimate a total population for the area flown. That estimate was 4,721 elk with a standard error of 21.12. Good coverage of occupied elk winter habitat was achieved in the survey. This is a very low sightability correction. A low sightability correction factor on these surveys is normal and is due to large groups of elk in high snow cover and open environments. This creates survey conditions where very few elk are missed during helicopter surveys. We have not had the budget available to fly this survey since 2020 and hence we do not have a good population estimate for this herd. We hope to fly this as soon as possible in the future. We did fly a short classification flight in January of 2025 with two fuel tanks flown. On this survey we saw a ratio of 18.24 bulls per 100 cows and 39.14 calves per 100 cows. Sample size was 1,717.

Population Modeling:
The spreadsheet population model no longer functions in this herd unit.
The old model cannot reconcile data on the population estimates, bull:cow ratios and bull harvest. We do not know if this is a data issue or a model issue but it has been the case for over 8 years, and the model is unable to track observed numbers and keep from crashing to negative. There are many elk herd units in Wyoming where spreadsheet models did not function. We rely largely on the aerial survey population estimates for population management in the West Green River herd unit, but unfortunately have not had the budget to fly them as of late. Population estimates are approximate and are based on ground observations from field personnel during winter conditions. We also record elk numbers and locations during Wyoming Range mule deer aerial surveys which gives us a feel for elk numbers and distribution.

Comingling with Livestock and **Brucellosis Monitoring:**
Conflict with agriculture producers can be an issue for this elk herd. Damage complaints occur during bad winters, but are less common during "normal" winters. Unfortunately, four of the past eight winters have been much worse than average in regards to snowfall and temperatures. Elk comingling with livestock during winter is uncommon, and only in limited areas, but is an issue we take very seriously. Past problems have typically been dealt with successfully if the Department was notified. The herd is in the brucellosis surveillance area. There is extremely low brucellosis prevalence, and the herd has never had a positive brucellosis test in elk near wintering livestock. However, measures to reduce elk/cattle interaction are still taken and will continue. The 2024 seropositive brucellosis prevalence was 0%, with a sample size of 35 testable samples.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

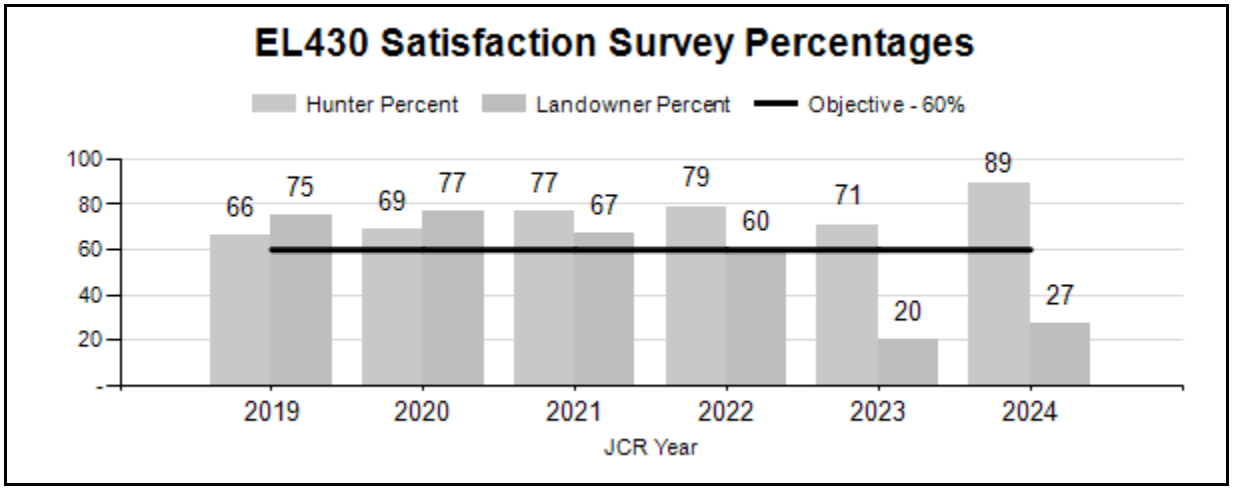
SPECIES: Elk
PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: EL430 - PETITION

HUNT AREAS: 124
PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	73%	89%	90%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	62%	27%	50%
Harvest:	103	162	240
Hunters:	168	198	290
Hunter Success:	61%	82%	83 %
Active Licenses:	168	198	290
Active License Success:	61%	82%	83 %
Recreation Days:	1,219	1,388	2,100
Days Per Animal:	11.8	8.6	8.8
Males per 100 Females:	0	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	0	0	

Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-2%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	2



2025 Hunting Seasons
Petition Elk Herd Unit (EL430)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
124	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Nov. 30	100	Any elk
124	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 25	Nov. 30	150	Antlerless elk
124	4			Dec. 1	Dec. 31		Antlerless elk valid east of Sweetwater County Road 19, and north and east of B.L.M. roads 4409 and 4411, and west of B.L.M. Road 3310 and Sweetwater County Road 23S
124	4			Dec. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk valid south and east of Standard Road/West Hangout Road (B.L.M. Road 3315) within Carbon County
124	6			Oct. 25	Jan. 31	50	Cow or calf valid south and east of Standard Road/West Hangout Road (B.L.M. Road 3315) within Carbon County

2024 Hunter Satisfaction (Obj.=60%): 89% Satisfied, 6% Neutral, 5% Dissatisfied
2024 Landowner Satisfaction (Obj.=60%): 27% At Desired Levels, 55% Above, 18% Below
2024 3-year Average Age of Harvested Bull Elk: 6.8

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
Satisfaction in 2024
Hunter satisfaction in 2024 (89%) was the highest since the adoption of the current satisfaction objective in 2013, was at least 20% higher than most past years, and indicated management objectives were being met from their perspective. This metric was surprising because of above average elk mortality during winter 2022-23, and fewer mature bulls should have been present during the 2024 hunting season. Elk in 2024 may have redistributed to more traditional areas compared to 2023, and bulls may have been recruited through immigration. Concurrent to increased bull elk harvest metrics, harvest success for the Type 4 licenses climbed to 79%, which was about double 2023's success (and several other previous years). This increase in Type 4 success contributed to the increased herd-wide satisfaction, but bull harvest and satisfaction also remained high.

Landowner satisfaction did not meet the objective for the second year in a row, with only 27% of the sample indicating elk were at desired levels. Some landowners indicated a desire for more elk (18%); however, most (55%) indicated there were too many elk in the herd. Landowners desiring fewer elk were located both within irrigated lands of the Little Snake River and in the northern checkerboard. Landowners who indicated there were too few elk were interested in the excellent hunting opportunity and felt more cow elk distributed across the area would help with maintaining presence of mature bulls. They also indicated the bull license numbers were too high and should be reduced to improve quality.

Average Age of Harvested Bull Elk

Absolute averages for age of harvested bull elk continued to be problematic; however, relative ages over time were still assessed for season setting. Low sample sizes were observed, but biased sample sizes were the main concern. With only 2 of 30 landowner license holders participating in tooth submission (versus 20 of 41 for all others), the 2024 average was likely biased low, as landowners have typically only harvested older age class bulls. Nevertheless, the average age of bulls harvested in this herd for 2024 was 6.5 (range 2.5-10.5) from 22 samples. The current 3-year average was also still excellent at 6.8. These ages indicated phenomenal existing opportunity to harvest mature bulls in Petition, particularly since the herd is managed under recreational objectives.

Auxiliary Hunting Seasons

Due to the elk use along the Little Snake River, one authorization for auxiliary elk harvest in this herd unit under the Chapter 34 Regulation occurred during this hunting season. In total, a minimum of 32 elk (31 cows and 1 calf) were harvested under this authorization. This total was in addition to totals reported in the harvest survey, and in particular the estimated 14 cow elk harvested on the Type 6 license that overlapped much of the same area. Details are as follows:

- Limited to private lands south of the Poison Buttes Road (Carbon County Road 700) within Carbon County
- 10 participating landowners
- Season Dates: August 15, 2024 through January 31, 2025
- 103 Auxiliary licenses issued out of 150 authorized
- Minimum harvest = 32 elk (31 cows and 1 calf)
- Estimated harvest = 34 elk (33 cows and 1 calf, accounting for the 4 hunters who were unable to be contacted)

2025 Hunting Season

Due to consistency of the high quality of bulls as evidenced by the tooth age data and due to high success and satisfaction, managers increased Type 1 licenses by 30 to a total of 100, a 43% increase. Due to the size of and relatively low elk density across the herd unit, changes in numbers, distribution, and age and sex ratios of elk were not estimable. However, assuming modest bull and calf ratios, this license allocation should sustain high average ages of harvested bulls. Using the same ratios, managers increased Type 4 licenses from 100 to 150, a 50% increase. Mangers also increased the Type 6 quota from 25 to 50, while expanding the valid area to include the Flat Tops to the north of the Little Snake River. This increase and expansion was to continue to address landowner concerns and to reduce the number of elk co-inhabiting crucial

winter ranges with mule deer. Finally, this same area was made valid in December and January for hunters with unfilled Type 4 licenses.

Feral horse HMAs across the unit continued to be significantly above AML. Horse numbers outside of HMAs were high as well. Feral horses continued to be observed immediately adjacent to Highway 789, with a couple having attempted to cross recently. These feral horses affected elk distribution and populations through exclusion from water and other resources and habitat degradation, and effectively reduced the carrying capacity of all wildlife across this area.

Management Objective Review

The current objective and management strategy for the Petition Elk Herd was adopted in 2013. Since this herd is currently being managed with an existing satisfaction objective, the Department will develop recommendations for a revised numeric objective in May of 2025 in conjunction with a public review process. This proposed change will be presented to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission at an upcoming meeting. A population estimation method using aerial imagery collected by fixed-wing aircraft in February 2025 will be used to inform the development of the new objective. Also, elk counts using infrared cameras from a fixed-wing aircraft were conducted in conjunction with BLM feral horse counts and will be used to help corroborate the aerial imagery method.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Monitoring and Management

The Petition Herd has limited CWD prevalence data available due to extremely low harvest, and no CWD management actions have occurred. Nineteen samples have been collected from 2019-2024, and CWD was not detected during that time.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose
PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MO415 - UINTA

HUNT AREAS: 27, 35, 44, 901-902
PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:		N/A	N/A
Harvest:	19	19	19
Hunters:	20	19	20
Hunter Success:	95%	100%	95 %
Active Licenses:	20	19	20
Active License Success:	95%	100%	95 %
Recreation Days:	216	238	225
Days Per Animal:	11.4	12.5	11.8

Limited Opportunity Objective:

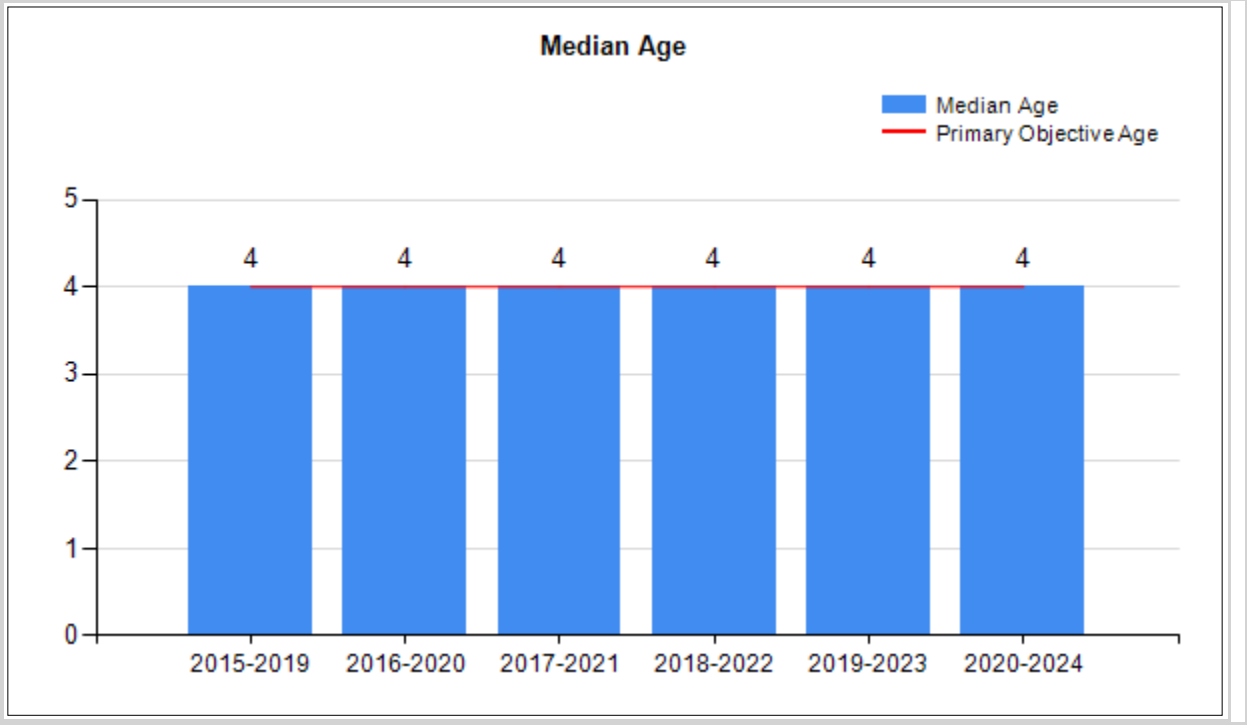
5-year median age of > 4 years for harvested moose

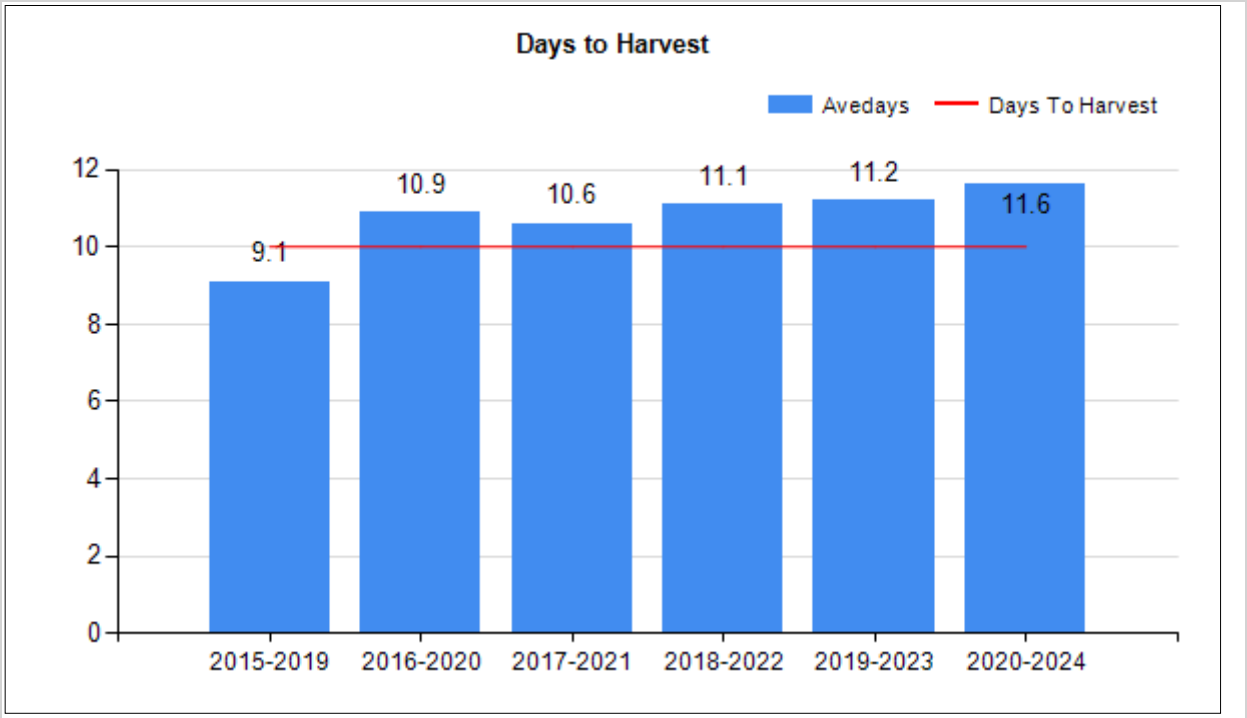
5-year average of <= 10 days/animal to harvest

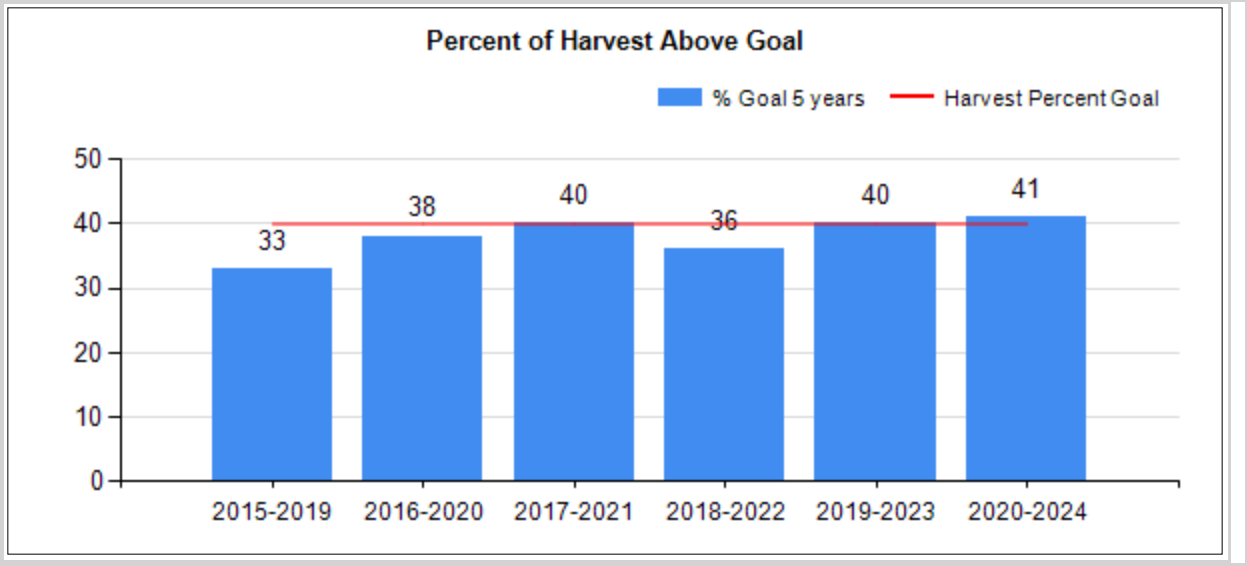
Secondary Objective:

5-year average of 40% of harvested moose are > 5 years of age

Management Strategy: Special




Days to Harvest
Avedays
Days To Harvest
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
9.1
10.9
10.6
11.1
11.2
11.6
2015-2019
2016-2020
2017-2021
2018-2022
2019-2023
2020-2024


Percent of Harvest Above Goal
% Goal 5 years
Harvest Percent Goal
50
40
30
20
10
0
33
38
40
36
40
41
2015-2019
2016-2020
2017-2021
2018-2022
2019-2023
2020-2024

2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Moose Herd MO415 - UINTA

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	0	5	5	24%	12	57%	4	19%	21	0	0	42	42	± 0	33	± 0	24
2020	0	1	3	4	40%	5	50%	1	10%	10	0	20	60	80	± 0	20	± 0	11
2021	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2023	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2024	0	0	96	96	34%	130	46%	55	20%	281	0	0	74	74	± 0	42	± 0	24

2025 Hunting Seasons
Uinta Moose Herd Unit (MO415)

Hunt Area	Hunt Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
27	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 20	15	Antlered moose (14 residents, 1 nonresident)
35	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 20	5	Antlered moose (5 residents)

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: NA

2025 Management Summary
Hunting Season Evaluation:
The Uinta Moose Herd has a limited opportunity type objective. The objective is based on harvest data and has two parts. The primary objective is to have a median age of Harvest ≥ 4 years and have an average days per harvest of ≤ 10 days. The secondary objective is to have 40% of the male harvest ≥ 5 years of age. For these we use 5 year average timelines for better sample sizes.

Based on recent harvest data, we believe we can offer the same opportunity for hunters as the previous year. We are at objective for the median age of harvest with a most recent 5 year average (2020-2024) at 4 years old. In recent years we have had several retired hunters spending many days hunting and passing up bulls. This has put our average days to harvest data out of objective but does not appear to indicate it is difficult to find moose to harvest. If anything, it appears that the hunt is improving and hunters are getting more selective and spending more time looking for large bulls. We are at objective for the secondary objective criteria of percent of harvested moose that are greater than or equal to five years of age. The most current 5 year average (2019-2023) is 41% percent of harvested moose that are greater than or equal to five years of age. Average age of harvest and antler spread in 2024 were good at 4.5 years and 39 inches.

Hunt Area 44 is hunted in conjunction with Hunt Area 33. The hunt is listed as 33,44 and in the Lincoln Moose Herd document. The hunt is a Type 1 and good for any moose, except cow moose with calf at side. No antlerless harvest is currently allowed in the rest of herd unit. This is an effort to allow maximum growth of the herd. However, hunting is not likely to be a limiting factor for this herd. We do have some landowners experiencing moose damage in Hunt Area 27 and will consider adding a type 4 hunt limited to private irrigated lands in the future if those issues persist.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the Uinta Moose Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2021, and will not be reviewed again until 2026.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose | PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MO417 - LINCOLN

HUNT AREAS: 26, 33, 36, 40 | PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	627	534	600
Harvest:	51	56	55
Hunters:	52	58	58
Hunter Success:	98%	97%	95%
Active Licenses:	52	58	58
Active License Success:	98%	97%	95%
Recreation Days:	358	563	550
Days Per Animal:	7.0	10.1	10
Males per 100 Females	71	84	
Juveniles per 100 Females	35	58	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 1000 (800 - 1200)

Management Strategy: Special

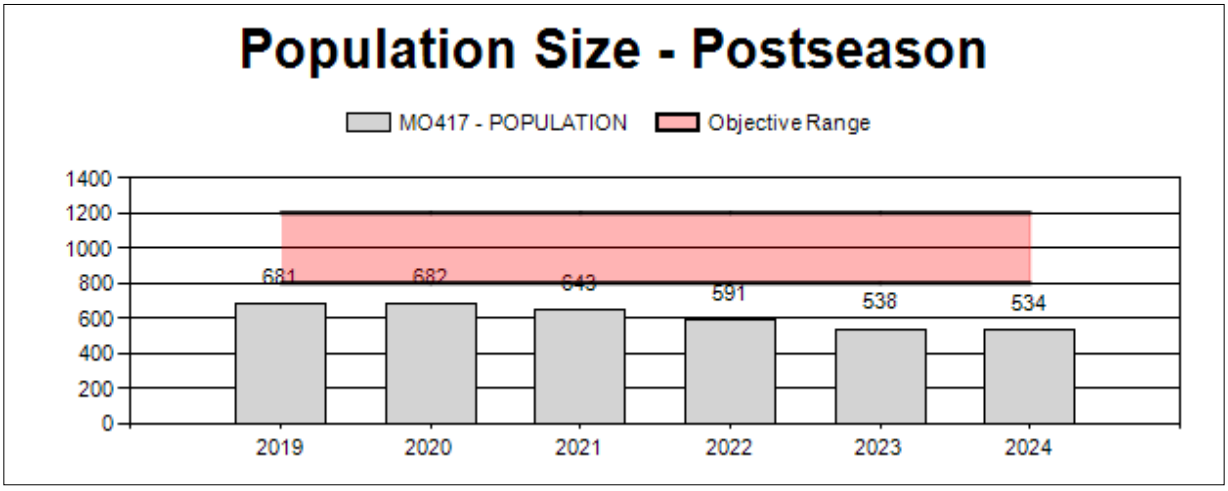
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -46.6%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 20

Model Date: 02/27/2025

Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	2%	2%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	25%	25%
Proposed change in post-season population:	0%	12%



2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR411 - UINTA-CEDAR MOUNTAIN

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	6,852	99	465	564	27%	1,168	56%	358	17%	2,090	0	8	40	48	± 3	31	± 3	21
2020	7,687	80	381	461	29%	786	49%	361	22%	1,608	0	10	48	59	± 5	46	± 4	29
2021	7,576	109	374	483	25%	1,054	54%	422	22%	1,959	0	10	35	46	± 4	40	± 3	27
2022	7,186	124	125	249	27%	407	45%	258	28%	914	0	30	31	61	± 8	63	± 8	39
2023	5,574	119	234	353	24%	806	55%	314	21%	1,473	0	15	29	44	± 4	39	± 4	27
2024	5,831	44	100	144	21%	276	41%	253	38%	673	0	16	36	52	± 8	92	± 12	60

2025 Hunting Seasons
Lincoln Moose Herd Unit (MO417)

Hunt	Hunt	Archery Dates		Season Dates			
Area	Type	Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes	Quota	Limitations
26	1	Aug. 15	Aug. 31				Antlered moose; Valid on private irrigated land within the LaBarge Creek Drainage
26	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	40	Antlered moose valid in entire area; (36 residents, 4 nonresidents)
26	4	Aug. 15	Aug. 31				Antlerless moose, except cow moose with calf at side; valid on private irrigated land within the LaBarge Creek Drainage
26	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	5	Antlerless moose, except cow moose with calf at side; valid on private irrigated land (4 residents, 1 nonresident)
33,44	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	3	Any moose, except cow moose with calf at side; (3 residents)
33	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	2	Antlerless moose, except cow moose with calf at side; (2 residents)
36	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	5	Antlered moose (4 residents, 1 nonresident)
40	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	3	Antlered moose; (3 residents)
40	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	3	Antlerless moose, except cow moose with calf at side; (3 residents)

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: NA

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:
Harvest data is collected on a voluntary check basis for moose. The data collected includes tooth age and antler spread data. As the check is voluntary, data is not complete. Harvest data from 33, 36 and 40 does not provide much information about individual hunt areas given the low sample sizes. Harvest from Area 26 results in a good sample size due to higher license numbers. Total herd unit harvested bull age data suggests an average age of harvest of 4.3 years old for 2024. Average antler spread was 37.75" and percent male harvest ≥ 5 years was 44% for 2024. These

all show increases from 2023 numbers.

Harvest opportunity has been much more limited in this herd unit over the past 15+ years. In the late 2000s we dramatically reduced the number of licenses due to a population crash related to habitat issues and the parasite *Elaeophora schneiderii*. Since then, populations have stabilized and started to grow slowly. Hunts have very good success rates. Hunt Area 26 is considered a quality moose hunt with potential for trophy animals. Area 26 has ample public access and a variety of places to hunt moose. Hunts in areas 33, 36 and 40 are considered good hunts with good success rates but require more time to find moose. This is due to the areas having low numbers of moose spread out over large areas. Public access can be more challenging in these areas but access to moose hunting is available. Those areas are not typically considered trophy areas but mature animals do exist and are harvested occasionally.

In 2022 we added a type 4 hunt in Area 26 to address problem moose on private agricultural lands. In 2024 we added an Aug. 15 to Sept. 30 archery only portion on the type 1 and type 4 hunts in order to deal with specific damage problems occurring in the LaBarge Creek Drainage. We also offer a type 4 hunt in Areas 33 and 40 to address problem moose and overall moose numbers on agricultural lands. Hunt Area 33 has a very limited amount of moose habitat. Moose habitat primarily occurs within cottonwood and willow habitats associated with the Green River, including Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge. Area 33 is hunted in conjunction with Area 44 for the type 1 hunt.

Management Objective Review:
The objective and management strategy for the Southwest Lincoln Moose Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2021, and will not be reviewed again until 2026.

Aerial surveys:
Moose aerial population estimation surveys are intended to be conducted every three years in Hunt Area 26 concurrent with West Green River Elk surveys if budgets allow. Classification data is also collected during these flights. Areas 33, 36 and 40 are not flown due to the large geographic area and very low moose densities. The joint elk and moose population estimate survey was last flown in January 2020. Total numbers of moose seen were 404. The Idaho sightability model was used to estimate a total population for the area flown. That estimate was 547 moose with a standard error of 6.63. Unfortunately, we have not had budget capacity to fly this population estimate survey and it is overdue. We were able to collect good moose classification data during the Wyoming Range mule deer sightability survey in February of 2024. That sample size was 225 animals and showed a good bull:cow ratio of 68:100 and a very good cow:calf ratio of 46:100. We also collected moose classification data with a helicopter post hunting season 2024 in Hunt Area 26. Ratios were higher than 2023 with 84 bulls per 100 cows and 58 calves per 100 cows. Sample size was 138 animals. We will fly another sightability survey when money is available and will have more information at that time.

Modeling:
There is a new Integrated Population Model (IPM) for moose. It appears to function in this herd unit. This is likely due to the past availability of sightability based population estimates. However, since it has been five years since the last sightability survey was conducted we have only moderate confidence in the model at this time. The model is showing a fairly flat population but our field observations, aerial observations and hunter comments indicate the population is doing well and growing.