

Rangewide Status of Black-tailed and Mule Deer February 2011

Alberta

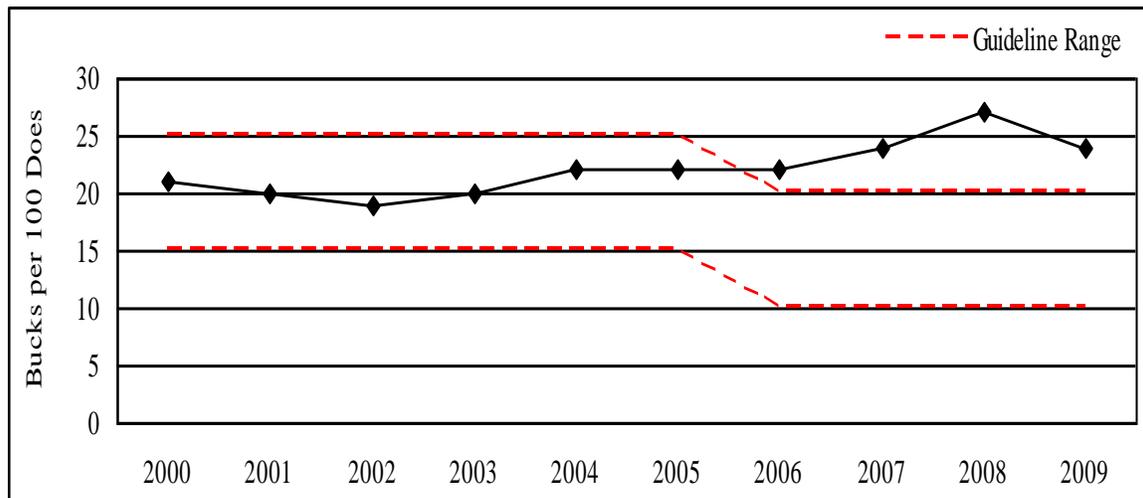
Overall, mule deer numbers have been increasing across the province, with many areas overgoal, with resulting depredation issues. Harvest has been pretty liberal on antlerless MD. This past spring was hard, with late snows and freezing rain. Early reports from hunters indicate MD numbers are down somewhat. The overall impact is not known though. I suspect we are at or close to goal now though in many units. In the northern parts of the province, MD populations are relatively stable.

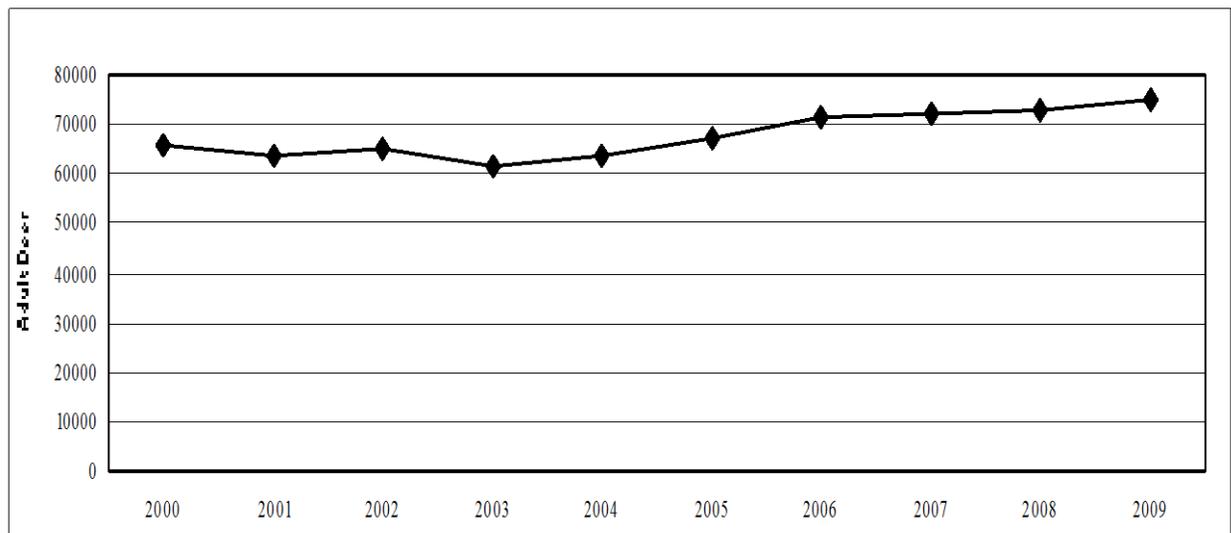
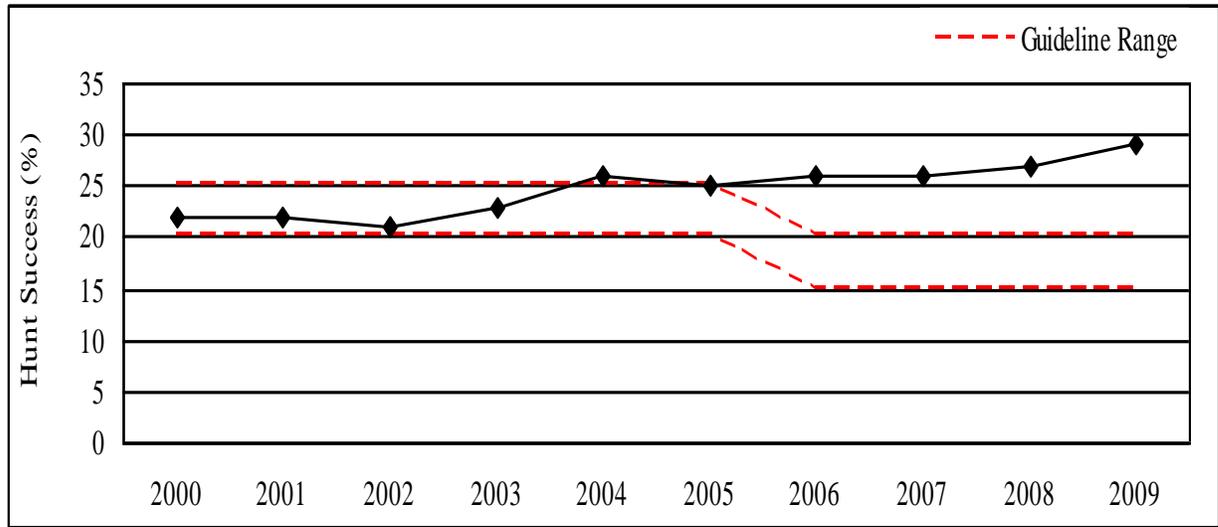
The province still provides approximately 13,500 hunting opportunities for residents for Antlered Mule Deer (over 61,000 resident hunters apply) and approximately 17,500 hunting opportunities for residents for antlerless Mule Deer (over 23,000 resident hunters apply). Many of the antlerless opportunities allow for multiple deer to be harvested (usually 2 but in some cases 3).

-Kim Morton

Arizona

Last year Arizona presented the MDWG with the accompanying graphs that largely indicate that we have seen some increases in buck to doe ratios and possible increases in mule deer populations since 2000. While we do not have any more recent survey data, Arizona's deer populations seem to be on the same trend observed since last year. Arizona may have seen a 10% increase in adult mule deer since 2000.





British Columbia

Mule deer numbers declined in the late 1990's, largely due to winter conditions. Since then, they are considered to be generally stable with the 2008 provincial estimate of 108,000-194,000. Populations on the northern edge of the range vary with winter severity. Mule deer surveys are generally focused to obtain post-hunt buck:doe ratios and overwinter fawn survival.

Black-tailed deer numbers declined during the early to mid-2000's mainly due to increased predation from cougars. Both cougar and wolf population levels stabilized late in the decade resulting in a subsequent general increase in deer numbers in parts of the province. The 2008 provincial estimate for black-tailed deer is 98,500-166,000. Black-tailed deer surveys are conducted to obtain pre-hunt buck:doe ratios and overwinter fawn survival.

Gerry Kuzyk – Jan 20, 2011

California

Based on the following population estimates, the overall trend in California is a gradual decline in the deer population (black-tail and mule deer).

2010 - 455,446
2009 - 484,400
2008 - 487,000
2007 - 440,000
2006 - 422,000
2005 - 635,000 *
2004 - 461,000
2003 - 540,000
2002 - 564,000
2001 - 602,000
2000 - 539,000
1999 - 541,000
1998 - 539,000

* Our model includes harvest, and in CA the weather can have a huge impact on harvest. In 2005 we had early storms that coincided with several opening weekends resulting in a higher than normal kill. We need to use these numbers with caution.

-Mary Sommer

Colorado

Mule deer populations in Colorado have increased since 1998 but the majority of the change has been due to an increase in the number of bucks resulting from reduced harvest rates because of fewer licenses. Recruitment gradually improved between 1998 and 2006 but the severe winter of 2007-2008 had a major impact on some west slope deer herds (where 80% of the deer are) and they still haven't fully recovered. Fawn:doe ratios have remained chronically low in some parts of the western slope, especially in the SW, but have increased considerably in recent years on the eastern slope. Our statewide deer population estimate of 460,000 is 81% of the statewide population objective of 566,000 deer. Loss of winter range to development is forcing us to assess and reduce our population objectives in some herds. It isn't possible to directly compare the current population estimate to the estimate in 1998 because of major changes to our population models.

-Andy Holland

Nevada

Mule deer population estimates in Nevada from 1998 to 2010 show a slight decline. Estimates for 1998 – 2001 were relatively stable at approximately 130,000 deer statewide. After a one year decline of ~20,000 animals in 2002, estimates have remained relatively stable at 106,000 to 110,000 (107,000 in 2010). Hunter success, although down slightly from long-term averages, due to back to back years of poor recruitment, still remains above 40%. Percent 4 point or better in the harvest increased to 46% in 2009, also likely an artifact of poor recruitment in the two years preceding 2009. The

outlook for 2011 is more positive as climatic conditions more favorable to fawn production and recruitment have occurred around much of the Great Basin and fall surveys have substantiated the beneficial conditions.

- Tony Wasley

Utah

Mule deer populations estimates in Utah have been fairly stable with some weather related declines and rebounds since 1998. Our population estimates are as follows:

1998	307,500
1999	316,530
2000	322,320
2001	309,070
2002	281,350
2003	268,180
2004	289,400
2005	296,050
2006	318,450
2007	302,430
2008	273,100
2009	303,000

We have a 2013 objective of 350,000 and a long term objective of 423,000.

-Anis Aoude

New Mexico

New Mexico's mule deer populations continue to show improvement. There are areas where more significant gains have been made yet there are still some that need more improvement. Habitat work is continuing; funded both through our Habitat Stamp Program that funds improvements on BLM and USFS property as well as funds originating from our Enhancement Tags (statewide licenses). These monies are used in selected priority areas. We have identified three focus areas for this work; GMU 2C in NW New Mexico, GMU 18 in central NM and GMU 16 in west-central NM. Other areas are also being considered. Prescriptions include thinning and burning as well as planting and seeding with native browse. Our MD Habitat Guidelines are used as a reference in implementing these prescriptions.

Our Private Land Deer Conservation Incentive Program has expanded over the past 4-5 years to include 35+ ranches. This program works with private landowners to improve the habitat on their property for deer. Again, we try to use the Guidelines as the guiding documents in consulting with the landowners. In return for their work, participating landowners are issued specific sport hunting incentives which they can market with the goal of using generated funds to further pay for their habitat work. Additional funds are sought through Federal Farm Bill Programs. Consultation among agency staff, landowners, NRCS, etc. has resulted in an expansion of the acreage in the program as well as increased variety of prescriptions employed. -Barry Hale

Montana (2010 Information)

From 1998 Montana mule deer populations did improve. Over course of last two years at least population levels have again slipped below long-term averages across much of state. In some areas significant weather events (harsh spring weather) have a proximity to these declines but not so in other locales. Levels in some areas are yet above record lows but may be 30% or more below long term average.

- Quentin Kujala

South Dakota

South Dakota's mule deer population have stayed stable on the prairie with good fawn recruitment and conservative harvest strategies with an estimate of approximately 68,000. The Black Hills mule deer population has continued to decline even with limited buck harvest due to poor fawn recruitment.

--Ted Benzon

North Dakota

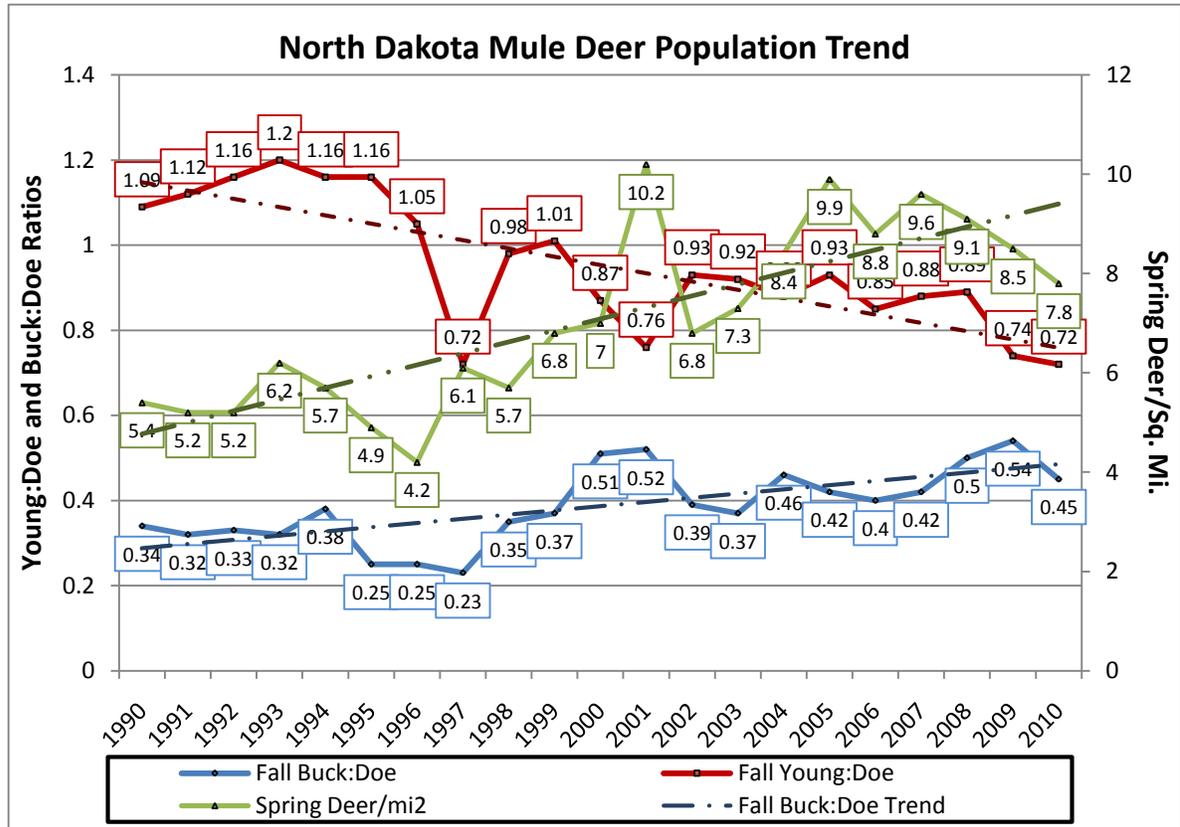
Upward trend for mule deer numbers in the ND badlands from 1998 – 2007 due to a decade of very mild winters. Mule deer numbers have gradually declined each year since 2007 due to back-back severe winters. We are in the middle of our third straight severe winter and expect a dramatic decline in numbers after the winter of 2010/ 2011.

2010 Fall Demographic and production survey

- Aerial surveyed 26 mule deer study areas (332.8mi²) to determine population demographics and production.
- Classified 1,613mule deer.
- Buck:Doe:Fawn ratio was 0.45:1.0:0.72
- 2010 Fawn:Doe ratio significantly less than long-term average (0.94:1.0).
- 2010 Buck:Doe ratio similar to long-term average (0.43:1.0).

2010 Spring population index

- Aerial surveyed 24 mule deer study areas (291.0 mi²).
- Counted 2,272 mule deer.
- Population index: 7.8 mule deer/ mi².
- 2010 population index above long-term average (6.8 mule deer/ mi²).



Nebraska

Nebraska’s mule deer population has increased about 40% since 1998 based on buck harvest data. It is currently at a record high and is likely stable or slightly increasing with a population of approximately 100,000 deer pre-harvest. Antlerless harvest is used to limit population growth in the western half of the state.

Disease and parasites (CWD, meningeal worm, *Bovicola tibalialis*) likely pose the greatest long term threat to populations. CWD infection rates approach 2% in western counties and significant mortality associated with meningeal worm has been documented in several central counties. Habitat conversions to irrigated row crop agriculture over that past 20 years has caused population declines on the eastern margins of our mule deer range that likely exceed 75%, however increasing populations in other counties has mitigated this loss to some extent.

--Bruce Trindle

Saskatchewan (2010 Information)

In the late 1990's mule deer populations were depressed due to combination of liberal license quotas and winter weather conditions. Between 1998 and 2010 there have been localized declines due to winter conditions and CWD management, but generally the mule deer population in Saskatchewan has increased and continues to expand into

portions of their historic range. We continue to use liberal antlerless quotas to stabilize or reduce populations depending on depredation concerns and CWD. Our most recent provincial pre-season population estimate was 59,000 in 2004.

-Adam P. Schmidt

Texas

In the Trans-Pecos, we have been fairly stable. The Panhandle has been on an increasing trend partly because of the population, but also because we are surveying more country and finding more pockets of mule deer. We are also seeing more mule deer moving eastward in the Trans-Pecos to more "white-tailed deer" country.

-Shawn Gray

Wyoming (2010 Information)

In Wyoming, mule deer populations are relatively stable over this time period. In 1998 and 2008, we estimated ~478,000 and ~480,000 mule deer respectively. –Daryl Lutz

Yukon

We do not monitor our modest (probably less than 1000 total) Yukon deer populations effectively, but there is a general sense that they declined as a result of harsh winter conditions in 2008/09. We don't have any real idea by how much. A follow up to this would be that deer seem to be rebounding slowly from the 08/09 winter with recent sightings in agricultural areas of reasonable numbers of twin short yearling fawns (Jan 2011). Still no formal inventory work on mule deer in Yukon.

-Rob Florkiewicz

Oregon (2010 Information)

Deer populations continue to be a major Hot Topic in Oregon. Oregon's estimated Mule deer population has continued to decline, from 260,000 (1998), to 229,000 (2008) - the 2009 estimate was 216,000.

Because of the difficulties with surveying black-tailed deer (BTD) we do not develop population estimates each year. However, in 1998 the BTD population was estimated at 387,000, declining to 320,000 in 2004, the population seems to have been relatively stable since that time. Deer hair loss syndrome was first found in Oregon in the late 1990's and is suspected of being one of the principal factors in the decline (along with changes to forest management and maturing forest habitats, particularly on federal lands). Both mule deer and BTD are substantially below the long term statewide management objectives/benchmarks.

-Tom Thornton

Washington (2010 Information)

Very general population estimates with no confidence intervals can sometimes be more problematic for the manager than they are a help. We still battle some of the collateral damage that came from general guesses made two and three decades ago.

That being said, in Washington state most of our mule deer and black-tailed deer populations have rebounded and are doing quite well. In North-Central (Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas counties) mule deer seem to be at the capacity that the habitat will support and continue to respond positively to habitat improvements. In the Northeast, mule deer numbers are stable but slightly down from the winters of 2007-08 and 2008-09, and fawn survival was excellent for this past winter. The Palouse, Southeast-Blue Mountains, and the Columbia Basin mule deer populations are all stable and doing well. South-central mule deer populations (Yakima and Kittitas counties) are doing poorly with high recent losses attributed to hair loss caused by exotic lice. The mule deer/black-tailed deer gradient along the Columbia River gorge on the state's southern border are doing very well with good fawn numbers through the winter. Black-tailed deer in western Washington are stable and mostly healthy, but have the potential to improve if private and public forests were managed in a more deer-friendly fashion.