



Deer Rule 19.31.13 NMAC

June 25, 2026
New Mexico State Game
Commission Meeting



NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

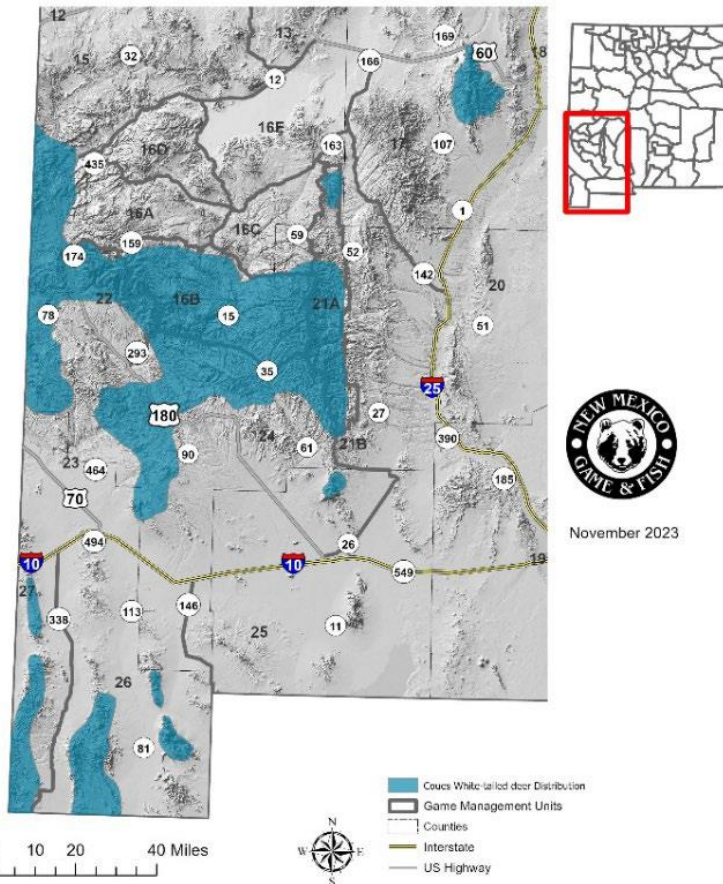


New Mexico Deer Population

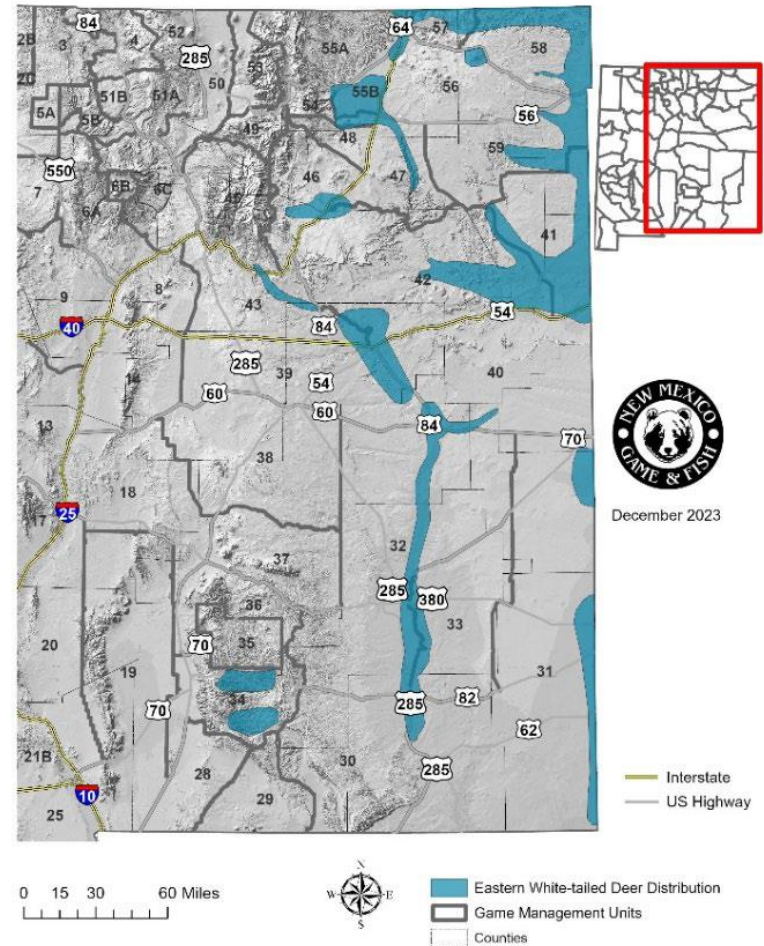
- Statewide population estimate: ~80,000-100,000
- Population growth driven by female and fawn survival
 - NM deer populations impacted by long-term drought
- Buck harvest not limiting to population growth
- 5-Year Statewide Average: 30 bucks:100 does:41 fawns (2020-2024 survey data)
 - >35 fawns:100 does over the long-term required for stable population
 - Buck ratio adequate for recreational opportunities



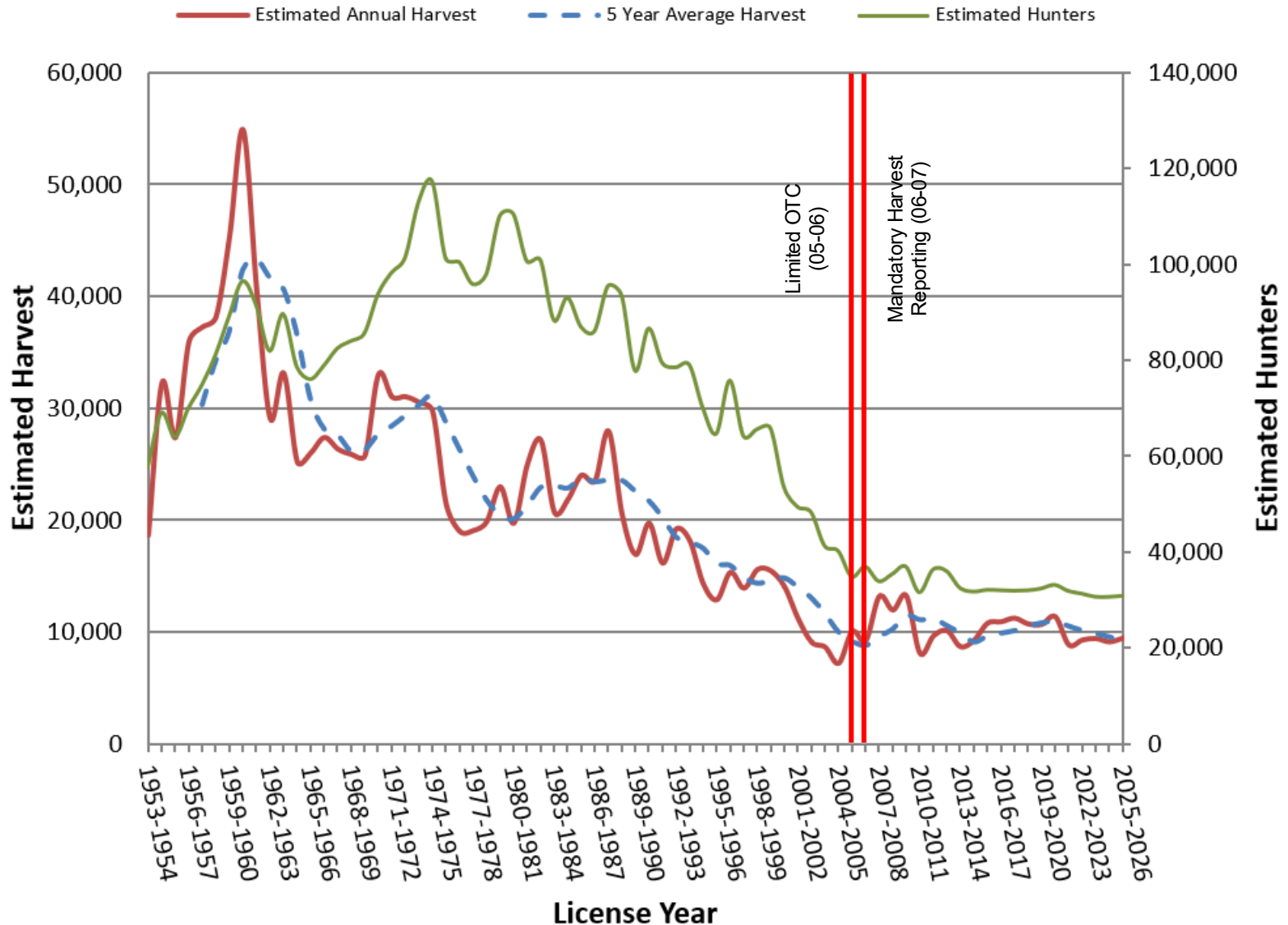
Coues White-tailed Deer Distribution



Eastern White-tailed Deer Distribution



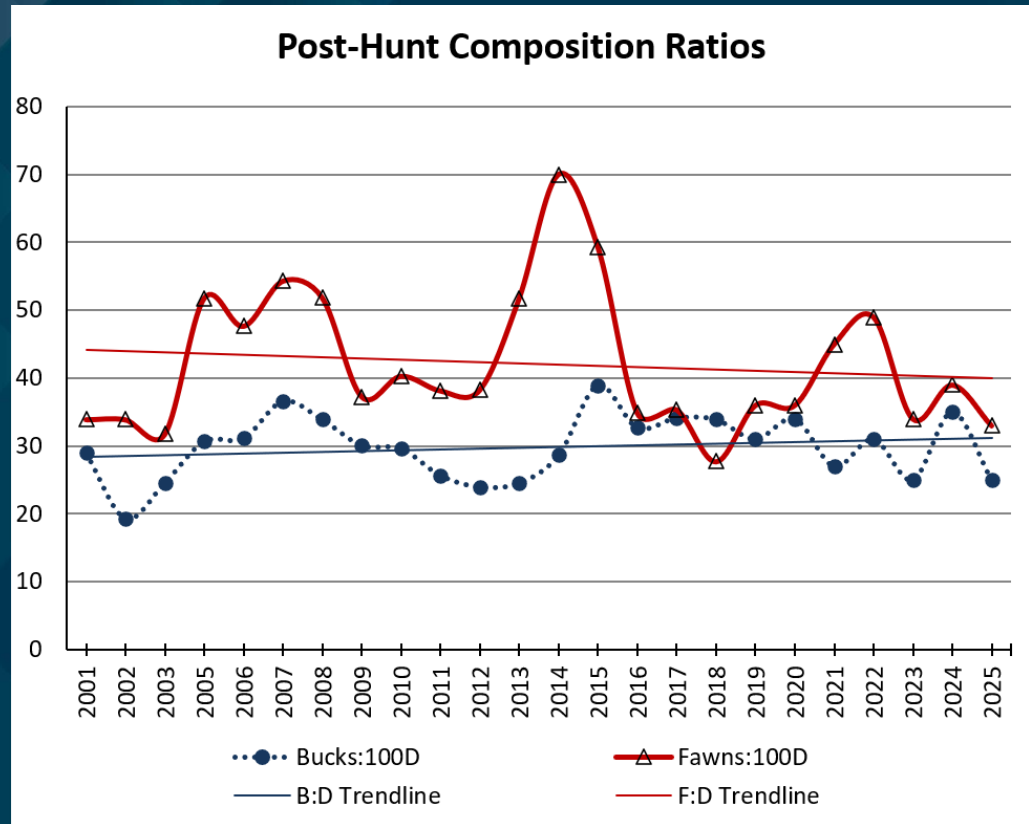
New Mexico Deer Harvest



Statewide Composition Ratios

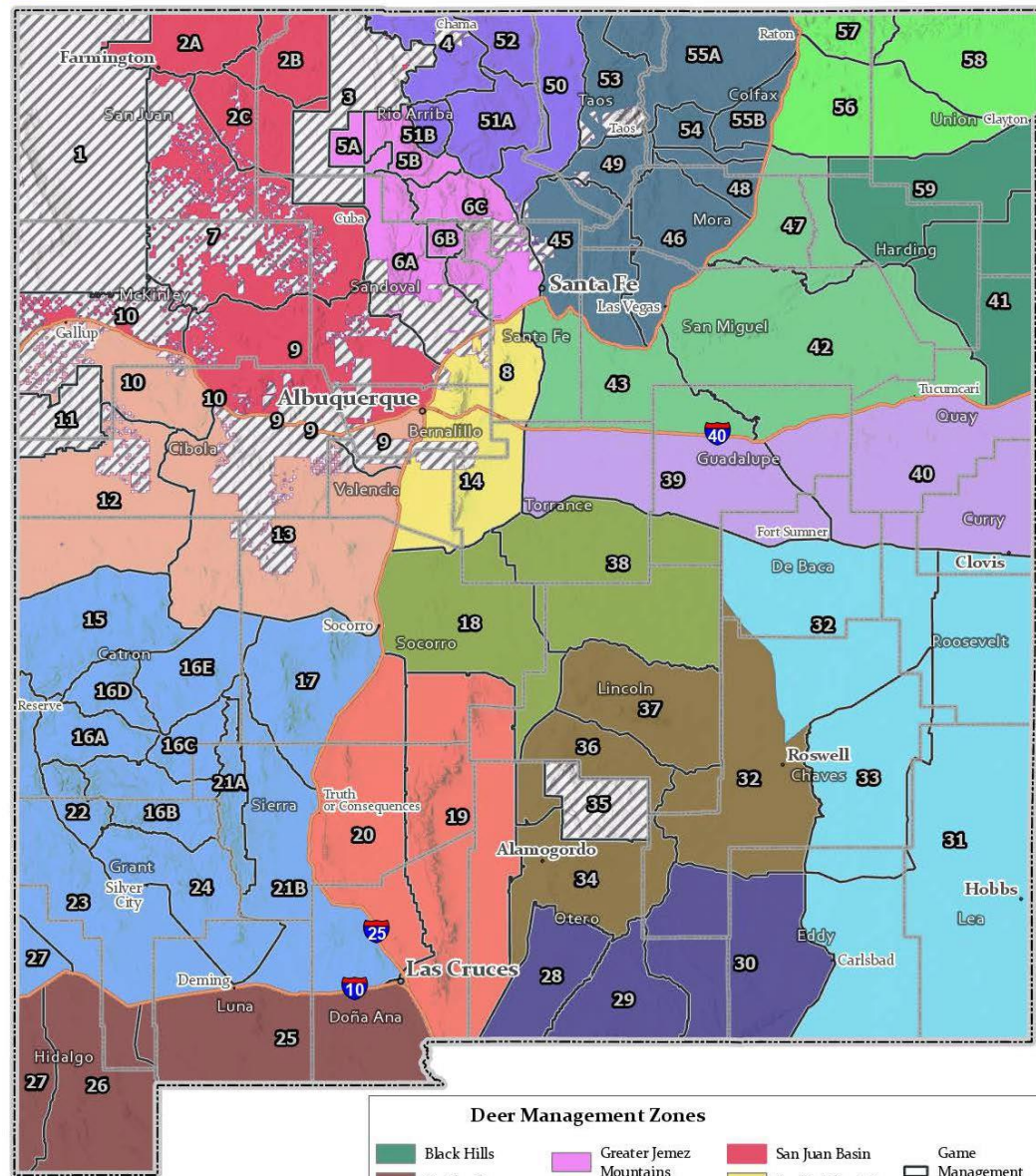
5-Year Statewide Average

- 29 bucks:100 does:40 fawns
 - 2021-2025 survey data





New Mexico Deer Management Zones



0 50 100 Miles
0 50 100 Kilometers
Scale: 1:3,500,000



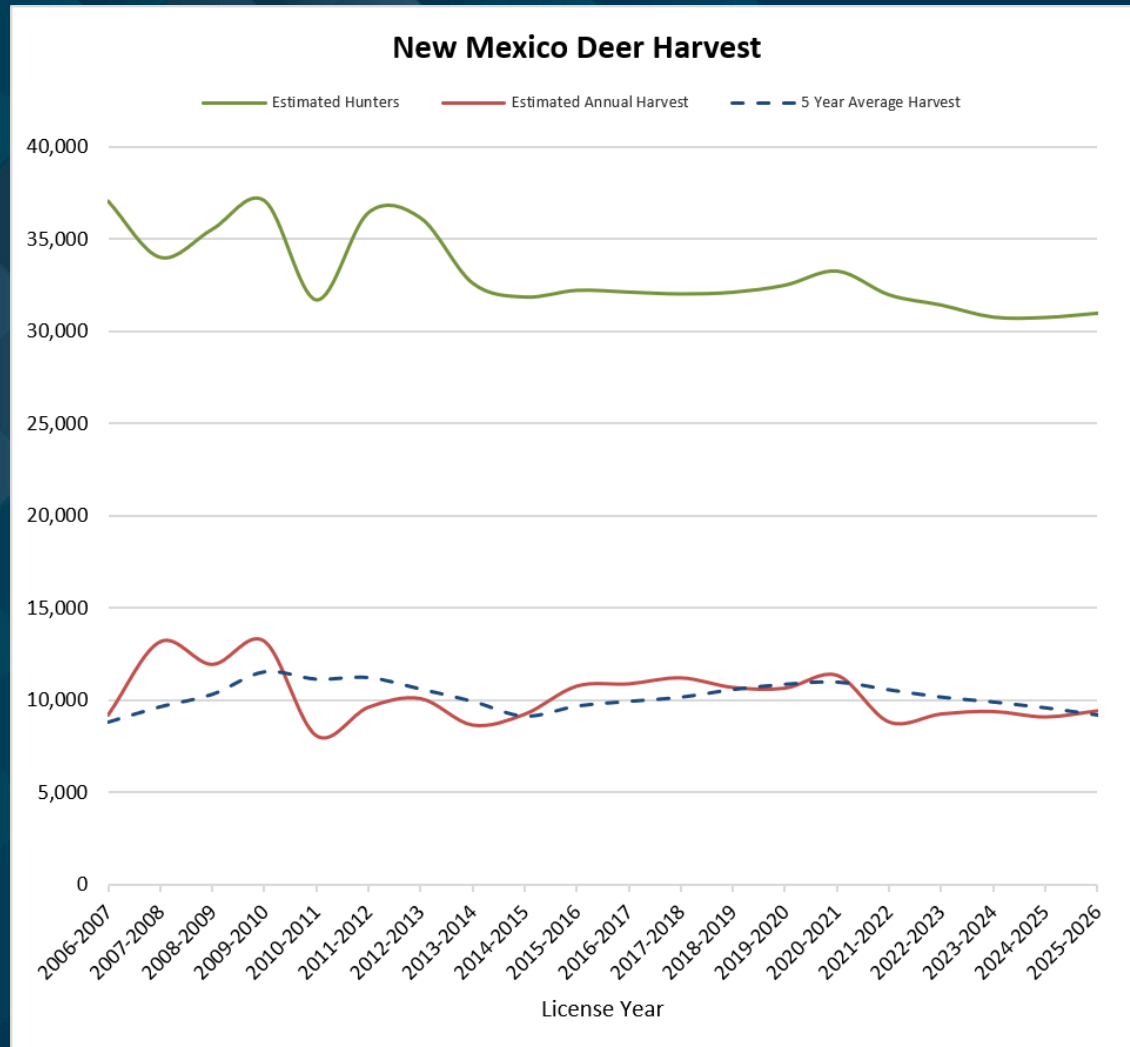
2025-2026 Deer License and Harvest



- 36,101 licenses sold
 - 99% are for bucks
- 87% of hunters reported
- 30% successful in harvesting
- Estimated statewide harvest
 - Bucks = 9,298; Does = 137
- Satisfaction rating = 3.2



Statewide Deer License and Harvest



Ongoing Deer Research

- Mule deer movement in the Pecos Mountains and on Mount Taylor
 - Map seasonal movements and migration
 - Document habitat use
 - Estimate doe survival
- Buck survival and seasonal movements in the northwest
 - Estimate overall survival and percentage of buck harvest
 - Map buck movements
 - Compare buck movement and vital rates to does
 - First captures in March 2026

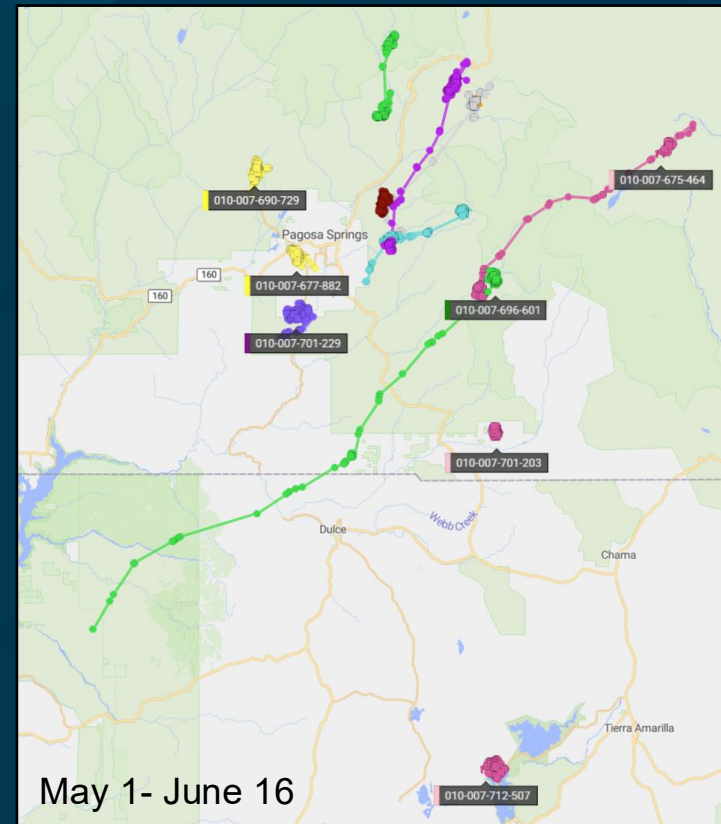
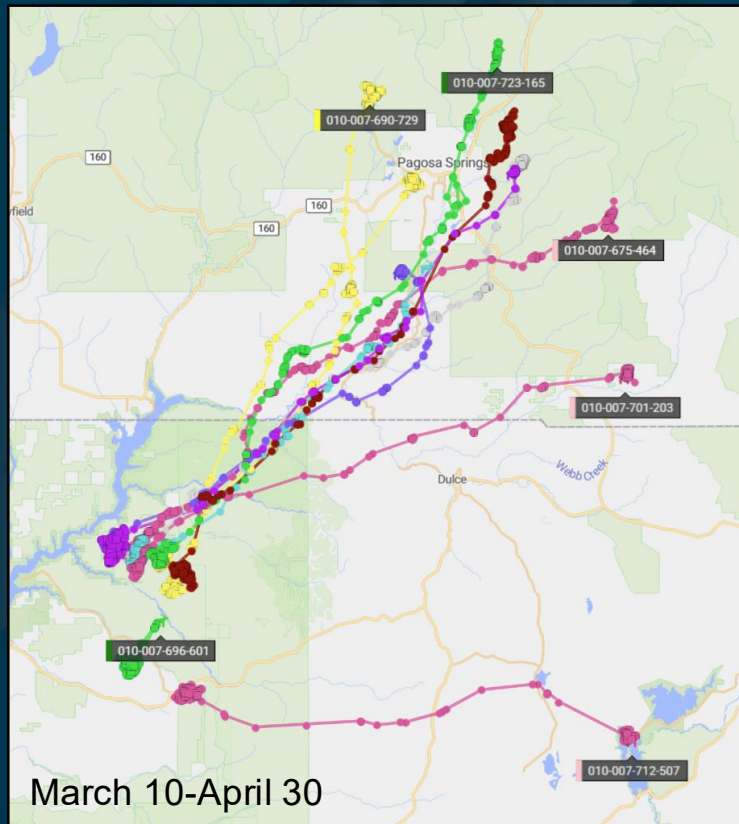


NW Buck Survival and Seasonal Movements

- Captured 15 bucks in March 2026
 - All age classes <1 year to 6.5+ years old
 - 3 died as of 6/16/26
 - 1 mtn lion, 2 unknown
 - All tagged animals migrated out of 2B
- Colorado is expanding the research in their state.
- Goal is to maintain a sample size of 110 tagged bucks in NM and 110 tagged bucks in CO for next 3-4 years



NW Buck Survival and Seasonal Movements



Hunt Types

Quality

- Designated by the Commission
- Designed to provide a combination of:
 - Harvest from a wider selection of bucks
 - A more pleasurable experience based upon timing and length of hunt season
- Lower hunter density
- Increased opportunity for success

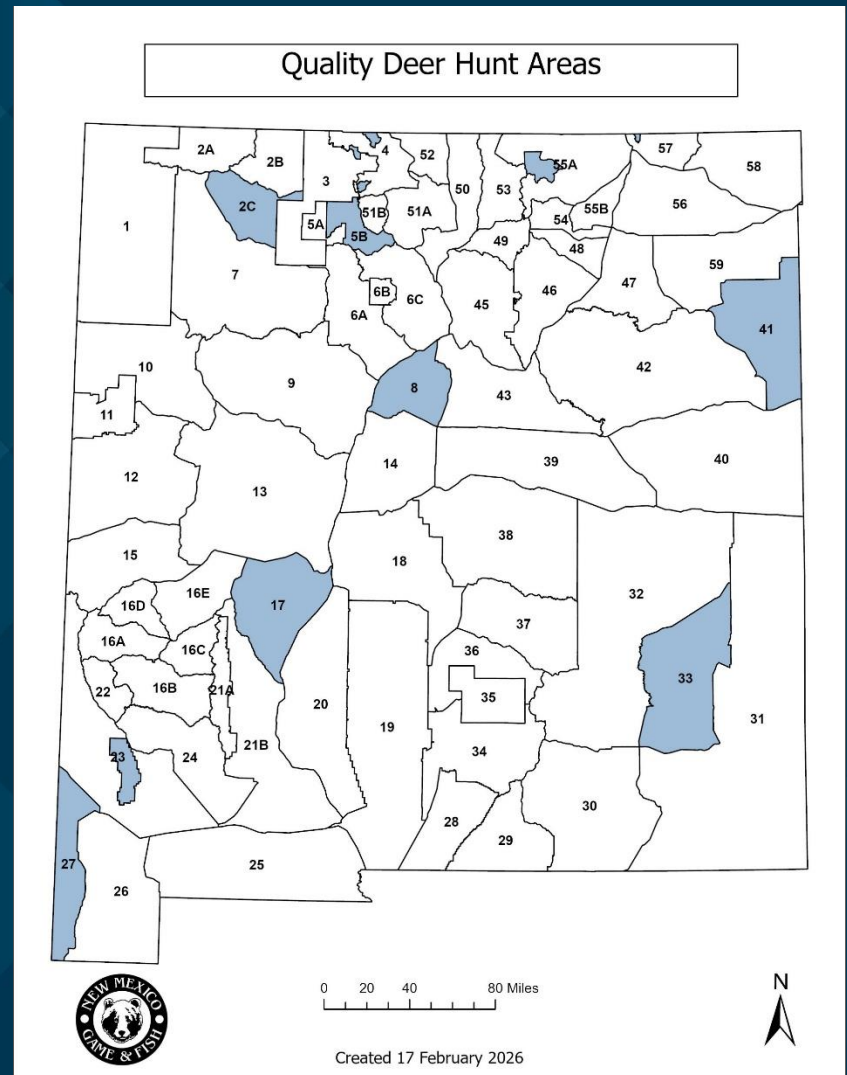
Opportunity (Standard Hunts)

- Designed to provide:
 - Applicants with a higher chance of drawing
 - Opportunity for more hunters
 - Chance of harvesting a deer
- Maximizes annual hunter opportunity without negatively impacting the population



Current Quality Hunts:

- Northwest
 - 2B (Third Rifle; Jan Bow), 2C, 5B, 8, Humphries/Rio Chama/Sargent WMAs
- Southwest
 - 17, Burro Mountains, 27
- Southeast
 - 33
- Northeast
 - 41, 55A (Valle Vidal), 57 (Sugarite Canyon State Park)

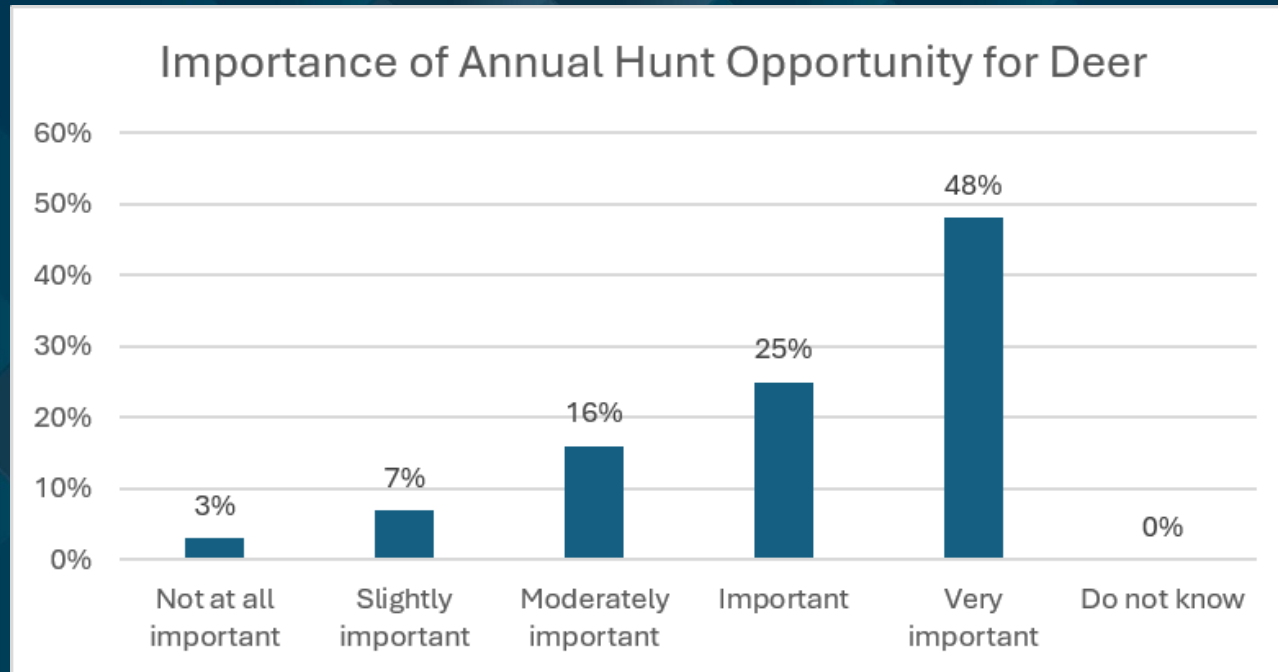


Deer Hunter Attitude Survey

- Sent out in March
- Open for 2 weeks
 - Coincided with application deadline
- 1,213 Respondents
 - 80% are residents
 - 93% are 35+ years of age
 - 93% are public draw hunters
 - 60% are rifle hunters

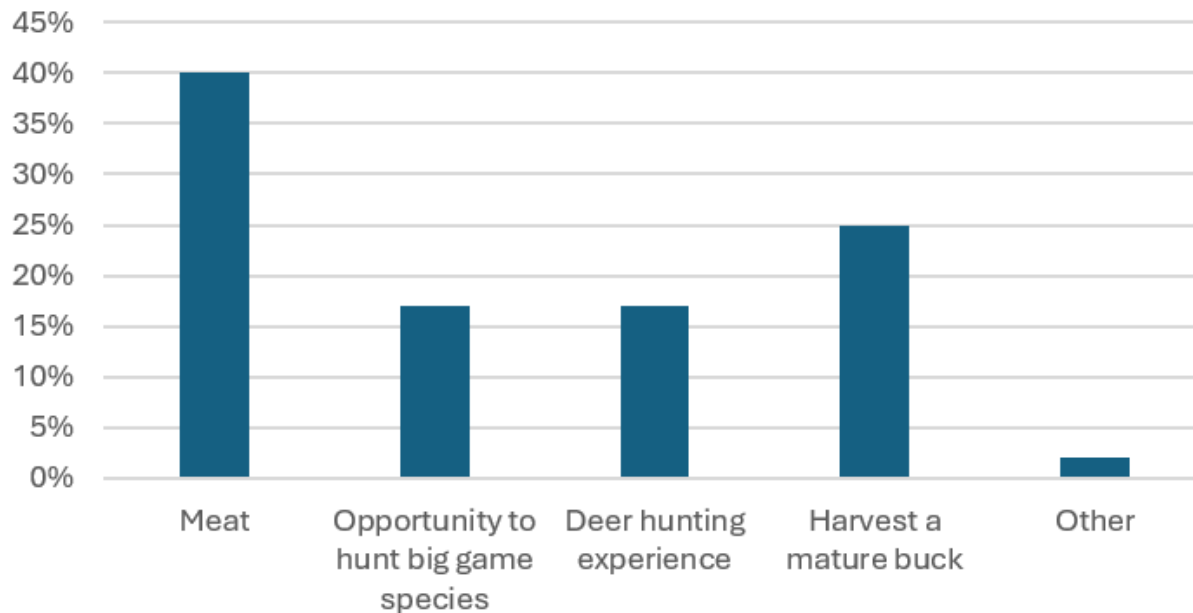


Deer Hunter Attitude Survey

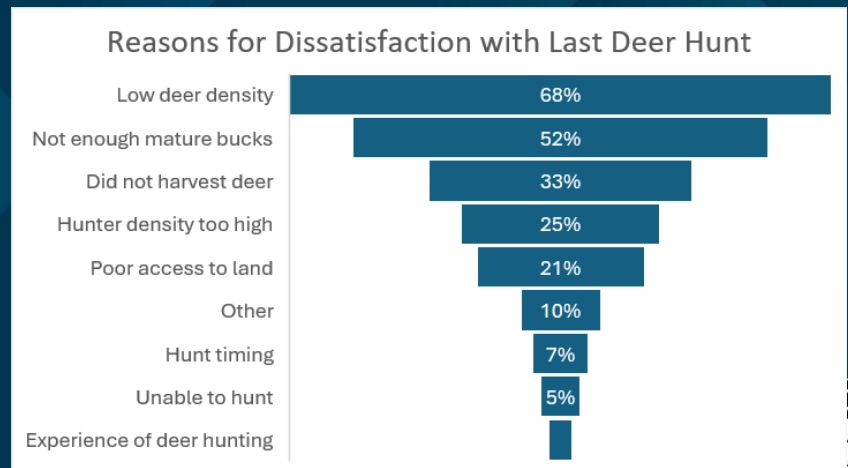
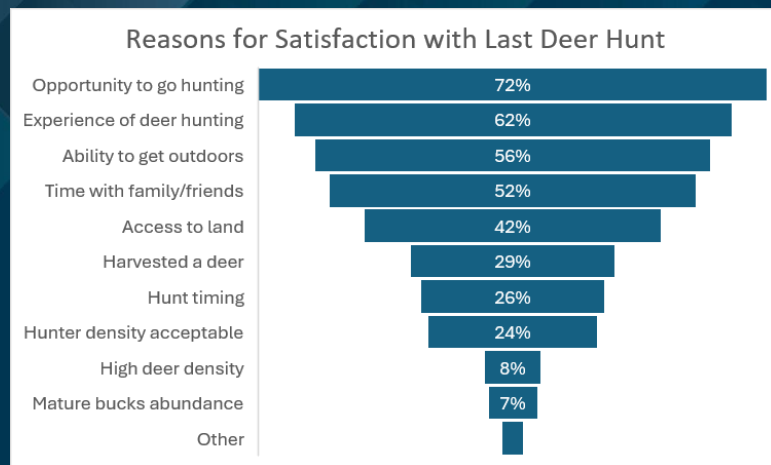
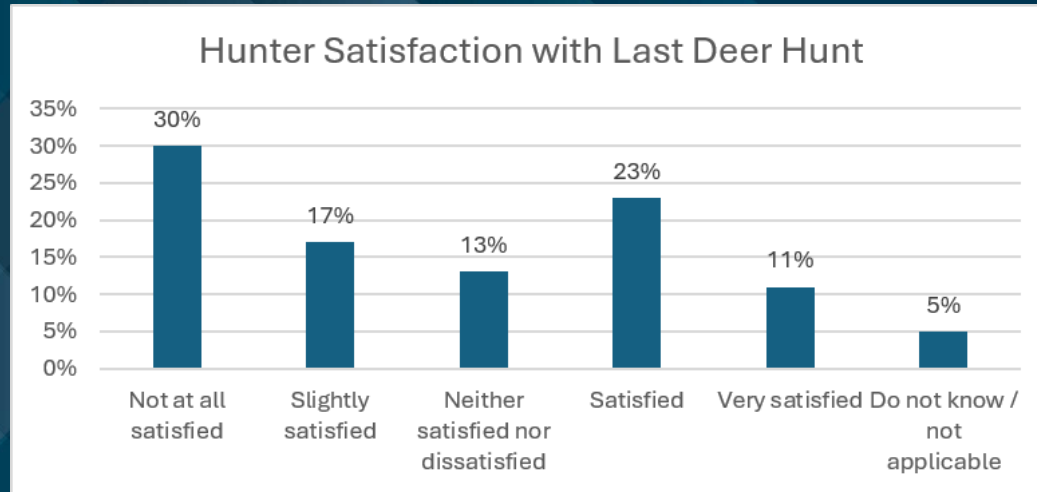


Deer Hunter Attitude Survey

Primary Objectives of Deer Hunters



Deer Hunter Attitude Survey



Deer Hunter Attitude Survey

- Some level of satisfaction = 35%
- Some level of dissatisfaction = 36%
- Neutral = 24%



Deer Hunter Attitude Survey

- Reasons for satisfaction:
 - Chance to go hunting (41%)
 - Happy with opportunity vs quality (31%)
 - Chance to harvest a buck (28%)
- Reason for dissatisfaction
 - High hunter density (37%)
 - Want more Quality units (30%)
 - Want more Opportunity units (30%)



Deer Hunter Attitude Survey Summary

- Half the hunters are satisfied with management and half are dissatisfied
- Hunters want to hunt more frequently while seeing less hunters and have a greater chance at harvesting a mature buck



General Proposed Changes

- Adjust license numbers to meet management strategies and reflect changes in deer herd dynamics.
- Adjust season dates where necessary.
 - Adjust season dates to ensure harvest is biologically sustainable.
 - Shift start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to calendar day starts for consistency.
 - Adjust season dates for hunt structure consistency across the state.
 - Adjust season dates to avoid overlapping hunts with mixed-weapon types.
- Designate the premium statewide deer hunt as a Quality hunt.
- Evaluate current antlerless hunts across the state.



Public Comments: 53 through 6/23

- Pertinent to proposed changes

Proposed change	Count
Support cap on private-land licenses	7
Oppose cap on private-land licenses	1
Oppose ranch registration	3
Support ranch registration	3
Oppose removing primitive/restricted muzzleloader rules	2
Support removing primitive/restricted muzzleloader rules	1
Support reducing licenses in GMU 31	1
Support reducing licenses in GMU 2B	5
Support making GMU 2B a Quality Hunt unit	5
Support license purchase 24-hour before hunt	3
Support GMU 4 public muzzleloader hunt	1
Oppose GMU 4 public muzzleloader hunt	1
Support FAWTD rifle hunts in GMUs 16 and 22	2
Support premium statewide deer hunt as Quality Hunt	2
Support WSMR youth hunt	1
Support removing antlerless tags in GMU 32	3
Support season-date / hunt-structure consistency	2
Support adjusting licenses to meet management strategies	2
Support wait period for private land tags	1



Miscellaneous Public Comments

Suggestion	Count
Split GMU 16/Gila deer units into subunits like elk	6
Create doe hunt in GMU 34 and/or 36	3
Increase nonresident license allocation	2
Split GMU 8 youth bow hunt into two hunt periods	2
Create preference point system	2
Make antler point restrictions	2
Stop deer hunting in GMUs 29 and/or 30 for 5 years	2



General Proposed Changes

- Require the purchase of a license at least a day prior to the start of the hunt. For hunts where published season dates are less than 6 days, hunters will no longer be able to buy a license once the hunt starts.
- Create “ranch registration” process for OTC private-land deer licenses, similar to the current registration process used for private land elk hunting in Secondary Management Zones.
- Limit private-land only OTC deer licenses for each GMU and redistribute some licenses to better align with draw proportion.



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Proposed Adjustments: NW Area

- Reduce deer licenses in GMU 2B based on input received during current rule cycle.
 - Analyzed total license reductions required to move to Quality Hunt unit.
 - Moving to Quality would require a reduction of 885 licenses.
- Create new rifle hunt code in GMU 51A to spread out pressure. The overall license numbers will remain the same.
- Create a public muzzleloader deer hunt on Wildlife Management Areas in GMU 4 to coincide with the private land hunt.



GMU 2B Quality Assessment

Type	Hunter Category	Hunt	2023-2027 Hunt Code	Hunt Timing	Bag Limit	Current Licenses	Proposed Adjusted Licenses	License Change	Estimated Change in Harvest
GMU 2B Public	REG	Rifle1	DER-1-110	Mid-Oct	FAD	275	140	-135	-32
	YO	Rifle1	DER-1-111	Mid-Oct	FAD	125	125	0	0
	REG	Rifle2	DER-1-113	End Oct	FAD	350	90	-260	-119
	REG	Rifle3	DER-1-115	End Oct/Early Nov	FAD	400	100	-300	-170
	YO	Rifle2	DER-1-117	End Oct/Early Nov	FAD	25	20	-5	-5
	REG	Archery1	DER-2-118	Sept 1-24	FAD	130	130	0	0
	YO	Archery1	DER-2-119	Sept 1-24	FAD	20	20	0	0
	REG	Archery2	DER-2-121	Jan 1-15	FAD	180	90	-90	-38
	YO	Archery2	DER-2-122	Jan 1-15	FAD	50	55	5	2
	REG	Muzzleloader1	DER-3-124	Sept 27-Oct 3	FAD	175	175	0	0
	YO	Muzzleloader1	DER-3-125	Sept 27-Oct 3	FAD	20	20	0	0
GMU 2B Private	REG	Rifle1	DER-1-112	Mid-Oct	FAD	25	15	-10	0
	REG	Rifle2	DER-1-114	End Oct	FAD	25	15	-10	-4
	REG	Rifle3	DER-1-116	End Oct/Early Nov	FAD	75	15	-60	-16
	REG	Archery1	DER-2-120	Sept 1-24	FAD	10	10	0	0
	REG	Archery2	DER-2-123	Jan 1-15	FAD	30	10	-20	-10
	REG	Muzzleloader1	DER-3-126	Sept 27-Oct 3	FAD	10	10	0	0
TOTAL						1,925	1,040	-885	-392



Proposed Adjustments: NW Area

- Adjust draw license numbers based on biological data, management goals, & public comment

GMU	<u>Licenses</u>			
	Current	Proposed	Change	% Change
2A	440	440	0	0%
2B	1,925	1,040	-885	-46%
2C	132	132	0	0%
4	685	695	10	2%
5A	570	570	0	0%
5B	60	70	10	17%
6A/6C	345	360	15	4%
7	80	80	0	0%
8	130	130	0	0%
9	60	65	5	8%
9 Marquez/Lbar	10	10	0	0%
10	460	460	0	0%
12	145	145	0	0%
14	170	190	20	12%
51A	210	210	0	0%
51B	50	50	0	0%
Region Total	5,472	4,647	-825	-15%



Proposed Private Land Caps: NW

GMU	2023-2025 Avg Sold	Proposed Cap
5B	50	50
6A/6C	208	208
7	80	85
8	48	53
9	43	45
10	112	112
12	53	55
14	168	170
51A	100	105
51B	36	41
Region Total	898	924



Proposed Adjustments: SW Area

- Structure the first January hunt on White Sands Missile Range as a youth hunt.
- Create a December rifle hunt for Coues white-tailed deer in GMUs 16 and 22 (20 licenses in each GMU).
- GMU 23 and 24 archery hunters who do not harvest an FAD, will no longer be permitted to hunt the Silver City Management Area antlerless hunt.
 - A new hunt code will be created for the Silver City Management Area antlerless archery hunt (50 public licenses and 20 private licenses).



Proposed Adjustments: SW Area

- Change youth rifle hunts in GMUs 13 and 17 to youth muzzleloader hunts to match elk weapon type for the same time and increase licenses.
- No longer include Fort Bayard as a special management area. Hunters drawing a tag for GMU 24 can hunt any legally accessible land in GMU 24, including Fort Bayard management area.
- Create a public rifle hunt for Mimbres WMA in GMU 24 (5 licenses).



Proposed Adjustments: SW Area

- Adjust draw license numbers based on biological data, management goals, & public comment

GMU	Licenses			
	Current	Proposed	Change	% Change
13	750	765	15	2%
15	365	370	5	1%
16	1,430	1,450	20	1%
17	470	485	15	3%
18	305	305	0	0%
19	20	20	0	0%
19 WSMR	10	10	0	0%
20	335	335	0	0%
21	1,825	1,830	5	0%
22	280	300	20	7%
23	1,835	1,835	0	0%
23 Burros	290	295	5	2%
23/24 Silver City	0	50	50	
24 Mimbres WMA	0	5	5	
24	1,725	1,740	15	1%
25	320	305	-15	-5%
26	325	325	0	0%
27	395	375	-20	-5%
Region Total	10,680	10,800	120	1%



Proposed Private Land Caps: SW

GMU	2023-2025 Avg Sold	Proposed Cap	Comments
13	62	68	
15	16	22	
16	33	48	New FAWTD hunt
17	59	63	
18	109	111	
19	1	6	
20	30	35	
21	154	161	
22	31	50	New FAWTD hunt
23	132	144	
23 Burros	7	24	
24	164	175	
23/24	15	15	Silver City Mgmt Hunt
25	18	23	
26	34	40	
27	35	50	



Proposed Adjustments: SE Area

- Remove the REG antlerless hunt in GMU 32 Roswell and Fort Sumner Hunt Areas.
 - Keep Youth Only antlerless hunt (15 public and 20 private licenses).
- Remove the antlerless hunt on the Huey WMA; change the ES hunt to FAD bag limit.
- Significantly reduce licenses in GMUs 29 (-120), 30 (-525), and 34 (-100).



Proposed Adjustments: SE Area

- Adjust draw license numbers based on biological data, management goals, & public comment

GMU	<u>Licenses</u>			
	Current	Proposed	Change	% Change
28	50	50	0	0%
29	520	400	-120	-23%
30	2,315	1,790	-525	-23%
31	1,325	1,325	0	0%
32	1,580	1,565	-15	-1%
33	560	545	-15	-3%
34	2,535	2,435	-100	-4%
36	1,115	1,140	25	2%
37	1,030	1,015	-15	-2%
38	520	490	-30	-6%
39	150	150	0	0%
40	165	165	0	0%
Region Total	11,865	11,070	-795	-7%



Proposed Private Land Caps: SE

GMU	2023-2025 Avg Sold	Proposed Cap	Comments
29	8	19	
30	105	105	
31	366	373	
32	333	280	Removed REG antlerless hunt
33	116	120	
34	157	163	
36	110	115	
37	206	209	
38	58	60	
39	121	130	
40	224	235	
Region Total	1804	1809	



Proposed Adjustments: NE Area

- Adjust draw license numbers based on biological data, management goals, & public comment.

GMU	Licenses			
	Current	Proposed	Change	% Change
41	155	155	0	0%
42	120	120	0	0%
43	60	60	0	0%
45	875	890	15	2%
47	75	75	0	0%
48	175	195	20	11%
49	305	320	15	5%
50	105	105	0	0%
52	285	290	5	2%
53	270	270	0	0%
54/55 Colin Neblett	30	30	0	0%
55 ES Barker	10	10	0	0%
55 Urraca	10	10	0	0%
55 Valle Vidal	10	10	0	0%
56	75	75	0	0%
57	105	110	5	5%
57 Sugarite	20	20	0	0%
58	150	150	0	0%
59	150	150	0	0%
Region Total	2,985	3,045	60	2%



Proposed Private Land Caps: NE

GMU	2023-2025 Avg Sold	Proposed Cap
41	116	122
42	189	195
43	136	141
45	228	228
46	379	385
47	73	83
48	25	30
49	71	75
50	32	37
52	25	34
53	56	60
54	21	40
55	117	126
56	46	56
57	116	124
58	70	80
59	86	95
Region Total	1786	1911



Questions?



Comment on Proposals:
DGF-Deer-Rule@state.nm.us

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