

Southwest Region

Deer:

Mule deer populations north of the Snake River are stable, and there should be more young bucks than last year. But mature bucks may be difficult to find because of heavy hunting pressure and easy access for hunters.

Fawn survival over the winter in Units 22, 31, 32 and 39 was approximately 86 percent, which was higher than any other monitored units in the state, so hunters should find lots of young bucks in units 32 and 39.

Doe ratios in the Weiser River area range from 10 bucks per 100 does in Unit 32 to 21 per 100 in Unit 22. The Unit 22 buck/doe ratio increased from 13 to 21 bucks per 100 does after one season of a general two-point-only hunt followed by a November controlled any-buck hunt.

Elk:

Populations in the Weiser River (Units 22, 32, 32A) and Boise River (Unit 39) zones range from stable to increasing. The bull/cow ratio in both zones is almost 15 bulls per 100 cows. Hunting pressure is usually higher compared to the Sawtooth Zone (Units 33, 34, 35, 36).

Populations in the Sawtooth Zone have decreased over the past several years. The bull/cow ratio was nine bulls per 100 cows and the calf/cow ratio was 19 calves per 100 cows in January. Calf survival was very low. This herd is feeling the pressure of habitat degradation, especially noxious weeds on winter and spring ranges, as well as increased wolf predation. Fish and Game is limiting "A" and "B" tags in the Sawtooth this year.

Populations in the McCall Zone (Units 19A, 23, 24 and 25) are stable at about 20 bulls per 100 cows. Areas in Units 19A and 25 that were damaged by fire in the summer of 2007 have begun to regrow and may attract elk.

Middle Fork Zone (Units 20A, 26 and 27) populations have declined, but hunter success was in the 15-22 percent range last year depending on whether hunters had an "A" or "B" tag. This zone is mostly within the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Area.

Wolves appear to have had an effect on elk behavior and hunting success.

General:

Hunters need to consider the current conditions. With the spring and summer moisture, elk and deer have abundant and succulent forage at all elevations and across most of their range and may not concentrate in particular areas. Hunters can expect animals to be widely distributed across their habitat and difficult to find.