

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Species: Deer
Region: 5
Hunting District: 520
Year: 2019

1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).

CWD was detected in the far eastern portion of this hunting district and adjacent HD 510 during the 2017 hunting season. Long term CWD management, as described in the Montana CWD Management Plan, is aimed at maintaining low densities of deer and low buck/doe ratios in hunting districts with CWD and adjacent hunting districts. The following season proposal is designed to meet these two broad objectives for the eastern portion of HD 520.

This proposal changes the general mule deer season from buck only to either sex in that portion of HD 520 lying east of Highway 212

Change From:

520: General License

- Sep 07 – Oct 20 Antlered Buck Mule Deer. Archery Season Only
Either-sex White-tailed Deer. Archery Season Only**
- Oct 26 – Dec 01 Antlered Buck Mule Deer
Either-sex White-tailed Deer.**

Change To:

520: General License

- Sep 07 – Oct 20 Either-sex Mule Deer. Only valid east of Highway 212. Archery Season Only**
- Antlered Buck Mule Deer. Only valid west of Highway 212. Archery Season Only**
- Either-sex White-tailed Deer. Archery Season Only**
- Oct 26 – Dec 01 Either=sex Mule Deer. Only valid east of Highway 212
Antlered Buck Mule Deer. Only valid west of Highway 212.
Either-sex White-tailed Deer.**

Table 1. Hunter and harvest statistics for mule deer B license holders for H.D. 520, 2007 – 2017.

Year	Season Type	B License Number	Harvest		B License Harvest
			Bucks	Antlerless	Antlerless
2007	Either Sex	300	378	212	130
2008	Either Sex	300	265	187	107
2009	Antlered Buck	150	323	114	54
2010	Antlered Buck	150	351	77	46
2011	Antlered Buck	150	303	89	52
2012	Antlered Buck	50	321	40	31
2013	Antlered Buck	50	325	37	21
2014	Antlered Buck	0	300	0	0
2015	Antlered Buck	0	247	6	0
2016	Antlered Buck	50	345	45	26
2017	Antlered Buck	50	273	45	21

2. Why is the proposed change necessary?

This season change proposal is in direct response to the detection of CWD in this hunting district and adjacent HD 510 in 2017 and follows the guidelines established in the **Montana CWD Management Plan**. The eastern portion of HD 520 lies immediately adjacent to a portion of HD 510 where mule and white-tailed deer were found to have CWD in 2017. Implementation of this proposal is necessary to help alleviate some of the developing game damage issues as well as beginning to address the CWD threat. This season proposal is designed to stabilize or slightly reduce the mule deer population especially in the area close to the CWD endemic area. Maintaining lower densities of mule deer is thought to be the best preventative measure to control the spread of CWD.

3. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.

The objective of the season change is to increase the harvest of antlerless mule deer in the eastern portion of the HD to at least 35 animals and reduce and stabilize the number of deer on the Grove Creek agricultural fields to about 75 animals in spring.

4. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints, etc.

Antlerless mule deer harvest will be monitored through the statewide harvest questionnaire survey. Deer numbers on the Grove Creek area will be monitored through annual post season and spring ground surveys. The number of game damage complaints will also be monitored.

5. What is the current population’s status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).

There are no management objectives currently in place for this portion of HD 520. Spring counts on the Grove Creek agricultural fields average 132 mule deer in recent years. To reduce the likelihood of CWD spread this number should be reduced to less than 75 animals

Table 2. Post season mule deer counts on the Grove Creek Count Area, HD 520.

Year	Yrlg	2+ Yr Old	Does	Adults	Fawns	Total	Fawns/100 Does	Fawns/100 Adults	Bucks/100 Does
2010-11	0	1	68	69	30	99	44	43	1
2011-12	7	6	110	123	55	178	50	45	12
2012-13	2	1	63	66	23	89	37	35	5
2013-14	4	3	38	45	25	70	66	56	18
2014-15	5	5	54	64	41	105	76	64	18
2015-16	11	3	50	64	33	97	66	52	28
2016-17	1	4	69	74	36	110	52	49	7
2017-18	3	2	64	69	49	118	77	71	8

Table 3. Spring recruitment mule deer counts on the Grove Creek Area, HD 520.

Date	Adults	Fawns	Unclassified	Total	Fawns/100 Adults	Remarks
2011	183	37		220	20	Ground
2012	43	20		63	47	Ground
2013	103	42		145	41	Ground
2014	149	46		195	31	Ground
2015	61	21		82	34	Ground
2016	17	4		21	24	Ground
2017	78	41		119	53	Ground
2018	157	54		211	34	Ground

6. How will this proposal influence this population status?

This proposal will likely hold the population at below average levels in the near term, which is the desired result in the face of the CWD threat.

7. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).

- 1) Utilization transect information: None
- 2) Snow condition survey information:
The winter of 2017-18 was severe causing a 50% overwinter mortality of fawns and probably an adult doe mortality of 15%
- 3) Describe access problems related to change, etc.
Access in the eastern portion of the HD will remain good with landowners taking advantage of additional opportunities to manage mule deer on their property. Access in the western portion of the HD will remain difficult.
- 4) Overwinter survival information (i.e. bad winter lost what % of population)
During the severe winter of 2017-18 overwinter fawn mortality was in excess of 50% and adult doe mortality could have been as high as 15%.

8. Provide information relative to impacts to resident hunters, nonresident hunters and public & private land use.

Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).

- 1) List specific sports groups or landowners:
This proposal has been discussed with Sunlight Ranch personnel on the east side of the HD and is fully supported by that ranch.
- 2) Indicate if proposal was recommended by public - is it in response to a concern by sportspersons:
- 3) The proposal is in response to the hunting season recommendations provided in the Montana CWD Management Plan.

Submitted by: Shawn T. Stewart

Date: 10/15//2018

Approved: _____
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: _____
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: