

Deer and Elk – HD 262



Draft Changes for 2022-2023 Hunting Regulations (boundary types, LPT changes, species, etc.):

Boundary Change: Create a larger Hunting District 262 by combining the Bitterroot portion of former HD 260 with former 262.

White-tailed Deer: Limit hunting opportunity on the general license to archery equipment only, which eliminates rifle opportunity on the general license where it occurred in former HD 262, due to consolidation with 260. Remove 260-20 B License for a second buck. Retain over-the-counter B Licenses for antlerless white-tailed deer, specific to archery only, or primitive weapons (private land only for primitive weapons), running to Jan. 15.

Mule Deer: Retain limits on the general license to archery equipment only and antlerless only; add restriction to private land only. Allow special weapons on the antlerless B-license from Aug. 15 through Jan. 15 on private land, except during archery season (valid for ArchEquip only).

Elk: Limit hunting opportunity on the general license to archery equipment only, which eliminates rifle opportunity for youth and PTHFV on the general license in former HD 262, due to consolidation with 260. Early shoulder season (Aug. 15-Sep. 3) and late shoulder season (Nov. 29-Feb. 15) would be available only on the unlimited, over-the-counter B License and only on private land without weapons restrictions. The over-the-counter B license is also valid on private land only during archery season with archery equipment only and in general season without weapons restrictions.

Biological Implications:

Boundary Change: The expanded area is almost exclusively private land with chronic game damage, which leads to duplication of regulation effort across the former two districts.

White-tailed Deer: 260/262 are private land HDs with intense game damage issues that the proposed regulations will help to address.

Mule Deer: Retains tools to help address game damage on private lands. Buck management strategies under consideration in this HD would not have significant biological consequences.

Elk: Attempting to increase elk harvest and adjust elk distribution where elk cause damage and find security on protected parcels within an intensively farmed and developed landscape.

Social Implications:

There would be some hunting opportunity lost by consolidating former HD 260 and 262.

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Allowing the Elk B License to be used without weapons restrictions during general season and for the early and late shoulder seasons will impact bowhunters in an area that has previously been archery-only.

The passionate discussion over mule deer buck management in this HD will likely continue. This HD focuses the competing needs and desires of landowners, rifle hunters, homeowners, and archers within a relatively small and confined area, and strategies are layered and tenuous.

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