

Deer and Elk – HD 285



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

Boundary Change: Create new Hunting District 285 by combining former HDs 285, 281, east half of 283, 284, 292 and 293 (excepting the south and east portions of 293). Remove the archery-only designation with the removal of former HD 284.

White-tailed Deer: Replace current Deer B Licenses: 281-00, 285-01, 292-00, 293-00, with a new antlerless WTD B-license for new HD 285.

Mule Deer: Eliminate unlimited mule deer permits 281-50 and 292-50, and introduce a general deer license opportunity to hunt the first three weeks of the season for mule deer bucks.

Elk: Make the general license valid for brow-tined bull or antlerless elk during archery season, and brow-tined bull only during rifle season to standardize the general license structure across new HD 285. Make the 285-00 limited Elk B License valid on private land, district-wide, and valid in a new, early shoulder season. Eliminate all Permit to Hunt from a Vehicle and youth antlerless elk opportunity on the general license.

Biological Implications:

Boundary Change: Elk numbers across this landscape are at or below population objective, and recruitment (spring calf:cow ratio) is low on predominantly forested summer ranges and forest/grassland winter ranges. Winter conditions can be severe. This new district has relatively high large carnivore densities that influence ungulate populations.

White-tailed Deer: This district includes productive forest and agricultural white-tailed deer habitat. The habitat generally supports high recruitment allowing for quick recovery from severe winters. A moderate allocation of licenses is intended.

Mule Deer: Buck harvest is below 25% of the long-term average for each former district within the proposed new district. Surveys on mule deer winter range have indicated declining or stable numbers. Mule deer buck opportunity would be on the general license for the first three weeks of the season to reduce buck harvest during the peak of the rut.

Elk: Elk numbers across this landscape are at or below population objective, and recruitment (spring calf:cow ratio) is low.

Social Implications:

Landowners have concerns about high deer densities and game damage can be severe. Hunters will be divided between appreciation for the opportunity to hunt antlerless whitetails and concerns of overharvesting does.



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The new regulations for elk will change very little from previous regulations, therefore, changes should not create much confusion and harvest opportunities will be very similar.

Currently HD 284 is an archery-only hunting district that surrounds the community of Lincoln. In large part this district was created for safety purposes but has become a valued district for the archery hunters, so there will likely be some loss to those hunters with this proposed change. Surrounding landowners may be supportive because elk tend to congregate in 284 during the rifle season, seeking refuge.

Contact: Scott Eggeman, Wildlife Biologist, Blackfoot, seggeman@mt.gov, 406-542-5542