

Deer/Elk/Lion – HD 321



Draft Changes for 2022-2023 Hunting Regulations:

Combine Hunting Districts 321 and 334 into one district, HD 321. This would apply to white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk and mountain lion. The regulations for each species would be as follows:

- White-tailed deer: Either-sex on the general license for archery and general season. This would not be a change from how it is now in both of the current HDs.
- Mule deer: Either-sex on the general license valid for archery and general season. There would be no B licenses offered. This would not reflect a change in the current archery season regulation, but it would reflect a liberalization in both hunting districts from buck only on the general license to either-sex on the general license during the general season.
- Elk: brow-tined bull (BTB)/antlerless on the general license for archery season and general season with a limited number of B licenses. Any bull/antlerless allowed on the general license for Youth and hunters with permission to hunt from a vehicle. This would not be a change from how it is now in the current HD 321, but it does reflect a liberalization from BTB only on the general license during the general season in HD 334.
- Mountain Lion: lion management would change from the current grouping of HDs 321, 332 and 334 to just include the new HD 321 (321 and 334 would be combined). Total quota would be set at two with a female subquota of one.

Biological Implications:

The justification for combining these districts is regulation simplification. The justification to liberalize the mule deer regulation in both HDs and the elk regulation in HD 334 is that the Big Hole Valley is summer range for both mule deer and elk, and animals migrate out of the valley by early November. This shortened general season provides a strong level of protection against overharvest of these big game populations. Since 2010, mule deer harvest has averaged 36 (27 bucks, 9 antlerless) in HD 321 and 22 (18 bucks, 4 antlerless) in HD 334. Since 2010, elk harvest has averaged 232 (73 bulls, 159 antlerless) in HD 321 and 89 (41 bulls, 48 antlerless) in HD 334.

Social Implications:

HD 321 has very good access to public and private land hunting and has supported the five-week liberal season since 2010. The proportion of private land available to hunters in HD 334 is significantly less and therefore has been managed under a standard regulation to prevent overcrowding.