

Deer & Elk – HD 303



Draft Changes for 2022-2023 Hunting Regulations:

- The current Hunting District 300 – Lima Peaks-Nicholia would be renamed as HD 303.
- The 300-50 antlered buck mule deer permit would be renamed to deer permit 303-50 and raised from 30 to 50 permits.
- The deer B 399-00 antlerless white-tailed deer license would be valid in the newly renamed HD 303.
- The elk B license 399-00 would be reduced to 500 licenses.

Biological Justification:

Renaming HD 300 to HD 303 is expected to improve the reliability of hunter survey information. Currently, an unknown number of hunters refer generically to Region 3 as “300”. This creates uncertainty in hunter survey information.

Management objectives for at least 25 mule deer bucks per 100 does are being met under the current regulations of limited antlered buck permits. However, the relatively high number of mature bucks in the population raises concerns about the potential for chronic wasting disease (CWD) to spread through the population. Currently, CWD has not been detected in the area; however, increased harvest on mature bucks would be a step toward managing CWD preemptively.

Increasingly, white-tailed deer are present in areas formerly occupied solely by mule deer. White-tailed deer competition with mule deer is a growing concern, as is the increasing prevalence of CWD. Applying deer B license 399-00 throughout the area will provide an additional tool for managing white-tail populations.

Elk B license 399-00 is currently valid in 14 districts with a quota of 750 licenses. Under new proposed regulations, the districts where this license is valid would decrease by approximately 30 percent. In response, the number of available licenses was reduced from 750 to 500 licenses.

Social Implications:

None identified.

District biologist:

Jesse Newby

406-683-9305 • jnewby@mt.gov