

Deer/Elk – HD 335



Draft Changes for 2022-2023 Hunting Regulations:

- Combine Hunting Districts 318 and 335 for deer and elk into one district, HD 335. This would still align with current Lion Management Units, and moose HDs 382 and 335 correspond with these and are also recommended to be merged into one moose district.
- Convert the brow-tined bull/antlerless elk permit to an antlerless elk license.
- Retain mule deer 335-01 Antlerless Mule Deer B Licenses.
- Retain 003-00, Region-wide Antlerless White-Tailed Deer License.
- Retain ALL Deer/Elk General License opportunities.

Biological Implications:

There is no biological justification to make this change. This is being recommended based on the regulations simplification directive.

For elimination of antlerless elk permits: All antlerless elk permits are being eliminated under the directive to simplify regulations.

The two existing districts do have biological differences: Elk bull-cow ratios are different between the two districts, and overall mule deer numbers and distribution are different between the two districts. While they are part of the same Elk Management Unit, these differences between the districts are likely the reason why there are two districts now. HD 318 has a very high road density, the highest on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, which negatively affects big game security. Habitat appears to be an additional limiting factor for mule deer in HD 318.

Social Implications:

This is being recommended based on the regulations simplification directive.

HD 318 has a very high road density, the highest on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, negatively affecting big game security, and the district sees a substantial amount of motorized use in the fall. Time will tell if the season structure needs to be different in order to manage hunting differently between the two districts.

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