

2014

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Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**



DISTRICT 3 HUNTING PROSPECTS

Asotin, Garfield, Columbia, and Walla Walla Counties

Hunting Season Prospects 2014 District 3--Asotin, Garfield, Columbia, and Walla Walla Counties

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DISTRICT 3 GENERAL OVERVIEW

District 3 is located in southeast Washington and consists of 13 Game Management Units (GMUs): 145 (Mayview), 149 (Prescott), 154 (Blue Creek), 157 (Watershed-closed except by permit), 162 (Dayton), 163 (Marengo), 166 (Tucannon), 169 (Wenaha), 172 (Mountain View), 175 (Lick Creek), 178 (Peola), 181 (Couse), and 186 (Grande Ronde). Administratively, District 3 includes Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin counties and is one of three Management Districts (1, 2, and 3) comprising WDFW's Region 1. The northern part of District 3 (north of Highway 12) includes the southeastern portion of the Palouse Prairie ecoregion, while the southern part of the District is situated in the Blue Mountains.

The landscape in District 3 is dominated by agricultural land in the prairie and foothill regions, with interspersed grassland areas and brushy "eyebrows" and draws. In the mountains, the most common habitat is characterized by second growth forests consisting primarily of Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, grand fir, and subalpine fir.

District 3 is most well-known for its elk hunting opportunities in the Blue Mountains and mule deer hunting opportunities in prairie GMUs. However, quality hunting opportunities also exist for other game species including white-tailed deer, black bears, turkey, and pheasant. Table 1 presents estimates of harvest and harvest-per-unit effort (HPUE) for most game species in District 3 during the 2013 hunting season, and how those estimates compare to the 2012 season and the 5-year average. For more specific information on harvest trends, please refer to the appropriate section in this document.

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TABLE 1. GENERAL SEASON HARVEST AND HPUE ESTIMATES FOR MOST GAME SPECIES FOUND IN DISTRICT 3 DURING THE 2012 AND 2013 HUNTING SEASONS. ALSO INCLUDED IS THE 5-YEAR AVERAGE AND A COMPARISON OF 2013 ESTIMATES TO 2012 ESTIMATES AND THE 5-YEAR AVERAGE. HPUE IS EXPRESSED AS #HUNTER DAYS/HARVEST FOR ELK, DEER, AND BEAR, AND AS #HARVESTED/HUNTER DAY FOR ALL OTHER SPECIES. NH = NO HUNTERS.

Species	Harvest					HPUE				
	5-yr avg.	2012	2013	% change (5yr)	% change (2012)	5-yr avg.	2012	2013	% change (5yr)	% change (2012)
Elk	186	186	188	1%	1%	99	93	91	-7%	-2%
Elk (Gen+Permit)	386	442	386	0%	-13%	116	119	111	-4%	-7%
Deer	2,358	2,694	2,995	27%	11%	18	17	16	-11%	-6%
Bear	102	112	108	6%	-4%	108	87	95	-12%	9%
Cougar	13	19	19	46%	0%	Not estimated			**	**
Wild Turkey	714	824	638	-11%	-23%	0.10	0.11	0.09	-14%	-16%
Canada Goose	3,484	3,125	3,067	-12%	-2%	1.05	1.11	0.95	-9%	-14%
Chukar Partridge	2,003	1,699	1,014	-49%	-40%	0.79	0.79	0.79	0%	0%
Cottontail Rabbit	274	377	219	-20%	-42%	0.28	0.48	0.30	7%	-37%
Duck	22,226	28,953	21,776	-2%	-25%	2.40	2.57	2.41	0%	-6%
Forest Grouse	3,319	1,904	1,771	-5%	-7%	0.33	0.38	0.40	24%	7%
Gray Partridge	1,575	1,441	504	-68%	-65%	0.64	0.79	0.47	-27%	-41%
Mourning Dove	2,132	2,717	1,818	-15%	-33%	2.83	3.22	2.56	-10%	-20%
Pheasant	12,954	9,792	7,157	-27%	-45%	0.71	0.74	0.59	-17%	-20%
Quail	7,510	6,783	3,516	-53%	-48%	0.95	1.01	0.78	-18%	-23%
Snowshoe Hare	29	60	66	128%	10%	0.30	0.43	0.60	98%	38%

ELK

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

In Washington, elk are managed at the Population Management Unit (PMU) level, while harvest regulations are set at the GMU level. In general, each PMU consists of several GMUs that collectively define the range of a population that minimizes interchange with adjacent elk populations. Population objectives are set at the PMU level—survey data is summarized at that level as well. District 3 is comprised of PMU 13 (GMU 145, 149, 154, 157, 162, 163, 166, 169, 172, 175, 178, 181, and 186).

Within District 3, only the GMUs within the forested portion of the District are managed for elk population stability or growth (GMUs 154, 157, 162, 166, 169, 172, 175, and 186). GMUs 145, 149, 163, 178, and 181 are managed to ‘limit’ elk numbers, although some recreational opportunity is provided as determined through surveys. Minimizing elk depredation to agricultural crops occurs in all GMUs with private agricultural activities occurring within them. Additional management objectives include maintaining herds that have a minimum of 22 bulls:100 cows in the post-season population, with a range of 22 – 28 bulls:100 cows identified as the management target.

Biologists in District 3 conduct an annual helicopter population survey within the core elk areas to estimate the post-winter population size. In the spring of 2014, a population estimate of 5,774 (90% Confidence Interval of +/- 490) elk was generated. Surveys are also conducted along the state line of Oregon (and within Oregon); resulting in approximately 500-600 elk being counted that likely are not available for harvest in Washington during the fall. The 5-year average prior to 2014 is 5,097 elk, which is 13% lower than the 2014 estimate. The large increase in 2014 is likely a result of increased calf production in 2013 and winter migration patterns between Oregon and Washington.

Calf ratios increased in 2013-2014 to an estimated 34.7:100 cows (90% CI +/- 1.2), the second highest recorded level since aerial surveys were implanted in 1991. This increase in calf production should directly relate to a higher number of spikes available for harvest in the fall of 2014. Bull ratios also rose over the past year and will result in an increased number of branched-bull permits in years to come.

For more detailed information related to the status of Washington’s elk herds, hunters should read through the most recent version of the Game Status and Trend Report which is available for download on the Department’s website or by [clicking here](#).

WHICH GMU SHOULD ELK HUNTERS HUNT?

Most general season hunters in the Blue Mountains have been hunting here for many years, with the exception of the Branched-bull tag holders and archery hunters in GMU 175. New hunters to

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this area will have to consider a number of options; such as weapon type, private land access versus public land, difficulty of hunt desired (wilderness versus highly roaded landscapes), and as archery hunters, whether the availability of antlerless opportunity is important.

Throughout District 3, the harvest of branched-bulls is regulated through the permit system. All GMUs in District 3, except 186, are managed for Quality. The drawing of these tags can be difficult and many hunters invest years of applying before successfully obtaining a permit. New hunters to the District are advised to contact the district biologists prior to applying for a hunt to better understand individual GMU limitations. Once a permit is obtained, district biologists are happy to provide information on where to hunt within the GMU that fits the hunter's needs.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH GMU:

GMU 145: This is a private land unit managed for zero elk. Very few elk reside in this unit and are very difficult to find.

GMU149: This large GMU is predominantly private land that is managed to minimize elk numbers because of conflicts with agricultural activities. A relatively large number of bulls inhabit the southwest corner of the GMU and do cross back and forth between Oregon and Washington. Most harvest occurs in the area of the Boise Cascade poplar farm. It is highly recommended that access is obtained to this property prior to applying for hunts. See footnote in the pamphlet for contact information. An additional herd of elk exists in the northern portion of the unit on the breaks of the Snake River. This is a very difficult herd to hunt without access to numerous landowners, as the elk are highly mobile in this area and can be difficult to locate.

GMU 154: This GMU is 99% private land, but does include numerous landowners in the Department's access program. The elk are heavily hunted in this GMU due to conflicts with agricultural activities. Access has historically been available to branched-bull tag holders as well as general season hunters.

GMU 157: This GMU is 99% public land, but closed to the public to any entry other than special permit holders. The Mill Creek Watershed is the source of drinking water for the City of Walla Walla and access is highly regulated and enforced.

GMU 162: The Dayton GMU is a mix of private and public lands and supports approximately 1,000 elk. This unit has the highest density of general season hunters in District 3. Access to the northern portion of the GMU can be difficult as it is predominantly private. The southern portion of the unit is predominantly USFS and lands owned by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Both of these lands are open to the public with motorized vehicle restrictions scattered throughout.

GMU 163: This GMU is not managed for elk and only occasionally supports huntable numbers of elk. The GMU is predominantly private land.

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GMU 166: This GMU has had the highest success rate for general season hunters recently, but also has one of the higher densities of hunters. The unit is predominantly USFS and WDFW owned lands. A portion of the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness extends into this GMU and offers backcountry hunting opportunities.

GMU 169: Most of this GMU is located within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness. Numerous road access points occur along the edge of this GMU, but a majority of the unit requires backpacking or stock to access. Elk densities have remained low in this unit for the past 20 years and do not show indications of improving. This can be a physically challenging unit to hunt.

GMU 172: Elk numbers have risen in this GMU recently and can offer good general season opportunity, depending upon access. Approximately 60% of this GMU is private and access can be challenging. The USFS lands within this GMU are physically challenging to hunt. WDFW has been acquiring land within this GMU recently (4-0 Wildlife Area), but deer and elk hunting there is managed by permit only access.

GMU 175: This GMU is predominantly public land owned by WDFW, USFS, and Washington DNR. Access is good throughout the unit. This is the only unit that archery hunters can harvest antlerless elk without a permit in the Blue Mountains, resulting in very high density of hunters during archery season.

GMU 178: This private land unit is managed to minimize elk numbers due to conflict with agricultural activities. Access can be challenging to obtain. Elk numbers are highly variable in the unit and do not offer reliable recreational opportunity during the general season without knowledge of landowners and herd behavior.

GMU 181: This private land unit is managed to minimize elk numbers due to conflict with agricultural activities. Access can be challenging to obtain. Elk numbers are highly variable in the unit and do not offer reliable recreational opportunity during the general season without knowledge of landowners and herd behavior.

GMU 186: This unit is split equally between private and public lands, with very limited private land access available. This GMU is predominantly winter range for elk in Oregon, although approximately 100 elk reside in the unit throughout the year. The individual elk may reside on private land throughout the season where access is not available, although some years have proven highly successful for the few hunters that know the unit.

The information provided in Table 2 provides a quick and general assessment of how District 3 GMUs compare with regard to harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success during general modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader seasons. The values presented are from the 2013 harvest reports. Total harvest and hunter numbers were further summarized by the number of elk harvested and hunters per square mile.

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Each GMU was ranked from 1 to 11 for elk harvested/mi² (bulls only for modern firearm and cows included with bulls for archery), hunters/mi², and hunter success rates. The three ranking values were then summed to produce a final rank sum. The modern firearm comparisons are the most straightforward because bag limits and seasons are the same in each GMU.

For archery seasons you have to consider that antlerless elk may be harvested in one public land GMU (175) and on private lands throughout multiple GMUs. These differences are important when comparing total harvest or hunter numbers among GMUs. Hunters should keep these differences in mind when comparing and interpreting the information provided in Table 2.

TABLE 2. RANK SUM ANALYSIS THAT PROVIDES A QUICK AND GENERAL COMPARISON OF HOW TOTAL HARVEST, HUNTER NUMBERS, AND HUNTER SUCCESS RATES COMPARE AMONG GMUS DURING GENERAL MODERN FIREARM, ARCHERY, AND MUZZLELOADER SEASONS. GMUS BOLDDED IN THE ARCHERY SECTION ARE OPEN DURING EARLY AND LATER ARCHERY SEASONS. GMUS ARE GENERALLY LIMITED TO SPIKE BULL HARVEST, BUT SOME MAY HAVE ANTLERLESS OPPORTUNITY AS WELL (SEE HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS). DATA PRESENTED ARE BASED ON 2013 HARVEST REPORTS.

MODERN FIREARM											
GMU	Size (mi ²)	Harvest			Hunter Density			Hunter Success		Public Access	Rank Sum
		Total	Harvest per mi ²	Rank	Hunters	Hunters per mi ²	Rank	Success	Rank	Rank	
149	1409	5	0.00	8	66	0.05	1	7.6%	1	3	13
154	216	17	0.08	4	283	1.31	5	6.0%	4	3	16
162	210	33	0.16	2	833	3.97	10	4.0%	7	2	21
166	131	27	0.21	1	417	3.18	8	6.5%	3	1	13
169	161	8	0.05	5	232	1.44	6	3.4%	10	1	22
172	108	17	0.16	2	234	2.17	7	7.3%	2	2	13
175	158	20	0.13	3	543	3.44	9	3.7%	8	1	22
178	275	5	0.02	6	107	0.39	4	4.7%	6	3	19
181	262	2	0.01	7	57	0.22	2	3.5%	9	3	21
186	53	1	0.02	6	18	0.34	3	5.6%	5	2	16

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ARCHERY											
GMU	Size (mi ²)	Harvest			Hunter Density			Hunter Success		Public Access	Rank Sum
		Total	Harvest per mi ²	Rank	Hunters	Hunters per mi ²	Rank	Success	Rank	Rank	
149	1409	0	0.00	6	8	0.01	2	0.0%	6	3	17
154	216	7	0.03	3	135	0.63	8	5.0%	3	3	17
162	210	4	0.02	4	164	0.78	9	2.4%	5	2	20
166	131	0	0.00	6	49	0.37	6	0.0%	6	1	19
169	161	1	0.01	5	41	0.25	5	2.4%	5	1	16
172	108	7	0.06	2	46	0.43	7	7.0%	2	2	13
175	158	24	0.15	1	265	1.68	10	9.0%	1	1	13
178	275	2	0.01	5	49	0.18	4	4.0%	4	3	16
181	262	1	0.00	6	21	0.08	3	5.0%	3	3	15
186	53	0	0.00	6	0	0.00	1	0.0%	6	2	9
MUZZLELOADER											
GMU	Size (mi ²)	Harvest			Hunter Density			Hunter Success		Public Access	Rank Sum
		Total	Harvest per mi ²	Rank	Hunters	Hunters per mi ²	Rank	Success	Rank	Rank	
172	108	1	0.01	NA	43	0.40	NA	2.30%	NA	2	NA

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2014 SEASON

It is typically uncommon for elk populations to fluctuate dramatically from year to year, especially in District 3 where severe winter weather conditions do not occur. Consequently, populations available for harvest are expected to be similar in size compared to most years. In 2013, calf numbers did increase and should result in a noticeable increase in the number of spikes on the landscape during 2014. Hunter numbers also typically do not change dramatically from one year to the next. What can change from year to year, and in doing so has the potential to influence harvest rates, is weather.

For example, 2013 was a hot and dry summer in eastern Washington, which produced very warm and dry conditions during the archery season. Nonetheless, we are not able to predict weather events that far in advance so the best predictor of future harvest during general seasons are trends in harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success. Figure 2 provides trend data for each of these statistics by GMU and is intended to provide hunters with the best information possible to make an informed decision on where they want to hunt in District 3.

HOW TO FIND ELK

When hunting elk in District 3, hunters need to do their homework and spend plenty of time scouting before the season opener because it is often difficult to predict where the elk are going to be, especially after hunting pressure increases. The majority of hunters spend most of their time focusing on open ridge tops where they can glass animals from a considerable distance. During the general season, past research on bulls has indicated that a majority of the elk will move to north aspect, mid-slope timbered hillsides within one day of the opener. With only 9 days to hunt the general season, there is a lot of pressure the first few days of the season. Pressure definitely declines as the season progresses and may allow the elk to return to normal behaviors if they are not close to major roads.

Later in the season, it is a good idea to consult a topographic map and find “benches” that are located in steep terrain and thick cover because elk often use these areas to bed down during the day. Lastly, on public land, hunters should not let a locked gate keep them from going into an area to search for elk. More often than not, these areas hold elk that have not received as much hunting pressure, which can make them less skittish and easier to hunt.

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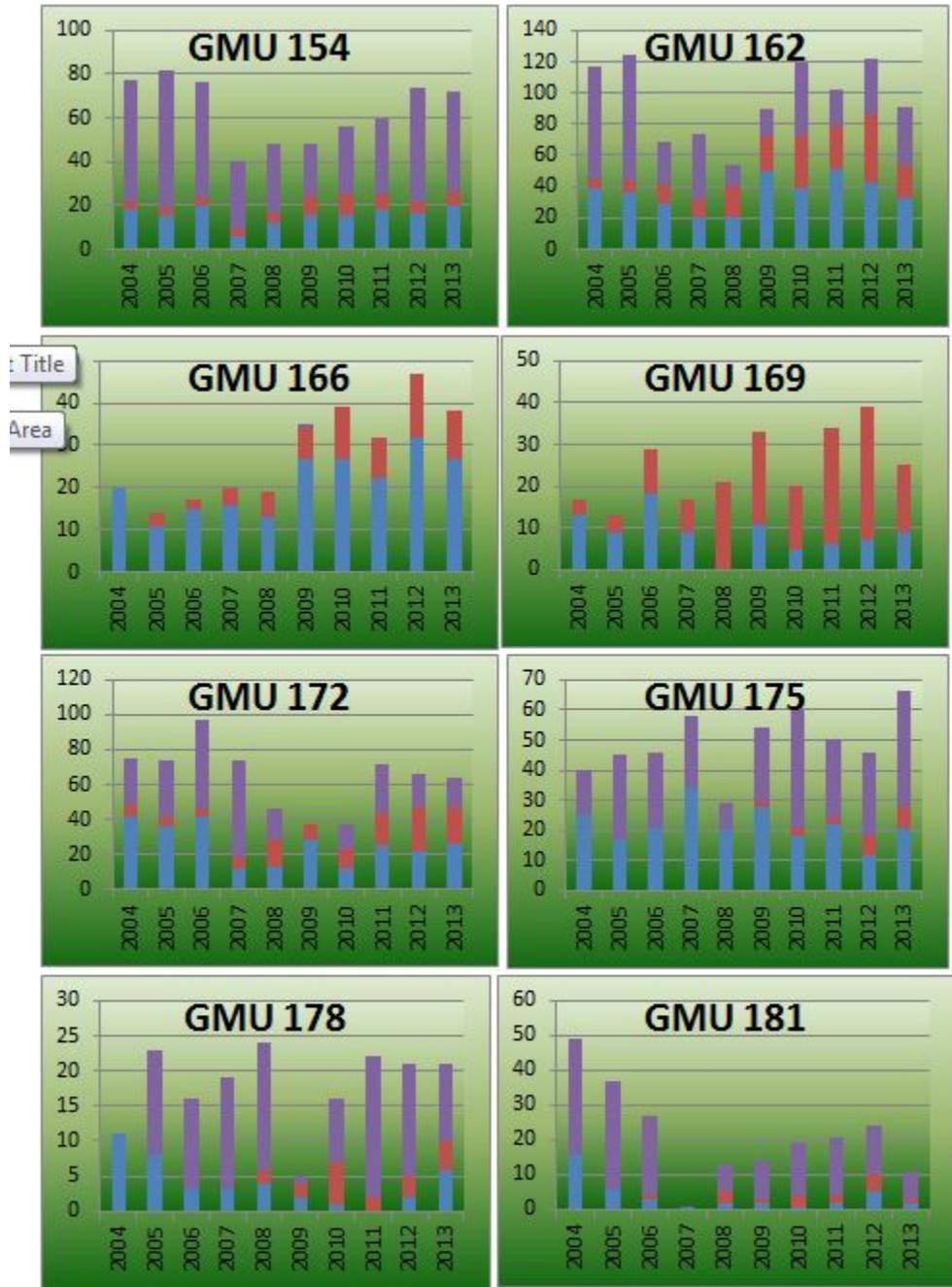


Figure 2. Trends in total number of yearling bulls (blue), branched bulls (red), and antlerless (purple) elk harvested during general and permit seasons combined, 2004 – 2013. Harvest does not include tribal harvest.

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ELK AREAS

There are six Elk Areas that occur in District 3: Elk Area 1010 (Dayton private lands), Elk Area 1008 and 1009 (Wenaha Wilderness), Elk Area 1013 (Mountain View Private), Elk Area 1040 (4-0 Wildlife Area) and Elk Area 1016 (Dayton USFS).

Elk Area 1010 is used to focus antlerless and branched-bull elk hunting on private land in the Dayton Unit. In the past, branched-bull tag holders focused on public lands where access was guaranteed, but also increased pressure on that segment of the population. This Elk Area is also used to focus antlerless harvest on the private lands where depredation complaints have historically been high, but limits antlerless harvest on public lands where higher elk densities are desired. Elk Area 1016 is used to provide controlled antlerless elk hunting opportunity on public lands, excluding the Rainwater Wildlife Area (CTUIR).

The intent of Elk Areas 1008 and 1009 was to distribute the hunting pressure within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness. In the past, most permit hunters focused in the western corner of the unit where the road density was highest. By spreading out the hunting pressure, additional hunting opportunity was created.

Elk Areas 1040 and 1013 are used to manage hunters within GMU 172. Elk Area 1013 limits antlerless hunting to private lands where damage can occur on agricultural areas, while maximizing elk numbers and recruitment on public lands. Elk Area 1040 is the newly acquired 4-0 Wildlife Area, which is managed for quality hunting opportunity as part of the sale agreement from the previous landowner. All deer and elk hunting on this wildlife area will be managed for quality opportunity, whereas all other species may be hunted by general seasons as listed in the pamphlet.

NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES

1. New Elk Area 1040 (4-0 Wildlife Area) is closed to general season deer and elk hunting. Elk hunting will only be allowed through the permit system on these lands.
2. Antlerless elk opportunity was increased in GMU 181 due to increasing herd size and depredation complaints.
3. Watershed bull permits were decreased from 45 to 35 as elk counts have declined for a number of years.

DEER

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Both mule deer and white-tailed deer occur throughout District 3. Deer hunting opportunities in District 3 vary from marginal to quite good, depending on the GMU. The GMUs with highest success (GMUs 145, 149, 178, 181) also have the highest amount of private land and access can be limited. GMUs where access to public land is highest (GMUs 166, 169, 175) have the lowest success, probably due to a combination of high hunter numbers and lower quality deer habitat. While overall harvest is one indicator of GMU hunting quality, harvest/unit effort (HPUE) and harvest/unit area (HPUA) equalize GMUs based on hunter numbers, number of days hunting, and GMU size. However, both HPUE and HPUA can be misleading, as HPUE is complicated by private land access limitations and HPUA is complicated by the amount of habitat in the GMU that actually supports deer. In general, HPUE seems to be a better indicator of hunting success. Hunter success and HPUE of either white-tailed or mule deer in District 3 is highest in GMUs 145 (Mayview), 149 (Prescott), 178 (Peola), and 181 (Couse), while total general season harvest is highest in GMUs 145 (Mayview), 149 (Prescott), 154 (Blue Creek), and 162 (Dayton).

In Washington, both mule deer and white-tailed deer are managed at the Population Management Unit (PMU) level, while harvest regulations are set at the GMU level. In general, each PMU consists of several GMUs that collectively define the range of a population that minimizes interchange with adjacent deer populations. Population objectives are set at the PMU level and survey data is summarized at that level as well. District 3 contains all of PMU 16 (GMU 145, 149, 154, 178, and 181) and PMU 17 (GMUs 157, 162, 163, 166, 169, 172, 175, and 186). All PMUs in District 3 are managed with the primary goal of promoting stable or increasing deer herds while also minimizing negative deer-human interactions. The WDFW Game Management Plan for 2009-2015 (WDFW 2008) has a desired status for post-hunt buck:doe ratios of 15-19 bucks:100 does for PMU 16 and 20-24 bucks:100 does for PMU 17. The lower desired ratios for PMU 16 mainly reflect a more liberal harvest of deer in agricultural units that likely have both higher quality forage due to availability of crops and higher levels of deer damage issues than PMU 17.

Currently, WDFW does not use formal estimates or indices of population size to monitor deer populations in District 3. Instead, trends in harvest, hunter success, and HPUE (harvest/hunter day) are used as surrogates to a formal index or estimate. WDFW recognizes the limitations of using harvest data to monitor trends in population size and we have recently been conducting aerial sightability surveys to monitor deer populations that are independent of harvest data.

All available harvest data indicates deer populations appear to be stable or slightly increasing in both PMUs associated with District 3, and only GMU 175 has shown a consistent declining trend in HPUE. For more detailed information related to the status of mule deer and white-tailed deer in Washington, hunters should read through the most recent version of the Game Status and Trend Report which is available for download on the Department's website or by [clicking here](#).

WHICH GMU SHOULD DEER HUNTERS HUNT?

Probably the most frequent question we get from hunters is, “What GMU should I hunt?” This is not always an easy question to answer because it depends on what weapon is going to be used and what type of hunting experience the hunter is looking for. Some hunters are looking for a quality opportunity to harvest a mature buck, while others just want to harvest any legal deer in an area with few hunters.

The ideal GMU for most hunters would have high deer densities, low hunter densities, and high hunter success rates. Unfortunately, this scenario does not exist in any GMU that is open during the general modern firearm, archery, or muzzleloader seasons in District 3. Instead, because of general season opportunities, the GMUs with the highest deer densities tend to have the highest hunter densities as well. For many hunters, high hunter densities are not enough to persuade them not to hunt in a GMU where they see lots of deer. For other hunters, they would prefer to hunt in areas with moderate to low numbers of deer if that means there are also very few hunters.

The information provided in Table 3 provides a quick and general assessment of how GMUs compare with regard to harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success during general modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader deer seasons. The values presented are the 5-year averages for each statistic. Total harvest and hunter numbers were further summarized by the number of deer harvested and hunters per square mile. This approach was taken because comparing total harvest or hunter numbers is not always a fair comparison because GMUs vary in size. For example, the average total number of deer harvested over the past 5 years during the general season in GMUs 149 (Prescott) and 154 (Blue Creek) has been 646 and 316 deer, respectively. Just looking at total harvest suggests deer densities are much higher in GMU 149 than 154. However, when harvest is expressed as deer harvested/mi², we come up with an estimate of 0.62 in GMU 149 and 1.61 in GMU 154, which suggests deer densities are probably much higher in GMU 154 than they are in GMU 149. This is further complicated by the amount of actual deer habitat in each GMU. For example, GMU 149 is the largest GMU, but is comprised primarily of tilled croplands, and deer are concentrated in CRP fields and along the breaks of the Snake River, so densities are probably higher than the harvest/mi² indicates.

Each GMU was ranked from 1 to 12 (except for ties) for deer harvested/mi², hunters/mi², hunter success rates, and public land access. Then, the four ranking values were summed to produce a final rank sum. GMUs are listed by GMU number, not by rank. Comparisons are straightforward because bag limits and seasons are the same for most GMUs. Differences that are present and should be considered are:

- 1 Some private land GMUs have extensive acreage in WDFW Access programs, such as Feel Free to Hunt, Hunt by Written Permission, Hunt by Registration, or Hunt by Reservation, and may offer similar access to some GMUs with public land. See the Access section of this document for private land acreage available for public hunting in each GMU.

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- 2 Some private land GMUs have extensive acreage in tilled croplands, and actual suitable hunting area may be much smaller, leading to higher than expected hunter densities.

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TABLE 3. RANK SUM ANALYSIS THAT PROVIDES A QUICK AND GENERAL COMPARISON OF HOW TOTAL HARVEST, HUNTER NUMBERS, HUNTER SUCCESS RATES, AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC LAND COMPARE AMONG GMUS DURING GENERAL MODERN, ARCHERY, AND MUZZLELOADER DEER SEASONS. GMUS BOLDDED ARE OPEN DURING EARLY AND LATE SEASONS FOR THE RESPECTIVE WEAPON TYPE. DATA PRESENTED ARE BASED ON A 5-YEAR AVERAGE.

MODERN FIREARM											
GMU	Size (mi ²)	Harvest			Hunter Density			Hunter Success		Public Access	Rank Sum
		Total	Harvest per mi ²	Rank	Hunters	Hunters per mi ²	Rank	Success	Rank	Rank	
145	355	263	0.740	3	608	1.71	4	43%	1	3	11
149	1409	520	0.369	10	1459	1.04	1	36%	3	3	17
154	216	254	1.175	2	932	4.31	11	27%	6	3	22
162	210	343	1.634	1	1606	7.65	12	21%	7	2	22
163	149	90	0.605	6	337	2.26	8	27%	6	3	23
166	131	84	0.641	5	528	4.03	10	16%	8	1	24
169	161	27	0.169	12	221	1.37	2	13%	9	1	24
172	108	61	0.565	7	218	2.01	7	28%	5	2	21
175	158	45	0.285	11	361	2.29	9	13%	9	1	30
178	275	192	0.699	4	500	1.82	6	38%	2	3	15
181	262	142	0.544	8	374	1.43	3	38%	2	3	16
186	53	28	0.536	9	92	1.74	5	31%	4	2	20

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ARCHERY											
GMU	Size (mi ²)	Harvest			Hunter Density			Hunter Success		Public Access	Rank Sum
		Total	Harvest per mi ²	Rank	Hunters	Hunters per mi ²	Rank	Success	Rank	Rank	
145	355	8	0.020	10	42	0.12	3	25%	5	3	21
149	1409	30	0.022	9	106	0.08	1	27%	3	3	16
154	216	56	0.261	1	215	1.00	10	26%	4	3	18
162	210	31	0.147	2	216	1.03	11	14%	8	2	23
163	149	21	0.143	3	123	0.82	9	18%	6	3	21
166	131	14	0.110	5	95	0.72	7	16%	7	1	20
169	161	1	0.006	12	24	0.15	4	5%	12	1	29
172	108	4	0.035	8	26	0.24	5	13%	9	2	24
175	158	7	0.044	7	115	0.73	8	6%	11	1	16
178	275	34	0.124	4	119	0.43	6	29%	2	3	13
181	262	14	0.053	6	40	0.15	4	34%	1	3	13
186	53	1	0.015	11	6	0.11	2	12%	10	2	15

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MUZZLELOADER											
GMU	Size (mi ²)	Harvest			Hunter Density			Hunter Success		Public Access	Rank Sum
		Total	Harvest per mi ²	Rank	Hunters	Hunters per mi ²	Rank	Success	Rank	Rank	
145	355	21	0.060	3	46	0.13	4	36%	2	3	12
149	1409	80	0.056	4	218	0.15	3	36%	2	3	12
154	216	N/A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
162	210	N/A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
163	149	N/A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
166	131	N/A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
169	161	N/A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
172	108	10	0.089	2	41	0.38	2	24%	4	2	10
175	158	3	0.020	6	23	0.15	3	13%	5	1	15
178	275	N/A	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
181	262	53	0.202	1	130	0.49	1	40%	1	3	6
186	53	2	0.030	5	6	0.12	5	33%	3	2	15

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2014 SEASON

It is typically uncommon for deer populations to fluctuate dramatically from year to year, especially in District 3 where deer move out of the mountains in winter and weather conditions are generally mild and do not result in large winter die-offs. Periodic die-offs have occurred due to epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD), a viral condition transmitted by biting midges, which mainly affects white-tailed deer. We have not had a severe outbreak since 2008. Mule deer populations have experienced long-term declines across much of the West with no definitive cause identified. Habitat loss is suspected to be one possible cause, particularly loss of winter range. The Conservation Reserve Program has probably helped maintain winter range in District 3, and mule deer populations outside of the mountains appear to be stable to increasing. Consequently, populations available for harvest are expected to be similar in size compared to the 2013 season.

Hunter numbers have generally decreased over the last 13 years, but have remained fairly stable since 2006. Consequently, the best predictor of future harvest during general seasons is recent

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trends in harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success. Figures 5 through 7 provide trend data for each of these statistics by GMU and are intended to provide hunters with the best information possible to make an informed decision on where they want to hunt in District 3 and what they can expect to encounter with regard to hunter success and hunter numbers.

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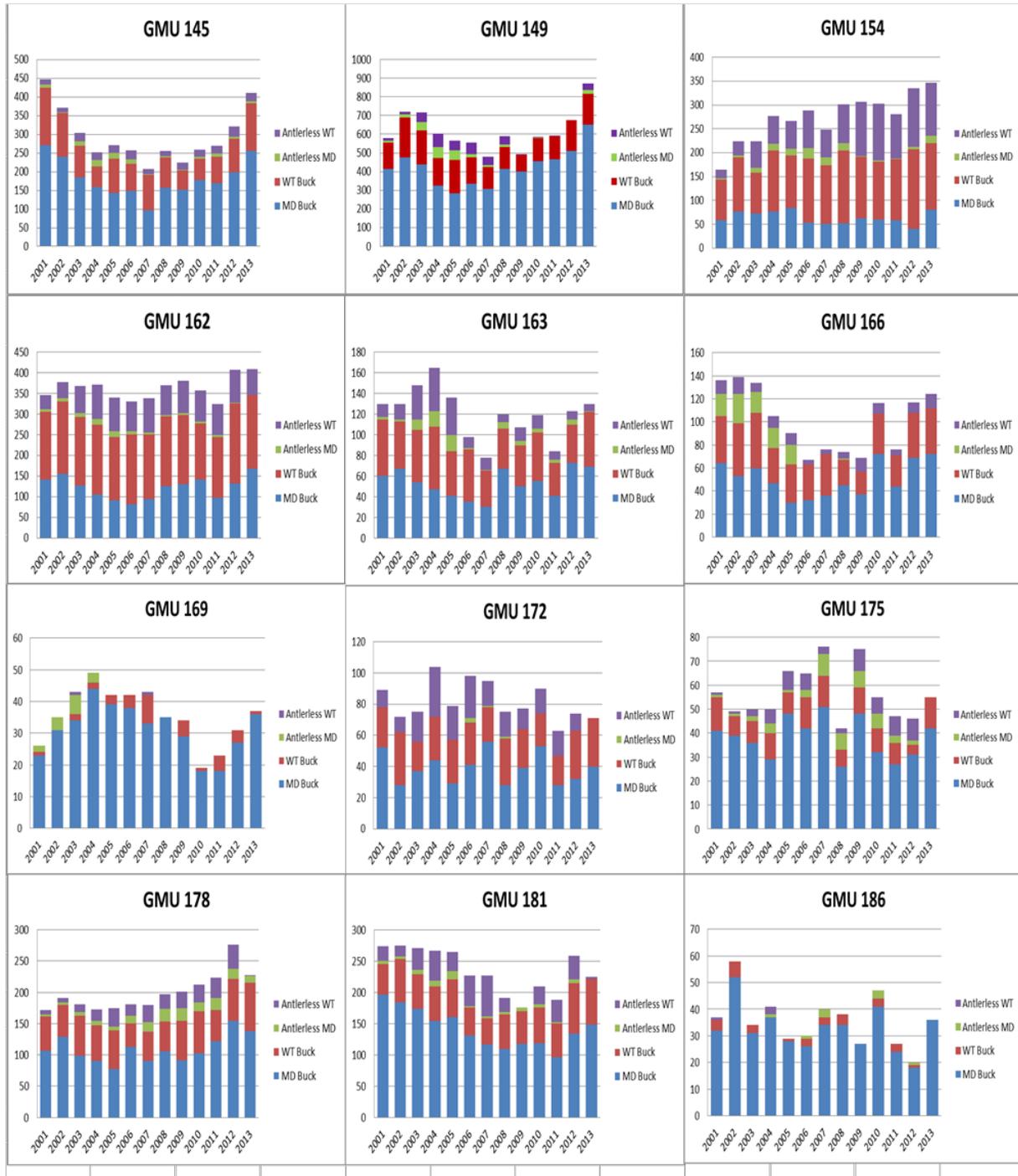


FIGURE 5. TRENDS IN TOTAL NUMBERS OF MULE DEER BUCKS (BLUE) AND ANTLERLESS DEER (GREEN), AND WHITE-TAILED BUCKS (RED) AND ANTLERLESS DEER (PURPLE) DURING THE ALL GENERAL SEASONS COMBINED FROM 2001-2013. TOTALS DO NOT INCLUDE PERMIT HARVEST.

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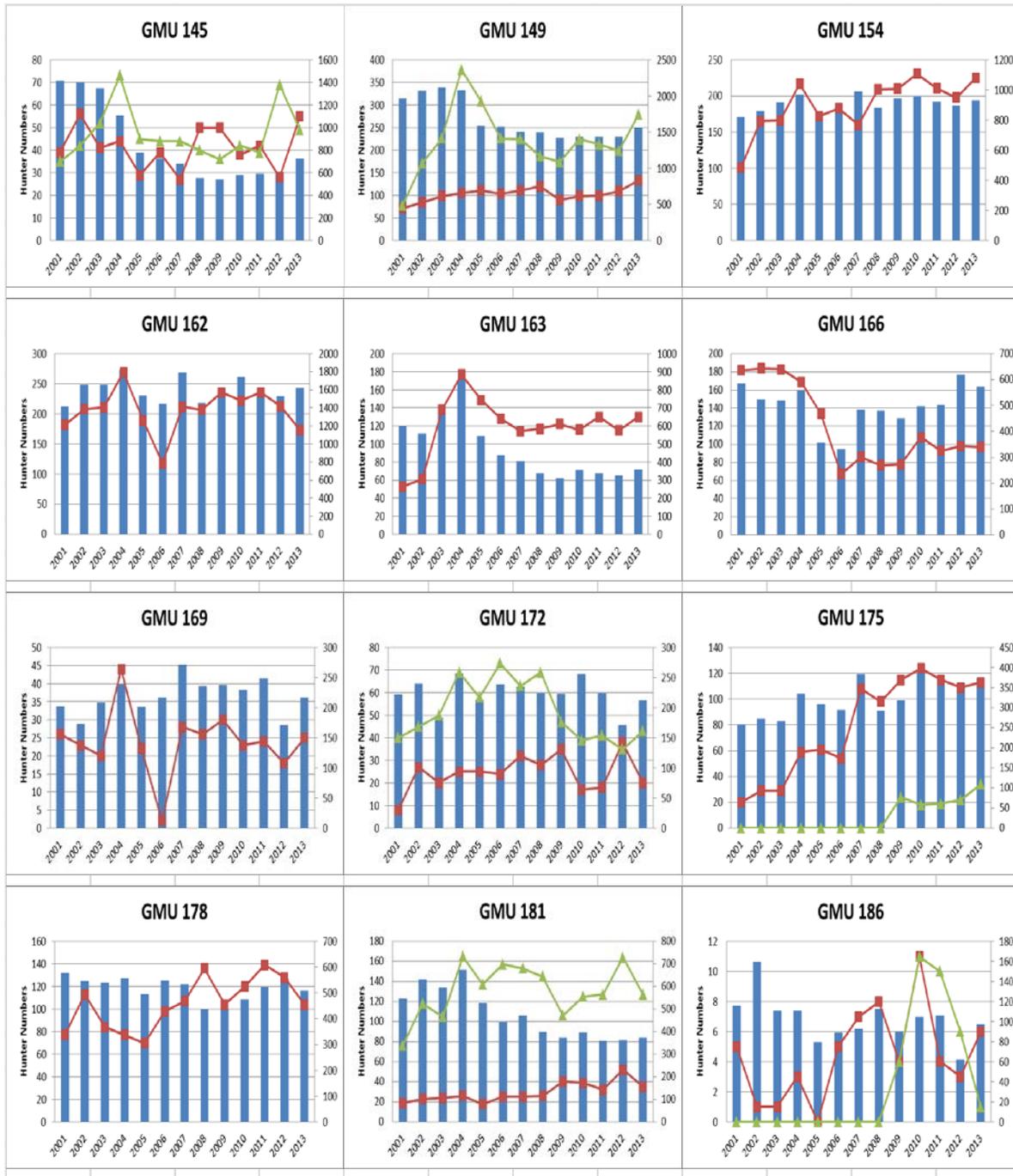


FIGURE 6. TRENDS IN HUNTER NUMBERS FOR EACH GMU IN DISTRICT 3 FOR MODERN FIREARM (BLUE BARS, RIGHT AXIS), ARCHERY (RED SQUARES, LEFT AXIS), AND MUZZLELOADER (GREEN TRIANGLES, LEFT AXIS) GENERAL SEASONS FOR 2001-2013.

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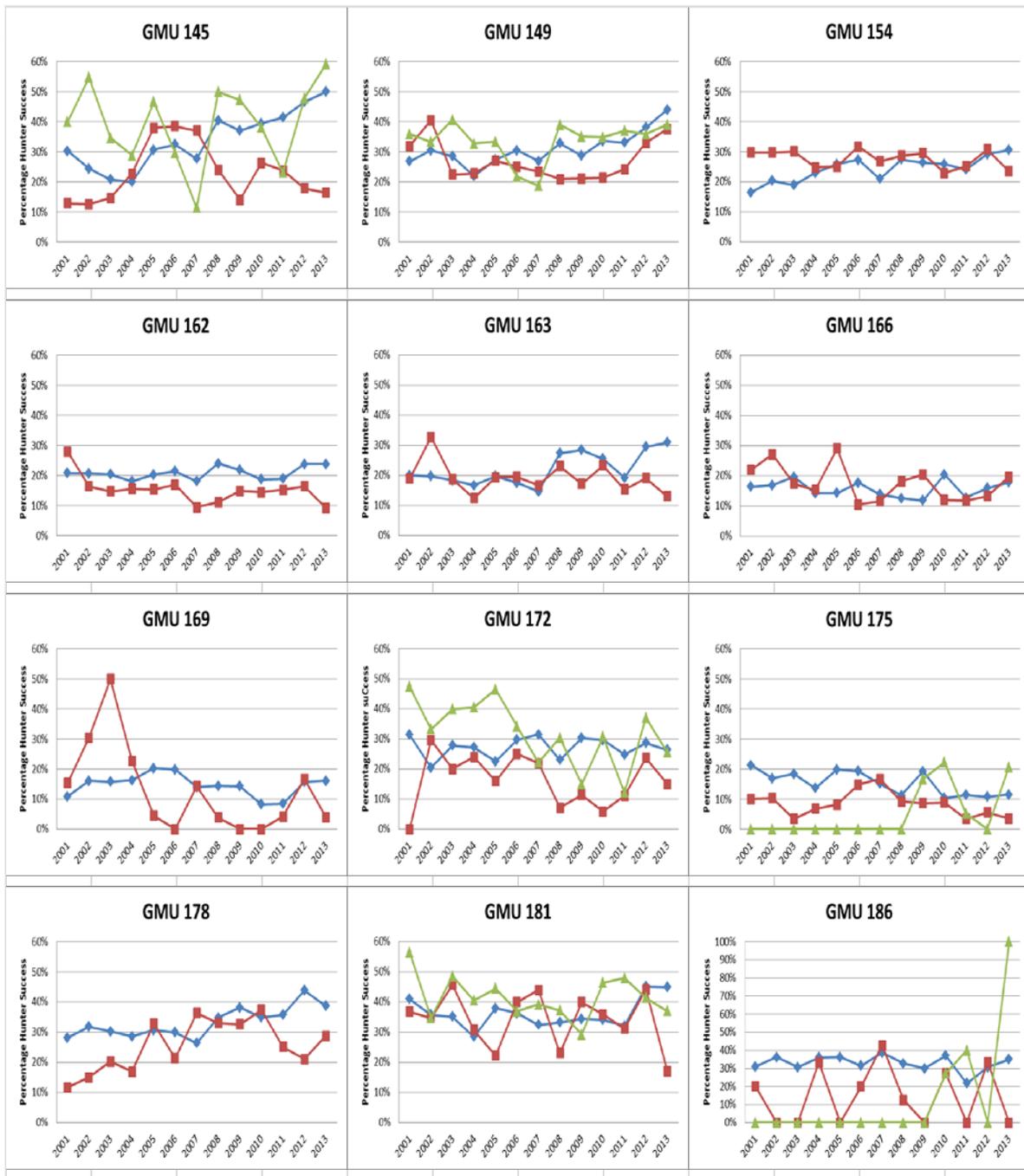


FIGURE 7. TRENDS IN PERCENTAGE HARVEST SUCCESS FOR EACH GMU IN DISTRICT 3 FOR MODERN FIREARM (BLUE DIAMONDS), ARCHERY (RED SQUARES), AND MUZZLELOADER (GREEN TRIANGLES) GENERAL SEASONS FOR 2001-2013.

DEER AREAS

There are 5 Deer Areas in District 3 that were created for a number of different purposes. Deer Area 1010 is located within the private land area of GMU 162 and was created to help manage deer damage while limiting antlerless harvest on public land in the GMU. Deer Area 1008 and 1009 divide GMU 169 and help to manage deer by distributing harvest opportunity across the wilderness area. Deer Area 1021 is located in and around the town of Clarkston in GMU 178 and is used to help manage deer in and around this urban area. Deer Area 1040 is located in GMU 172 and consists of the newly purchased 4-0 Ranch Wildlife Area. The boundaries of this area are still in flux as different phases of the acquisition are approved, and the designation helps to manage harvest on this unique property.

NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES

1. New Deer Area 1040 (4-0 Wildlife Area) is closed to general season deer and elk hunting, open only by permit.
2. GMU 178 included in Senior/Disabled/Youth general rifle season area after mistakenly being omitted in 2013.
3. GMU 149 is open for 5 days longer during early archery season.
4. GMU 172 and 181 antlerless opportunities for late muzzleloader season reinstated.
5. New Deer Area 1040 buck permits for Modern (2), Archery (2), and Muzzleloader (2).

BEAR

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Black bears occur mainly in the foothills and forested areas of District 3, but population densities vary among GMUs. The best opportunities to harvest a bear likely occur in GMUs 154 (Blue Creek) and 162 (Dayton).

District 3 consists of GMUs that are part of the Blue Mountains Black Bear Management Unit 8 (BBMU 8), which is one of nine BBMUs defined by WDFW. The current black bear hunting season guidelines for the Blue Mtns BBMU are designed to maintain black bear populations at their current level, which is not expected to result in increased impacts to big game herds. The metrics used to direct black bear harvest include: proportion of harvested bears that were female, median age of harvested females, and median age of harvested males.

WDFW does not conduct annual surveys to monitor trends in black bear population size. Instead, we use trends in harvest data as surrogates to formal population estimates or indices. Currently, black bear populations are believed to be stable in District 3.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2014 SEASON

Although there are hunters that specifically target black bears, it is suspected most bears are harvested opportunistically during general deer and elk seasons. Consequently, annual harvest can vary quite a bit from one year to the next and overall hunter success is quite low. Since 2001, hunter success in District 3 has averaged just 6% and has never been higher than 9%. However, hunter success is likely higher for those hunters that specifically hunt bears versus those that buy a bear tag in case they see one while they are deer or elk hunting.

Overall, there has been no trend in annual bear harvest during the general bear season in District 3, with harvest generally fluctuating between 75 and 100 bears, excluding a few outliers. 2011 was a relatively poor year, with 66 bears harvested, but harvest rebounded during the 2012 and 2013 seasons (Figure 8). With annual fluctuations in hunter numbers, some index of harvest per unit effort is generally a better indicator of harvest trends. Figure 8 shows the number of hunter days per bear harvested, which also does not show any consistent trend.

At the GMU level, most bears will be harvested in GMUs 154 (Blue Creek) and 162 (Dayton). Harvest numbers during the 2013 season compared to long-term (10-year) and short-term (5-year) averages were higher in both GMUs 154 and 162, but the yearly harvest does not show any identifiable trends, other than some depressed harvest in GMU 162 during the mid-2000s that has since recovered (Figure 9). Based on general long-term stability in District 3 bear harvest, hunters should expect similar harvest and success rates during the 2014 season.

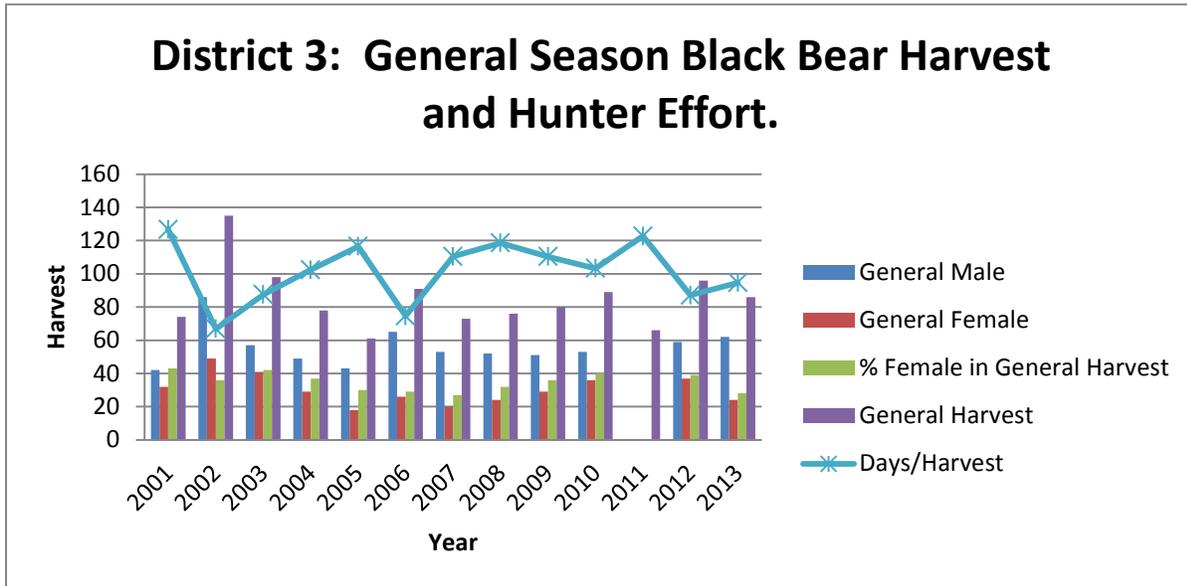


FIGURE 8. TRENDS IN THE NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE BLACK BEARS AND TOTAL NUMBER OF BEARS HARVESTED DURING THE GENERAL BEAR SEASON, AND AN INDEX OF HUNTER EFFORT (HUNTER DAYS/BEAR HARVESTED) IN DISTRICT 3, 2001–2013. THE SEX OF HARVESTED BEARS IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR 2011.

HOW TO LOCATE AND HARVEST A BLACK BEAR

Scouting is an extremely important factor hunters should consider when specifically hunting for black bears in District 3. Although black bears are extremely common and occur in some areas at very high densities, they are seen infrequently because they limit their time in the open to cooler times of day, and move into thick vegetation in draws and creek bottoms.

Black bears can occur in a variety of habitat types so it can be difficult to narrow down where to search for them. Hunters should focus their efforts early in the day in more open terrain (e.g. south-facing slopes) because bears have an incredible sense of smell, and in habitats with dense vegetation a bear is likely to smell a hunter well before the hunter knows the bear is there.

Bears can often be located along riparian corridors that contain a large number of berry-producing shrubs including creeping blackberries and elderberries, or along north-facing slopes with salmonberries, huckleberries, and blackberries. Spring permit holders should look below snow-line on south-facing slopes that get early green-up of wild onions and other vegetation and near springs or wet areas with green aquatic vegetation. During the fall, hunters generally will find bears early in the day foraging across open slopes dissected by shrubby draws. Also, check riparian areas that may still have berries or rose hips, and hike through them to see if there is any

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bear sign. If you do find fresh sign, odds are there is a bear that is frequenting that area often. If hunters are patient and sit for extended periods of time watching open areas in these riparian patches and corridors, they may get a chance to harvest that bear. Patience is the key.

NOTABLE CHANGES

There are no notable changes for the 2014 season.

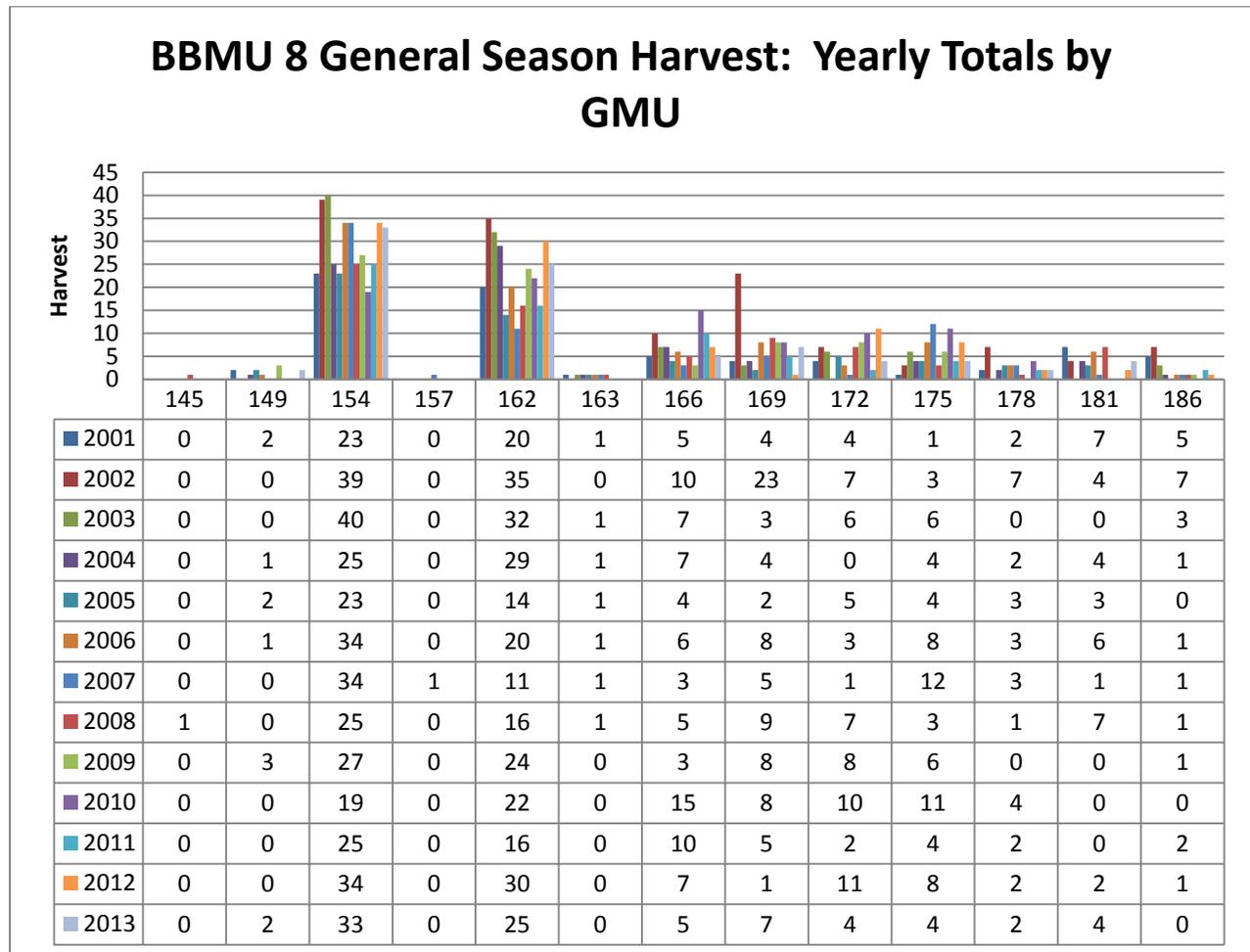


Figure 9. The number of bears harvested in each GMU during 2001-2013 general bear season in District 3.

COUGAR

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Cougars can occur throughout District 3, but densities likely vary among GMUs. Cougar populations in District 3 are managed with the primary objective of maintaining a stable cougar population. Beginning in 2012, WDFW changed the way it managed cougar harvest in Washington. The biggest change was associated with shifting away from using season length or permit seasons to manage the number of cougar harvested, and instead use a standard liberal season coupled with harvest guidelines. The intent was to have a longer season, without any weapon restrictions, and only close cougar seasons in specific areas if harvest reached or exceeded a harvest guideline.

To accomplish harvest goals, WDFW established a series of hunt areas with standard season dates of September 1 through March 31. Harvest numbers are examined starting January 1 and any hunt area that meets or exceeds the harvest guideline may be closed. If you plan on hunting cougar after January 1, please take a moment to confirm that the cougar season is open in the area you plan to hunt. Harvest quotas for each Hunt Area located in District 3 are provided in Table 4.

For more information related to the new harvest guidelines management approach, please visit the WDFW’s website or [click here](#).

TABLE 4. HARVEST GUIDELINES AND 2013 HARVEST LEVELS FOR THE 3 COUGAR HUNT AREAS LOCATED IN DISTRICT 3.

Hunt Area	Harvest Guideline	2013-2014 Harvest
145, 166, 175, 178	3-4	6
149, 154, 162, 163	4-6	10
169, 172, 181, 186	3-4	4

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2014 SEASON

Cougar harvest in District 3 has been variable over the years, with the average since 1990 of 16 cougars and a range between a low of 7 and a high of 33. However, in 16 out of the last 24 years, the range has been between 12 and 20 cougars harvested. Since 2001, the number of cougars harvested in District 3 has averaged 14 cougars, and sub-adults typically dominate the harvest. With the yearly variation, it is hard to predict future harvest, but cougar sightings in the District continue to be fairly common and there is no reason to suspect much change in the harvest.

NOTABLE CHANGES

There are no notable changes for the 2014 season.

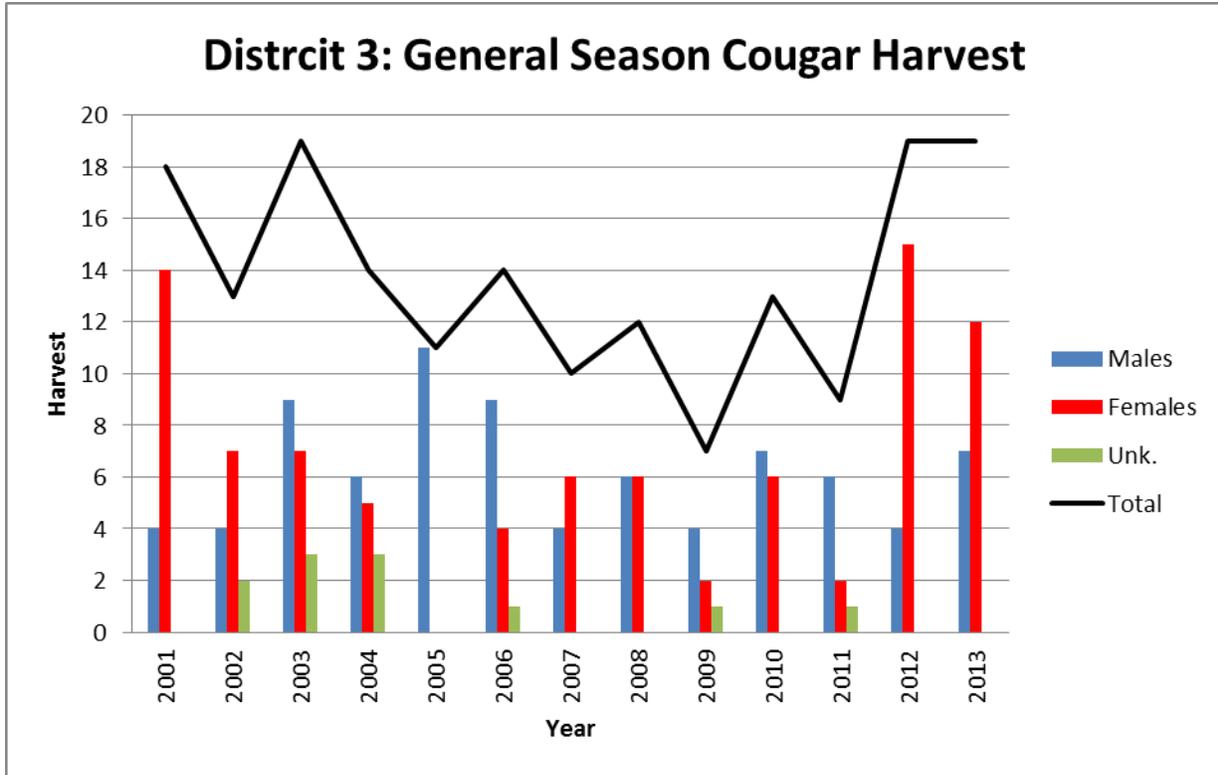


FIGURE 10. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF COUGARS HARVESTED IN DISTRICT 3, 2001–2013.

DUCKS

COMMON SPECIES

A wide variety of ducks occur in District 3. Common dabbling ducks include mallard, northern pintail, American widgeon, green-wing teal, and northern shoveler. Species of divers, including bufflehead, scaup, canvasback, and common goldeneye are present along the reservoirs of the Snake and Columbia River and can occur in fairly large numbers. Nesting wood ducks can be located along the Snake River near Asotin and can provide a unique hunting opportunity early in the season.

Mallards are the most abundant duck species in Washington and constitute the vast majority of ducks harvested statewide (typically $\geq 50\%$). Mid-winter surveys in the South Columbia Basin segment of District 3 typically yield $>50\%$ of mallards in the dabbling duck count, with

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goldeneye and canvasback making up 80% of the diving ducks. When hunting, hunters should expect harvest opportunities to be dominated by mallard and American widgeon, although hunting by boat in the river reservoirs can yield good harvests of diving ducks.

MIGRATION CHRONOLOGY

There are very few ducks in District 3 during late-spring and early summer. Beginning in mid to late September, birds will begin migrating south from British Columbia, the Yukon, and Alaska and numbers will continue to increase until they peak in late October and early November. Although migration patterns have not been intensively studied, it is believed ducks use concentration areas in District 3 as resting and foraging areas and do not stay in the District for long periods of time. Consequently, the number of ducks located in District 3 most likely changes on a daily basis, but begins to decline precipitously when there are no more new migrants coming into the area from breeding grounds to the north.

CONCENTRATION AREAS

In general, concentration areas include the wetlands and rivers around McNary NWR and the Columbia and Snake River Valleys. Where concentrations occur within these broader areas is dependent on many factors (e.g. hunting pressure, weather, food, etc.) and has the potential to change on a daily basis. The agricultural areas around McNary NWR attract large numbers of foraging ducks and geese, but most of these lands are closed to hunting or leased by private hunting outfitters and access can be difficult or expensive.

POPULATION STATUS

The number of ducks that occur in District 3 during established hunting seasons is most strongly related to the status of breeding duck populations in Alaska. The 2013 breeding population survey estimated the breeding population in Alaska at 3.3 million ducks which represented a 26% decline from the 2012 estimate of 4.46 million. In addition, the mallard estimates showed an even greater decline, from 506,000 in 2012 to 338,000 in 2013, a 33% decline. The 2014 breeding survey estimated the breeding population in Alaska at 3.5 million ducks, a 6% increase over 2013 values, but still well below the 2012 estimate. The mallard estimate recovered from 2013 lows to an estimate of 501,000 for 2014, a 48% increase and similar to the 2012 estimate (USFWS, Trends in Duck Breeding Populations, 1955-2014).

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2014 PROSPECTS

Even though estimates of breeding populations in Alaska were down in 2013, hunters still had many great hunting opportunities in District 3 during the 2013 season. Although hunter numbers have remained relatively stable, both the total number of ducks harvested and the number of ducks harvested per hunter day have been increasing since 2009 (Figure 12). 2014 breeding population estimates are up from 2013, and the 2014 season should offer good hunting prospects.

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HUNTING TECHNIQUES

How hunters go about hunting ducks is largely dependent on where they choose to hunt. When hunting inland waters associated with ponds and rivers, or feeding areas, traditional setups work the best and birds are most active during early morning and late afternoon as they move from resting areas to feeding areas. See [“Let’s Go Waterfowling”](#) for more information on hunting ducks.

PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of US Army Corp of Engineer (USACE) Habitat Management Units along the Snake River in District 3 that offer good waterfowl hunting opportunities, and McNary National Wildlife Refuge Complex along the Columbia River offers some of the premier hunting opportunities in the District. Wildlife Areas in District 3 are primarily big game habitat and do not offer much waterfowl hunting opportunity, but hunters should visit WDFW waterfowl hunting page ([click here](#)) for more detailed information on related to their location, current waterfowl management activities, and common species.

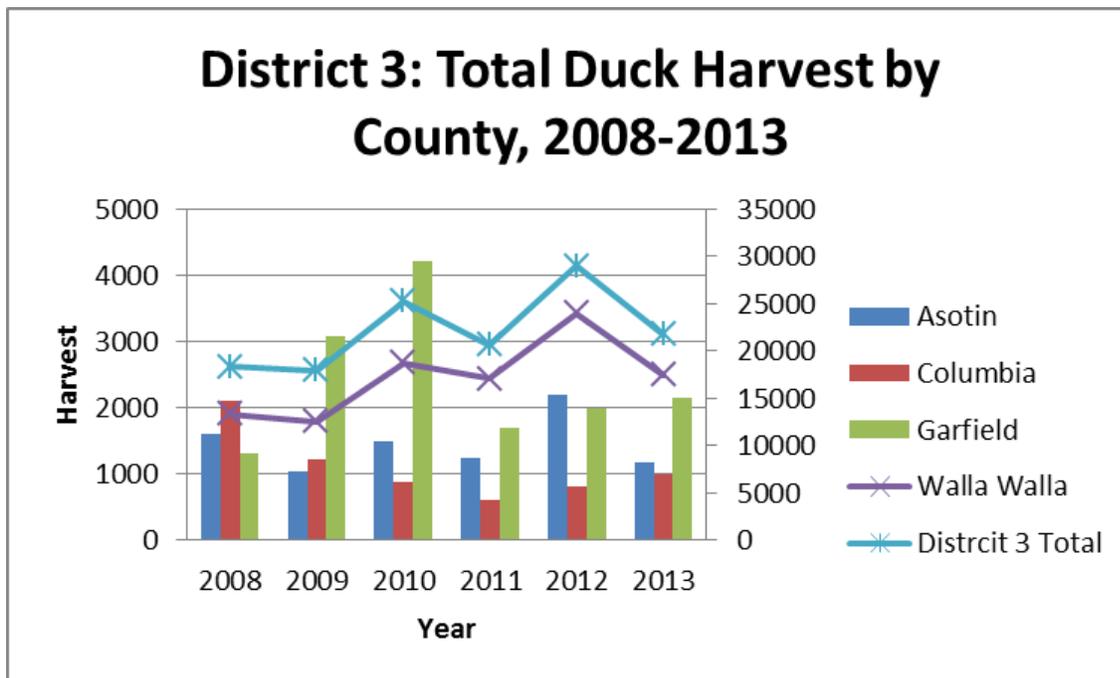


FIGURE 13A. TRENDS IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DUCKS HARVESTED (BLUE LINE, RIGHT AXIS), AND TOTALS BY COUNTY IN WALLA WALLA COUNTY (PURPLE LINE, RIGHT AXIS), AND ASOTIN, COLUMBIA, AND GARFIELD COUNTIES (BARS, LEFT AXIS), 2008–2013.

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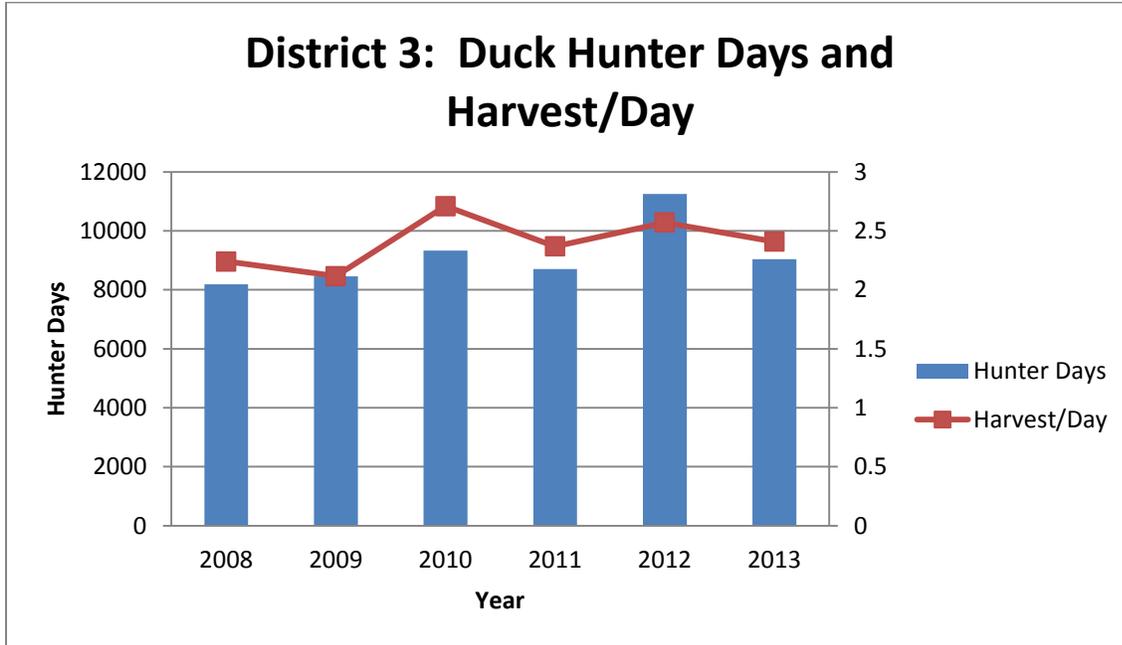


FIGURE 13B. TRENDS IN THE TOTAL DUCK HUNTER DAYS (LEFT AXIS), AND DUCKS HARVESTED PER HUNTER DAY (RIGHT AXIS) IN DISTRICT 3, 2008–2013.

GEESE

COMMON SPECIES

Canada geese are the only goose species available for harvest in District 3 during the early September season, while Canada, Snow, Ross, and White-fronted geese may all be taken during the late season.

MIGRATION CHRONOLOGY AND CONCENTRATION AREAS

The migration chronology of geese in District 3 is nearly identical to that described for ducks with very few geese occurring in the District until migrants begin showing up from Alaska in September. However, one distinct difference between ducks and geese is that goose numbers do not decline as sharply as duck numbers do around the latter half of November. Instead, many geese choose to over-winter in the agricultural areas of the District as long as snow cover does not become excessive.

POPULATION STATUS

There are few geese that breed in District 3 so WDFW does not conduct breeding goose surveys in this part of the state. Urban populations can be problematic at time, but offer limited hunting opportunities.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2014 PROSPECTS

Goose hunting opportunities in District 3 are expected to be similar to trends observed during the last few seasons. Most goose harvest will occur in Walla Walla County during the late season, where twice as many geese are harvested each year compared to Asotin, Columbia, and Garfield Counties combined.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES

The techniques employed to harvest geese are pretty standard; find agricultural areas where geese are feeding and set up your spread well before daylight in parts of the fields you expect the geese to concentrate. In District 3, agricultural areas where feeding geese congregate are dryland and irrigated agricultural fields relatively close to the Snake or Columbia Rivers. Because of this, goose hunting opportunities most often occur on private property and require hunters to gain permission before hunting. There are multiple guide services available for hunters willing to pay for access and experience.

SPECIAL REGULATIONS

It is strongly recommended that hunters review the most recent Washington State Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Season Pamphlet to ensure they are in compliance, as there are specific daily regulations. Pamphlets are available at any retailer that sells hunting licenses or they can be downloaded from WDFW's website ([click here](#)).

FOREST GROUSE

SPECIES AND GENERAL HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS

There are two species of grouse that occur in District 3-- ruffed grouse and blue grouse (dusky). Ruffed grouse are the most abundant and occur at lower elevations and valley bottoms. Blue grouse can be located in upper elevation grasslands and forests.

POPULATION STATUS

WDFW does not conduct any standardized surveys to monitor grouse populations in District 3. Instead, we use harvest data trends as surrogates to formal population estimates or indices of population size. Total harvest numbers tend to vary with hunter numbers so catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE; birds harvested per hunter day) is the best indicator of population trend. In District 3, grouse populations appear to have increased in the past 2 years as CPUE has slowly increased from a 5-year average of 0.32 birds per hunter day to 0.40 birds per hunter day during the 2013 season.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2014 PROSPECTS

The total number of grouse harvested in District 3 declined significantly from 2009 when 5,147 grouse were estimated to be harvested to 1,771 in 2013. However, hunter numbers have declined as well, especially over the past few years. Regardless, hunters should expect to bag somewhere between 0.2 and 0.4 grouse per day hunted.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES AND WHERE TO HUNT

In general, the most effective way to hunt grouse in District 3 is by walking roads and shooting them as they flush or after they roost in a nearby tree. Blue grouse tend to occur in higher densities in the higher elevations of the Blue Mountains, and can occasionally be found in high densities along grassy open ridges mixed with conifer forests. Ruffed grouse are closely associated with riparian areas throughout all elevations of the forested portions of the Blue Mountains. To learn more about how to hunt Washington's grouse species please visit WDFW's upland bird hunting webpage or [click here](#).

PHEASANTS

Pheasant hunting opportunities in District 3 are associated with the Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program. Each year, approximately 3,500 pheasants are released in Region 1, and most of these are destined for release sites in District 3. Nine sites are located throughout the District; 4 of those sites (Hollebeke HMU, Mill Creek HMU, Rice Bar HMU, and Willow Bar HMU) are owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2 sites (Asotin WMA and Wooten WMA) are WDFW-owned, and the remainder are on private lands enrolled in the Access program and are open to the public under the Feel Free to Hunt program. Releases take place for the youth season on most of the sites in late September, and the remaining releases happen sporadically throughout the pheasant hunting season.

SPECIES AND GENERAL HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS

Pheasants are closely associated with agricultural and grassland habitats throughout the northern portion of the District. The best pheasant hunting is located in areas of permanent cover, usually associated with riparian or shrubby habitats.

POPULATION STATUS

WDFW does not generate population estimates for pheasants currently. Instead, we use harvest data trends as surrogates to formal population estimates or indices of population size. Total harvest numbers tend to vary with hunter numbers so catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE; birds harvested per hunter day) is the best indicator of population trend. In District 3, pheasant CPUE appears to have remained relatively stable over the past 5 years. CPUE in 2013 was 0.7 birds harvested per hunter day, with the previous 5-year average being 0.70. Other WDFW information implies that populations have declined during the past couple of decades, but appear to have stabilized.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2014 PROSPECTS

The total number of pheasants harvested in District 3 is dependent upon habitat and weather conditions during the breeding season. The spring and early summer of 2014 have been good conditions for nesting and brood rearing for pheasants. We would predict that pheasant numbers should be better in the fall of 2014 than the past 2-3 years.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES AND WHERE TO HUNT

In general, the most effective way to hunt pheasants in District 3 is with the use of a bird dog. Pheasants are usually located in thicker cover and often require a dog to flush them if they do not run in front of the hunters. To learn more about how to hunt Washington's pheasant please visit WDFW's upland bird hunting webpage or [click here](#).

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Hunters should be aware that special regulations apply when hunting on eastern Washington pheasant release sites. Most notably, hunters are required to use non-toxic shot, and hunting is only allowed between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. To locate maps for the Mill Creek, Hollebeke, Rice Bar, and Willow Bar HMUs, and Asotin and Hartstock WMA Release Sites, and to learn more about the Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program, [click here](#).

QUAIL

California quail are locally common in the lower elevation draws and drainages across the foothills of the Blue Mountains, and in suitable pockets of habitat across the prairie areas and breaks of the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers. Mountain quail occur in District 3, but there are no sizable populations and sightings are uncommon. When they do occur, it is usually along the Asotin Creek drainage and tributaries that have abundant shrub cover, and hunters looking for California quail in this area should be careful to identify their target, as Mountain quail are protected in Eastern Washington.

POPULATION STATUS

WDFW does not estimate population size for quail. Instead, we use harvest data trends as surrogates to formal population estimates or indices of population size. Total harvest numbers tend to vary with hunter numbers so catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE; birds harvested per hunter day) is the best indicator of population trend. In District 3, quail CPUE appears to have declined in 2013, likely due to weather during the nesting period. CPUE in 2013 was 0.77 birds harvested per hunter day, with the previous 5-year average being 0.95.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2014 PROSPECTS

The total number of quail harvested in District 3 is dependent upon habitat and weather conditions during the breeding season. The spring and early summer of 2014 have been good conditions for nesting and brood rearing for quail. We would predict that quail numbers should be better in the fall of 2014 than the past 2-3 years.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES AND WHERE TO HUNT

In general, the most effective way to hunt quail in District 3 is with the use of a bird dog. Quail are usually located in thicker cover and often require a dog to flush. To learn more about how to hunt Washington's quail please visit WDFW's upland bird hunting webpage or [click here](#).

TURKEYS

Wild Turkeys of the Rio Grande subspecies have been introduced into SE WA and have become locally very common. Turkeys are found in the lower elevation draws and drainages across the foothills of the Blue Mountains, and in suitable pockets of habitat across the prairie areas and breaks of the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers. Turkeys can be found in all GMUs, but tend to be concentrated along riparian areas in the lower elevations of the Blue Mountains, and often near farmsteads and towns.

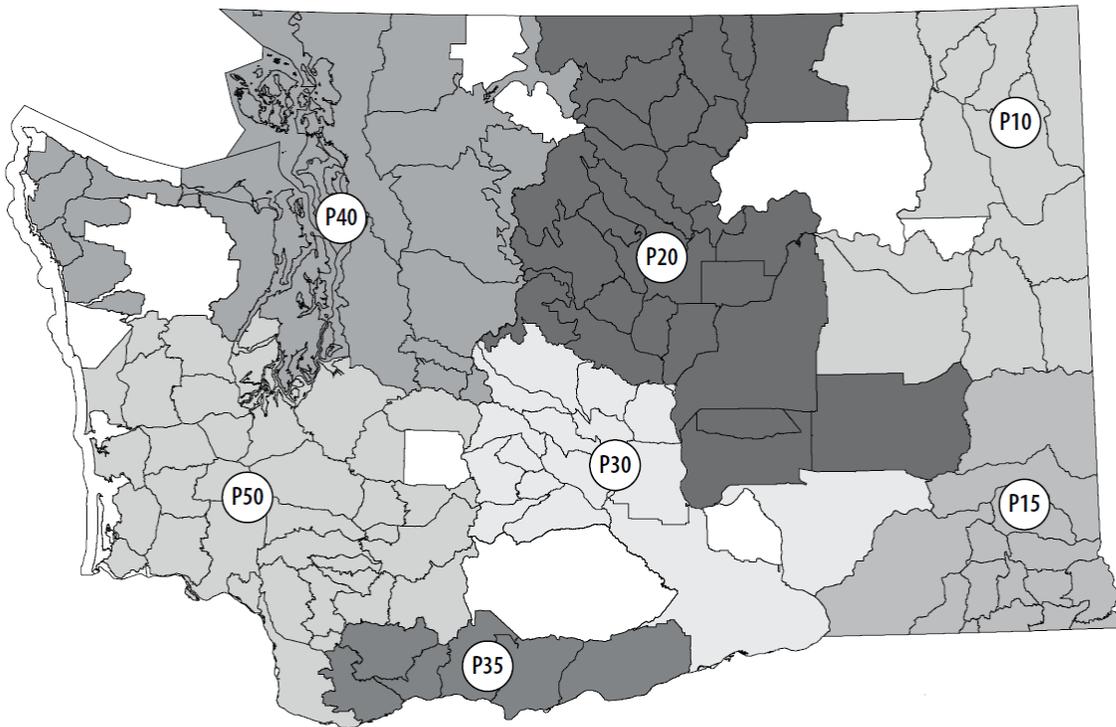


FIGURE 17. MAP DEPICTING WDFW'S SEVEN WILD TURKEY POPULATION MANAGEMENT UNITS.

POPULATION STATUS

WDFW does not estimate population size for turkeys. Instead, we use harvest data trends as surrogates to formal population estimates or indices of population size. Total harvest numbers tend to vary with hunter numbers so catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE; birds harvested per hunter day) is the best indicator of population trend. In District 3, turkey CPUE appears to have declined in

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2013, likely due to weather during the nesting period. CPUE in 2013 was 0.09 birds harvested per hunter day, with the previous 5-year average being 0.10.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2014 PROSPECTS

The total number of turkeys harvested in District 3 is dependent upon habitat and weather conditions during the breeding season. Total harvest dropped from 824 turkeys in 2012 to 638 in 2013, which was also lower than the 5-year average of 714 birds. Based on long-term harvest trends, turkey populations in SE WA appear to have stabilized after years of increasing harvest, and future harvest is likely to be most impacted by Spring weather conditions on brood survival. The spring and early summer of 2014 have been good conditions for nesting and brood rearing for turkey. We would predict that turkey numbers should be better in the fall of 2014 than the past 2-3 years.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES AND WHERE TO HUNT

Most turkey hunters target gobblers in the spring when males are displaying and readily come to box, slate, and mouth calls that mimic hen groups. Setting a blind or using camouflage clothing near meadows or small forest openings used as strutting grounds can be very effective and often only minimal calling is needed to bring turkeys within range. Identifying roost areas and setting up nearby can also be effective, but efficient calling will be needed to attract birds to move in your direction. "Gobble" calls should only be used infrequently, and hunters generally should not stalk or approach "gobble" calls as it may be another hunter. For other tips and tactics on safe and ethical turkey hunting, [click here](#).

GMUs 154 (Blue Creek) and 162 (Dayton) have the highest turkey harvests. Highest densities are often found on private land in the lower foothill areas that have a mix of forest, grassland, and agricultural fields, and flocks can frequently be seen from roadways along the creek drainages in these areas. Some of these flocks have become nuisance birds, and landowners are often willing to grant permission to thin turkey numbers. Be respectful of private land and always ask for permission to hunt. Although densities are lower, good numbers of birds can be found on National Forest lands and local wildlife areas, including the Wooten Wildlife Area in GMU 166 (Tucannon), Asotin Creek Wildlife Area in GMU 175 (Lick Creek), and the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area in GMU 186 (Grande Ronde).

OTHER SMALL GAME SPECIES

Other small game species and furbearers that occur in District 3, but were not covered in detail include cotton-tail rabbits, snow-shoe hares, coyotes, beaver, raccoons, river otter, marten, mink, muskrat, and weasels. Additional migratory birds include mourning doves, snipe and coot.

MAJOR PUBLIC LANDS

District 3 does offer considerable public land hunting opportunities. Public land opportunities within the District are comprised of US Forest Service (Umatilla National Forest), US Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Natural Resources, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Bureau of Land Management, and WDFW.

GMUs with the greatest amount of public land include GMU 157 (Mill Creek Watershed, closed except by permit), GMU 162 (Dayton), GMU 166 (Tucannon), GMU 169 (Wenaha), GMU 172 (Mountain View), GMU 175 (Lick Creek), and GMU 181 (Couse), and GMU 186 (Grande Ronde).

For more information related to the location of WDFW Wildlife Areas, visit the WDFWs hunting access website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/hunting_access/ or by [clicking here](#).

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF HUNTER ACCESS IN EACH GMU

One of the most common questions we get from hunters is “What is hunter access like in GMU [enter GMU number]?” Generally, this question is referring to the amount of public land in each GMU, and the following ratings reflect that assumption. Please refer to the “Private Land Access Program” section of this document to determine which GMUs have significant amounts of additional lands available for public hunting.

The following rating system was developed for District 3 GMUs to give hunters a general idea of what type of access is available in the GMU they are thinking of hunting. For the purposes of this exercise, access ratings are specific to the level of public land available. Each GMU was given a rating of excellent, good, and poor with the level of access associated with each rating as follows:

- **Excellent**---A majority of the GMU is in public ownership.
- **Good**---There is a mix of public land within the GMU.
- **Poor**---Most of the GMU is privately owned

Information provided is a brief description of major ownership. Hunters are encouraged to contact the WDFW Region 1 office in Spokane (509-892-1001) if they have questions related to hunter access that have not been answered.

GMU 145 - Mayview

Access rating = Poor

The majority of this GMU is in private ownership, although the US Army Corps of Engineers owns the shorelines of the Snake River. In many places, the USACE lands only extend a couple of hundred yards above the waterlines, but there are a few large Habitat Management Units that provide considerable recreational opportunity.

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GMU 149 – Prescott

Access rating = Poor

The majority of this GMU is in private ownership, although the US Army Corps of Engineers owns the shorelines of the Snake River. In many places, the USACE lands only extend a couple of hundred yards above the waterlines, but there are a few large Habitat Management Units that provide considerable recreational opportunity.

GMU 154 – Blue Creek

Access Rating = Poor

The majority of this GMU is in private ownership, although a number of large landowners participate in the Department’s private land access program. Hunters wishing to hunt in this GMU are highly encouraged to contact landowners long before their season opens to secure access. Hunters applying for special permits in this GMU are encouraged to secure access prior to applying.

GMU 157 – Mill Creek Watershed

Access rating = Not Available

Although this GMU is 99% public lands, access is restricted to special permit holders. The Mill Creek Watershed has regulated public access because it is the source of drinking water for the City of Walla Walla. Currently, there are elk and deer permit opportunities within this GMU.

GMU 162 - Dayton

Access rating = Good

Approximately half of this GMU is in public ownership, primarily USFS and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Private land access can be difficult to obtain within this GMU, although a few landowners participate in the Department’s private land access program.

GMU 163 - Marengo

Access rating = Poor

A majority of this GMU is in private ownership. This GMU has a large percentage of the lands developed for windpower. Some of the windpower companies allow hunting access if the hunters participate in an educational training, located at the Last Resort along the Tucannon River and Deadman Creek Outfitters along the Lower Deadman Rd near Central Ferry.

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GMU 166 - Tuccannon

Access rating = Excellent

A majority of this GMU is owned by WDFW and the USFS. Access is good throughout most of the unit, with a portion of the unit being located within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness.

GMU 169 - Wenaha

Access rating = Excellent

This GMU is 100% public lands, with 95% of it being located within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness. This is a very rugged wilderness topographically and access can be physically challenging.

GMU 172 – Mountain View

Access rating = Good

Approximately 50% of this GMU is in public ownership. Access to the private lands can be difficult to obtain. This GMU also has the 4-0 Wildlife Area located within it, where deer and elk hunting is permitted by special draw only.

GMU 175 – Lick Creek

Access rating = Excellent

A majority of this GMU is in public ownership, administered by the USFS, WDFW, and DNR. Access is excellent and this GMU has the highest road density of any District 3 GMU's.

GMU 178 - Peola

Access rating = Poor

This GMU is predominantly private land, with the public land (DNR sections) often being land locked from public access. Landowners tend to allow significant access throughout the GMU and there are numerous landowners who participate in the Department's private lands access program.

GMU 181 - Couse

Access rating = Good

This GMU is mostly private land, but WDFW does own a considerable amount of land. See the Department's Wildlife Area webpage.

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GMU 186 – Grande Ronde

Access rating = Good

Approximately half of this GMU is in public ownership. Access to the private land in this GMU has not been available to the public in recent years.

PRIVATE LANDS ACCESS PROGRAM

There are a multitude of private landowners in District 3 who are enrolled in WDFW’s Private Lands Access Program. However, at the time of this writing, Cooperative Agreements with some of these landowners have not been finalized. Even though there are no indications landowners will not renew their Cooperative Agreements for the 2014 hunting season, we were hesitant to provide that information in this document. Hunters are encouraged to call the Region 1 office in Spokane (509-892-1001) or periodically check for updated information in this document or on WDFW’s Hunter Access website located at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/hunting_access/ or [click here](#) .

The following is a summary of anticipated private land acres available through the Departments Private Lands Access program in 2014.

District 3

GMU	Hunting Only BY Written Permission (HOBWP)		Feel Free To Hunt (FFTH)		Register To Hunt (RTH)		Hunt By Reservation (HBR)		Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP)	
	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres
145 Mayview	8	7,750	10	6,911	1	1,837	1	1,060		
149 Prescott	8	28,580	21	44,434			2	3,423		
154 Blue Creek	4	3,869	16	13,063					1	7,280
162 Dayton	2	1,081	1	11,087						
163 Marengo	8	9,642	7	13,345						
172 Mountain View			1	554					1	8,746
175 Lick Creek	2	887								
178 Peola	8	11,417	4	1,591	1	2,602	2	1,071		
181 Couse	10	13,813	3	4,059	1	1,617				
186 Grande Ronde										
Total	50	77,039	63	95,044	3	6,056	5	5,554	2	16,026
Total Acres	199,718.94									

ONLINE TOOLS AND MAPS

Most GMUs in District 3 are a checkerboard of ownerships and sometimes it can be extremely difficult to determine who owns the land where a hunter wishes to hunt. However, there are several online tools and resources that many hunters do not know about, but provide valuable information that helps solve the landowner puzzle. The following is a list and general description of tools and resources that are available to the general public.

Department of Natural Resources Public Lands Quadrangle (PLQ) Maps

The best source for identifying the specific location of public lands are DNR PLQ maps which can be purchased for less than \$10 on DNR's website ([click here](#)).

Online Parcel Databases

Technology has come a long way and has made it much easier for the general public to identify tax parcel boundaries and the associated landowner. However, because this technology has not been readily available in the past, there are several hunters who are not aware it exists.

Walla Walla County tax parcels can be searched using the county GIS site, which is a user-friendly mapping program that allows users to zoom in to their area of interest, click on a parcel, and identify who the owner of that parcel is. The Walla Walla County GIS tool can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

WDFW's Go Hunt Tool

WDFW's Go Hunt Tool has been revamped and provides hunters with a great interactive tool for locating tracts of public land within each GMU. The Go Hunt Tool can be accessed on WDFW's Hunting website or by [clicking here](#).