

2015

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Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**



DISTRICT 2 HUNTING PROSPECTS

Spokane, Lincoln, and Whitman Counties

CONTENTS

DISTRICT 2 GENERAL OVERVIEW	3
ELK	5
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status.....	5
Which GMU Should Elk Hunters Hunt?.....	6
Elk Areas.....	8
Notable Hunting Changes	9
DEER	9
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status.....	9
What To Expect During The 2015 Season	13
Deer Areas	14
BIGHORN SHEEP	15
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status.....	15
What to Expect During the 2015 Season	16
MOOSE.....	16
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status.....	16
What to Expect During the 2015 Season	19
WATERFOWL	21
PHEASANT.....	23
CHUKAR AND GRAY PARTRIDGE	25
FOREST GROUSE	27
QUAIL.....	28
TURKEY	29
DOVE.....	29
MAJOR PUBLIC LANDS	31
PRIVATE LANDS.....	32

DISTRICT 2 GENERAL OVERVIEW

Hunters should be aware that motorized access may be limited or closed completely on Inland Empire Paper, Stimson, Hancock, and other private timber company lands this season due to fire danger. Be sure to check on closures before you go. Fire restriction updates can be found here for [IEP](#) , [Stimson](#), and [Hancock](#).

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) District 2 is located in eastern Washington, bordering Idaho, and covers Lincoln, Whitman, and Spokane counties. Game Management Units (GMUs) in District 2 include 124 (Mount Spokane), 127 (Mica Peak), 130 (Cheney), 133 (Roosevelt), 136 (Harrington), 139 (Steptoe), and 142 (Almota) (Figure 1). The majority of the district is in private ownership, so hunters are highly encouraged to secure access prior to the hunting season or applying for special permits.

The geography of District 2 includes the edge of the Rocky Mountain Range in the east, the Columbia Basin in the west, and the Channeled Scablands and Palouse in between. This diverse geography supports a wide range of habitats that include mixed coniferous forests dominated by Douglas fir, larch, dry Ponderosa pine forests, some aspen groves, scabland, sagebrush steppe, grasslands, and extensive agricultural lands. Topography varies from ~500 feet above sea level along the Snake River in the south to the 5883 foot Mount Spokane in the north. Dominant river drainages include the Spokane, Palouse, Columbia, & Snake rivers.

District 2 is most well-known for its deer hunting opportunities, including white-tailed deer in the Spokane and the Palouse agricultural lands and mule deer in the Channeled Scablands and breaks of the Snake River. Quality hunting opportunities also exist for other game species, including pheasant and elk, if hunters have secured access to private lands, and moose and bighorn sheep if hunters are selected for those special permit hunts.

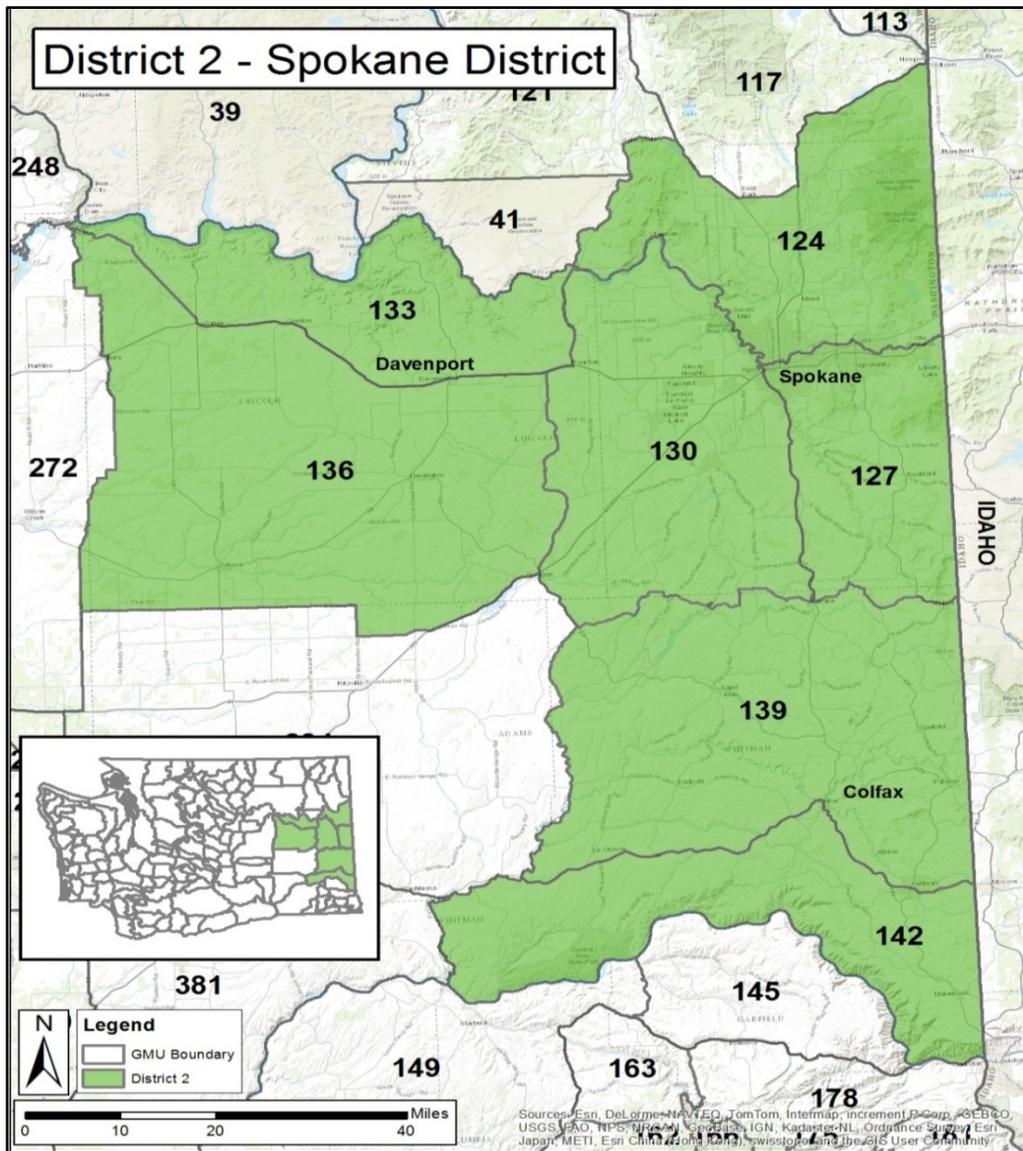


FIGURE 1. GENERAL LOCATION AND GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS (GMU) FOR WDFW DISTRICT 2.

ELK

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

The Selkirk herd originated in Pend Oreille County and has expanded its range over the last 40 years to include GMUs 124-142. Elk in District 2 are considered to be the Spokane sub-herd of the Selkirk herd. Elk habitat in District 2 continues to be lost to urban sprawl and agricultural conversion. General hunts in all GMUs are “any elk.” The goal of this harvest strategy is to maintain the population at its current level (roughly 1000-1500 elk) to limit agricultural damage and conflict within urban areas. Given the majority of the land in the district is in private ownership, managing this population requires landowner acceptance and cooperation.

Opportunistic surveys, harvest data (Figures 2-4), sightings, and damage complaints are generally used in place of formal estimates to indicate population trends in most of District 2. The exception is GMU 130 (Cheney), where the majority of the district’s elk harvest (25-50%) typically occurs. This unit includes Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, which has been regularly surveyed for herd composition for the last 11 years. WDFW herd composition objective is to maintain a ratio of 15 to 35 bulls per 100 cows pre-hunt and/or 12 to 20 bulls per 100 cows post-hunt. The 2014 pre-hunt aerial survey in GMU 130 found the bull:cow ratio to be within, but at the low end, of this management objective. 2014 calf production was consistent with 2013 counts, with a calf:cow ratio of 50:100. Combined data sources for District 2 over the last ten years indicate a stable to slightly increasing population trend. For more detail on the status of elk in Washington, see WDFW’s 2014 Game Status and Trend Report at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01667/>.

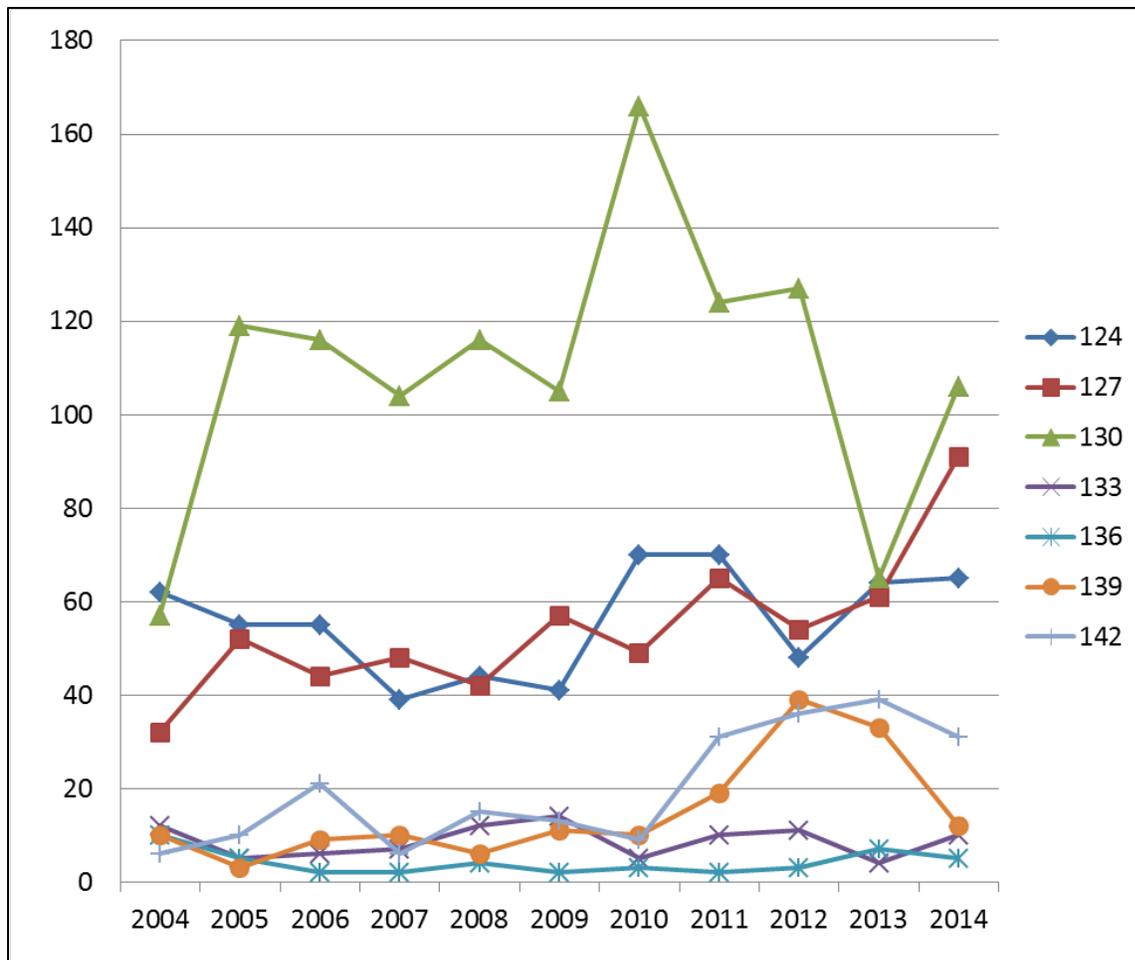


FIGURE 2. ELK GENERAL SEASON TOTAL HARVEST IN DISTRICT 2 BY GMU FOR ALL WEAPON TYPES COMBINED.

WHICH GMU SHOULD ELK HUNTERS HUNT?

The highest proportion of the elk harvest consistently occurs in GMUs 124, 127, and 130 (Figure 2). However, elk appear to be expanding into new areas and harvest in GMUs 139 and 142 has been generally on the rise. Some of these appear to be elk that move back and forth between Idaho and Washington, so timing and access to private lands will be the key to successful elk hunting in these GMUs. General hunt participants on private lands in GMU 130 have the highest success (Figure 4), probably benefitting from animals moving on and off Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge during the season. With almost 40% of the hunters in District 2, GMU 124 (Mount Spokane) sustains the greatest hunting pressure. As a result, hunter success is lower there (Figure 4), although the unit typically does produce one of the highest number of mature bulls (6+ points) in the harvest (Figure 3). Private timber companies, especially Inland Empire Paper,

offer public access in this unit with a paid permit. See Inland Empire Paper Company - Recreational Use at <http://www.iepco.com/recreation.htm> for their rules and regulations. Hunters should be aware that motorized access may be limited or closed completely on IEP and other timber company lands this season due to fire danger. Hunters are advised to check closures and restrictions before setting out. IEP fire restriction updates can be found at <http://www.quality-service-inc.com/inland-empire-paper-company/>.

For more detailed harvest information, visit:

District 2 - 2014 Game Harvest Statistics:

- Elk

Harvest: http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2014/reports/deer_gmu.php?District=2

- Elk Special Permits

Harvest: http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2014/reports/elk_permits_gmu.php?District=2

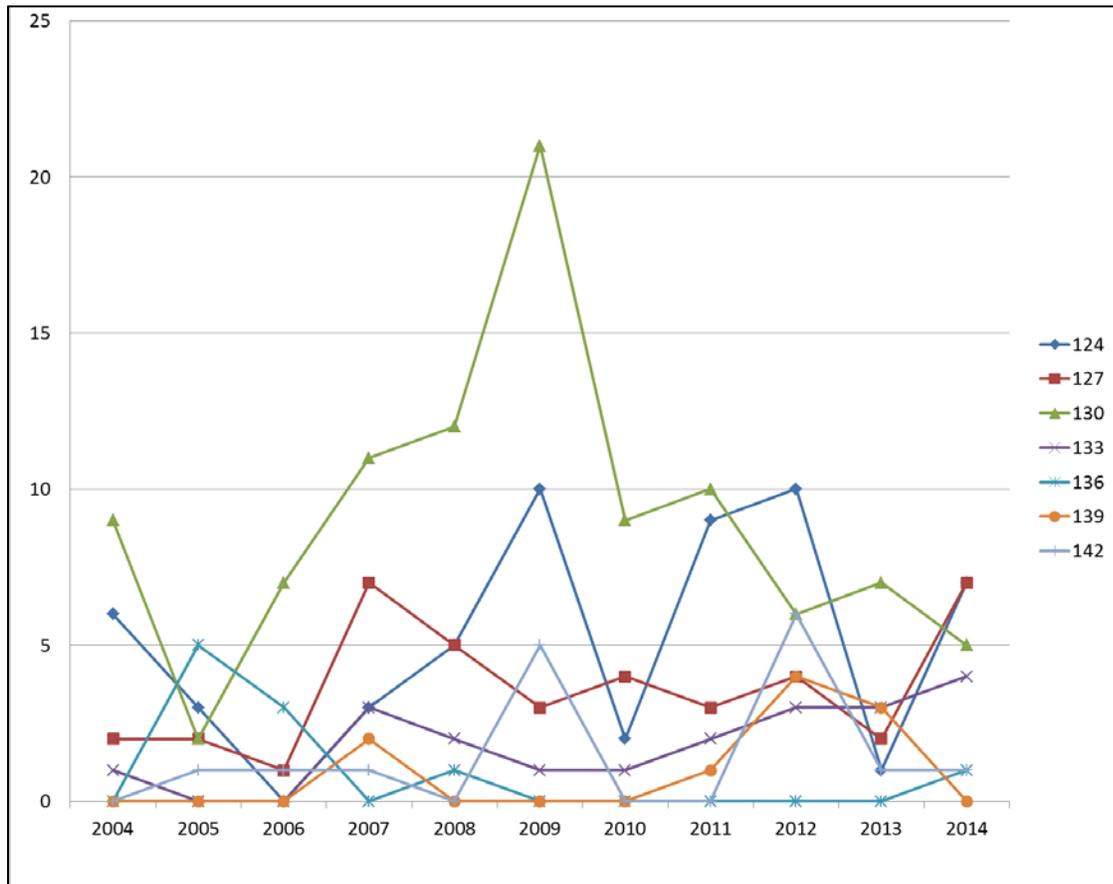


FIGURE 3. NUMBER OF MATURE BULLS (6+ POINTS) HARVESTED BY GMU IN DISTRICT 2.

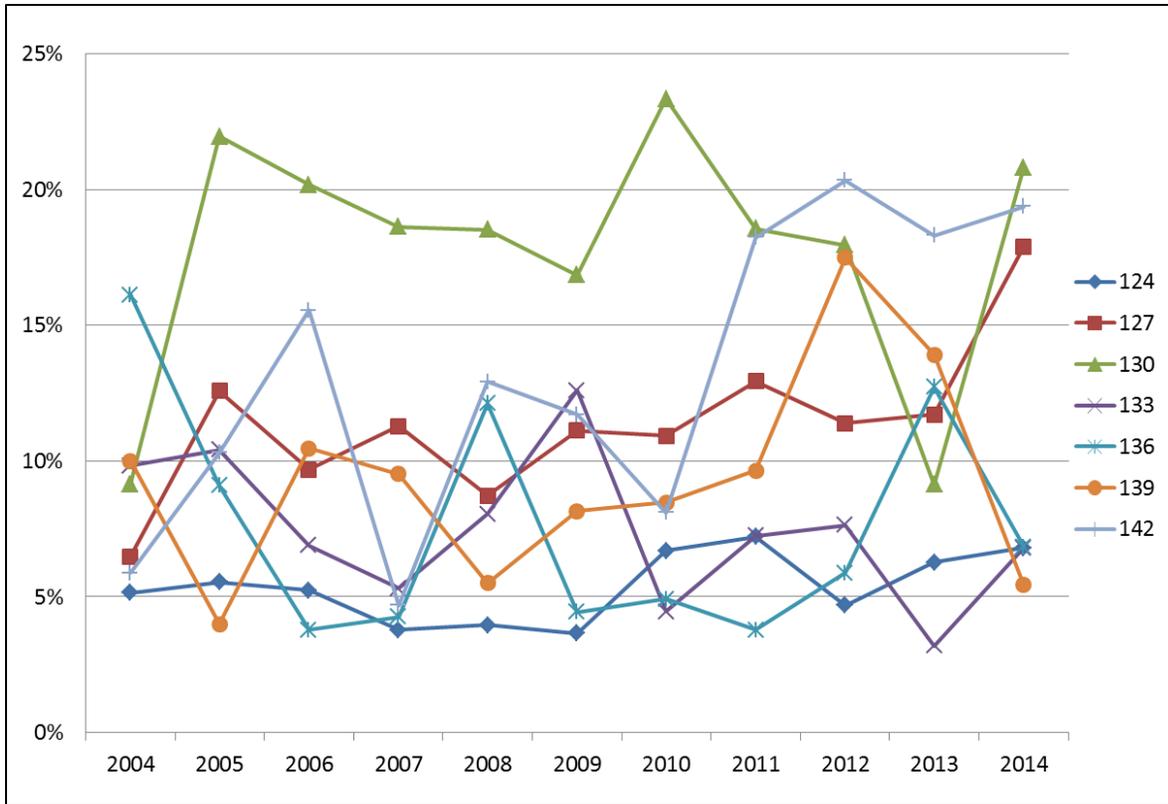


FIGURE 4. ELK GENERAL SEASON HUNTER SUCCESS IN DISTRICT 2 BY GMU FOR ALL WEAPON TYPES COMBINED.

ELK AREAS

Elk Area 1015 is located within Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. Turnbull special permit hunts were created in 2010 to address damage to aspen stands on the refuge and to address complaints from landowners in the area. These are walk-in hunts in specified portions of the refuge. For 2015, one bull permit and 62 antlerless permits will again be allocated across several hunt categories, including each weapon type, Youth, Master Hunter, and Hunters with Disabilities. Turnbull hunters average 42% success for antlerless hunts, while the bull permit has had 100% success each year except for 2014. For those who missed the May permit application deadline, Turnbull permit hunts should be offered again next year. For more information about Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, visit Turnbull - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Turnbull/what_we_do/resource_management/Elk_Management.html. To address winter property damage in the area, there are also several late-season raffle permits and WDFW special permits offered on Columbia Plateau Wildlife Management Association (CPWMA) properties in areas around Turnbull. See the “Private Lands Program” section for more information on acreage enrolled and the CPWMA website at <https://sites.google.com/site/columbiaplateauwildlifemgmt/> for details on their hunt management.

NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES

There are no notable changes for 2015 elk hunting in District 2. Across all GMUs, elk hunter success has averaged 10% over the last ten years, and hunters have spent an average of 40 days hunting per kill. These numbers vary widely by area, as hunter success depends heavily on the work the hunter is willing to put in to obtain access to private property. There are over 50 landowners enrolled in WDFW's private land hunting access program. The majority of these are built around upland game and deer hunting. However, some support elk hunting as well, so opportunities exist for elk hunters who do their research. For locations of these properties, visit the GoHunt website at <http://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/gohunt/>.

The 2015 wildfires that were still burning in late August may affect hunter access to some hunting areas. Hunters should check the status of wildfires and access restrictions at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/49#>.

DEER

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

District 2 has both white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). White-tailed deer are found predominantly in the north and east portions of the district, in the forest/agricultural interface and along riparian corridors. Mule deer are predominantly found in the west and south of the district, in the shrub steppe, scablands, and farm lands.

Deer population levels are closely tied to droughts, severe winters, and land-use practices. The primary management objective for white-tailed and mule deer in District 2 is to keep the herds stable to slightly increasing and within landowner tolerance. Given the majority of the land in the district is in private ownership, managing this population without landowner cooperation is impossible. Additional management objectives include maintaining herds at 15-19 bucks to 100 does in the post season population.

Currently, WDFW does not use formal estimates or indices of population size to monitor deer populations in District 2. Instead, trends in harvest (Figures 5 & 6), hunter success (Figure 7), days per kill (Figure 8), and pre-season sex and age ratios (Figure 9), are used to estimate populations. WDFW recognizes the limitations of using this data to monitor trends in population size and we are currently evaluating new approaches to monitoring white-tailed and mule deer populations.

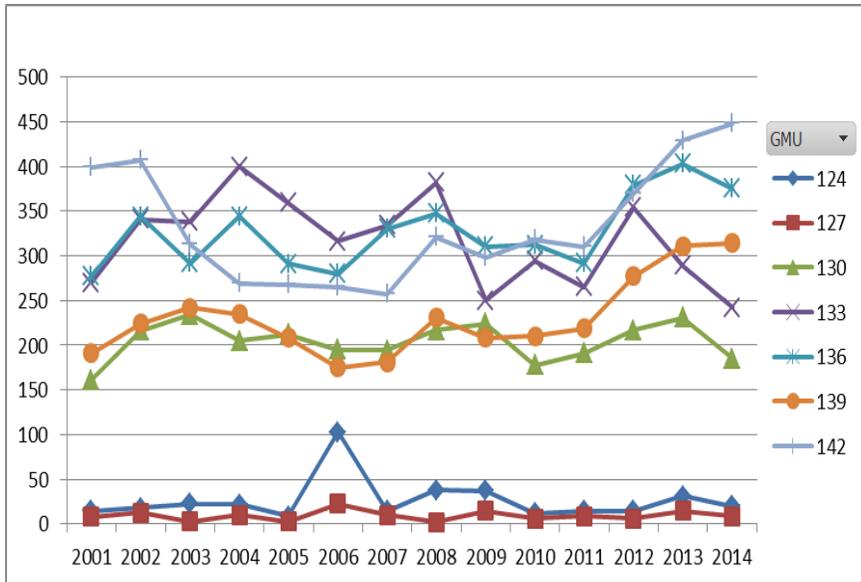


FIGURE 5. MULE DEER GENERAL SEASON BUCK HARVEST IN DISTRICT 2 BY GMU FOR ALL WEAPON TYPES COMBINED.

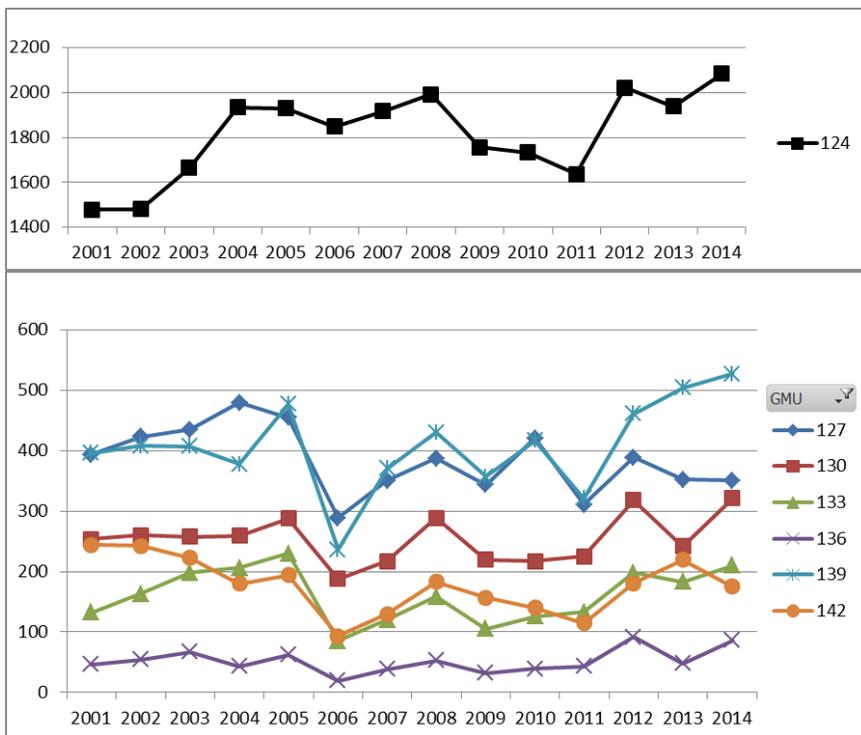


FIGURE 6. WHITE-TAILED DEER GENERAL SEASON BUCK HARVEST IN DISTRICT 2 BY GMU FOR ALL WEAPON TYPES COMBINED.

The harvest of mule deer has remained relatively stable in the district over the past 14 years, with an increasing trend over the past four years in GMUs 136-142 (Figure 5). White-tailed harvest appears stable overall in the district, with an increasing trend in GMUs 124 and 139 the past three years (Figure 6). The steep decline in white-tailed harvest in 2006 is associated with the conversion of the general late season into a permit only hunt in GMUs 127-142 called the Palouse Hunt.

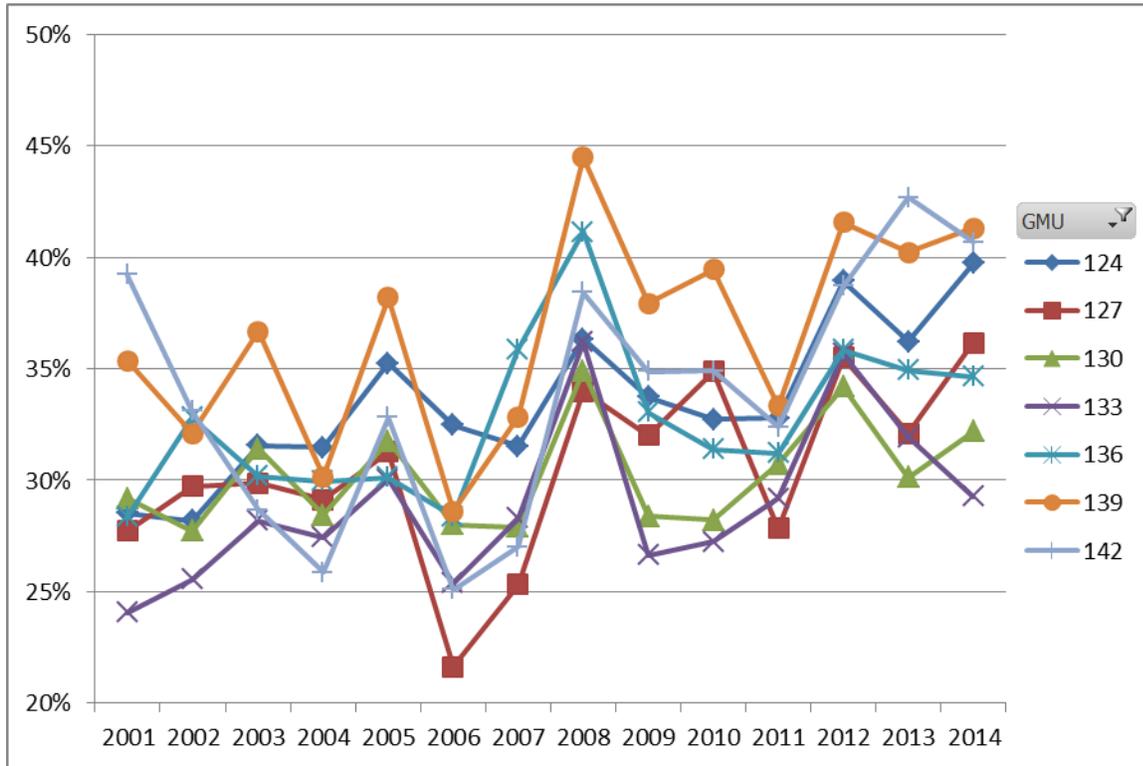


FIGURE 7. DEER GENERAL SEASON HUNTER SUCCESS IN DISTRICT 2 BY GMU FOR ALL WEAPON TYPES COMBINED.

While harvest has remained relatively stable over the past 14 years, hunter success has increased from an average of 30% in 2001 to an average of 36% in 2014 (Figure 7). Over the same time period, hunter effort (Days/kill) has declined from 14 days/kill on average in 2001 to 11 days in 2014 (Figure 8). Pre-season fawn to 100 doe ratios for mule and white-tailed deer show a slight decline over the past 13 years, but for the past six they have been relatively stable (Figure 9).

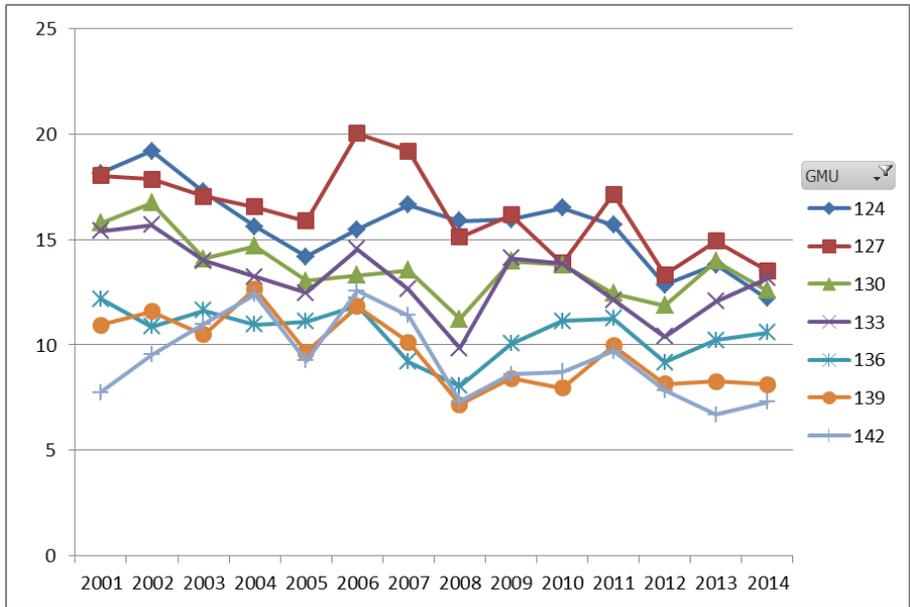


FIGURE 8. DEER GENERAL SEASON DAYS/KILL IN DISTRICT 2 BY GMU FOR ALL WEAPON TYPES COMBINED.

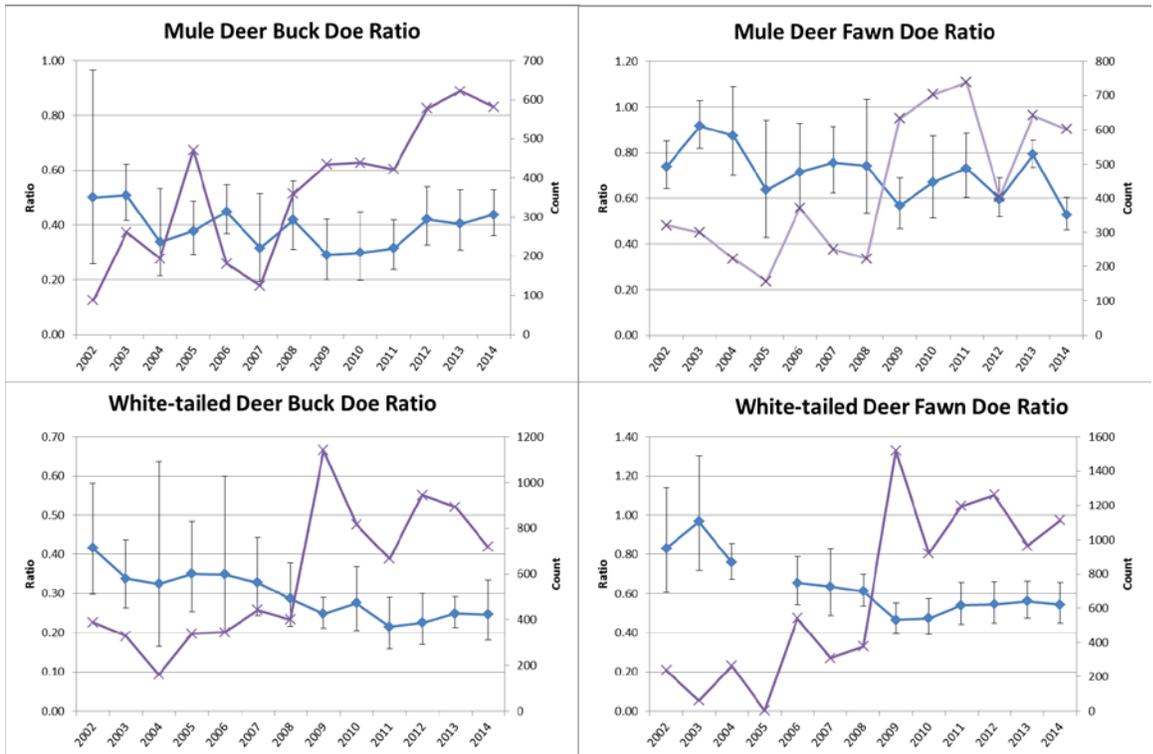


FIGURE 9. DISTRICT 2 PRE-SEASON BUCK TO DOE (AUGUST) AND FAWN TO DOE (SEPTEMBER) RATIOS (BLUE LINES WITH 90%CI) AND TOTAL COUNT (PURPLE LINES) BY SPECIES.

Overall harvest data and pre-season ratios taken together indicate white-tailed and mule deer populations appear to be stable to slightly increasing in all GMUs in District 2. Damage complaints associated with these herds are a perennial issue and have shown some signs of increasing in recent years, indicating an approach of social carrying capacity. For more information related to the status of 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 WDFW website

at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/search.php?Cat=Hunting&SubCat=Game%20Harvest,%20Status%20and%20Trends>.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2015 SEASON

White-tailed and mule deer hunting opportunities in District 2 vary from marginal to excellent, depending on the GMU and if private land access has been secured. The best opportunities to harvest a mule deer in District 2 occur in GMUs 136, 139, & 142 on private property (Figure 5). The best opportunities to harvest a white-tailed deer in District 2 occur in GMUs 124, 127, 130, & 139 on private property (Figure 6). For archery hunters, GMU 124 & 127 provide the best terrain, whereas the terrain in GMUs 136-142 is better suited for muzzleloader and modern firearm.

Low mule deer fawn production in 2014 (Figure 9) and severe drought this summer will likely combine to produce poor fawn survival and recruitment this year. White-tailed deer herds appear to have fully recovered from the hard winters of 2008 and 2009. With average white-tailed deer fawn production in 2014 (Figure 9), as well as a mild winter, white-tailed herds should experience average to good survival and recruitment. However, the drought and high temperatures this summer may increase the chance of outbreaks of diseases such as Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) and Blue Tongue.

There is a three-antler-pointt minimum regulation in GMUs 127-142 for white-tailed deer, and the late white-tailed deer season in GMUs 127-142 is by permit only (Palouse Hunt) as of 2006. Hunter success is, on average, higher for the Palouse Hunt (47%), with 5-plus- point bucks making up, on average, a greater percentage of the kill (38%) when compared to the general season 2001 to 2006 average of 24% and the 27% averaged since 2006. There are currently 750 permits offered for the Palouse Hunt.

Mule and white-tailed deer populations overlap in District 2, so make sure to identify the species before harvesting an animal, since regulations can differ between species within a GMU. The bulk of District 2 is private land, and buck hunters will have to put in the time to get access. Doe hunters should have an easier time given the agricultural nature of this district. We have enrolled many new cooperators in our hunter access program in southeast Washington. See the “Private Lands Program” section below and note that the locations are mapped on the GoHunt website.

For more 2014 harvest information from District 2 visit:

- Deer General

Harvest: http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2014/reports/deer_gmu.php?District=2

- Deer Special Permits

Harvest: http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2014/reports/deer_permits_gmu.php?District=2

DEER AREAS

There are suburban/rural areas in District 2 where deer congregate and have the potential to cause landscape/property and agricultural damage. To help address this issue, extended general season opportunities have been created for youth, senior, & disabled hunters to harvest antlerless deer that occur in these areas. Additionally, 975 second tags, half of the district's second tag (doe only) opportunities, are focused in these areas. The remaining 975 second tags are primarily offered in the rural GMUs (133-142) to help address agricultural damage. WDFW deer area locations and boundaries are mapped on the GoHunt website.

BIGHORN SHEEP

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

District 2 is home to one herd of California bighorn sheep, found in GMU 133 north of Highway 2 in Lincoln County (see the GoHunt website for a map). These sheep can most often be seen in the cliffs in the town of Lincoln and in the cliffs around Whitestone Rock approximately seven miles downstream from Lincoln. Sheep are also observed frequently in the cliffs above Sterling Valley, the area between Lincoln and Whitestone, and in agricultural fields nearby.

WDFW has conducted regular aerial surveys to assess the status of the Lincoln Cliffs herd since 2002. Minimum population size is estimated by the count of rams and ewes observed during these flights. The population has been increasing over the previous five years, but is showing signs of leveling off (Figure 10). Although still at the low end of the goal of 90-100 animals, social tolerance, habitat quantity and quality, and disease threats will continue to be factors in the management of this population. For more details on the status of bighorn sheep in Washington, take a look at WDFW's 2014 Game Status and Trend Report.

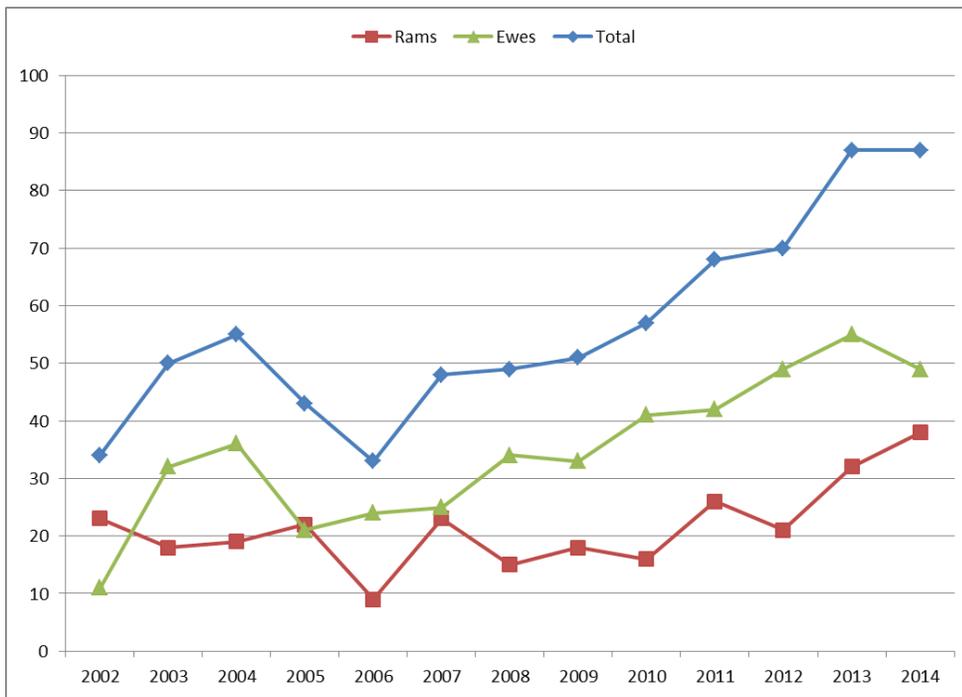


FIGURE 10. LINCOLN CLIFFS MINIMUM POPULATION ESTIMATE BY SEX FOR 2002-2014. ESTIMATED AS THE MAXIMUM COUNT FROM HELICOPTER SURVEYS CONDUCTED EACH YEAR.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2015 SEASON

Bighorn sheep hunting in Washington requires a special permit. One ram permit for the Lincoln Cliffs herd was offered each year from 1997–2013. In 2014 this was increased to two ram permits, and two will be issued again for the 2015 season. The average number of applicants for this hunt over the last five years is 1,540 and harvest success has remained at 100%. The area is almost entirely private property and permittees will need to obtain permission to access these properties for their hunt.

The 2015 wildfires that were still burning in late August may affect hunter access to some hunting areas. Hunters should check the status of wildfires and access restrictions at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/49#>.

MOOSE

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Moose in northeast Washington are Shiras moose (*Alces alces shirasi*). Moose were not believed to be common or widely distributed in the Rocky Mountain States in the 1800s, and it was not until 1908 when explorer George Shiras III found a fairly large population in Yellowstone National Park that this mountain race was described. Shiras moose were only rarely noted in Washington until the late 1950s when distribution began to expand into eastern Pend Oreille County. Moose have dramatically increased in numbers and distribution in the last couple of decades and now are relatively common throughout northeast Washington.

Statewide moose management goals are to: 1) Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage moose and their habitats to ensure healthy productive populations; 2) Manage for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes; and 3) Manage statewide moose populations for a sustained yield. The proximity of an expanding moose population near the Spokane metropolitan area adds the challenge of balancing population objectives with the community's tolerance of moose.

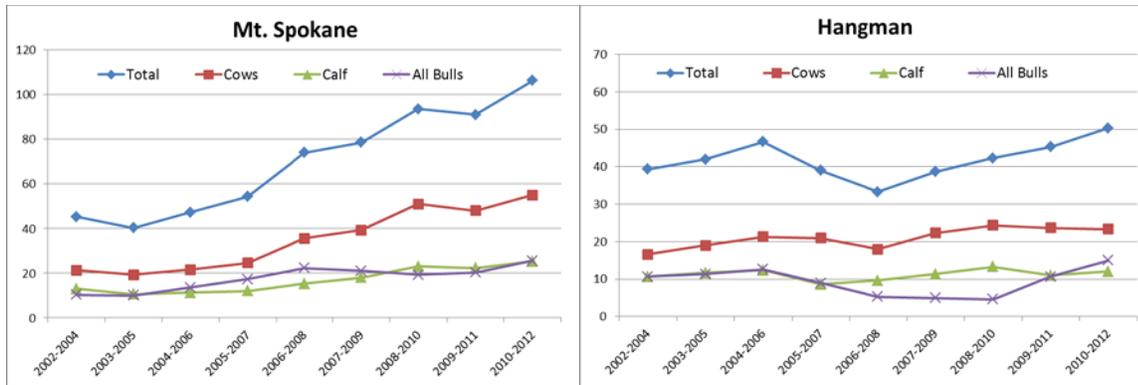


FIGURE 11. MOUNT SPOKANE (NORTH AND SOUTH) AND HANGMAN UNITS MOVING THREE YEAR AVERAGES OF OBSERVED MOOSE DURING DECEMBER/JANUARY AERIAL SURVEYS FROM 2002-2012.

Currently, WDFW uses a combination of aerial surveys and harvest metrics to monitor and manage moose populations in District 2. From 2002 to 2012, annual aerial surveys were flown during winter (December-January) by district biologists covering a sub-sample of each hunt unit in District 2. General trends in observed moose during aerial survey flights (Figure 11) indicate a stable to growing population in each area. However, there is large variability in the observed count between years, much of which is likely due to movement of moose back and forth across state lines (all hunt units border Idaho). In 2013, WDFW changed its survey methodology. The new method allows for a greater proportion of northeast Washington to be covered. However, this resulted in reduced coverage in each unit. The new methodology resulted in 76 moose (18 bulls, 40 cows, and 18 calves) observed in Mount Spokane and 24 moose (eight bulls, 13 cows, and three calves) in Hangman. No flights were conducted in 2014 due to lack of snow.

Calf to 100 cow ratios in the hunt units (Figure 12) have been fairly stable year to year and have averaged 50 for Hangman and 47 for Mount Spokane for the past 11 years, also indicating a stable to growing population. The low calf to 100 cow ratio in Hangman in 2013 is likely due to the new survey methodology and low number of moose observed.

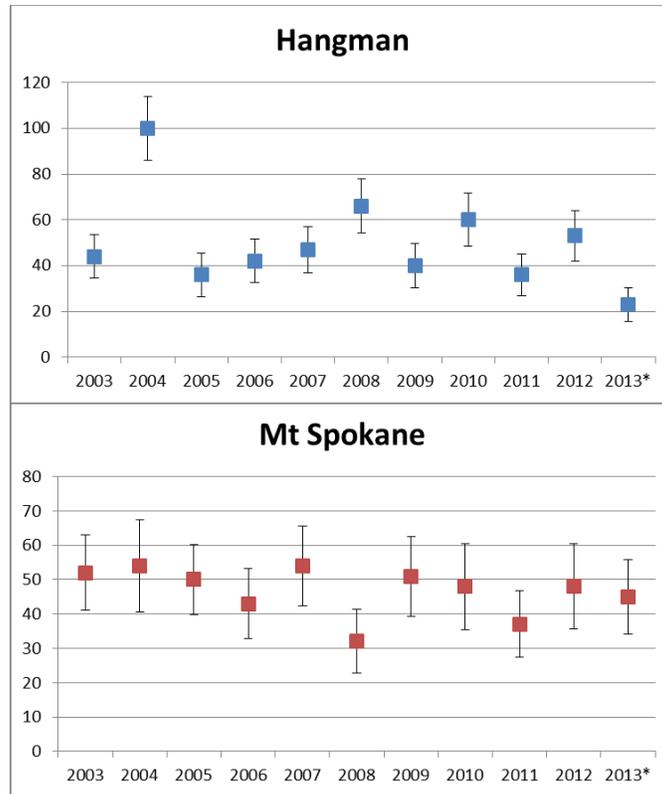


FIGURE 12. MOOSE CALF TO 100 COW RATIOS FROM AERIAL SURVEYS FROM 2003-2013 FOR MOUNT SPOKANE (MOUNT SPOKANE NORTH AND SOUTH COMBINED FOR 2012-2013) AND HANGMAN UNITS.

Harvest management emphasizes quality hunting opportunities through a limited entry permit process. Prior to 2012, District 2 had two moose hunt units, Mount Spokane and Hangman. In 2012, the Mount Spokane Unit was split into the Mount Spokane North and Mount Spokane South units (maps found at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/moose_units/) to help distribute hunters more evenly across the area and increase hunter opportunity. However, the harvest data presented herein combines the two units to allow for an easier comparison to previous years. Additionally, in 2015 the Hangman Unit was split into the Mica Peak and Cheney units for antlerless hunts only and the Spokane West Moose Unit was created. Prior to this, the area was part of the Huckleberry Unit. Both were altered to distribute hunters and allow WDFW to increase the number of tags offered.

Hunter success rates for Mount Spokane over the past 14 years have been consistently high, with an average of 95% (Figure 13). Hunter effort (days/kill) declined from 2001 to 2006, and has since remained stable at around four days per kill in Mount Spokane (Figure 13). Both of these harvest metrics indicate a stable to growing moose population in this area. The drop in success in the Hangman Unit in the past two years and the increase in days/kill in 2014 is of significant

concern and will be closely monitored. If the trends continue, permits will likely need to be reduced. For more detailed information related to the status of moose in Washington, hunters should read through the most recent version of the Game Status and Trend Report, which is available for download on the WDFW website.

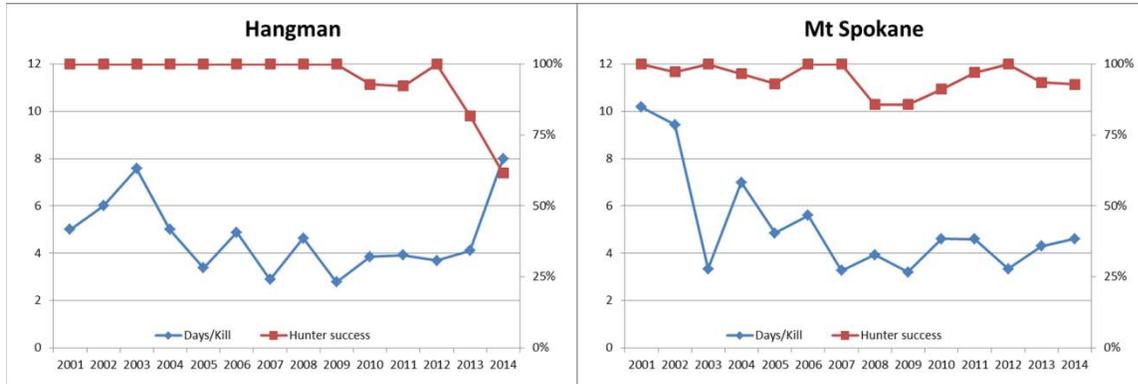


FIGURE 13. MOOSE HUNTER SUCCESS AND DAYS PER KILL FROM 2001-2014 FOR MOUNT SPOKANE (MOUNT SPOKANE NORTH AND SOUTH COMBINED FOR 2012-2013) AND HANGMAN UNITS.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2015 SEASON

The 2015 wildfires that were still burning in late August may affect hunter access to some hunting areas. Hunters should check the status of wildfires and access restrictions at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/49#>.

Moose hunting in Washington is by special permit only. Sixty-four permits (23 Any Moose and 41 Antlerless) are offered in District 2 at this time. Success rates for these hunts have been historically stable and high (Figure 13), and with most metrics indicating stable to increasing populations, success rates should continue to be good. However, success has dropped in recent years in the Hangman Unit. This is predominantly driven by the antlerless hunts. Success for the any moose hunts are still averaging >90% success over the past three years.

District 2 also has a Master Hunter Only Coordinated Damage Hunt (10 permits). However, the opportunity to hunt under this permit depends on problem moose occurring in a safe area to harvest. Over the course of this hunt's existence (started in 2010), there have been only six moose harvested.

The majority of the kills occur early in the season while roads are still open. However, hunters have been successful later in the season as well, and the largest moose have generally been killed later in the season. Antler spread of harvested moose has averaged about three feet for all units over the past 14 years (Table 1). However, in most years moose in the 3.5 foot range are harvested, and in both areas moose with a 50 inch or greater spread have been harvested. Another advantage to hunting early is that there will be no competition or interference from deer or elk modern firearm hunters.

Year	Hangman A			Mount Spokane A			Mount Spokane North A			Mount Spokane South A		
	Harv	Avg	Max	Harv	Avg	Max	Harv	Avg	Max	Harv	Avg	Max
2001	4	42	51	12	32	49						
2002	5	37	45	9	31	40						
2003	4	40	49	9	32	53						
2004	4	33	43	9	35	47						
2005	5	35	43	9	36	40						
2006	4	34	39	9	31	35						
2007	5	32	42	9	39	44						
2008	6	33	41	11	32	41						
2009	7	37	47	11	36	50						
2010	7	43	50	12	39	46						
2011	6	39	44	9	32	42						
2012	7	36	52				8	36	45	7	35	46
2013	5	37	45				7	35	44	8	35	40
2014	5	37	42				8	35	43	6	36	40
Total	74	37	52	109	34	53	23	36	45	21	35	46

TABLE 1. AVERAGE ANTLER SPREAD FOR HARVESTED MOOSE IN DISTRICT 2 BY HUNT UNIT.

Hunters should take note that moose are by nature a solitary animal and are scattered over very wide areas as individuals or in small groups. Early in the season, moose are widespread and snow may or may not be available for tracking. This is a good time to learn the country and view clear-cuts, since roads are still open, and many hunters take moose in October. While they can be found at any elevation, they are most likely found between 3,000 to 5,000 feet. In the fall they are looking for deciduous browse, primarily willow brush in clear-cuts or burns that are 15 years old or older. Moose seek out the cooler, moist drainage basins and slopes. North slopes or east flowing drainage basins are generally preferred. Moose are still in the rut in early October and some hunters have been effective with calls. By November, snow is common and locating

moose tracks and seeing these dark animals with a snow background is much easier. However, by mid to late November, there is usually enough snow that motor vehicle access can be limited. Experience shows that moose seek out snow rather than avoid it in late fall and early winter. Actual elevation of where moose may be found varies, but in years without much snow, they are found right around the top of the mountain. In years with a lot of snow, they move down to the foothill band around the mountain

Moose habitat in the district is largely located on private timber company lands, but smaller private ownerships can also harbor good moose concentrations. Inland Empire Paper (IEP) is the largest of the timber companies in District 2. IEP does charge an access fee. However, they are the only timber company that allows motor vehicle access, dependent on the area and time of year. See their website at <http://www.iepco.com/recreation.htm> for details and maps. Permit holders should exercise caution and know where they and the moose they are targeting are at all times given the percentage of private land ownership, proximity to Idaho, and non-hunting lands (state & county parks, national wildlife refuge) within the moose hunting units.

WATERFOWL

At the statewide level, District 2 is not known for its duck hunting and is not a large duck production area due to the ephemeral nature of the waterbodies in the Channeled Scablands. Local surveys indicate brood production is down this year relative to last year's high, but is still in the range of normal for the area (Figure 14). The most common breeding duck species in the area are mallard, gadwall, and redhead. Other common waterfowl species in District 2 include ruddy duck and all three teal species. Based on Breeding Population Surveys (BPOP), overall duck numbers appear to be increasing in the Channeled Scablands/ Potholes region of eastern Washington, of which District 2 is a part (Figure 15). Canada goose and American coot counts show similar trends. Given the limited number of local nesting ducks, the waterfowl hunting opportunity in this district is dependent upon the number of migrants coming from Canada and Alaska, the amount of precipitation (winter snow and/or fall rains), and how long waterbodies remain ice free. Given the lack of snow during the 2014/15 winter and the severe drought this summer, hunters should focus their efforts on larger perennial waterbodies unless fall rains are significant. For more information on waterfowl hunting, see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/waterfowl/index.html> and Waterfowl Hunting Areas in Region 1.

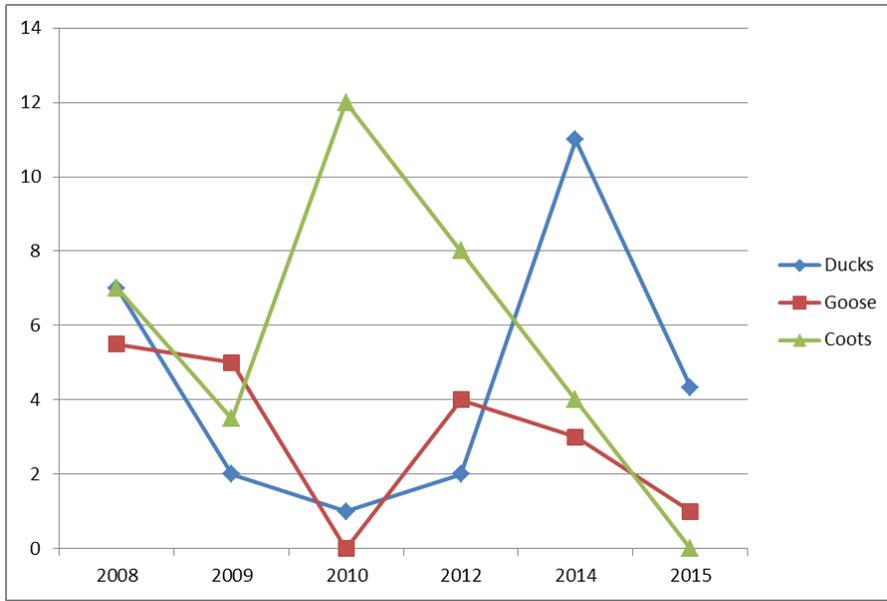


FIGURE 14. AVERAGE NUMBER OF BROODS OBSERVED PER ROUTE FOR DISTRICT 2 BROOD PRODUCTION GROUND SURVEYS.

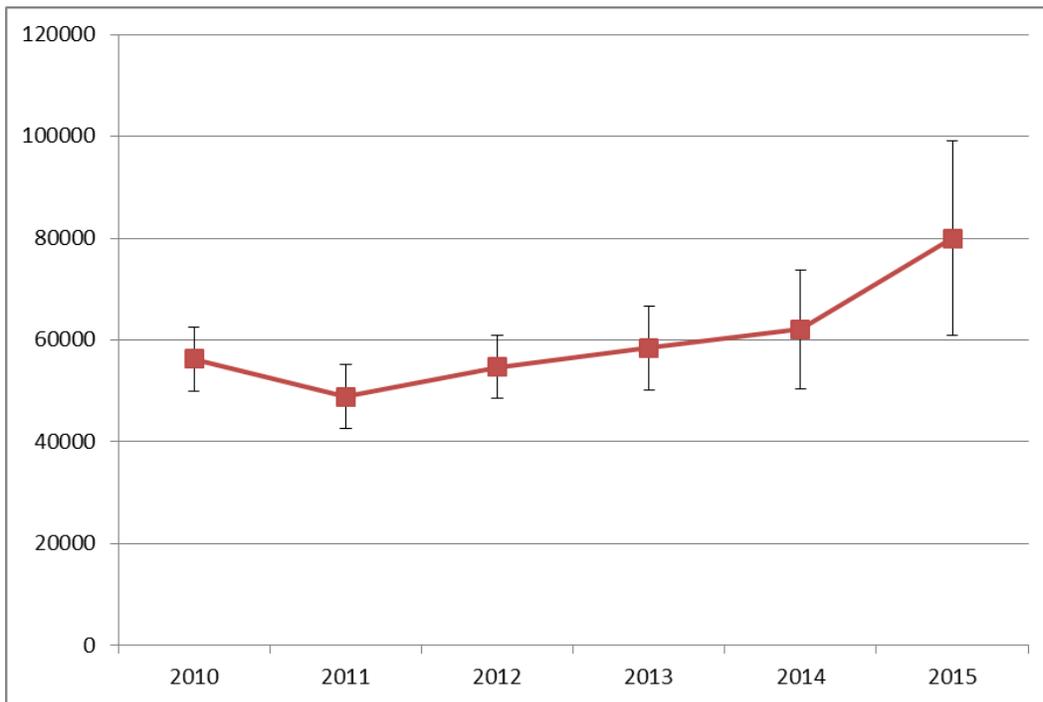


FIGURE 15. TOTAL DUCK ESTIMATES FROM BREEDING POPULATION SURVEYS FOR THE POTHOLES REGION OF EASTERN WASHINGTON.

PHEASANT

Across the district, pheasant count surveys were 4% higher this year than the previous five year average (Figure 16). However, this was driven by the St. John route (up 54%), while the other routes are negative relative to their previous five year averages. Spring & summer weather was good and should lead to good production and recruitment. District wide trends in harvest continue to decline, while hunter numbers appear to have stabilized (Figure 17, top), mirroring statewide trends. Days per hunter have remained fairly stable in the district, while harvest per hunter has declined (Figure 17, bottom). The majority of pheasant hunting occurs in Whitman County, which has ~five times the harvest and ~three times more hunters than Lincoln or Spokane. Overall, pheasant populations in the district should see some recruitment this year, but are experiencing long term declines. This is a trend seen across the country, and though the cause of the decline in pheasant populations in Washington is undefined, it likely results from several causes associated with current farming practices and habitat loss.

For more information on harvest statistics see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Pheasant - Statewide and by County. For more information on pheasant status in Washington see the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.

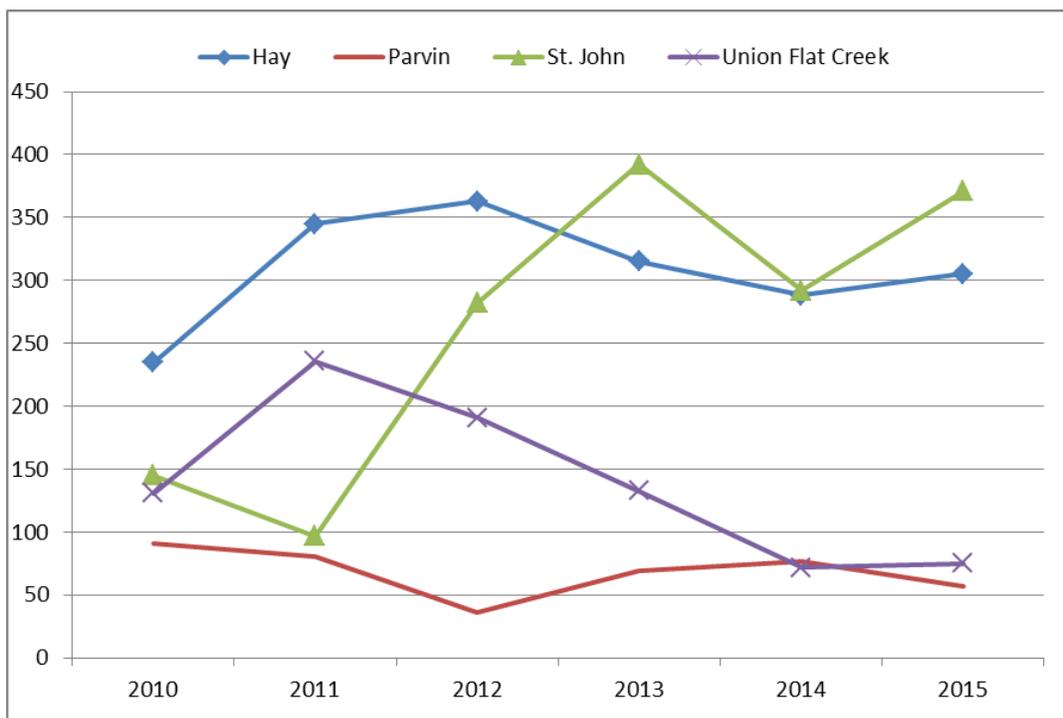


FIGURE 16. MAXIMUM COUNT FROM PHEASANT CROW ROUTES IN DISTRICT 2 FROM 2010-2015.

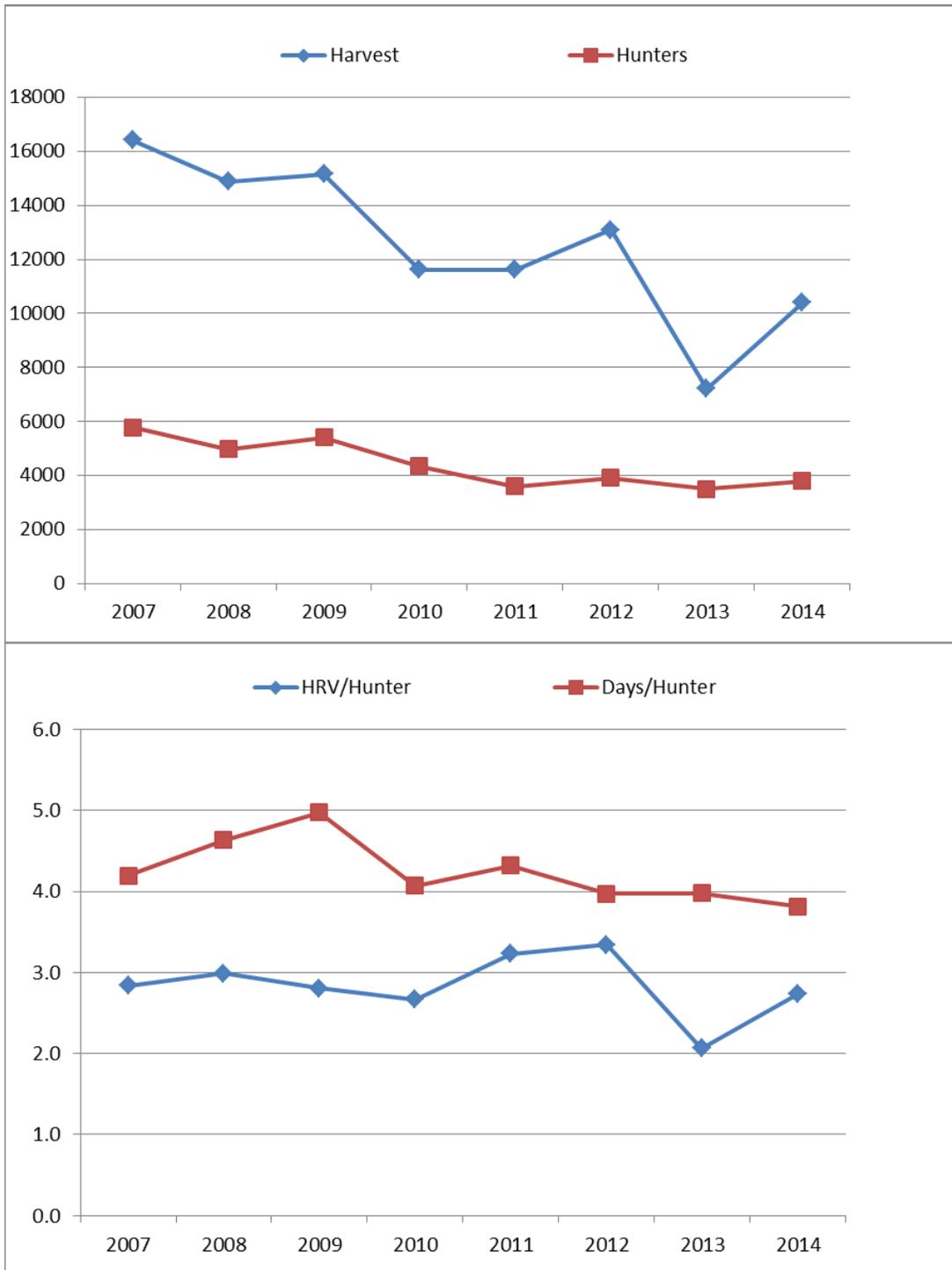


FIGURE 17. TOP GRAPH: PHEASANT HARVEST AND HUNTER NUMBERS FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014. BOTTOM GRAPH: PHEASANT HARVEST AND DAYS HUNTED PER HUNTER FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014.

Since most of the land in this district is private, hunters will need to spend some time “knocking on doors” to get access to the better sites. See the “Private Lands Program” below for private land access program acres by GMU. Many new cooperators have been enrolled in WDFW hunter access programs in the last couple years in southeast Washington. The locations are mapped on the GoHunt website.

WDFW will also be releasing game farm produced roosters once again this fall at the traditional release sites, which are also mapped on the GoHunt website and the Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program publication at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/pheasant/eastern/>. For more information see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Pheasant - Statewide and by County at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/2014/reports/small_game.php.

CHUKAR AND GRAY PARTRIDGE

Nest and brood success for chukars and partridge should be good, with decent spring weather leading to good nest success. However, the severe drought may reduce brood survival and recruitment. Harvest has been quite variable the past two years, but in 2014 was just about average, relative to the long term average (Figure 18). Hunter numbers, effort (days/hunter), and harvest per hunter remain stable (Figure 18).

Partridge broods of 10-12 chicks have been seen regularly during field work in Lincoln County. Partridge are most common in Lincoln and Whitman counties and are most often seen in and adjacent to agricultural fields.

There are very few chukar in District 2. They are predominantly found along the breaks of the Snake River. Terrain is steep and rocky with limited public access from above. There is some access via US Army Corps of Engineers along the Snake River from below, but not all of the Corps lands allow hunting. See the website at <http://www.nww.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation.aspx> for details.

For more information on gray partridge and chukar see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Statewide and by county, and the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.

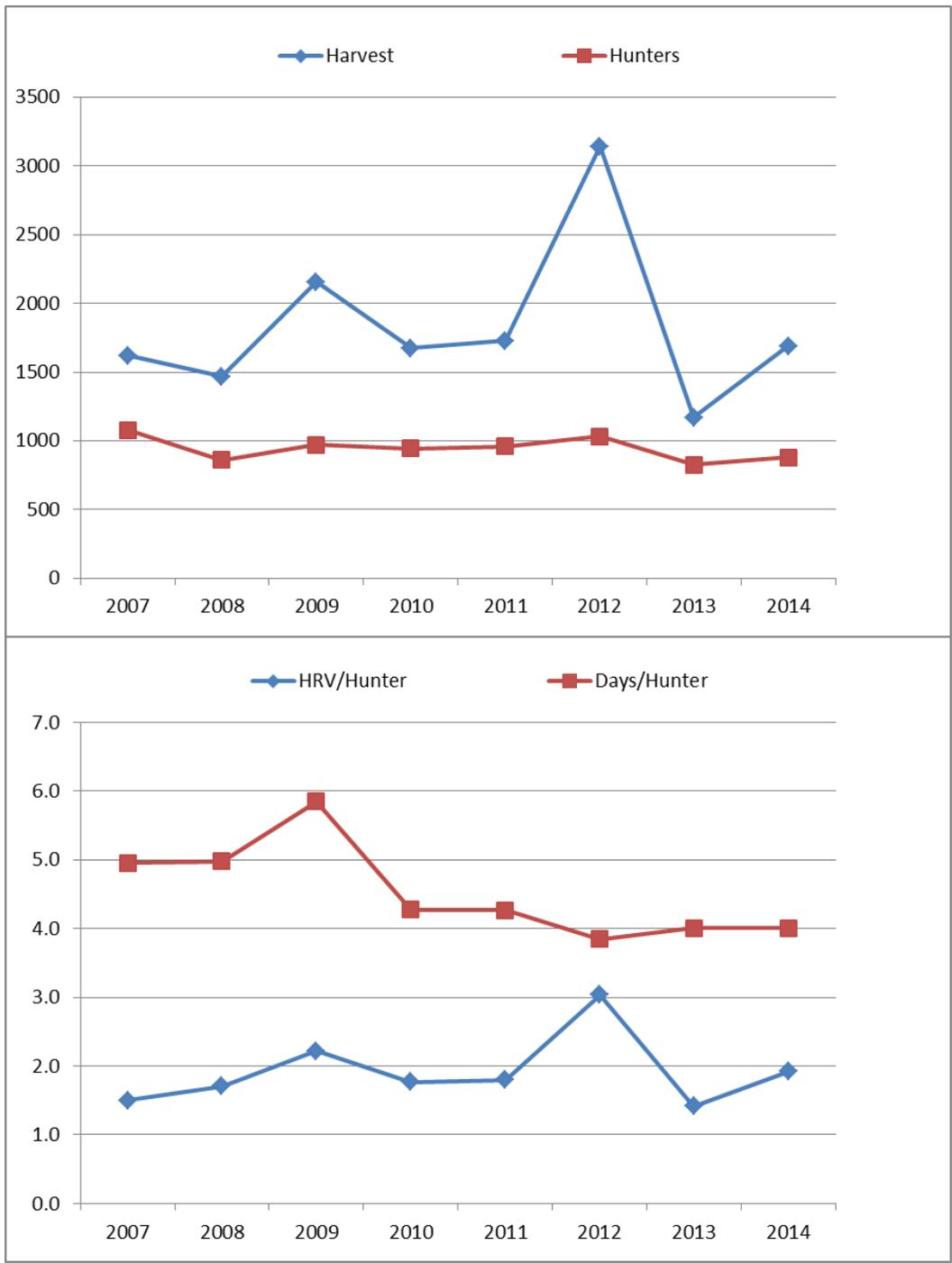


FIGURE 18. TOP GRAPH: CHUKAR AND PARTRIDGE HARVEST AND HUNTER NUMBERS FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014. BOTTOM GRAPH: CHUKAR AND PARTRIDGE HARVEST AND DAYS HUNTED PER HUNTER FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014.

FOREST GROUSE

The mild winter and decent spring weather should combine to produce good nesting and brood success this year. However, the severe drought and fires may reduce summer survival and recruitment into the fall population. Populations overall appear to be down in District 2, but it's still possible to shoot one opportunistically in the forested portions of GMUs 124, 127, and 133. Harvest and hunter numbers are down relative to long term averages, but have been relatively stable the past five years (Figure 19, top). Hunter effort remains stable at ~five days per hunter, while hunter success (harvest/hunter) is showing signs of recovering (Figure 19, bottom).

For more information on forest grouse see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Statewide and by County, and the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.

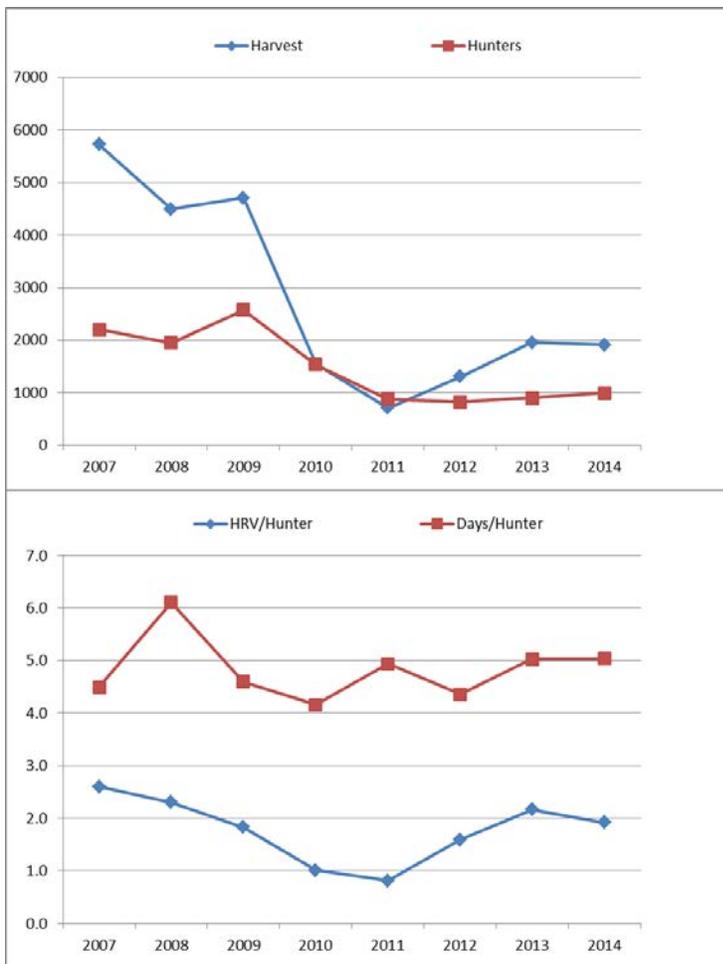


FIGURE 19. TOP GRAPH: FOREST GROUSE HARVEST AND HUNTER NUMBERS FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014. BOTTOM GRAPH: FOREST GROUSE HARVEST AND DAYS HUNTED PER HUNTER FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014.

QUAIL

Quail populations appear to have recovered from the hard winters of 2008 and 2009. Prospects look good, with decent spring weather this year for nests and broods. However, severe drought and fires will likely impact summer survival. Good brood numbers were seen in south Spokane and Whitman counties. All harvest metrics show a long term negative trend, but for the past five years they have been stable (Figure 20), indicating a relatively stable population. Access can be a problem, especially with most of the good quail habitat occurring in and around farmsteads and towns. For more information on harvest statistics see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Quail - Statewide and by County. For more information on quail status in Washington see the most recent Game Status and Trend Report

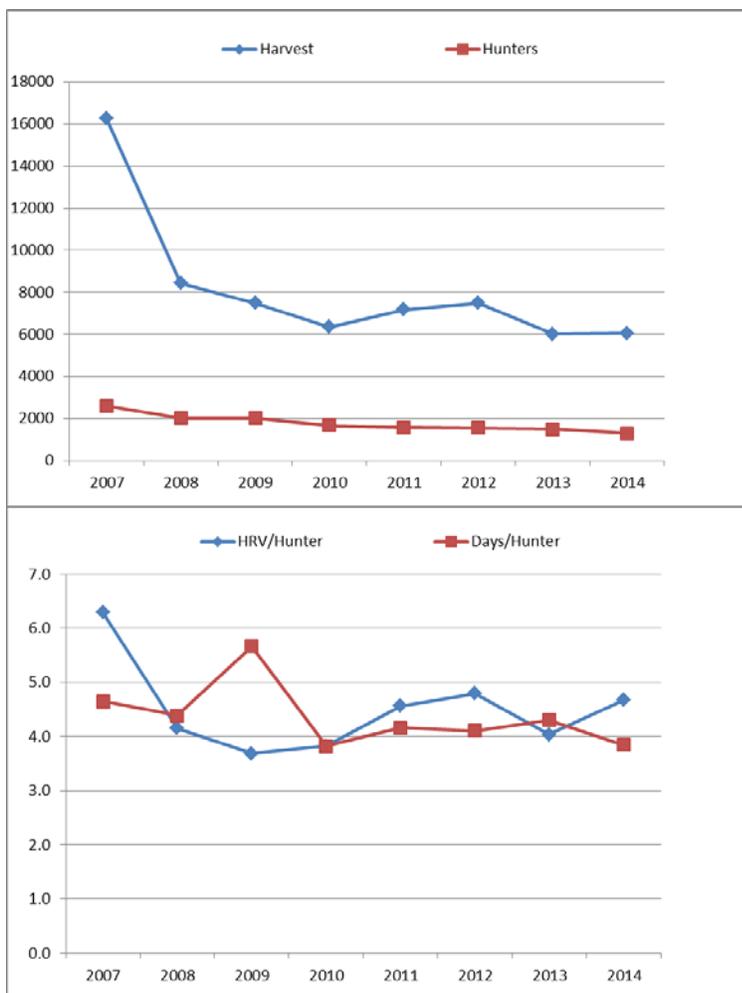


FIGURE 20. TOP GRAPH: QUAIL HARVEST AND HUNTER NUMBERS FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014. BOTTOM GRAPH: QUAIL HARVEST AND DAYS HUNTED PER HUNTER FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014.

TURKEY

Opportunistic observations during field work, public reports, and damage claims all indicate that the turkey population is doing very well in GMUs 124-133 and expanding into GMUs 136-142. Again, the district is predominantly private land and hunters will need to secure access. Access during the spring hunt can be competitive, but access should be relatively easy to acquire in GMU 124 for the fall seasons.

For more information on turkey in Washington, see the Turkey Game Harvest Statistics and the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.

DOVE

Doves in District 2 occur at low population densities relative to the Columbia Basin and similar regions. As often as not, cool temperatures just prior to or during the dove season push many doves further south out of the district. Hunter harvest metrics indicate a highly variable, but relatively stable population (Figure 21), with harvest averaging ~3000 birds a year by ~300 hunters. Hunter effort (days/hunter) has been slowly increasing the past five years, while harvest per hunter shows high annual variation (Figure 21). It is important to note that eastside hunters have an additional dove opportunity – the Eurasian collared dove. This dove is an exotic dove that has just invaded most of eastern Washington and can be hunted with a license all year round.

For more information on doves see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: 2014 Statewide and by County, and the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.

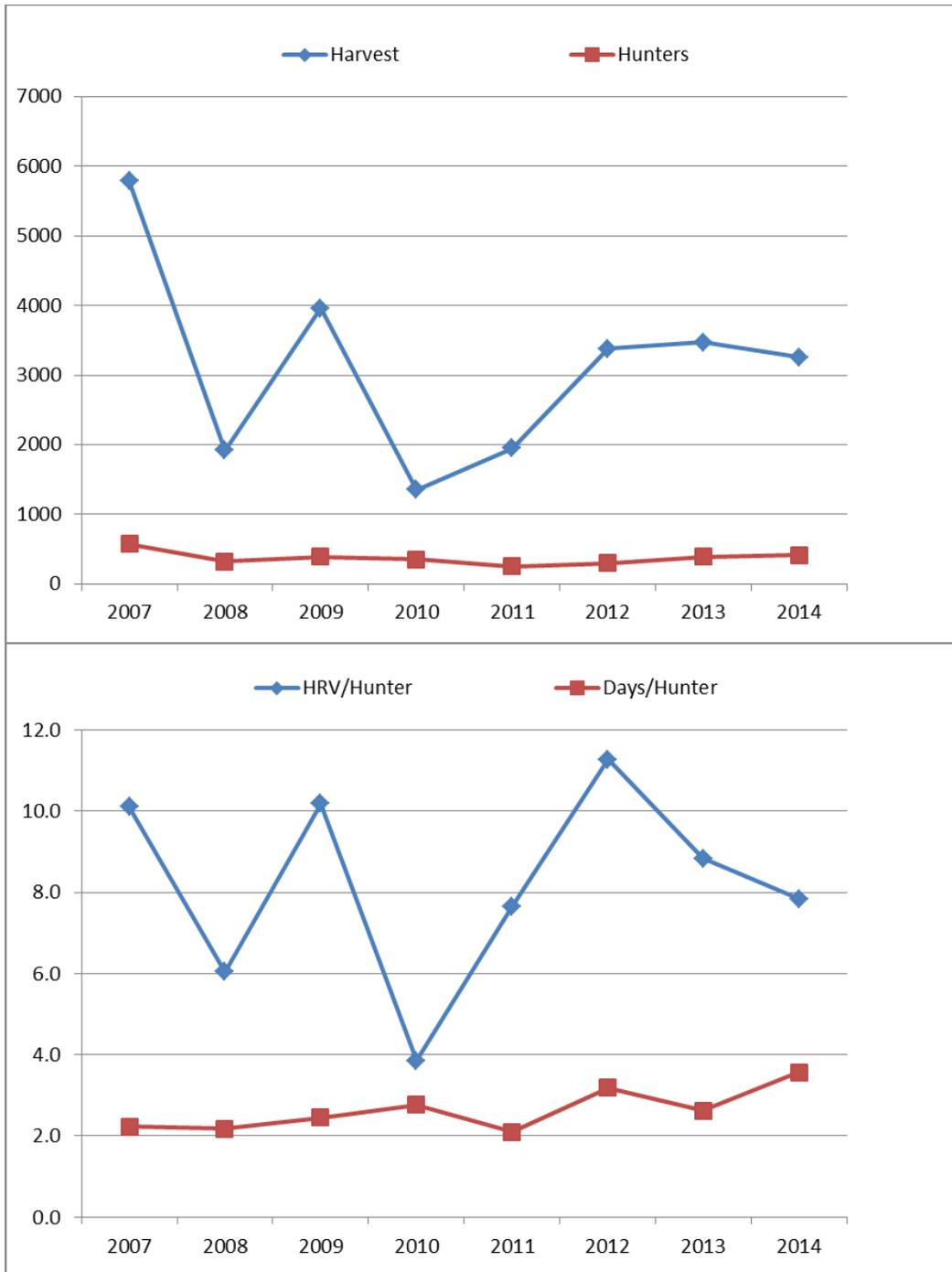


FIGURE 21. TOP GRAPH: DOVE HARVEST AND HUNTER NUMBERS FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014. BOTTOM GRAPH: DOVE HARVEST AND DAYS HUNTED PER HUNTER FOR DISTRICT 2 FROM 2007-2014.

MAJOR PUBLIC LANDS

The 2015 wildfires that were still burning in late August may affect hunter access to some hunting areas. Hunters should check the status of wildfires and access restrictions at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/49#>.

The majority of the district is privately owned. However, WDFW and BLM own ~60,000 acres in the center of Lincoln County and ~15,000 acres in northwest Whitman County. For more information on BLM property, or to order maps, please visit the blm.gov website. For more information on WDFW lands, see the wildlife area webpage at http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/index.html.

The Washington Department of Natural Resources maintains land that is open to the public for recreational purposes. Visitors to DNR land should be aware that a Discover Pass is required for access. Further information regarding recreational opportunities on DNR land can be found on the DNR website at <http://dnr.wa.gov/>.

The US Army Corps of Engineers also maintains lands associated with the Snake River that are open to the public for recreational purposes. Not all of these lands are open to hunting, so hunters will want to research beforehand.

Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR) has a limited entry youth waterfowl hunt (details available through TNWR) and allows elk hunting by permit only (permits allotted via WDFW special permit draw in June).

Riverside State Park and Mount Spokane State Park, along with all county parks in Spokane County, are open to public access, but NOT to hunting.

There are several private timber companies that allow hunting in Spokane County, and throughout the district there are private landowners enrolled in WDFW hunt access programs (see “Private Lands Program” below and visit the WDFW Private Lands Access web site at http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/hunting_access/private_lands/).

PRIVATE LANDS

Since 1948, WDFW has worked with private landowners across the state to provide public access through a negotiated agreement. Landowners participating in a WDFW cooperative agreement retain liability protection provided under RCW 4.24.210. Landowners receive technical services, materials for posting (signs and posts), and in some cases monetary compensation. In addition, lands under agreement are well known by WDFW enforcement staff.

Currently, the private lands access program includes five basic access agreement types: Hunt by Written Permission (HBWP), Feel Free to Hunt (FFTH), Hunt by Reservation (HBR), Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP), and Register to Hunt (RTH). Total accessible acreage in District 2 is 170,809 acres – 24,892 in Spokane County, 45,324 in Lincoln County, and 100,593 in Whitman County. A summary of these acres by GMU and the program are in Table 2 below. The LHP in GMU 130 is managed by the Columbia Plateau Wildlife Management Association (CPWMA). Access is only available through WDFW Special Permitting and CPWMA Raffle Permit Hunts (see WDFW Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations Pamphlet). More information on the other four access programs and where these enrolled lands occur can be found at WDFW's [GoHunt site](#) and at the [WDFW Private Lands Access web site](#).

Game Management Unit (GMU)	Hunt by Written Permission (HBWP)		Feel Free To Hunt (FFTH)		Hunt By Reservation (HBR)		Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP)		Register to Hunt (RTH)	
	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres	Cooperators	Acres
124 Mt Spokane	2	298	2	9,228						
127 Mica Peak			1	3,130						
130 Cheney	1	6,246					1	5,990		
133 Roosevelt	18	20,788	1	612						
136 Harrington	12	16,658	7	7,266						
139 Steptoe	15	12,620	7	5,286	22	48,852			2	320
142 Almota	8	12,111	6	3,248	10	18,156				
TOTAL	56	68,721	24	28,770	32	67,008	1	5,990	2	320

TABLE 2. ACRES OF PRIVATE LAND ENROLLED IN WDFW ACCESS PROGRAMS BY GMU IN DISTRICT 2.