

2018

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Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**



DISTRICT 16 HUNTING PROSPECTS

Clallam and west Jefferson counties



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Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Shelly Ament banding ducks

DISTRICT 16 GENERAL OVERVIEW

District 16 includes Clallam County and western Jefferson County on the Olympic Peninsula (Figure 1). Eight Game Management Units (GMUs) are within District 16. Two eastern GMUs, Coyle GMU 624 and Olympic GMU 621, extend into eastern Jefferson County, which is within District 15. See the District 17 Hunting Prospects for information on GMU 618 Matheny.

Each GMU in District 16 has its own unique mix of land ownerships: private residential, private agricultural, private forest industrial, state and federal forest, and park lands. Most higher-elevation forest lands are in public ownership (U.S. Forest Service and Olympic National Park). Lower elevation foothills are generally private industrial forest lands and state lands managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

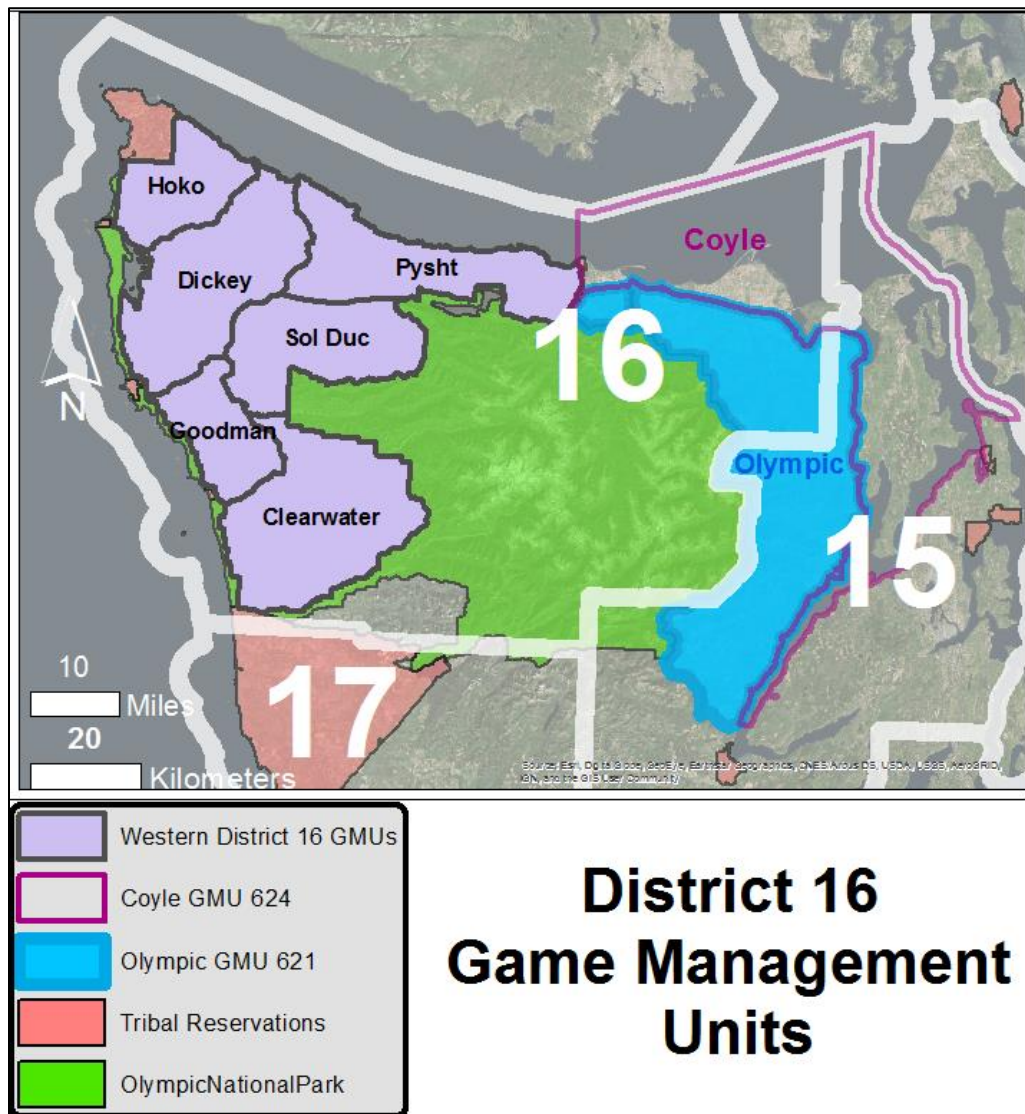


Figure 1. District 16 GMUs. Coyle and Olympic extend into District 15.

District 16 Annual Harvest of game species is shown on Table 1 and Table 2.

District 16 Deer & Elk Annual Harvest				
Species	2017	2016	2015	2014
Elk - Bulls Total	210	213	285	213
Elk - Bulls State	135	141	184	123
Elk - Bulls Tribal	75	72	101	90
Elk - Antlerless State	2	3	4	2
Elk - Antlerless Tribal	25	41	25	25
Deer - Bucks Total	872	1115	982	987
Deer - Bucks State	775	993	884	881
Deer - Bucks Tribal	97	122	98	106
Deer - Antlerless Total	149	189	150	130
Deer - Antlerless State	117	138	115	84

District 16 Game Species Annual Harvest				
Species	2017	2016	2015	2014
Bear	101	87	66	66
Cougar	2	8	5	2
Ducks	6057	11,540	8093	7253
Geese (early season)	149	272	97	136
Geese (late season)	183	713	355	331
Brant	90	Closed	Closed	Closed
Forest Grouse	2590	4374	4794	5356
Mourning Dove	0	54	67	11
Quail	150	236	164	500
Snipe	0	45	4	0
Hare/Rabbit	54	60	45	54



EAST DISTRICT 16

The eastern portion of the district is the Dungeness Basin (western GMU 624 Coyle and northern portion of GMU 621 Olympic). The Dungeness watershed offers a rich diversity of habitats from high elevation, rain-shadow mountains to the lower watershed with plentiful wetland habitats dispersed amidst a mix of riparian and bygone prairie/oak forest. The prairie is now a rural mix of small and large farms with scattered developments. In the lower basin there are some choice private duck hunting club ownerships and a few well enjoyed public waterfowl hunting areas. Waterfowl hunting opportunities have been expanded in the eastern portion of the district in recent years. The Dungeness Basin and the smaller watersheds east of the Elwha are areas where deer abundance is a problem, resulting in frequent complaints by local residents. The high visibility of deer in the Coyle and Olympic GMUs extends into the lower elevation forestlands where there is an ideal ratio of forest openings. Some of the Olympic GMU habitat includes large areas of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) mature and older forest, habitat that does not provide much forage for ungulates. The availability of deer for harvest is enhanced within Deer Area 6020, where there are “any deer” regular seasons. The main challenge for hunting in eastern District 16 is the high amount of private ownership, so time needs to be invested into arranging your hunting access on the target properties.

WEST DISTRICT 16

The west end (Hoko, Dickey, Sol Duc, Goodman, and Clearwater) has the bulk of the elk in the district, while the deer are sparse in these same GMUs. Various subherds of elk are located within District 16. Many elk herds are year-round residents that remain in lower elevation habitats. There are some herds that make regular migrations into the higher elevations, most always being on Olympic National Park (ONP) habitat. There are opportunities to harvest elk as they move out of ONP during the hunting season. The ONP areas vary from the Outer Coast Park strip to the eastern portion of the Clearwater (GMU 615), which includes a large block of DNR ownership bordering ONP.

Varied hunting opportunities exist within District 16, from waterfowl hunting on designated shoreline and wetland areas along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, to forest grouse, deer, elk, bear, and cougar hunting on private commercial and public forest land. Both state (DNR) and federal (USFS) lands provide hunting opportunities for a variety of species within the district.

ELK

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

The elk within District 16 are Roosevelt elk. District 16 contains various subherds of the Olympic elk herd, one of 10 herds identified in the state. Elk numbers peaked in the late 1970s, with a conservative estimate of about 12,000 elk outside of Olympic National Park based on historical harvest information. Past elk population estimates were based on a combination of harvest data, telemetry studies, and mark-resight surveys. These techniques yielded a fall population estimate of approximately 8,600 in the game management units (GMUs) surrounding Olympic National Park in the year 2000. The current estimated population of the Olympic Elk herd is likely lower.

Overall, the elk harvest opportunity is for 3-point minimum. Much of the elk hunting within the eastern portion of the district is restricted to a limited entry, 3-point minimum, bull-only harvest, with antlerless harvest used as a damage management tool when necessary. Elk hunting opportunities are generally good west of the Elwha, with possibilities on DNR lands, USFS lands, and private timberlands. However, it is important to note that there are several areas where vehicular access is limited. Hunters need to obtain permission to hunt on private lands and must obey all posted signs and regulations. Some elk herds migrate down from high alpine meadows in Olympic National Park (ONP) to lowland winter range. Public lands and private commercial timberlands bordering the park are good prospects. Hunters often scout for elk that leave ONP and travel along major river drainages. Keep in mind that it is unlawful to hunt in ONP.

Along with elk come elk damage issues, some of which can be managed using harvest and hunting pressure. Conflict biologists are tasked to manage these elk damage areas and frequently utilize Master Hunter permittees to put pressure on the herds and encourage habitat use patterns that minimize damage and human safety concerns. If interested, review the information to sign up for the [Master Hunter Permit Program](#).

Local elk studies and ongoing monitoring require marking elk using transmitting markers (collars and/or ear tags). Some markers are VHF transmitters, but most markers are GPS/satellite models. It is very likely that you will observe elk that have been captured and are marked. If you observe a marked elk in an unusual location or possibly even find an elk marker, you are encouraged to share that information with WDFW. Markers should have information indicating who to call. Because markers may have been deployed by other agencies, it is most helpful to report to both WDFW and the agency that deployed the collar.

WHICH GMU SHOULD ELK HUNTERS HUNT?

Elk can be harvested from any of the GMUs within District 16. Reviewing past harvest records can be a starting point for hunters to consider when selecting an area to spend some time hunting. Harvest has been one of the reliable measurements for the monitoring of elk on the Olympic Peninsula. Game harvest report data are generated using mandatory hunting reports, follow-up phone surveys, and permit reports. For other species, data may come from the small game hunter questionnaire, trapper report of catch, and cougar pelt sealing. WDFW's game harvest reports [data collection and analysis website](#) describes the methods associated with these data.

West District 16 – West End:

The Clearwater (GMU 615), Dickey (GMU 602), Goodman (GMU 612), and Sol Duc (GMU 607) have the highest elk harvest in District 16. These units contain large acreages of public land, much of it without restricted access. Be aware there are gated roads in all of these GMUs, some of which allow hunter access and others that are closed to the public.

The Hoko (GMU 601), Pysht (GMU 603), and Coyle (GMU 624) have very limited opportunities for general season hunters. Most of these units contain private land and many of the roads on timberlands are gated. Elk groups in GMU 603 (Pysht) have increased slightly in the recent years.

A thesis on elk with research conducted in the Hoko (GMU 601) and Dickey (GMU 602) is available on this website: [Movements and Habitat Use of Female Roosevelt Elk in Relation to Human Disturbance on the Hoko and Dickey Game Management Units, Washington](#).

East District 16 – The Olympic GMU 621 is limited to state permit elk and tribal elk harvest. GMU 624 (Coyle) is not a recommended destination for elk hunting because the opportunities are going to be rare. The season remains open for 3-point minimum for the hunter that may encounter that rare opportunity. The elk population and associated hunting opportunities may increase in GMU 624, but most likely outside of District 16.

Hunting seasons have been established not only to allow recreational use, but also to manage habitat use patterns by elk populations within the district. Elk Area 6071 is within GMU 621 and 624, designed to specifically address the Dungeness/Sequim elk herd issues. Harvest within Elk Area 6071 is limited to damage control, occasionally involving Master Hunter elk hunts from the Region 6 permit list.

See [District 15 Hunting Prospects](#) at for more information on elk harvest within GMU 621 and GMU 624.

DISTRICT 16 ELK HUNTING AND HARVEST RECORDS

[Annual harvest reports](#) and harvest statistics for elk based on hunter reporting can be found on the WDFW website.

The compiled harvest records represent harvest, hunting effort and success obtained using mandatory hunter reports and follow-up surveys for correction factor of non-response bias.

Bull Elk Harvest

The Olympic Peninsula elk harvest reflects the general elk abundance, most harvest occurring in the western GMUs. The west end elk are distributed as many small herds scattered well throughout the GMUs. The east Olympic Peninsula elk are individual herds with distinct use patterns within watersheds. There appears to be sizeable habitat within eastern Olympic Peninsula that is not currently being utilized by elk. Hunting on the east Olympic Peninsula takes more deliberate planning to find the herds and make the most of elk harvest opportunities.

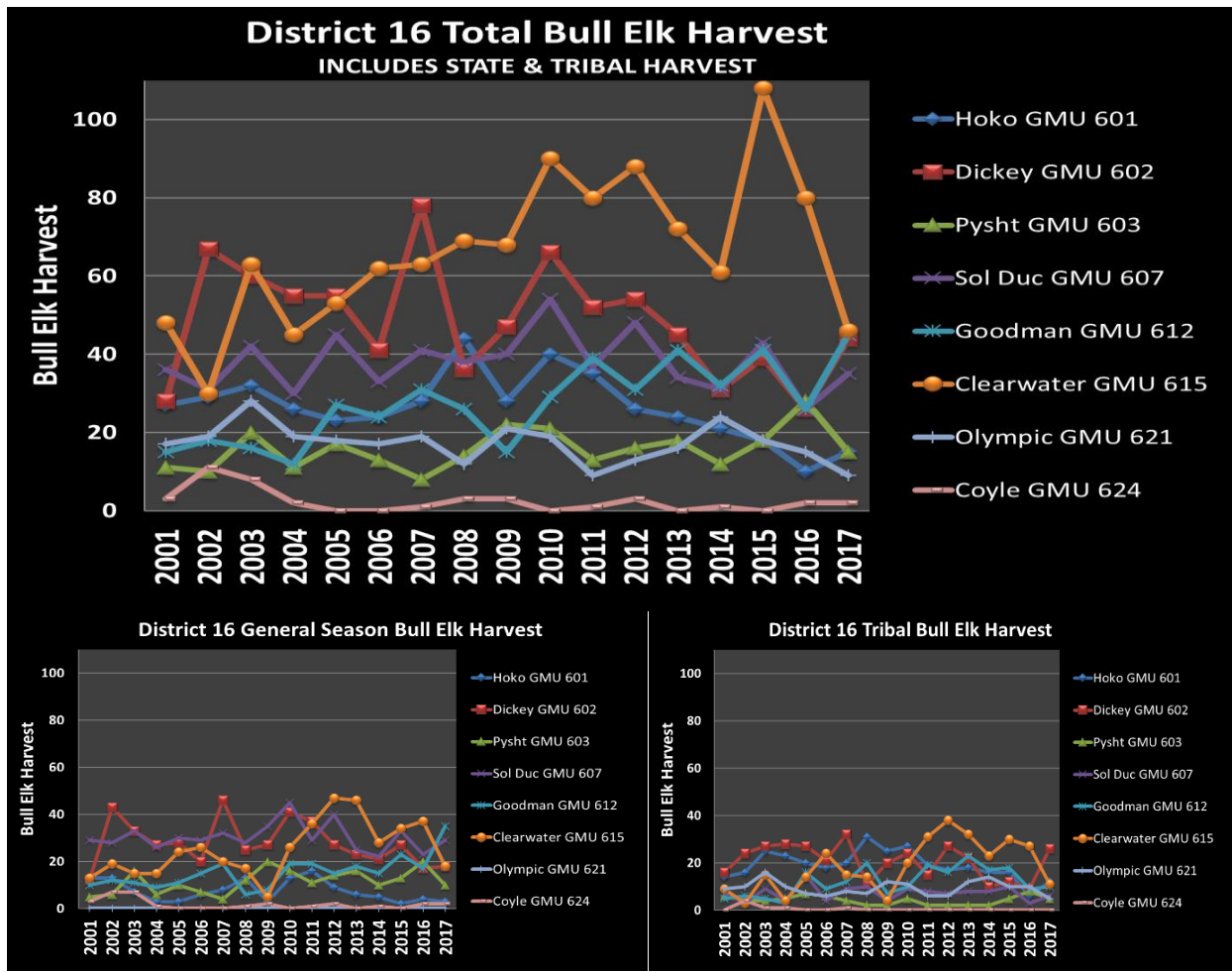


Figure 2. Bull elk harvest by GMU in District 16 from 2001 to 2017.

The total bull elk harvest within the western GMUs (GMUs 615, 602, and 607) consistently contributes the highest bull harvest levels, while the eastern GMUs (GMUs 621, 624, and 603) consistently have low bull harvest levels, rarely having a GMU harvest total over 20 annually (Figure 2).

The general season bull harvest is typically between 50 and 70 percent of the total bull harvest.

The tribal bull harvest has averaged between 30 and 40 percent of the total bull harvest. In a couple GMUs, the tribal bull harvest has been a higher percentage of the total bull harvest (55 percent for GMU 621 and 70 percent for GMU 601).

Archery Elk Hunting

Archery elk hunting in District 16 is predominately occurring in GMU 615 (Figure 3). GMU 612, GMU 602, and GMU 603 have a much lower level of archery hunter days, ranging between 200 and 400 days annually. GMU 601, GMU 621, and GMU 624 had the lowest level of archery hunter days below 200 days annually.

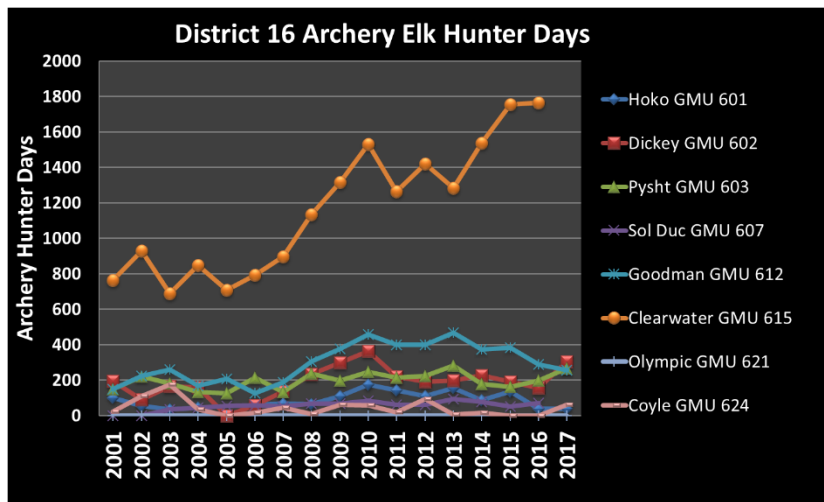


Figure 3. Archery elk hunter days by GMU.

Muzzleloader Elk Hunting

Muzzleloader elk hunting has been concentrated in GMU 602 and GMU 607 for many years (Figure 4). This changed in 2015 when muzzleloader elk hunting opened up in GMU 615 and GMU 612. A high level of participation was reported in GMU 615, while at the same time there was a reported drop in muzzleloader elk hunter days for GMU 607 and GMU 602.

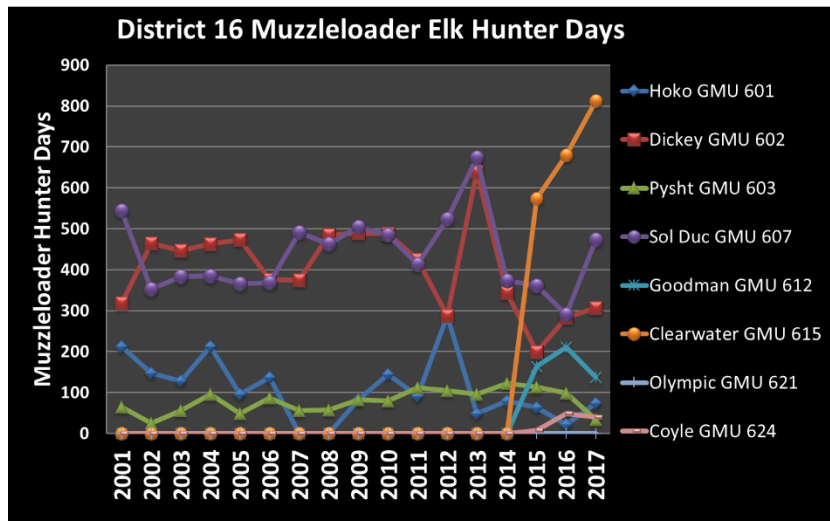


Figure 4. Muzzleloader elk hunter days by GMU.

Modern Firearm Elk Hunting

The Modern Firearm elk hunter days has decreased since the highs in 2014, especially in GMU 615 (Figure 5). In GMU 615, the modern firearm hunting pressure dropped drastically in 2015 and 2016, while at the same time there was a 600-day increase in muzzleloader hunting and a 200-day increase in archery hunting. The total number of state hunter days has remained fairly constant, while the pressure has shifted from modern firearm to archery and muzzleloader.

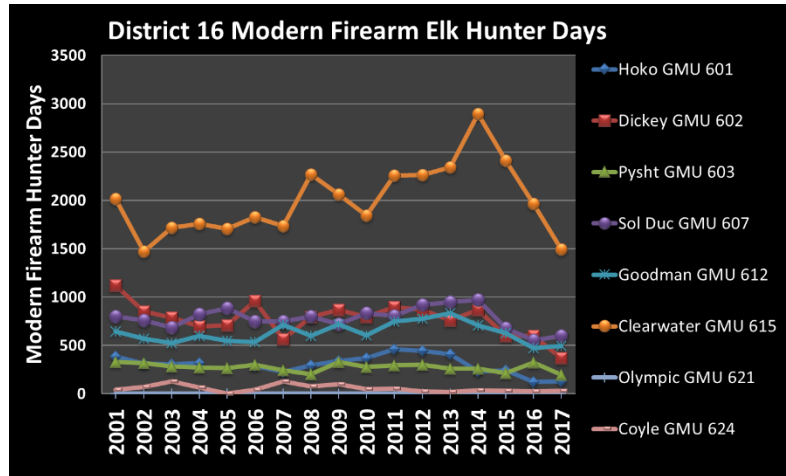


Figure 5. District 16 modern firearm elk hunter days.

GMU 601 (Hoko) Elk Hunting

Hoko bull elk harvest has been declining for both state hunter harvest and tribal harvest since 2011, with a 2017 state hunter elk harvest of only three branched bulls (Figure 6). Overall participation by state hunters in GMU 601 has dropped to less than 300 days annually and consisted of primarily modern firearm hunters.

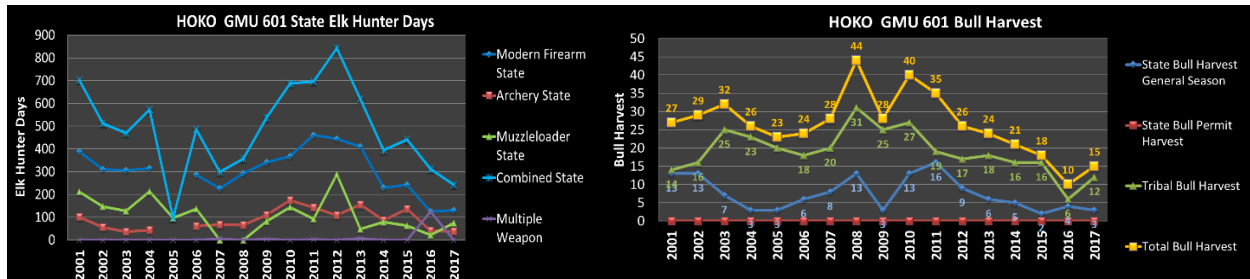


Figure 6. GMU 601 state elk hunter days and bull elk harvest.

GMU 602 (Dickey) Elk Hunting

The reported total bull harvest has been declining since 2010, with an increase to 44 in 2017, after a low in 2016 of 26 (Figure 7). In 2014, there was an overall drop in elk hunter days that has continued to drop through 2017.

The hunter success trends have an ever so slight increase over the years, typically ranging from 5-15 percent.

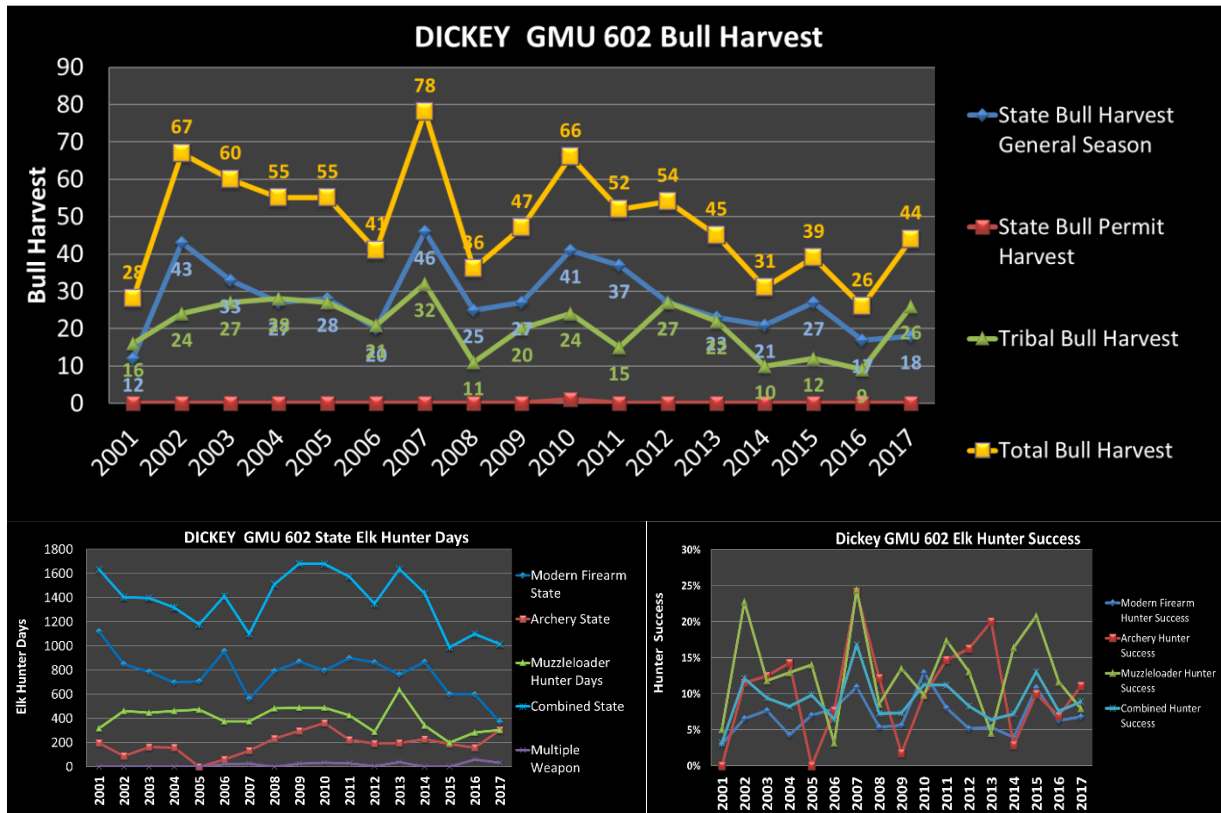


Figure 7. Dickey GMU 602 Total Bull Elk Harvest & State Elk Hunter Days & Success.



GMU 603 (Pysht) Elk Hunting

Abundance of elk in GMU 603 has been increasing in the last three decades. During the 1990s, it was uncommon to observe elk in GMU 603. Even during helicopter searches, few elk were observed. The lack of detectability can be due to other reasons, so there has been interest in better understanding the elk population in this GMU. Elk monitoring and studies have been accomplished by the Lower Elwha Tribe during the last 10 years. As the elk population continues to increase, the hunting opportunities are expanding, with the harvest trend increasing since 2001. Most of the elk population increase is occurring within the western portion, on Merrill and Ring Pysht Tree Farm and other private forestlands. There are also some herds within the Elwha Watershed, with occasional observations of elk use within the newly formed Elwha floodplains. The Joyce vicinity seems to be the least populated by elk in all of GMU 603.

Muzzleloader hunters enjoy the highest hunter success of state hunters in GMU 603. Since 2008, the success has been between 10 and 25 percent (Figure 8), with 2017 success for modern firearm and archery dropping to below 10 percent. Archery hunters' success is wide ranging, from 0-17 percent. Modern firearm hunters maintain a success level between 5-15 percent most all of the time.

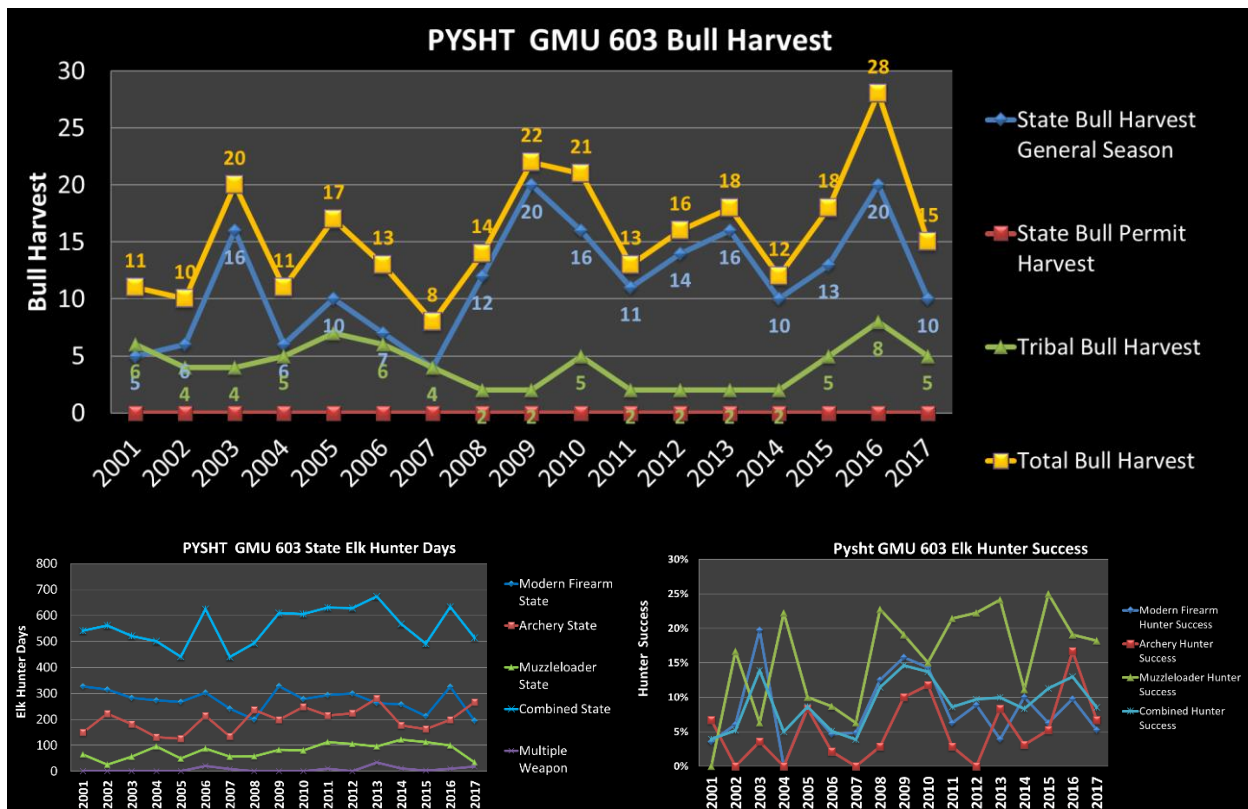


Figure 8. GMU 603 bull elk harvest, state elk hunter days, and success.

GMU 607 (Sol Duc) Elk Hunting

Over 70 percent of the elk harvest within GMU 607 is by state hunters. The harvest has remained fairly consistent and steady since 2001, with a trend of state hunters taking about 30 bulls annually and tribal hunters taking about seven bulls annually.

Hunter success in GMU 607 is usually around 5-15 percent for all participating state hunters.

During 2015, 2016, and 2017, there was a decrease in modern firearm hunter days in GMU 607 compared to 2013 and 2014, but interestingly enough the harvest for modern firearm hunters did not show a comparable drop.

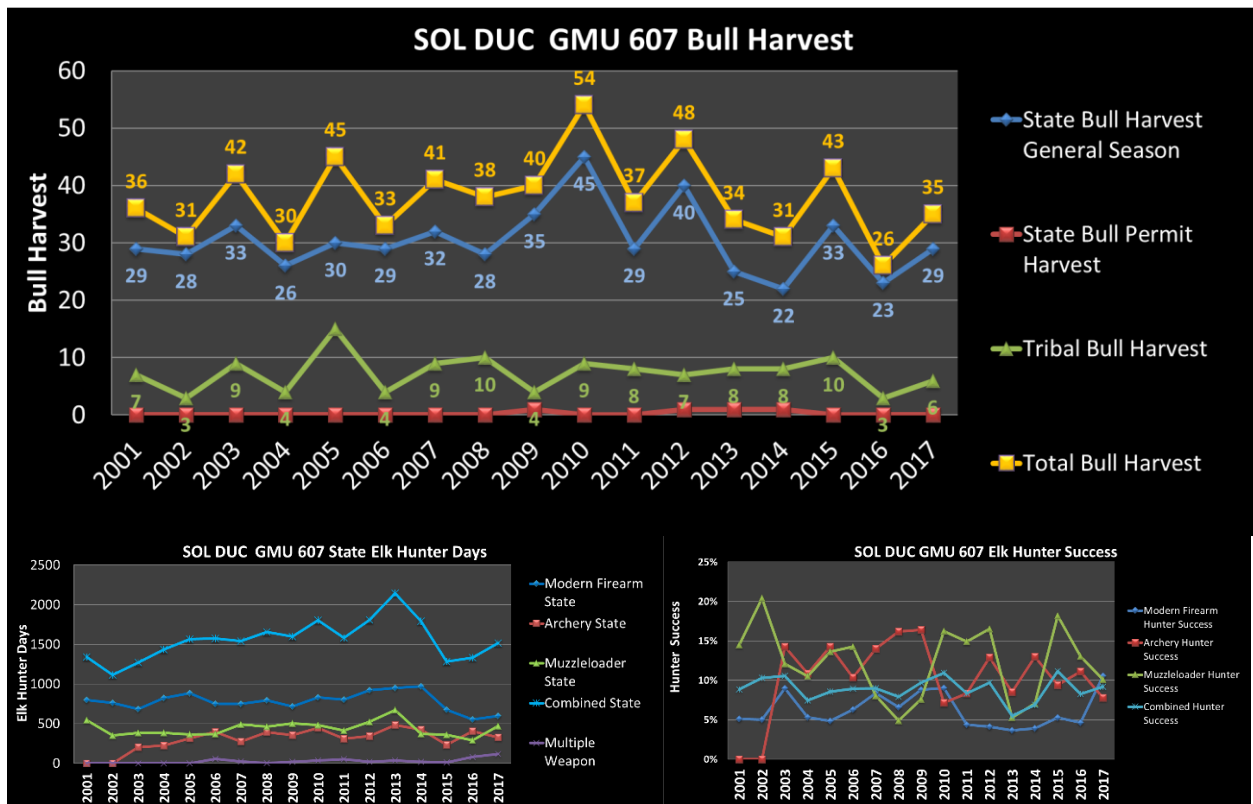


Figure 9. GMU 607 bull harvest, state elk hunter days and success

GMU 612 (Goodman) Elk Hunting

Total bull harvest in Goodman GMU 612 is almost 50 percent state hunter harvest and 50 percent tribal hunter harvest.

Muzzleloader season opened up for GMU 612 in 2015, resulting in a modest amount of muzzleloader hunter days, 137 days in 2017. The muzzleloader hunter success is starting at 10-17 percent, while the archery and modern firearm hunter success has been between 5-15 percent until 2017, when the archery hunter had a 36 percent success rate.

The total number of state hunter days in GMU 612 has remained fairly constant over the years, not being below 800 days since 2006, while in recent years it has hovered around 1,000 to 1,200.

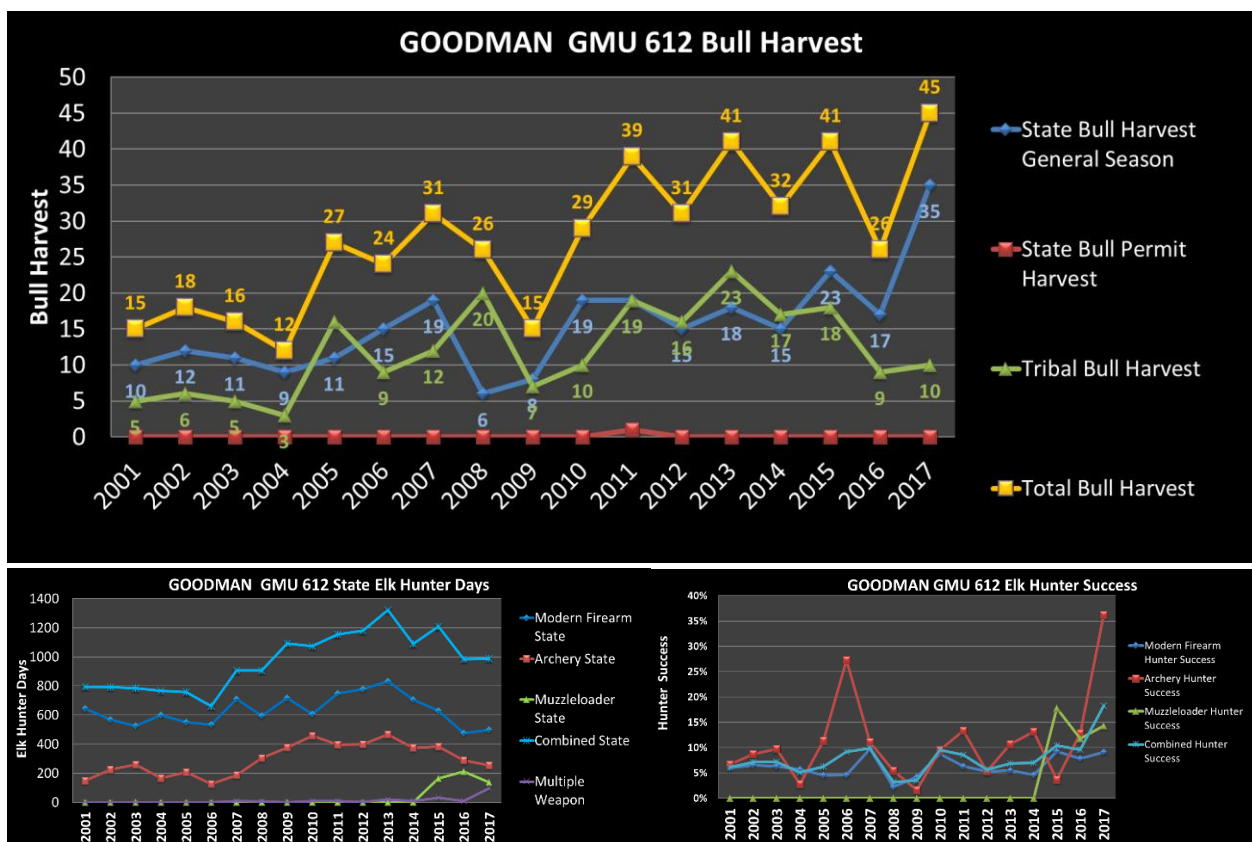


Figure 10. GMU 612 bull harvest, state elk hunter days and success.

GMU 615 (Clearwater) Elk Hunting

GMU 615 has always had the most elk harvest of all GMUs in District 16. The total elk bull harvest trend since 2001 has been increasing from mid 40s in 2001 to twice that in 2016 at 80-90.

Hunter success for GMU 615 falls within a narrow range for all state hunters, reliably between 4 and 12 percent, with only a couple outliers for archery hunters.

Muzzleloader season opened during 2015 and 2016, and there was participation both years. The overall total number of hunter days remained fairly constant, a result of increased muzzleloader hunter days and an almost equal decrease of modern firearm hunter days.

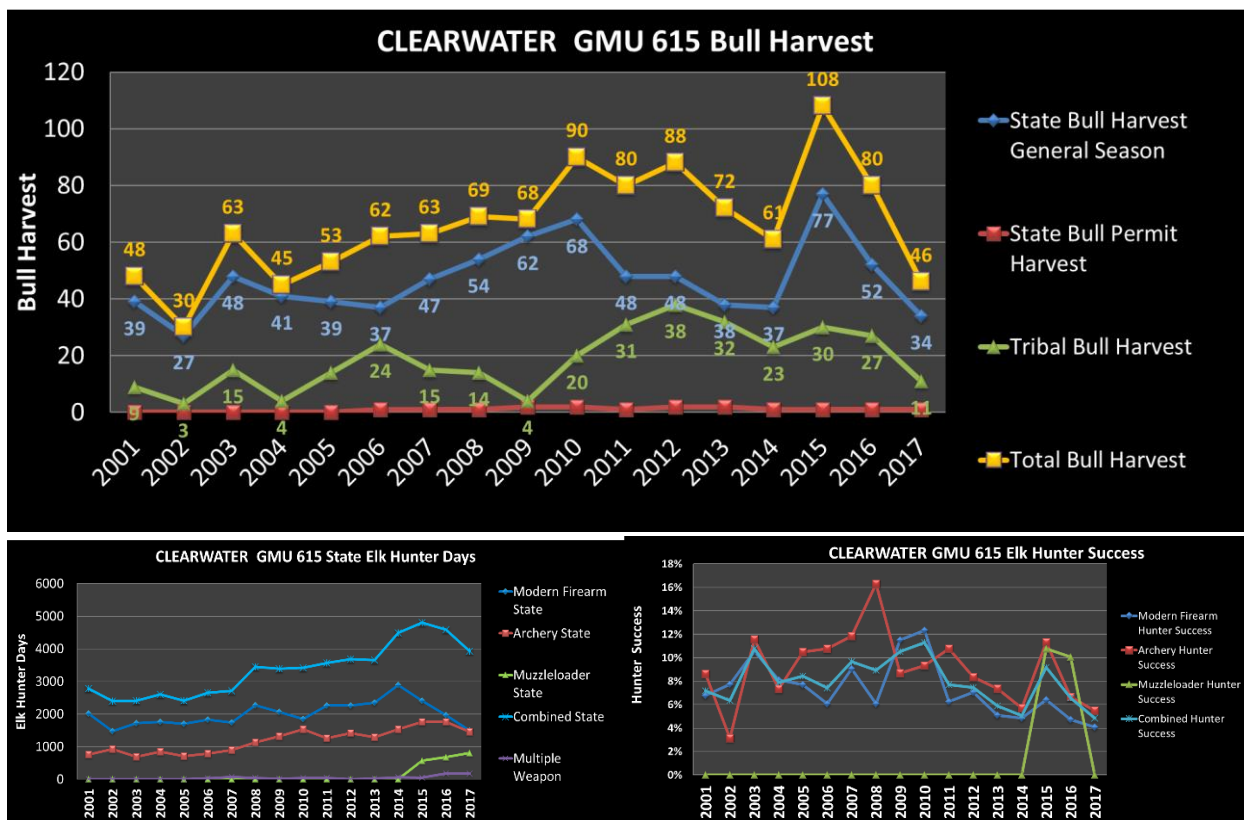


Figure 11. GMU 615 bull harvest, state elk hunter days and success.

GMU 621 (Olympic) Elk Hunting

Overall the Olympic GMU 621 elk hunt opportunity is limited to permit hunts and an occasional damage hunt harvest. The permit hunts can be a great opportunity, as long as the weather and elk use patterns are favorable. Most of the hunting opportunity in Olympic GMU 621 is within District 15. Please review the Hunting Prospects for District 15.

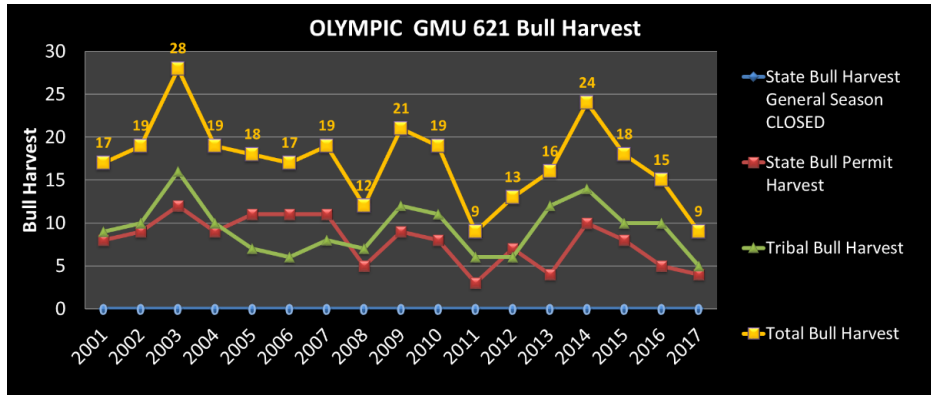


Figure 12. GMU 621 bull harvest from 2001 to 2017.

GMU 624 (Coyle) Elk Hunting

GMU 624 is not a prime elk hunting GMU. The source of GMU 624 elk harvest is likely from small groups of elk that may have split off from the Dungeness herd or other east Olympic Peninsula elk herds. Over the years there have been reports of small groups of elk in various locations within GMU 624, mostly within District 15. See [District 15's Hunting Prospects](#). Much of the ownership in these areas are private acreages, typically small farms. Making arrangements for hunting in much of this area is difficult. When WDFW was tasked to consider closing the GMU to elk hunting, it was decided that the hunting season would be retained, which can help be used as a tool to resolve some damage control. If elk abundance increases in this GMU, the opportunity to harvest elk should increase as well.

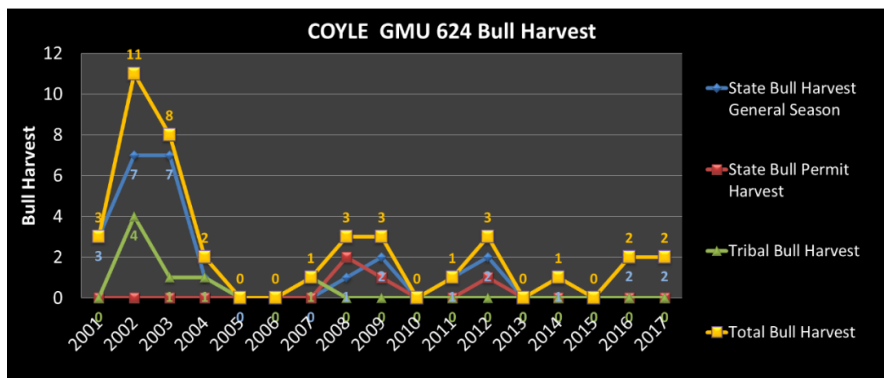


Figure 13. GMU 624 bull harvest from 2001 to 2017.

NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES

New baiting regulations for deer and elk have been adopted. See page 88 of the 2018 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations pamphlet at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>.

BACTERIAL HOOF DISEASE

Since 2008, reports of elk with deformed, broken, or missing hooves have increased dramatically in southwest Washington, with sporadic observations in other areas west of the Cascade Range. While elk have long suffered from “hoof rot,” a relatively common livestock disease, the rapid spread and severity of this new affliction was something completely different.

Scientific tests commissioned by WDFW in 2013 found that these abnormalities were strongly associated with treponeme bacteria, known to cause digital dermatitis in cattle, sheep and goats. Although this disease has plagued the dairy industry for decades, the treponeme bacteria had never been documented in elk or any other wildlife species until 2013.

Since then, WDFW has continued to work with scientists, veterinarians, outdoor organizations and others to develop management strategies for elk infected by treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD).

Several aspects of TAHD in elk are clear:

- **Vulnerability:** The disease appears to be highly infectious among elk, but there is no evidence that it affects humans. TAHD can affect any hoof in any elk, young or old, male or female.
- **Hooves only:** Tests show the disease is limited to animals’ hooves, and does not affect their meat or organs. If the meat looks normal and if hunters harvest, process and cook it practicing good hygiene, it is probably safe to eat.
- **No treatment:** Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent the disease, nor are there any proven options for treating it in the field. Similar diseases in livestock are treated by cleaning and bandaging their hooves and giving them foot baths, but that is not a realistic option for free-ranging elk.

Counties with confirmed cases of TAHD

As of July 2018, WDFW had confirmed cases of elk afflicted with TAHD in Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Thurston, Mason, King, Skamania, Klickitat and Wahkiakum counties. The April 2018 discovery of TAHD in the Trout Lake Valley in western Klickitat County was the first documented east of the Cascades in Washington. Since 2015, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has also confirmed TAHD in elk populations in both western and eastern Oregon.

How hunters can help

- **Leave hooves:** Scientists believe that treponeme bacteria are associated with moist soil and spread to new areas on the hooves of infected elk. For that reason, WDFW requires hunters to remove the hooves of any elk taken in affected areas and leave them onsite. During the 2018-19 hunting season, this rule applies to GMUs 407, 418, 437, 454, 501-578, 633, 636 and 642-699.
- **Report elk:** Hunters can help WDFW track TAHD by reporting observations of both affected and unaffected elk on the department's [online reporting form](#).
- **Clean shoes and tires:** Anyone who hikes or drives off-road in a known affected area can help minimize the risk of spreading the disease to new areas by removing all mud from their shoes and tires before leaving the area.

WDFW is currently studying the effects of the disease on Washington elk populations and has partnered with Washington State University to monitor and research the disease. For more information on TAHD please see pages 66-68 of the [Big Game Hunting pamphlet](#) and the [WDFW hoof disease webpage](#).



DEER

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Black-tailed deer monitoring is continuing to be accomplished by tracking the harvest and hunting effort and gathering data on survivability, recruitment, and mortality rates using studies of collared deer and aerial census methods.

District 16 wildlife biologists are involved in WDFW black-tailed deer research on the Olympic Peninsula and currently assist tribal biologists with ongoing deer studies. Assignments conducted by district staff members included collaring, tracking of the deer, and locating collared deer mortalities to identify mortality causes. These links represent some of the collaring in Clallam County:

- Link: Researcher Cliff Rice releasing collared doe. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2nRUpgwGRc>
- Link: Black-tailed Deer Study using GPS collars <https://www.vectronic-aerospace.com/wildlife-monitoring/projects/alphabetic-list/black-tailed-deer-in-usa/>

The deer captures in District 16 may be indicative of the prevalence of deer here. During the capture portion of the study, the observations of deer were noticeably much higher east of the Elwha compared to west of the Elwha. According to Dr. Cliff Rice, the lead researcher, some of the largest does captured in western Washington were captured west of the Dungeness on the lower foothills in a mix of DNR and private land.



WHICH GMU SHOULD DEER HUNTERS HUNT?

Western District 16

Western District 16 is generally sparse of deer. This area includes GMUs 601 (Hoko), 602 (Dickey), 603 (Pysht), 607 (Sol Duc), 612 (Goodman), and 615 (Clearwater). Observations and published reports indicate that deer population numbers and density are generally low throughout the district west of the Elwha. West Olympic Peninsula tribes dropped antlerless harvest in the western GMUs in 2010.

Following are links to some deer research in the Hoko GMU:

- Factors affecting the survival of black-tailed deer fawns:
<http://files.nwifc.org/wildlife/makah-fawn-report-final-201102.pdf>
- Abstract of a study on the influence of hair loss syndrome (HLS) on black-tailed deer fawn survival <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/jwmg.772>.

Eastern District 16

Eastern District 16 includes the northwestern portion of GMU 621 (Olympic) and the northern portion of GMU 624 (Coyle), which extend east and south into District 15 (eastern Jefferson County). Because the data on harvest is recorded by GMU, the harvest figures presented here include all of GMU 621 and 624, extending into District 15. The portion of District 16 east of the Elwha River has black-tailed deer populations that are readily observed (presumably due to higher densities) and in many areas can often be observed in groups, especially in the vicinity of farmland. In these areas, the deer are often considered to be a nuisance by property owners and agricultural operations, especially in GMU 624. Read more about Deer Area 6020 in [Deer Areas](#) section.

GMU 624 does have firearm restrictions, with no centerfire or rimfire rifles allowed. Read more about that in the [Firearm Restrictions](#) section.

The mid and lower elevations of GMU 621 have high densities of deer as well, with some scattered blocks of DNR ownership that offer hunting on public land. Private industrial timber lands and property managed by DNR are largely gated due to timber theft, dumping, vandalism, and other problems. However, many of these roads can be accessed on foot or with mountain bikes, giving those willing to do the work access to deer that don't get as much hunting pressure. Be sure to check with the appropriate landowner/manager and obey all posted rules and regulations.

The key to a successful harvest is securing the appropriate permission to hunt on private land and scouting the area prior to the hunting season. Hunters who intend to target deer in developed areas would be well advised to check with local jurisdictions regarding firearm restrictions.

DISTRICT 16 BLACK-TAILED DEER HUNTING AND HARVEST RECORDS

Annual harvest reports and harvest statistics for deer based on hunter reporting can be found on the WDFW website <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/harvest/>

See the [District 15 Hunting Prospects](#) for more information on GMU 621 and GMU 624.

Buck harvest within District 16 GMUs is highest on the eastern half and lower as one goes further west. The four GMUs with the lowest buck harvest are Clearwater, Goodman, Dickey, and Hoko, the most western GMUs in the District (Figure 12). Tribal harvest was 5-20 percent of the total deer harvest in District 16 GMUs.

Buck Harvest

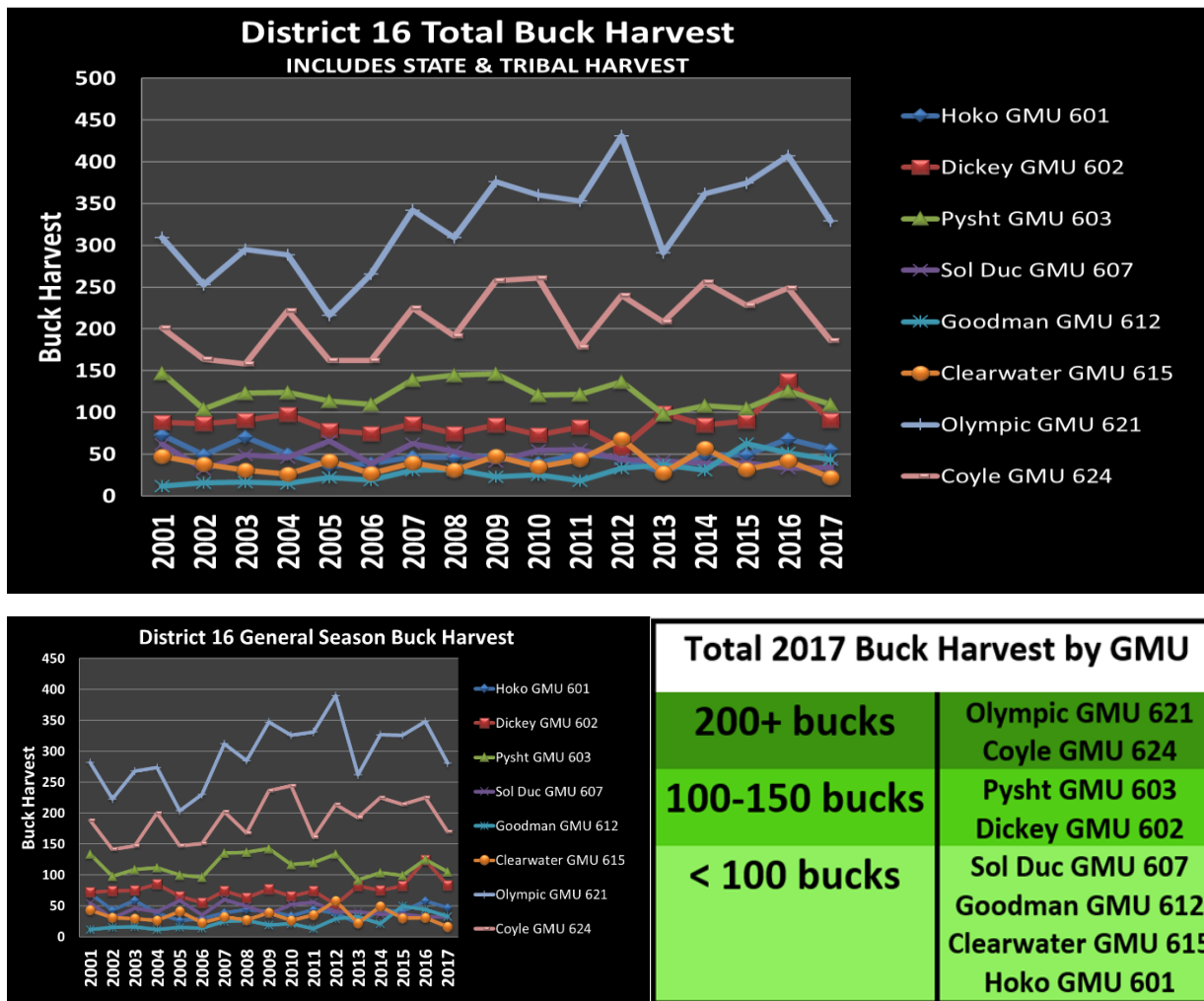


Figure 14. District 16 buck harvest total and general season harvests.

Archery Deer Hunting

Archery hunting in District 16 is concentrated in GMU 621 and GMU 624 (GMUs 621 and 624 are in both District 15 and 16). GMU 603 had moderate participation by archery hunters prior to 2010, but in recent years it has dropped, comparable now to GMU 615 archery hunter days.

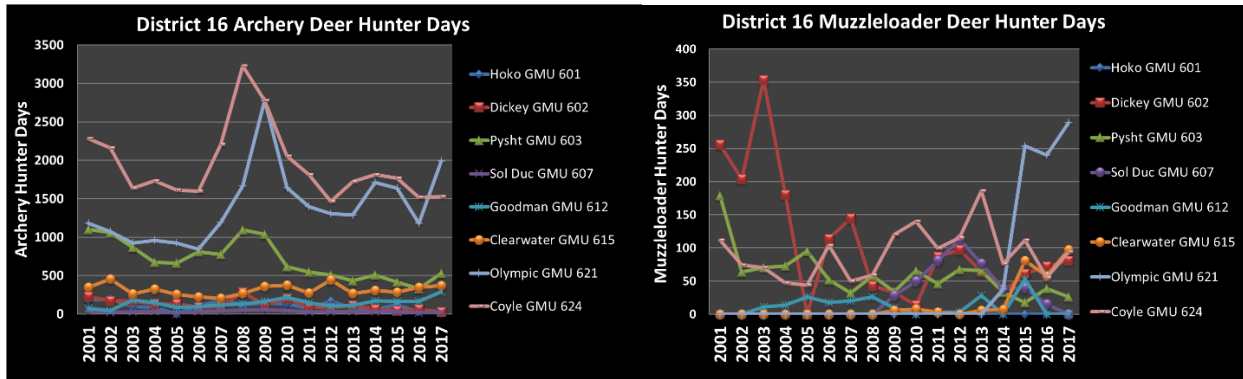


Figure 15. District 16 archery and muzzleloader hunter days.

Muzzleloader Deer Hunting

Muzzleloader deer hunting has recently increased in GMU 621, while all of the other GMUs in District 16 reportedly receive less than 100 hunter days annually (Figure 13). GMU 624 and GMU 602 have had much higher levels of muzzleloader hunter days in previous years, but recently they have dropped down to below 100 days annually as well.

Modern Firearm Deer Hunting

Modern firearm hunters have maintained a steady participation level in the GMUs in District 16 (Figure 14).

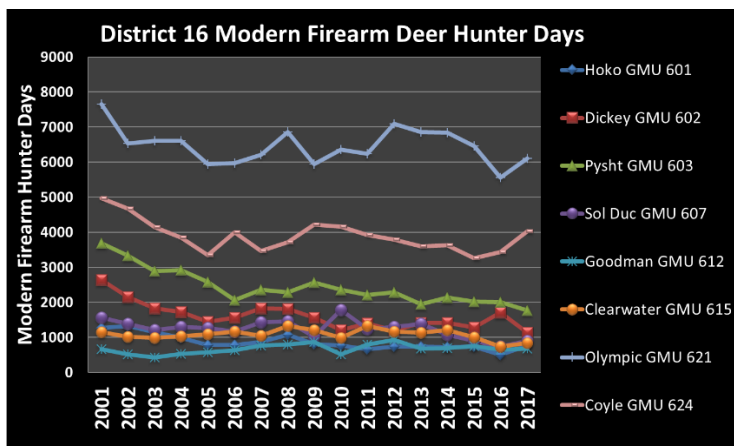


Figure 16. District 16 modern firearm deer hunter days.

DEER AREAS

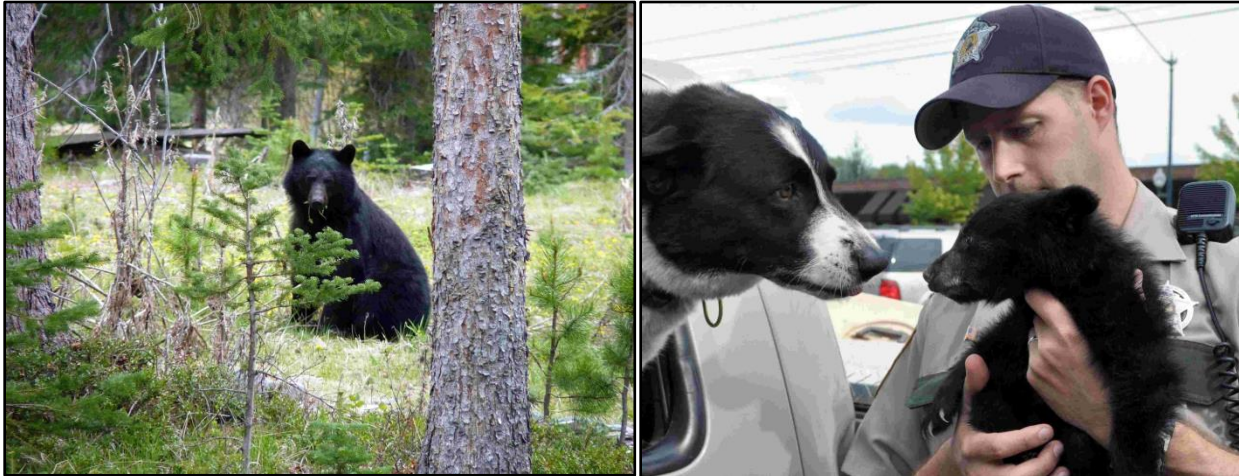
Deer Area 6020 was established years ago to allow harvest of does to help curb the trend of too many deer encompassing the area north of Highway 101 between Port Angeles and eastern Miller Peninsula. Doe harvest is allowed within Deer Area 6020 during the general seasons. This area is primarily private land, but it is worth inquiring with landowners about hunting access. Note that much of the state land on Miller Peninsula is state park, where hunting is not allowed. Refer to the Firearm Restrictions section of the Big Game pamphlet if you are considering this area. The entirety of GMU 624 within District 16 (Clallam County) has [firearm restriction](#) regulations. No hunting of wildlife is allowed with centerfire or rimfire rifles.

NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES

Baiting regulations for deer and elk have been adopted in recent years. See page 88 of Washington's 2018 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations pamphlet.



BEAR



GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

The goals for black bear management in Washington are to: 1) preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage black bear and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations; 2) minimize threats to public safety from black bears, while at the same time maintaining a sustainable and viable bear population; 3) manage black bear for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes, including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography; and 4) manage populations statewide for a sustained yield. For management purposes, the state is divided into nine black bear management units (BBMUs). Harvest levels vary between BBMU depending on local population dynamics and environmental conditions.

District 16 is located nearly entirely within the designated Coastal Black Bear Management Unit (BBMU) with the exception of GMU 624 which is in the Puget Sound BBMU. This area is mostly private land with firearm restrictions. There is no spring bear permit hunt season within the district. Fall black bear hunting is allowed in all GMUs within the district. The current black bear hunting season guidelines for both the Coastal BBMU and Puget Sound BBMU are designed to maintain black bear populations at their current level. The fall black bear hunting season for all District 16 units is Aug. 1 to Nov. 15, 2018. Hunters can purchase up to two bear tags during each license year. Three statistics used to assess black bear harvest are:

- Proportion of females harvested
- Median age of harvested females
- Median age of harvested males

WDFW does not conduct annual surveys to monitor trends in black bear population size. Trends in harvest data are used instead for population estimates or indices. Currently, black bear populations are believed to be stable in District 16. Black bears occur throughout District 16, but population densities vary among GMUs.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2018 SEASON



The prospects for harvesting a black bear in District 16 remain good to excellent. Although some hunters specifically target black bears, most bears are harvested opportunistically during general deer and elk seasons. Consequently, annual harvest and hunter success can vary quite a bit from one year to the next. The variability in the district is likely higher for hunters who specifically hunt black bears versus those who buy a bear tag just in case they see one while deer or elk hunting. Biologists in the district have reported observing bears in GMU 607 from an airplane while monitoring collared elk. This spring, the local biologist observed three different black bears in a single day within GMU 603 during efforts to assist with collaring deer fawns and elk calves. During the 2017 season, a total of 69 bears were harvested within District 16 GMUs. An additional 27 bears were harvested in GMU 621 and five bears in GMU 624, which both include a portion of District 15. Hunter success during the 2017 season ranged from 7.6 percent in GMU 607 to 18 percent in GMU 612. The GMUs with the highest black bear harvest in the district the past two years are GMU 615 (Clearwater) and GMU 621 (Olympic). Statewide and GMU harvest reports are summarized in the two tables (Table 1 and Table 2). The percentage of male and female black bear harvest is also represented in the harvest report table.

Table 1. Black bear 2017 harvest and hunter effort for District 16 GMUs.

WASHINGTON STATEWIDE BLACK BEAR HARVEST STATISTICS FOR THE 2017 HUNTING SEASON						
BMU	Bear Management Unit Name	Total Harvest	Number Hunters	Hunter Success Rate	Hunter Days	Days/Kill
1	Coastal	241	3,165	7.6%	28,377	117.7
2	Puget Sound	88	1,786	4.9%	15,368	174.6

Table 2. Black bear 2017 harvest reports for District 16 GMUs.

GMU	Fall Male Harvest	Fall Female Harvest	Total Harvest	Number Hunters	Hunter Success	Hunter Days	Days/Kills
BMU 1 - COASTAL							
601 - HOKO	3	2	5	349	14.8%	235	47
602 - DICKEY	6	3	9	101	9%	735	82
603 - PYSHT	6	5	11	117	9.4%	811	74
607 - SOL DUC	5	2	7	92	7.6%	590	84
612 - GOODMAN	13	0	13	72	18%	583	45
615 - CLEARWATER	11	7	18	191	9.4%	1,373	76
618 - MATHENY	3	3	6	42	14.2%	290	48
621 - OLYMPIC	19	8	27	300	9%	2,080	77
BMU 2 - PUGET SOUND							
624 - COYLE	2	3	5	136	3.6%	1079	216

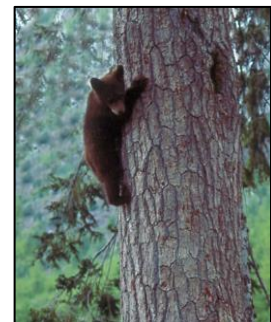
HOW TO LOCATE AND HARVEST A BLACK BEAR

State DNR and federal (USFS) lands continue to provide the best opportunities for bear hunting within the district. Hunters are encouraged to scout for signs of bears (scat and tree bark peeling) in regenerating timber stands. Similar to deer, access behind gated roads is largely available to those willing to walk or mountain bike, and there are ample numbers of clear cuts/younger age class regeneration units that will attract bears. At higher elevations, those willing to hike in/pack out can pursue bears in classic environments where spot-and-stalk opportunities await. The USFS has a website with forest health maps that identify areas where bear damage has been detected from aerial surveys. You can find the [aerial forest health detection maps](#) online. A check of these maps may provide a person with ideas on where to scout for bear.

Scouting is an extremely important factor that hunters should consider when specifically hunting for black bears in District 16. Although black bears are fairly common and occur in some areas at high densities, they are seen infrequently because of the thick vegetation that dominates the Olympic Peninsula landscape. Black bears can occur in a variety of habitat types, so it can be difficult to narrow down where to search for them. In the early fall, hunters should focus their efforts at higher elevations and in open terrain (e.g. open hillsides) and clear-cut areas. Huckleberries ripen throughout the summer, but in the early fall the most remaining berries are typically at higher elevations. A good berry patch yielding much fruit would be a good place to hunt. Bears can also be located in recent timber harvests that contain a large number of berry-producing shrubs, including huckleberries, serviceberries, snowberries, blackberries, salmonberries, thimbleberries, and salal berries. During the fall, hunters need to find openings with these characteristics and hike through them to see if there is any bear sign. If they do find fresh sign, odds are there is a bear frequenting the area. If hunters are patient and sit for extended periods of time watching these areas, they stand a reasonable chance of harvesting a bear.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Bear hunters are strongly urged not to shoot sows with cubs. Sows may be accompanied by cubs that tend to lag behind when traveling. Cubs may be located in trees or hidden in dense vegetation in the vicinity. Please observe and be patient before shooting. The past few seasons, several orphaned cubs were reported in Region 6. Some were captured and taken to rehabilitation facilities.



Remember if you harvest a bear, it is mandatory (per [WAC 220-415-090](#)) to submit a premolar tooth. Tooth envelopes are available at WDFW offices. The premolar tooth is located behind the canine tooth (toward the throat) of the upper jaw. The use of hounds and/or bait to hunt black bear is prohibited statewide ([RCW 77.15.245](#)).

COUGAR



GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Cougars occur throughout District 16, but local densities can vary among GMUs. Cougars in District 16 are managed with the primary objective of maintaining a stable cougar population. The statewide goals for cougar are: 1) Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage cougar and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations; 2) Minimize human/cougar conflict; 3) Manage cougar for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes, including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography; 4) Manage statewide cougar populations for a sustained yield; and 5) Improve our understanding of predator-prey relationships.

Since the 2012 – 2013 hunting season, WDFW changed cougar harvest management throughout Washington. The biggest change was shifting away from using season length or permit seasons to manage the number of cougar harvested, and instead using a standard liberal season coupled with harvest guidelines. The intent was to have a longer season, without any hunting implement restrictions, and only close cougar seasons in specific areas if harvest reached or exceeded a harvest guideline. The hunt structure is currently administered within 50 population Management units (PMUs). District 16 includes PMU 42, 43, and 45.

To accomplish harvest goals, WDFW established a series of hunt areas with standard season dates of Sept. 1 through March 31. Beginning in the 2015 hunting season and continuing in 2018, cougar season dates were extended through April 30. However, to hunt cougars after March 31 in a unit open for cougar harvest, hunters need to purchase a new hunting license and cougar tag. Harvest numbers are examined starting Jan. 1 and any hunt area that meets or exceeds the harvest guideline may be closed. Anyone planning to hunt cougar after Jan. 1 is advised to confirm the cougar season is open in the desired hunting area. Hunters can call 1-866-364-4868 to determine if a specific hunt area is open after Dec. 31. Harvest guidelines for each hunt area are located in District 16 for 2018 are provided in Table 5.

For more information related to the harvest guidelines management approach, please visit [cougar hunting area openings and closures](#).

Table 3. Cougar Harvest Guidelines and State Hunter Reported harvest.

Hunt Area	Harvest Guideline 2017-2018	2017-2018 Harvest
601, 602, 603, 612	5-7	0
607, 615	4	0
621, 624	None	2

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2018 SEASON

Most cougar harvest within the district comes from opportunistic encounters while hunters are pursuing deer, elk, or other activities. The total cougar harvest in District 16 can vary from year to year. See status and trend report information presented below in Table 6. The cougar harvest for the 2016 – 2017 season was lower than the previous season. A total of two cougars were harvested within the district during the general cougar hunt in 2017. During the general hunt, one sub-adult female cougar was harvested in GMU 621 and one adult female cougar was harvested in GMU 624. An additional cougar, classified as a landowner kill, was reported in GMU 621. Two cougars were also harvested in GMU 615 by tribal hunters. See the [Washington Big Game Hunting pamphlet](#) or the WDFW website for more information regarding cougar hunting in specific GMUs within the district. Cougars are widespread in the forest lands of District 16. Areas supporting high numbers of deer and elk provide great opportunity for hunting cougar. Many of the cougars sealed by the assistant district biologist have been harvested by hunters who simply encountered the cougars while deer or elk hunting. Enforcement officers in the district have reported low cougar hunting pressure in most GMUs in previous years.

Table 4. Cougar harvest in District 16 for 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons.

Cougar Status and Trend Report 2017				
	2014-2015 HARVEST	2015-2016 HARVEST	2016-2017 HARVEST	3-Year Mean Harvest
GMUs 601, 602, 603, 612	3	1	0	1.33
GMUs 607, 615	1	2	0	1
GMUs 621, 624, 627, 633	1	5	2	2.67
Total	5	8	2	5

** Tribal harvest or other sources of mortality not included.

Table 5. Total cougar harvest statewide and for PMUs within District 16 by state hunter (tribal not included). Harvest of male & female cougars are represented.

GENERAL HUNTING STATEWIDE TOTALS				DEPREDAATION STATEWIDE TOTALS				OTHER TAKE STATEWIDE TOTALS				COMBINED
Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Total
121	91	8	220	16	16	1	33	3	4	2	9	262

Population Management Unit (PMU) totals by GMU's in district.

PMU 42 – No Harvest (GMU 601, 602, 603, and 612)												
PMU 43 – No Harvest (GMU's 607 and 615)												
PMU 45 – (GMU's 621 and 624)												
GENERAL HUNTING				DEPREDAATION				OTHER TAKE				COMBINED
Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Total
GMU 621 - Olympic												
0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
GMU 624 - Coyle												
0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

It is unlawful to kill or possess spotted cougar kittens (usually less than 80 pounds) or adult cougars accompanied by spotted kittens. Cougar hunters are strongly urged to search for possible multiple tracks when pursuing an animal. Female cougars may have kittens located in trees or in dense vegetation in their vicinity. Please be very observant and patient before shooting. During the 2015 – 2016 season, two orphaned cougar kittens had to be captured by WDFW Enforcement officers and biologists near Joyce. One kitten later died and the other kitten will remain in captivity at a zoo. Remember if you harvest a cougar, there are mandatory reporting and sealing requirements. The use of hounds to hunt cougars is prohibited statewide except during cougar management removals authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.



NOTABLE CHANGES

A 2019 cougar license and tag will be required to hunt cougar in April 2019.

MANDATORY REPORTING/SEALING

All successful cougar hunters must report their cougar harvest to the cougar hotline at: 1-866-364-4868 within 72 hours of harvest. This is the same hotline used to check if cougar hunt areas are open or closed. The hunter must have the cougar pelt sealed within five days of notification. See the [Washington Big Game Hunting pamphlet](#) for more details.

COUGAR OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

A mountain biker was killed by a young male cougar near North Bend this spring. This type of incident is extremely rare and was only the second known human fatality from a cougar in Washington state. With the migration of humans into cougar habitats over the last 30 years, it is essential to raise public awareness and keep both people and cougars safe. Please see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/living/cougars.html> to learn more about cougar/human interactions.

DUCKS

COMMON SPECIES

The majority of the waterfowl hunting opportunity in District 16 is east of Port Angeles, centered in the Lower Dungeness Basin. The basin has a high density of wintering waterfowl and holds about 7 percent of the western Washington breeding waterfowl population.

Keep in mind that trumpeter swan numbers have increased in the Dungeness valley in the past five years and they have been documented near the Dungeness river mouth. All waterfowl hunters are encouraged to know all identification features for trumpeter swans and snow geese. It is illegal to shoot trumpeter swans.

CONCENTRATION AREAS

District biologists have focused on documenting areas with high waterfowl concentrations in Clallam County during the last several years, mapping high use areas during breeding and wintering periods.

The Dungeness Basin has proven to be an area of consistently high waterfowl concentrations, even amidst the ongoing development of open space habitats. Fortunately, there remains a rich mix of farmland, wetlands, coastal habitats, and conserved open space that retain the necessary food and cover for many wintering waterfowl. Concentrations of waterfowl in freshwater habitats diminish drastically west of the Elwha and Lyre Rivers.

POPULATION STATUS

Midwinter waterfowl survey counts in District 16 showed an increase from 11,611 in 2013 to 18,379 in 2014, representing 2 percent of all waterfowl counted in the state. Midwinter populations include resident and migratory populations. The links below provide more information on the population status.

- USFWS Waterfowl Population Status 2017
<https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/Population-status/Waterfowl/WaterfowlPopulationStatusReport17.pdf>
- USFWS Trends in Duck Breeding Populations 1955-2015
https://flyways.us/sites/default/files/uploads/trends_in_duck_breeding_populations_2015.pdf
- Four Flyways April 2012 Map
https://flyways.us/sites/default/files/uploads/trends_in_duck_breeding_populations_2015.pdf



Dungeness breeding population trends have been showing an increase through 2014, then a drop in 2015 through 2017. In 2010, new methods were adopted for western Washington breeding waterfowl surveys, shifting from ground counts to conducting aerial surveys. The Dungeness transect counts have ranged from just under 4,000 to 7,500 since 2010. The 2017 season had the lowest counts since 2010, with the 2017 total duck population estimated at 3,238. The Dungeness count has been about 10 percent of the total breeding ducks in Washington from 2010 to 2016. Washington breeding waterfowl population monitoring for 2017 can be found in the [2017 Game Status and Trend Report](#) on pages 256-304. The greatest factor influencing brood production in the district continues to be loss of habitat to development and increasing human disturbance. Waterfowl numbers are expected to remain moderate in District 16.

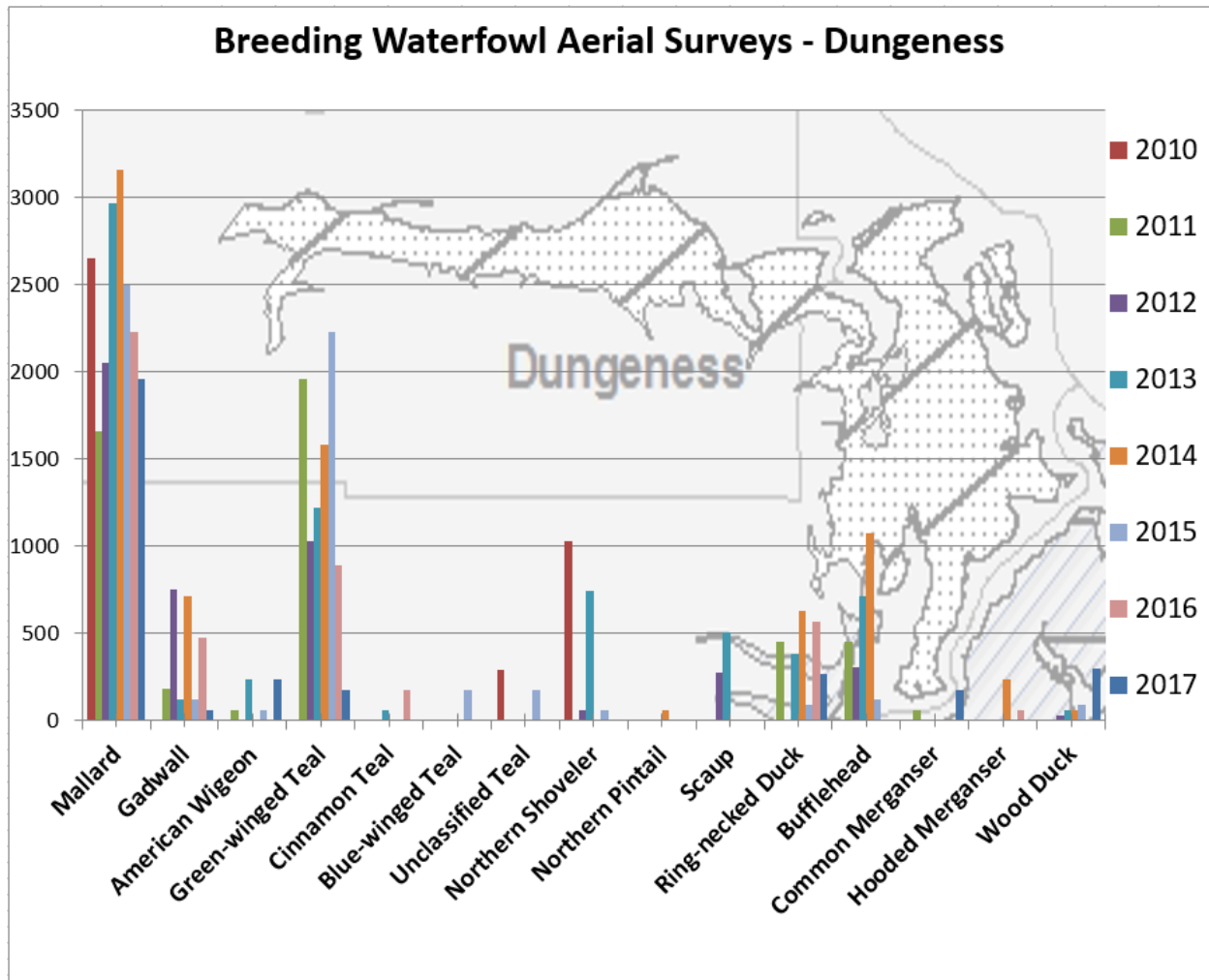


Figure 17. Breeding waterfowl survey counts - with background map showing Dungeness aerial transects, including nearby Elwha, Chimacum, and Quilcene habitats.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2018 PROSPECTS

There is limited access to where you can hunt waterfowl in District 16. Some locals in the western portion of the district conduct jump shooting in pools and side channels of the west end rivers, along with other small ponds and flooded gravel pit areas. In 2017, there were 4,408 ducks harvested by hunters in Clallam County, and 1,649 ducks harvested by hunters in Jefferson County. The harvest and hunter participation has been decreasing in recent years.

The Office of the Washington State Climatologist reported outlook for August-September-October (ASO) on <http://www.climate.washington.edu/outlook.html> is calling for increased chances of above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. Lower precipitation levels in late summer and early fall will likely result in less forage for wintering waterfowl. This could result in higher concentrations of waterfowl in the water saturated habitats and it could cause the waterfowl to move on to other areas seeking adequate forage for the wintering months.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES

Public saltwater hunting opportunities are more numerous than freshwater options in District 16, albeit more difficult in many ways. The regulations and landownerships, including tideland ownerships, make it necessary for the hunter to plan ahead. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Dungeness Wildlife Refuge has areas that are closed. Hunting is not allowed on the refuge and some of the refuge boundaries can be difficult to determine in the field.

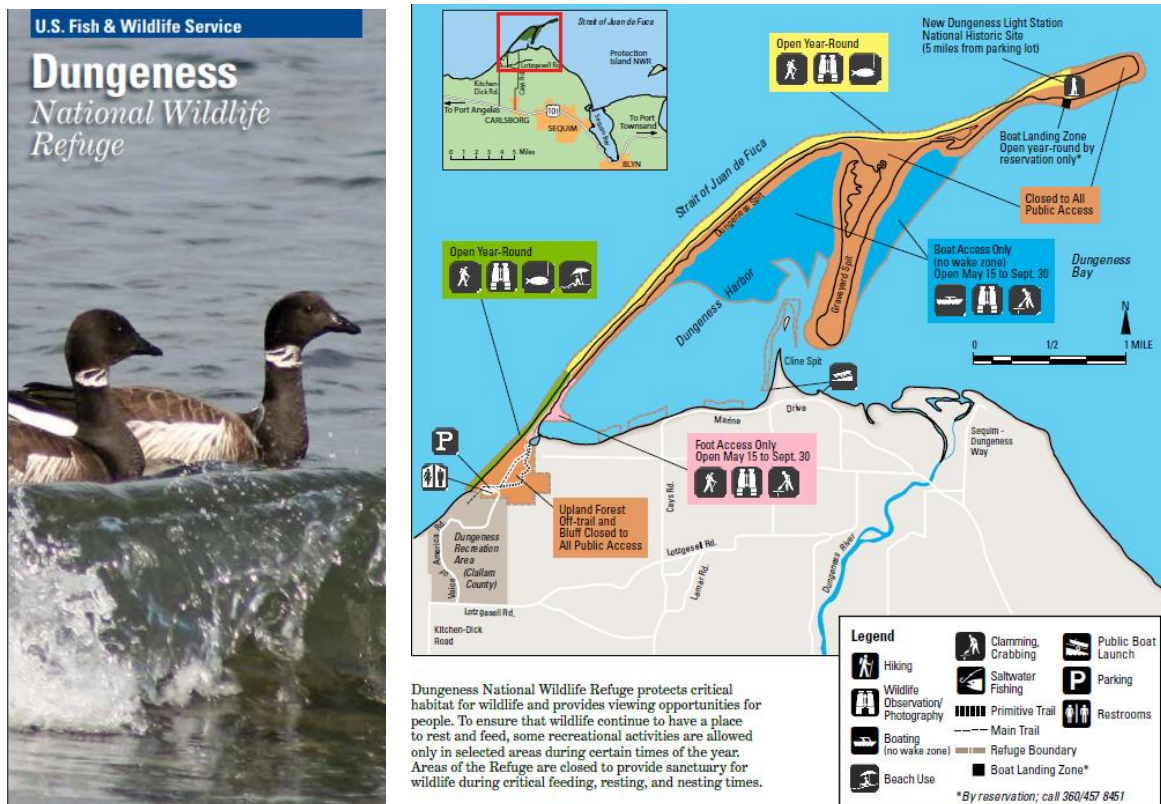


Figure 18. Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge map showing closed areas.



***IMPORTANT INFORMATION IF YOU HUNT FROM A BOAT** – When hunting from a boat, hunters should ensure the boat anchor is not down on private tidelands without permission. Boat hunters must not go onto private land without permission to retrieve any waterfowl shot. However, hunters should be aware they could run the risk of violating the wastage law if they do not retrieve the waterfowl they have shot. Therefore, it is essential hunters be aware of property ownership, especially when hunting from a boat.

Shoreline/Tidelands: There are some private landowners who allow limited hunting access along the saltwater shoreline. Typically, local signage refers to a phone number or contact information, and in some cases the signage spells out the conditions of access. Because these vary from year to year, the hunter must make a tour of the area and find out the current arrangements. Hunters should make sure they will have the ability to retrieve ducks, keeping in mind the ownerships where they have permission to hunt and the adjacent ownership where they do not have that permission.

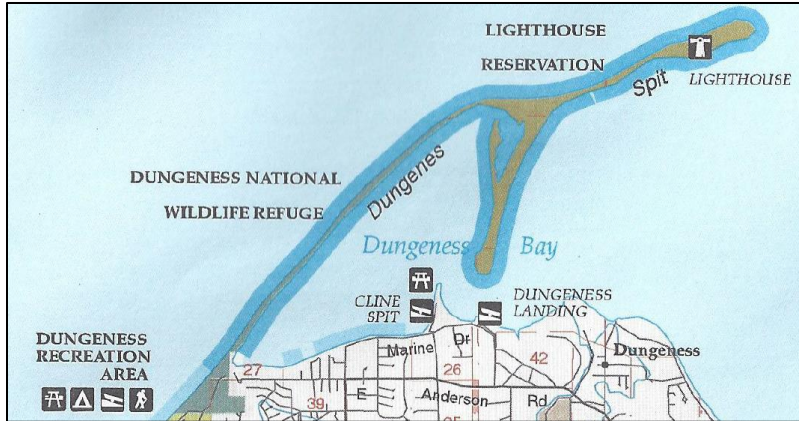


Figure 19. Portion of DNR quadrangle map displaying public tidelands in blue.

For Clallam County, tideland ownership can be determined on the Assessor maps. Assessor maps can be retrieved on the internet using these websites:

Clallam County Map links: <http://www.clallam.net/maps/> or http://www.clallam.net/aimsxwebsite/CA_public_nopop/viewer.htm

Make sure you have the parcel (tide-shoreline) layer checked and active circle dotted, and the scale set at 1:25,000 or less.

Use the icons on the top left to zoom in and choose the lightning bolt icon, then select tideland parcels and click on them. The information on ownership will come up.

Figure 20. Clallam County website with parcel information on tidelands.

PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

Most all freshwater waterfowl hunting areas in the Dungeness Basin are on private lands. Public land hunting opportunities include the newly established Lower Dungeness Unit at the mouth of the Dungeness River. Some hunters find hunting opportunities in the near-shore areas of bays and along the shoreline of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, both on foot and by boat. Hunting violations remain a concern on small water bodies and along the saltwater shorelines in the district. Hunters are urged to obey all state and county regulations at sites near residential areas to avoid potential future closures. Be sure to check the 2018 Washington State Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons pamphlet for additional requirements before hunting seaducks (long-tailed ducks, scoter, harlequin, and goldeneye) in western Washington. The local seaduck populations have been studied for many years and you can review the [seaduck management strategies draft publication](#) from 2013.

North Olympic Wildlife Area includes the [Lower Dungeness Unit](#). This unit contains multiple disjointed parcels located about five miles north of Sequim. Seventy-five acres of this unit can be hunted north of East Anderson Road and west of the Dungeness River. Public access is supported by a small parking area, an information kiosk containing site rules, and a restroom. There are seasonal freshwater ponds located in the main field below the parking area that may contain ducks if water is present. The main hunting area for this unit is located on the tidelands of Dungeness Bay, adjacent to the river's mouth. A variety of dabbling ducks, diving ducks, and geese have been documented at the unit.

Hunters are required to walk into the main hunting area. Rivers End Road is a privately owned road and cannot be used to access the tidelands. It is approximately a half mile to reach the main hunting areas on this unit. Hunting is permitted only on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays throughout the regular waterfowl season. A 15-shotgun shell restriction is in effect for this unit. Designated blind locations for first-come, first-served use will be established for this season. Detailed information will be posted on the kiosk and on the Lower Dungeness Unit webpage. The hunting area along the tidelands is privately owned and is managed by WDFW through a temporary land use agreement. Misuse of this area may result in the loss of future public access.

Useful Links:

- Lower Dungeness Wildlife Area
https://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/north_olympic/Dungeness/
- Lower Dungeness-River's End Site Hunting Rules
https://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/north_olympic/lower_dungeness_unit_-_rivers_end_site_hunting_rules_-_2016.pdf
- The Dungeness Recreation Area County Park no longer allows hunting.
<http://www.clallam.net/Parks/Dungeness.html>

GEESE AND BRANT

COMMON SPECIES

Canada Geese: Most goose hunting opportunity in District 16 is for Canada geese. Resident geese are increasing in distribution, especially within urban and rural areas. Habitats like the Port Angeles Coast Guard base, Civic field, and nearby estuaries have had increased usage by Canada geese. In the last 10 years there has been a noticed Canada goose expansion into wetlands not previously known to be used by the geese.

Brant: Brant hunting is opening for Clallam and Whatcom counties on Jan. 12, 16, and 19, 2019. The daily bag limit is two brant and the possession limit is six brant. The Jan. 2018 season was the first season that brant hunting was open in Clallam County for decades. The harvest within Clallam County was estimated to be 90. To compare, the harvest in Skagit County was 170, Whatcom County was 28, and Pacific County was 58.

Brant hunting was closed in Clallam and Jefferson counties for decades. Brant management was complicated by the difference in productivity of subpopulations, some enduring high nesting failures that led to restrictions on the hunting grounds. The [2014 report on management of brant in Washington](#) is available to review.

POPULATION STATUS

Canada geese populations continue to increase on the east side of the district.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2018 PROSPECTS

Clallam County goose harvest in 2017-18 was 301, about 9 percent of Region 6's entire goose harvest. The harvest information is shown in the 2018 Washington State Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons pamphlet on page 33.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES

Within small acreages and patchy ownership, pass shooting of geese is inadvisable. Local hunters were quite successful in previous seasons using a decoy spread and blinds. Permission to hunt on private lands would need to be obtained and all [firearm regulations](#) must be followed. Many agricultural fields have residential properties in the vicinity, so hunters must be aware of all safety concerns.

Please be respectful of private landowners and avoid conflicts with other recreational users in the area. The brant are typically found along the Dungeness shorelines that hold eelgrass but also occur in other locations from Port Angeles to Sequim Bay. It will be worthwhile to become familiar with the other regular uses in potential brant hunting areas to avoid a location that will have conflicting uses on the few days the hunt is open.

PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

Most goose hunting opportunities are on private agricultural lands containing barley in GMU 624.



FOREST GROUSE

SPECIES AND GENERAL HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS

Hunting within any of the forest lands throughout District 16 should offer good opportunities for harvesting grouse. Prime forest grouse hunting may be found on DNR and USFS lands within

the district. The harvest of grouse in Clallam County is one of the highest county totals within Region 6.

Ruffed and sooty (formerly classified as blue) grouse are present throughout public and private forest lands in District 16. The chances for harvesting sooty grouse increase at higher elevations. Hunters can expect the greatest success along trails and ridgelines above 2,000-3,000 feet, within timber stands with huckleberry and other forage plants. Hunters targeting ruffed grouse should focus on elevations below 2,500 feet, particularly in riparian forest habitats, early seral forests (5-25 years old), and deciduous-conifer mixed forest types.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2018 PROSPECTS

Participation in grouse hunting in District 16 continues to decline, a trend documented since 2009. Clallam County grouse harvest peaked in 2009 at 6,350 by 1,202 hunters, with Jefferson County 2009 harvest at 3,839 grouse by 1,502 hunters. The 2017 harvest totals for Clallam County is down to 1,787 grouse, 43 percent lower than 2016 harvest (727 hunters). The 803 grouse harvested in Jefferson County is 35 percent lower than the 2016 harvest (358 hunters).

Habitat conditions certainly play a role, but spring weather and its effect on young is also a huge factor in grouse production and hunting prospects for the fall.

WDFW is collecting grouse wings and tails to evaluate the harvested populations. There are various ways you can contribute your harvested grouse wing. One is to drop them off (with filled out envelopes, provided) at these wing/tail barrels. You can also provide them to local WDFW employees. The information to collect from the harvest is the date and location (GMU). Thanks in advance for helping with grouse monitoring.



PHEASANTS

District 16 does not have viable populations of wild pheasant and there are no longer any pheasant release sites in the district.

For information on current pheasant release sites, check this link to the [Western Washington Pheasant Release Program](#).

QUAIL

There is a fair abundance of California (valley) quail in the eastern portion of District 16. They are quite common in the Dungeness Valley, but hunting opportunities can be challenging due to predominately private ownership. Quail, like the deer, thrive in the Dungeness habitats that include a mix of open grass, shrubs, and forest. Some quail hunting opportunities can be found on public lands located in the lower foothills in clear-cuts or any early successional habitats. During 2017, the harvest in Clallam County was 150 quail, with zero harvested in Jefferson County.

TURKEYS

District 16 is not managed for wild turkeys and the species remains relatively rare here. WDFW receives occasional reports of individuals or small groups of turkeys within GMU 603. They are likely domestic turkeys that escaped from a farm that raised turkeys in the Joyce area. There are basically no prospects for hunting wild turkeys in District 16.

BAND-TAILED PIGEONS

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Band-tailed pigeons were quite abundant in District 16 historically. Local hunters reported seeing clouds of band-tailed pigeons in drainages, such as McDonald Creek, on the east side of District 16 back in the 1950s. You will find them throughout the district using forest habitats.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2018 PROSPECTS

The reported harvest of band-tailed pigeons in this district is relatively low (sometimes zero), but the resource is available throughout the district in good numbers. WDFW Enforcement officers remind hunters that they must have all required hunting licenses, along with the special migratory bird authorization and the band-tailed pigeon harvest card. It is mandatory to report all band-tailed pigeon harvest. More information about population monitoring and harvests is available in the [2017 USFWS band-tailed pigeon population status report](#).

WHERE AND HOW TO HUNT BAND-TAILED PIGEONS

Band-tailed pigeons are most prevalent in the district along marine estuaries, shorelines, and forest roads where they forage on berries. Hunters are encouraged to search for areas with elderberry and cascara present. Band-tailed pigeons often congregate around these food sources.

OTHER SMALL GAME SPECIES

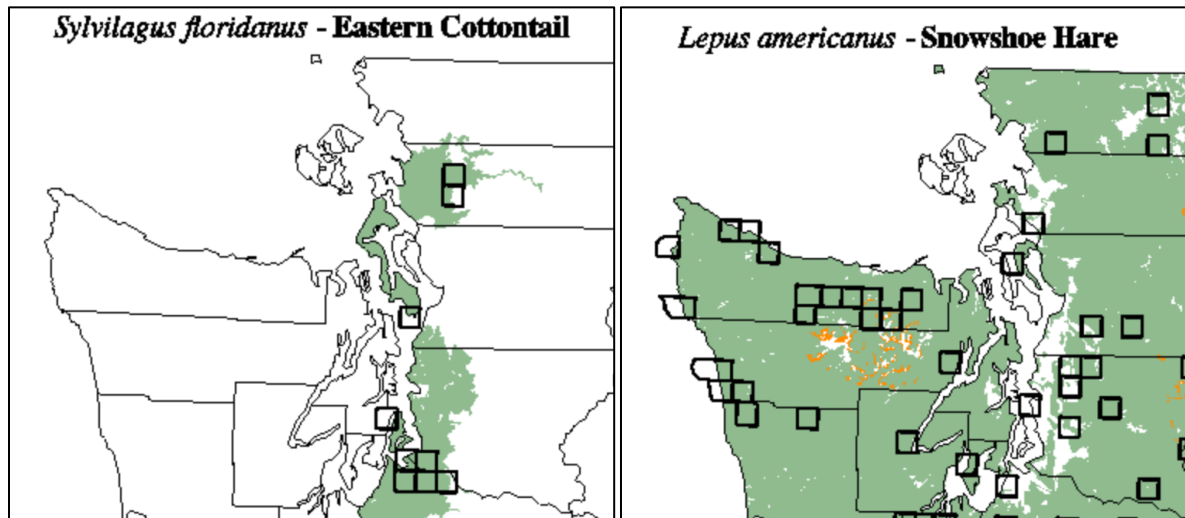
Mourning Dove

District 16 has not been a major dove hunting area, although eastern Clallam County has a lot of doves. To complicate matters, the Eurasian collared dove, an introduced species, is becoming very prevalent in east Clallam County. There was no reported harvest of doves in 2017 within District 16. The estimated 2016 harvest in Clallam County was 64 mourning doves. Reported harvest in Jefferson County during 2016 was 11 mourning doves. The [2017 USFWS Mourning Dove Population Status report](#) contains more information.

Snowshoe Hare and Cottontail Rabbit

Most all of the rabbits encountered on the Olympic Peninsula will be snowshoe hare (see range maps below). Snowshoe hare are readily observed along forested roads in the western half of District 16, and will be found throughout the district, usually along forested edges. Annual district harvest of hares and rabbits is erratic, ranging from zero to over 300, with 2017 harvest reported to be 54 during 740 hunt days. The opportunity is always there, with a harvest per unit effort expected to range between 0.25-0.70/day. More information on the snowshoe hare and other rabbits can be found at the following links:

- http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_snowshoe_hare.html
- http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_eastern_cottontail.html
- http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_european_rabbit.html
- http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_nuttalls_cottontail.html
- [Snowshoe Hare - Canadian Wildlife Federation](#)



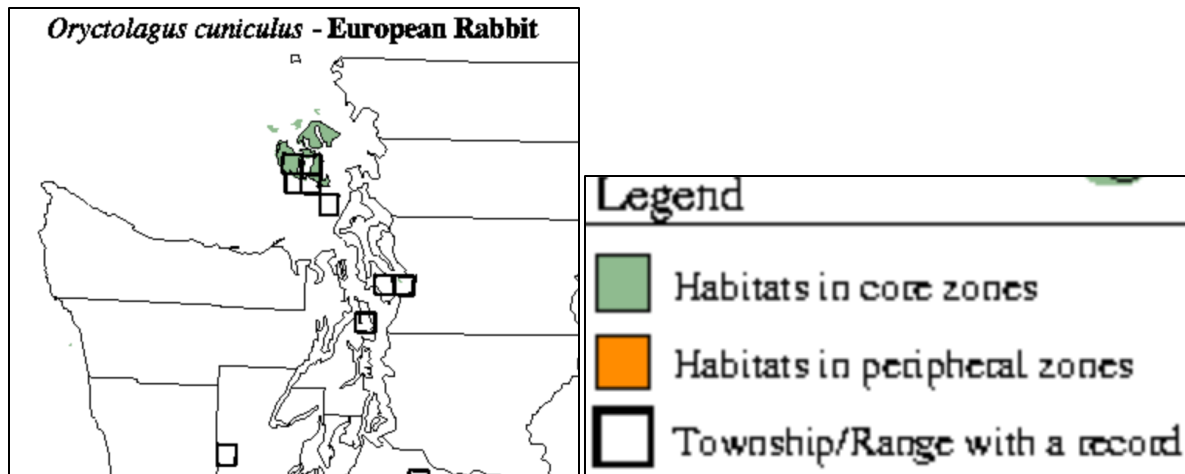


Figure 21. Range maps for snowshoe hare, eastern cottontail rabbit, and European rabbit.

TRIBAL HUNTING

District 16 is within the ceded area of numerous treaty tribes on the Olympic Peninsula. WDFW and tribes cooperatively manage wildlife populations. Tribal hunting often occurs concurrent with WDFW hunting seasons. Tribes set their own seasons and bag limits. Tribal Enforcement personnel are responsible for ensuring tribal hunting regulations, which may differ from state regulations.

Tribal big game harvest reports are available at [Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission Big Game Harvest Reports](#).

FIREARM AND WEAPON RESTRICTIONS

These diverse mixtures of ownerships and jurisdictions also present different combinations of firearm restriction regulations and ordinances. The three main firearm restriction regulations most relevant to hunters are the following:

- WDFW – Firearm Restriction - unlawful to hunt wildlife ... with centerfire or rimfire rifles in “The portion of the GMU 624 (Coyle) within Clallam County.” Page 92 in [Washington's 2018 Big Game Hunting Seasons & Regulations](#) pamphlet.
- Clallam County Code – [Clallam County Firearms Discharge Restrictions](#)
- Jefferson County Code – [Jefferson County NO SHOOTING AREAS](#)

MAJOR PUBLIC LANDS

With mixed ownership comes a complexity of access rules by various governmental and private entities. Make sure you have acquired the necessary permits to drive on public and private land in the area you decide to explore.

Public Access Permits: Here are some public access permits to be aware of and that you may need depending on your destination.

[Discover Pass](#) State parks, DNR, & WDFW



[Federal Agency-Interagency Annual Pass](#)



[Federal Agency Interagency Volunteer Pass](#)



The interagency passes include access on National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Reclamation lands. Keep in mind that many public lands on the Olympic Peninsula are not open to hunting, including Olympic National Park, most all Washington state parks, and Clallam County parks.

PRIVATE INDUSTRIAL FORESTLANDS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Private timberlands have various access and road closure procedures, so it is prudent to determine current ownership for a target location and the requirements to obtain permission to hunt. Merrill and Ring Pysht Tree Farm in GMU 603 has made a drastic change for 2018 and will not be allowing access for deer hunting. A lottery system is used for the small number of access permits they issue for elk hunting season. The other forest industry ownerships have various access systems in place. Hunters are encouraged to scout the areas they are considering hunting and pay close attention to the signs on all roads. Signs are often the landowner's primary method of informing the public on which areas are open to hunting.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MAJOR TIMBER COMPANIES

Rayonier, Inc.

Website: <http://www.rayonier.com/>

IFP Office (360) 452-1351

Forks Office (360) 374-6565

Port Angeles (360) 457-2329

Information on Rayonier Access Permits:

- <http://property.rayonierhunting.com/Permits/PermitsHome.aspx>
- <http://property.rayonierhunting.com/AvailableAreas/FindProperties.aspx>

Green Crow

Website: <http://www.greencrow.com/contact-us/locations/>

Port Angeles (360) 452-3325

727 E. 8th, Port Angeles, WA 98362

Merrill & Ring

Website: <http://www.merrillring.com/contacts/>

(360) 452-2367

Email: contact@merrillring.com

813 East 8th Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362

Cascade Timberlands

Website: <http://www.cascadetimberlands.com>

OTHER MAJOR LANDOWNERS

Hoh River Trust

Facebook Website: <https://www.facebook.com/The-Hoh-River-Trust-74841050447/>

HUNTING ORGANIZATIONS

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation – Olympic Peninsula Chapter

Website: <http://www.rmef.org/Washington/OlympicPeninsula.aspx>

Douglas Doherty

Phone: (989) 736-4234

Email: ddoherty@rmef.org

Jefferson County Sportsmen’s Association

Website: <http://jeffersoncountysportsmen.org/page2.html>

Email: info@JeffersonCountySportsmen.org

P.O. Box 737, Port Townsend, WA 98368

Sportsmen for Wild Olympics

Website: www.SportsmenForWildOlympics.org

Email: info@sportsmenforwildolympics.org

Wapiti Bowmen Archery Club

Website: <https://www.wapitibowmen.org/>

Facebook Website: <https://www.facebook.com/Wapiti-Bowmen-180948655312545/>

Email: wapitibowclub@gmail.com

374 E Arnette Rd, Port Angeles, WA 98362

Eyes in the Woods

Website: <http://www.eyesinthewoods.org/index.php/en/?Itemid=419>

P.O. Box 2406, Olympia, WA 98507

West End Sportsmen's Club-Forks

Facebook Website: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/West-End-Sportsmens-Club-354953248029561/posts/>

Phone: (360) 374-5420

Sportsman Club Road, Forks, WA 98331

Washington Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Website: http://www.backcountryhunters.org/washington_bha

Max Cole, West Side Co-Chair

Email: washington@backcountryhunters.org

Ducks Unlimited Olympic District

Website: <http://www.ducks.org/washington/wa-content/state-contacts/?poe=stateHomeIcon>

Chairman Mike Luecht

Email: papaluke@wavecable.com

Izaak Walton League of America Greater Seattle Chapter

Website: <https://www.iwla.org/local-chapters>

A. William Way

Phone: (425) 868-4759

Email: bway@watershedco.com

3451 E. Lake Sammamish Ln. N.E., Sammamish, WA 98074

Washington Brant Foundation

Website: <http://www.wabrانت.org/>

Maynard Axelson

Phone: (360) 445-6681

Email: info@wabrانت.org

15929 Fir Island Rd, Mt Vernon, WA 98273

Washington Outdoor Women (WOW)

Website: <http://www.washingtonoutdoorwomen.org>

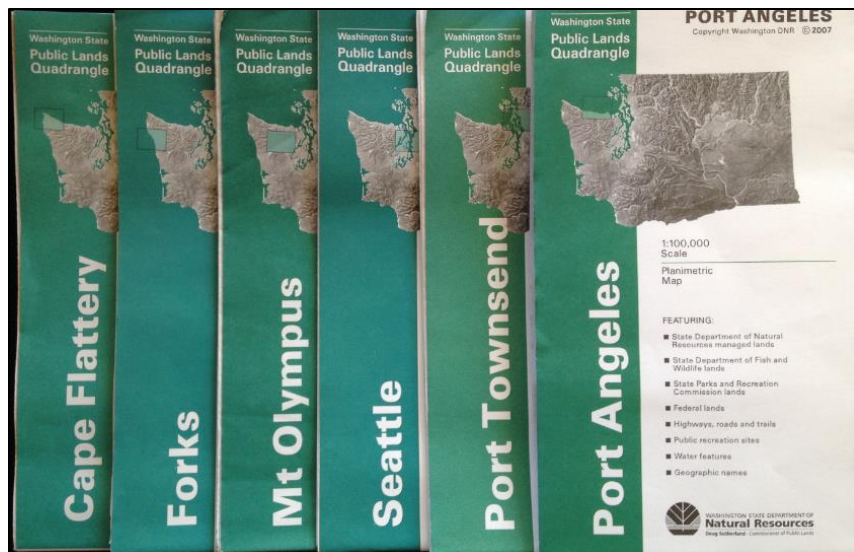
<http://washingtonoutdoorwomen.org/register/> - Workshops

P.O. Box 1656, Bellevue, WA 98009-1656

If you know of an organization that should be included in this document, please let us know.

ONLINE TOOLS AND MAPS

Because land ownership can be very confusing, we recommend a set of these DNR maps, which you can order online at [Buy Maps, Aerial Photos, or Survey Data | WA - DNR](#).



These DNR maps are available to buy at Swains & Browns in Port Angeles and Thriftway in Forks.

These DNR maps have the best combination of land ownership and current roads. However, keep in mind there have been several DNR & private forest land ownership exchanges in recent years that won't show up on these maps. DNR's website has current DNR ownership displayed at [DNR Ownership](#). Other maps that can be helpful for select areas include:

Forest Service Online:

Forest Service maps can be obtained free online at <http://freegeographytools.com/2007/updated-usgs-24k-topographic-maps-from-the-us-forest-service>

Forest Service Maps to purchase:

USFS sells forest district maps that are very useful, as are the custom correct maps shown on the same page.

Link: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/olympic/maps-pubs/?cid=stelprdb5195398>

East end of WDFW District 16 is the Hood Canal Ranger District/North End map.

West end of WDFW District 16 are the Pacific Ranger District/North End & South End maps.