

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN PUBLIC INPUT

Taken at the Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting

March 9-10, 2012

WAC 232-28-357 "Deer general seasons and definitions."

COMMENTS	AGENCY RESPONSE
<p>It is foolish to eliminate the Master Hunter Season for antlerless whitetails in Whitman county (GMU 139 and 142). This short season (9 days) will not harm the take for the "General Hunter," but the timing of the Dec. season for WTD antlerless only is just right to help landowners who need deer taken off the WINTER WHEAT fields. And Colfax in Whitman county has too many whitetails and that is why it is a Special Deer Management unit within Whitman county. If you want to eliminate a December deer season why not in GMU 130 but not in GMU's 139 and 142.</p>	<p>The intent for Master Hunters is to address specific damage situations. A general season hunt spread over several units does not appear to meet that intent. The Department is attempting to ensure that Master Hunters are not perceived as being in competition for opportunity with general hunters. In this case, we are recommending dropping the December MH hunt for antlerless deer and adding second deer permits for general season hunters in GMUs 139 & 142.</p>
<p>As a Master Hunter I do not agree with some of the proposed changes to the incentive hunts/seasons. To start the GMUs 130-142 antlerless whitetail hunt seems that at least addressing the areas that have the highest amount of damage and or the most sensitive, due to safety and landowner relations would be acceptable. Verses eliminating MH participation altogether.</p>	<p>In addition to the hunts listed above for general season hunters, we are developing a list of 20 Master Hunter permit holders in south Region 1 who would be available on-call when a landowner needs help with a deer problem.</p>
<p>Removing the Master Hunter white-tailed deer general season antlerless hunt in GMU's 130-142 is a mistake for several reasons: First, this hunt provides a critical service by improving public perception of the department and the hunting public which in turn increases private land hunting opportunities throughout the year. Secondly, public safety is a concern because the rolling terrain and open countryside makes these areas vulnerable to hunting accidents caused by bullet trajectory, lack of obstructions and prevalence of commonly concealed outbuildings and habitations. Third, White-tailed deer populations in these GMU's still appear high and the ability of whitetail to exploit these agricultural habitats and be extremely productive is well documented in literature.</p>	<p>Please see the responses above that address your comments. There are also archery, muzzleloader, and modern firearm general seasons and permits in all of these areas in addition to the Master Hunters season currently which should also address your concerns.</p>