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# DISTRICT 2 HUNTING PROSPECTS

Spokane, Lincoln, and Whitman counties

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISTRICT 2 GENERAL OVERVIEW .....	4
BE AWARE OF FIRE CONDITIONS .....	4
ELK.....	6
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status .....	6
Which GMU Should Elk Hunters Hunt?.....	6
Elk Areas .....	8
What To Expect During The 2020 Season .....	9
DEER .....	13
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status .....	13
Which GMU Should Deer Hunters Hunt?.....	14
What To Expect During The 2020 Season .....	16
BIGHORN SHEEP .....	20
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status .....	20
What to Expect During the 2020 Season .....	21
MOOSE .....	22
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status .....	22
What to Expect During the 2020 Season .....	23
COUGAR .....	28
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status .....	28
What To Expect During The 2020 Season .....	28
BLACK BEAR.....	30
General Information, Management Goals, and Population Status .....	30
What To Expect During The 2020 Season .....	31
WATERFOWL.....	32
PHEASANT .....	34
CHUKAR AND GRAY PARTRIDGE .....	36

FOREST GROUSE.....	38
QUAIL .....	40
TURKEY .....	42
DOVE .....	44
MAJOR PUBLIC LANDS.....	46
PRIVATE LANDS .....	47

## DISTRICT 2 GENERAL OVERVIEW

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, Ponderosa pine, scattered 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, and Snake rivers.

District 2 is best known for its deer hunting opportunities, including white-tailed deer in the Spokane and 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. Moose and bighorn sheep hunters can enjoy quality hunts if they are selected for special permit hunts and if they have secured private land access prior to applying.

## BE AWARE OF FIRE CONDITIONS

Wherever you choose to hunt, be sure to check on fire conditions, access restrictions, and other emergency rules before you head out. In addition to potential wildfires, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) may be conducting prescribed burns and/or forest-thinning projects in your hunt area. For more information, see:

- Wildfire status updates (InciWeb – Incident Information System)
- Northwest Interagency Coordination Center
- WDFW Wildlife Areas

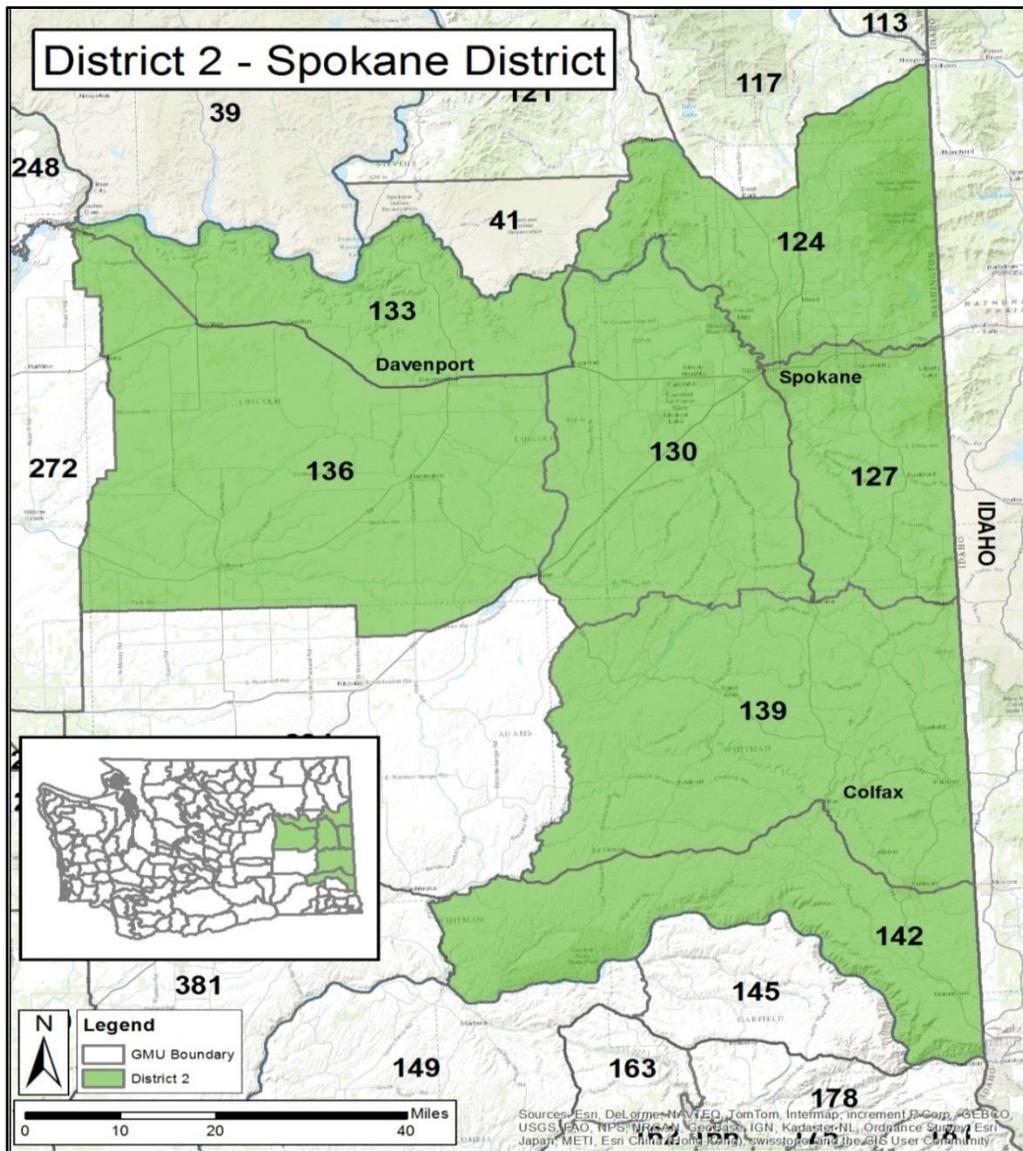


Figure 1. General location and game management units (GMUs) for WDFW District 2.

## ELK

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

All elk that occur in District 2 are Rocky Mountain elk and belong to the Spokane sub-herd of the Selkirk elk herd. The Selkirk herd originated in Pend Oreille County and has expanded its range over the last 40 years to this area. As elk habitat in District 2 continues to be lost to agricultural conversion and urban sprawl, our goal is to maintain the population at its current level (roughly 1000–1500 elk) while limiting agricultural damage and conflict within urban areas. Consequently, an “any elk” harvest is offered for the general season in all GMUs. The majority of the land in the district is in private ownership, so managing this population requires landowner tolerance and cooperation. Elk in this herd can be highly mobile and difficult to locate, so learning their behavior and gaining access to numerous private lands will greatly increase your chance of success.

Currently, WDFW does not conduct formal population surveys to monitor elk populations in most of District 2. Rather, harvest data, opportunistic surveys, sightings, and damage complaints are used to indicate population trends. The exception to this is the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge located in GMU 130 (Cheney). Aerial surveys have been conducted on and near Turnbull for the last 15 years to obtain herd size and composition data. The survey area only covers a small portion of the Spokane sub-herd range and is not likely representative of the entire area, it informs management decisions for the Refuge. WDFW’s 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 2019 pre-hunt aerial survey of Turnbull and the surrounding area within GMU 130 found the bull to cow ratio to be well above this management objective. Also based on the survey, 2019 calf production was above average, with a calf to cow ratio of 62 calves per 100 cows. Combined data sources for the entirety of District 2 over the last ten years indicate an overall stable population with some local populations declining and others increasing. For more detail on the status of elk in Washington, see WDFW’s most recent [Game Status and Trend Report](#). Also available is a general how-to guide for elk hunting entitled “The Basics of Elk Hunting in Washington.” You can find this document on the WDFW website [here](#).

### WHICH GMU SHOULD ELK HUNTERS HUNT?

This question does not have an easy answer, because it depends on access to private land, hunting method, and the type of hunting experience desired. For archery hunters, GMUs 124 and 127 provide the best terrain and generally more forested land, irrigated agriculture, small developed lakes, and riparian areas. The terrain in GMUs 136–142 is better suited for muzzleloader and modern firearm, with open landscapes predominated by shrub steppe, scablands, and dryland farming

The majority of the district's elk harvest (25-50 percent) typically occurs in GMU 130, though a high proportion consistently occurs in GMUs 124 and 127 as well. Hunters who gain access to private lands in GMUs 127 and 130 have typically had the highest success, though success in GMUs 136 and 139 has been higher the past couple of years. In GMU 130, hunters likely benefit from animals moving on and off Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge during the season. Elk are often targeted by nearby landowners due to seasonal crop, fence, and haystack damage. With one-third of the elk hunters in District 2, GMU 124 (Mt Spokane) sustains the greatest hunting pressure. As a result, overall hunter success is lower there, although the unit periodically produces one of the higher harvests of mature 6-point bulls. Private timber companies, especially Inland Empire Paper (IEP), offer public access in this unit with a paid permit. See [IEP - Recreational Use](#) 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 due to road conditions, logging operations, or fire danger. Hunters are advised to check closures and restrictions before setting out. Quality Services, the property access manager for IEP, provides access updates online. Also be aware that GMU 124 contains several county parks, Conservation Areas, and State parks, and they may not be hunted.

The information provided in Table 1 provides a quick and general assessment of how GMUs compare regarding harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success during general modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader elk seasons. The values presented are the five-year averages for each statistic. The table also summarizes the number of elk harvested per square mile and hunters per square mile to account for the variation in sizes between GMUs.

Each GMU was ranked for elk harvested/mile<sup>2</sup>, hunters/mile<sup>2</sup>, and hunter success rates during the general season. The three ranking values were then summed to produce a final rank sum, the lower the score the better. Comparisons are most straightforward for modern firearm because seasons are the same across all GMUs. However, when choosing which GMU and/or species to hunt, differences that should be taken into consideration are:

1. In addition to the early general archery season in all GMUs, there is a late archery season in GMUs 124 & 127.
2. In addition to the early general muzzleloader season in all GMUs, there is a late muzzleloader season in GMUs 130-142.
3. There is a late Master Hunter season for all weapon types in GMUs 127 & 130.
4. There are considerable differences in the sizes of GMUs, so looking at only total harvest or hunter numbers is not always a fair comparison.

MODERN FIREARM												
GMU	Size (mi <sup>2</sup> )	% Public Land (Open to Hunting)	Harvest			Hunter Density			Hunter Success		Rank Sum	
			Total	Harvest per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Total	Hunters per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Success	Rank		
124	771	4%	46	0.06	2	558	0.72	7	8%	6	15	
127	509	1%	57	0.11	1	310	0.61	6	19%	1	8	
130	940	7%	44	0.05	3	261	0.28	5	17%	2	10	
133	555	6%	5	0.01	5	82	0.15	4	6%	7	16	
136	1586	11%	4	0.00	6	40	0.03	1	10%	4	11	
139	1327	3%	7	0.01	5	70	0.05	2	9%	5	12	
142	771	8%	12	0.02	4	89	0.12	3	14%	3	10	
ARCHERY												
GMU	Size (mi <sup>2</sup> )	% Public Land (Open to Hunting)	Harvest			Hunter Density			Hunter Success		Rank Sum	
			Total	Harvest per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Total	Hunters per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Success	Rank		
124	771	4%	14	0.02	1	227	0.29	7	6%	5	13	
127	509	1%	12	0.02	1	137	0.27	6	9%	4	11	
130	940	7%	8	0.01	2	53	0.06	5	16%	2	9	
133	555	6%	1	0.00	3	9	0.02	3	9%	4	10	
136	1586	11%	0	0.00	4	4	0.00	1	0%	6	11	
139	1327	3%	6	0.00	3	19	0.01	2	35%	1	6	
142	771	8%	4	0.01	2	27	0.04	4	12%	3	9	
MUZZLELOADER												
GMU	Size (mi <sup>2</sup> )	% Public Land (Open to Hunting)	Harvest			Hunter Density			Hunter Success		Rank Sum	
			Total	Harvest per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Total	Hunters per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Success	Rank		
124	771	4%	7	0.01	3	77	0.10	4	9%	6	13	
127	509	1%	11	0.02	2	62	0.12	5	18%	2	9	
130	940	7%	27	0.03	1	251	0.27	6	11%	5	12	
133	555	6%	7	0.01	3	64	0.12	5	11%	5	13	
136	1586	11%	4	0.00	4	15	0.01	1	24%	1	6	
139	1327	3%	16	0.01	3	98	0.07	2	17%	3	8	
142	771	8%	8	0.01	3	62	0.08	3	14%	4	10	

Table 1. Rank sum analysis that provides a quick and general comparison of how harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success rates compare among GMUs during general modern, archery, and muzzleloader elk seasons. As a generalization, the lower the rank, the better the overall elk hunting opportunity is within a GMU. Data presented are based on a five-year average (2015-2019).

## ELK AREAS

Most of the special permit elk hunts available in District 2 occur in Elk Area 1015, which is located within Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. Turnbull special permit hunts were created in 2010 to address damage to aspen stands and address complaints from landowners in the area. These are walk-in only hunts, except for disabled hunt permit holders. In past years, one bull permit (any weapon type) and 62 antlerless permits were offered. For the 2019 and 2020 seasons, this changed to 58 and includes 1 bull, 4 spike-only, and 53 antlerless permits. Permits include each weapon type as well as hunts for youth, master hunters, and hunters with disabilities. Turnbull hunters averaged 15 percent success for antlerless hunts in 2019, compared to the previous 5-year average of 27 percent. The archery hunt has been particularly challenging, with an average of 10 percent success rate, although archers harvested 4 animals in 2018, more than

all other weapon types combined that year. In 2019 the early muzzleloader season hunters were the most successful, with 3 antlerless harvests. The bull permittee has been successful once in the past five years but was successful each year for the first four years. For more information about elk management in the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, visit [Turnbull - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#).

To address winter property damage in the area, there are also several late-season raffle permits and one WDFW special permit offered on Columbia Plateau Wildlife Management Association (CPWMA) properties in areas around Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. See the Private Lands Program section for more information on acreage enrolled and the [CPWMA](#) website for details on their hunt management.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2020 SEASON**

Harvest of antlered and antlerless elk in the district has been fairly evenly split, with an average of 165 antlered and 146 antlerless elk harvested each year over the past 5 years. In the 2019 season, 16 percent of bulls harvested were 6-point or better, and 29 percent of bulls were 5-point. Across all GMUs, elk hunter success during the general season has averaged 12 percent over the last 10 years, and hunter effort (days/kill) has averaged 41 days/kill. These numbers vary widely by GMU. A good predictor of future harvest during general seasons is the recent trend in the harvest and catch per unit effort (CPUE) or its inverse, days per kill. Figures 2 and 3 below provide trend data for these statistics by GMU and are intended to provide hunters with the best information possible to make an informed decision on where to hunt. As these numbers are highly variable between GMUs, pay attention to the scale of each, as they are not all the same.

Elk in District 2 appear to be expanding into new areas, and harvest in GMUs 139 (Steptoe) and 142 (Almota) has increased over the last five years (Figure 3). Some of these elk appear to 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. Complaints of agricultural damage have been on the rise, especially in areas where crops have been recently converted to legumes. Scattered groups of 20–100 elk have been reported causing damage in areas including Fairfield south to Tekoa in GMU 127, the area from Dusty east to Palouse, south to Uniontown, and along the Snake River breaks in GMUs 139 and 142, and from Tyler near the Lincoln/Spokane County border to Sprague and north to Edwall in GMU 130. There has also been an increase in reported crop damage by 60-80 elk along the river breaks in northern GMU 133 over the past five years.

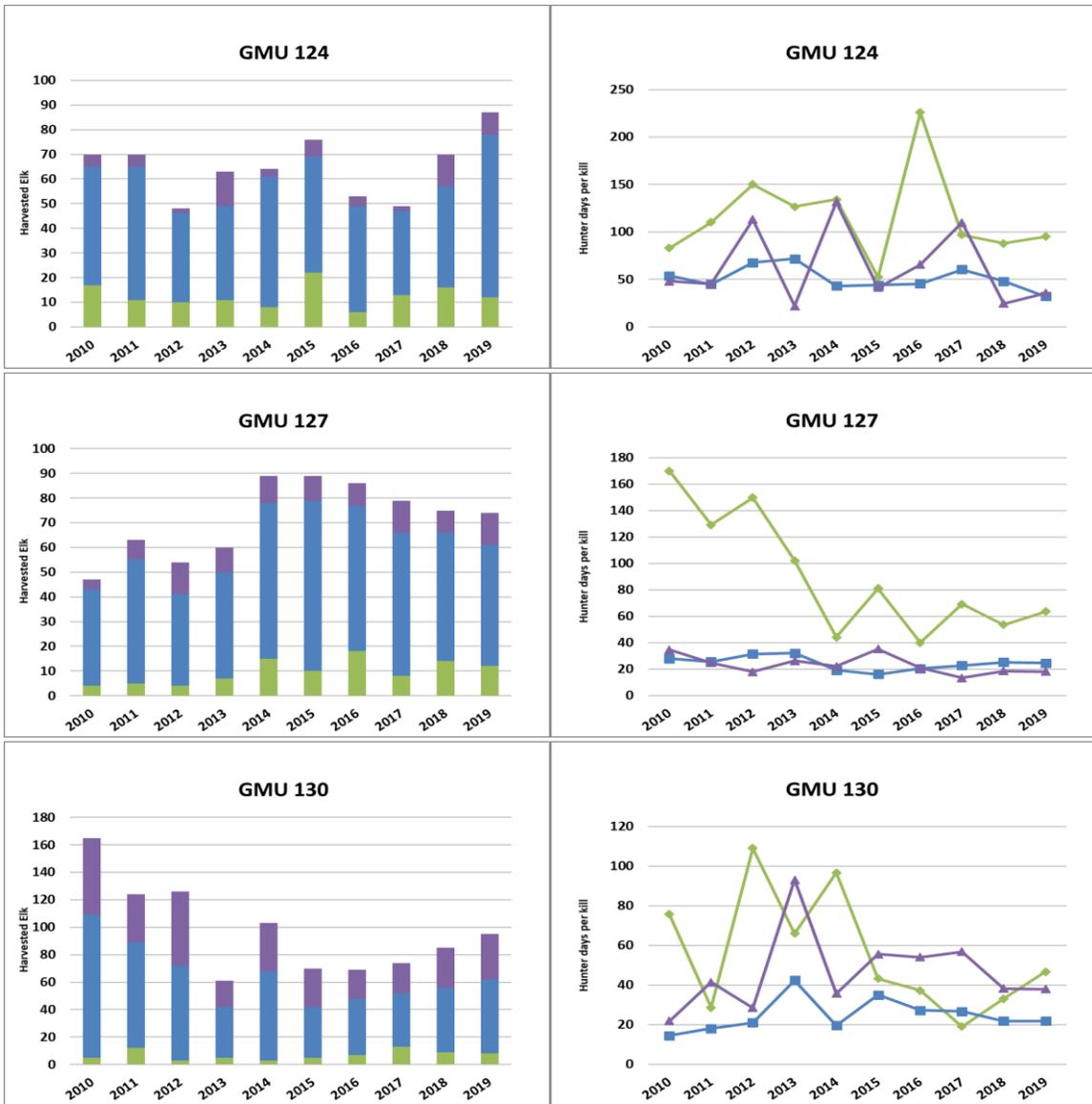


Figure 2. GMUs 124 – 130. **Left column:** Ten-year trends in general season elk harvest by weapon type: modern firearm (blue), archery (green), and muzzleloader (purple). Note the different scale for GMU 130. **Right column:** Ten-year trends in general season hunter effort (measured in days per kill) by weapon type: modern firearm (blue), archery (green), and muzzleloader (purple). Note the difference in scales for each GMU.

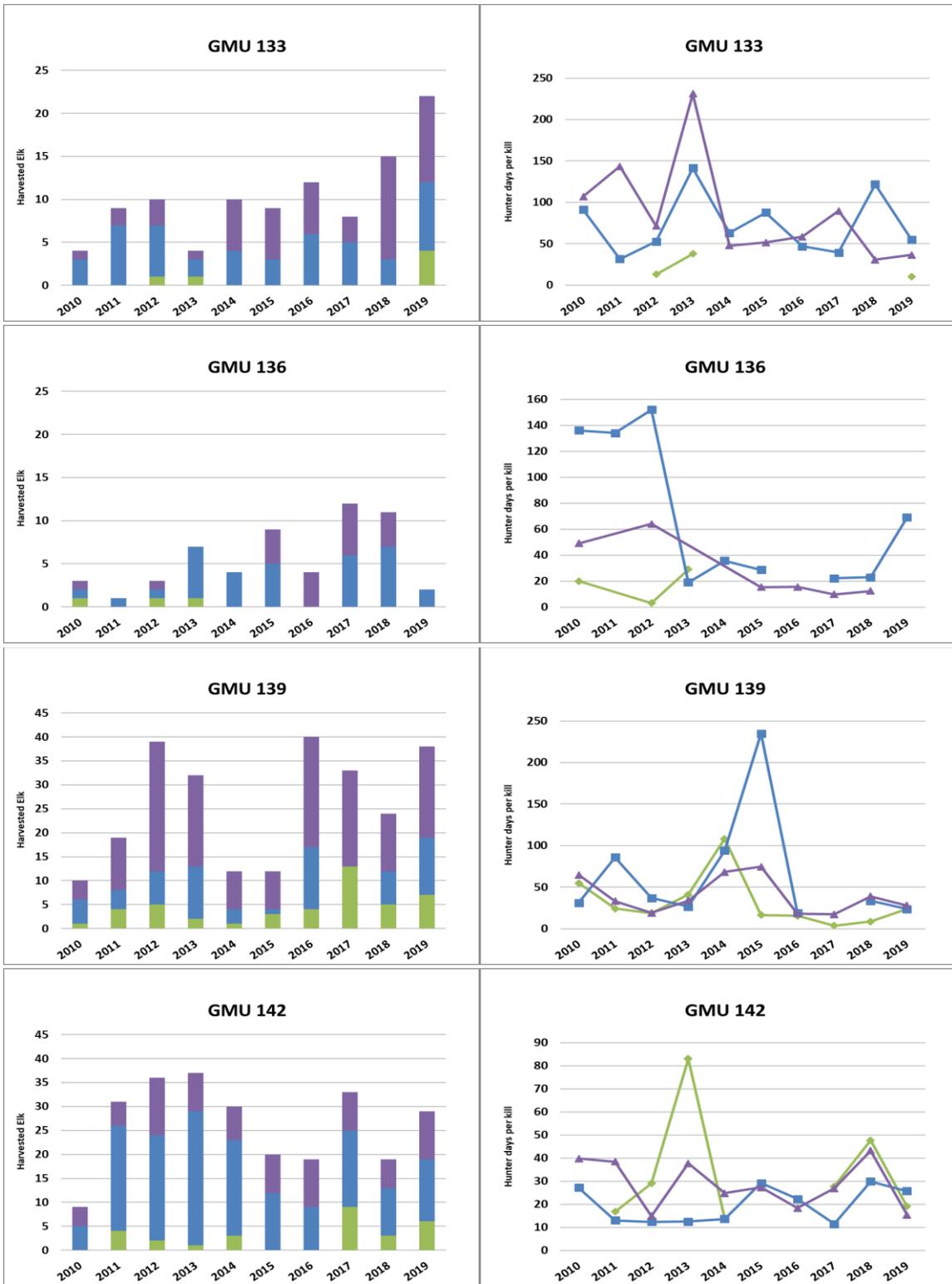


Figure 3. GMUs 123 – 142. **Left column:** Ten-year trends in general season elk harvest by weapon type: modern firearm (blue), archery (green), and muzzleloader (purple). Note the difference in scales. **Right column:** Ten-year trends in general season hunter effort (measured in days per kill) by weapon type: modern firearm (blue), archery (green), and muzzleloader (purple). Again, note the difference in scales for each GMU.

Hunter's success depends heavily on the work the hunter is willing to put in to obtain access to private property. There are well over 100 properties enrolled in WDFW's private land hunting access program in District 2. 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 our new [Hunt Regulations Web map](#). For more detailed harvest information, see District 2 - 2019 Game Harvest Statistics Online: [Elk General Season Harvest](#)

[Elk Special Permits Harvest](#)

## 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 forests, irrigated ag-fields, and along riparian corridors. Mule deer are predominantly found in the west and south of the district, in the shrub steppe, scablands, and farmlands.

Deer population levels are closely tied to droughts, severe winters, disease, 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 that the majority of the land in the district is in private ownership, managing this population without landowner cooperation is impossible.

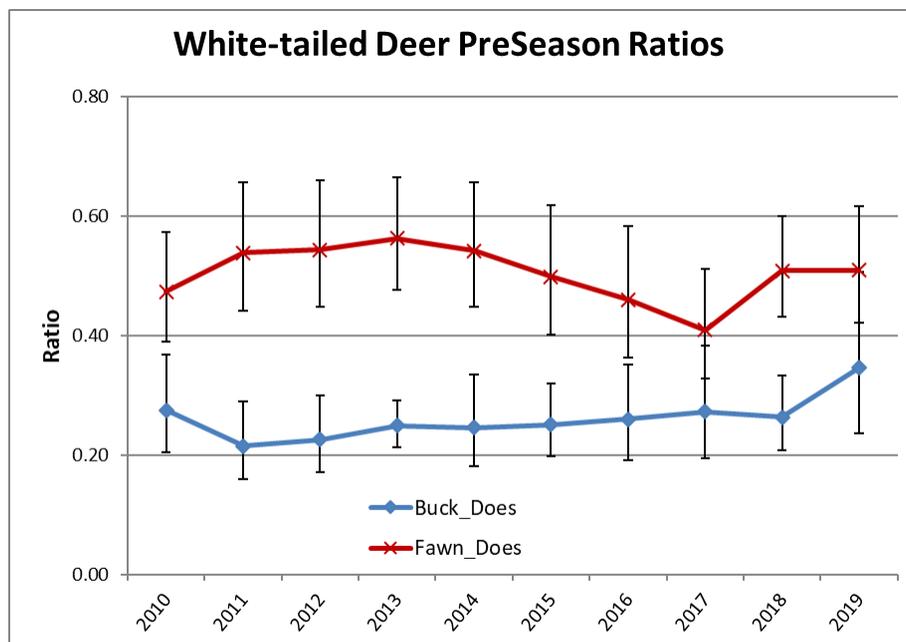


Figure 4. District 2 pre-season buck to doe (August) and fawn to doe (September) ratios (blue lines with 90 percent CI) for White-tailed deer.

Currently, WDFW does not use formal estimates or indices of population size to manage white-tailed deer populations in District 2. Instead, trends in harvest, hunter success, days per kill, and pre-hunting season sex and age ratios are used to monitor 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 deer populations. In general, the harvest metrics indicate a decline in the white-tailed deer population from the high in 2014, however, pre-season ground surveys indicate fawn to doe ratios (i.e. recruitment) have started to rebound (Figure 4).

The harvest statistics noted above are also used in managing mule deer, but congregations of mule deer on wintering grounds allow for viable postseason aerial surveys to estimate populations periodically. Flights are conducted every three to five years in conjunction with Districts 4 and 5, and ground surveys for ratios are completed every year. The last flight completed for the Washtucna sub-herd (GMUs 139, 142, 284, & 381) was flown in 2015 and resulted in a population estimate of ~13,000 mule deer; the 2019 ground survey estimated ~63 fawn per 100 doe. The Odessa sub-herd (GMUs 133, 136, & 272) was last flown in 2019 resulting in an estimate of ~12,000 mule deer; the 2019 ground survey estimated ~70 fawn per 100 doe. All are in line with previous estimates for these herds, indicating stable to slightly increasing populations.

For more details please see the Columbia Basin Mule Deer Management Zone section and the Palouse White-tailed Deer Management Zone section of the [2019 Game Status and Trend Report](#).

### **WHICH GMU SHOULD DEER HUNTERS HUNT?**

Probably the most frequent question from hunters is, “What GMU should I hunt?” This is not always easy to answer because it depends on the hunting method and the type of hunting experience desired. Some hunters are looking for a quality opportunity to harvest a mature buck, while others just want to “fill the freezer,” and still others prefer to hunt an area with few other hunters.

The ideal GMU for most hunters would be entirely or mostly comprised of public land, have high deer densities, low hunter densities, and high hunter success rates. Unfortunately, this scenario does not exist in any GMU that is open during the general modern firearm, archery, or muzzleloader seasons in District 2. Instead, because of general season opportunities, the GMUs with the highest deer densities tend to have the highest hunter densities as well. For many hunters, high hunter densities are not enough to persuade them not to hunt in a GMU where they see lots of deer. Some hunters prefer to hunt in areas with moderate to low numbers of deer if that means there are also very few hunters and provide a backcountry experience.

The information provided in Table 2 provides a quick and general assessment of how GMUs compare with regard to harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success during general modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader deer seasons. The values presented are the five-year averages for each statistic. Furthermore, harvest and hunter numbers were divided by the area of each GMU to account for the variation in sizes between GMUs. Mule deer and white-tailed deer are combined in this table. Because both species can be hunted with the same tag, we cannot separate white-tailed deer hunters from mule deer hunters. However, the percentage of mule deer in the total harvest is given to provide a gauge of how prominent each species is in each GMU.

<b>MODERN FIREARM</b>												
GMU	Size (mi <sup>2</sup> )	% Public Land (Open to Hunting)	<u>Harvest</u>				<u>Hunters</u>			<u>Hunter Success</u>		Rank Sum
			Total	% Mule Deer	Harvest per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Total	Hunters per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Success	Rank	
124	771	4%	1449	1%	1.88	1	4195	5.44	7	34%	1	<b>9</b>
127	509	1%	165	4%	0.32	4	696	1.37	4	24%	6	<b>14</b>
130	940	7%	163	52%	0.17	7	889	0.95	2	18%	7	<b>16</b>
133	555	6%	242	55%	0.44	3	996	1.79	6	24%	5	<b>14</b>
136	1586	11%	276	88%	0.17	6	945	0.60	1	29%	4	<b>11</b>
139	1327	3%	420	42%	0.32	5	1405	1.06	3	30%	3	<b>11</b>
142	771	8%	393	68%	0.51	2	1243	1.61	5	32%	2	<b>9</b>
<b>ARCHERY</b>												
GMU	Size (mi <sup>2</sup> )	% Public Land (Open to Hunting)	<u>Harvest</u>				<u>Hunters</u>			<u>Hunter Success</u>		Rank Sum
			Total	% Mule Deer	Harvest per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Total	Hunters per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Success	Rank	
124	771	4%	447	1%	0.58	1	1262	1.64	7	35%	2	<b>10</b>
127	509	1%	153	2%	0.30	2	459	0.90	6	33%	3	<b>11</b>
130	940	7%	48	66%	0.05	4	205	0.22	4	24%	7	<b>15</b>
133	555	6%	68	80%	0.12	3	186	0.33	5	36%	1	<b>9</b>
136	1586	11%	29	93%	0.02	7	113	0.07	1	26%	5	<b>13</b>
139	1327	3%	28	70%	0.02	6	98	0.07	2	29%	4	<b>12</b>
142	771	8%	17	71%	0.02	5	71	0.09	3	25%	6	<b>14</b>
<b>MUZZLELOADER</b>												
GMU	Size (mi <sup>2</sup> )	% Public Land (Open to Hunting)	<u>Harvest</u>				<u>Hunters</u>			<u>Hunter Success</u>		Rank Sum
			Total	% Mule Deer	Harvest per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Total	Hunters per mi <sup>2</sup>	Rank	Success	Rank	
124	771	4%	46	3%	0.06	3	142	0.18	4	33%	1	<b>8</b>
127	509	1%	8	24%	0.02	7	32	0.06	1	25%	7	<b>15</b>
130	940	7%	125	40%	0.13	2	459	0.49	7	27%	6	<b>15</b>
133	555	6%	81	41%	0.15	1	267	0.48	6	30%	2	<b>9</b>
136	1586	11%	34	79%	0.02	6	127	0.08	2	27%	5	<b>13</b>
139	1327	3%	78	24%	0.06	4	275	0.21	5	28%	4	<b>13</b>
142	771	8%	39	52%	0.05	5	130	0.17	3	30%	3	<b>11</b>

Table 2. Rank sum analysis that provides a quick and general comparison of how harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success rates compare among GMUs during general modern, archery, and muzzleloader deer seasons. As a generalization, the lower the rank, the better the overall deer hunting opportunity is within a GMU. Data presented are based on a five-year average (2015-2019).

Each GMU was ranked for deer harvested/mile<sup>2</sup>, hunters/mile<sup>2</sup>, and hunter success rates. The three ranking values were then summed to produce a final rank sum, the lower the score the better. Comparisons are relatively straightforward because bag limits and seasons are fairly similar between GMUs. However, when choosing which GMU and/or species to hunt, differences that should be taken into consideration are:

1. There is a 3-point minimum harvest restriction for both species in all GMUs, except for white-tailed deer in GMU 124 where “any buck” is legal.
2. There is a late general modern firearm season for white-tailed deer in GMU 124. Late modern firearm season for white-tailed deer is by permit only for all other GMUs.
3. There is a late general muzzleloader season for white-tailed deer in GMUs 130-142.
4. There is a late general archery season for white-tailed deer in GMUs 124 & 127.
5. Muzzleloader, archery, youth, senior, and disabled hunters can take antlerless white-tailed deer with their general season tag in most GMUs.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2020 SEASON**

Overall, the white-tailed deer population is down in District 2 due to a series of events starting with the drought and blue tongue (BT) outbreak of 2015 that lasted well into October and had deer dying in Region 1 from Canada to Oregon. The relatively mild winter of 2015/16 helped a little, as did more normal precipitation that spring and summer, however, the winter of 2016/17 was one the hardest in the past 10 years and decreased overwinter fawn survival. The population got a break in 2017 and started showing signs of recovery, however, the winter of 2018/19 was another difficult winter (though not as bad as 2016) and there was a small outbreak of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) in north Lincoln and northwest Spokane counties. 2019/20 was a mild winter and 2020 spring precipitation has been up, which should increase forage availability. All of these should help the white-tailed deer population start to rebound.

Overall the mule deer herds are near their long-term averages. The mule deer populations suffered losses due to the same series of events noted above, however, mule deer do not typically die from BT and EHD, and the snows left the basin a bit sooner than in the northeast.

In general, the best opportunities to harvest a white-tailed deer in District 2 occur in GMUs 124 and 127. The best opportunities to harvest a mule deer in District 2 occur in GMUs 136, 139, and 142. For archery hunters, GMUs 124 and 127 provide the best terrain, whereas the terrain in GMUs 136–142 is better suited for muzzleloader and modern firearm.

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. A good predictor of future harvest during general seasons is recent trends in the harvest and catch per unit effort (CPUE) or its inverse, days per kill. Figures 5 and 6 provide trend data for each of these statistics by GMU

and are intended to provide hunters with the best information possible to make an informed decision on where to hunt.

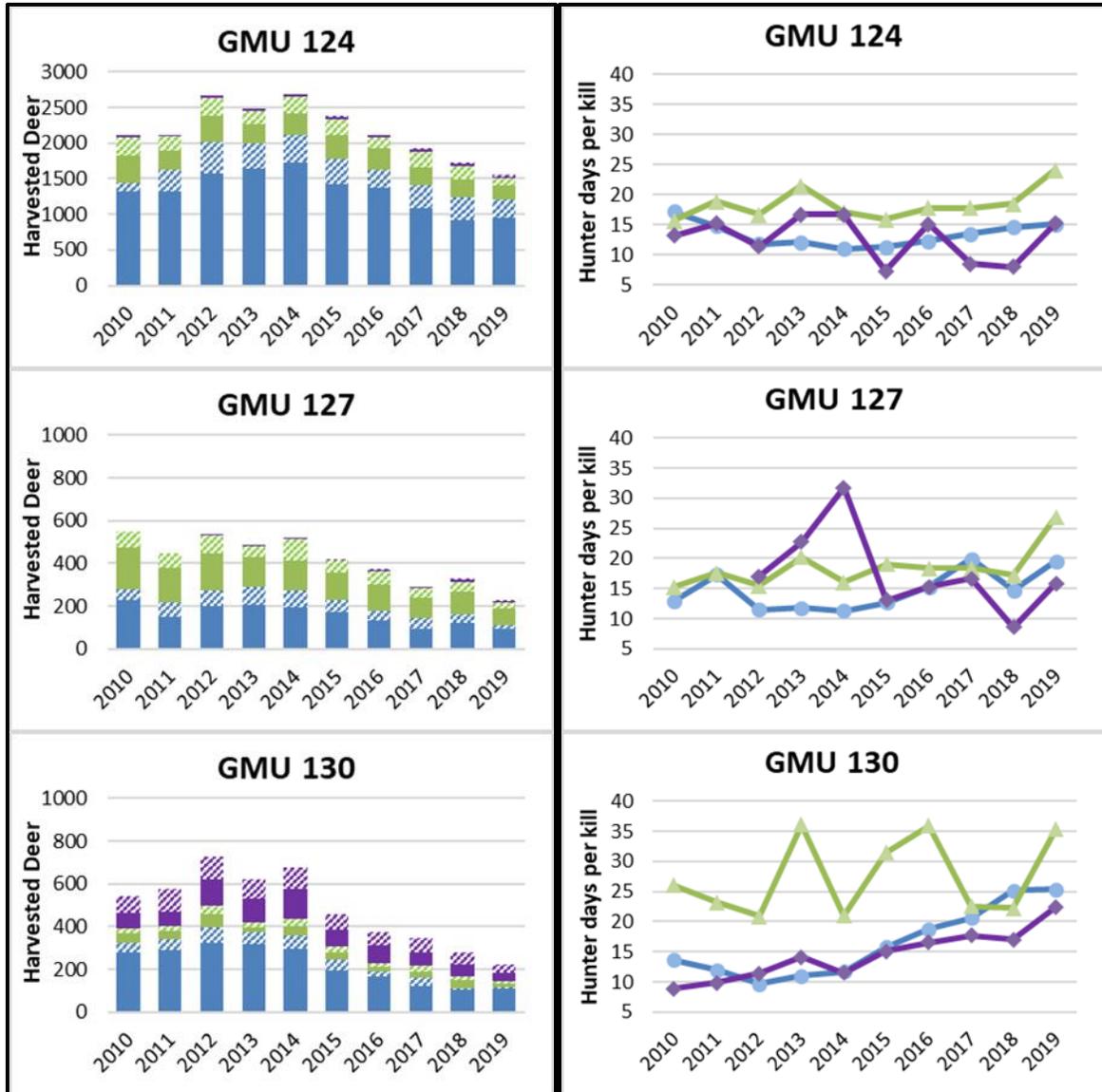


Figure 5. GMUs 124 – 130. **Left column:** Ten-year trends in general season harvest of deer bucks (solid) and antlerless (slash) by weapon type modern firearm (blue), archery (green), and muzzleloader (purple). Note the different scale for GMU 124. **Right column:** Ten-year trends in general season hunter days per kill by weapon type modern firearm (blue), archery (green), and muzzleloader (purple).

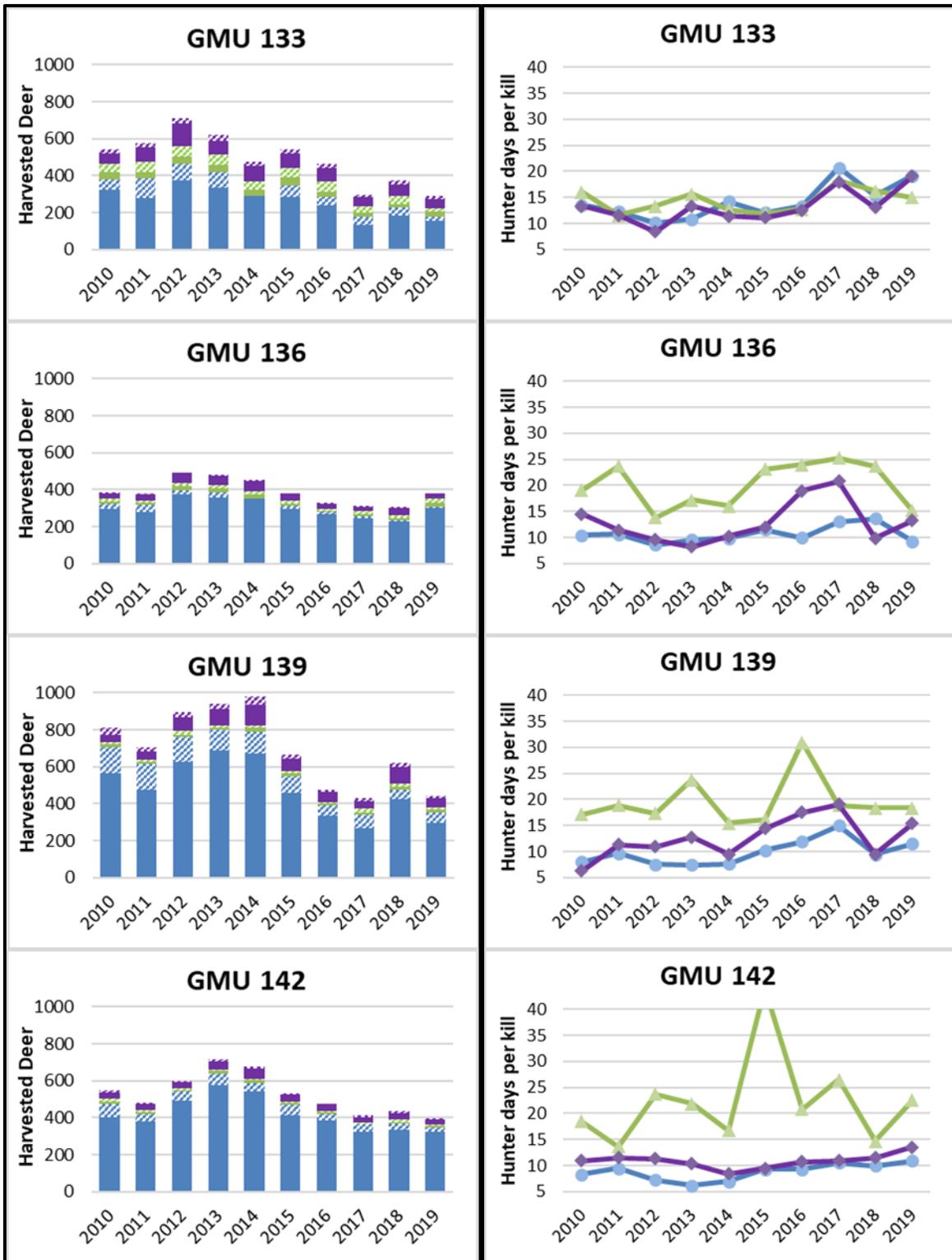


Figure 6. GMUs 133 – 142. **Left column:** Ten-year trends in general season harvest of deer bucks (solid) and antlerless (slash) by weapon type modern firearm (blue), archery (green), and muzzleloader (purple). **Right column:** Ten-year trends in general season hunter days per kill by weapon type modern firearm (blue), archery (green), and muzzleloader (purple).

There is a 3-point 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 (the Palouse Special Permit Hunt) as of 2006. Hunter success over the past 10 years is, on average, higher for the Palouse hunt (46 percent versus 33 percent in the general season), with 5+ point bucks making up, on average, a greater percentage of the kill (38 percent versus 27 percent in the general season). 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, as 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 cooperators in our hunter access programs in southeastern Washington. See the Private Lands Program section below and note that the locations are mapped on the [Hunt Regulations Web map](#).

For more 2019 harvest information from District 2, see:

- [Deer General Harvest District 2](#)
- [Deer Special Permits Harvest District 2](#)

## BIGHORN SHEEP

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

District 2 is home to one herd of California bighorn sheep, the Lincoln Cliffs herd, found in GMU 133 north of Highway 2 in Lincoln County (visit the [Hunt Regulations Web map](#) for a map). These sheep can most often be seen throughout the residential community of Lincoln and the cliffs above it, and in the cliffs around Whitestone Rock approximately seven miles downriver from Lincoln on Lake Roosevelt. Sheep are also observed frequently in the cliffs and canyons above Sterling Valley (the area between Lincoln and Whitestone) and in surrounding agricultural fields, where they are sometimes reported causing crop damage.

WDFW has conducted regular aerial surveys to assess the status of the Lincoln Cliffs herd since 2002. The minimum population size is estimated by the count of rams and ewes observed during these flights (Figure 7). After several years of increase, the population is showing signs of leveling off and has likely reached the largest feasible herd size here due to human tolerance and availability of quality habitat. For more details on the history of the Lincoln Cliffs herd and the status of bighorn sheep in Washington, see WDFW's 2019 Game Status and Trend Report [here](#).

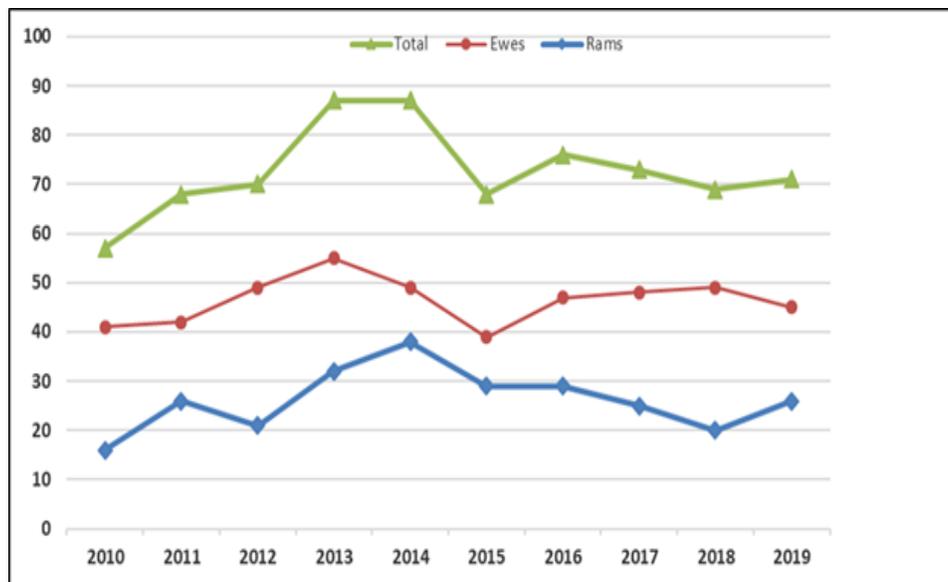


Figure 7. Lincoln Cliff's minimum population estimate by sex for 2010–2019. Estimated as the maximum adult count from helicopter surveys conducted each year.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2020 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 and in 2017. Based on ram numbers and population size, this was increased to two permits in 2014–16 and again in 2018 and 2019. The average number of applicants for this ram hunt over the last five years is 2203 and harvest success has remained at 100 percent. In both 2018 and 2019, two ewe permits were offered— one in the Whitestone Unit and one in the Lincoln Cliffs Unit. All the ewe hunters were successful. Only one ewe hunt, in the Whitestone Unit, will be available for the 2020 season. The area is almost entirely private property and permittees will need to obtain permission to access these properties for their hunt.

## MOOSE

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Moose in northeast Washington are Shiras moose (*Alces alces shirasi*), the smallest of the four subspecies of moose in North America. 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 dramatically increased in number and distribution in the decades that followed and are now 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 a moose population near the Spokane metropolitan area adds the challenge of balancing population objectives with human safety and the community's tolerance of moose.

From 2013-16, WDFW completed a project to develop a new survey methodology that would produce a reliable population estimate over the entire northeast (GMUs 101–130). This project resulted in an estimate of 5,169 (3,510 to 7,034) moose in the northeast in 2015. Though the estimate produced by the new method was less variable than previous methods, the larger area of coverage made it impractical to apply the results to individual hunt units and the cost makes it unviable to repeat annually.

Currently, WDFW uses harvest, success, and hunter effort to monitor and manage moose populations in District 2. Based on these harvest metrics and results from a WDFW and the University of Montana partner study from 2014-2018 in northeast Washington, it appears that the ~5000 moose in 2015 was a high point in the moose population in northeast Washington and that now we are seeing a decline. Primary drivers of this decline are the poor condition of cows and reduced calf survival. Poor cow condition is likely caused by reduced habitat quality and quantity due to reduced timber harvests, increased tick infestations due to warmer winters and more hosts (i.e. moose), and decreased foraging by cows in winter due to high temperatures (moose become thermally stressed at 28°F once in their winter coats). Reduced calf survival is due to increased predation likely tied to the recent re-establishment of wolves in the northeast. However, the effects of predation (wolf and otherwise) are exacerbated by the impact of poor cow condition on their young nursing calves and poor habitat quality (i.e. forage) for older calves.

Harvest management emphasizes quality hunting opportunities through limited special permits drawn by lottery each year. A total of 34 permits are offered in District 2 in a variety of categories (Table 3). Prior to 2012, District 2 had two moose hunt units (MHU), Mount Spokane (GMU 124 east of Highway 395), and Hangman (GMUs 127 and 130). In 2012, the Mount Spokane MHU was split into Mount Spokane North and Mount Spokane South Moose Areas (maps found [here](#)) to help distribute hunters more evenly across the area and increase hunter opportunity. In 2015, the Hangman MHU was split into the Mica Peak (GMU 127) and Cheney (GMU 130) MHUs for the antlerless hunts to better distribute hunters and address increasing moose conflict in Cheney. Additionally, in 2015, the Spokane West MHU was split off from the Huckleberry MHU to distribute hunters and increase opportunity.

Table 3. Permits offered in District 2 by moose hunt unit for 2019.

Moose Unit	Antlered Bull	Antlerless Only		
	General	General	Disabled	Youth
Mount Spokane North	8	2	1	0
Mount Spokane South	8	2	0	1
Spokane West	2	2	0	0
Hangman	4	0	0	0
Mica Peak	0	2	0	0
Cheney	0	2	0	0

### WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2020 SEASON

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. While they can be found at any elevation, they are most likely found between 3,000 and 5,000 feet. In the fall they are looking for deciduous browse, primarily willow brush, alder, serviceberry, ceanothus, and other shrubs in clear-cuts or burns 10–20 years old. Moose seek out cool, moist drainage basins and slopes, and generally prefer north slopes or east-flowing drainages. 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.

Moose seek out snow rather than avoid it in late fall and early winter because they are in their winter coats and start to experience thermal stress at temperatures exceeding 28°F. In years without much snow, they are typically found at a higher elevation and on north slopes with tree cover. In years with a lot of snow, they move down to the foothills of the mountains. Moose habitat in District 2 is largely located on private timber company lands, but smaller private ownerships can also harbor good moose concentrations. Permit holders should exercise caution and know where they and the targeted moose are at all times given the percentage of private land

ownership, proximity to Idaho, and non-hunting lands (State and County parks, National Wildlife Refuge) within the moose hunting units. WDFW requires all successful moose hunters to submit tooth samples in the envelopes provided with their informational packet. Tooth samples allow us to get an overview of the age structure of the moose population, which will help inform future management decisions.

See below for specific harvest metrics and access for each MHU:

### **Mount Spokane North Moose Area**

The success rate for the eight Bull Moose permits in this unit was 100 percent in 2019 and has averaged 93 percent since its creation in 2012. Hunters have spent eight days per kill on average, but the trend is increasing with hunters spending averages of 11, 12, & 14 days in 2017, 18, & 19 respectively. The average spread of bulls harvested is 36 inches, with the largest bull harvested measuring 49 inches. Success rates for the Antlerless Only hunt in this unit was 100 percent in 2019 and has averaged 86 percent since its creation in 2012. Hunters have spent seven days per kill on average, though it reached as high as 19 days per kill in 2016. Decreasing hunter success rates and increasing hunter effort combined with low pregnancy rates and low calf survival in a local study have led the department to reduce antlerless opportunity in this area to two permits in 2019. We also offer one antlerless permit to disabled hunters in this unit.

Access in this unit is primarily on timber company lands, Inland Empire Paper (IEP) and Hancock Timber, and DNR lands around the [E Blanchard Rd area](#). The DNR lands are free to hunt, though full-sized vehicles are not typically allowed, so be careful and read signage at gates- they might be open in the morning if crews are working but you might get locked in that evening. IEP allows vehicular access but will close gates to full-sized rigs once there has been enough rain to soften the roads (typically in late Oct or early Nov). IEP does charge an access fee, but it is reasonable and comes in daily and annual versions. For more information on IEP and maps of their property please visit their website (<https://iepc.com/forestry/rec-use/>). Hancock, at this time, has signed a contract with WDFW to allow **non-motorized** access for free to our hunters; in exchange, WDFW Enforcement monitors their property. Please respect the agreement or this access could be lost. Hancock does not supply a map of their property; we recommend hunters use the Spokane County Assessor's [online parcel map](#) to identify Hancock ownership or invest in third-party software (e.g. OnX maps).

### **Mount Spokane South Moose Area**

The success rate for the eight Bull Moose permits in this unit was 75 percent in 2019 and has averaged 93 percent since its creation in 2012. Hunters spent 10 days per kill on average in 2019, the average for this hunt since its creation is seven days. The average spread of bulls harvested is 34 inches, with the largest bull harvested measuring 46 inches. Success rates for the Antlerless Only hunt in this unit was 75 percent in 2019 and has averaged 84 percent since its creation in

2012. Hunters have spent seven days per kill on average, though it reached as high as 16 days per kill in 2016. Decreasing hunter success rates and increasing hunter effort combined with low pregnancy rates and low calf survival in a local study have led the department to reduce antlerless opportunity in this area to two permits in 2019. We also offer one antlerless permit to youth hunters in this unit.

Access in this unit is primarily on Inland Empire Paper (IEP) timber company lands in [Thompson Creek](#) and [Brickel Creek](#). There is a small chunk of DNR lands north of the Brickel Creek area as well. The DNR lands are free to hunt, though full-sized vehicles are not typically allowed, so be careful and read signage at gates—they might be open in the morning if crews are working but you might get locked in that evening. IEP allows vehicular access but will close gates to full-sized rigs once there has been enough rain to soften the roads (typically in late Oct or early Nov). IEP does charge an access fee, but it is reasonable and comes in daily and annual versions. IEP lands are adjacent to Mt Spokane State Park, which is not open to hunting, and the border with Idaho, so hunters need to know where they are before taking a shot. We recommend hunters use the Spokane County Assessor's [online parcel map](#) to identify ownership or invest in third-party software (e.g. OnX maps). For more information on IEP and maps of their property please visit their website (<https://iepc.com/forestry/rec-use/>).

### **Spokane West Moose Hunt Area**

This Hunt Area was split off from the Huckleberry GMU 121 in 2015, so there is little historic data for comparison. The 2015 Any Moose permittee harvested a 32-inch bull in one day of hunting. The 2016 permittee harvested a 44-inch bull in five days. The 2017 Any Moose permittee did not report their hunt. The 2018 permittee harvested a 43-inch bull in one day. The 2019 permittee harvested a 30-inch bull in 5 days. For the two antlerless permits offered each year success has been 100 percent, though only 1 hunter reported in 2018 and 2019. Days hunted have ranged from 1 to 10. Based on harvest stats and limited composition flights the moose population in this unit is doing better than the other units in District 2. However, most of the access is non-motorized, so do not apply if you are not in good physical condition or have private land access.

Access in this unit is primarily on Hancock Timber Company lands and scattered DNR parcels. The DNR lands are free to hunt, though full-sized vehicles are not typically allowed, so be careful and read signage at gates—they might be open in the morning if crews are working but you might get locked in that evening. Hancock, at this time, has signed a contract with WDFW to allow **non-motorized** access for free to our hunters; in exchange, WDFW Enforcement monitors their property. Please respect the agreement or this access could be lost. Hancock does not supply a map of their property; we recommend hunters use the Spokane County Assessor's [online parcel map](#) to identify Hancock ownership or invest in third-party software (e.g. OnX

maps). Access to Hancock lands in this unit are from the gate east off [Hwy 231 just south of the intersection with Reservation Road](#).

### **Hangman Moose Hunt GMUs 127 and 130**

The number of Bull Moose permits offered for this hunt was reduced from seven to four in 2017, due to reduced success, ≤86 percent, and increased effort (as high as 23 days) observed the previous four years. Since this reduction success has averaged 90 percent and effort has averaged 7 days per harvest. The average spread of bulls harvested in the last 10 years is 37 inches, with the largest bull ever harvested measuring 52 inches. Overall, the moose population in this unit appears to be declining in areas open to general hunting access (e.g., DNR and Inland Empire Paper Company), but increasing in areas closed to hunting or where access is limited (Conservation Areas and suburban Spokane). Hunters are strongly encouraged to secure private land access for this hunt before applying.

Access in this unit is primarily on Inland Empire Paper (IEP) timber company lands on Mica Peak and scattered sections of DNR throughout. The DNR lands are free to hunt, though full-sized vehicles are not typically allowed, so be careful and read signage at gates before entering. They might be open in the morning if crews are working but you might get locked in that evening. IEP does NOT allow vehicular access on their lands in this unit due to a history of road damage. IEP does charge an access fee, but it is reasonable and comes in daily and annual versions. IEP lands are adjacent to Spokane County Parks lands, which are not open to hunting, and the border with Idaho, so hunters need to know where they are before taking a shot. We recommend hunters use the Spokane County Assessor's [online parcel map](#) to identify ownership or invest in third-party software (e.g. OnX maps). For more information on IEP and maps of their property please visit their website (<https://iepc.com/forestry/rec-use/>). Two primary entry points for this hunt are the [Belmont Rd County Park](#) trailhead and [FAA Starr Road gate](#).

### **Mica Peak Moose Hunt GMU 127**

There are no Bull Moose permits specific to just this unit (Hangman MHU incorporates both Mica Peak and Cheney MHUs). The following Antlerless harvest statistics include the Hangman Unit data because the vast majority of permittees prior to 2015 harvested their animals in Mica Peak. Due to declining hunter success, Antlerless Only permits were reduced from seven to four in 2017. The success rate for this hunt increased to 100 percent in 2017, up significantly from the previous 5-year average of 69 percent and remained at 100 percent in 2018. However, success dropped to 50 percent in 2019. Hunter's effort came back into line with the 5-day average observed prior to the more recent increase. Overall, the moose population in this unit appears to be declining in areas open to general hunting access (e.g., DNR and Inland Empire Paper Company), but increasing in areas closed to hunting or where access is limited. Hunters are encouraged to secure private land access for this hunt if they want to increase their odds of success.

See the Hangman unit above for more access information.

### **Cheney Moose Hunt GMU 130**

There are no Bull Moose permits specific to just this unit (Hangman MHU incorporates both Mica Peak and Cheney MHUs). This MHU was split off from the Hangman MHU in 2015 for Antlerless only hunts because very few permittees hunted it while the number of complaints regarding moose in the unit's suburban/rural areas increased. This unit is almost entirely private land. The larger blocks of public land are NOT open to hunting, and the moose are dispersed and highly mobile. Only one of the two Antlerless Only permittees reported for this hunt in 2015. The permittee was successful after 15 days of hunting. In 2016, neither permittee was successful after spending a combined 20 days hunting. In 2017, one permittee did not hunt, while the other was successful after nine days of hunting. In 2018, both hunters were successful after spending a combined 36 days hunting. In 2019 both hunters were successful after spending a combined 20 days hunting.

Hunters are **STRONGLY** encouraged to secure private land access for this hunt prior to applying for the permit.

## COUGAR

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Cougars may be found in varying densities throughout District 2, depending on habitat availability. Cougars are managed to provide maximum harvest opportunity while promoting population stability and social structure and minimizing human-cougar conflict.

Beginning with the 2012 season, WDFW shifted away from using season length or permits to manage cougar harvest, instead implementing a standard, liberal season along with harvest guidelines. Hunt areas were created across the state, each one offering an opportunity to harvest 12–16 percent of its estimated cougar population from Sept. 1 until April 30. Starting Jan. 1, harvest numbers and composition of the harvest in each hunt area are evaluated, and hunt areas may be closed for meeting or exceeding the guideline with relatively short notice. Hunters that plan on hunting cougar after Jan. 1 are responsible for knowing if their hunt area is open or closed. To confirm, hunters must call the cougar hotline (1-866-364-4868) or [check online](#).

GMUs 124, 127, and 130 comprise a single hunt area with a harvest guideline of 7–9. Therefore, if you would like to hunt cougar in GMUs 124–130 after Jan. 1, you will have to verify the unit is still open. Harvest in this unit has met or exceeded the guideline for the past 3 seasons and has been closed. GMUs 133–142 are part of the Columbia Basin Hunt Area that has no harvest guideline due to limited cougar habitat and corresponding lower cougar population.

### WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2020 SEASON

General season cougar harvest has been increasing in District 2 over the last six years, with the highest reported harvest of 20 cougars during the 2016 license year (Figure 8). The average harvest across the district over the last 10 years is 13. Harvest is consistently the highest in GMUs 124 and 133, and sightings in these units are also common. Cougar harvest in GMUs 136–142 is typically very low (Figure 8). Most of the general season cougar harvest in the district is opportunistic, occurring most often while hunters are seeking deer or elk. The proportion of males and females in the harvest varies each year, but the average age at harvest is typically three years or younger. For harvest details by GMU, see the [Game Harvest Reports](#). For information on reporting and pelt-sealing requirements visit this [link](#).

Starting in 2017, the cougar season was extended until April 30. If you hunt in a unit that has not been closed to harvest, **you will have to purchase a 2021 hunting license and cougar tag to hunt cougar after March 31.**

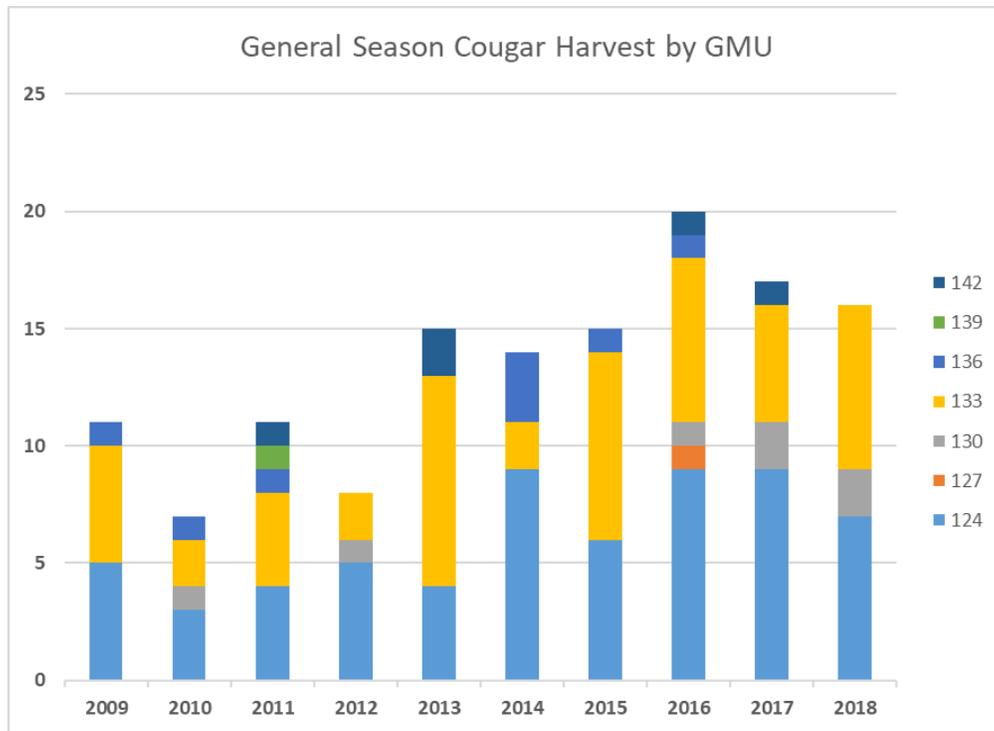


Figure 8. General season cougar harvest by GMU for license years, 2009–2018.

## BLACK BEAR

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Black bears in Washington are managed with the goal of ensuring healthy and productive populations while minimizing conflict with people. The state is divided into nine Black Bear Management Units (BBMUs); District 2 is part of both the Northeastern BBMU (GMUs 124–130) and the Columbia Basin BBMU (GMUs 133–142). Harvest levels vary within and between BBMUs depending on local habitat conditions and corresponding bear densities, as well as hunter effort and access limitations. We do not currently conduct annual surveys or have formal population estimates but rely on harvest statistics to infer population trends and evaluate management decisions.

Bear harvest in District 2 is substantially lower than in the rest of the Northeastern BBMU, likely due to habitat and hunter access limitations. Bear harvest in District 2 also varies widely year by year, as bears are most often harvested by deer and elk hunters when they come across one during their general seasons (Figure 9). Most of the harvest consistently occurs in GMUs 124 and 127. Although the Columbia Basin BBMU is not thought to support resident black bear populations, due to lack of forested habitat, GMU 133 has averaged 6 bears per year over the past 10 years. Harvest in the other GMUs in the Basin (136–142) is very low or nonexistent and would not be worth hunting for this species. The proportion of males and females in the harvest is also highly variable from year to year, likely for the same reason (Figure 10).

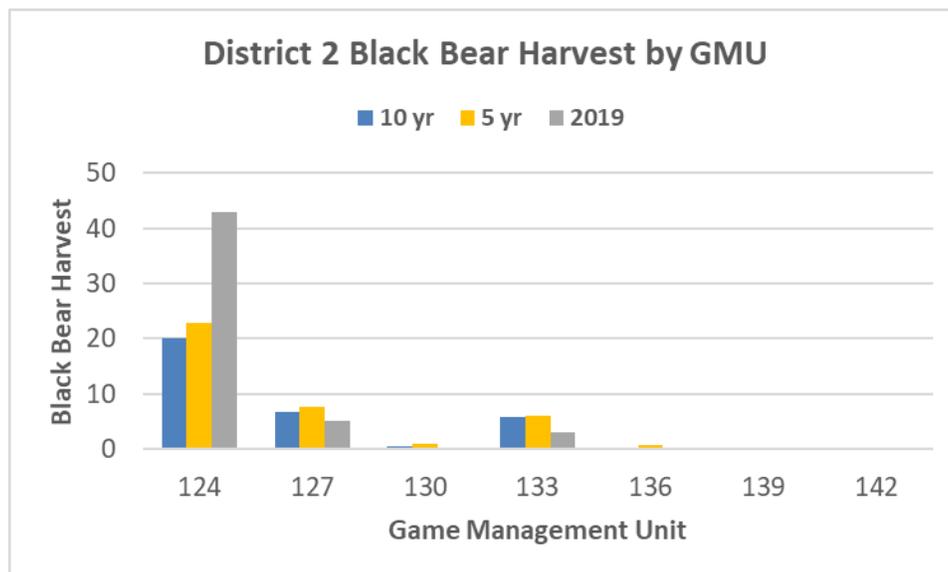


Figure 9. The number of black bears harvested in each GMU during the 2019 general season in District 2. Also included are the 10-year (2010-2019) and 5-year (2015-2019) average for the total number of bears harvested in each GMU.

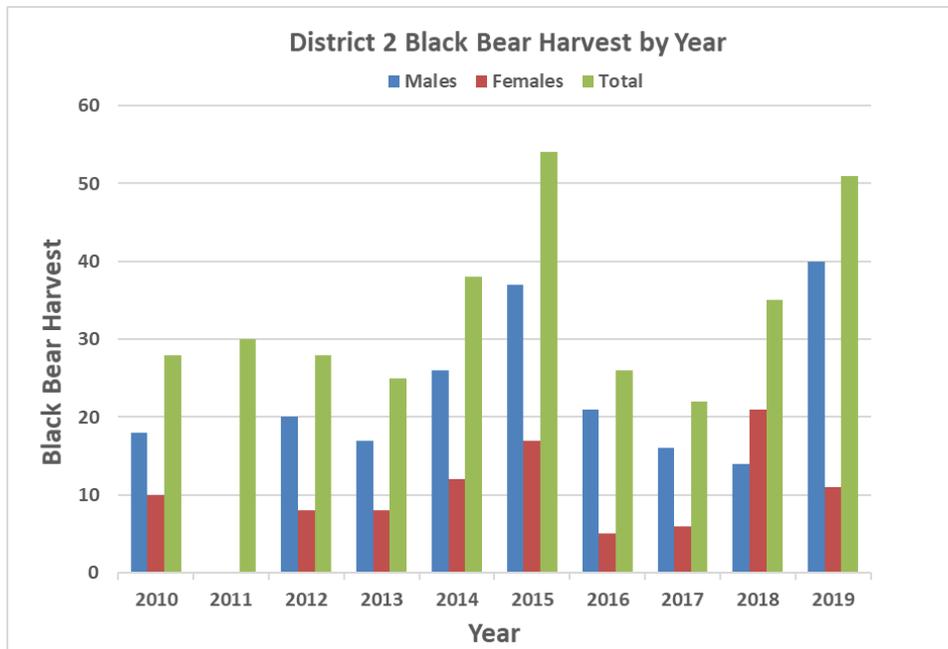


Figure 10. Black bear total harvest in District 2, 2010–2019. The sex of harvested bears is not available for 2011.

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2020 SEASON

Beginning in 2019, the fall general season dates were standardized statewide, allowing eastside hunters to start hunting August 1 in all GMUs. Additionally, the bag limit was increased to two bears, regardless of location. Hunters must purchase a second bear tag to harvest a second bear. There are no spring permits for bear in District 2. District 2 is not known for black bear hunting, however as a recent increase in harvest indicates, the local population appears to be doing well especially in the forested areas of Spokane and Lincoln Counties.

Scouting and securing private land access are extremely important factors that hunters should consider when specifically hunting for black bears in District 2. Although black bears are fairly common in some areas, they are seen infrequently because they tend to spend most of their time in forest cover and limit their time in the open to cooler times of the day. Much of the bear habitat in the district is either in State or County parks (which are not open to hunt), or private timber company land (where you may need an access permit).

Bear hunters are strongly urged not to shoot females with cubs. In the fall, cubs are 30 to 50 pounds and tend to lag behind when traveling. Please be patient and spend time watching for cubs before shooting a bear. In addition, remember that it is **mandatory** to submit a premolar tooth from all harvested bears. Tooth envelopes are available at WDFW offices, and hunters are welcome to make an appointment for help with pulling the tooth if needed. If you are unable to reach a regional WDFW for a tooth envelope, contact the Wildlife Program at (360) 902-2515. Hunters that submitted a tooth can look up the age of their harvest several months after the close of the season on our website [here](#).

## 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 water bodies in the Channeled Scablands. Local surveys indicate brood production was up overall in 2019 (Figure 11). However, this is driven by coot broods, while duck brood numbers have fallen the past three years from their high in 2016 and are coming back in line with the numbers seen prior to the wet spring of 2016. The most common breeding duck species in the area are mallard, gadwall, green-winged teal, and redhead. Other common waterfowl species in District 2 include coot, ruddy duck, and northern pintail and American wigeon during migration. Based on breeding population surveys (BPOP), duck numbers appear to be increasing overall in the Potholes region of eastern Washington, while coot and Canada goose numbers remain relatively stable (Figure 12).

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 summer and fall precipitation, and how long waterbodies remain ice-free. Hunters should focus their efforts on larger perennial waterbodies unless fall rains are significant, then shallow, flooded agricultural fields become duck and goose hot spots. For more information on waterfowl hunting techniques and waterfowl hunting areas in Region 1, see the [WDFW waterfowl webpage](#).

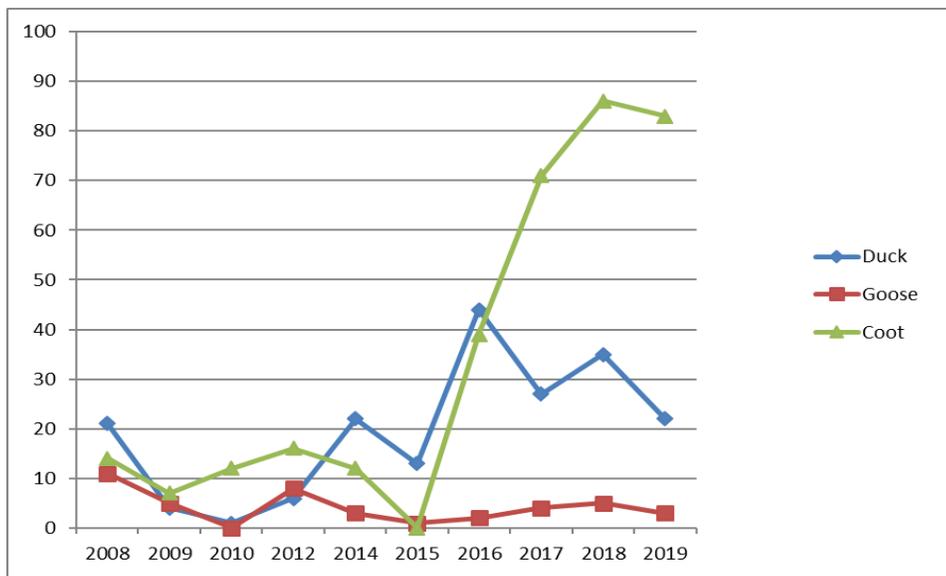


Figure 11. Total number of broods observed on District 2 brood ground survey routes.

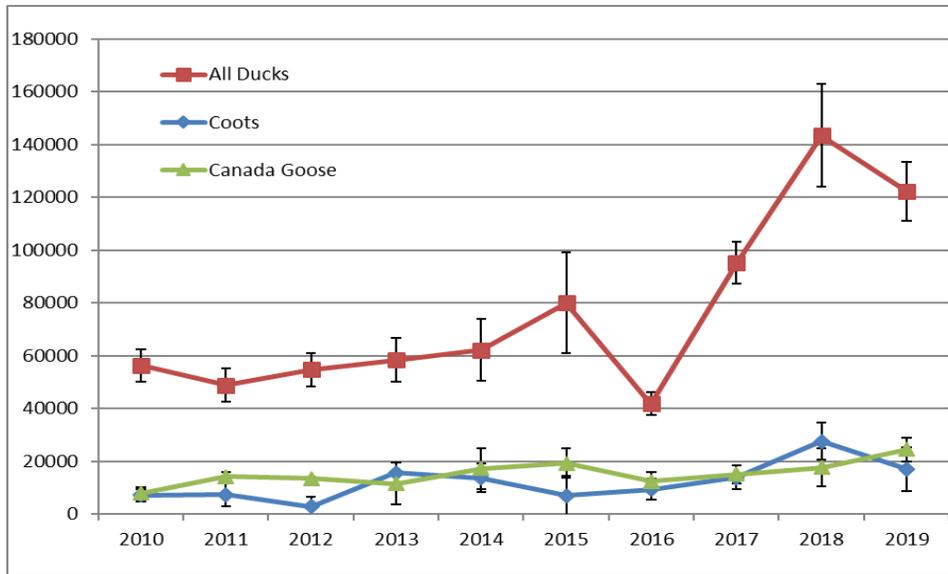


Figure 12. Waterfowl estimates from breeding population surveys for the Potholes region of eastern Washington.

## PHEASANT

Pheasant populations in the district should remain relatively similar to last year with potential for a small bump given the mild winter and if broods survived the spring showers. The extra precipitation along with relatively mild summer should increase forage and help with brood survival and recruitment. The majority of pheasant hunting occurs in Whitman County, which has about three times the harvest and about two times more hunters than Lincoln or Spokane counties.

District-wide trends in harvest show an overall decline over the past 10 years, but harvest has been up the past two years (Figure 13, top). Hunter numbers have been relatively stable (Figure 13, top), mirroring statewide trends. Days per hunter and harvest per hunter have remained relatively stable in the district, with a slight increase in both in 2018 (Figure 13, bottom). For more information on the harvest statistics see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics here: [Pheasant - Statewide and by County](#). For more information on pheasant status in Washington, see the most recent [Game Status and Trend Report](#).

Overall, pheasant populations are experiencing long-term declines. This is a trend seen across the country and it is likely associated with current cleaner farming practices and habitat loss. Examples of this include the switch to large-scale monoculture farming, removal of hedgerow (farming through small creeks beds and up into the gravel of the road), the more efficient harvest machinery leaving less waste grain, increased use of herbicides and pesticides, and more recently the use of neonicotinoid insecticides. All of these combine to reduce adult, nest, and chick survival through less food (fewer insects and forbs) and less cover, and in the case of neonicotinoids, potential direct mortality of individuals that consume the coated seeds.

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. Many private landowners have enrolled in WDFW hunter access programs recently in southeast Washington. See the Private Lands Program section below for access program acres by GMU, and the [Hunt Regulations Web map](#) for mapped locations.

For tips on pheasant hunting in general, visit this [link](#) and the “Basics of Upland Bird Hunting in Washington” publication available on the WDFW website [here](#).

WDFW will be releasing game farm-produced roosters once again this fall at the traditional release sites, which are also mapped on the Hunt Regulations Web map and the [Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program](#) publication.

A summary of upland game bird seasons can be found [here](#).

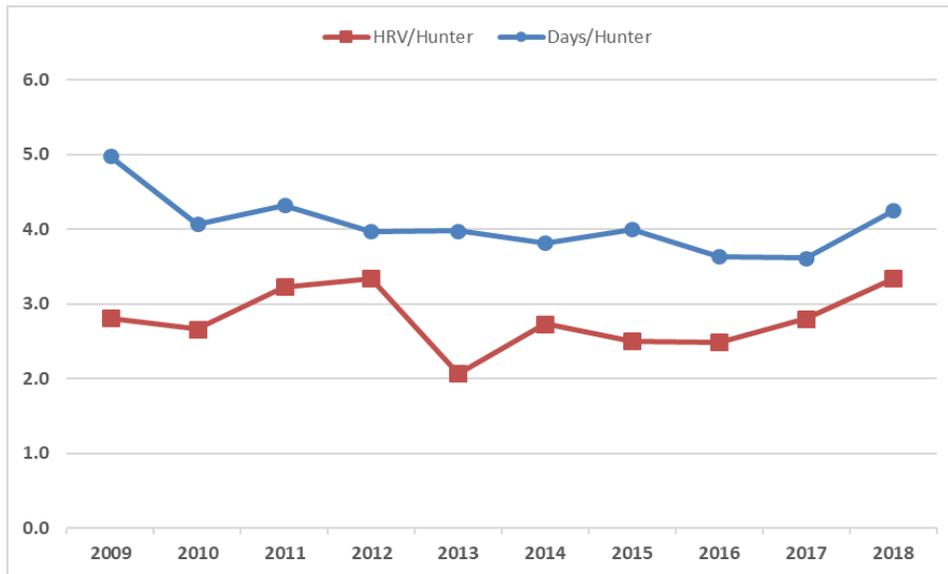
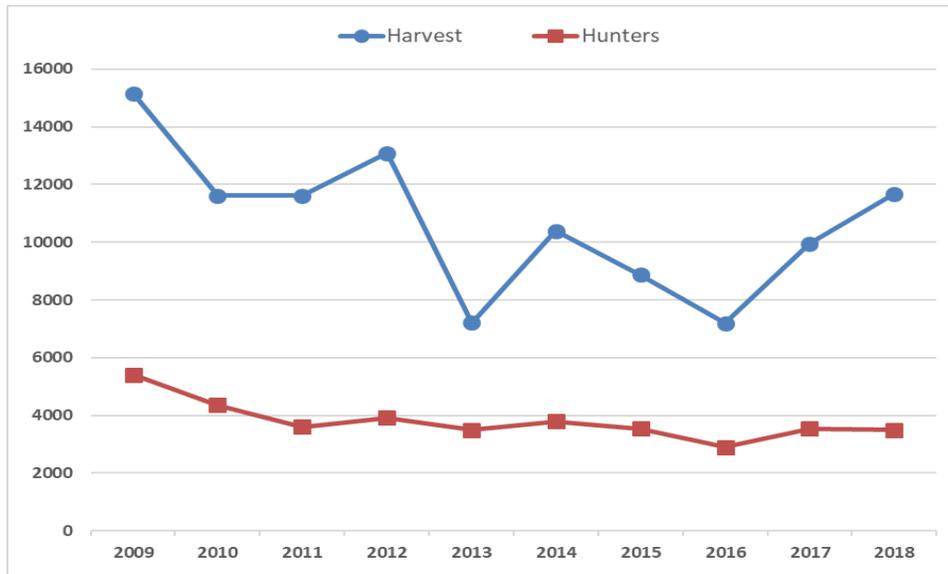


Figure 13. Top graph: Pheasant harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2009–2018. Bottom graph: Pheasant harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2009–2018.

## CHUKAR AND GRAY PARTRIDGE

Nest and early chick survival for chukar and partridge should be good this year given the mild winter and if broods survived the spring showers. The higher precipitation and relatively mild summer should increase forage and help with brood survival and recruitment. Except for the spike in 2012, harvest has been fairly stable over the past ten years, averaging 1791 birds a year (Figure 14). Harvest in 2018 was 2236, considerably above both the ten-year average and almost twice the 2017 harvest for both species. Hunter numbers increased slightly last year, and those hunters put in a lot of effort (measured by days per hunter); harvest per hunter remains relatively stable (Figure 14).

Partridge are most common in Lincoln and Whitman counties and are most often seen in, and adjacent to, agricultural fields. When hunting for partridge in Lincoln County please be sure to identify your bird before pulling the trigger. There are populations of Sage grouse and Sharp-tailed grouse in the county and both are State Listed species.

There are very few chukar in District 2. They are predominantly found along the breaks of the Snake River, where the terrain is steep and rocky with limited public access from above. There is some access via the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers land along the Snake River from below, but not all the Corps lands allow hunting. See their [website](#) for details.

For more information on gray partridge and chukar harvest, see the [Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: Statewide and by County](#), and the most recent [Game Status and Trend Report](#).

For tips on chukar and gray partridge hunting in general, see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/requirements/upland-birds> as well as the “Basics of Upland Bird Hunting in Washington” publication available on the WDFW website [here](#).

A summary of upland game bird seasons can be found [here](#).

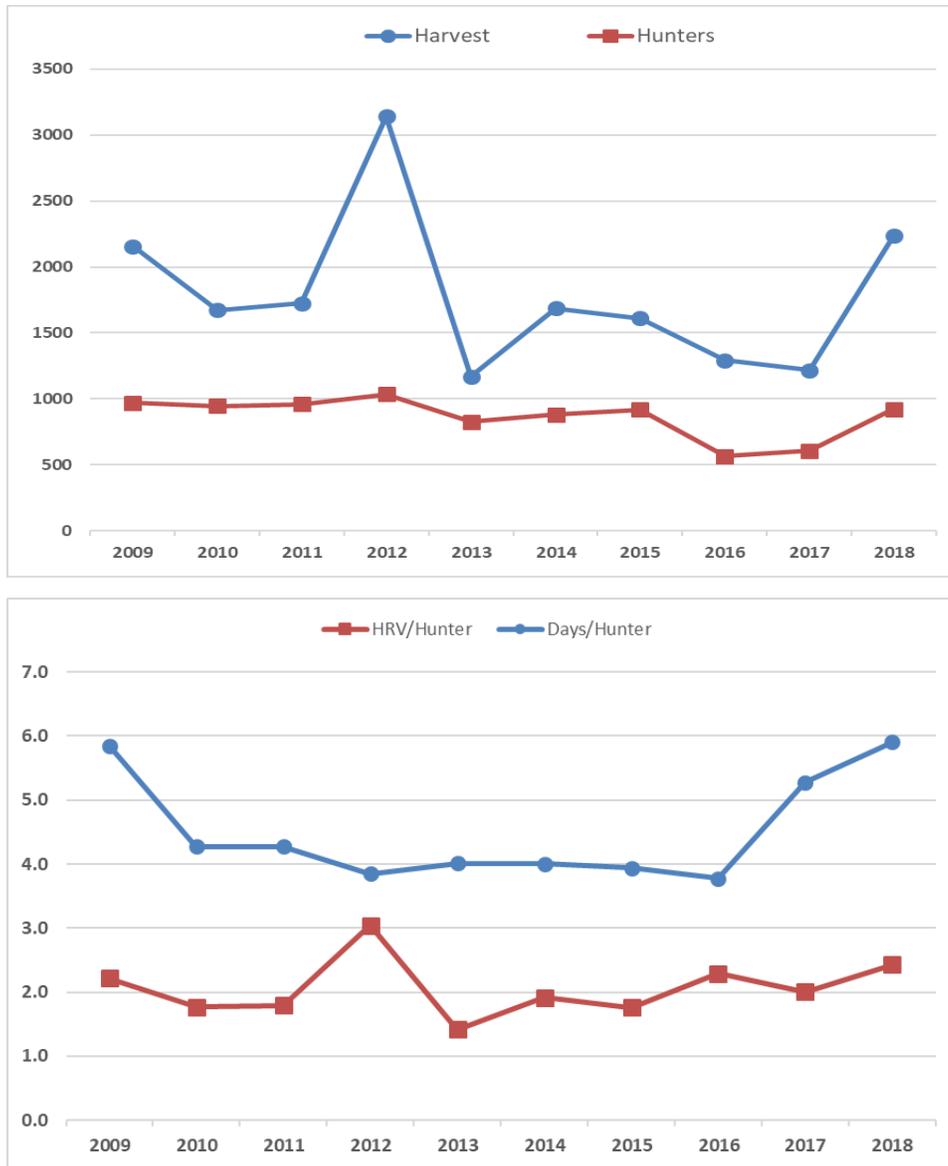


Figure 14. Top graph: Chukar and partridge harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2009–2018. Bottom graph: Chukar and partridge harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2009–2018.

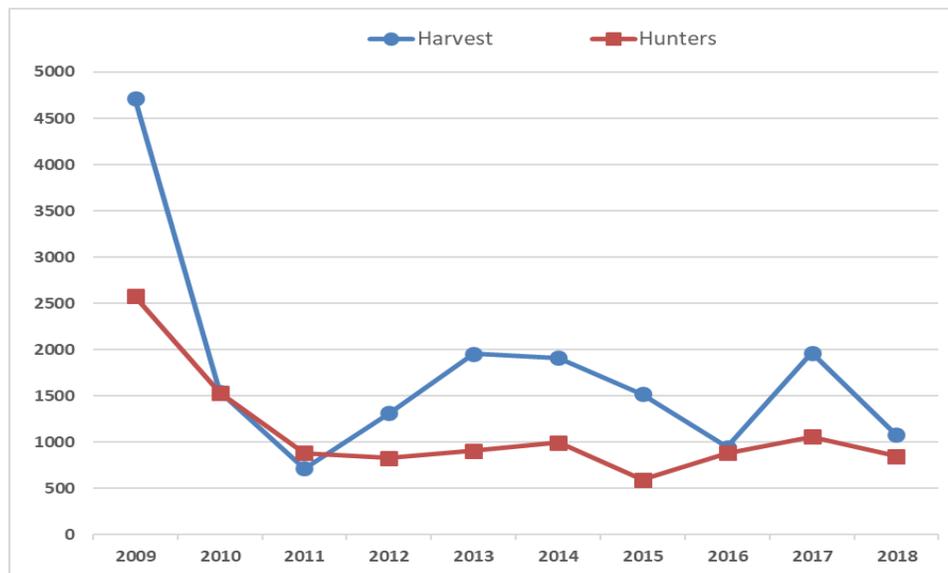
## FOREST GROUSE

Overall, forest grouse populations appear to be low but stable in District 2, with the best success found in the forested portions of GMUs 124, 127, and 133. Of the four forest grouse species, only ruffed and dusky grouse are found in District 2. Ruffed grouse are by far the most common of the two, but dusky grouse can be found in GMUs 124, 127, and 133. The mild winter combined with a wet spring and warm summer should result in good nest and brood success if hens were able to keep chicks dry during the critical first couple of weeks following hatch.

Harvest and hunter numbers are down relative to long term averages but have been relatively stable in the past eight years (Figure 15, top). Hunter effort decreased in 2018, at 3.5 days per hunter relative to the previous five-year average of five. Hunter success (harvest per hunter) was lower in 2018 than the five-year average of two birds per hunter (Figure 15, 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](#). For tips on hunting forest grouse, see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/requirements/upland-birds> as well as the “Basics of Upland Bird Hunting in Washington” publication available on the WDFW website [here](#). A summary of upland game bird seasons can be found [here](#).

To evaluate population trends and harvest changes, WDFW began collecting forest grouse wings and tails from hunters in 2016 and will continue these in 2020. Collection barrels will be distributed at various hunting access points, as well as WDFW offices throughout Region 1. You can help with this effort by dropping off a wing and tail from each forest grouse you harvest, following the instructions at the barrel. Locations of wing barrels and other information about this sampling effort can be found [here](#).



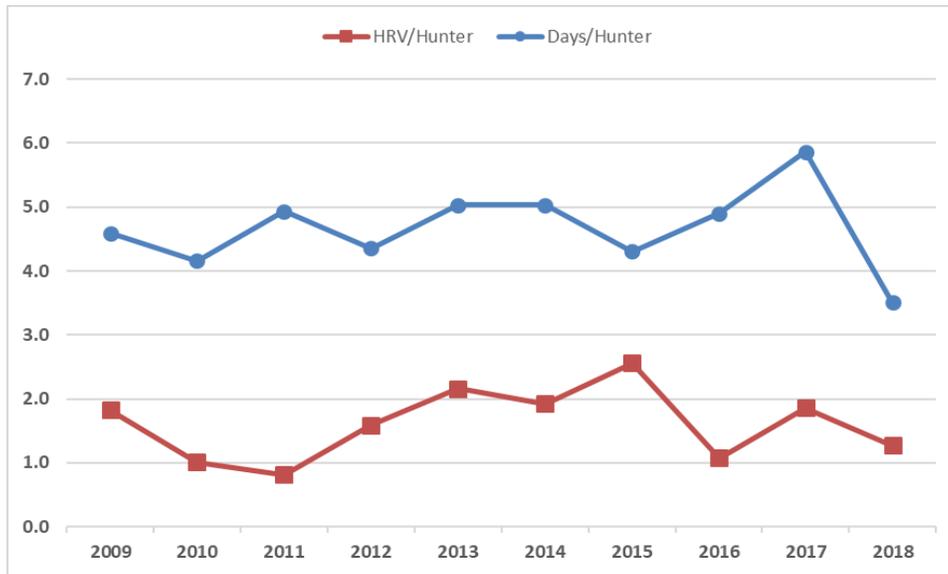


Figure 15. Top graph: Forest grouse harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2009–2018. Bottom graph: Forest grouse harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2009–2018.

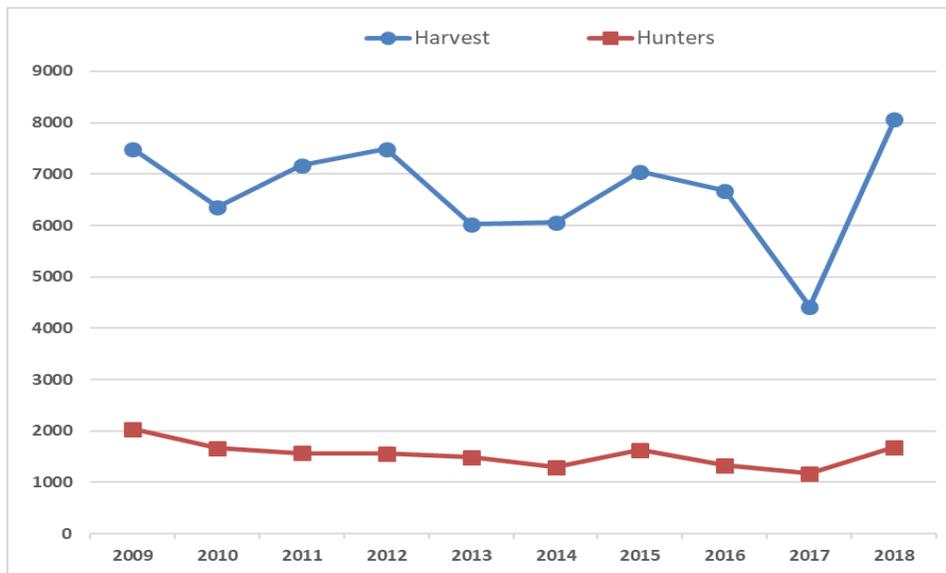
## QUAIL

The mild 2019/20 winter combined with good spring precipitation and warm summer should result in good nest and brood success if the quail were able to keep chicks dry during the critical first couple of weeks following hatch. Additionally, the relatively early spring and mild summer should allow for quail to pull off multiple clutches this year.

Harvest and hunter numbers were both up in 2018 (Figure 16, top), as were success rates (harvest/hunter) and hunter effort (days/hunter) (Figure 16, bottom). Access can be challenging, 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 here: [Quail - Statewide and by County](#). For more information on quail status in Washington, see the most recent [Game Status and Trend Report](#).

For tips on quail hunting in general, see <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/requirements/upland-birds> as well as the “Basics of Upland Bird Hunting in Washington” publication available on the WDFW website [here](#).

A summary of upland game bird seasons can be found [here](#).



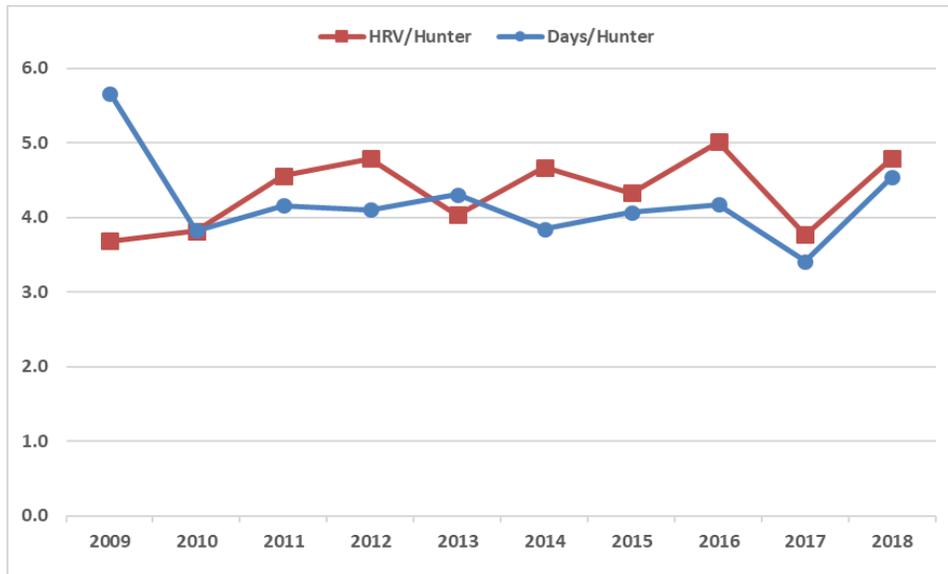


Figure 16. Top graph: Quail harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2009–2018. Bottom graph: Quail harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2009–2018.

## TURKEY

Opportunistic observations during fieldwork, public reports, and damage claims all indicate that the turkey population is doing very well in GMUs 124–133 and stable in GMUs 136–142. Hunter effort in 2019 was 8 days/kill, in line with the previous 5-year average of 9. GMU 124 has by far the most turkeys and the most turkey harvest. GMUs 130 and 133 come in a distant second for turkey harvest followed closely by GMU 127. GMUs 136, 139, & 142 have relatively few turkeys compared to these other units, but hunting can be very good in some areas within these GMUs.

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 hen season, given the extensive turkey damage complaints the department has received from this area. Many private landowners have enrolled in WDFW hunter access programs recently in southeast Washington. See the Private Lands Program section below for access program acres by GMU, and the [Hunt Regulations Web map](#) for mapped locations.

For more information on turkey harvest in Washington, see the [Turkey Game Harvest Statistics](#) and the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.

For more information and tips on hunting turkey in Washington check out [“The Basics of Turkey Hunting In Washington”](#) publication from WDFW.

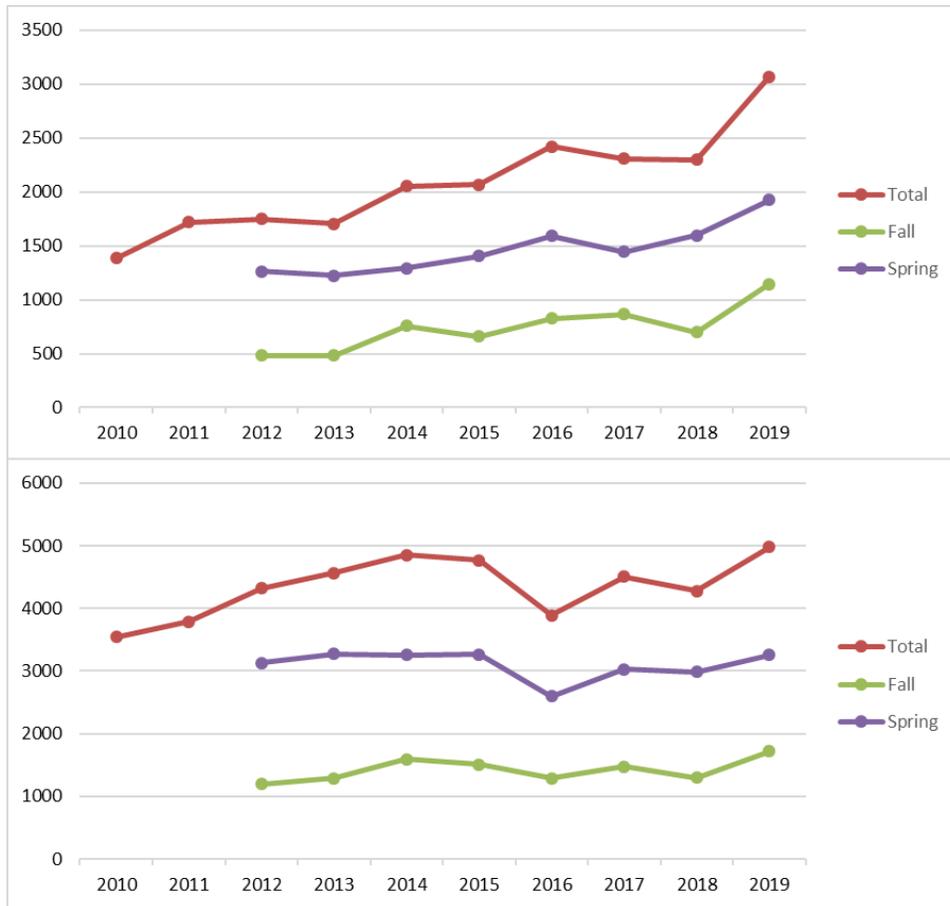
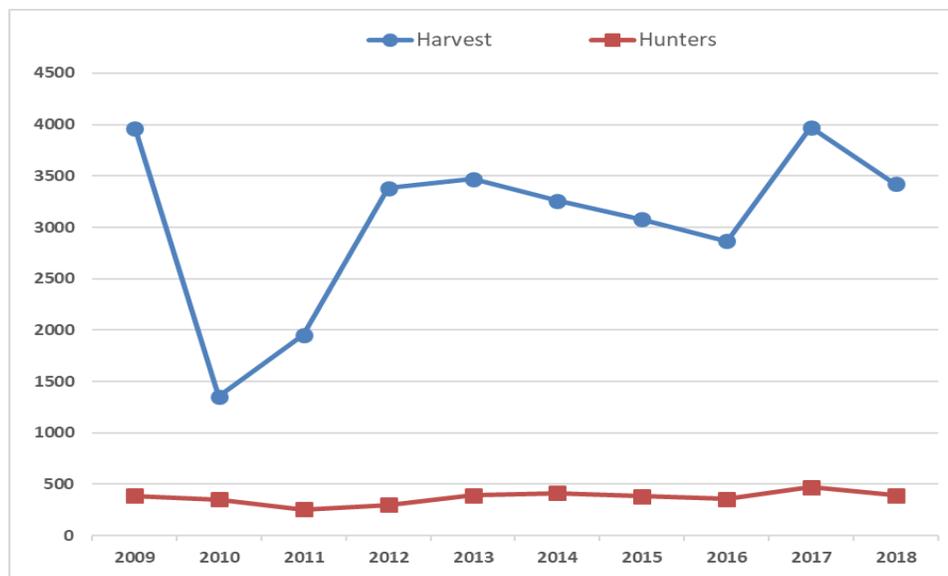


Figure 17. **Top graph:** Turkey harvest (spring, fall, & total) for District 2 from 2010–2019. **Bottom graph:** Turkey hunters (spring, fall, & total) for District 2 from 2010–2019.

## 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 have been highly variable (Figure 18, top), with harvest averaging about 3000 birds a year by about 370 hunters. Hunter effort (days per hunter) has been slowly increasing the past ten years, and harvest per hunter has been fairly stable over the past five years (Figure 18, bottom). 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 invaded most of eastern Washington. It can be hunted and trapped with a license year-round. Eurasian collared doves are commonly found in and around towns and around grain elevators.

For more information on doves, see the Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: [2018 Statewide and by County](#), and the most recent Game Status and Trend Report.



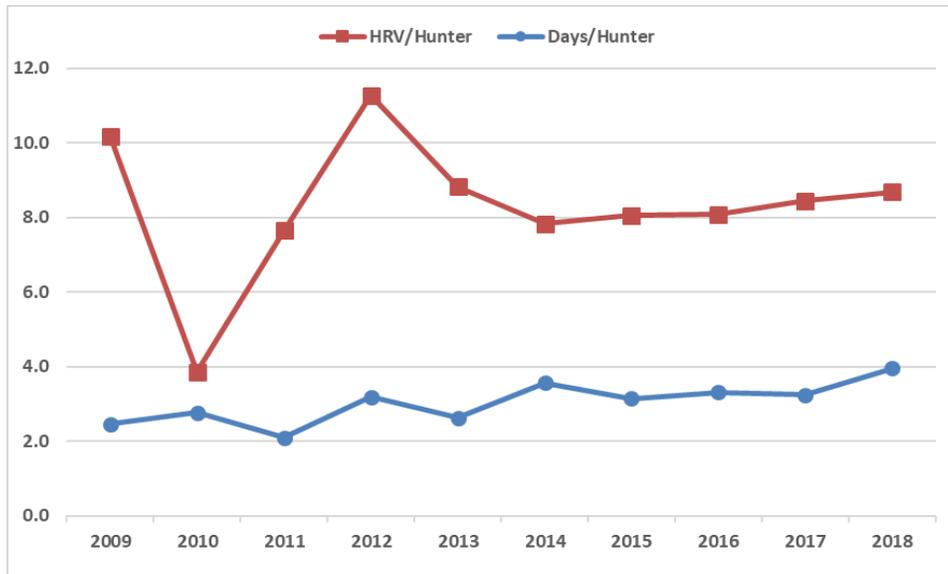


Figure 18. Top graph: Dove harvest and hunter numbers for District 2 from 2009–2018. Bottom graph: Dove harvest and days hunted per hunter for District 2 from 2009–2018.

## MAJOR PUBLIC LANDS

The majority of the district is privately owned. However, WDFW and BLM own about 60,000 acres in the center of Lincoln County and about 15,000 acres in northwest Whitman County. For more information on BLM property, or to order maps, please visit the [BLM](#) website. To hunt on WDFW wildlife areas, you will need to display a WDFW Vehicle Access Pass (free with hunting or fishing license purchase) or a Discover Pass. For more information on WDFW lands, see the [wildlife areas webpage](#).

The Washington Department of Natural Resources maintains land 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](#).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also maintains lands associated with the Snake River open to the public for recreational purposes. Not all of these lands are open to hunting, so hunters will want to research beforehand. More information can be found [here](#).

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 and conservation areas in Spokane County, are open to public access, but NOT to hunting.

Several private timber companies allow hunting in Spokane County. The largest of these is Inland Empire Paper (IEP), which does allow vehicular access but will close gates to full-sized rigs once there has been enough rain to soften the roads (typically in late October or early November). IEP does charge an access fee, but it is reasonable and comes in daily and annual versions. For more information on IEP and maps of their property please visit their website (<https://iepco.com/forestry/rec-use/>). Hancock is another large timber company in Spokane County, and at this time has signed a contract with WDFW to allow non-motorized access for free to our hunters, in exchange WDFW Enforcement monitors their property. Please respect the agreement or this access could be lost. Hancock does not supply a map of their property; we recommend hunters use the Spokane County Assessor's online parcel map to identify Hancock ownership or invest in third-party software (e.g. OnX maps).

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](#) website).

## 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 the agreement are well known by WDFW Enforcement.

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). As of July 2020, the total accessible acreage in District 2 is 5,980 acres in Spokane County, 47,376 in Lincoln County, and 91,725 in Whitman County. A summary of these acres by GMU and the program are in Table 4 below. The LHP in GMU 130 is managed by the Columbia Plateau Wildlife Management Association (CPWMA). Access to the LHP is only available through WDFW special permitting and CPWMA raffle permit hunts (see WDFW's 2020 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 [Hunt Regulations Web map](#) and the [WDFW Private Lands Access](#) page.

Table 4. Acres of private land enrolled in WDFW access programs by GMU in District 2 as of July 2020.

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)	
	Properties	Acres	Properties	Acres	Properties	Acres	Properties	Acres	Properties	Acres
124 Mt Spokane	1	146	0	0	2	370	0	0	0	0
127 Mica Peak	3	2,613	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
130 Cheney	1	1,800	0	0	0	0	1	2,852	0	0
133 Roosevelt	18	20,788	1	612	1	2052	0	0	0	0
136 Harrington	12	16,658	7	7,266	0	0	0	0	0	0
139 Steptoe	15	13,989	6	7,386	34	29,099	0	0	0	0
142 Almota	12	16,666	1	336	20	22,457	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	62	72,660	15	15,600	57	53,978	1	2,852	0	0