



SPENCER J. COX
Governor

DEIDRE M. HENDERSON
Lieutenant Governor

State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

JOEL FERRY
Executive Director

Division of Wildlife Resources

J. SHIRLEY
Division Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Utah Wildlife Board / Regional Advisory Councils

FROM: Dax Mangus, Big Game Coordinator

DATE: April 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Overview of 2023 buck deer permit recommendations

The attached tables summarize the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' recommended permit allocations for the 2023 buck deer hunts. We've made these recommendations after evaluating 2022 harvest information, conducting post-hunt assessments of herd composition and monitoring winter conditions and survival.

The 2023 buck deer permit recommendations will help us achieve or maintain the objectives detailed in Utah's mule deer management plan for harvest size, animal quality and hunting opportunity. For specific information about how mule deer are managed, please refer to <https://wildlife.utah.gov/> and use the search field to find the statewide management plan for mule deer.

Below is a summary of the **2023 buck deer permit recommendations**:

- 1) For general-season deer hunting, we manage a total of 31 hunting units. There are 21 units with a post-season objective of 18-20 bucks per 100 does and 10 units with an objective of 15-17 bucks per 100 does. For 2023, we are recommending permit decreases on 8 units, no changes on 6 units and increases on the remaining 17 units. Statewide, we are recommending 71,600 general-season permits, which is 1,475 fewer permits than the 73,075 general-season permits issued in 2022.
- 2) Utah's premium limited-entry deer units — Henry Mtns and Paunsaugunt — are managed for older bucks. (The management objective specifies that at least 40% of the harvested bucks should be 5 years old or older). The 3-year average for bucks in the harvest that are 5 years old or older is 77% for the Henry Mtns unit and 65% for the Paunsaugunt unit. For 2023, we recommend no changes in permits on the Henry Mtns (49 permits) and Paunsaugunt (135 permits).
- 3) Premium limited-entry deer units are managed for 40-55 bucks per 100 does post-season. For 2023, we recommend no management buck permits on the Henry Mtns and an increase in management buck permits on the Paunsaugunt (increasing from 15 permits in 2022 to 20 permits in 2023). We recommend no

change to the Paunsaugunt cactus buck permits for 2023 (remaining at a total of 30 permits).

- 4) We recommend five permits per unit on the three handgun, archery, muzzleloader and shotgun (HAMS) units, for a total of 15 permits.
- 5) We recommend 25 additional limited-entry deer permits, increasing from 645 permits last year to 670 permits in 2023.
- 6) We recommend no change to total number of limited-entry, late-season muzzleloader permits issued for general-season deer units. The recommendation would remain at 355 permits.
- 7) We recommend an increase of 10 late-season muzzleloader deer permits for the chronic wasting disease (CWD) targeted hunt on the South Slope, Myton hunt unit. This hunt had 20 permits in 2022 and would increase to 30 permits in 2023.

Please see the buck deer hunt recommendations in the hunt tables for a detailed breakdown of recommended permits and how they are allocated among weapon types and residents/non-residents.

Biologists continue to monitor harsh winter conditions and impacts to deer survival in the northern part of the state. In some parts of northern Utah, the winter of 2022–23 has been severe. Biologists have used on-the-ground observations and GPS collar survival data to anticipate over-winter deer survival. Prolonged snow and cold — as well as deer dietary transitions in the month of April — can be difficult for animals in poor condition. Although biologists have taken this into consideration, if deer survival worsens beyond anticipated levels, the DWR may re-evaluate its general-season deer proposals and come to the May 4 Utah Wildlife Board meeting with revised permit recommendations.