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MEMORANDUM

TO: Utah Wildlife Board / Regional Advisory Councils

FROM: Dax Mangus, Big Game Coordinator

DATE: March 27, 2024

SUBJECT: Overview of 2024 buck deer permit recommendations

The attached tables summarize the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' recommended permit allocations for the 2024 buck deer hunts. We've made these recommendations after evaluating 2023 harvest information, conducting post-hunt assessments of herd composition and monitoring winter conditions and survival.

The 2024 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 visit <https://wildlife.utah.gov/biggame> and scroll down the page (to "Statewide big game management plans") to find the Utah Mule Deer Statewide Management Plan.

Below is a summary of the **2024 buck deer permit recommendations**:

- 1) Utah has 31 general-season buck deer 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. We are recommending permit decreases on three units, no change to permit numbers on 10 units and increases on the remaining 18 units. Statewide, we are recommending 71,525 general-season buck deer permits, which is 6,800 more permits than the 64,725 permits approved last year. Much of recommended increase comes from southern Utah, where we have seen two consecutive years of high survival and growth along with high post-season buck/doe ratios.
- 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 79% for the Henry Mtns unit and 66% for the Paunsaugunt unit. We recommend no changes to permit numbers 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. We use management buck and cactus buck hunts to help manage the buck-to-doe ratio. We recommend no management buck permits on the Henry Mtns and an increase from 20 to 28 management buck permits on the Paunsaugunt. We recommend no change to the Paunsaugunt cactus buck permits (remaining at a total of 30 permits).
- 4) We recommend five permits per unit on the three handgun, archery, muzzleloader, shotgun, straight-walled rifle (HAMSS) units, for a total of 15 permits.
- 5) We recommend 38 additional limited-entry deer permits, increasing from 664 permits last year to 702 permits.
- 6) We recommend an increase of four limited-entry, late-season muzzleloader permits issued for general-season deer units. The recommendation would increase from 355 permits last year to 359 permits this year, with increases coming primarily from units in southern Utah and decreases coming from some units in northern Utah.
- 7) We recommend a decrease of 10 late-season muzzleloader deer permits for the hunt to target bucks with chronic wasting disease on the South Slope, Myton unit. This hunt had 30 permits last year and would decrease to 20 permits.

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.