



WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

5400 Bishop Blvd. Cheyenne, WY 82006

Phone: (307) 777-4600 Fax: (307) 777-4699

Web site: <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>

GOVERNOR
MATTHEW H. MEAD

DIRECTOR
SCOTT TALBOTT

COMMISSIONERS
AARON CLARK – President
MIKE HEALY – Vice President
RICHARD KLOUDA
FRED LINDZEY
T. CARRIE LITTLE
ED MIGNERY
CHARLES PRICE

7 June 2012

Co-Chairman Jason Fearneyhough and Co-Chairman Scott Talbott
Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board
2219 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

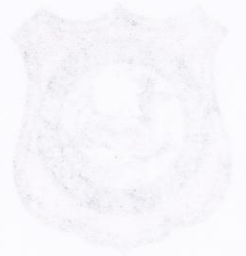
Dear Co-Chairmen Fearneyhough and Talbott,

The intent of this letter is to provide the Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board (ADMB) with an update for the ***“Identification of mule deer seasonal ranges to maximize predator control benefits in the Platte Valley herd unit,”*** project. This project is part of a multi-faceted mule deer research project which began in July of 2010. The research is being conducted in joint by Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), and the University of Wyoming’s Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. The primary funding source for this research is the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. During fiscal year 2011, ADMB granted \$22,000, towards capture and GPS radio-collaring of mule deer for this project to delineate seasonal ranges in order to maximize any future predator control benefit.

In January of 2011, 70 mule deer were captured in the Platte Valley mule deer herd unit using a helicopter/net-gun capture technique. Each mule deer was fitted with a radio-collar (GPS collars on 50 does, VHF collars on 15 bucks and 5 does) and subsequently released. The 50 GPS radio-collars will record doe locations at 2 hour intervals until April of 2013, when the collars are programmed to drop off for collection. The data collected from the GPS radio-collars will allow managers to identify specific areas, and habitat types, selected by the does for fawning in the Platte Valley herd unit.

The radio-collared mule deer have also been invaluable in evaluating a mule deer abundance estimation technique known as the sightability survey. Sightability surveys have now been conducted 3 times in Platte Valley herd unit. We believe this technique to be a more accurate method of estimating mule deer numbers, and has recently adopted this technique as the method which will be used to produce future abundance estimates in this herd unit, and perhaps in other mule deer herd units as well.

During the first year of this project 19 mortalities occurred. This represented 27% of the radio-collared deer and was assumed to be representative for the herd unit. We considered the observed mortality level to have been higher than normal, and attributed the increase to the long and severe winter of 2010-2011.



Co-Chairmen Fearneyhough and Talbott

7 June 2012

Page 2

The causes of death were the following: undetermined (10); malnutrition (4); mountain lion predation (2); wounding loss (2); and legal harvest (1). The 19 radio-collars were redeployed on "new" mule deer in February of 2012. The GPS radio-collars will all drop off for data retrieval in April of 2013.

Carbon County Predator Management District, in cooperation with USDA/Wildlife Services, and WGFD, has presented a grant application to the ADMB for the development of a coyote removal project in the Platte Valley mule deer herd unit. This project centers on using the habitat use data from the radio-collared mule deer to target coyote removal efforts in parturition areas. This removal project would occur in those areas during late spring and early summer months, when mule deer fawns are most vulnerable.

We thank the Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board for their financial support of this project. The Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board's contributions to this project have been recognized in WGFD presentations and publications regarding the progress of this important mule deer research.

Sincerely,

Will Schultz
Saratoga Wildlife Biologist

WS/ws