

**Meeting Date:** July 24, 2024

**Agenda Item No. 9**

**Agenda Item:** Mature Mule Deer Harvest Management    **Bureau Chief Approval:** SR

**Prepared by:** Eric Freeman, Regional Wildlife Biologist  
Toby Boudreau, Statewide Deer and Elk Coordinator

**Background:**

The Department manages most of Idaho's mule deer populations to provide abundant hunting and harvest opportunities to sportsmen. This management strategy is based on the results of repeated public opinion surveys and is reaffirmed in our mule deer management plan. However, a portion of Idaho's deer hunters disagree with that direction and instead feel that management should be focused more on harvesting mature individuals and less on opportunity. Department staff and Commissioners hear frequently from "trophy" hunters who would like the Department to employ more conservative harvest management strategies.

This presentation will build off the harvest management presentation that Eric Freeman gave at the November 2023 Commission meeting and will also become part of the Department's State of Deer and Elk informational video series. This presentation will focus on management for mature mule deer; how it can be accomplished, and the costs involved in providing this type of opportunity.

The goal of the State of Deer and Elk video series is to help inform the public about many of the factors involved in the management of deer and elk and to increase transparency of the data the Department collects and how the Department uses it to manage deer and elk populations.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

Idaho Code 36-104(2) grants authority to the Commission to determine when an open season may be declared for the taking of wildlife. The Department is charged with preserving, protecting, perpetuating, and managing the state's wildlife (IC 36-103). IDAPA 13.01.08 establishes rules regarding the take of big game animals.

**Public Involvement Process:**

This agenda item is for information only.

**Justification:**

This presentation is informational for the Commission and a version of the presentation will become part of the Department's State of Deer and Elk informational video series to share with the public.

**Staff Recommendation:**

This agenda item is for Commission information. No action is requested.