

**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS
HUNTING SEASON / QUOTA CHANGE SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Species: White-tailed Deer
Region: 1
Hunting District: 122
Year: 2019

- 1. Describe the proposed season / quotas changes and provide a summary of prior history (i.e., prior history of permits, season types, etc.).**

Eliminate the either-sex white-tailed deer season the first week and the either-sex white-tailed deer season valid on private land only the last week. Establish a buck only season for the general five-week hunting season.

- 2. What is the objective of this proposed change? This could be a specific harvest amount or resulting population level or number of game damage complaints, etc.**

The previous two winters have been long and hard with deep snow and cold temperatures which has resulted in decreased deer recruitment. Hunters have expressed concerns about the number of deer and the lack of adult bucks in HD 122. Buck harvest decreased 10% in 2017 and I expect a further decline from the 2018 season. The total number of HD 122 white-tailed deer checked at our Highway 2 check station outside of Kalispell was down almost 50% this past season. In addition, the percentage of bucks from HD 122 vs total bucks checked at the check station dropped from 19% in 2017 to only 15% in 2018.

- 3. How will the success of this proposal be measured? This could be annual game or harvest surveys, game damage complaints, etc.**

Success will be measured by the annual big game harvest survey conducted by the Department to document a substantial decrease in antlerless harvest.

- 4. What is the current population's status in relation to the management objectives? (i.e., state management objectives from management plan if applicable; provide current and prior years of population survey, harvest, or other pertinent information).**

This recommendation is based on the previous two years of severe winter conditions with heavy snow and cold temperatures which have contributed to two years of poor recruitment.

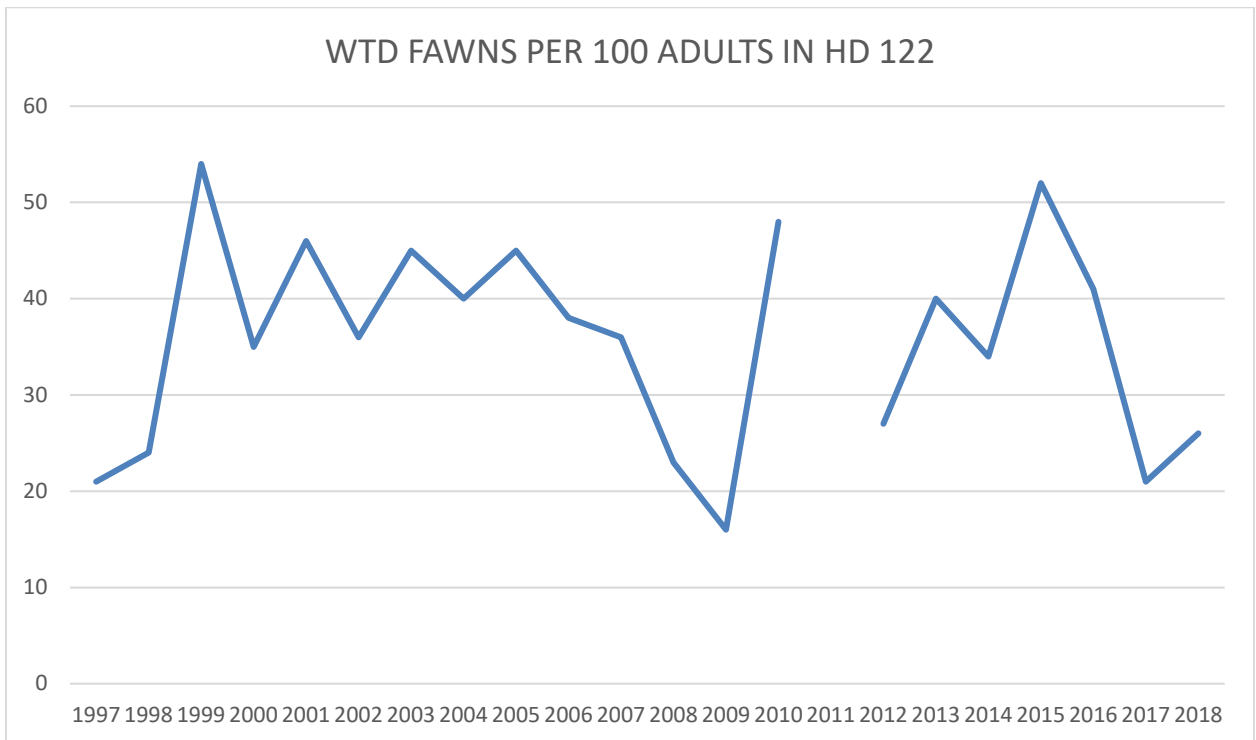
The following tables represent WTD surveys in hunting district 122 showing the decreased recruitment as represented by fawns:100 adults.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Adults</u>	<u>Fawns</u>	<u>Uncl.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Fa:100</u> <u>Ad</u>
1997	38	8	0	46	21
1998	42	10	22	74	24
1999	56	30	5	91	54
2000	43	15	8	66	35
2001	33	15	8	56	46
2002	115	41	27	183	36
2003	44	20	21	85	45
2004	40	16	15	71	40

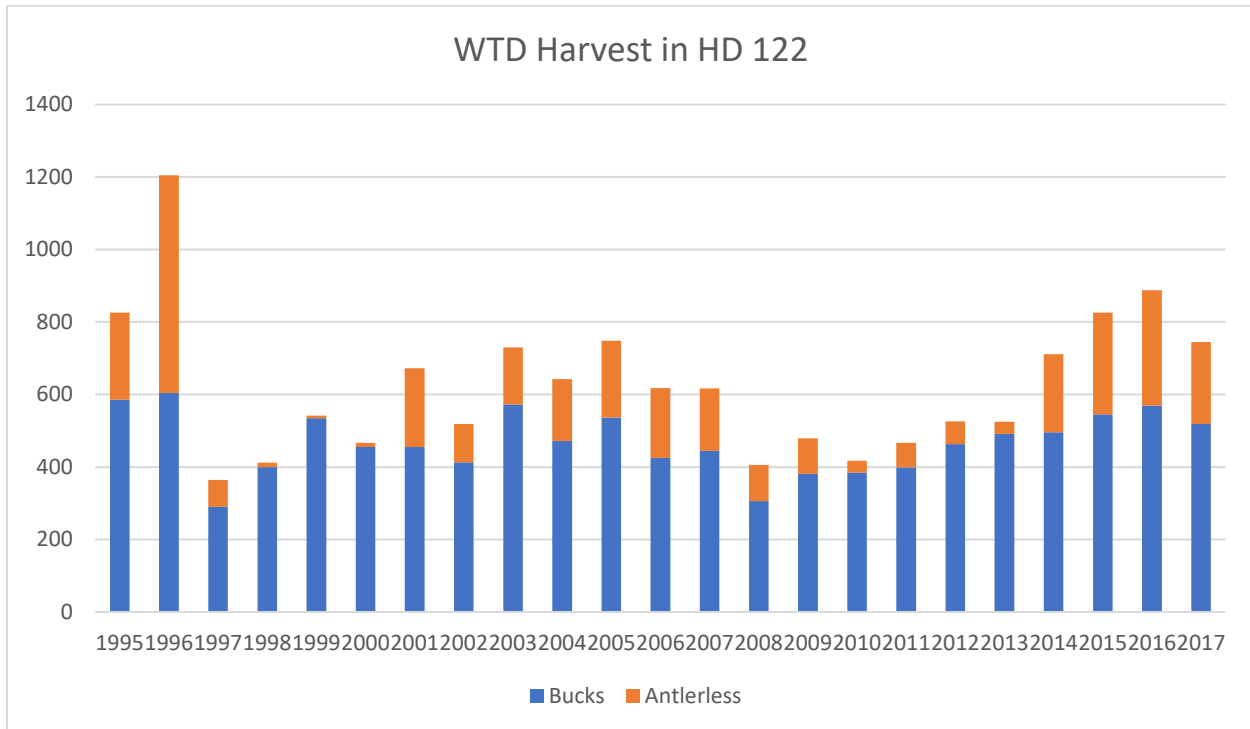
2005	22	10	5	37	45
2006	85	32	17	134	38
2007	58	21	11	90	36
2008	78	18	5	101	23
2009	131	21	8	160	16
2010	63	30	16	109	48
2011	No Survey				
2012	128	34	8	170	27
2013	89	36	2	127	40
2014	164	55	17	236	34
2015	50	26	2	78	52
2016	51	21	14	86	41
2017	58	12	8	78	21
2018	80	21	5	106	26

10 yr Avg **89** **27** **9** **125** **33**

While the total numbers can be deceiving, because of the timing of the survey and the advancement of green-up conditions, what is most important is the decreasing fawn recruitment in this hunting district.



The graph below shows a moderate decline in the buck harvest in HD 122 of about 10% during the 2017 season. However, the total number of HD 122 white-tailed deer checked at the Highway 2 check station in 2018 showed a dramatic reduction of around 50% and the total number of bucks checked decreased 37% from the previous year. If this trend holds, and I believe it will, we can expect a sharp decline in the total number of bucks harvested during the 2018 hunting season.



5. Provide information related to any weather/habitat factors, public or private land use or resident and nonresident hunting opportunity that have relevance to this change (i.e., habitat security, hunter access, vegetation surveys, weather index, snow conditions, and temperature / precipitation information).

Hunter access is great for this hunting districts with a high percentage of public land and private timber company land that is open to hunting.

6. Briefly describe the contacts you have made with individual sportsmen or landowners, public groups or organizations regarding this proposal and indicate their comments (both pro and con).

On the night of January 10th, the region one wildlife staff held a public meeting to discuss deer management and hunting regulations in Trout Creek. Of the 40 participants, 18 wanted to see this change, 3 wanted to see the regulations stay the same and 19 had no opinion.

Submitted by: Bruce Sterling, Area Wildlife Biologist

Date: 11 January 2019

Approved: _____
Regional Supervisor / Date

Disapproved / Modified by: _____
Name / Date

Reason for Modification: