

PROPOSED AMENDMENT by Commissioner Brooke (Region 3)

Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife commission to approve the following adjusted boundary descriptions for deer-elk hunting districts 313 and 314, that is intended to adjust the deer-elk hunting district 314-313 boundary that extends west of the Yellowstone River, to the Yellowstone River.

New deer-elk HD 313 boundary description (with GDS edits)

313 Gardiner: That portion of Park County lying within the following-described boundary: Beginning at the intersection of the Yellowstone River and the north boundary of Yellowstone National Park near Gardiner, then north along said boundary to the Yellowstone River near its junction with Reese creek, then north along said river to its junction with Sixmile Creek, then up said creek to the intersection with State Highway 540 (East River Road), then northeasterly on said highway to the intersection of Sixmile Creek Road, then southerly on said road to the intersection with the westerly branch of Sixmile Creek in the NE1/4 Section 29, T6S, R8E, then southerly up said creek to the North Fork of Sixmile Creek, then easterly up the North Fork of Sixmile Creek to Monitor Peak, then southeasterly along the Mill-Hellroaring-Bear Creek divide to Ash Mountain, then southerly along the divide between Crevice and Cottonwood Creek and Hellroaring Creek to the Yellowstone National Park boundary, then westerly along said boundary to its intersection with the Yellowstone River, the point of beginning. NOTE: "No Shooting Zone" posted around the town of Gardiner.

New deer-elk HD 314 boundary description (with GDS edits)

314 Upper Yellowstone West: Those portions of Gallatin and Park Counties lying within the following-described boundary: Beginning at the junction of the Yellowstone River and Interstate 90, then westerly along said interstate to the Trail Creek Road, then southeasterly up said road to the Goose Creek Road, then southerly on said road to its intersection with Gallatin-Yellowstone River divide, then southerly down said divide to Yellowstone National Park boundary, then southeasterly along said boundary to the intersection of the Yellowstone River, near its junction with Reese creek, then northerly down said river to its junction with Interstate 90, the point of beginning.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSE

HD 313 elk telemetry data collected between 2007–2009 indicate that the elk population routinely crosses the Yellowstone River. The current boundaries of HD 313 are intended to encompass the winter range of the Northern Yellowstone elk population and use the same management structure on both sides of the Yellowstone River so that the herd is managed as a single unit. Adjacent elk herds that occupy the current HD 314 primarily winter in HD 314. This proposed amendment, while unlikely to have substantive biological effects on elk populations, would subject the HD 313 elk population to two different season structures. One result could be a reduction in the current low bull:cow ratios in HD 313 and reduced elk presence in the southern portion of HD 314.

If the amendment is adopted, the department recommends reducing HD 313 youth B licenses to 25 and the B licenses for hunters of any age to 25, with no change to the proposed quota range.