

**MULE DEER WORKING GROUP**  
**Directors Report - Mid-winter WAFWA**  
Corpus Christi, TX January 4-5, 2014



**Mule Deer Fact Sheets**

Six Fact Sheets (a-f) are completed. A seventh has been through internal and external review by the MDWG and subject matter experts and is being finalized. We also have 4 additional DRAFT Fact Sheets (h-k) we are sharing with you at this meeting. These are the drafts and are now being fully reviewed by the MDWG. We traditionally share the rough first drafts with the directors at meetings to allow for comments and guidance from the very beginning of the development of our documents. The remaining titles have designated authors and will be the next topics we work on. Finalized sheets are posted on our website in PDF format and we have a limited number of hardcopies on quality paper for situations such as public meetings or as mail-outs where digital copies are not as useful. An additional printing of several hundred per Fact Sheet per agency is being discussed with financial support from Federal Premium Ammunition. The Mule Deer Foundation did all graphic layout for us free of charge and is publishing one fact sheet in each issue of their magazine.

- a. *Predation COMPLETED*
- b. *Winter Feedings COMPLETED*
- c. *Antler Restrictions COMPLETED*
- d. *Elk/Mule Deer COMPLETED*
- e. *Carrying Capacity COMPLETED*
- f. *Highways COMPLETED*
- g. *Doe Harvest (in external review)*
- h. *Urban Deer (draft out for MDWG review)*
- i. *Diseases and Parasites of Mule Deer (draft from Wildlife Health Committee out for MDWG review)*
- j. *Poaching (draft out for MDWG review)*
- k. *Translocation (draft out for MDWG review)*
- l. *Winter Range Disturbance*
- m. *Shed antler hunting*
- n. *Fencing*
- o. *Migration Corridors*
- p. *Immunocontraception*
- q. *Forestry Practices*

**Managing Deer-Vehicle Collisions Document**

One of the current projects the MDWG is working on is a document that will inform practitioners about this increasingly important issue, give an overview of the research that's been done, and provide suggested solutions based on what has worked on the ground. There is a lot of new information available in widely scattered documents and it is hard for those working on this issue to have the latest information. Our handbook will focus on pre-planning, implementation of solutions, and important post-project monitoring. This document is just taking shape and we

are providing a partial rough draft so you can see how it is progressing and offer comments and guidance. Brian Wakeling (AZ) is coordinating the effort and will continue to keep you apprised of its progress.

### **Rangewide Mule and Black-tailed Deer Status**

Gerry Kuzyk (BC) compiled a summary of the current status of mule and black-tailed deer from each representative of the 23 member agencies. This was provided at the summer meeting in Omaha and is on the MDWG website. Since that meeting we submitted a revised version to the Proceedings of the Deer/Elk Workshop (2013) in order to get this document published in a location that can be cited and more easily found by others. The document saw extensive peer-review and the final draft was recently submitted to be part of the published proceedings.

### **Rangewide Analysis of Mule Deer Survival Data**

Thousands of deer radiocollars have been deployed throughout the West in the last 2 decades. These data are valuable to site-specific research projects, but when pooled together over large areas this information can reveal some very interesting trends and relationships not seen at the local level or on one study area. Similar to the paper by Unsworth et al. (1999) where 3 states' survival data were pooled, the MDWG is working to update and expand this effort to investigate survival through time under different environmental conditions and see how survival differs across the landscape. This information could help inform how we survey deer herds and provide important input data for population models. George Pauley (MT) has coordinated with Mark Hebblewhite, Justin Gude, and Paul Lukacs about conducting such an analysis. Paul Lukacs developed a proposal to conduct this analysis. The MDWG discussed this proposal and agreed this would be very valuable and we will be working to raise the funding for this effort. Something similar is currently being done for elk in the West. This is no simple undertaking and will require some funds. We are trying to raise all we can through outside sources, but may ask each agency to help get his done.

### **Mule Deer Video**

The 45-minute mule deer production "*Saving the Icon of the West*" was produced with the help of the MDWG is currently available on-line in its entirety. Also, as promised, all the raw footage from the production is available to WAFWA member agencies. Arizona Game and Fish currently has all footage from Orion Entertainment and will share it with any agency that requests it. Agencies only need to supply a 1 TB (Terabyte) external harddrive to transfer the material. This material will be available on a harddrive at our next MDWG meeting and can be transferred to anyone bringing their own 1 TB harddrive. Or, agencies can purchase one and mail it with a simple request to:

Carol Lynde  
Video Production Specialist II  
Information Education – AV  
Arizona Game and Fish Department  
5000 W. Carefree Highway  
Phoenix, AZ 85086-5000

### **Reseeding Guidance Document**

The MDWG is developing a guide to reseeding and restoring mule deer habitat in the 7 ecoregions we have defined. There are opportunities to increase the usefulness of seed mixes for mule deer and other wildlife without jeopardizing soil stabilization needs. This will also help suppliers of seed decide what they should be growing and supplying to agencies. We have received feedback from federal partners and others that this will be very useful, but it is a very complex topic. We have no intention to try to produce a comprehensive document that will serve as a cookbook for reseeding - that would be impossible across all soil types, vegetation types, climates, etc. We intend to produce a document that will offer consistent overall guidance while directing on-the-ground practitioners to local experts and resources that have the experience and knowledge in that environment.

### **Website**

Jim has updated the website with the range-wide status report, Wallmo Award contact info, Deer/Elk Workshop notice, Fact Sheets, and research priorities.

### **Stewardship Project Areas**

The MDWG is assisting the Mule Deer Foundation to identify areas where match dollars are needed for landscape-scale projects. The MDWG representatives are providing the Mule Deer Foundation with at least 3 areas in their state/province that are high priority areas.

### **North American Mule Deer Conservation Plan MOU**

The North American Mule Deer Conservation Plan MOU between WAFWA and our federal partners was signed in 2008, but expired this summer and needs to be renewed. The original MOU is still accurate and applicable with no need for substantive changes. This 2014 version clarifies verbiage in one section and updates agency names. In 2008, the USFS added an attachment and we will retain that same attachment in this renewal. Ideally we would have distributed this a month prior to the business meeting, but since there are no major changes we thought waiting for the summer meeting is unwarranted. The MDWG would like to ask the directors to approve this MOU and cover letter so that they can be signed by the WAFWA president and circulated to federal partners for signatures.

### **Next Meeting**

We will hold the next MDWG meeting in conjunction with the Western Hunting and Conservation Expo in Salt Lake City February 12, 2014 (9am – 5pm). Many representatives attend this Expo already and by meeting here we can maximize attendance and minimize costs.

*Mule Deer Working Group Purpose: “To find solutions to our common mule deer management problems and to optimize cooperative research and management in the Western states and provinces.”*