

MULE DEER WORKING GROUP REPORT

Mid-Winter WAFWA Meeting
Wigwam, Litchfield Park, AZ
January 7-8, 2017



Chair – Jim Heffelfinger, AZ Game and Fish Department

Consideration of Disease Risks in Translocation of Deer by Wildlife Management Agencies

This document was approved by the directors at the July meeting in Cody and so copies of the final printed version are provided at this meeting. It was written collaboratively with the Wildlife Health Committee to provide information about diseases to wildlife management agencies involved or contemplating deer translocation. This is already posted on the MDWG portion of the WAFWA website and MDWG representatives have PDF copies to email and post on your agency's website. Representatives also have high resolution versions with corner marks for professional printing if you want to produce hard copies.

Rangewide Mule Deer Survival Analysis with University of Montana

This effort will pool deer telemetry data already housed in agencies files and allow for a larger rangewide analysis to evaluate survival relationships with environmental conditions, allow managers to extrapolate survival rates to other areas lacking those data, and provide information to be used to improve population models. This project has proceeded in collaboration with the MDWG and is almost completely funded. We are now working on cooperative data sharing agreements and requesting data from agencies.

Reseeding Guidance Document Update

Ashley Green (Habitat Chief in Utah) is leading this project to produce a guidance document for practitioners about reseeded in a way that benefits mule deer. This will apply to rehabilitation projects as well as habitat improvements. We will discuss a first draft at our upcoming February meeting.

Mule Deer Fact Sheets

At this meeting we are asking for final approval to publish 3 more Fact Sheets: 1) *Habitat Conversion by Wildfire and Invasive Species*, 2) *Pinyon-Juniper Management for Mule Deer*, and 3) *Mule Deer Management and the Public Process*. Final Drafts of these 3 were provided to directors prior to this meeting for final review.

Other Fact Sheets in progress (suggested future topics are welcome):

- Economic Contributions
- WT x MD Ecological Interactions
- WT x Mule deer Hybridizations
- Antler Development

New Mule Deer Book

The MDWG is in the process of producing an updated comprehensive book on black-tailed and mule deer ecology in North America. The MDWG and its collaborators have the expertise to make this happen. We are now finalizing the outline and discussing appropriate authors of the various chapters. This will be a topic of discussion at our upcoming meeting in Salt Lake City next month.

Identifying and Protecting Migration Corridors

Wyoming Game and Fish Department used information gathered on mule deer migration to update their policy on corridors and to integrate that information into management to protect and improve these migration routes. This discussion caught the interest of other states and provinces who are interested in applying what was learned in Wyoming. The MDWG is working with Matt Kauffman at the WY Coop Unit to discuss how to transfer this information to other agencies. We would like to help facilitate a technology transfer to those agencies who are interested by organizing a series of workshops led by Matt Kauffman to showcase the process WY used to identify and protect these corridors.

CWD Management at the Population Level

There is a growing interest in the topic of managing CWD in our wild herds of deer and elk. Wyoming has a CWD committee discussing how to manage the spread of that disease. At our upcoming February meeting we will discuss how the MDWG, in collaboration with the WAFWA Wildlife Health Committee, can help agencies in this arena. Perhaps it would be valuable to summarize what states and provinces have done to try to manage the spread of CWD. Management has ranged from attempts to eradicate deer to a hands-off approach and agencies should know how well those actions/inactions worked.

Miscellaneous

- Our February meeting in Salt Lake City in conjunction with the Western Hunting and Conservation Expo will be Wednesday, February 15, 2017. At the Expo, we will have a WAFWA Mule Deer Working Group booth representing most attending state agencies and will provide MDWG materials and information.
- The next Deer and Elk Workshop will be May 1-4, 2017 in Sun Valley, ID.
- The National Deer Alliance “Deer Summit” is June 7-8, 2017 in Austin, Texas. There will be a robust mule deer presence this time and state/province mule deer biologists should be represented so mark your calendars.
- The MDWG portion of the WAFWA website was updated with names of current and past representatives and new products.