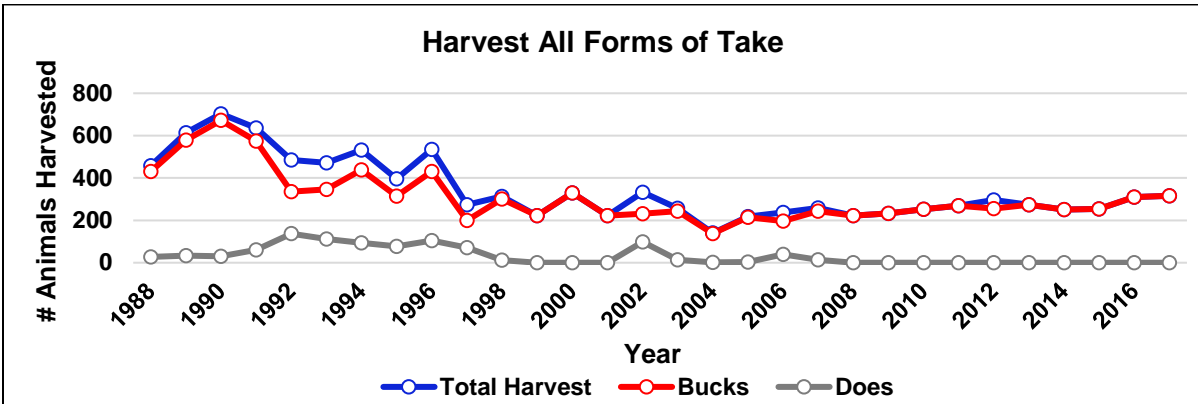
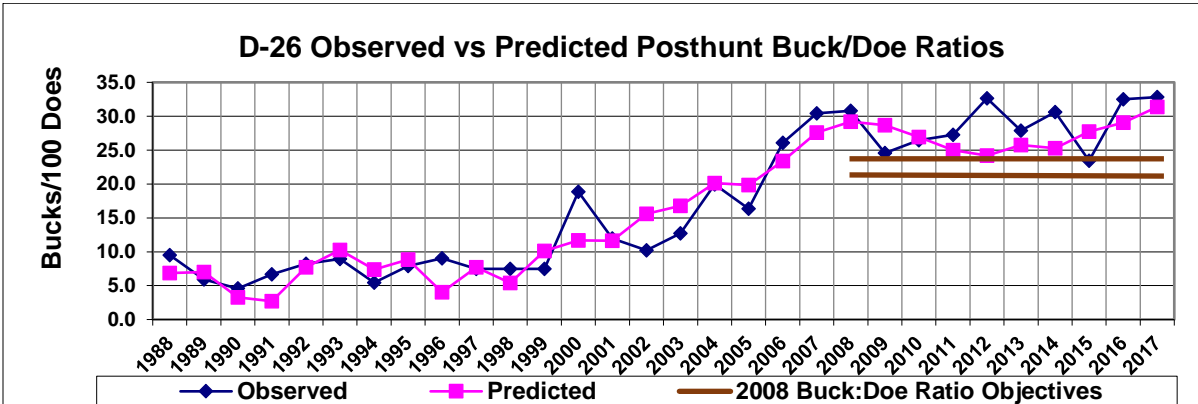
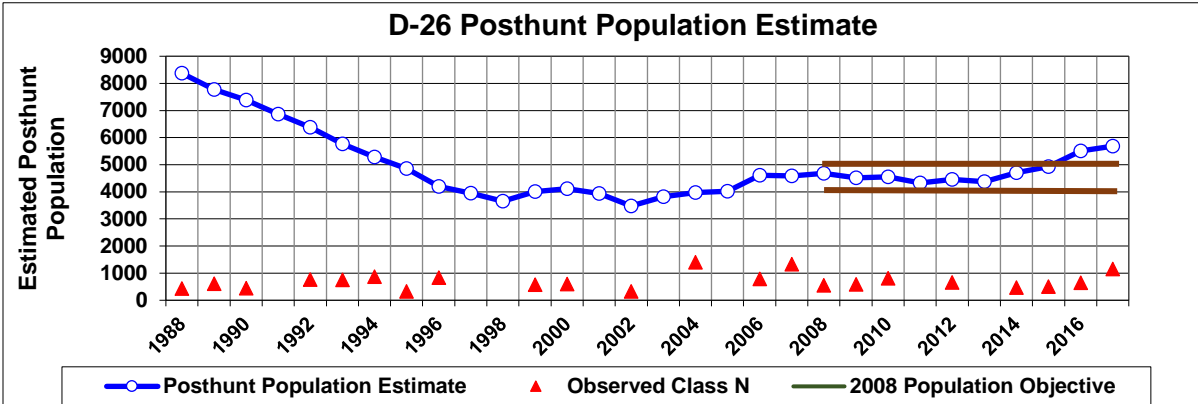


D-26 HMP Draft Executive Summary

GMU's: 68, 681 and 682

Land Ownership: 35% Private, 41% USFS, 18% BLM, 1% NWR, 5% other

Post-hunt Population	2008 Objective	4,000 to 5,000
	2017 Estimate	5,680
	2019 Preferred Objective	5,500 to 6,500
Post-hunt Sex Ratio	2008 Objective	21-24 Bucks : 100 Does
	2017 Observed	32 Bucks : 100 Does
	2017 Estimate	31 Bucks : 100 Does
	2019 Preferred Objective	26 - 29 Bucks : 100 Doe



The Saguache Deer Herd consists of Game Management Units 68, 681 and 682. It is located in the northwest portion of the San Luis Valley in Colorado. All the GMU's have been managed with limited antlered deer licenses since the statewide implementation in 1999. Since then, very few antlerless deer licenses have been made available, with the harvest mainly occurring through game-damage or dispersal efforts. Antlerless deer harvest has not occurred since 2008 in any of these units.

The D-26 population began to decrease steadily in the late 1980's. To address this decrease doe licenses were eliminated and buck licenses, which had been unlimited, became limited in 1999. The herd dropped to less than 3500 in 2002, and has been gaining traction since then, with a slight increase in numbers to within the boundaries of the 2008 objectives. The population had remained within the 2008 objectives of 4,000 to 5,000 animals until 2015. From that time, the population estimate has been increasing above the upper end of the 2008 population objectives. Increased buck harvest in recent years appears to have slowed the population growth.

Post-hunt sex ratios have shown an increase since limiting antlered licenses. Before the implementation of limited licenses in 1999, the observed sex ratio averaged less than 10 bucks per 100 does. From 1999 to 2008, the average observed sex ratio had risen to 22 bucks per 100 does and since 2008 it has risen to 29 bucks per 100 does.

Buck harvest has averaged 263 since 2008 with a low of 222 bucks harvested in 2008 and a high of 316 bucks in 2017. Since limiting buck licenses in 1999 the average buck harvest has been 247 animals. There has been no antlerless harvest since 2008 and the majority of doe harvest between 1999 and 2008 had been through game damage and dispersal efforts, with the exception of doe licenses available in 2002.

The main limiting factor on this herd is the amount and quality of winter range available. Overpopulation of herbivores on the winter range can damage the habitat and can force animals into lower elevations where agricultural fields are located. This in turn could lead to game damage issues which Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) could be held responsible for.

Management Alternatives

Three alternatives for Data Analysis Unit D-26 were considered for **post-hunt population size** and **sex ratio** objectives:

Population Objective Alternatives:			Sex Ratio Objectives	
3,500 to 4,500	Approximately 10-20% decrease		21 to 24 Bucks : 100 Does	
4,500 to 5,500			24 to 26 Bucks : 100 Does	
5,500 to 6,500	Approximately 10-20% increase	Preferred	26 to 29 Bucks : 100 Does	Preferred

Preferred Alternative:

Population

The responses received during all public involvement processes, including feedback from partner agencies, suggest that the majority support increasing the deer population objective in GMU's 68, 681 and 682 to encompass the present population estimate. The preferred alternative is a **population objective of 5,500 to 6,500** deer, which would maintain the present estimated population within this objective range, allowing for a slight increase. It would also maintain realistic expectations for hunter opportunity.

Sex Ratio

The responses received during all the public involvement processes, including feedback from partner agencies, suggest that the majority of the public would like to see an increase in the buck : doe ratio objective to encompass what is being presently observed and estimated, according to the models. Based on this, the preferred alternative is a **sex ratio objective of 26-29 bucks per 100 does**, which would maintain the buck : doe sex ratio at its present observed and estimated status, however still maintaining the current hunting opportunities.