

TRINIDAD DEER HERD MANAGEMENT PLAN EXTENSION

DATA ANALYSIS UNIT D-32

GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS

85, 140, 851

PREPARED FOR

COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE



BY

ALLEN VITT
BRIAN DREHER
JULIE STIVER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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|---|---------------------------|
| Trinidad Deer Herd (DAU D-32) | GMUs: 85, 851, 140 |
| Posthunt Population: Previous Objective: 9,800-10,800 deer; Estimate for 2018: 8,400. Preferred Alternative: <u>Maintain population objective of 9,800-10,800</u> | |
| Posthunt Sex Ratio (Bucks:100 Does): Previous Objective: 25-29; Posthunt 2018 observed: 40; modeled: 35. Preferred Alternative: <u>Status Quo 25-29</u> | |

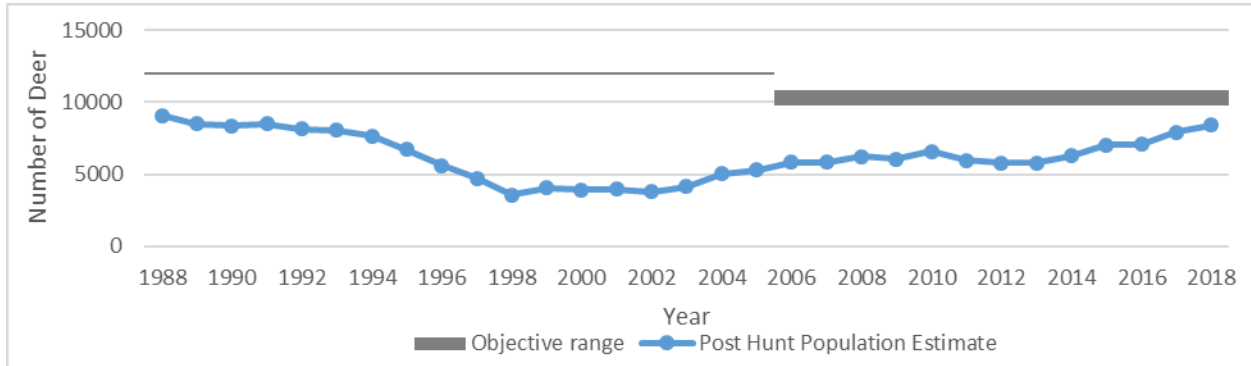


Figure 1. Deer DAU D-32 modeled posthunt population and objective range, 1988-2018.

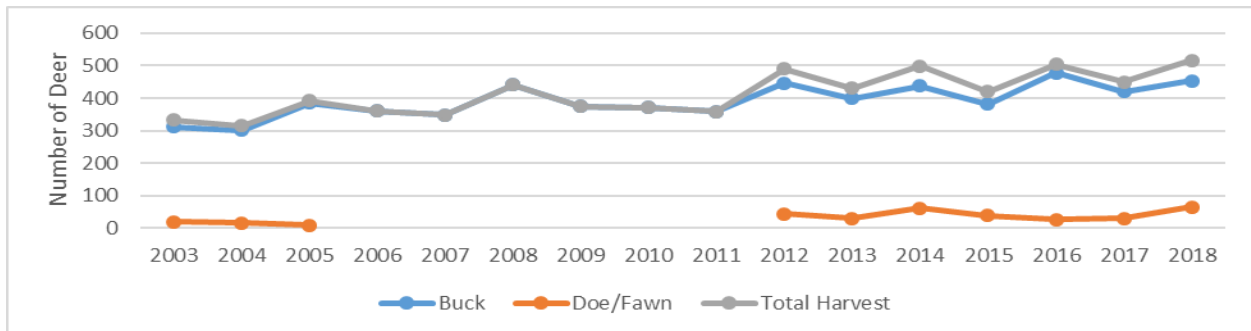


Figure 2. Deer harvest estimates in D-32, 2003-2018.

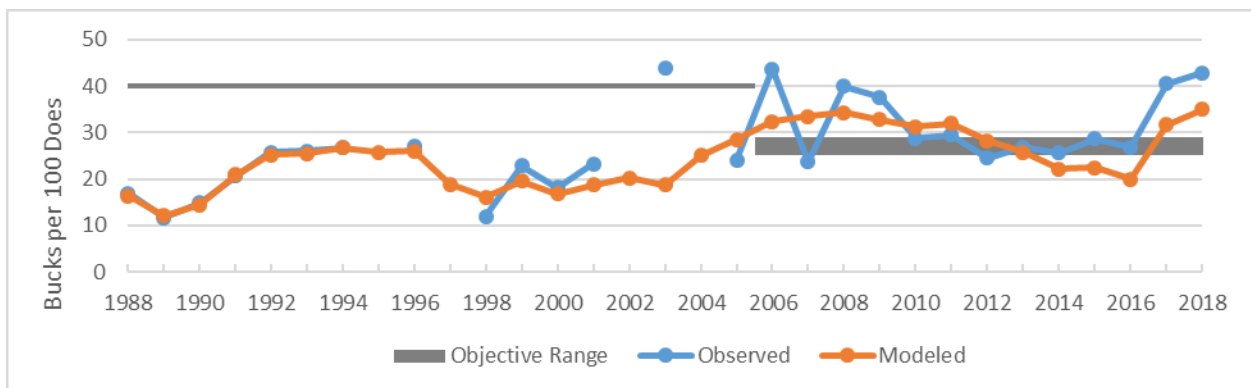


Figure 3. Deer DAU D-32 observed and modeled posthunt sex ratio (Bucks:100 Does), 1988-2018.

Background Information

The Trinidad Deer DAU is located in south central Colorado and lies within portions of Costilla, Huerfano and Las Animas Counties. It is 2,044 mi² and consists of Game Management Units (GMUs) 85, 140 and 851. Almost 86% (1,772 mi²) of the DAU is privately owned, including low-density housing developments, agricultural properties, and large ranches. Hay is the primary crop produced on farmlands and cattle grazing occurs throughout the DAU.

Deer generally occupy the entire DAU from the grassland\shrub and pinion\juniper areas of the foothills through all vegetative zones up to the alpine tundra during the summer and early fall. Another distinct population of deer spends the majority of the year in the riparian and agricultural areas at lower elevations throughout most of the drainages

In developing this Herd Management Plan (HMP), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) sought input from stakeholders and staff on the desired population and sex ratio objectives along with identifying significant management issues. A public meeting was held in Trinidad in November 2019 to gather input and the plan was posted on CPW's website for a 30-day comment period in November and December 2019.

CPW staff think the deer population in D-32 is doing well, with the population showing increases and satisfaction amongst hunters is very high. Therefore, we are proposing to maintain the current population and sex ratio objectives for another 10-year period.

Recommendation to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission

Population and Sex Ratio Objectives: CPW recommends an extension of the current D-32 post-hunt population objectives of 9,800-10,800 deer with a sex ratio of 25-29 bucks per 100 does for the life of this plan.

Strategies for Addressing Management Issues and Achieving Objectives

Significant management issues identified through the public input process include housing and methane development, lack of private land hunting access, and urban deer. CPW has limited ability to affect many of these issues. However, we will seek opportunities to conserve land through fee title purchase or conservation easements, especially ones with hunting access. We will look for opportunities, working with land management agencies and private landowners, to improve habitat and increase hunter access.