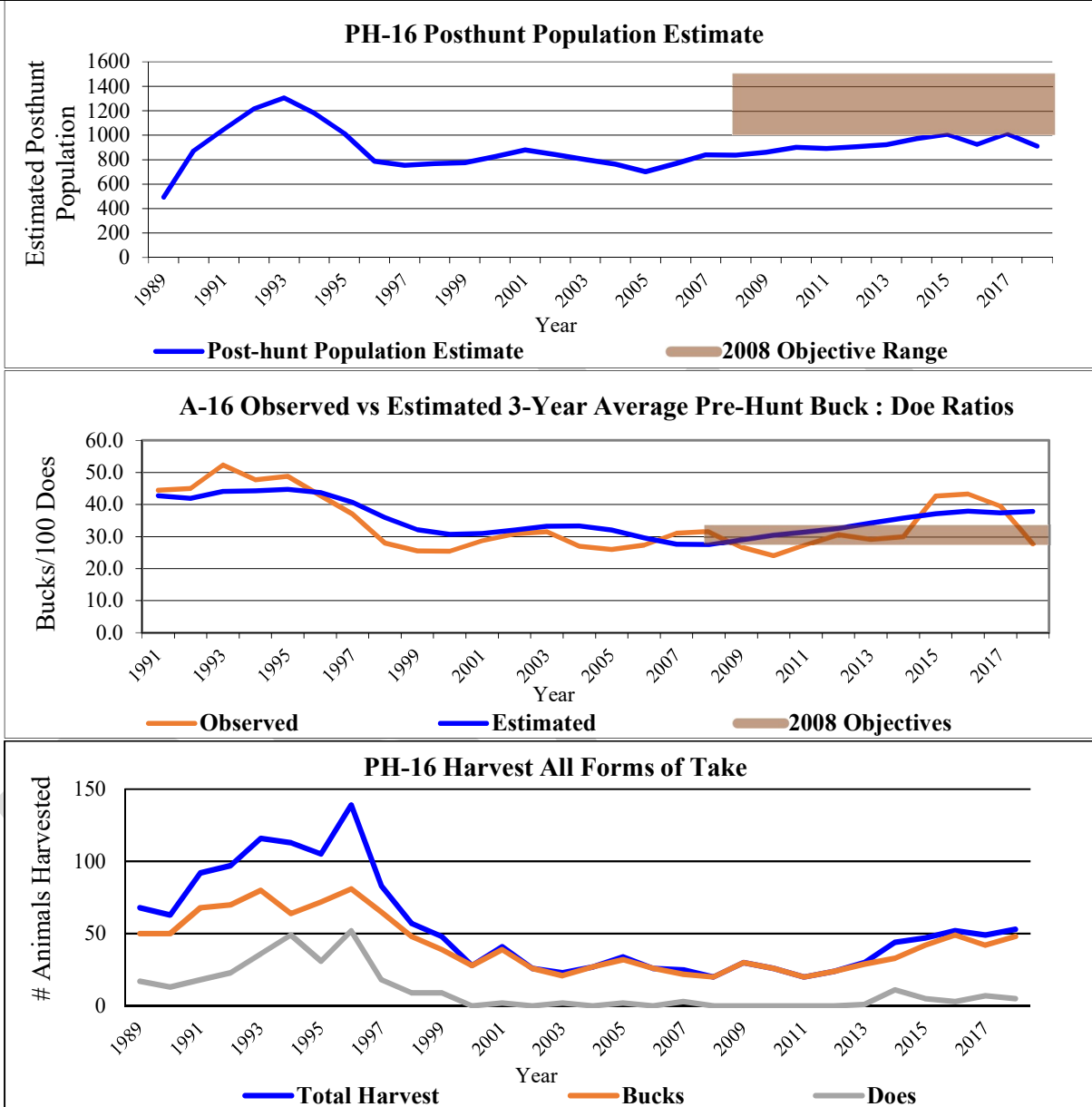


Southern San Luis Valley Pronghorn PH-16 HMP Extension Executive Summary

GMUs: 80, 81, and 83.	Land Ownership: 11.3% BLM, 25.8% RGNF, 1.3% USFWS, 3.8% CO State and 57.8% Private.
Post-hunt Population Estimate (2018): 910 pronghorn.	Pre-hunt Sex Ratio (Bucks to 100 Does): 28 (Observed 3-yr. average).
2008-2018 (Previous Herd Plan Objectives):	1,000 to 1,500 pronghorn; 27-33 Bucks per 100 Does.
2019- 2029 Preferred Herd Plan Objectives:	1,000 to 1,500 pronghorn; 27-33 Bucks per 100 Does.



Pronghorn herd PH-16 is in the southern section of the San Luis Valley. The DAU (geographical area) comprises Game Management Units (GMUs) 80, 81, and 83. The pronghorn range (summer and winter) comprises approximately 1,315 square miles of this area. The DAU encompasses portions of Alamosa, Archuleta, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, and Rio Grande counties. No one has recently located pronghorn in the Archuleta or Mineral County portion of the DAU. However, historical reports of pronghorn in the Mineral County portion exist. Public land makes up approximately 42% of the entire DAU, and approximately 58% of the area is privately owned.

The post-hunt population estimate reached its peak during the early 1990s at just over 1,300 animals. In the mid-1990s, there was a sharp decline to less than 800 animals. CPW believes the reduction occurred because of poor fawn recruitment and high female harvest. Drought conditions over many years may have contributed to the decrease in fawn recruitment. From 1996 to 2005, the population trajectory has been relatively stable. Since 2005, the population has inclined slightly to its current estimated population of approximately 900 animals. The pre-hunt observed fawn-to-doe ratios have fluctuated since the mid-1990s. Moisture availability during the spring and summer months may have caused the fluctuations in fawn survival. CPW expects the population to remain relatively stable and possibly increase with the present limited harvest potential.

The three-year-average observed sex ratio peaked in the mid-1990s at approximately 52 bucks per 100 does. It then dropped through to the early 2000s. After that, for the next decade and a half, the observed sex ratio varied slightly but remained relatively stable around the objective range. Over the past few years, it has been above the higher end of the objectives. CPW recognized this and increased buck licenses to reduce the sex ratio back towards the objective range. The most recent three-year-average observed sex ratio of approximately 28 bucks per 100 does was just within the lower end of the objective range. The current sex ratio objectives provide adequate hunting opportunity and a desirable mature buck population.

The ability to obtain a license for this DAU can influence harvest success, which is typical in many pronghorn units. Buck licenses are available on a limited basis but are in high demand. There are no public land doe licenses available in the DAU. Despite that, CPW may provide doe depredation licenses on private land. Since 1989, the annual buck harvest has averaged approximately 42 animals. After implementing the 2008 objectives, the annual buck harvest has averaged approximately 33 animals. The average doe harvest since 1989 is approximately ten animals. Since 2000, all doe harvest has resulted from depredation on crops through damage and dispersal licenses. The overall combined-season (all methods of harvest), average success rate, since 2008, has been approximately 58%. The highest harvest success rate since 2008 occurred during the rifle season (85%), and the lowest has been during the archery season (17%).

The two most significant factors limiting this population are the amount of annual precipitation and availability of water resources, particularly on winter habitat. Areas that have natural water retention and succulent forage availability, such as around the Mogote peak area, have experienced relatively high reproduction rates. The more arid regions have seen reduced fawn recruitment, especially during drought conditions; significant droughts occurred in 1996, 2002, and 2013. The availability of winter range continues to diminish with increased development on private land and competition with domestic livestock.

The game-damage issues that have occurred in this population have been on agricultural lands in GMU 80 in the Capulin area, south of Monte Vista. The number of pronghorn involved in landowner conflict issues is a small proportion of the overall population. Issuing doe damage or dispersal licenses to the affected landowner usually resolves the problems.

Preferred Objectives:

Post-hunt Population

The preferred management objective for PH-16 is a **population of 1,000 to 1,500 pronghorn**, aiming to increase the estimated population slightly. Buck-hunting opportunities will remain the same. Once the herd population estimate falls within the objective range, or if significant private land issues occur, CPW may reinstate doe licenses.

Three-year Average Pre-hunt Sex Ratio

The preferred three-year average pre-hunt sex ratio is to maintain the current objective at **27-33 bucks per 100 does**. This range supports what CPW has recently observed during summer inventory flights. The objective range allows for a satisfactory hunting experience and the desired hunting opportunities

Strategies for Achieving the Preferred Objectives:

Post-hunt Population – To manage towards the preferred pronghorn population objective, buck licenses will remain the same. The provision of limited public-land doe licenses would not occur. However, control of private land depredation issues will remain in place. CPW will consider doe harvest opportunities once the population estimate is within the objective range, or there is a deterioration in habitat.

Pre-hunt Sex Ratio – Maintaining buck licenses will allow buck-hunting opportunities to remain the same. Harvest from these licenses should sustain the desired adult buck population at acceptable levels and maintain stakeholder satisfaction.