

NDG&F April 25th Newsletter

Spring Mule Deer Survey Complete

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department completed its annual spring mule deer survey in April, and results indicate western North Dakota's mule deer population has increased 21 percent from last year.

Bruce Stillings, big game supervisor, said the increase is a result of higher adult doe survival in 2015, three consecutive years of good fawn production, and overwinter survival combined with milder winter weather conditions.

"These factors, along with no harvest of antlerless mule deer during the past four deer hunting seasons, have resulted in mule deer numbers doubling since we experienced our low in 2012," Stillings said.

Biologists counted 2,880 mule deer in 306.3 square miles during this year's survey. Overall mule deer density in the badlands was 9.4 deer per square mile, which is up from 7.8 deer per square mile in 2015.

The spring mule deer survey is used to assess mule deer abundance in the badlands. It is conducted after the snow has melted and before the trees begin to leaf out, providing the best conditions for aerial observation of deer. Biologists have completed aerial surveys of the same 24 study areas since the 1950s.

Pronghorn Hunters Successful in 2015

Hunter success during last fall's pronghorn hunting season was 81 percent, according to statistics provided by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

The season was held in units 3-B, 4-A and 4-C. Game and Fish issued 409 licenses (266 lottery and 143 gratis), and 385 hunters took 312 pronghorn, consisting of 286 bucks, 15 does and 11 fawns. Each hunter spent an average of 2.4 days afield.

The 2016 pronghorn hunting season will be determined in early July.