

Roswell Area Pronghorn/Mule Deer Population Management Action Plan Update 2-1-10

Background – Over the last several years various environmental and land management practices, drought and increased irrigated crop production, have led to significant numbers of pronghorn and mule deer moving into and proliferating in intensely managed farmlands and exurban areas along the western edge of Roswell. As both species have found this new area to be very accommodating and providing of high quality forage resources, reproduction and recruitment have escalated while mortality has declined. This has resulted in a population of both species reaching unusually high levels, compounded by frequent shifts in disproportionate distribution from crop to crop and season to season. Numbers of animals have progressed from levels that create a visual novelty to levels that have resulted in significant crop damage, increased vehicle/wildlife collisions, and in some instances, human safety concerns in residential yards and area recreation facilities. The affected area is about 250 square miles.

Over the last ten years the Department has used numerous techniques to reduce the pronghorn and mule deer numbers around the Roswell area. Scare techniques using zon-guns, cracker shells, fuse rope salutes (m-80's), bird bangers, screamers, rubber buck and slugs were all used by Department personnel and landowner assistance with limited success.

The Department also trapped and relocated approximately 156 pronghorn from the Roswell area within a five year time period. Population management hunts and youth hunts are tools that have also been used.

Goal – To utilize a cooperative partnership between the NMDGF, local landowners and agricultural producers, and sportsmen interested in hunting pronghorn and mule deer, that continues to implement a flexible system of using relocation, fence modifications, and private, public, and youth hunters to accomplish a reasonable and appropriate reduction in both pronghorn and mule deer numbers in and around a defined area west of Roswell over the next 3-5 years.

The NMDGF has established initial target population levels for both pronghorn and mule deer.

Pronghorn target level – 500-750

Mule Deer target level – 100-150

*These initial target population levels may be re-evaluated by affected parties periodically and adjusted as appropriate.

Pronghorn population estimates in 2008 were approximately 1,600-2,150 animals.

Mule Deer population estimates in 2008 were approximately 250-350 animals.

During the period from June 2008 through December 2009 the Department has worked with landowners to implement fence modifications, establish various population management hunts (approx. 150 animals harvested by public and private hunters), and continued to develop trap and transplant opportunities.

Currently Pronghorn and Mule Deer population levels are estimated to still be well above target levels. As a result:

- The Department, in cooperation with a landowner, plans to implement a trap & transplant project in early February to attempt to capture 40-50 Pronghorns and move them to an area of remote public lands North of Roswell.
- The Department has, and will continue to develop and implement population management hunts for Mule Deer and Pronghorn on both public and private lands within the established management zone.
- The Department continues to work with affected landowners to provide fence modification assistance where appropriate.
- The Department continues to identify opportunities to accomplish additional Pronghorn harvest through modifications to the A-PLUS program.
- The Department will periodically evaluate the results of these actions and implement actions as appropriate.

For more information about this program please contact Leon Redman, Southeast Area Operations Chief at 575-624-6135 or leon.redman@state.nm.us

