

Goose Creek Area Depredation Hunt History

Under the direction of the Wells Resource Management Plan the Goose Creek elk herd has a population objective of 1,050 elk. This elk herd which includes hunt units 076, 077, 079, and 081 has been at objective since 2005. Antlered and Antlerless elk tags have increased in this herd unit group to keep this herd at objective. The majority of antlerless elk harvest has been in the 077 unit. In the summer of 2007 there were two large scale wildfires in the northeastern portion of the state (unit 081).

Due to increased hunting pressure in the southern portion of the unit group, coupled with the recent burns, elk have significantly increased in the northeastern portions of unit 081. There is a considerable amount of private land in the northeastern portion of unit 081, mainly in the drainages. One alfalfa field on Eric Bedke's property has been fenced due to the elk use, however most of the other elk use occurring on private lands is on native haymeadows. The four landowners in the area are all signed up for our elk incentive tag program. We have been issuing elk tags for the elk use on the haymeadows and other private rangeland since 2005. In 2005 2 tags were issued, 2006 4 tags were issued, 2007 3 tags were issued, and in 2008 8 tags were issued.

Earlier in August NDOW met with Idaho Fish and Game to discuss a possible depredation hunt in the area to address increasing concerns from landowners of elk use on meadows. The timing of regular elk seasons between Idaho, Utah, and Nevada were also discussed. Idaho and Utah have since decided to hold depredation hunts along the Nevada border in the Goose Creek area. Idaho has issued 25 antlerless tags with season dates of August 15th through September 30th, and Utah issued 30 tags with season dates starting August 15th through January 31st (excluding September 1st through October 1st to avoid the bull season). In order to avoid creating a safe zone for elk being hunted in the corner of the state, Nevada will hold a depredation hunt with 15 tags starting September 15th running through October 15th. During this period the regular muzzleloader and rifle antlerless seasons will also take place. The depredation hunt in Nevada will be to help keep pressure on the elk in all three states (reducing the amount of time on private haymeadows) as well as direct antlerless elk hunters to that portion of unit 081 to help maintain population objective.

There is one landowner in the area (Frank Bedke) that does not wish to participate in the depredation hunt. The hunt area will be defined as four miles west of the Utah border and ten miles south of the Idaho border, excluding the fields along Jay Creek owned by Frank Bedke. These fields will be clearly marked on the mapped provided to the hunters.

The other three landowners have requested that hunters check in at the ranches before hunting the private meadows. The meadows will all have cattle grazing in them during the hunt, so it will be important to remind hunters to keep gates closed.

Submitted By: Kari Huebner August 18, 2008