

**Species:** Mule Deer

**Unit Group:** 221-223

**Hunt Geometry ID:** 42

**Hunt ID:** [324, 226, 178, 177, 176, 427, 903, 253, 255, 340, 254]

**Access:**

The eastern and southern portions of this unit group can be accessed from various locations along U.S. Highway 93 from Ely to Crystal Springs. The western portion of this unit group can be accessed at various location from State Route 318. Many maintained and unmaintained dirt and gravel roads exist throughout the unit group to allow vehicle access throughout the area. The majority of lands in this unit group are public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and are accessible to the public. This unit group contains designated wilderness areas, including the South Egan Range, Mount Grafton, and Far South Egans Wilderness areas. Wilderness areas do not allow mechanized transportation, including wheeled game carriers and mountain bikes.

**Recommended Hunting Areas:**

During archery season, most mule deer are located at higher elevation areas in the northern portion of the unit group. Many mule deer reside in the Schell Creek Range and Egan Range during the summer and can typically be found in basins with reliable water sources. Using binoculars and spotting scopes to locate deer from high vantage points early in the morning and late in the evening can be the most effective hunting strategy. Hunters should be prepared to hike to higher elevations and pack animals out over long distances. Mule deer remain at these higher elevation areas throughout the muzzleloader season as well. After shedding velvet, mature mule deer bucks may move into areas with thick vegetation and remain bedded most of the day. Hunters should be at their glassing spots prior to shooting light in order to maximize their chances of locating mature deer prior to bedding. If temperatures remain high during early October, rifle hunters should continue to hunt the upper elevations of the Schell and Egan Ranges. Cooler temperatures and snowfall will move deer to lower elevations and initiate migration. Mule deer migrate to lower elevations and to southern portions of the unit group during late rifle season. Benches on the southern end of the Schell range and in Mule Shoe Valley, as well as lower elevations of the Fairview Range, hold the majority of wintering deer populations. Mule deer can also be found in the West Range, Ely Springs range, and North Pahroc Range during late rifle season. Hunting during the late rifle season can be difficult, as deer use areas with thick pinyon-juniper cover and can be difficult to spot. Hunters should glass from high vantage points and have patience when locating mature bucks.

**Biologist Comments:**

This area has been affected by prolonged drought cycles in the past and receives precipitation following monsoonal weather patterns. A large portion of the annual precipitation for this unit group comes during the late fall and winter as both rain and snow. Late spring and early summer tend to be dry with limited precipitation falling during June. Beginning in late July, monsoonal weather patterns can bring significant precipitation that may last through mid-August. This late summer precipitation can cause vegetation green-up and change animal distribution across the landscape. However, if summer has been dry with little precipitation, mule deer may be more closely associated with permanent water sources

on summer range. Mule deer can be difficult to locate during late September and early October, as many deer have started migrating toward winter range but have not congregated into larger groups. During early rifle season hunters may want to focus on summer range areas, however if no deer are located on summer range, they should work south in an attempt to locate deer midway through migration.