

Species: Mule Deer

Unit Group: 291 – Pinenut Mtns

Hunt Geometry ID: 90

Hunt ID: [119, 203, 140, 864, 285, 351, 382]

Access: There are several main roads that lead into the Pinenut Range. On the west side, Pine Nut Creek, Buckeye Creek and the Sunrise Pass Road which begins at the end of Johnson Lane. Brunswick Canyon, Eldorado Canyon and Como Road are on the north end of the range. Both the Como Road and Sunrise Pass Road traverse to the east side. Red Canyon and Rickey Canyon begin on the southeast side, out of Smith Valley. There is limited access on the Minnehaha Canyon Road on the south end of the range, beginning out of Topaz Ranch Estates. There are four-wheel drive roads and trails throughout the mountains, although most are not maintained on a regular basis, and many get very muddy and impassable after a good precipitation event. Access to the Carson River lands requires landowner permission.

The cities of Carson City, Minden/Gardnerville, Dayton and Yerington are nearby and offer all facilities and services. The small town of Wellington is at the south end of the range and has limited services (food and an RV park). There are limited campsites at both Fort Churchill and Dayton State Parks. Dispersed camping is allowed, for up to 14 days per site, on BLM and U.S. Forest Service lands. <https://www.blm.gov/basic/programs-recreation-recreational-activities-nevada-camping-overview>

Recommended Hunting Areas:

The deer remain in the higher elevations throughout the year so concentrate your efforts above 6000 feet. Regardless of the season, the mule deer will use the forested areas for thermal-cover, however, the density of pinyon-juniper in this unit can make spotting game very difficult. Using quality optics at dawn and dusk is the most efficient way to spot deer. Hunters should focus on the aspen glades, paying special attention to Bald Mountain, Rickey Canyon, Red Canyon, Mount Siegal and areas around Mount Como. Deer tend to remain fairly close to these mountain riparian zones and mahogany patches. Still hunting the pinyon-juniper on north-facing slopes can also be productive.

Biologist Comments:

Deer populations in this unit are widely scattered and exist at low densities. With the increased urban development along the western and southern borders, and the resulting increase in traffic that took place beginning in the 1980s, this once migratory deer herd became primarily a resident herd only, with few opportunities to expand. Unit 291 is not formerly surveyed by NDOW but is estimated at about 700 animals. The southeastern boundary of the unit is defined by the Upper Colony Road in Smith Valley. Deer will leave Pinenut Range canyons on the Unit 291 side (west side) of this road to forage in the agricultural fields of Unit 203 (east side). NDOW strongly discourages the practice of road hunting in this area. Almost all the gently sloping land is privately owned. Hunters may bring a shotgun to take advantage of the chukar, mountain quail and valley quail populations that exist in the unit.