

Washington State Population Estimates for Mule and Blacktail and Deer
Estimates provided to the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

These tables report the state of Washington's estimate of the Mule and Blacktail deer populations. Data source is in the link for each year on the table. See below for comments about trends

Year	Mule Deer		
	Range	Estimate	Harvest for previous year
2012		No data	
2013	85,000 - 95,000	90,000	2012: 10,599
2014	85,000 - 95,000	90,000	2013: 11,427
2015	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2014: 10,097
2016	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2015: 12,156
2017	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2016: 8,669
2018	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2017: 7,197
2019	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2018: 8,590
2020	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2019: 8,590
2021	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2020: 10,282
2022	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2021: 8,277

Comment from

[Deer in Washington](#)

[This undated information from a Washington hunter education course gives an average, recent breakdown of the deer population in the state]: There are about 300,000 deer in the state, with about 100,000 black-tails, 90,000 mule deer, and 110,000 white-tails.

Year	Black Tail Deer		
	Range	Estimate	Harvest for previous years
2012		No data	
2013	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2012: 12,551
2014	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2013: 10,937
2015	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2014: 11,336
2016	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2015: 11,336
2017	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2016: 11,709
2018	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2017: 9,150
2019	90,000 - 110,000	100,000	2018: 7,148
2020	No estimate		2019: 11,470
2021	No estimate		2020: 11,057

2022	No Estimate		2021: 10,783
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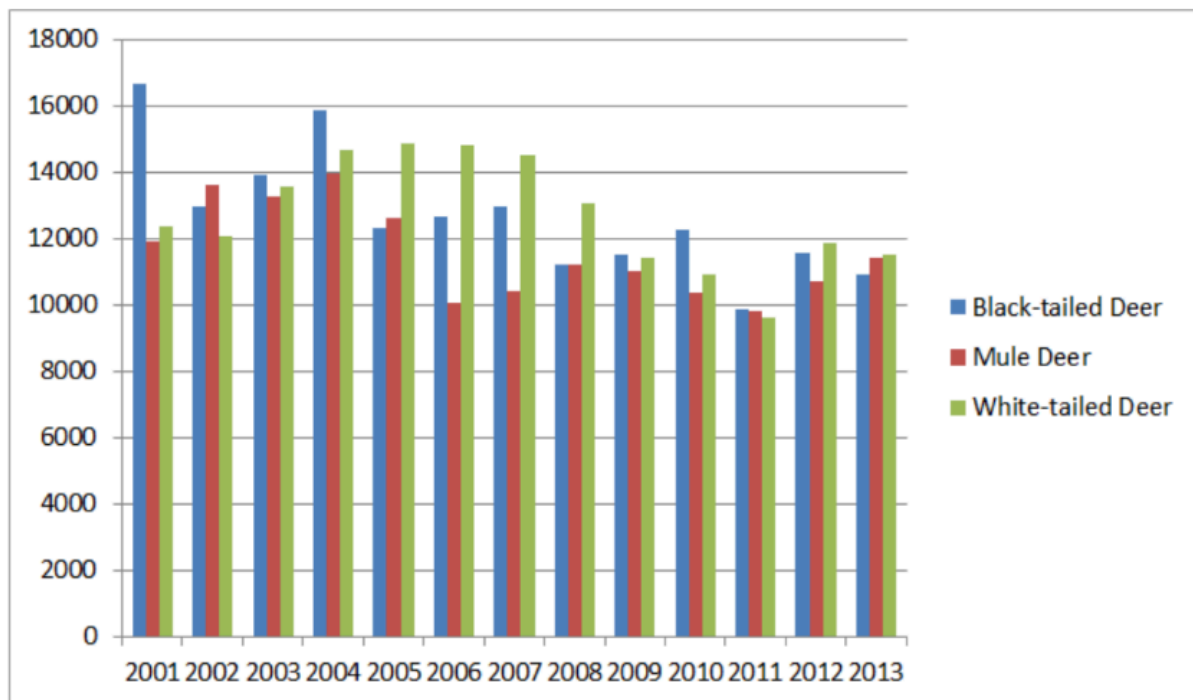
No estimate in 2020 and 2021

Comments from WAFWA Reports

[2012](#). P. 12: Washington state mule deer and black-tailed deer populations have rebounded and are doing well with a couple of exceptions. In North-Central (Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas counties) mule deer seem to be at the capacity that the habitat will support and continue to respond positively to habitat improvements when they occur. Mild to average winters the last two years allowed for better over- winter survival and strong young of the year recruitment. In the Northeast, mule deer numbers have climbed slightly.

[2013](#). P. 21: Washington state mule deer and black-tailed deer populations have rebounded and are doing well, with some exceptions. In north-central Washington (Okanogan, Chelan, and Douglas counties) mule deer seem to be at the capacity that the habitat will support and continue to respond positively to habitat improvements when they occur. Mild to average winters the last 3 years allowed for better over-winter survival and strong young of the year recruitment. In the northeast, mule deer numbers have climbed slightly.

[2014](#). P. 23: Graph below



Estimated Washington deer harvest by deer species/subspecies for 2001 through 2013.

-Jerry Nelson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

[2016](#). P. 28 Washington state mule deer and black-tailed deer populations are meeting management objectives as outlined in the 2015-2021 Game Management Plan and the recently completed Washington State Mule Deer Management Plan (wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/game).

[2017](#). P. 32. Ground and aerial monitoring efforts indicate mule deer populations experienced severe winter conditions during 2016-2017, likely affecting over-winter survival of fawns to a greater degree than in the past 5 years.

[2018](#). P. 35 Populations within WDFW's 7 mule deer management zones and 5 black-tailed deer management zones are stable to decreasing in some zones compared with previous years, but remain within objective. The statewide harvest estimate (all species, general and permit seasons combined) for 2017 was 26,529 deer, below the 10-yr mean (2008-2017) of 33,285 deer, and the harvest estimate for 2016 was 33,230 deer.

[2019](#). P. 40 Some localized population segments in each zone fluctuate due to forest production rotations, but potential remains to increase abundance if private and public forests were managed for greater early successional habitat. Loss of black-tailed deer habitat due to encroaching human development continues to be a concern.

[2020](#). P. 42 Harvest estimates and composition ratios from annual monitoring efforts for mule deer indicate populations along the northern Cascade Mountains, are likely stable to increasing. However, southern herds remain stable to decreasing. Similar to last year, antlerless permits for mule deer will be limited in most management zones.

[2021 WAFWA report, p. 43](#): Populations within most of Washington's 7 mule deer management zones are stable but status varies by region. Populations within the 5 black-tailed deer management zones are stable to increasing.

[2022](#). P. 45. Populations within most of Washington's 7 mule deer management zones are generally stable but status varies by region and zone. In late summer of 2021, outbreaks of epizootic hemorrhagic disease and bluetongue in eastern Washington caused major and widespread deer mortality. This outbreak primarily affected white-tailed deer, but mule deer were also impacted in many areas.