

Your Lands, Your Wildlife

Mule Deer



NO HOME ON THE RANGE FOR POPULAR WESTERN ICON

This western icon, named by Lewis and Clark in 1804 for its long, mule-like ears, has long been a fixture of western American culture and history, and is viewed as a prized trophy by sportsmen and wildlife-watchers alike. Hunting and viewing big game species like mule deer are wildly popular recreational activities that generate enormous economic benefits for local communities. In 2006, nearly 560,000 people hunted and over 2.5 million people observed big game species in Wyoming, New Mexico, Colorado and Montana alone.

Our western public lands provide unsurpassed opportunities to hunt or catch a glimpse of mule deer, and other big game species like bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain elk and pronghorn antelope. Our national forests and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands provide essential habitat and crucial migration paths for these species, making these public lands favored destinations for sportsmen and wildlife-watchers alike.

Protecting habitat, particularly on public lands, is the key to maintaining healthy, abundant mule deer populations. Unfortunately, rampant unchecked energy development in the West is degrading habitat and disrupting historic migration routes of this and other iconic game species that inhabit many areas of the West.

Wyoming's beautiful Upper Green River Valley is home to the nation's largest herds of mule deer and pronghorn antelope. Since 2002, mule deer herds have declined a dramatic 46 percent in the BLM's Pinedale area of the Upper Green, home to both key mule deer winter range and nearly 650 sprawling oil and gas wells. Rapid boom-driven energy development is accompanied by roads, vehicles and well pads and other industrial infrastructure – eliminating big game winter range and degrading



Courtesy DOI BLM

Quick Mule Deer Facts

- Lifespan:** 10 years
- Weight:** 125-330 lbs.
- Eats:** Mixture of trees, grasses, shrubs and herbaceous plants
- Territory:** Summers in higher elevations and winters in lower elevations
- Range:** Western United States
- Threats:** Energy development, habitat fragmentation

fragile sagebrush lands and threatening the critters that rely on them.

Despite the striking declines in deer populations associated with energy development, the BLM has plans to drill 4,400 more wells in the area.

Defenders of Wildlife supports balanced, science-based wildlife conservation measures on public lands. Healthy mule deer and other fish and wildlife populations on public lands indicate overall land health, leading to unparalleled recreation opportunities, outstanding water quality, clean air and countless other natural, social and economic benefits for all Americans.