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Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**



DISTRICT 16 HUNTING PROSPECTS

Clallam and west Jefferson counties

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District Biologists Shelly Ament and Anita McMillan collaring a deer fawn.

DISTRICT 16 GENERAL OVERVIEW

District 16 includes Clallam and western Jefferson counties on the Olympic Peninsula (Figure 1). Eight Game Management Units (GMUs) are within District 16. Two eastern GMUs, Coyle GMU 624 and Olympic GMU 621, extend into eastern Jefferson County, which is within District 15. See the District 17 Hunting Prospects for information on Matheny GMU 618.

Each GMU in District 16 has its own unique mix of land ownerships: private residential, private agricultural, private forest industrial, state, and federal forest, and park lands. Higher-elevation forest lands are primarily in public ownership: U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Olympic National Park (ONP). Lower elevation foothills are generally private industrial forest lands and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) managed lands.

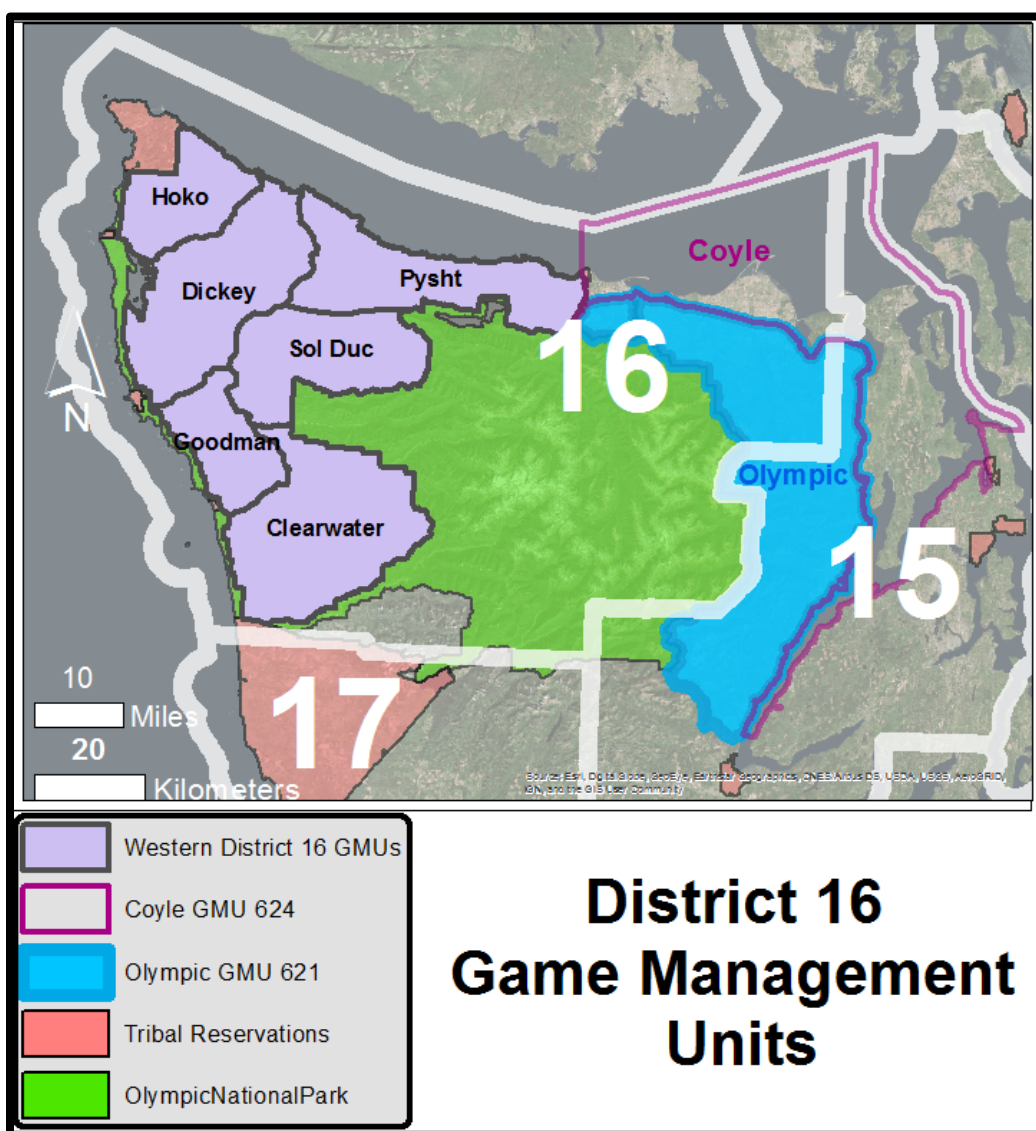


Figure 1. District 16 GMUs. Coyle and Olympic GMUs extend into District 15.

Table 1. District 16 Deer and Elk Annual Harvest

District 16* Deer & Elk Annual Harvest							
Species	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Elk - Bulls Total		323	306	213	213	286	213
Elk - Bulls State	201	226	229	135	141	184	123
Elk - Bulls Tribal		97	77	75	72	101	90
Elk - Antlerless Total		70	50	27	44	29	27
Elk - Antlerless State	8	28	26	2	3	4	2
Elk - Antlerless Tribal		42	24	25	41	25	25
Deer - Bucks Total		1115	967	872	1115	982	987
Deer - Bucks State	995	1000	867	775	993	884	881
Deer - Bucks Tribal		115	100	97	122	98	106
Deer - Antlerless Total		124	97	149	189	150	130
Deer - Antlerless State	85	78	66	117	138	115	84
Deer - Antlerless Tribal		46	31	32	51	35	46
*Includes GMU 601, 602, 603, 607, 612, 615, 621, 624 (GMU 621 & 624 are in both District 15 & 16)							

Table 2. District 16 Game Species Annual Harvest (2019 and 2020 small game data not readily delineated by District)

District 16 Game Species Annual Harvest							
Species	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
BEAR*	119	152	94	101	87	66	66
COUGAR	11	5	12	2	8	5	2
DUCKS (Clallam & Jefferson Co)			6,999	6057	11,540	8093	7253
GEESE - September (early season)			154	149	272	97	136
GEESE (late season)			318	183	713	355	331
BRANT - Clallam County			89	90	Closed	Closed	Closed
FOREST GROUSE (Clallam & Jefferson Co)			2,958	2590	4374	4794	5356
MOURNING DOVE (Clallam & Jefferson Co)			36	0	54	67	11
QUAIL (Clallam & Jefferson Co)			31	150	236	164	500
SNIPE			0	0	45	4	0
HARE/RABBIT (Clallam & Jefferson Co)			71	54	60	45	54
* Includes GMU 601, 602, 603, 607, 612, 615, 621, 624 (harvest in entire GMU, even portion in District 15)							



EAST DISTRICT 16

The eastern portion of the district is the Dungeness Basin (western GMU 624 Coyle and northern portion of GMU 621 Olympic). The Dungeness watershed offers a rich diversity of habitats from high elevation, rain-shadow mountains to the lower watershed with plentiful wetland habitats dispersed amidst a mix of riparian and bygone prairie/oak forest. The prairie is now a rural mix of small and large farms with scattered developments. In the lower basin there are some choice private duck hunting club ownerships and a few well-enjoyed public waterfowl hunting areas. Waterfowl hunting opportunities have expanded in the eastern portion of the district in recent years. The Dungeness Basin and the smaller watersheds east of the Elwha are areas where deer abundance results in frequent complaints. The high visibility of deer in the Coyle and Olympic GMUs extends into the lower elevation forestlands with an ideal ratio of forest openings. Some of the Olympic GMU habitat includes large areas of USFS mature and older dryer forest habitat that offers lower quantities of forage for ungulates. The availability of deer for harvest is enhanced within Deer Area 6020, where there are “any deer” regular seasons. The main challenge for hunting in eastern District 16 is the high amount of private ownership, so hunters should invest time needs into arranging hunting access on the target properties.

WEST DISTRICT 16

The west end (Hoko, Dickey, Sol Duc, Goodman, and Clearwater) has the bulk of elk in the district, while the deer are sparse in these same GMUs. Various sub herds of elk are located within District 16. Many elk herds are year-round residents that remain in lower elevation habitats. Some herds regularly migrate into higher elevations, most always being on ONP habitat. There are opportunities to harvest elk as they move out of ONP during the hunting season. The ONP areas vary from the Outer Coast Park strip to the eastern portion of the Clearwater (GMU 615), which includes a large block of land that borders ONP.

Varied hunting opportunities exist within District 16, from waterfowl hunting on designated shoreline and wetland areas along the Strait of Juan de Fuca, to forest grouse, deer, elk, bear, and cougar hunting on private commercial and public forest land. Both state (DNR) and federal (USFS) lands provide hunting opportunities for a variety of species within the district.

ELK

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

The elk within District 16 are Roosevelt elk. District 16 encompasses various sub herds of the Olympic elk herd, one of 10 herds identified in the state. Elk numbers peaked in the late 1970s, with a conservative estimate of about 12,000 elk outside of Olympic National Park based on historical harvest information. Past elk population estimates were based on a combination of harvest data, telemetry studies, and mark-resight surveys. These techniques yielded a 2000 fall population estimate of about 8,600 in the GMUs surrounding Olympic National Park. The current population of the Olympic elk herd is likely lower.

Overall, the elk harvest opportunity is for 3-point minimum. Much of the elk hunting within the eastern portion of the district is restricted to a limited entry (state hunters – permit only, 3-point minimum, bull-only harvest) with antlerless harvest used as a damage management tool when necessary. Elk hunting opportunities are generally good west of the Elwha River, with possibilities on DNR-managed lands, USFS lands, and private timberlands. However, several areas limit vehicular access. Hunters should obtain permission to hunt on private lands and must obey all posted signs and regulations. Some elk herds migrate down from high alpine meadows in Olympic National Park to lowland winter range. Public lands and private commercial timberlands bordering the park are good prospects. Hunters often scout for elk that leave ONP and travel along major river drainages. Keep in mind that it is unlawful to hunt in ONP.

Along with elk come elk damage issues, some of which WDFW manages using harvest and hunting pressure. WDFW's Conflict Specialists manage these elk damage areas and frequently use Master Hunter permittees to put pressure on the herds and encourage habitat use patterns that limit damage and support public safety. If interested, review the information to sign up for the [Master Hunter Permit Program](https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/requirements/master-hunter) is available at wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/requirements/master-hunter.

Radio-Collars and Markers: Local elk studies and ongoing monitoring require marking elk using transmitting markers or other tags. The radio-collar or ear tag markers should be marked with contact information identifying it as property of WDFW, university or other researchers. Recovering radio-collars from marked animals can provide valuable information to biologists. Please return any radio-collars from animals you harvest. When drugs are used to capture an animal, it is marked with an ear tag printed with directions to call the Department before consuming the meat. If you harvest an animal that you can't consume due to potential drug residues remaining in the meat, the Department will re-issue your original transport tag, special permit, or special permit points as appropriate. For more information see page 46 of the 2021 WDFW Big Game pamphlet.

WHICH GMU SHOULD ELK HUNTERS HUNT?

Hunters can harvest elk from any of the GMUs within District 16. Reviewing past harvest records can be a starting point for hunters to consider when selecting an area to spend some time hunting. Harvest has been one of the reliable measurements the Department to monitor elk on the Olympic Peninsula. WDFW generates game harvest report data using mandatory hunting reports, follow-up phone surveys, and permit reports. For other species, the small game hunter questionnaire, trapper report of catch, and cougar pelt sealing also inform data. WDFW's [game harvest reports](#) are available at wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/management/game-harvest. The 2020 Game Status and Trend Report is available at wdfw.wa.gov/publications/02217 wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02217/wdfw02217.pdf.

West District 16 – The Clearwater (GMU 615), Dickey (GMU 602), Goodman (GMU 612), and Sol Duc (GMU 607) have the highest elk harvest in District 16. These units contain large areas of public land, much of it without restricted access. Be aware there are gated roads in all of these GMUs, some of which allow hunter access and others that are closed to the public.

The Hoko (GMU 601), Pysht (GMU 603), and Coyle (GMU 624) have very limited opportunities for general season hunters. Most of these units contain private land and many of the roads on timberlands are gated. Elk groups in GMU 603 (Pysht) have increased slightly in the recent years.

A thesis on elk with research conducted in the Hoko (GMU 601) and Dickey (GMU 602) is available at this link: [Movements and Habitat Use of Female Roosevelt Elk in Relation to Human Disturbance on the Hoko and Dickey Game Management Units, Washington.](#)

East District 16 – The Olympic GMU 621 is limited to state permit elk and tribal elk harvest. WDFW doesn't recommend GMU 624 (Coyle) as an elk hunting destination because the opportunities are limited. The season remains open for 3-point minimum. The elk population and associated hunting opportunities may increase in GMU 624, but are most likely outside of District 16.

WDFW establishes hunting seasons not only to allow recreational use, but also to manage elk populations' habitat use patterns within the district. The Department designed Elk Area 6071, within GMU 621 and 624, to specifically address challenges with the Dungeness/Sequim elk herd. Harvest within Elk Area 6071 is limited to damage control, occasionally involving Master Hunter elk hunts from the Region 6 permit list. See District 15 [Hunting Prospects](#) online at wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/locations/prospects for more information on elk harvest within GMU 621 and GMU 624.

DISTRICT 16 ELK HUNTING AND HARVEST RECORDS

[Annual harvest reports](https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/management/game-harvest) can be found on the WDFW website at wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/management/game-harvest. The compiled harvest records represent harvest, hunting effort, and success informed by mandatory hunter reports and follow-up surveys for correction factor of non-response bias.

Bull Elk Harvest

The distribution of Olympic Peninsula elk harvest reflects the general elk abundance, with most harvest occurring in the western GMUs. The west end elk are well distributed, with herds scattered throughout the GMUs. The east Olympic Peninsula elk herds are not as well distributed, with herds having distinct use patterns within watersheds. Hunting the east Olympic Peninsula elk takes more deliberate planning to find the herds and make the most of elk harvest opportunities. The entire GMU 621- Olympic is permit only for elk harvest.

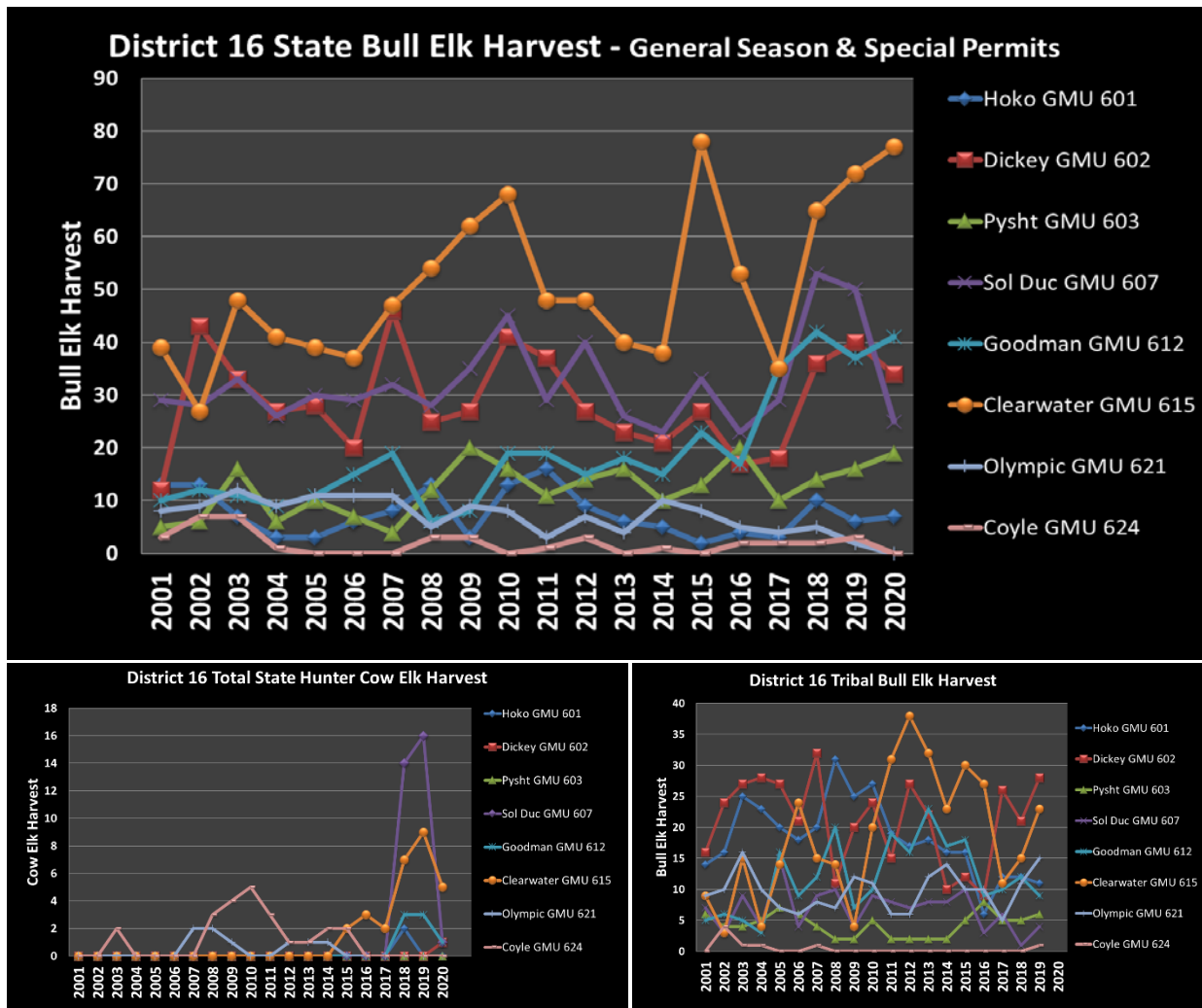


Figure 2. District 16 State Bull and Cow Elk Harvest and Tribal Bull harvest (no tribal 2020 data).

The bull elk harvest within the western GMUs (GMUs 615, 602, and 607) consistently contributes the highest bull harvest levels, while the eastern GMUs (GMUs 621, 624, and 603) consistently have low bull harvest levels, rarely having a GMU harvest total over 20 annually (Figure 2).

Archery Elk Hunting

Archery elk hunting in District 16 predominately occurs in GMU 615 (Figure 3). GMU 612, GMU 602, and GMU 603 have a much lower level of archery hunter days, ranging between 200 and 400 days annually. GMU 601, GMU 621, and GMU 624 had the lowest level of archery hunter days below 200 days annually.

Muzzleloader Elk Hunting

Muzzleloader elk hunting was concentrated in GMU 602 and 607 for many years (Figure 4). This changed in 2015 when muzzleloader elk hunting opened in GMU 615 and GMU 612. As the total days spent in GMU 612 and 615 continue to increase the overall trend in muzzleloader elk hunter days has also been increasing.

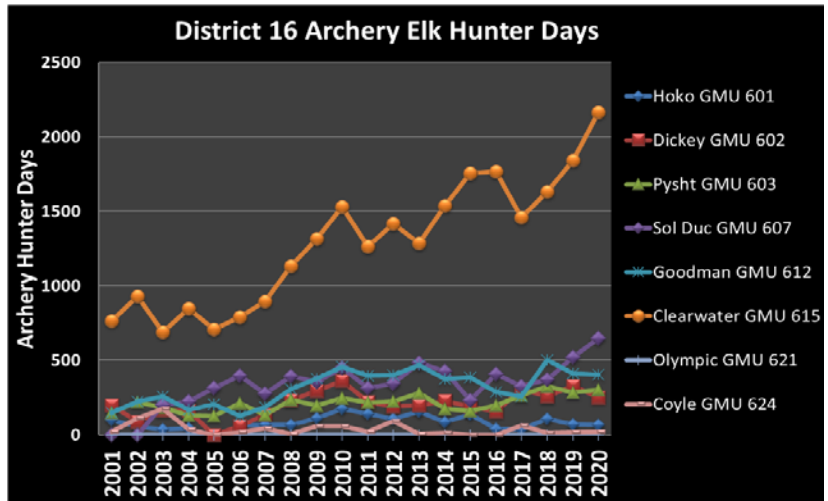


Figure 3. Archery elk hunter days by GMU.

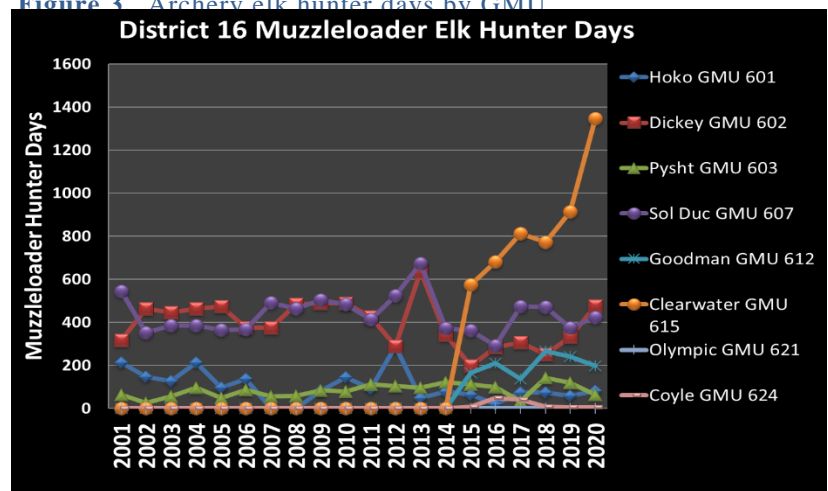


Figure 4. Muzzleloader elk hunter days by GMU.

Modern Firearm Elk Hunting

Total modern firearm elk hunter days decreased since 2014. GMU 615 modern firearm hunting pressure dropped in half from a 2014 high to a 2017 low. Simultaneously there was a noteworthy 600-day increase in muzzleloader hunting and a 200-day increase in archery hunting. The total number of state hunter days has remained constant, shifting pressure from modern firearm to archery and muzzleloader.

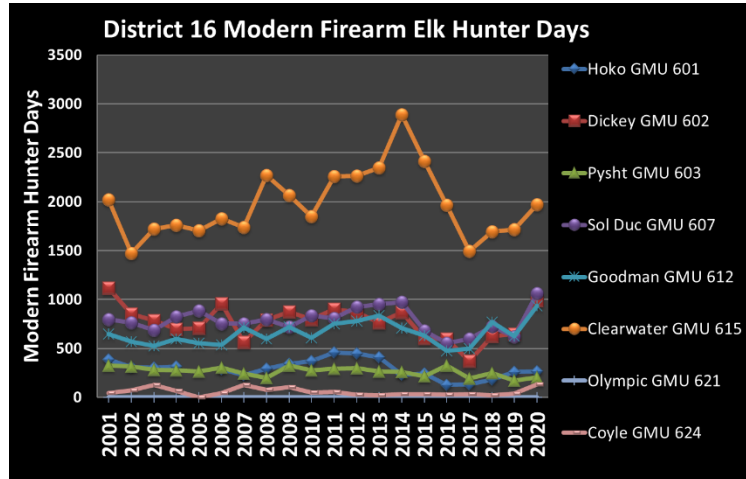


Figure 5. District 16 modern firearm elk hunter days.

GMU 601 (Hoko) Elk Hunting

Hoko bull elk harvest has remained below 30 since 2011, which is typical for this GMU (Figure 6). Overall participation by state hunters in GMU 601 has dropped since the 2012 season to less than 400 days annually and consisted of primarily modern firearm hunters.

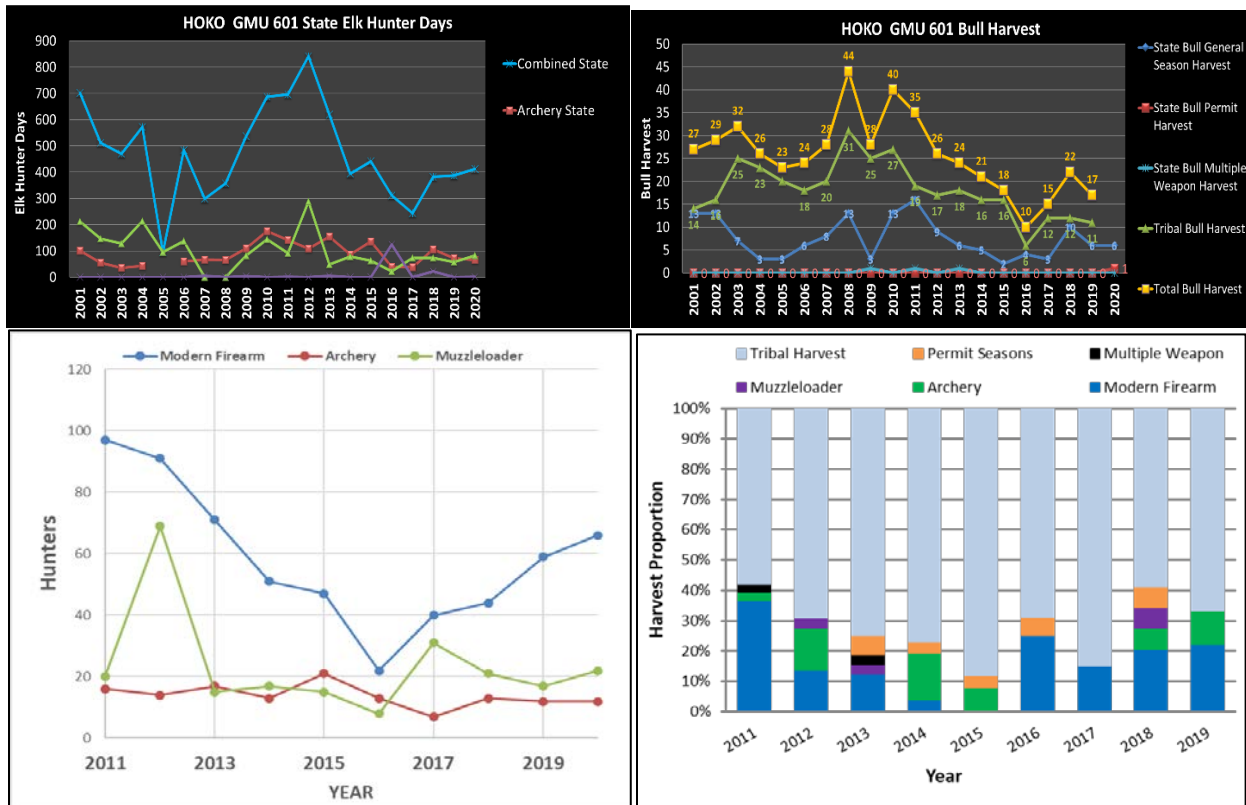


Figure 6. Hoko GMU 601 State elk hunter days and elk hunter numbers, bull elk harvest and all elk harvest proportion (Note that 2020 Data does not include Tribal Harvest).

GMU 602 (Dickey) Elk Hunting

The total bull harvest in Dickey increased in recent years to 68 in 2019. There was also an increase in state hunter days (Combined) from 1000 in 2017 to over 1700 in 2020 (Figure 7).

The hunter success dropped in 2020 for Archery and Muzzleloader and increased for Modern Firearm compared to 2019.

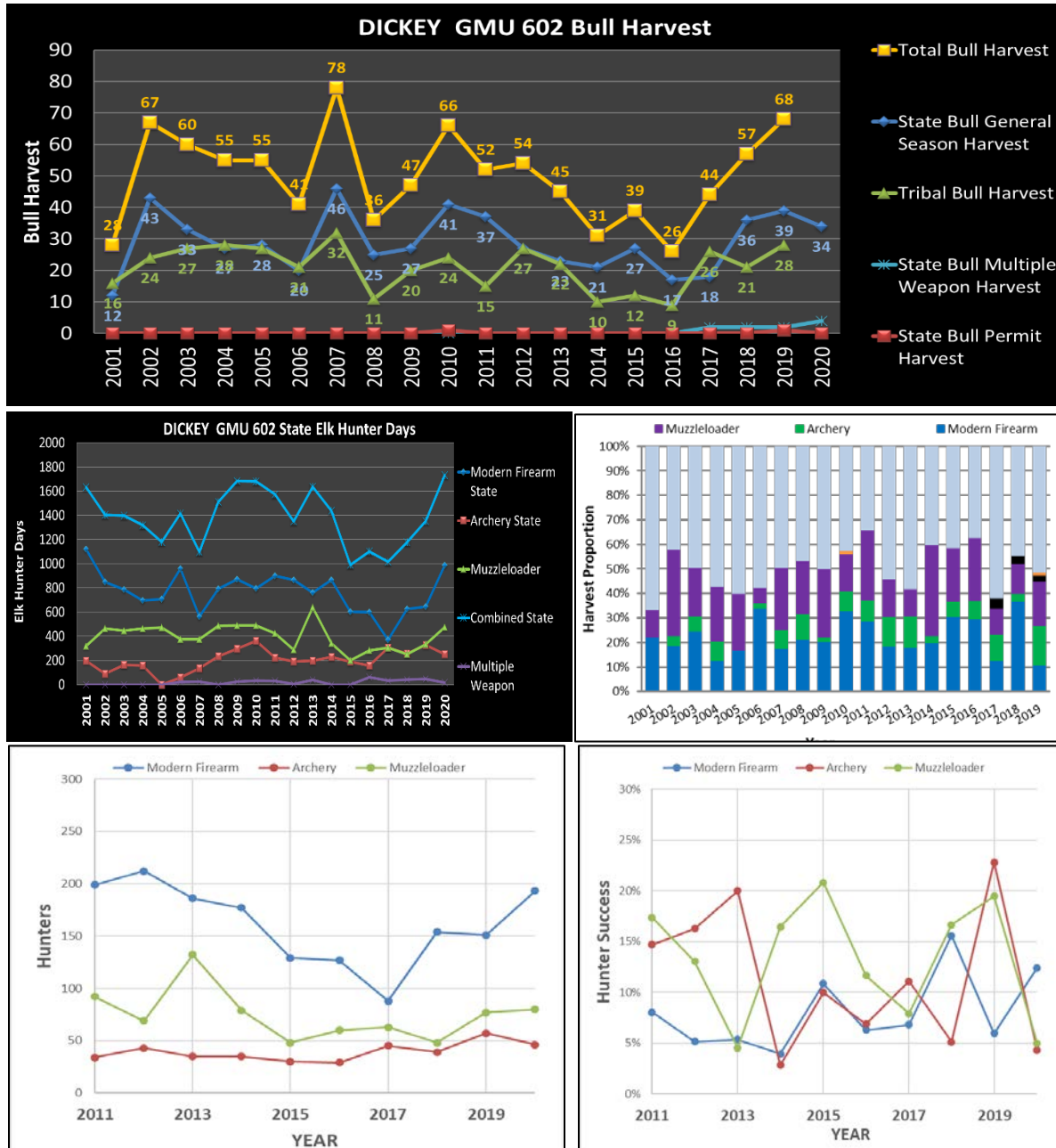


Figure 7. Dickey GMU 602 Bull Elk harvest, State Elk Hunter Day Trends, Harvest Proportion, State Hunter Numbers and State Hunter Success (Note that 2020 Data does not include Tribal Harvest).

GMU 603 (Pysht) Elk Hunting

Abundance of elk in GMU 603 has been increasing in the last three decades. During the 1990s, it was uncommon to observe elk in GMU 603. Even during helicopter searches, WDFW observed few elk. The lack of detectability can be due to other reasons, so there has been interest in better understanding the elk population in this GMU. The Lower Elwha Tribe has conducted elk monitoring and studies during the last 10 years. As the elk population continues to increase, the hunting opportunities are expanding, with the harvest trend increasing since 2001. Most of the elk population increase occurs within the western portion, on Merrill and Ring Pysht Tree Farm and other private forestlands. There are also some herds within the Elwha Watershed, with occasional observations of elk use within the newly formed Elwha floodplains. The Joyce vicinity elk herds have increasing conflict situations arising.

Modern firearm hunters maintain a success rate of around 5 to 10 percent until 2018, bumping up to 15 to 20 percent during 2018-2020 (Figure 8). Hunter pressure has remained relatively constant since 2001. During 2019, state harvest was about 60% of the total elk harvest, with tribal harvest approximately 40% of the total.

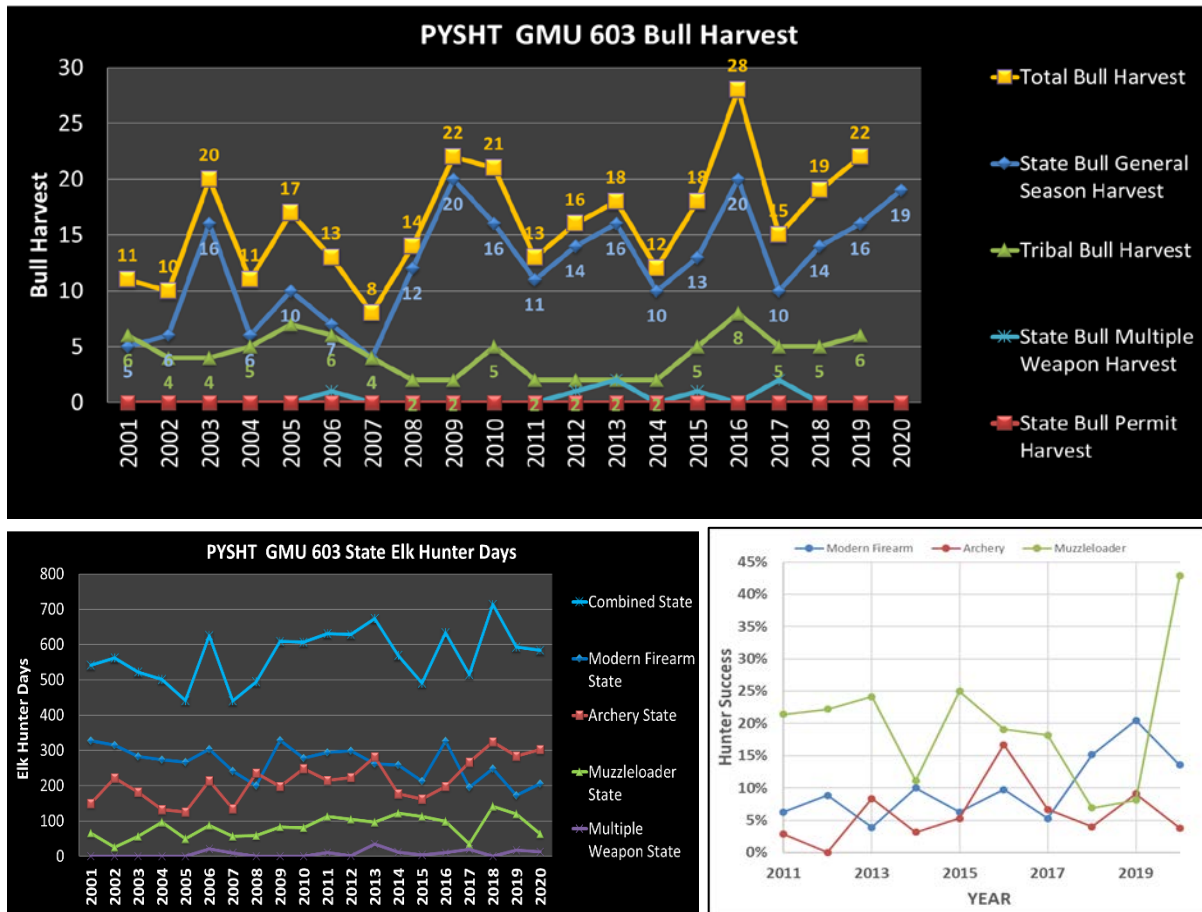


Figure 8. Pysht GMU 603 Bull Elk harvest, state elk hunter days, and success (Note that 2020 Data does not include Tribal Harvest).

GMU 607 (Sol Duc) Elk Hunting

Most of the bull elk harvest within GMU 607 is by state hunters with tribal harvest being only 10 percent in 2019 (Figure 9). State hunters take about 30 bulls annually and tribal hunters take about seven bulls annually. The state bull harvest topped at 53 in 2018 and 48 in 2019. In 2018 State hunters were provided a new antlerless elk permit opportunity, resulting in a harvest of 14 in 2018 and 16 in 2019, dropping to 1 in 2020. Hunter success in GMU 607 is usually around 5-20% for all participating state hunters with hunter success for all groups dropping in 2020 (Figure 9).

Hunter success in GMU 607 is usually around 5-20% for all participating state hunters with hunter success for all groups dropping in 2020 (Figure 9).

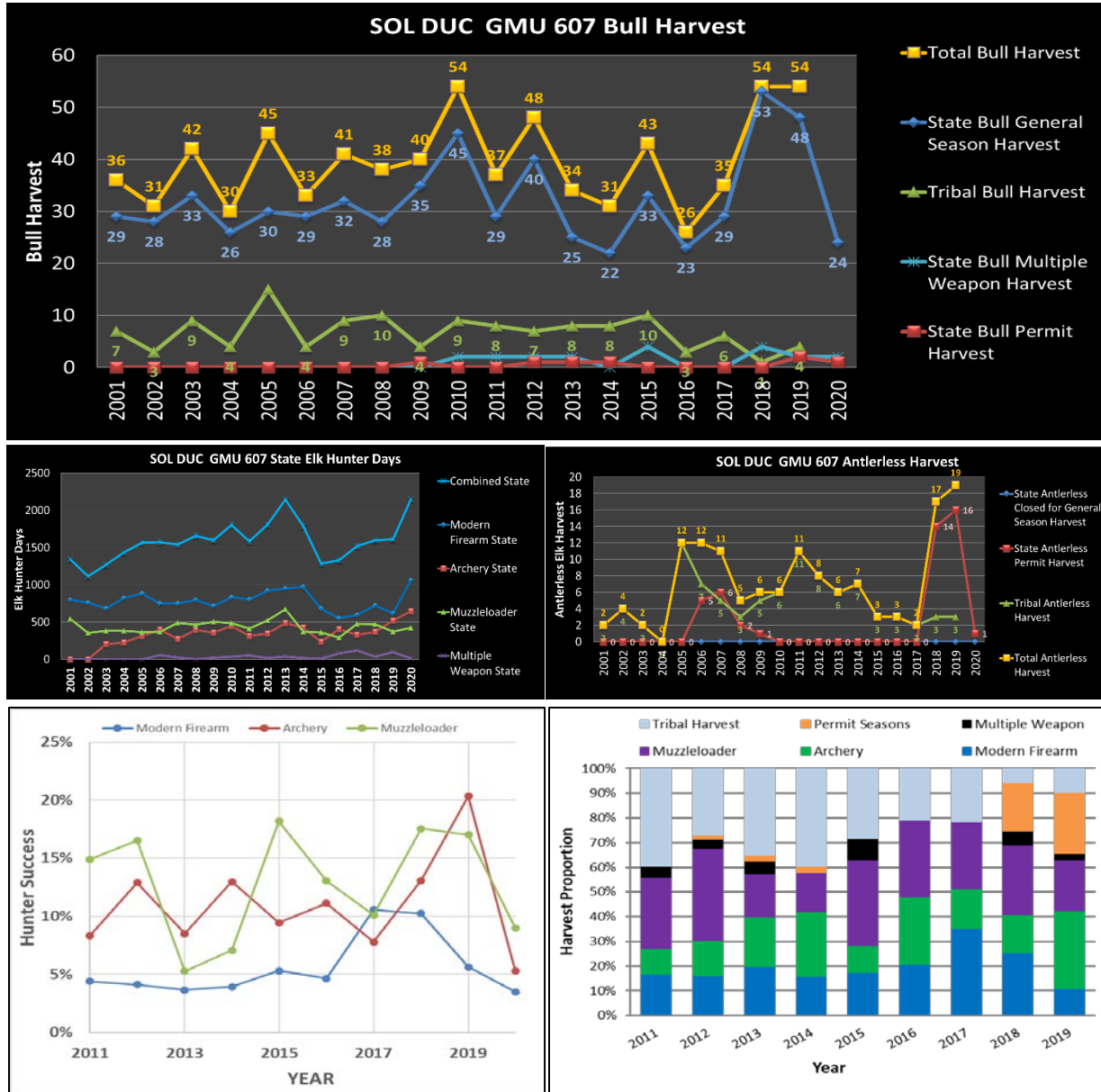


Figure 9. Sol Duc GMU 607 bull and antlerless elk harvest, state elk hunter days, hunter success and proportion of harvest (Note that 2020 Data does not include Tribal Harvest).

GMU 612 (Goodman) Elk Hunting

State bull harvest in Goodman has maintained harvest numbers 35 and over since 2017, doubling the early 2001-2004 harvest estimates of less than 20 (Figure 10).

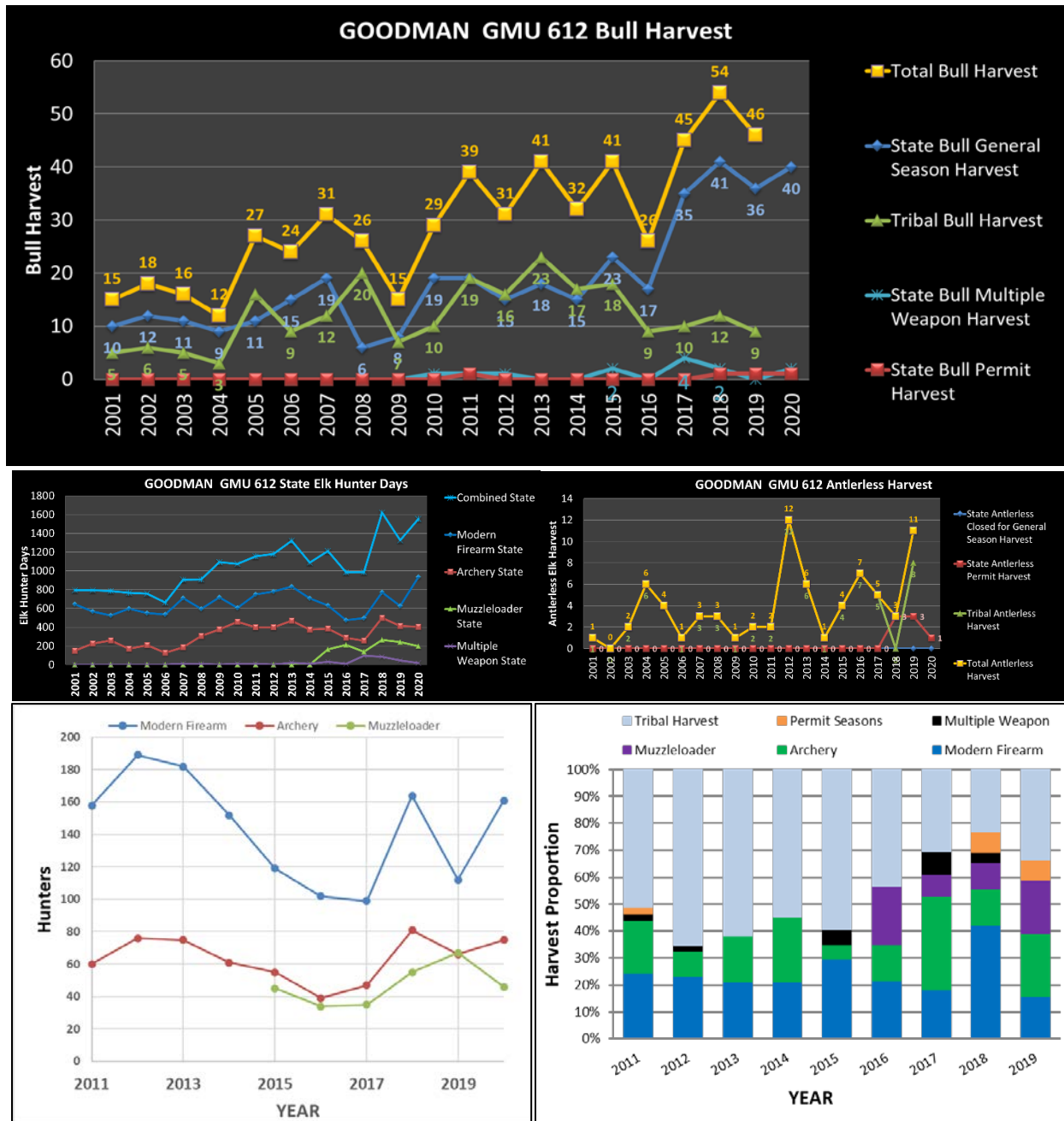


Figure 10. Goodman GMU 612 bull and antlerless harvest, state elk hunter days and number of hunters, and elk harvest proportion (Note that 2020 Data does not include Tribal Harvest).

The total number of state hunter days in GMU 612 has remained constant over the years, not dropping below 800 days since 2006, while in recent years it has increased to 1,300-1,600 range. In 2015, a new Muzzleloader season opened in GMU 612, resulting in a modest amount of

muzzleloader hunter days (Figure 10). The muzzleloader hunter success has been over 10% until 2020 when it dropped to less than 5%, while modern firearm hunter success has been between 5-15%, with a bump above 15% in 2020 (Figure 11). Archery success has ranged between 5 and 15% most years, with a jump to 36% in 2017 and more recently 18% in 2019. In 2018, state hunters got a new antlerless elk permit opportunity, resulting in a harvest of three in both 2018 and 2019, then a harvest of one in 2020.

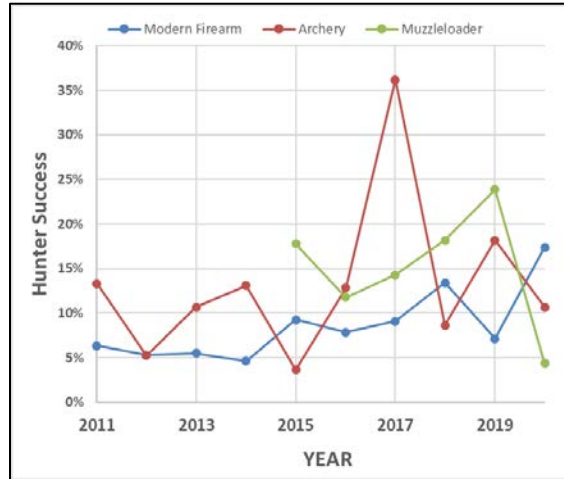


Figure 11. Goodman GMU 612 State Hunter Success.



GMU 615 (Clearwater) Elk Hunting

GMU 615 has had the most elk harvest of all GMUs in District 16 since 2008 (Figure 2). The total elk bull harvest trend has fluctuated considerably the last five years, with a low of 46 in 2017 and a high of 108 in 2016 (Figure 12). The Clearwater total bull harvest was on the high end at 95 in 2019. State harvest remained steady between 2019 and 2020, with tribal harvest not yet reported.

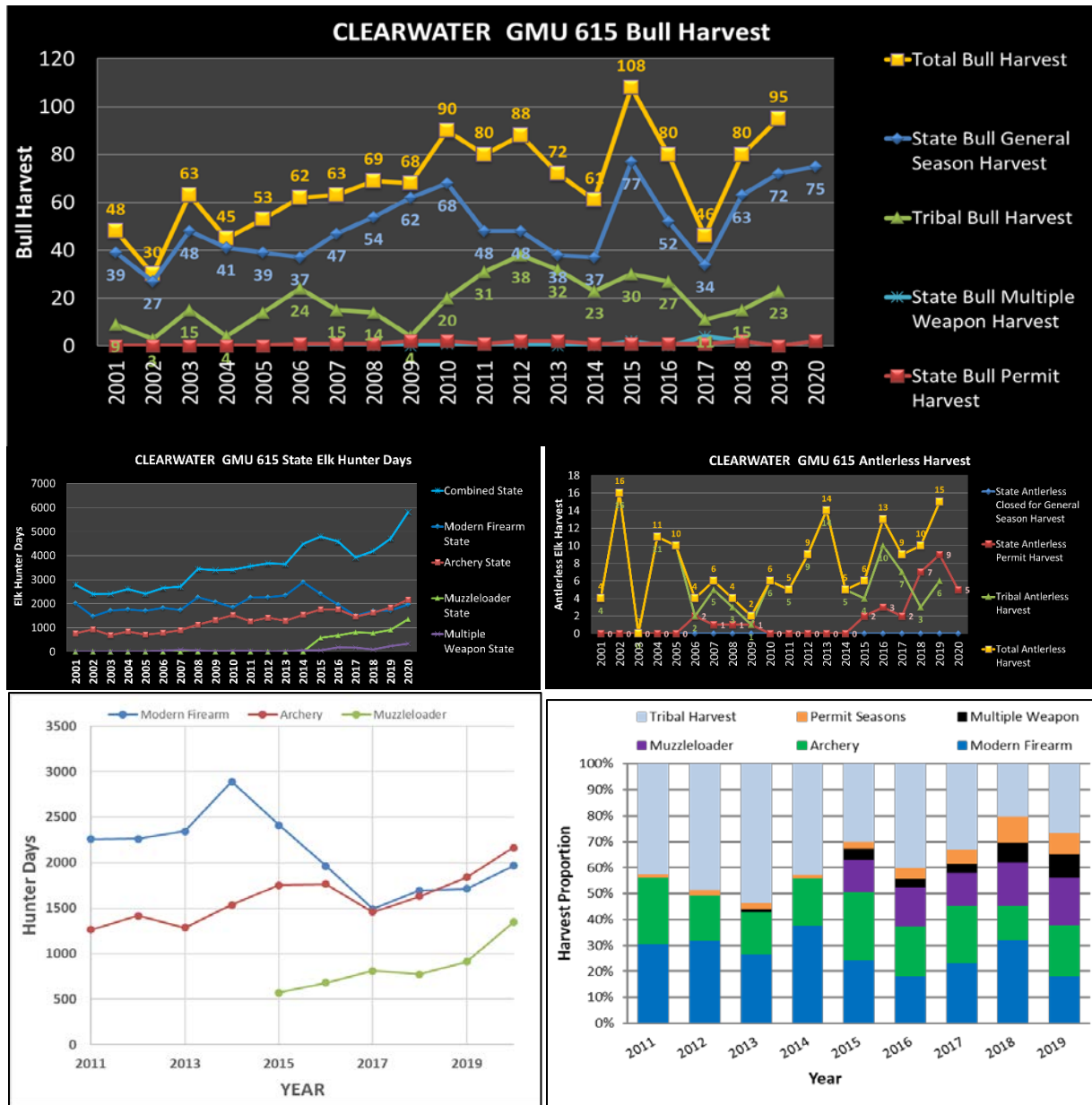


Figure 12. Clearwater GMU 615 bull and antlerless harvest, State elk hunter days and number of hunters and proportion of harvest (Note that 2020 Data does not include Tribal Harvest)

Hunter success for GMU 615 falls within a narrow range for all state hunters, reliably between 4 and 12% (Figure 13). Muzzleloader season opened in 2015. The overall total number of hunter

days remained constant, a result of increased muzzleloader hunter days and an almost equal decrease of modern firearm hunter days.

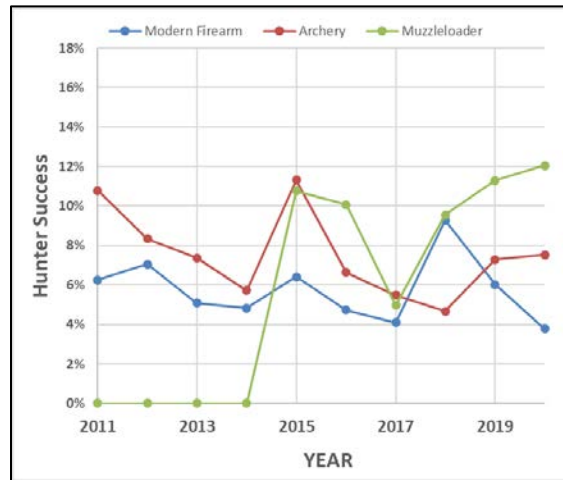


Figure 13. GMU 615 bull elk State hunter days and success.

GMU 621 (Olympic) Elk Hunting

Olympic GMU 621 elk hunt opportunity is limited to permit hunts and an occasional damage hunt harvest. The permit hunts can be a great opportunity, if the weather and elk use patterns are favorable. Most of the hunting opportunity in Olympic GMU 621 is within District 15. Please review the Hunting Prospects for District 15. Harvest is generally between 10 and 20 bull elk (Figure 14).

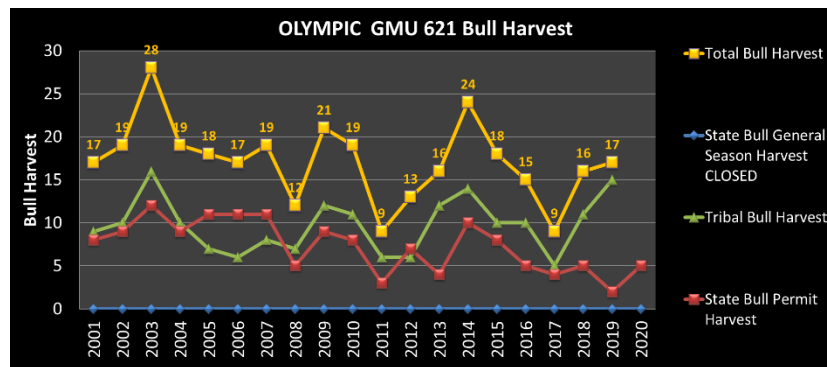


Figure 14. GMU 621 bull harvest from 2001 to 2020 (Note that 2020 Data does not include Tribal Harvest).

GMU 624 (Coyle) Elk Hunting

GMU 624 is not a prime elk hunting GMU with extremely low harvest (Figure 15). The source of GMU 624 elk harvest are small groups of elk that may have split off from the Dungeness herd or other east Olympic Peninsula elk herds. Over the years, WDFW has received reports of small groups of elk in various locations within GMU 624, mostly within District 15. See District 15 [Hunting Prospects](http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/locations/prospects) online at wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/locations/prospects.

Much of the ownership in these areas is private, typically small farms. Securing permission for hunting in much of this area can be difficult. When the Legislature tasked WDFW to consider closing the GMU to elk hunting due to the lack of opportunity overall, WDFW decided to retain the hunting season, which can be a tool to resolve some damage control. If elk abundance increases in this GMU, elk harvest opportunity should increase as well.

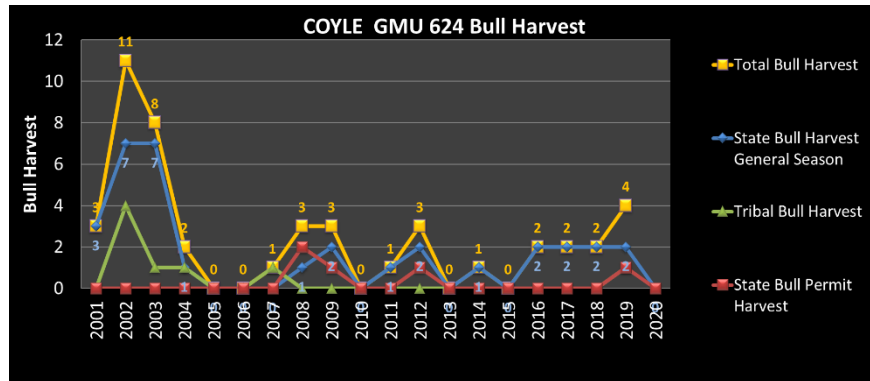


Figure 15. GMU 624 bull harvest from 2001 to 2020 (Note that 2020 Data does not include Tribal Harvest).

NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES AND NOTEWORTHY REGS

WDFW has adopted night hunting and hound hunting regulations during deer and elk hunting seasons in recent years. See page 21 of Washington’s Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations pamphlet.

Unmanned Aircraft: WAC 220-413-070 “Using Aircraft” to include unmanned aircraft. See page 87 of the Big Game pamphlet. “It is illegal to: Hunt game animals, game birds, or migratory birds on the day one has operated an unmanned aircraft.” Page 87 of the Big Game pamphlet.

Using Dogs: (WAC 220-413-060) Hunting wild animals (except rabbits and hares) with dogs (hounds) during the months of October or November during the dates established for modern firearm deer or elk general seasons in eastern and western Washington is prohibited. Page 87 of the Big Game pamphlet.

People with disabilities: Note new regulations referenced on page 92 of the Big Game pamphlet.

ELK HOOF DISEASE (TREPONEME BACTERIA)

Since 2008, WDFW has received dramatically increasing reports of elk with deformed, broken, or missing in southwest Washington, with sporadic observations in other areas west of the Cascade Range, including within the Olympic Elk Herd area. While elk are susceptible to many conditions which result in limping or hoof deformities, the prevalence and severity of this new affliction suggested something altogether different. WDFW diagnostic research (2009 – 2014), in conjunction with a panel of scientific advisors, found that these hoof abnormalities were strongly associated with treponeme bacteria, known to cause a hoof disease of cattle, sheep, and goats called digital dermatitis. Although digital dermatitis has affected the livestock industry for decades, Treponeme-Associated Hoof Disease (TAHD) is the first known instance of digital dermatitis in a wild ungulate. The disease is currently concentrated in southwestern Washington where prevalence is highest in Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and western Lewis counties. The disease is also present at lower prevalence in elk herds that are distant and discrete from the core affected area. Including elk from the Olympic herd.

All of District 16 falls within the Olympic elk herd range. TAHD is most prevalent among elk on the southern end of the Olympic Peninsula, however recent detections on the northern end confirm the disease is spreading to other portions of the Olympic elk herd range. The WDFW has confirmed the presence of TAHD from elk sampled in GMUs 603, 607, 621, 624, 636, 638, 648, and 651.

While many questions remain about the disease, several aspects of TAHD in elk are clear:

- **Vulnerability:** The disease appears to be highly infectious among elk, but there is no evidence that it affects humans. TAHD can affect any hoof in any elk, young or old, male, or female.
- **Hooves only:** Tests show the disease is limited to animals' hooves and does not affect their meat or organs. If the meat looks normal and if hunters harvest, process and cook it practicing good hygiene, it is probably safe to eat.
- **No treatment:** There is no vaccine to prevent the disease, nor are there any proven options for treating it in the field. Similar diseases in livestock are treated by cleaning and bandaging their hooves and giving them foot baths, but that is not a realistic option for free-ranging elk.

How hunters can help:

- Harvest a limping elk from any 400, 500, 600 series GMUs
- Turn in your elk hooves along with complete registration forms at one of several collection sites in western Washington
- Report elk: Hunters can help WDFW track TAHD by reporting observations of both affected and unaffected elk on the department's online reporting form.

- Clean shoes and tires: Anyone who hikes or drives off-road in a known affected area can help minimize the risk of spreading the disease to new areas by removing all mud from their shoes and tires before leaving the area.

In 2021, WDFW is implementing an incentive-based pilot program to encourage west-side (400, 500, 600 series GMUs) hunters to harvest limping elk, potentially reducing prevalence of the disease over time. This program aims to increase the proportion of limping elk in the total harvest, rather than increase elk harvest overall. General season or permit hunters can choose to participate in the program by submitting elk hooves at one of the many collection sites in western Washington. Hunters that submit hooves with signs of TAHD (for example, abnormal hooves) will be automatically entered into a drawing for a special incentive permit for the following license year. Multiple bull permits in western Washington with season dates of Sep. 1 – Dec 31 will be awarded. Additionally, participants will receive a custom, waterproof license holder.

WDFW is working with scientists, veterinarians, outdoor organizations, tribal governments, and others to better understand and manage TAHD. For more information about TAHD, see WDFW's website at wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_disease/. Additional information on TAHD and this incentive program can also be found on page 65 of the Big Game Hunting Pamphlet.

DEER

GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

WDFW continues to accomplish black-tailed deer monitoring by tracking the harvest and hunting effort and gathering data on survivability, recruitment, and mortality rates using studies of collared deer and aerial census methods.

WDFW district 16 wildlife biologists continue to research Olympic Peninsula black-tailed deer and assist tribal biologists with ongoing deer studies. Assignments include collaring, deer tracking, and locating collared deer mortalities to identify mortality causes.

According to Dr. Cliff Rice, the lead researcher for recent western Washington black-tailed deer research, some of the largest does captured in western Washington were captured west of the Dungeness on the lower foothills in a mix of DNR and private land.



WHICH GMU SHOULD DEER HUNTERS HUNT?

Western District 16

Western District 16 is generally sparse of deer. This area includes GMUs 601 (Hoko), 602 (Dickey), 603 (Pysht), 607 (Sol Duc), 612 (Goodman), and 615 (Clearwater). Observations and published reports indicate that deer population numbers and density are generally low throughout the district west of the Elwha River. West Olympic Peninsula tribes dropped antlerless harvest in the western GMUs in 2010. Following are links to some deer research in the Hoko GMU:

Factors affecting the survival of black-tailed deer fawns: files.nwifc.org/wildlife/makah-fawn-report-final-201102.pdf

- Abstract of a study on the influence of hair loss syndrome (HLS) on black-tailed deer fawn survival onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/jwmg.772.

Eastern District 16

Eastern District 16 includes the northwestern portion of GMU 621 (Olympic) and the northern portion of GMU 624 (Coyle), which extend east and south into District 15 (eastern Jefferson County). Because WDFW records the data on harvest by GMU, the harvest figures presented here include all GMU 621 and 624, extending into District 15. The portion of District 16 east of the Elwha River has black-tailed deer populations that are readily observed (presumably due to higher densities) and in many areas can often be observed in groups, especially in the vicinity of farmland. In these areas, the deer are often considered to be a nuisance by property owners and agricultural operations, especially in GMU 624. Read more about Deer Area 6020 in [Deer Areas](#) section on Page 40.

GMU 624 does have firearm restrictions, with no centerfire or rimfire rifles allowed. Read more about that in the [Firearm Restrictions](#) section on Page 90.

The mid and lower elevations of GMU 621 have high densities of deer as well, with some scattered blocks of DNR ownership that offer hunting on public land. Private industrial timber lands and DNR-managed lands are largely gated due to timber theft, dumping, vandalism, and other problems. However, hunters can access many of these roads on foot or with mountain bikes, giving those willing to do the work access to deer that don't get as much hunting pressure. Be sure to check with the appropriate landowner/manager and obey all posted rules and regulations.

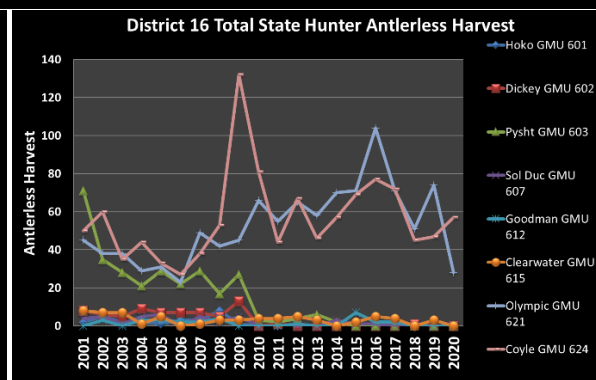
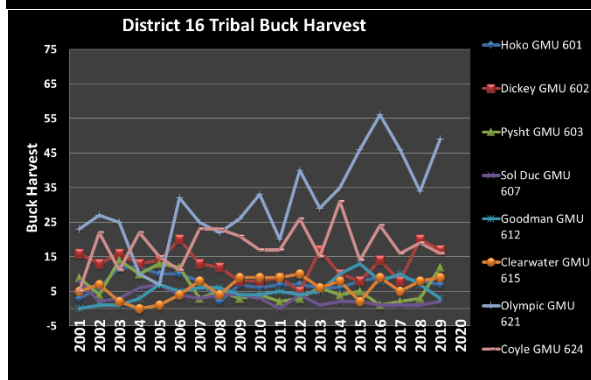
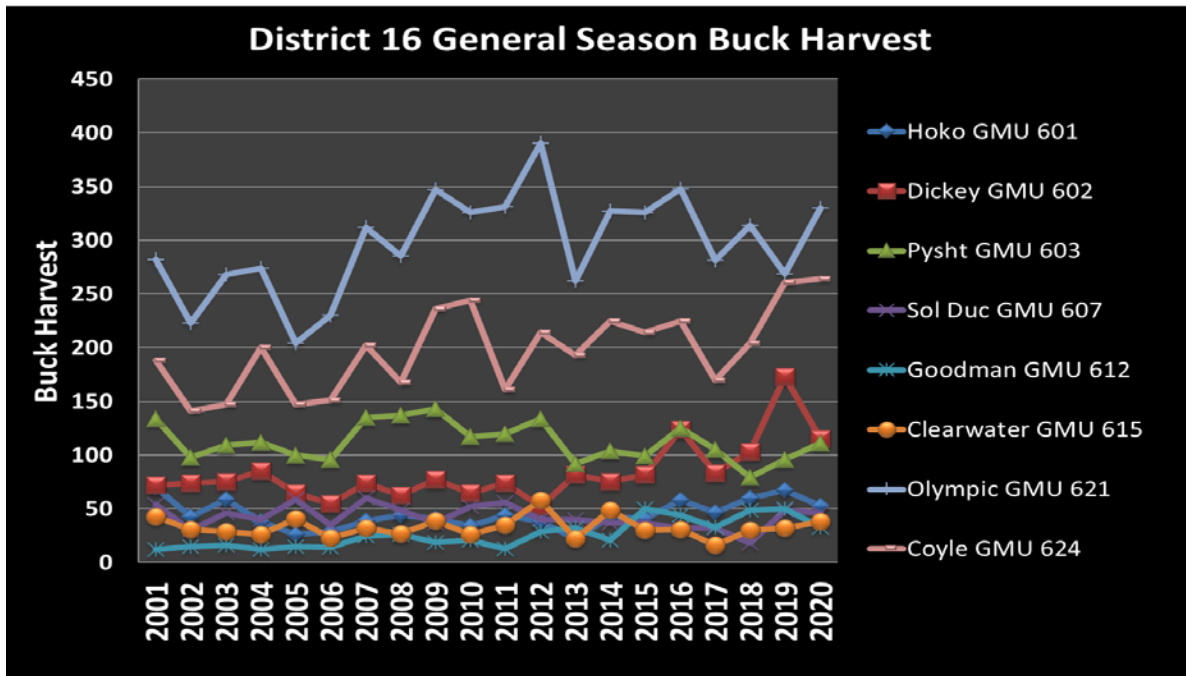
The key to a successful harvest is securing the appropriate permission to hunt on private land and scouting the area prior to the hunting season. Hunters who intend to target deer in developed areas would be well advised to check with local jurisdictions regarding firearm restrictions.

DISTRICT 16 BLACK-TAILED DEER HUNTING AND HARVEST RECORDS

Annual harvest reports and harvest statistics for deer based on hunter reporting can be found on the WDFW website wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/management/game-harvest .

See the [District 15 Hunting Prospects](#) for more information on GMU 621 and GMU 624.

Buck harvest within District 16 GMUs is highest on the eastern half and lower as one goes further west. The four GMUs with the lowest buck harvest are Clearwater, Goodman, Pysht, and Hoko, is the most western GMU in the District (Figure 16). Tribal harvest ranges within 5-20 percent of the total deer harvest in District 16 GMUs.



Total 2020 Buck Harvest by GMU	
200+ bucks	Olympic GMU 621
	Coyle GMU 624
100-200 bucks	Dickey GMU 602 Pysht GMU 603
< 100 bucks	Sol Duc GMU 607 Goodman GMU 612 Clearwater GMU 615 Hoko GMU 601

Figure 16. District 16 buck harvest total, general season harvests and tribal harvest.

Archery Deer Hunting

Archery deer hunting in District 16 is concentrated in GMU 621 and GMU 624 (GMUs 621 and 624 are in both District 15 and 16). GMU 603 had moderate participation by archery hunters prior to 2010, but in recent years it has dropped, comparable now to GMU 615 archery hunter days (Figure 17).

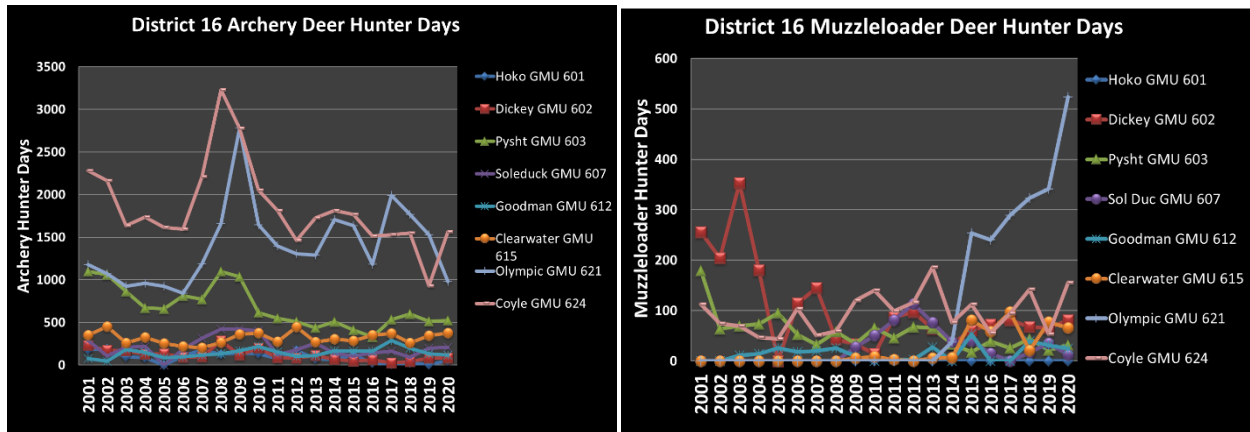


Figure 17. District 16 archery and muzzleloader hunter days.

Muzzleloader Deer Hunting

Muzzleloader deer hunting has recently increased in GMU 621, while all the other GMUs in District 16 reportedly receive less than 200 hunter days annually (Figure 17). Other GMUs remain consistent with the amount of muzzleloader hunter days.

Modern Firearm Deer Hunting

Modern firearm hunters have maintained a steady participation level in the GMUs in District 16 (Figure 18).

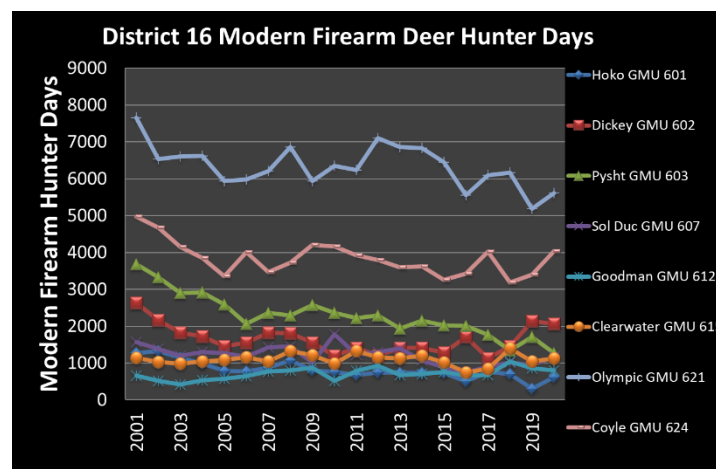


Figure 18. District 16 modern firearm deer hunter days.

DEER AREAS

WDFW established Deer Area 6020 years ago to allow hunters to harvest does to help reduce deer conflicts within the area north of Highway 101 between Port Angeles and eastern Miller Peninsula, an area rich with high abundances of deer. The Department allows doe harvest within Deer Area 6020 during the general seasons. This area is primarily private land, but it is worth inquiring with landowners about hunting access. Note that much of the state land on Miller Peninsula is state park land where hunting is not allowed. Refer to the firearm restrictions section of the Big Game pamphlet if you are considering this area. The entirety of GMU 624 within District 16 (Clallam County) has [firearm restriction](#) regulations. No hunting is allowed with centerfire or rimfire rifles.

NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES

Night hunting, hound hunting and permits during deer and elk hunting seasons have been adopted in recent years. See page 87 of Washington’s Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations pamphlet.

Unmanned aircraft: Wording has been added to WAC 220-413-070 “Using Aircraft” to include unmanned aircraft. See page 87 of the Big Game pamphlet.

People with disabilities: Note new regulations referenced on page 92 of the Big Game pamphlet.



Deer observed walking along a beach grassland

BEAR



GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

WDFW's goals for black bear management are to:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage black bear and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations;
2. Minimize threats to public safety from black bears, while at the same time maintaining a sustainable and viable bear population;
3. Manage black bear for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes, including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by tribal members, wildlife viewing, and photography; and
4. Manage populations statewide for a sustained yield. For management purposes, the state is divided into nine Black Bear Management Units (BBMUs). Harvest levels vary between BBMU depending on local population dynamics and environmental conditions.

District 16 is located nearly entirely within the designated Coastal Black Bear Management Unit (BBMU) except for GMU 624, which is in the Puget Sound BBMU. This area is mostly private land with firearm restrictions. There is no spring bear permit hunt season within the district. Fall black bear hunting is allowed in all GMUs within the district. The current black bear hunting season guidelines for both the Coastal BBMU and Puget Sound BBMU are designed to maintain black bear populations at their current level. The fall black bear hunting season for all District 16 units is Aug. 1 to Nov. 15, 2021. There are no special permit spring bear hunts within the district. Hunters can buy up to two bear tags during each license year.

Wildlife managers use three statistics to assess black bear harvest:

- Proportion of females harvested (no more than 35-39 percent of harvest)
- Median age of harvested females (range no younger than 5-6 years)
- Median age of harvested males (range no younger than 2-4 years)

WDFW does not conduct annual surveys to monitor trends in black bear population size and instead uses harvest data trends for population estimates or indices. Wildlife managers believe that black bear populations are stable in District 16. Black bears occur throughout District 16, but population densities vary among GMUs.

In 2013, the Department began work to estimate black bear density statewide. This research originated in the North Cascade Mountains using two detection methods, non-invasive DNA collection using barbed-wire hair collection and physical capture and deployment of global positioning system (GPS) collars. Results showed that while density varied by human development and habitat productivity, it averaged 20 bears/100 km² in western Cascades and 19 bears/100 km² in eastern Cascades (Welfelt et al. 2019). In the western Washington study area, average total density estimates (including cubs) were nearly 50% lower than expected prior to this research (20 vs 39/100 km²). Because these results showed that density could vary widely by habitat types within limited areas, WDFW determined that density should not be extrapolated to a statewide or even region-wide black bear density given the variability of habitats. Thus, the Department needs more data to evaluate which habitat and management factors are associated with variations in bear density at a broad scale. Depending on funding, a non-invasive DNA collection project is anticipated to be replicated in District 16 next spring/summer. With multiple density estimates in a variety of habitats, WDFW can examine what habitat and human factors are associated black bear density across Washington State and estimate statewide population abundance more accurately. Continued sampling will also allow for appropriate inferences to be made regarding harvest levels and the effects of management actions.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2021 SEASON

The prospects for harvesting a black bear in District 16 remain good to excellent. Although some hunters specifically target black bears, hunters harvest most bears opportunistically during general deer and elk seasons. Consequently, annual harvest and hunter success can vary quite a bit from one year to the next. The variability in the district is likely higher for hunters who specifically hunt black bears versus those who buy a bear tag just in case they see one while deer or elk hunting. During the 2020 season, hunters harvested 77 bears within District 16 GMUs. Hunters harvested an additional 42 bears in GMU 621 and seven bears in GMU 624, both of which include a portion of District 15. Hunter success during the 2020 season ranged from 2% in GMU 601 to 16% in GMU 602. There was a significant increase in the number of bears harvested in GMU 602 (Dickey) last season. GMU 615 (Clearwater) had the highest black bear harvest in the district in 2019 with 40 bears harvested, but only 15 bears were harvested in this GMU last season. The harvest in GMU 621 (Olympic) continues to remain consistent with a total of 42 bears. This is the highest harvest for District 16, but a major portion of this Game Management

Unit is in District 15. Hunters can view summaries of statewide and GMU harvest reports in two tables (Table 3 and Table 4). The harvested report table also represents the percentage of male and female black bear harvest.

Table 3. Black bear 2020 harvest and hunter effort for District 16 GMU's.

WASHINGTON						
STATEWIDE BLACK BEAR HARVEST STATISTICS						
FOR THE 2019 HUNTING SEASON						
BMU	Bear Management Unit Name	Total Harvest	Number Hunters	Hunter Success Rate	Hunter Days	Days/Kill
1	Coastal	333	3,723	9%	36,094	108
2	Puget Sound	134	1,732	8%	14,434	108

Table 4. Black bear 2020 harvest reports for District 16 GMU's.

GMU	Fall Male Harvest	Fall Female Harvest	Total Harvest	Number Hunters	Hunter Success	Hunter Days	Days/Kills
BMU 1 COASTAL							
601 - HOKO	2	0	2	91	2%	569	285
602 - DICKEY	22	9	31	191	16%	1,140	37
603 - PYSHT	2	5	7	69	10%	549	78
607 - SOL DUC	5	3	8	114	7%	630	79
612 - GOODMAN	3	4	7	56	13%	453	65
615 - CLEARWATER	8	7	15	206	7%	1,185	79
618 - MATHENY	4	3	7	49	14%	327	47
621 - OLYMPIC	31	11	42	335	13%	2,345	56
BMU 2 PUGET SOUND							
624 - COYLE	5	2	7	116	6%	864	123

HOW TO LOCATE AND HARVEST A BLACK BEAR

State DNR and federal (USFS) lands continue to provide the best opportunities for bear hunting within the district. WDFW encourages hunters to scout for signs of bears (scat and tree bark peeling) in regenerating timber stands. Access behind gated roads is largely available to those willing to walk or mountain bike, and there are ample numbers of clear cuts/younger age class regeneration units that will attract bears. At higher elevations, those willing to hike in and pack out can pursue bears in classic environments where spot-and-stalk opportunities await. The USFS website has forest health maps that identify areas where bear damage has been detected from aerial surveys. You can find the aerial forest health detection maps at:

fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/forest-grasslandhealth/insects-diseases/?cid=stelprdb5294941



Scouting is an extremely important factor that hunters should consider when specifically hunting for black bears in District 16. Although black bears are common and occur in some areas at high densities, they are seen infrequently because of the thick vegetation that dominates the Olympic Peninsula landscape. Black bears can occur in a variety of habitat types, so it can be difficult to narrow down where to search for them. In the early fall, hunters should focus their efforts at higher elevations and in open terrain (hillsides, etc.) and clear-cut areas. Huckleberries ripen throughout the summer, but in the early fall the most remaining berries are typically at higher elevations. A good berry patch yielding much fruit would be a good place to hunt. Bears can also look in recent timber harvests that contain many berry-producing shrubs, including huckleberries, serviceberries, snowberries, blackberries, salmonberries, thimbleberries, and salal berries. During the fall, hunters need to find openings with these characteristics and hike through them to see if there is any bear sign. If they do find fresh sign, odds are there is a bear frequenting the area. If hunters are patient and sit for extended periods of time watching these areas, they stand a reasonable chance of harvesting a bear. Since the Olympic Peninsula is experiencing a dry and warm summer, it can be expected that bears may move into berry foraging areas earlier this season.



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

WDFW strongly urges bear hunters not to shoot sows with cubs. Some cubs that accompany their mother's may tend to lag behind and may not be obvious to hunters. Bear cubs may also be present in trees or well-hidden in dense vegetation in the vicinity. Please observe and be patient before shooting. The past few seasons, several orphaned cubs were reported in Region 6. Some of these cubs were captured and taken to rehabilitation facilities. It is mandatory (per [WAC 220-415-090](#)) that hunters who harvest a bear submit a premolar tooth with a tooth envelope, available at WDFW offices. The premolar tooth is located behind the canine tooth (toward the throat) of the upper jaw. The use of hounds and/or bait to hunt black bear is prohibited statewide ([RCW 77.15.245](#)).

COUGAR



GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

Cougars occur throughout District 16, but local densities can vary among GMUs. WDFW manages cougars in District 16 to maintain a stable cougar population. The statewide goals for cougar are:

1. Preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage cougar and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations.
2. Minimize human/cougar conflict.
3. Manage cougar for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by tribal members, wildlife viewing, and photography.
4. Manage statewide cougar populations for a sustained yield.
5. Improve WDFW's understanding of predator-prey relationships.

Since the 2012 – 2013 hunting season, WDFW changed cougar harvest management throughout Washington. The biggest change was shifting away from using season length or permit seasons to manage the number of cougars harvested, and instead using a standard liberal season coupled with harvest guidelines. The intent was to have a longer season, without any hunting implement restrictions, and only close cougar seasons in specific areas if harvest reached or exceeded a

harvest guideline. WDFW administers this hunt structure within 50 population Management units (PMU²s). District 16 includes PMU 42, 43, and 45.

To accomplish harvest goals, WDFW established an early and a late general season for defined hunt areas. The early season is September 1 – December 31 and no harvest limits apply even if harvest exceeds the guideline. Beginning in the 2015 hunting season and then continuing in 2021, WDFW extended cougar season dates through April 30. In this late season, (January 1 – April 30), harvest guidelines apply for hunter killed cougars only. However, to hunt cougars after March 31 in a unit open for cougar harvest, hunters need to buy a new hunting license and cougar tag. WDFW examines harvest numbers starting January 1. If the guideline is met or exceeded, the PMU may not open for the late season. Cougar harvest is monitored during the late season and managers close any hunt areas that meet or exceed the harvest guideline. Over the past 5-years, an average of 66% of the PMU’s remained open to hunters through April 30. Closures occur on the PMU level, resulting in less impact to hunter opportunity. WDFW advises anyone planning to hunt cougar after January 1 to confirm the cougar season is open in the desired hunting area.

Hunters can call 1-866-364-4868 to determine if a specific hunt area is open after December 31. For more information related to the harvest guidelines management approach, please visit: wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/big-game/cougar. The agency recently formed an internal group to assess the results of implementing the cougar harvest hunting structure. Table 5 provides the harvest guidelines for each District 16 hunt area for 2021 – 2022. This table also provides the cougar harvest for the 2020 – 2021 season for state hunters.

Hunt Area	Harvest Guideline	
	2021-2022	2020-2021 Harvest
PMU 42 - 601, 602, 603, 612	4-6	1
PMU 43 - 607, 615	3-4	4
PMU 45 - 621, 624, 627, 633	None	6

Table 5. Cougar Harvest Guidelines for 2021-2022 and State Hunter Reported Harvest for 2020-2021.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2021 - 2022 SEASON

Most cougar harvest within the district comes from opportunistic encounters while hunters are pursuing deer, elk, or other activities. The total cougar harvest in District 16 can vary from year to year. Table 6 presents total cougar hunting and other mortality while table 7 presents status and trend report information as well as harvest totals and mean averages for the past three seasons (2017 – 2020). Hunters harvested 11 cougars within the district during the general cougar hunt last season. During the general hunt, hunters harvested one cougar in PMU 42, four cougars in PMU 43, and six cougars in PMU 45, which includes a portion of District 15. These totals don’t include tribal harvest and other mortality. See the [Washington Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations](#) or more information regarding cougar hunting in specific GMUs within the district. Cougars are widespread in the forest lands of District 16. Areas

supporting high numbers of deer and elk provide great opportunity for hunting cougar. GMU 621 consistently has the highest cougar harvest in the district. The other GMUs' cougar harvest numbers fluctuate each year. With the yearly variation, it is hard to predict future harvest, but cougar sightings in the district continue to be somewhat common and there is no reason to suspect much change in the harvest. Under the continuing harvest management guidelines, the two district hunt areas PMU 42 and PMU 43 had not met their harvest guideline in the past eight seasons. However, during the late season cougar hunt in PMU 43 the harvest guideline of 4 cougars was met and the unit was closed to further cougar hunting on February 26, 2021. This highlights that hunters should monitor closures and plan accordingly. One cougar hunter that WDFW's assistant district biologist contacted last season was not aware that there was a harvest guideline for the area he had harvested his cougar.

Table 6. Total cougar harvest 2020 – 2021 for PMUs within District 16 (and a portion of District 15) by state hunters. The harvest of male and female cougars is represented. Tribal hunting not included.

PMU 42 – (GMU 601, 602, 603, and 612)									
GENERAL HUNTING				OTHER MORTALITY				COMBINED	
Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Total	
1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	

PMU 43 – (GMU 607 and 615)									
GENERAL HUNTING				OTHER MORTALITY				COMBINED	
Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Total	
3	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	

PMU 45 – (GMU 621, 624, 627, and 633)									
GENERAL HUNTING				OTHER MORTALITY				COMBINED	
Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Total	
4	2	0	6	3	2	0	5	11	

Table 7. Cougar harvest in District 16 (and portion of District 15) for 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21.

Cougar Status and Trend Report				
	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 – 2021	3-Year
	HARVEST	HARVEST	HARVEST	Mean Harvest
GMUs 601, 602, 603, 612	2	1	1	1.33
GMUs 607, 615	2	1	4	2.33
GMUs 621, 624, 627, 633	7	3	6	5.33
Total	11	5	11	

* Tribal harvest or other sources of mortality not included.



Most of the cougars that the assistant district biologist seals each season have been harvested by hunters who encounter the animals while out deer or elk hunting. However, during the 2019-2020 season, several hunters were successful when specifically targeting cougars after snow events. One father and son hunting team was fortunate to harvest adult male cougars a few weeks apart in two different locations within GMU 615. Enforcement officers in the district report low cougar hunting pressure in most GMUs in previous years. A few cougars were

removed in District 16 last season due to depredation concerns with livestock and domestic animals.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

It is unlawful to kill or possess spotted cougar kittens (usually less than 80 pounds) or adult cougars accompanied by spotted kittens. WDFW strongly encourages cougar hunters to search for possible multiple tracks when pursuing an animal. Female cougars may have kittens in trees or in dense vegetation nearby. Please be very observant and patient before shooting. During the 2015 – 2016 season, WDFW enforcement officers and biologists had to capture two orphaned cougar kittens near Joyce. One kitten later died, and the other kitten will remain in captivity at a zoo. Remember, if you harvest a cougar, there are mandatory reporting and sealing requirements. Voter initiative 655 banned the use of hounds to hunt cougars in the state. Hunting with the aid of dogs is prohibited statewide except during cougar management removals authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Commission and for research purposes.



NOTABLE CHANGES

The Cougar Harvest for Guideline for GMU's 601, 602, 603, and 612 was changed last season and will remain at 4-6. The Cougar Harvest Guideline for GMUs 607 and 615 was changed from 4 to a range 3-4 last season and this harvest guideline is still in effect. Subadult cougars no longer count towards the cougar harvest guideline. A valid 2022-23 cougar license and tag is required to hunt cougar in April 2022.

MANDATORY REPORTING/SEALING

Successful cougar hunters must report their cougar harvest to the cougar hotline at: 1-866-364-4868 within 72 hours of harvest and have the cougar pelt sealed within five days of notification. This is the same hotline hunters can use to check if cougar hunt areas are open or closed. A premolar tooth and tissue sample will be taken. See the [Washington Big Game Hunting Seasons and Rules](#) for more specific details about cougar sealing requirements.



COUGAR OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

WDFW is committed to minimizing human-wildlife conflict. With the increase of the human population in Washington, there are more recreationists in cougar habitat, an increase in small livestock farms near residences, along with intentional and unintentional feeding of wildlife around homes. It is essential to raise public awareness and keep both people and cougars safe. A young male cougar killed a mountain biker near North Bend in the spring of 2018. This type of incident is extremely rare and was only the second known human fatality from a cougar in Washington State. Many people in Washington know little about cougar behavior and are not aware of what steps are necessary to avoid negative encounters. Please see: wdfw.wa.gov/living/cougars.html to learn more about cougar/human interactions or contact a WDFW Regional Office for a copy of the 2018 “Discover Washington’s Cougars” brochure.

DUCKS

COMMON SPECIES

Much of the waterfowl hunting opportunity in District 16 is east of Port Angeles, centered in the Lower Dungeness Basin. The basin has a high density of wintering waterfowl and holds about 7% of the western Washington breeding waterfowl population.

Keep in mind that trumpeter swan numbers have increased in the Dungeness valley in the past five years, and they have been documented near the Dungeness river mouth. WDFW encourages Waterfowl hunters to know all identification features for trumpeter swans and snow geese. It is illegal to shoot trumpeter swans.

CONCENTRATION AREAS

District biologists have focused on documenting areas with high waterfowl concentrations in Clallam County during the last several years, mapping high use areas during breeding and wintering periods.

The Dungeness Basin is an area of consistently high waterfowl concentrations, even amidst the ongoing development of open space habitats. Fortunately, a rich mix of farmland, wetlands, coastal habitats, and conserved open space retain the necessary food and cover for many wintering waterfowl. Concentrations of waterfowl in freshwater habitats diminish drastically west of the Elwha and Lyre Rivers.

POPULATION STATUS

Midwinter waterfowl survey counts in District 16 represent about 2% of all waterfowl counted in the state. Midwinter populations include resident and migratory populations. The links below provide more information on the population status.

- USFWS Waterfowl Population Status 2020
[fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/Population-status/Waterfowl/WaterfowlPopulationStatusReport20.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/Population-status/Waterfowl/WaterfowlPopulationStatusReport20.pdf)



fws.gov/refuges/RefugeUpdate/MarApr_2012/fourflyways.html

In 2019, the total duck breeding population estimate within the Dungeness was 3,060, a drop from 5,317 in 2018. The Dungeness transect counts have ranged from 3,060 to 7,518 since 2010. In 2019, the total duck breeding population estimate within the Dungeness was 70% mallards and 10% wood ducks. In 2010, WDFW adopted new methods for western Washington breeding waterfowl surveys, shifting from ground counts to conducting aerial surveys. The Dungeness count has been 4-15% of the total breeding ducks in Western Washington from 2010 to 2016. Washington breeding waterfowl population monitoring can be found in the 2020 Game Status and Trend Report wdfw.wa.gov/publications/02217 on pages 297-353. The greatest factor influencing brood production in the district continues to be loss of habitat to development and increasing human disturbance. Waterfowl numbers are expected to remain moderate in District 16.

Sea ducks have had restrictive bag limits due to concerns about low recruitment rates in sea ducks, increasing interest in sea duck hunting, and the unknown impact of reduced sea duck bag limits on compensatory species, particularly Barrow's goldeneyes led to the measure. The harvest survey indicated a 2019 total harvest of 961 scoters, 118 long-tailed ducks, 172 harlequin ducks and 315 goldeneyes. The reported goldeneye harvest included 45% common goldeneye. Primary harvest areas included Island, Mason, Skagit, Clallam, Pierce, and Whatcom counties.

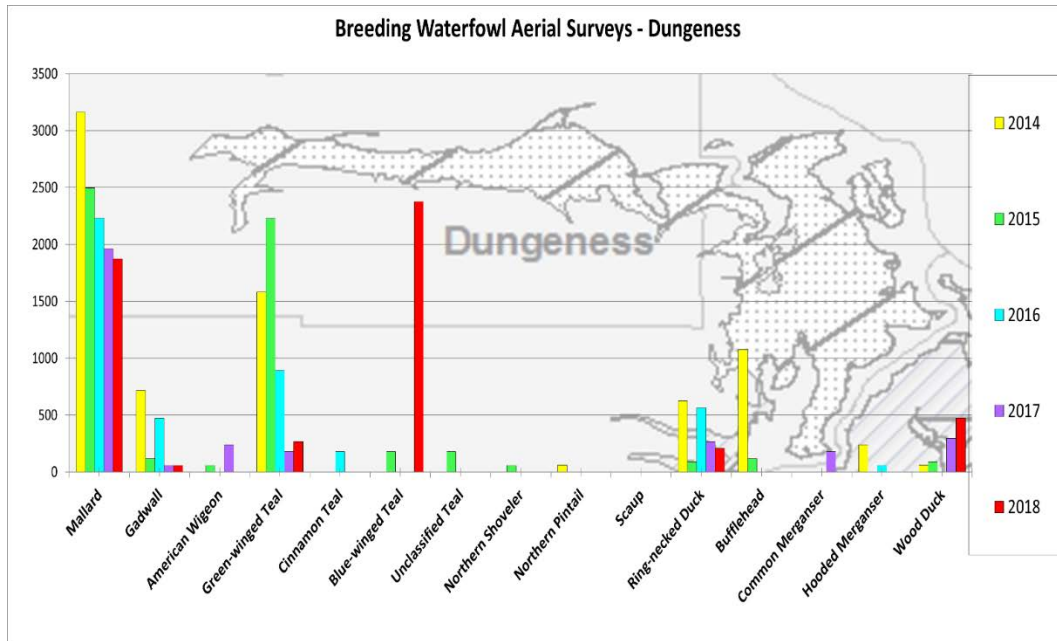


Figure 19. Breeding waterfowl survey counts - with background map showing Dungeness aerial transects, including nearby Elwha, Chimacum, and Quilcene habitats.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2021 PROSPECTS

District 16 has limited access for waterfowl hunting. Some locals in the western portion of the district jump shoot in pools and side channels of the west end rivers, along with other small ponds and flooded gravel pit areas. In 2018, hunters harvested 6,031 ducks in Clallam County, and 1,958 ducks in Jefferson County.

Hunters can find the Office of the Washington State Climatologist website at: link climate.washington.edu/outlook/ Climate Prediction Center (CPC). The CPC September temperature outlook has increased chances of above normal temperatures statewide. The outlook for precipitation is less insightful with equal chances of above, below, or near-normal temperatures.

Similar to the one-month outlook, the three-month CPC temperature outlook for September-October-November has increased chances of above normal statewide, though chances are only slightly increased at 30-40%. The precipitation outlook has increased chances of above normal precipitation totals across the state.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES

Public saltwater hunting opportunities are more numerous than freshwater options in District 16, albeit more difficult in many ways. The regulations and landownerships, including tideland ownerships, make it necessary for hunters to plan ahead. The USFS Dungeness Wildlife Refuge has areas that are closed (Figure 20). Hunting is not allowed on the refuge and some of the refuge boundaries can be difficult to determine in the field.

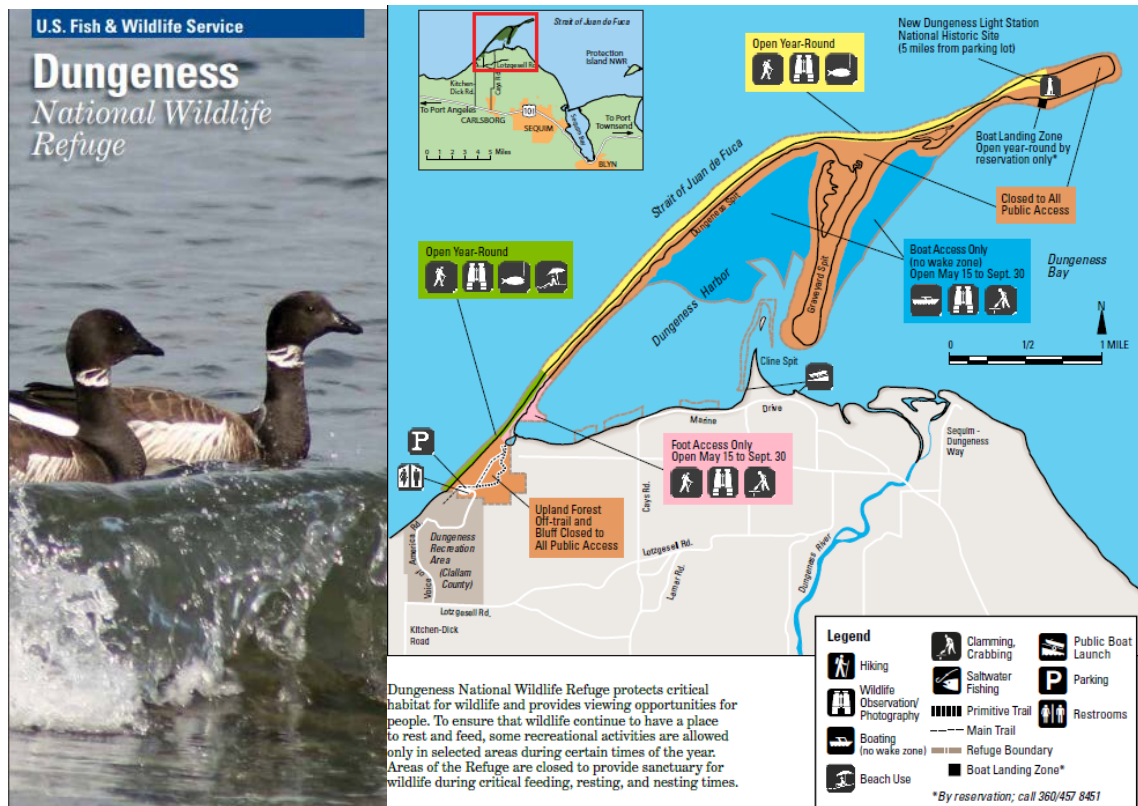


Figure 20. Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge map showing closed areas.

***IMPORTANT INFORMATION IF YOU HUNT FROM A BOAT** – When hunting from a boat, hunters should ensure the boat anchor is not down on private tidelands without permission. Boat hunters must not go onto private land without permission to retrieve any waterfowl shot. However, hunters should be aware they could run the risk of violating the wastage law if they do not retrieve the waterfowl they have shot. Therefore, it is essential hunters be aware of property ownership, especially when hunting from a boat.

Shoreline and Tidelands: There are some private landowners who allow limited hunting access along the saltwater shoreline. Typically, local signs refers to a phone number or contact information, and in some cases the signage spells out the conditions of access. Because these vary from year to year, hunters must make a tour of the area and find out the current arrangements. Hunters should make sure they will have the ability to retrieve ducks, keeping in mind the ownerships where they have permission to hunt and the adjacent ownership where they do not have that permission.

The DNR quadrangle maps display the category of tidelands, with different shades of blue for different public tideland ownerships (Figure 21).



Figure 21. Portion of DNR quadrangle map displaying public tidelands in blue.

For Clallam County, hunters can use the Assessor maps to determine tideland ownership.. Assessor maps are available at the following websites (Figure 22): clallam.net/Maps/websrv19.clallam.net/map/multipurpose_map/

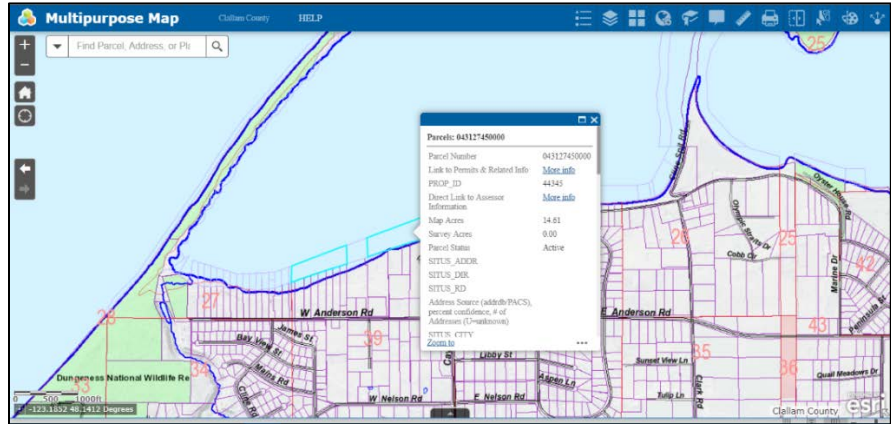


Figure 22. Clallam County website with parcel information on tidelands.

PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

Most all freshwater waterfowl hunting areas in the Dungeness Basin are on private lands. Public land hunting opportunities are changing this year at the Lower Dungeness Unit at the mouth of the Dungeness River. Some hunters find hunting opportunities in the near-shore areas of bays and along the shoreline of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, both on foot and by boat. Hunting violations remain a concern on small water bodies and along the saltwater shorelines in the district. WDFW urges hunters to obey all state and county regulations at sites near residential areas to avoid potential future closures. Be sure to check the 2020 Washington State Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons pamphlet for additional requirements before hunting sea ducks (long-tailed ducks, scoter, harlequin, and goldeneye) in western Washington. WDFW has studied the local sea duck populations for years and you can review the sea duck management strategies draft publication from 2013 at wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01007.

North Olympic Wildlife Area includes the [Dungeness Unit](http://wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-areas/dungeness-wildlife-area-unit) wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-areas/dungeness-wildlife-area-unit (Figure 23). This unit contains multiple disjointed parcels located about five miles north of Sequim. Hunting opportunities are offered ONLY at the RIVER'S END property. Access to private lands that were previously available is no longer available. WDFW is still evaluating the level of hunter use the the reduced size area can accomodate. Consult the wildlife area unit webpage for information updates. RIVER'S END PROPERTY is located north of East Anderson Road, and west of the Dungeness River. This is about 50acres north of East Anderson Road and west of the Dungeness River. Public access is supported by a small parking area, an information kiosk containing site rules, and a restroom.

Be advised:

- Due to popularity, waterfowl hunting at this site is subject to a number of rules. Hunting is restricted to Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday, and state and federal holidays. Hunting is restricted to WDFW designated points that are available on a first- come, first-serve basis. Occupancy of a hunt point is limited to a maximum of four people.
- RIVER'S END: It is unlawful to have in possession more than 15 shotgun shells or to fire (shoot) more than 15 shells in one day on this unit (WAC 220-414-050).
- FIREARMS RESTRICTION AREA: Per Clallam County Regulations Chapter 15.16 FIREARMS DISCHARGE RESTRICTIONS - RESTRICTED SHOOTING AREA 1 (North of 101). The area north of Highway 101, and bounded on the west by the Elwha River, on the south by Highway 101, on the east by the east county line, and on the north by the Strait of Juan de Fuca.
- TOWNE ROAD and THREE CRABS PROPERTIES: Hunting management decisions are on hold until further review and planning.

Useful Links:

- Dungeness Wildlife Area Unit wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-areas/dungeness-wildlife-area-unit
- The Dungeness Recreation Area County Park no longer allows hunting. clallam.net/Parks/Dungeness.html



Figure 23. Map of Dungeness - Rivers End and Helen's Pond (3 Crabs Rd)

GEESE AND BRANT

COMMON SPECIES

Canada Geese: Most goose hunting opportunity in District 16 is for Canada geese. Resident geese are increasing in distribution, especially within urban and rural areas. Habitats like the Port Angeles Coast Guard base, Civic field, and nearby estuaries have had increased usage by Canada geese. In the last 10 years the Department has noticed a Canada goose expansion into wetlands that geese previously didn't use to WDFW knowledge.

Brant: Brant hunting is opening for Clallam and Whatcom counties on Jan. 15, 19, and 22, 2022 with a daily bag limit being two brant and the possession limit being six brant. Feb. 5 is the date for youth, veterans, and active military hunters, with the daily and possession bag limit being two brant.

The January 2018 season was the first season that brant hunting was open in Clallam County for decades. WDFW estimated the harvest within Clallam County to be 90 in 2018 and 89 in 2019. To compare, the 2019 harvest in Skagit County was estimated to be 241, Whatcom County was 48, and Pacific County was 72.

Brant hunting was closed in Clallam and Jefferson counties for decades. Brant management was complicated by the difference in productivity of subpopulations, some enduring high nesting failures that led to restrictions on the hunting grounds. The 2014 report on management of brant in Washington is available at pacificbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Brant-Management-in-Washington.pdf

WDFW recently added brant hunting in Clallam County. "For the second consecutive year, harvest was allowed in Whatcom and Clallam counties resulting in 48 and 90 brant harvested, respectively, after winter counts had consistently placed the three-year average above the 1,000 brant winter population threshold required to consider opening a county to potential harvest, per WDFW Game Management Plan objectives." (2019 Game Status and Trend Report).

WDFW checked and measured, including collecting feather specimens for DNA,

many of the harvested brant from Clallam County during the 2018 and 2019 seasons to further assess the brant populations.



POPULATION STATUS

Canada geese populations continue to increase on the east side of the district.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2021 PROSPECTS

Clallam County goose harvest in 2018-19 was 310, about 8% of Region 6's entire goose harvest. Goose numbers are increasing year-round, providing more hunter opportunity by the local production.

HUNTING TECHNIQUES

Within small acreages and patchy ownership, WDFW doesn't advise pass shooting geese. Local hunters were quite successful in previous seasons using a decoy spread and blinds. Hunters must obtain permission to hunt on private lands and follow all [firearm regulations](#). Many agricultural fields have residential properties nearby, so hunters must be aware of all safety concerns.

Please be respectful of private landowners and avoid conflicts with other recreational users in the area. Brant are typically found along the Dungeness shorelines that hold eelgrass but also occur in other locations from Port Angeles to Sequim Bay. It will be worthwhile to become familiar with the other regular uses in potential brant hunting areas to avoid a location that will have conflicting uses on the few days the hunt is open.

PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

Most goose hunting opportunities are on private agricultural lands in GMU 624.

FOREST GROUSE

SPECIES AND GENERAL HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS

Hunting within any of the forest lands throughout District 16 should offer good opportunities for harvesting grouse. Hunters may find prime forest grouse hunting on DNR and USFS lands within the district. Grouse harvest in Clallam County is one of the highest county totals within Region 6.

Ruffed and sooty (formerly classified as blue) grouse are present throughout public and private forest lands in District 16. The chances for harvesting sooty grouse increase at higher elevations. Hunters can expect the greatest success along trails and ridgelines above 2,000-3,000 feet, within timber stands with huckleberry and other forage plants. Hunters targeting ruffed grouse should focus on elevations below 2,500 feet, particularly in riparian forest habitats, early seral forests (5-25 years old), and deciduous-conifer mixed forest types.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2021 PROSPECTS

Grouse hunting in District 16 continues to decline, a trend WDFW has documented since 2009. Clallam County grouse harvest peaked in 2009 at 6,350 by 1,202 hunters, with Jefferson County 2009 harvest at 3,839 grouse by 1,502 hunters. The 2018 harvest totals for Clallam County were up to 3,060 grouse. Hunters harvested 954 grouse in Jefferson County in 2018.

Habitat conditions certainly play a role, but spring weather and its effect on young is also a huge factor in grouse production and hunting prospects for the fall.

WDFW is collecting grouse wings and tails to evaluate the harvested populations. There are various ways you can contribute your harvested grouse wing. One is to drop them off (with filled out envelopes, provided) at these wing/tail barrels. You can also provide them to local WDFW employees. The information to collect from the harvest is the date and location (GMU). Thanks in advance for helping with grouse monitoring.



PHEASANTS

District 16 does not have viable populations of wild pheasant and there are no longer any pheasant release sites in the district. For information on current pheasant release sites, check this link to the [Western Washington Pheasant Release Program](http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/locations/pheasant-release)

QUAIL

There is a fair abundance of California (valley) quail in the eastern portion of District 16. They are quite common in the Dungeness Valley, but hunting opportunities can be challenging due to predominately private ownership. Quail, like the deer, thrive in the Dungeness habitats that include a mix of open grass, shrubs, and forest. Some quail hunting opportunities can be found on public lands located in the lower foothills in clear-cuts or any early successional habitats. During 2018, hunters harvested 214 quail in Clallam County, with two harvested in Jefferson County.

TURKEYS

WDFW doesn't manage District 16 for wild turkeys and the species remains relatively rare here. WDFW receives occasional reports of individuals or small groups of turkeys within GMU 603. These are likely domestic turkeys that escaped from a farm that raised turkeys in the Joyce area. There are basically no prospects for hunting wild turkeys in District 16.

BAND-TAILED PIGEONS

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Band-tailed pigeons were quite abundant in District 16 historically. Local hunters reported seeing clouds of band-tailed pigeons in drainages, such as McDonald Creek, on the east side of District 16 back in the 1950s. You will find them throughout the district using forest habitats.

HARVEST TRENDS AND 2021 PROSPECTS

Hunters report relatively low band-tailed pigeon harvest in this district (sometimes zero), but the resource is available throughout the district in good numbers. WDFW Enforcement officers remind hunters that they must have all required hunting licenses, along with the special migratory bird authorization and the band-tailed pigeon harvest card. It is mandatory to report all band-tailed pigeon harvest. More information about population monitoring and harvests is available in the 2020 USFWS band-tailed pigeon population status report.

fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/Population-status/Waterfowl/WaterfowlPopulationStatusReport20.pdf

WHERE AND HOW TO HUNT BAND-TAILED PIGEONS

Band-tailed pigeons are most prevalent in the district along marine estuaries, shorelines, and forest roads where they forage on berries. WDFW encourages hunters to search for areas with elderberry and cascara present. Band-tailed pigeons often congregate around these food sources.

OTHER SMALL GAME SPECIES

Mourning Dove

District 16 has not been a major dove hunting area, although eastern Clallam County has a lot of doves. To complicate matters, the Eurasian collared dove, an introduced species, is becoming very prevalent in east Clallam County. The estimated 2018 harvest in Clallam County was 34 mourning doves. Reported harvest in Jefferson County during 2018 was 0 mourning doves. There was no reported harvest of doves in 2017 within District 16. The 2020 USFWS Mourning Dove Population Status report fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/Population-status/MourningDove/MourningDovePopulationStatus20.pdf has more information

Snowshoe Hare and Cottontail Rabbit

Most all of the rabbits encountered on the Olympic Peninsula will be snowshoe hare (see range maps below). Snowshoe hare are readily observed along forested roads in the western half of District 16, and will be found throughout the district, usually along forested edges. Annual district harvest of hares and rabbits is erratic, ranging from zero to over 300. The opportunity is always there, with a harvest per unit effort expected to range between 0.25-0.70/day. More information on the snowshoe hare and other rabbits can be found at the following links:

- naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_snowshoe_hare.html
- naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_eastern_cottontail.html
- naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_european_rabbit.html
- naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_nuttalls_cottontail.html
- [Snowshoe Hare - Canadian Wildlife Federation www.hww.ca/en/wildlife/mammals/snowshoe-hare.html](https://www.hww.ca/en/wildlife/mammals/snowshoe-hare.html)

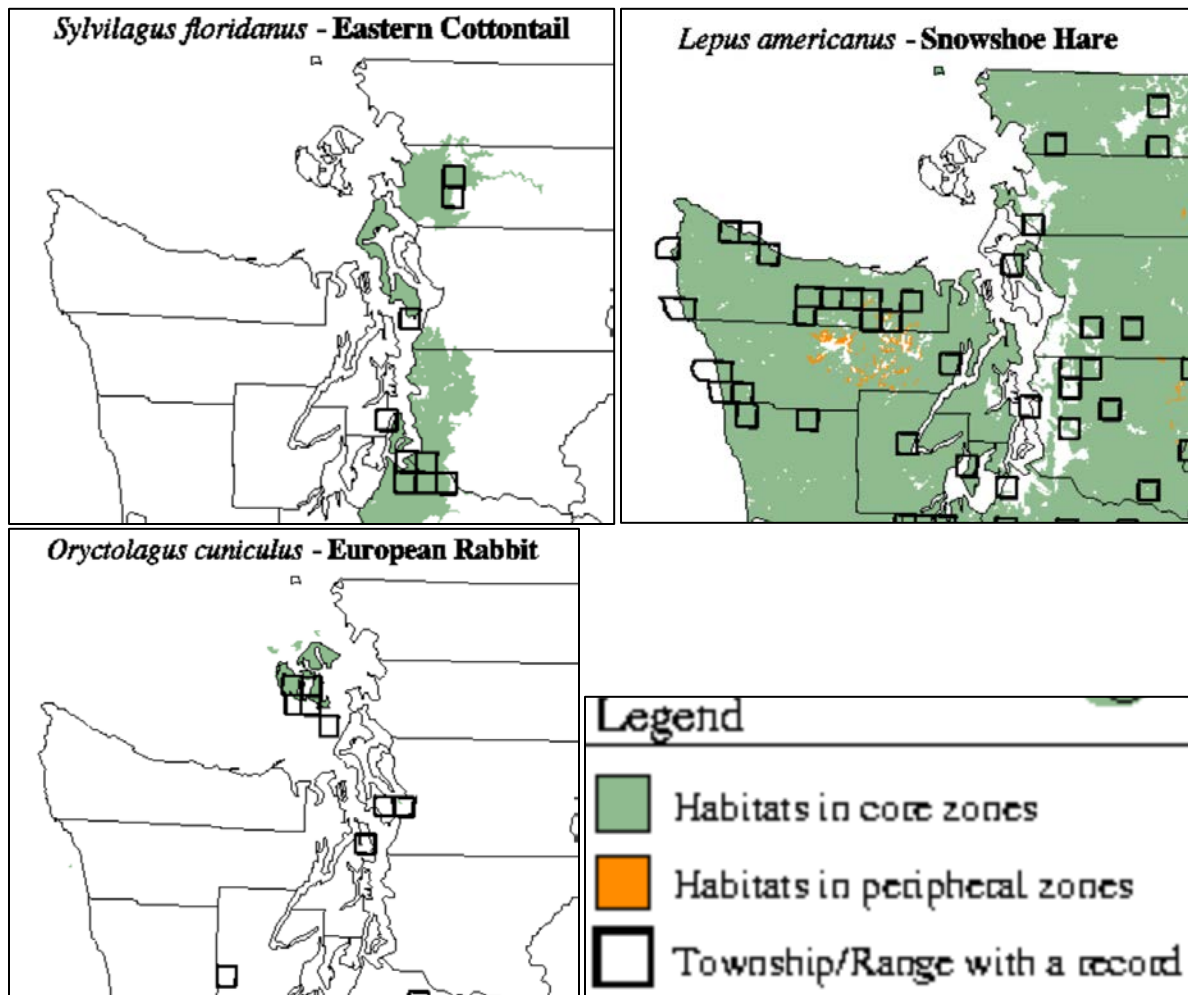


Figure 24. Range maps for snowshoe hare, eastern cottontail rabbit, and European rabbit.

TRIBAL HUNTING

District 16 is within the ceded area of numerous treaty tribes on the Olympic Peninsula. WDFW and tribes cooperatively manage wildlife populations. Tribal hunting often occurs concurrent with WDFW hunting seasons. Tribes set their own seasons and bag limits. Tribal Enforcement personnel are responsible for ensuring tribal hunting regulations are followed, which may differ from state regulations.

Tribal big game harvest reports are available at: nwifc.org/publications/big-game-harvest-reports/

FIREARM AND WEAPON RESTRICTIONS

These diverse mixtures of ownerships and jurisdictions also present different combinations of firearm restriction regulations and ordinances. The three main firearm restriction regulations most relevant to hunters are the following:

- WDFW – Firearm Restriction - unlawful to hunt wildlife with centerfire or rimfire rifles in “The portion of the GMU 624 (Coyle) within Clallam County.” Page 90 in the 2020 Big Game Hunting Regulations pamphlet.
- Clallam County Code Clallam County Firearms Discharge Restrictions
codepublishing.com/WA/ClallamCounty/html/ClallamCounty15/ClallamCounty1516.html
- Jefferson County Code Jefferson County Shooting in the County
codepublishing.com/WA/JeffersonCounty/html/JeffersonCounty08/JeffersonCounty0850.html

MAJOR PUBLIC LANDS

Make sure you have acquired the necessary permits to drive on public and private land in the area you decide to explore.

Public Access Permits: Here are some public access permits to be aware of and that you may need depending on your destination.

[Discover Pass](#) State parks, DNR, and WDFW



[Federal Agency-Interagency Annual Pass](#)



[Federal Agency Interagency Volunteer Pass](#)



The interagency passes include access on National Park Service, USFS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Reclamation lands. Keep in mind that many public lands on the Olympic Peninsula are not open to hunting, including Olympic National Park, Washington state parks, and Clallam County parks.

PRIVATE INDUSTRIAL FORESTLANDS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Private timberlands have various access and road closure procedures, so it is prudent to determine current ownership for a target location and the requirements to obtain permission to hunt. Merrill and Ring Pysht Tree Farm in GMU 603 has made a drastic change for 2018 and will not be allowing access for deer hunting. A lottery system is used for the small number of access permits they issue for elk hunting season. The other forest industry ownerships have various access systems in place. Hunters are encouraged to scout the areas they are considering hunting and pay close attention to the signs on all roads. Signs are often the landowner's primary method of informing the public on which areas are open to hunting.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MAJOR TIMBER COMPANIES

Rayonier, Inc.

Website: rayonier.com/

IFP Office 360-452-1351

Forks Office 360-374-6565

Port Angeles 360-457-2329

Information on Rayonier Access Permits:

- property.rayonierhunting.com/Permits/PermitsHome.aspx
- property.rayonierhunting.com/AvailableAreas/FindProperties.aspx

Green Crow

Website: greencrow.com/contact-us/locations/

360-452-3325

727 E. 8th, Port Angeles, WA 98362

Merrill and Ring

Website: merrillring.com/contacts/

360-452-2367

Email: contact@merrillring.com

813 East 8th Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362

OTHER MAJOR LANDOWNERS

Hoh River Trust

Facebook: facebook.com/The-Hoh-River-Trust-74841050447/

HUNTING ORGANIZATIONS

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation – Olympic Peninsula Chapter

Website: <http://www.rmef.org/Washington/OlympicPeninsula.aspx>

Douglas Doherty

Phone: (989) 736-4234

Email: ddoherty@rmef.org

Jefferson County Sportsmen's Association

Website: <http://jeffersoncountysportsmen.org/wp/>

Email: info@JeffersonCountySportsmen.org

P.O. Box 737, Port Townsend, WA 98368

Sportsmen for Wild Olympics

Website: www.SportsmenForWildOlympics.org

Email: info@sportsmenforwildolympics.org

Wapiti Bowmen Archery Club

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Wapiti-Bowmen-180948655312545/>

Email: wapitibowclub@gmail.com

374 E Arnette Rd, Port Angeles, WA 98362

Eyes in the Woods

Website: <http://www.eyesinthewoods.org/index.php/en/?Itemid=419>

P.O. Box 2406, Olympia, WA 98507

West End Sportsmen's Club-Forks

Facebook Website: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/West-End-Sportsmens-Club-354953248029561/posts/>

Phone: (360) 374-5420

Sportsman Club Road, Forks, WA 98331

Washington Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Website: http://www.backcountryhunters.org/washington_bha

Max Cole, West Side Co-Chair

Email: washington@backcountryhunters.org

Ducks Unlimited Olympic District

Website: <http://www.ducks.org/washington/wa-content/state-contacts/?poe=stateHomeIcon>

Chairman Mike Luecht

Email: papaluke@wavecable.com

Izaak Walton League of America Greater Seattle Chapter

Website: <https://www.iwla.org/local-chapters>

A. William Way

Phone: (425) 868-4759

Email: bway@watershedco.com

3451 E. Lake Sammamish Ln. N.E., Sammamish, WA 98074

Washington Brant Foundation

Website: <http://www.wabrant.org/>

Maynard Axelson

Phone: (360) 445-6681

Email: info@wabrant.org

15929 Fir Island Rd, Mt Vernon, WA 98273

Washington Outdoor Women (WOW)

Website: <http://www.washingtonoutdoorwomen.org>

<http://washingtonoutdoorwomen.org/register/> - Workshops

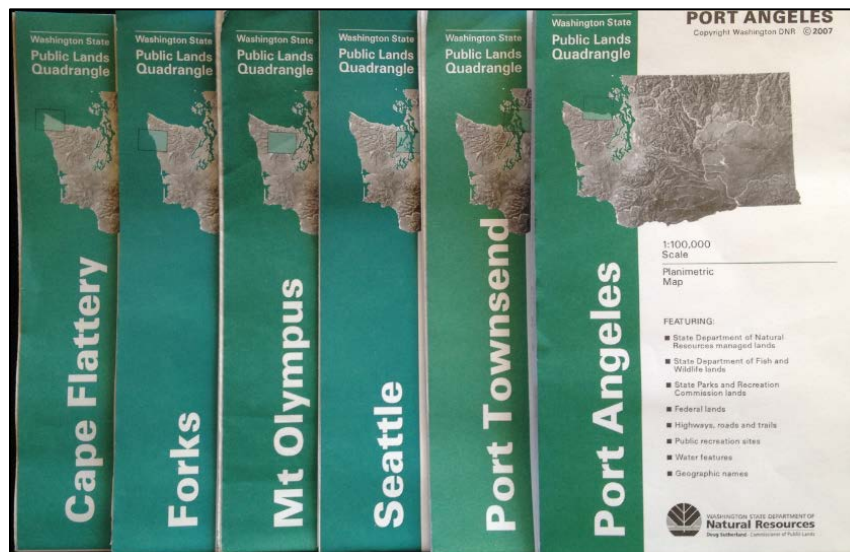
P.O. Box 1656, Bellevue, WA 98009-1656

If you know of an organization that should be included in this document, please let us know.

ONLINE TOOLS AND MAPS

WDFW recommends a set of these DNR maps, which you can order online at:

dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/buy-maps-aerial-photos-or-survey-data



These DNR maps are available to buy at Swains and Browns in Port Angeles and Thriftway in Forks but can also be ordered online or by phone.

These DNR maps have some of the best combination of land ownership and current roads. However, keep in mind there have been several DNR and private forest land ownership exchanges in recent years that won't show up on these maps. DNR's website has current DNR ownership displayed at arcgis.com/apps/Embed/index.html?webmap=fa6875f802ee43f4a21d16df47b71cecextent=-124.6798,47.5345,-123.334,48.3084&zoom=true&scale=false&theme=light

Other maps that can be helpful for select areas include:

Forest Service Online:

Forest Service maps can be obtained free online at freegeographytools.com/2007/updated-usgs-24k-topographic-maps-from-the-us-forest-service

Forest Service Maps to purchase:

USFS sells forest district maps that are very useful, as are the custom correct maps shown on the same page.

Link: fs.usda.gov/detail/olympic/maps-pubs/?cid=stelprdb5195398

East end of WDFW District 16 is the Hood Canal Ranger District/North End map.

West end of WDFW District 16 are the Pacific Ranger District/North End and South End maps.

OnX App: The OnX Cellphone App has been the go-to tool for information on land ownership in recent years. One main issue is areas with no cell service could make the tool useless. If you preplan when you have service, you can save the aerial background for the areas you will encounter poor cell coverage and then still use the App without cell service.