

2020



Washington  
Department of  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**

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## **DISTRICT 16 HUNTING PROSPECTS**

Clallam and west Jefferson counties

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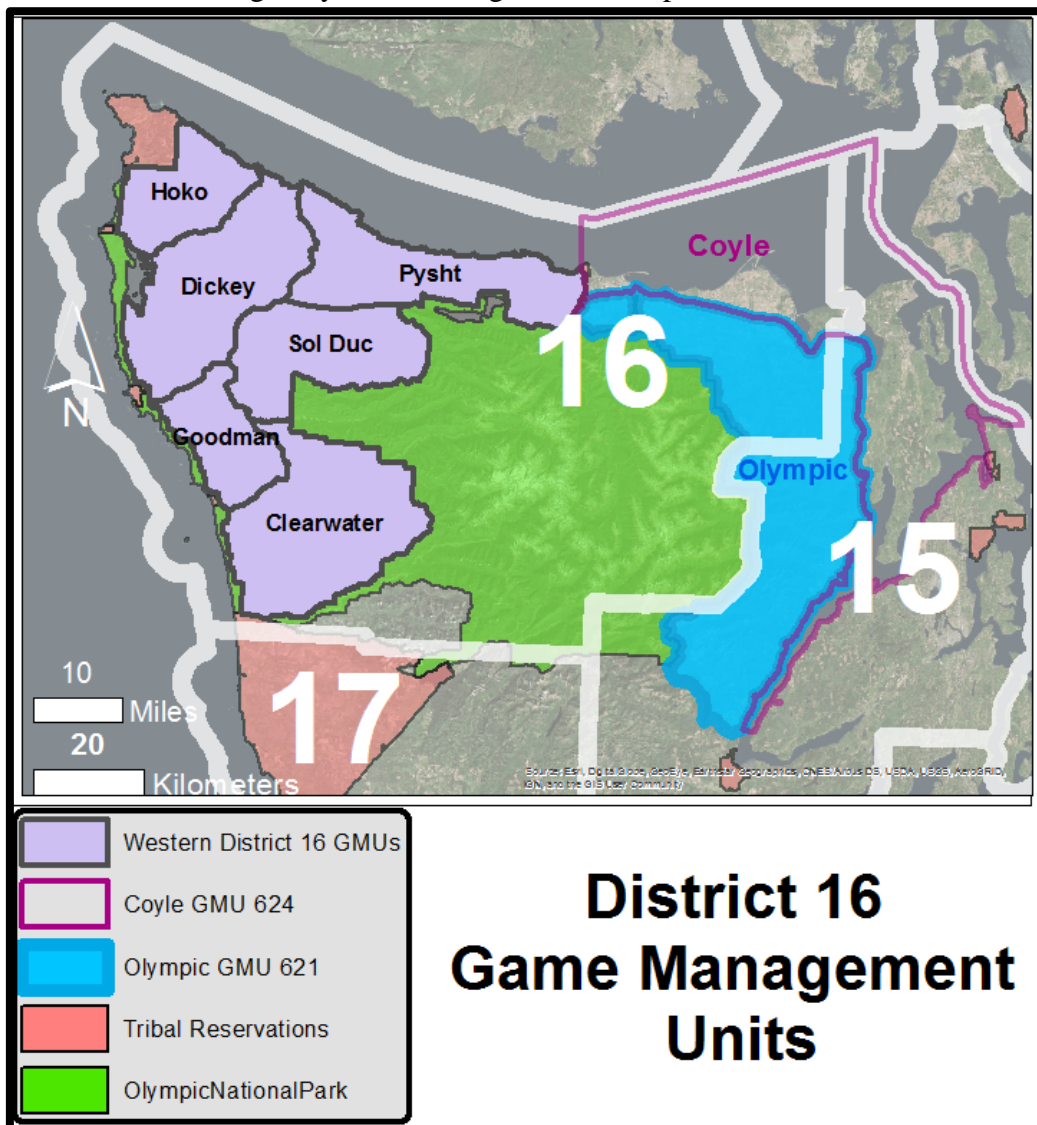


District Biologists Shelly Ament and Anita McMillan collaring a deer fawn.

## 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 GMU 618 Matheny.

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



(DNR).

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

Table 1 and Table 2 present District 16 annual game species harvest.

**Table 1.** District 16 Deer and Elk Annual Harvest

<b>District 16* Deer &amp; Elk Annual Harvest</b>						
<b>Species</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
Elk - Bulls Total	323	306	213	213	286	213
Elk - Bulls State	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	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	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	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

<b>District 16 Game Species Annual Harvest</b>						
<b>Species</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>BEAR*</b>	152	94	101	87	66	66
<b>COUGAR</b>	5	12	2	8	5	2
<b>DUCKS</b> (Clallam & Jefferson Co)	not available	6,999	6057	11,540	8093	7253
<b>GEESE - September</b> (early season)	not available	154	149	272	97	136
<b>GEESE</b> (late season)	not available	318	183	713	355	331
<b>BRANT</b> - Clallam County	not available	89	90	Closed	Closed	Closed
<b>FOREST GROUSE</b> (Clallam & Jefferson Co)	not available	2,958	2590	4374	4794	5356
<b>MOURNING DOVE</b> (Clallam & Jefferson Co)	not available	36	0	54	67	11
<b>QUAIL</b> (Clallam & Jefferson Co)	not available	31	150	236	164	500
<b>SNIPE</b>	not available	0	0	45	4	0
<b>HARE/RABBIT</b> (Clallam & Jefferson Co)	not available	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**

Dungeness River basin (western GMU 624 Coyle and northern portion of GMU 621 Olympic) makes up the eastern portion of the district. This watershed offers a rich diversity of habitats from high elevation, rain-shadow mountains to the lower watershed with plentiful wetland habitats as well as riparian and bygone prairie/oak forest. The prairie is 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. Deer abundance, resulting in frequent complaints, is a challenge in the Dungeness River basin and the smaller watersheds east of the Elwha River.. The high deer visibility in the Coyle and Olympic GMUs extends into the lower elevation forestlands where there is an ideal ratio of forest openings. Some of the Olympic GMU habitat includes large areas of USFS mature and older forest with limited forage for ungulates. Deer Area 6020, where there are “any deer” regular seasons, offers more availability for deer harvest. The main challenge for hunting in eastern District 16 is the high amount of private ownership. Hunters should arrange access ahead of time.

## **WEST DISTRICT 16**

The west end (Hoko, Dickey, Sol Duc, Goodman, and Clearwater) has the bulk of the elk in the district, while the deer are sparse in these same GMUs. District 16 has various elk sub herds . Many elk herds are year-round residents that remain in lower elevation habitats. Some herds regularly migrate into the higher elevations, most always on to ONP habitat. Hunters are likely to find opportunities to harvest elk as they move out of ONP during the hunting season. ONP areas vary from the outer coast park strip to the eastern portion of the Clearwater (GMU 615), which includes a large block of DNR ownership bordering 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.

## ELK

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

District 16's elk are Roosevelt elk. District 16 contains various sub herds of the Olympic elk herd, one of 10 herds wildlife managers have 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. WDFW based past elk population estimates on a combination of harvest data, telemetry studies, and mark-resight surveys. These techniques yielded a fall population estimate of approximately 8,600 in the game management units (GMUs) surrounding ONP in 2000. The current Olympic elk herd population 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, 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, with possibilities on DNR lands, USFS lands, and private timberlands. However, hunters should note that several areas limit vehicular access. Hunters need to 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 ONP 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.

WDFW's Conflict Specialists help to manage elk damage areas and frequently use Master Hunter permittees to put pressure on the herds and encourage habitat use patterns that minimize damage and address human safety concerns. More information about the Master Hunter Permit Program is available at <https://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. These 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 conducting this work.

“The Department asks that you please return any radio-collars from animals you have harvested.... Your cooperation will help us manage for healthy, viable big game populations.” (2019 WDFW Game pamphlet page 46). “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 cannot be consumed 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.” (2020 WDFW Game pamphlet page 46).



## WHICH GMU SHOULD ELK HUNTERS HUNT?

Hunters can harvest an elk District 16 GMU. Hunters should review past harvest records to inform where they should spend some time hunting. Harvest is one of the reliable measurements for Olympic Peninsula elk monitoring. Wildlife managers generate game harvest report data using mandatory hunting reports, follow-up phone surveys, and permit reports. For other species, data may come from the small game hunter questionnaire, trapper report of catch, and cougar pelt sealing. WDFW's [game harvest reports](https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/management/game-harvest) can be found online, <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/management/game-harvest> .

### West District 16 – West End:

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 include 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 general season hunting opportunities. 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: [Movements and Habitat Use of Female Roosevelt Elk in Relation to Human Disturbance on the Hoko and Dickey Game Management Units, Washington. http://humboldt-dspace.calstate.edu/handle/2148/88](http://humboldt-dspace.calstate.edu/handle/2148/88)

**East District 16** – The Olympic GMU 621 is limited to state permit elk and tribal elk harvest. Wildlife managers don't recommend elk hunting GMU 624 (Coyle) because the opportunities are going to be rare. The season remains open for 3-point minimum for the hunter that may encounter that rare opportunity. The elk population and associated hunting opportunities may increase in GMU 624, but 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. WDFW designed Elk Area 6071, located within GMU 621 and 624, specifically to address challenges with the Dungeness/Sequim elk herd. WDFW limits Elk Area 6071 harvest to damage control, occasionally involving Master Hunter elk hunts from the Region 6 permit list.

See District 15 [Hunting Prospects](https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/locations/prospects) online at <https://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

Hunters can find [annual harvest reports](https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/management/game-harvest) at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/management/game-harvest>. The compiled harvest records represent harvest, hunting effort and success obtained using mandatory hunter reports and follow-up surveys.

### Bull Elk Harvest

Olympic Peninsula elk harvest reflects the general elk abundance, with most harvest occurring in 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.

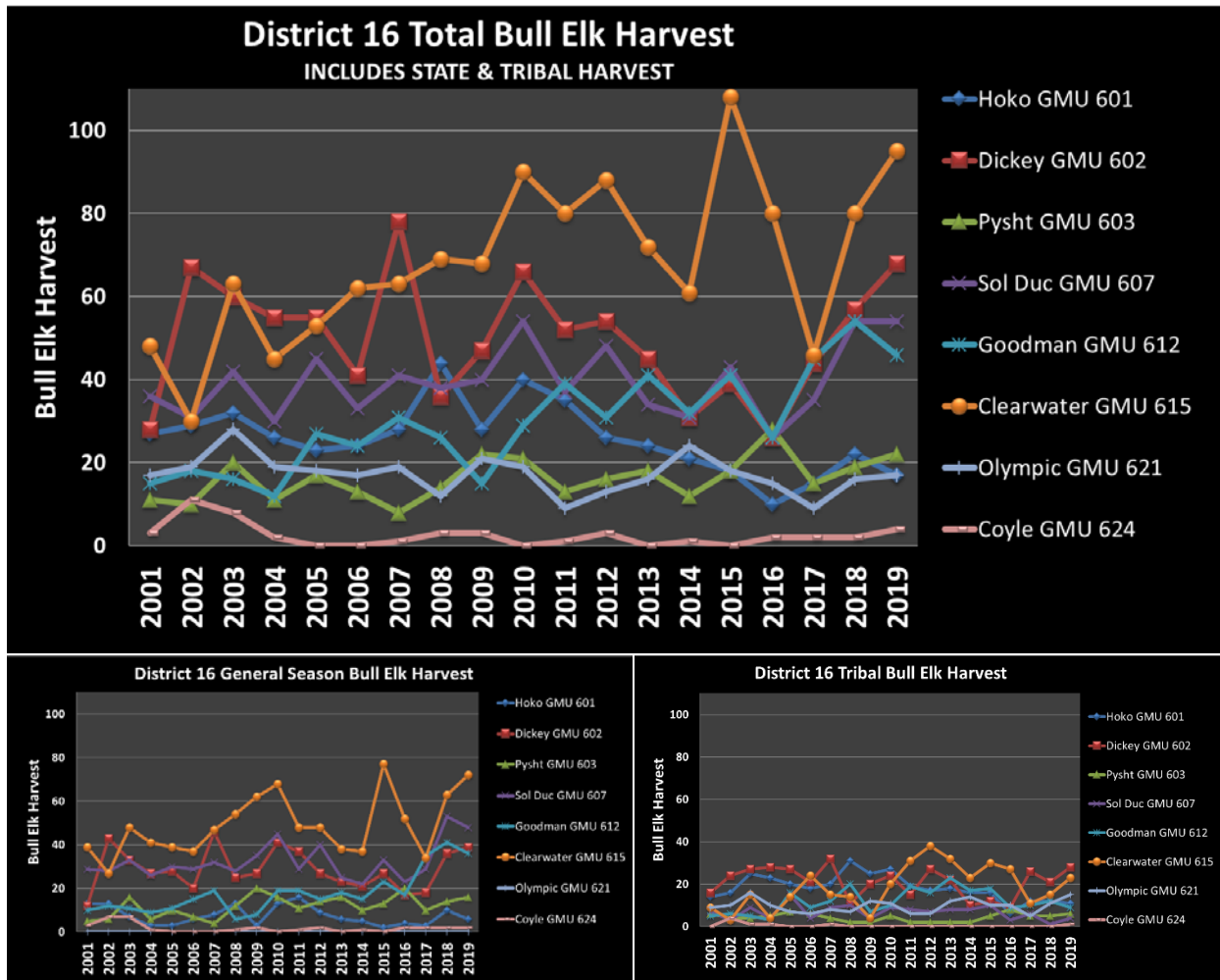


Figure 2. District 16 Total Bull Elk Harvest

The total bull harvest in District 16 has kept increasing since 2017, with most of the increase being state hunter bull harvest (Table 1).

The total 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.

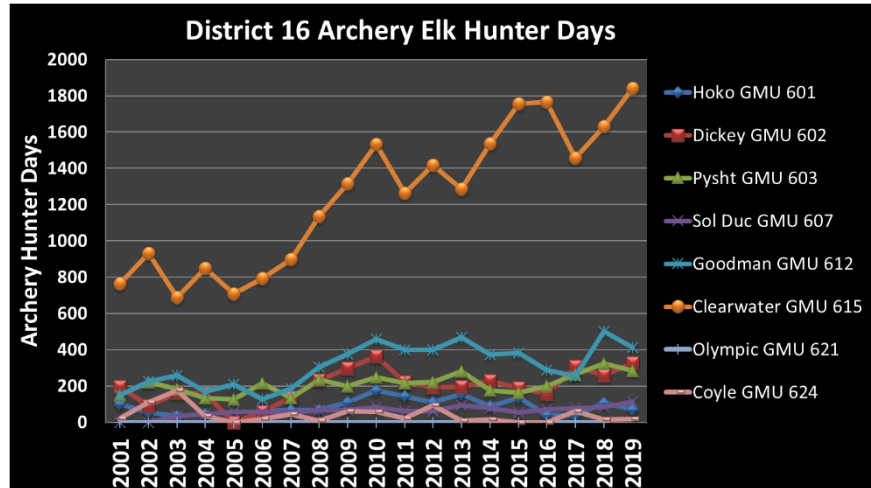


Figure 3. Archery elk hunter days by GMU.

### Muzzleloader Elk Hunting

Wildlife managers concentrated muzzleloader elk hunting 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; achieving the goals of the new opportunity.

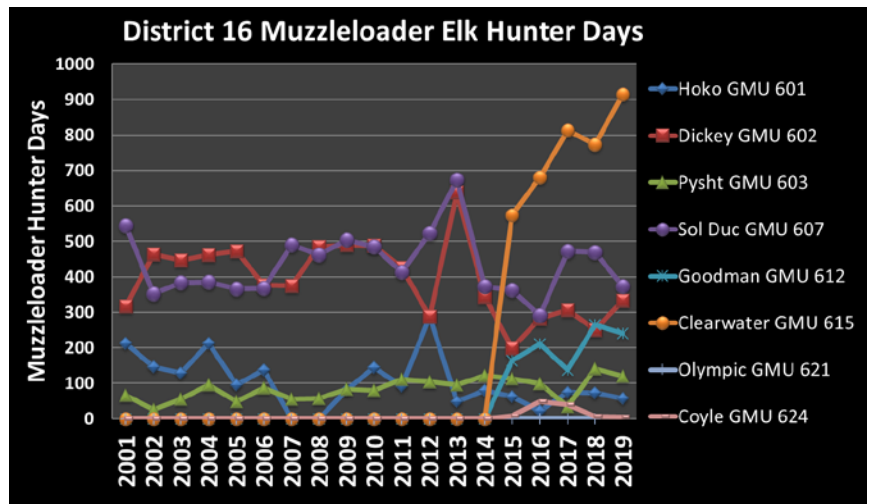


Figure 4. Muzzleloader elk hunter days by GMU.

## 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.

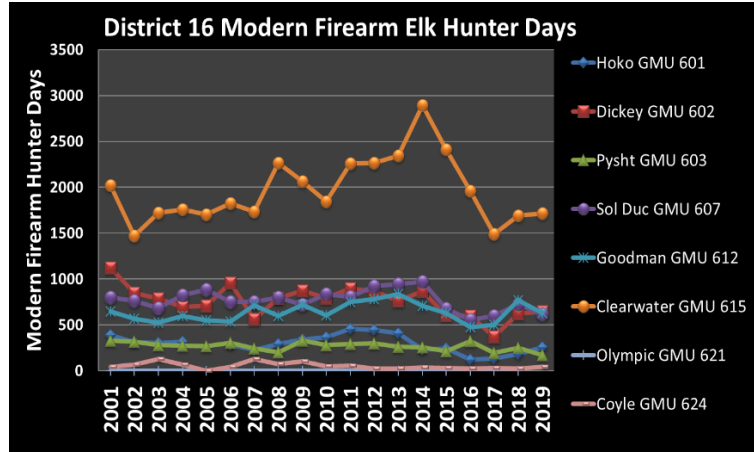


Figure 5. District 16 modern firearm elk hunter days.

## GMU 601 (Hoko) Elk Hunting

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

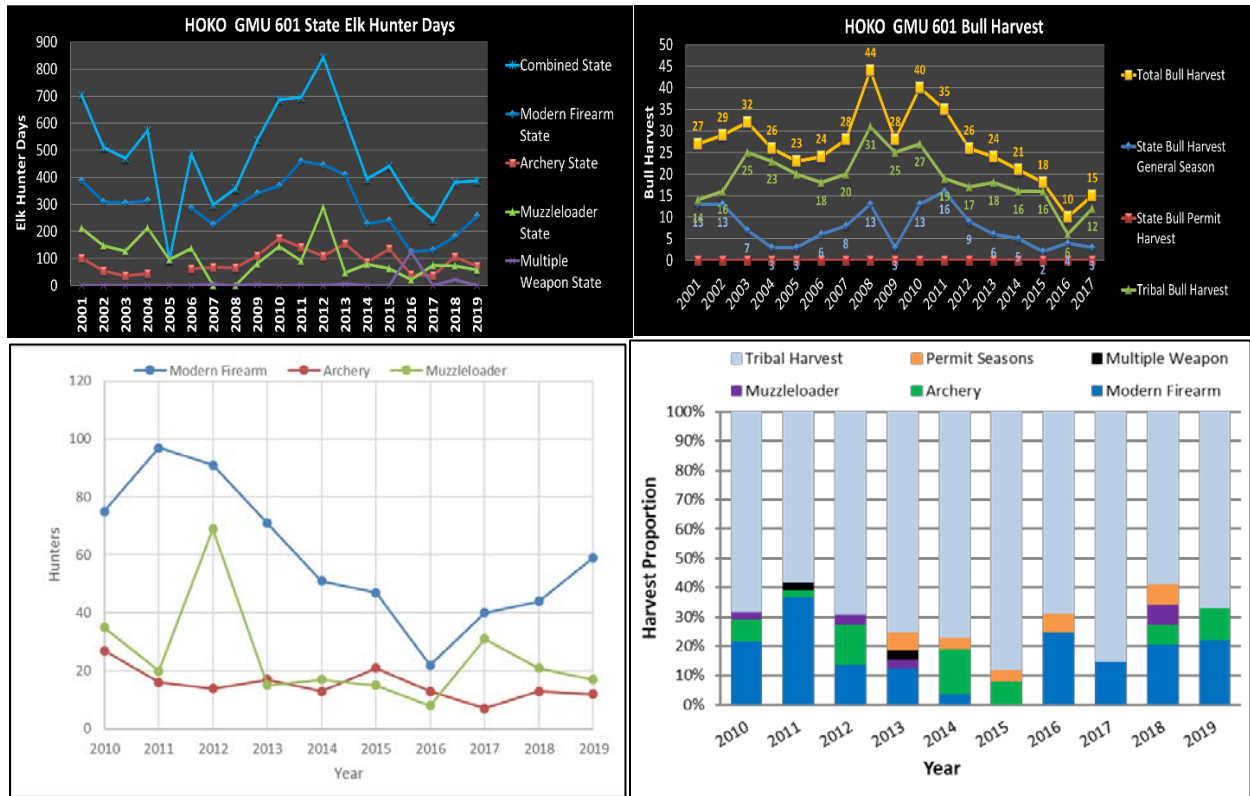
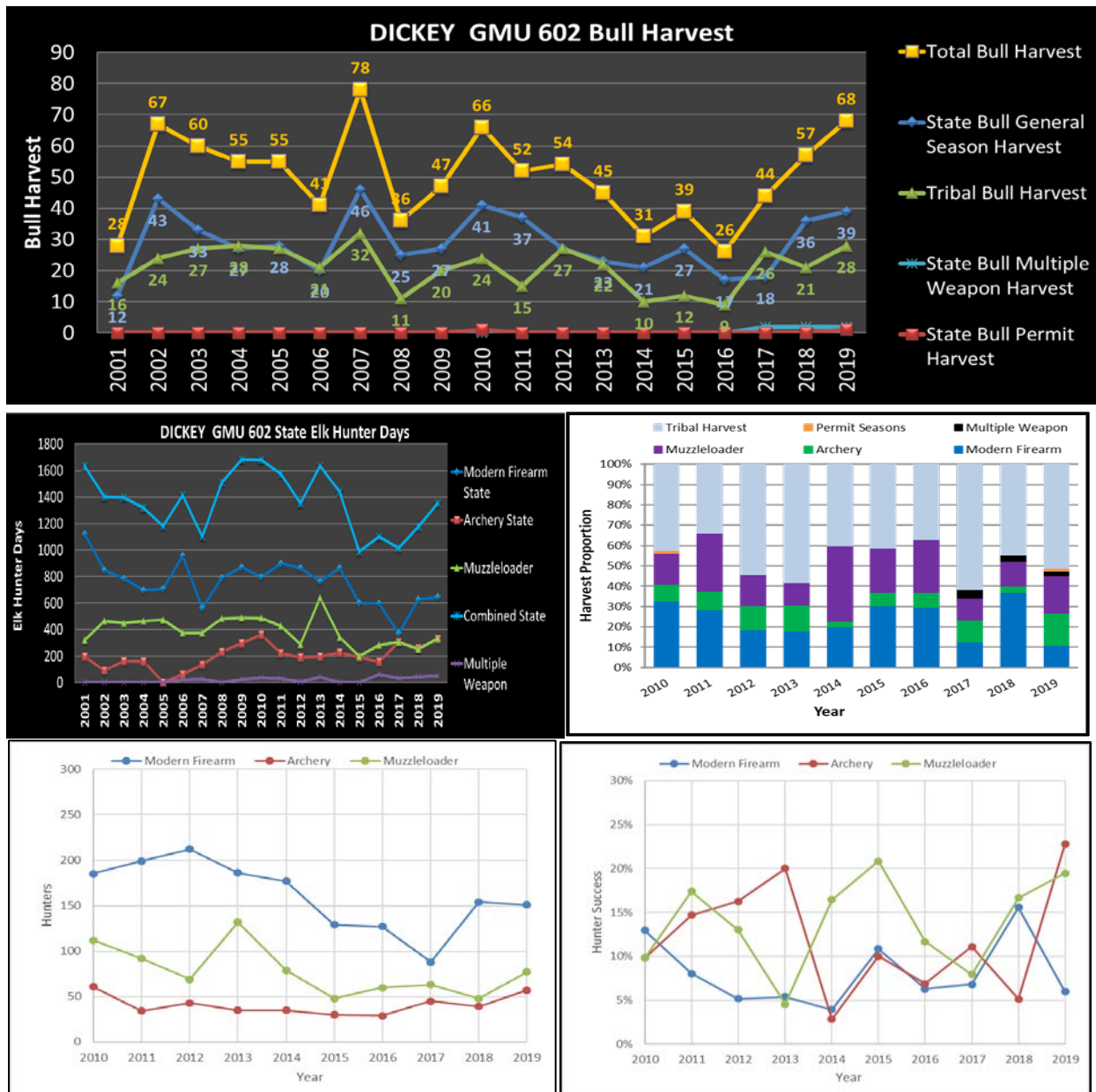


Figure 6. Hoko GMU 601 State elk hunter days and numbers, bull elk harvest and all elk harvest proportion.

## GMU 602 (Dickey) Elk Hunting

Total Dickey bull harvest increased in recent years to 68 in 2019 from a low of 26 in 2016, with a slight increase in hunter days during that same period from 1,000 to 1,354 (Figure 7).

Hunter success also increased slightly over the years, typically ranging from 5-15 percent. For 2019, archery hunter success increased to over 20 percent, muzzleloader to 19 percent while modern firearm success decreased from 17 to 6 percent.



**Figure 7.** Dickey GMU 602 Bull Elk harvest, State Elk Hunter Day Trends, Harvest Proportion, State Hunter Numbers and State Hunter Success.

## GMU 603 (Pysht) Elk Hunting

GMU 603 elk abundance has been increasing in the last three decades. During the 1990s, it was uncommon to observe elk in GMU 603. Even helicopter searches 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 accomplished 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 is occurring 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 have maintained a success rate of around 5 to 10 percent until 2018, increasing to 15 percent and continuing to increase to 20 percent in 2019 (Figure 8). Hunter pressure has remained relatively constant since 2001. During 2019, state harvest was about 60 percent of the total elk harvest, with tribal harvest about 40 percent of the total.

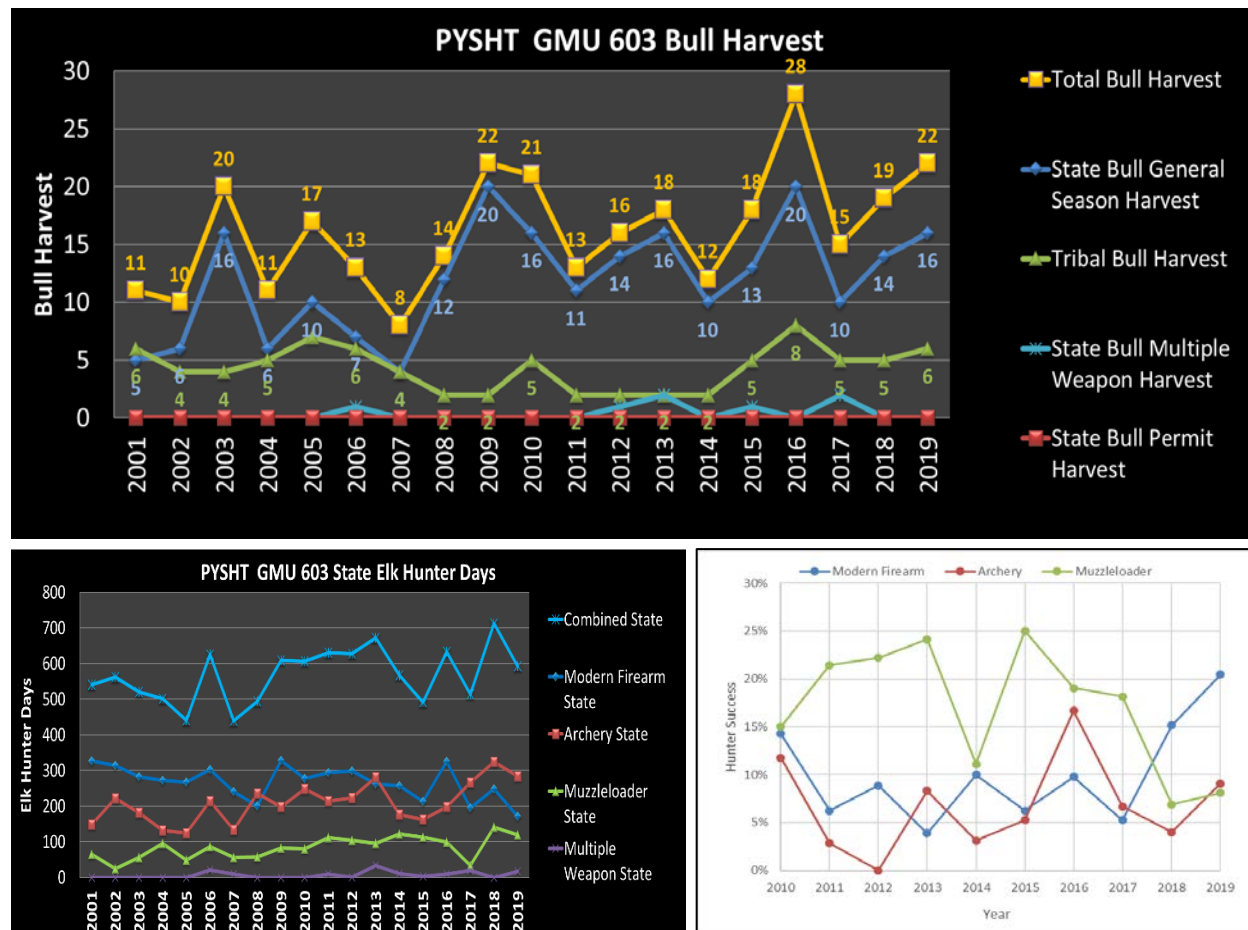
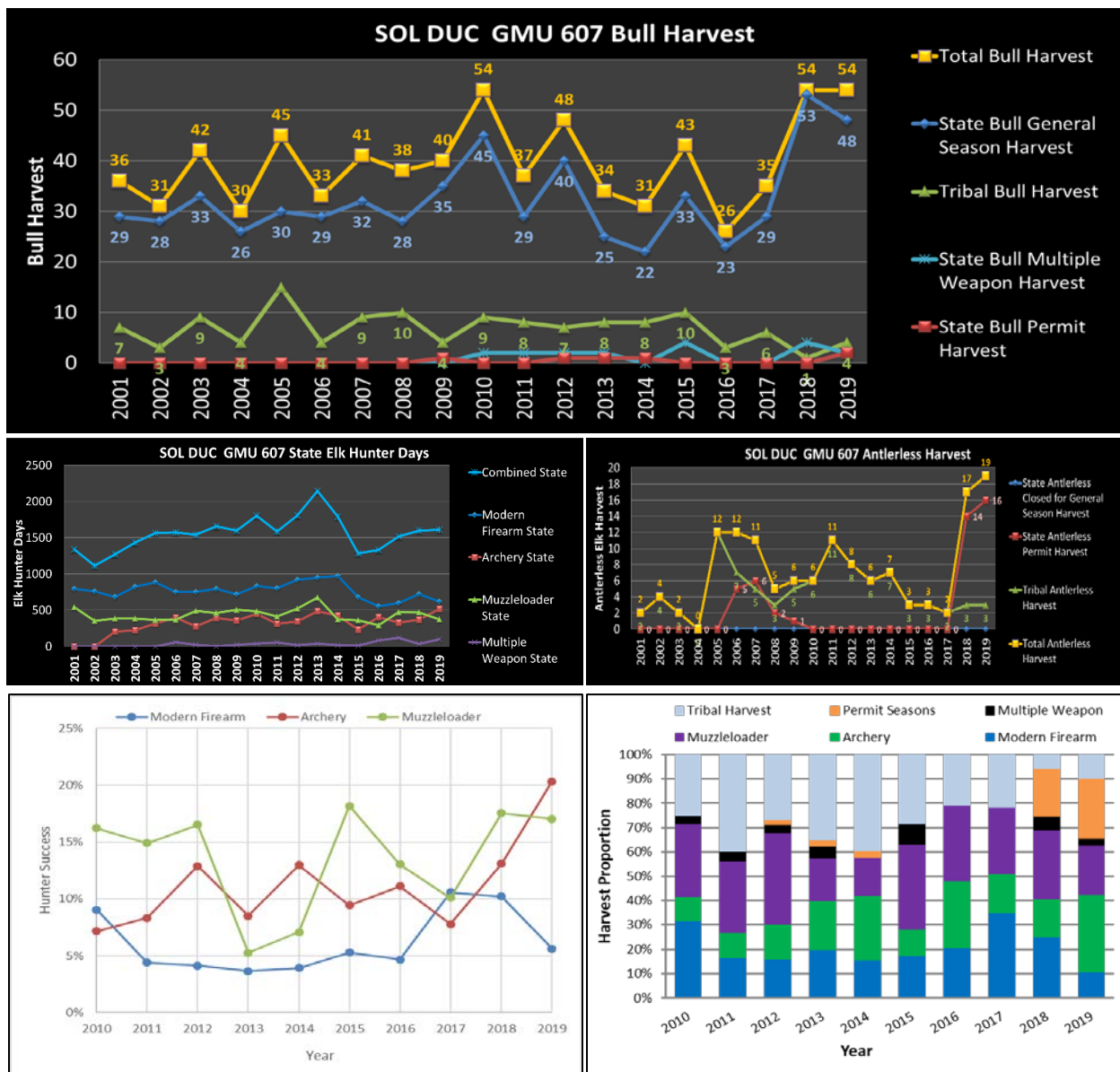


Figure 8. Pysht GMU 603 Bull Elk harvest, state elk hunter days, and success.

## GMU 607 (Sol Duc) Elk Hunting

State hunters account for most of the GMU 607 bull elk harvest with tribal harvest being 10 percent in 2019 (Figure 9). Harvest remained consistent since 2001 until the recent increase in 2018. State hunters take about 30 bulls annually and tribal hunters take about seven bulls annually. The bull harvest topped at 54 in 2018 and 2019. In 2018, state hunters received anew antlerless elk permit opportunity, resulting in a harvest of 14 in 2018 and 16 in 2019.

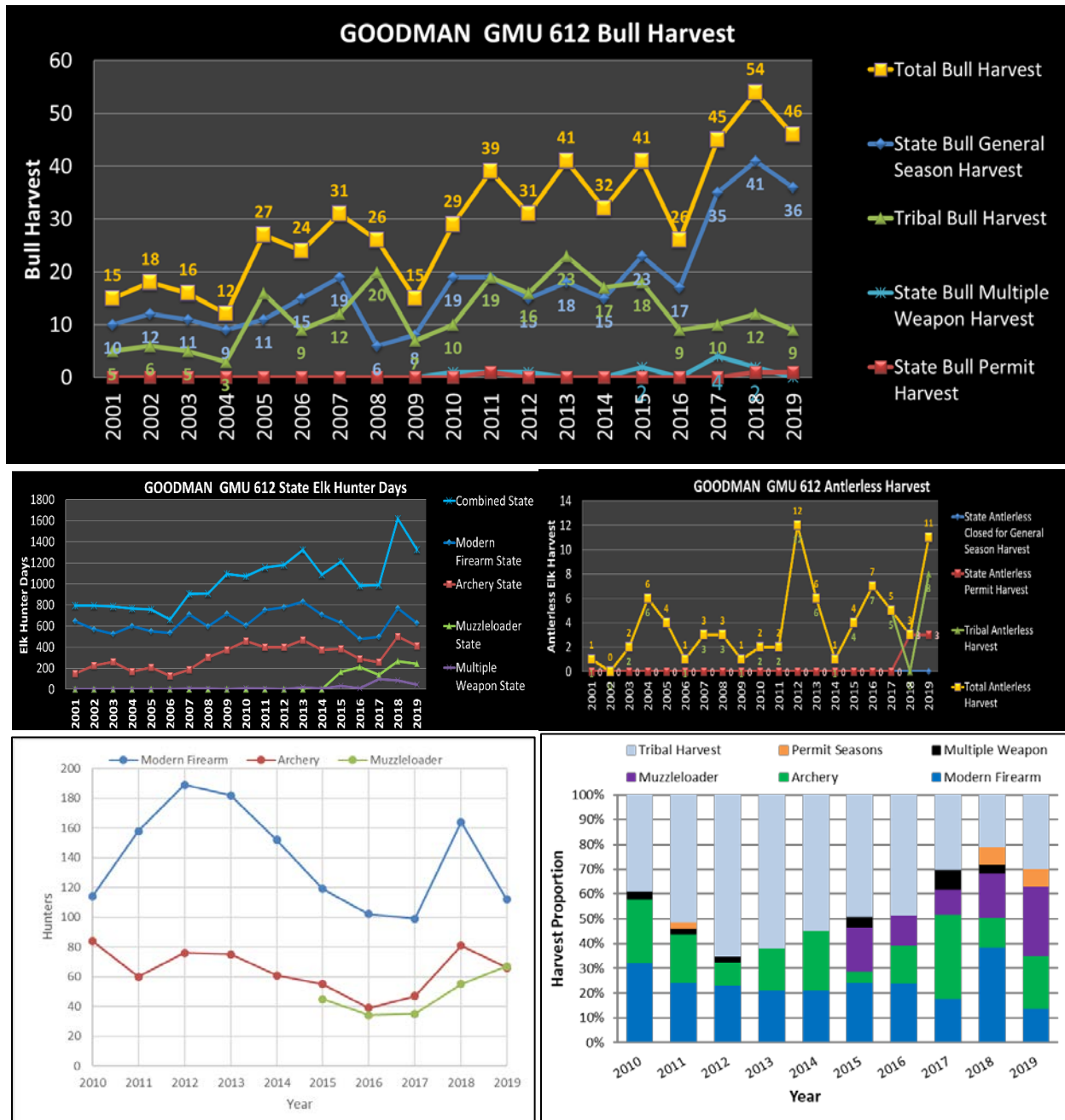
Hunter success in GMU 607 is usually around 5-20 percent for all participating state hunters. Success with archery harvest has increased recently to 20 percent in 2019.



**Figure 9.** Sol Duc GMU 607 bull and antlerless elk harvest, state elk hunter days, hunter success & proportion of harvest.

## GMU 612 (Goodman) Elk Hunting

State bull harvest in Goodman has increased the last few seasons, doubling the previous harvest in this unit from less than 20 to over 35 (Figure 10).



**Figure 10.** Goodman GMU 612 bull and antlerless harvest, state elk hunter days and number of hunters, and elk harvest proportion.

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 hovered around 1,000 to 1,200. In 2015, a new



Muzzleloader season opened in GMU 612, resulting in a modest amount of muzzleloader hunter days, which increased to 241 days in 2019 (Figure 10). The muzzleloader hunter success has been over 10 percent, reaching 24 percent in 2019, while modern firearm hunter success has been between 5-15 percent (Figure 11). Archery success has ranges between 5 and 15 percent most years, with a jump to 36 percent in 2017 and more recently 18 percent in 2019. In 2018, state hunters received a new antlerless elk permit opportunity, resulting in a harvest of 3 in both 2018 and 2019.

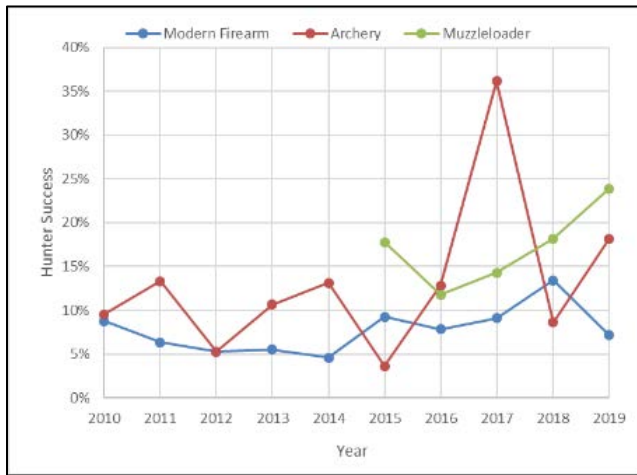
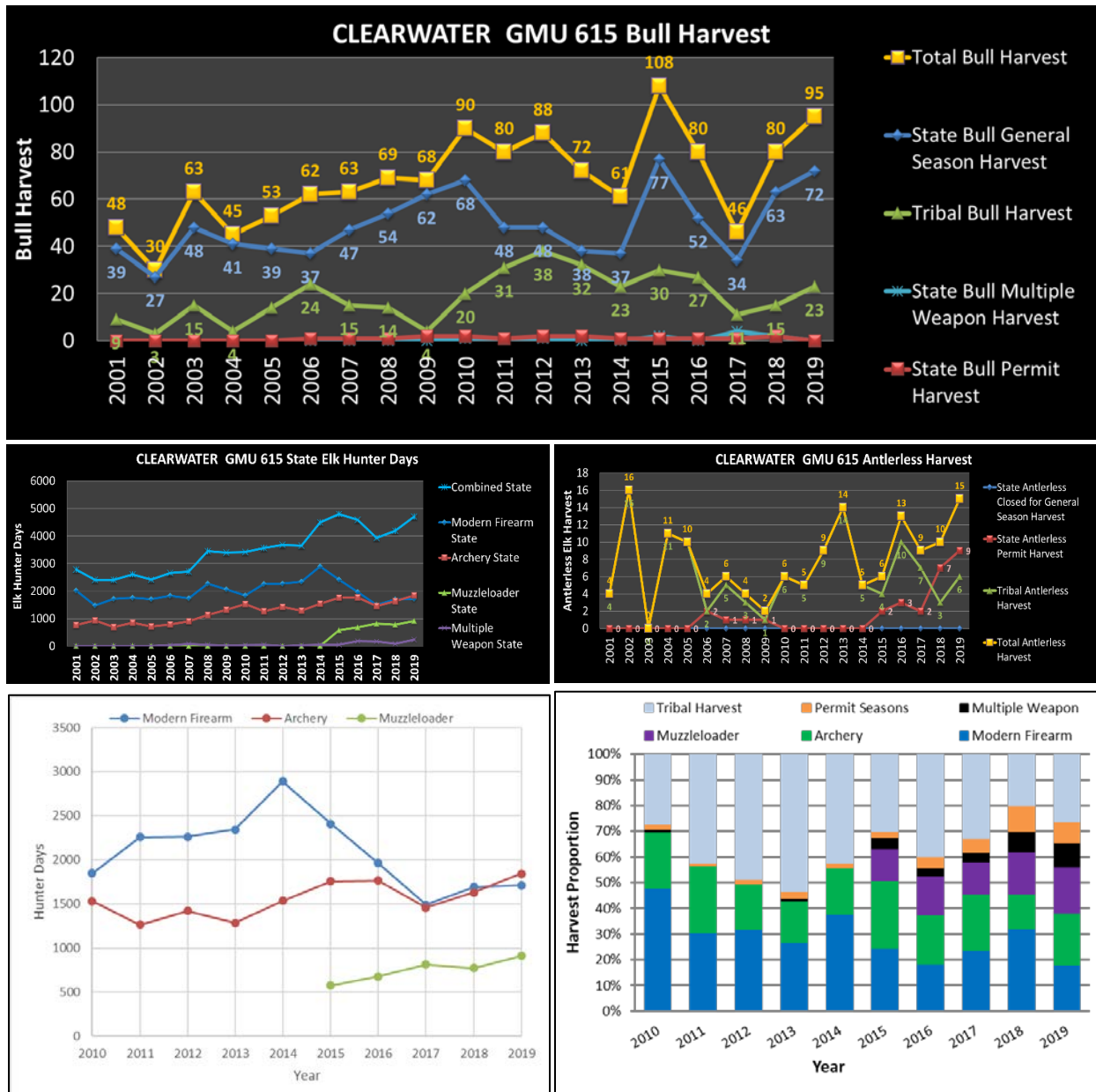


Figure 11. Goodman GMU 612 State Hunter Success.



## 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 again at 95 in 2019.



**Figure 12.** Clearwater GMU 615 bull and antlerless harvest, state elk hunter days and number of hunters and proportion of harvest.

Hunter success for GMU 615 falls within a narrow range for all state hunters, reliably between 4 and 12 percent (Figure 13). Muzzleloader season opened in 2015. The hunter days remained constant, a result of increased muzzleloader hunter days and an almost equal decrease of modern firearm hunter days.

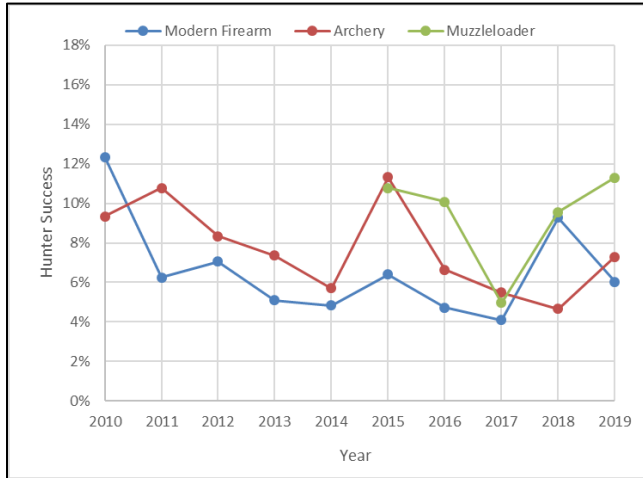


Figure 13. GMU 615 bull elk hunter days and success.

### 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 elk, with harvest being almost equal between state and tribal hunters until 2019 (Figure 14).

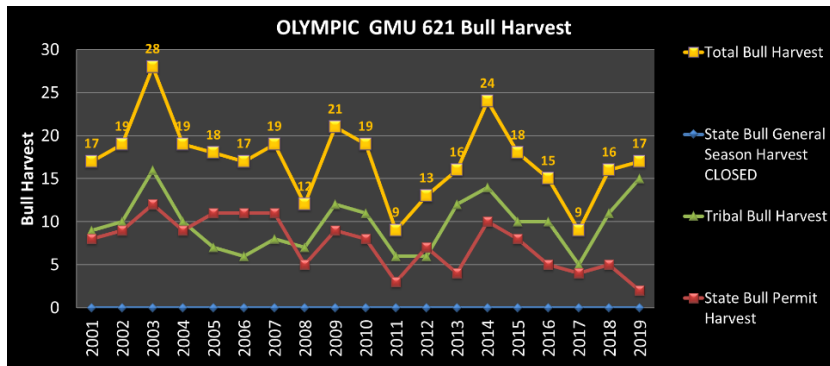


Figure 14. GMU 621 bull harvest from 2001 to 2019.

### GMU 624 (Coyle) Elk Hunting

GMU 624 is not a prime elk hunting area 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. Wildlife managers have received reports over the years of small groups of elk in various locations within GMU 624, mostly within District 15. See District 15 [Hunting Prospects](https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/locations/prospects) at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/locations/prospects>. Private acreages, typically small farms, make up a lot of the land ownership in these areas. Securing permission for hunting in much of this area can be difficult. When WDFW closing the GMU to elk hunting, it decided to keep the hunting, which can serve as a tool to resolve some damage control. If elk abundance increases in this GMU, the opportunity to harvest elk should increase as well.

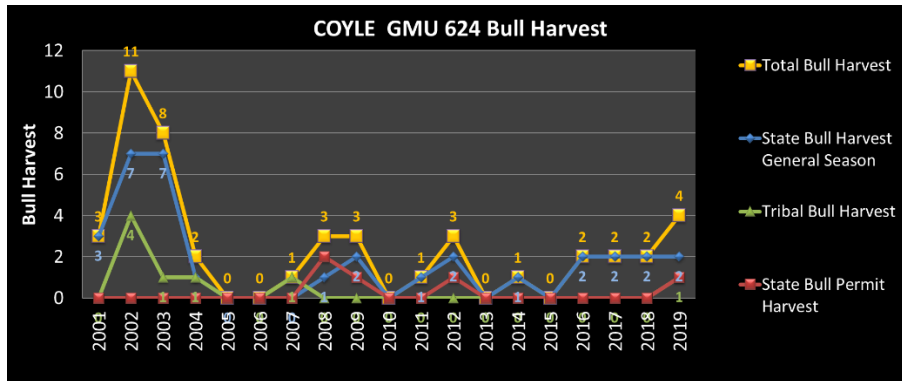


Figure 15. GMU 624 bull harvest from 2001 to 2019.

### NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES AND NOTEWORTHY REGS

WDFW adopted nNight hunting and hound hunting regulations during deer and elk hunting seasons in recent years. See page 21 of Washington’s 2020 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations pamphlet.

Unmanned Aircraft: WAC 220-413-070 “Using Aircraft” to include unmanned aircraft. See page 87 of the 2020 Big Game pamphlet, which states that “it is illegal to: Hunt game animals, game birds, or migratory birds on the day one has operated an unmanned aircraft.”

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

Persons with Disabilities: Note new regulations referenced on page 92 of the Big Game pamphlet.

Elk Treponeme-associated Hoof Disease (TAHD) has been documented on the Olympic Peninsula. It is unlawful to transport the hooves of harvested elk beyond the site where the elk was killed in all 600 series game management units.

### BACTERIAL HOOF DISEASE - TAHD

Since 2008, WDFW has received increasing reports of elk with deformed, broken, or missing hooves in southwest Washington, with sporadic observations in other areas west of the Cascade Range. While elk have long suffered from “hoof rot,” a relatively common livestock disease, the rapid spread and severity of this new affliction was something completely different.

WDFW-commissioned tests in 2013 found these abnormalities to be strongly associated with treponeme bacteria, known to cause digital dermatitis in cattle, sheep and goats. Although this disease has plagued the dairy industry for decades, the treponeme bacteria had never been documented in elk or any other wildlife species until 2013.

Since then, WDFW has continued to work with scientists, veterinarians, outdoor organizations and others to develop management strategies for elk infected by treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD).

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:** Currently, 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.

### **Counties with confirmed cases of TAHD**

WDFW had confirmed cases of elk afflicted with TAHD in Clallam and Jefferson counties.

### **How hunters can help**

- **Learn:** Find out more about TAHD at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/elk-hoof>
- **Leave hooves:** Scientists believe that treponeme bacteria are associated with moist soil and spread to new areas on the hooves of infected elk. For that reason, WDFW requires hunters to remove the hooves of any elk taken in all 600 series GMUs and leave them onsite.
- **Report elk:** Hunters can help WDFW track TAHD by reporting observations of both affected and unaffected elk at: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/2eb28165b335452c9a44aedfb79799f1>

- **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.

WDFW is currently studying the effects of the disease on Washington elk populations and has partnered with Washington State University to monitor and research the disease.



## DEER

### GENERAL INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT GOALS, AND POPULATION STATUS

WDFW is continuing to monitor Black-tailed deer 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.

District 16 wildlife biologists have been involved in WDFW black-tailed deer research on the Olympic Peninsula and assist tribal biologists with ongoing deer studies. District staff members' assignments included 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. West Olympic Peninsula tribes dropped antlerless harvest in the western GMUs in 2010.

More information about deer research in the Hoko GMU:

- Factors affecting the survival of black-tailed deer fawns:  
<http://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: <https://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 harvest data 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 23.

GMU 624 does have firearm restrictions, with no centerfire or rimfire rifles allowed. Read more about that in the [Firearm Restrictions](#) section on Page 47.

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. Private industrial timber lands and DNR-managed lands in this GMU are largely gated due to timber theft, dumping, vandalism, and other problems. However, hunters can access many of these roads onfoot or with mountain bikes. Be sure to check with the appropriate landowner or land 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 shoul check with local jurisdictions regarding firearm restrictions.

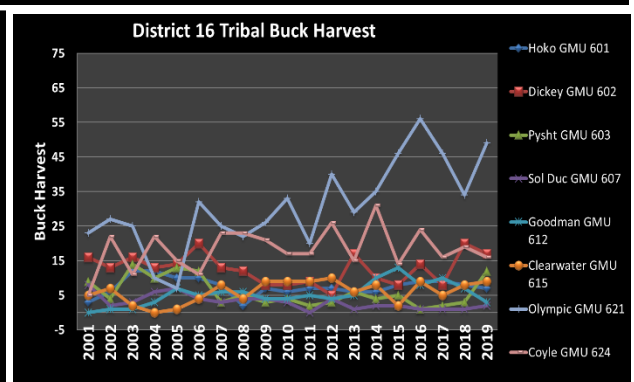
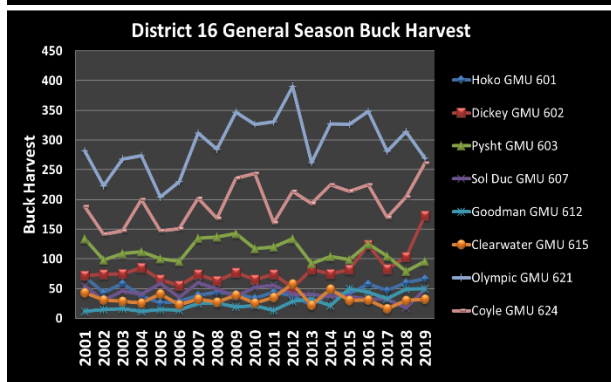
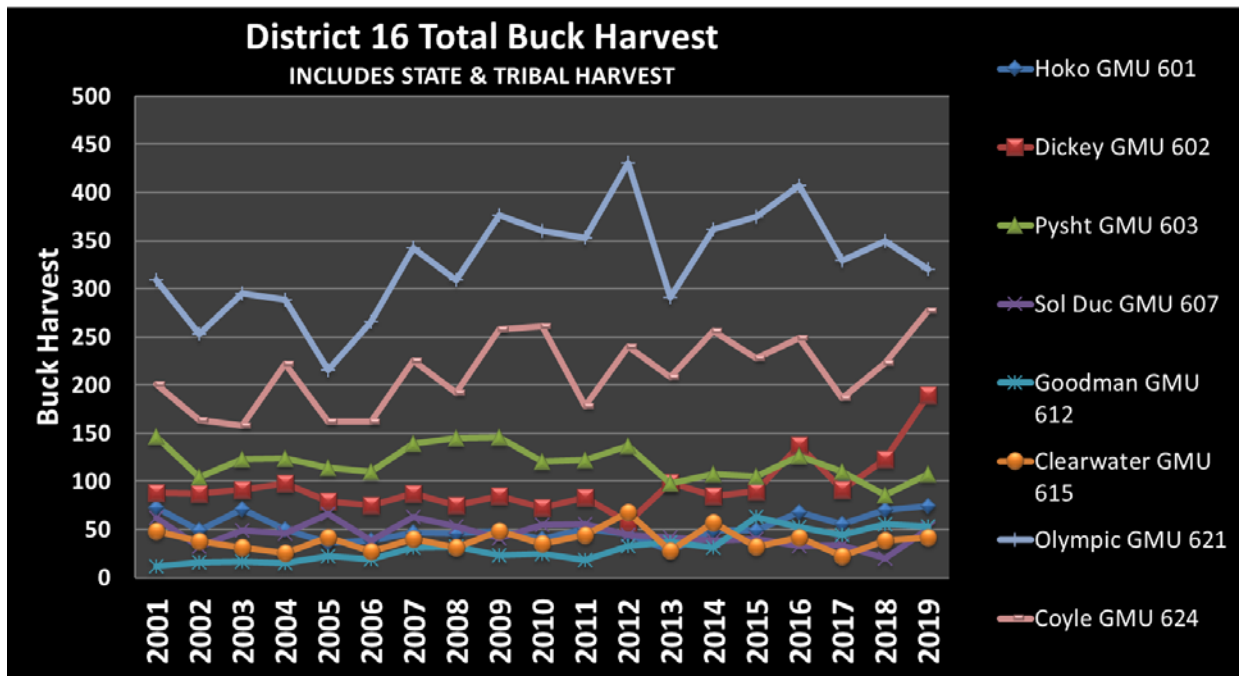
### **DISTRICT 16 BLACK-TAILED DEER HUNTING AND HARVEST RECORDS**

Hunters can find annual harvest reports and harvest statistics for deer based on hunter reporting at: <https://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, the most western GMUs in the District (Figure 16). Tribal harvest was 5-20 percent of the total deer harvest in District 16 GMUs.





<b>Total 2019 Buck Harvest by GMU</b>	
<b>200+ bucks</b>	<b>Olympic GMU 621</b> <b>Coyle GMU 624</b>
<b>100-200 bucks</b>	<b>Dickey GMU 602</b> <b>Pysht GMU 603</b>
<b>&lt; 100 bucks</b>	<b>Sol Duc GMU 607</b> <b>Goodman GMU 612</b> <b>Clearwater GMU 615</b> <b>Hoko GMU 601</b>

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

## Archery Deer Hunting

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

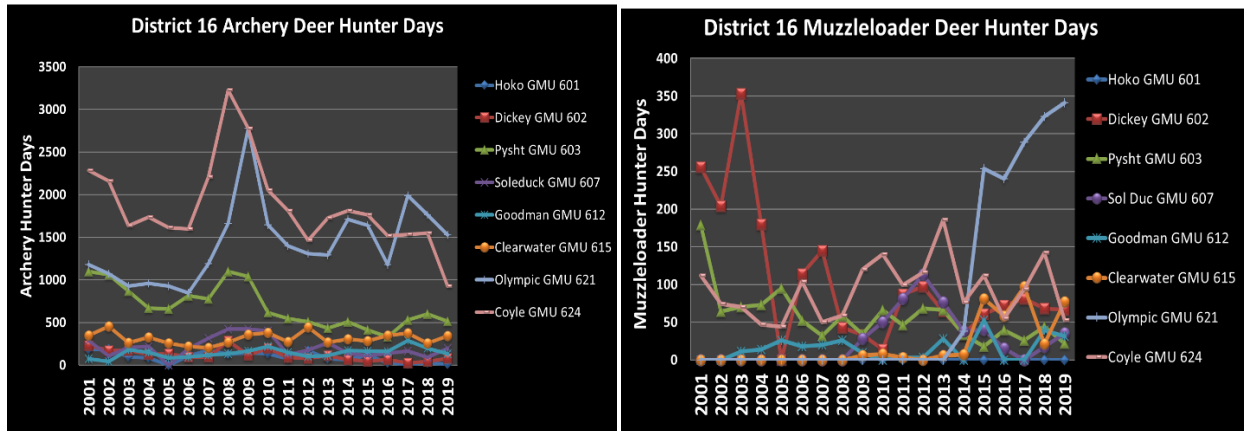


Figure 17. District 16 archery and muzzleloader hunter days.

## Muzzleloader Deer Hunting

Muzzleloader deer hunting has recently increased in GMU 621, while all the other GMUs in District 16 reportedly receive less than 100 hunter days annually (Figure 17). GMU 624 and GMU 602 have had much higher levels of muzzleloader hunter days in previous years, but recently they have dropped down to below 100 days annually as well.

## Modern Firearm Deer Hunting

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

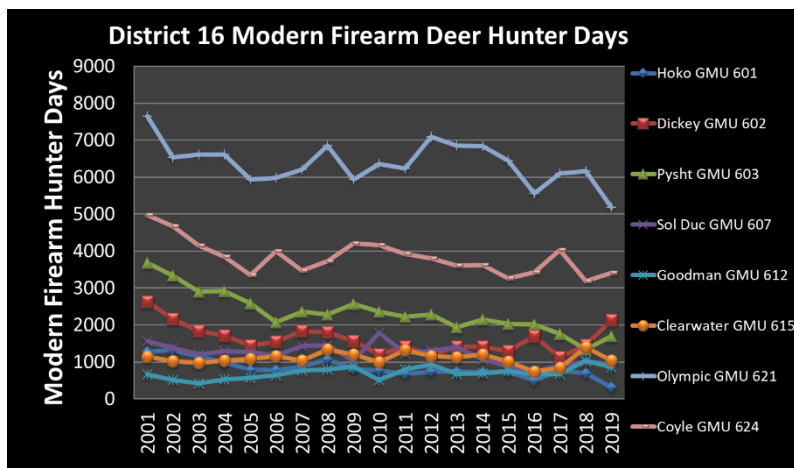


Figure 18. District 16 modern firearm deer hunter days.

## DEER AREAS

WDFW established Deer Area 6020 years ago to allow hunters to harvest does to help curb the trend of too many deer encompassing the area north of Highway 101 between Port Angeles and eastern Miller Peninsula. Wildlife managers allow doe harvest is 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 Washington 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. Hunting wildlife with centerfire or rimfire rifles isn't allowed.

## NOTABLE HUNTING CHANGES

WDFW adopted new “Night Hunting, Hound Hunting and Permits during Deer and Elk Hunting Seasons” in recent years. See page 86 of Washington’s 2019 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 93 of the Big Game pamphlet.

Persons with Disabilities: Note new regulations referenced on page 98 of the Big Game pamphlet.



## 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 Native Americans, 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, 2020. 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 black bear populations are stable in District 16. Black bears occur throughout District 16, but population densities vary among GMUs.

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2020 SEASON



The prospects for harvesting a black bear in District 16 remain good to excellent. Although some hunters specifically target black bears, most bears are harvested 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 2019 season, hunters harvest 110 bears within District 16 GMUs. Hunters harvested an additional 36 bears in GMU 621 and six bears in GMU 624, both of which include a portion of District 15. Hunter success during the 2019 season ranged from 6 percent in GMU 612 to 24 percent in GMU 607. The GMUs with the highest black bear harvest in the district the past three years are GMU 615 (Clearwater) and GMU 621 (Olympic). There was a significant increase in the number of bears harvested in GMU 607 (Sol Duc) and GMU 615 last season. Hunters can view summaries of statewide and GMU harvest reports in the 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 2019 harvest and hunter effort for District 16 GMUs.

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	435	3,478	13%	34,185	79
2	Puget Sound	157	1,844	9%	15,046	96

Table 4. Black bear 2019 harvest reports for District 16 GMUs.

GMU	Fall Male Harvest	Fall Female Harvest	Total Harvest	Number Hunters	Hunter Success	Hunter Days	Days/Kills
<b>BMU 1 – COASTAL</b>							
601 - HOKO	9	2	11	69	16%	498	45
602 - DICKEY	10	5	15	145	10%	1,099	730
603 - PYSHT	7	0	7	71	10%	665	95
607 - SOL DUC	16	7	23	94	24%	548	24
612 - GOODMAN	5	0	5	78	6%	562	112
615 - CLEARWATER	27	13	40	247	16%	1,525	38
618 - MATHENY	2	7	9	52	17%	397	44
621 - OLYMPIC	32	4	36	265	14%	2,046	57
<b>BMU 2 - PUGET SOUND</b>							
624 - COYLE	5	1	6	115	5%	857	143

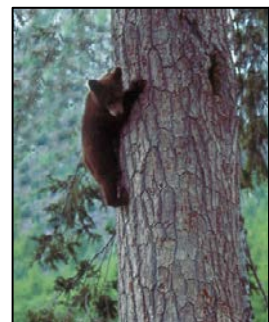
## HOW TO LOCATE AND HARVEST A BLACK BEAR

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. Similar to deer, 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 aerial surveys have detected. You can find the [aerial forest health detection maps](https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/forest-grasslandhealth/insects-diseases/?cid=stelprdb5294941) at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r6/forest-grasslandhealth/insects-diseases/?cid=stelprdb5294941>. A

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 (e.g. open hillsides) 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 be 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.

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

WDFW strongly urges bear hunters not to shoot sows with cubs. Cubs that tend to lag behind may accompany sows. Cubs may also be present in trees or 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 were captured and taken to rehabilitation facilities.



It is mandatory (per [WAC 220-415-090](http://wac.wa.gov/WAC220-415-090)) 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](http://rcw.wa.gov/RCW77.15.245)).

## 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 with the primary objective of maintaining 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 Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography. 4. Manage statewide cougar populations for a sustained yield. 5. Improve our 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 cougar 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 (PMUs). District 16 includes PMU 42, 43, and 45.

To accomplish harvest goals, WDFW established a series of hunt areas with standard season dates of September 1 through March 31. Beginning in the 2015 hunting season and then continuing in 2020, WDFW extended cougar season dates through April 30. 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 can close any hunt area that meets or exceeds the harvest guideline. 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: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/big-game/cougar>. The agency recently formed an internal group to asses the results of implementing the cougar harvest hunting structure. Table 5 provides the harvest guidelines for each District 16 hunt area for 2020 - 2021. This table also provides the cougar harvest for the 2019 – 2020 season for state hunters.

Table 5. Cougar Harvest Guidelines for 2020-2021 and State Hunter Reported Harvest for 2019-2020.

Hunt Area	Harvest Guideline 2020-2021	2019-2020 Harvest
PMU 42 - 601, 602, 603, 612	4-6	1
PMU 43 - 607, 615	3-4	1
PMU 45 - 621, 624, 627, 633	None	4

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE 2020 - 2021 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 (2016 – 2019). The cougar harvest for the 2019 – 2020 season was 50 percent lower than the previous season. Hunters harvested only five cougars within the district during the general cougar hunt last season. During the general hunt, hunters harvest one cougar in PMU 42, one

cougar in PMU 43, and four 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](#) for 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. The GMU that consistently has the highest cougar harvest in the district is GMU 621. The other GMU's 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 have not met their harvest guideline in the past seven seasons. It is likely they would not close by Jan. 1 but hunters should monitor closures and plan accordingly.

Table 6. Total cougar harvest 2019 – 2020 for PMUs within District 16 (and a portion of District 15) by state hunter. The harvest of male and female cougars is represented. Tribal hunting not included.

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

<b>PMU 43 – (GMU's 607 and 615)</b>										
GENERAL HUNTING				OTHER MORTALITY				COMBINED		
Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Total		
1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1		

<b>PMU 45 – (GMU 621 and 624)</b>										
GENERAL HUNTING				OTHER MORTALITY				COMBINED		
Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Male	Female	Unknown	Total	Total		
1	2	0	3	2	2	0	4	7		

Table 7. Cougar harvest in District 16 (and portion of District 15) for 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19.

<b>Cougar Status and Trend Report</b>				
	<b>2016-2017 HARVEST</b>	<b>2017-2018 HARVEST</b>	<b>2018-2019 HARVEST</b>	<b>3-Year Mean Harvest</b>
GMUs 601, 602, 603, 612	1	0	1	1.33
GMUs 607, 615	2	2	1	1.67
GMUs 621, 624, 627, 633	8	2	4	4.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	

\* Tribal harvest or other sources of mortality not included.

Most of the cougars that the assistant district biologist sealed hunters harvested while out deer or elk hunting. Enforcement officers in the district report low cougar hunting pressure in most GMUs in previous years. Three 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 in 1996. Hunting of the aid of hounds is prohibited statewide except during cougar management removals authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Commission.



**NOTABLE CHANGES**

The Cougar Harvest for Guideline for GMUs 601, 602, 603, and 612 changed from 5-7 to 4-6. The Cougar Harvest Guideline for GMUs 607 and 615 was changed from 4 to a range 3-4. Subadult cougars will no longer count toward the cougar harvest guideline. A valid 2021-22 cougar license and tag is required to hunt cougar in April 2021.

## MANDATORY REPORTING/SEALING

All 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 5 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

A mountain biker was killed by a young male cougar 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 ecology and behavior and are not aware of what steps are necessary to avoid negative encounters. With the increase of human populations, development patterns, and increasing human presence in rural areas, it is essential to raise public awareness and keep both people and cougars safe. Please see: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/living/cougars.html> to learn more about cougar/human interactions.

## 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 percent 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 wildlife managers have documented them near the Dungeness river mouth. WDFW encourages all 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 has consistently high waterfowl concentrations, even amidst the ongoing development. The area has mix of farmland, wetlands, coastal habitats, and conserved open space that retain the necessary food and cover for many wintering waterfowl. Waterfowl concentrations in freshwater habitats diminish drastically west of the Elwha and Lyre rivers.

### POPULATION STATUS

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

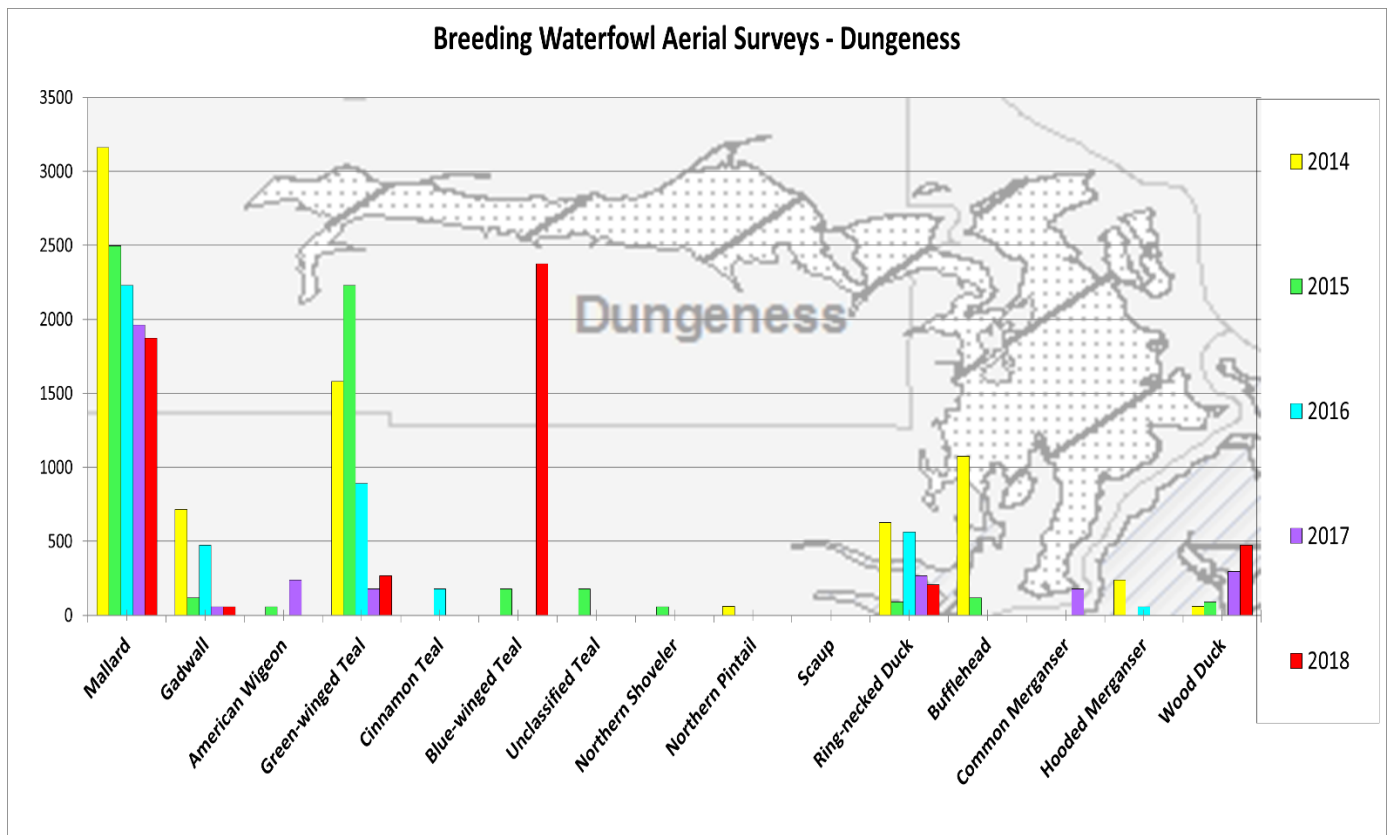
- USFWS Waterfowl Population Status 2019  
<https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/Population-status/Waterfowl/WaterfowlPopulationStatusReport19.pdf>



[https://www.fws.gov/refuges/RefugeUpdate/MarApr\\_2012/fourflyways.html](https://www.fws.gov/refuges/RefugeUpdate/MarApr_2012/fourflyways.html)

Much of the 2019 small game data was not available for the preparation of this publication. In 2018, WDFW estimated the total duck breeding population within the Dungeness at 5,317, with 44 percent being blue-winged teal, 35 percent being mallards, and 9 percent being wood ducks. Dungeness breeding population trends have shown an increase through 2014, then a drop in 2015 through 2017, following with an increase in 2018. In 2010, WDFW adopted new methods for western Washington breeding waterfowl surveys, shifting from ground counts to aerial surveys. The Dungeness transect counts range from just under 3,238 to 7,518 since 2010. The 2017 season had the lowest counts since 2010, with the 2017 total duck population estimated at 3,238. The Dungeness count has been 4-15 percent of the total breeding ducks in Western Washington from 2010 to 2016. Hunters can find Washington breeding waterfowl population monitoring for 2019 in the 2019 Game Status and Trend Report <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/02126> on pages 297-344. The greatest factor influencing brood production in the district continues to be habitat loss due to development and increasing human disturbance. Wildlife managers expect waterfowl numbers to remain moderate in District 16.

Seaducks have had restrictive bag limits through 2019 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 total harvest of 961 scoters, 118 long-tailed ducks, 172 harlequin ducks and 315 goldeneyes (Fig. 13, Table 9). The reported goldeneye harvest included 45 percent common goldeneye. Primary harvest areas included Island, Mason, Skagit, Clallam, Pierce, and Whatcom counties.” (2019 Game Status and Trend Report).



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

### HARVEST TRENDS AND 2020 PROSPECTS

Hunters have limited access to areas to hunt waterfowl in District 16. 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.

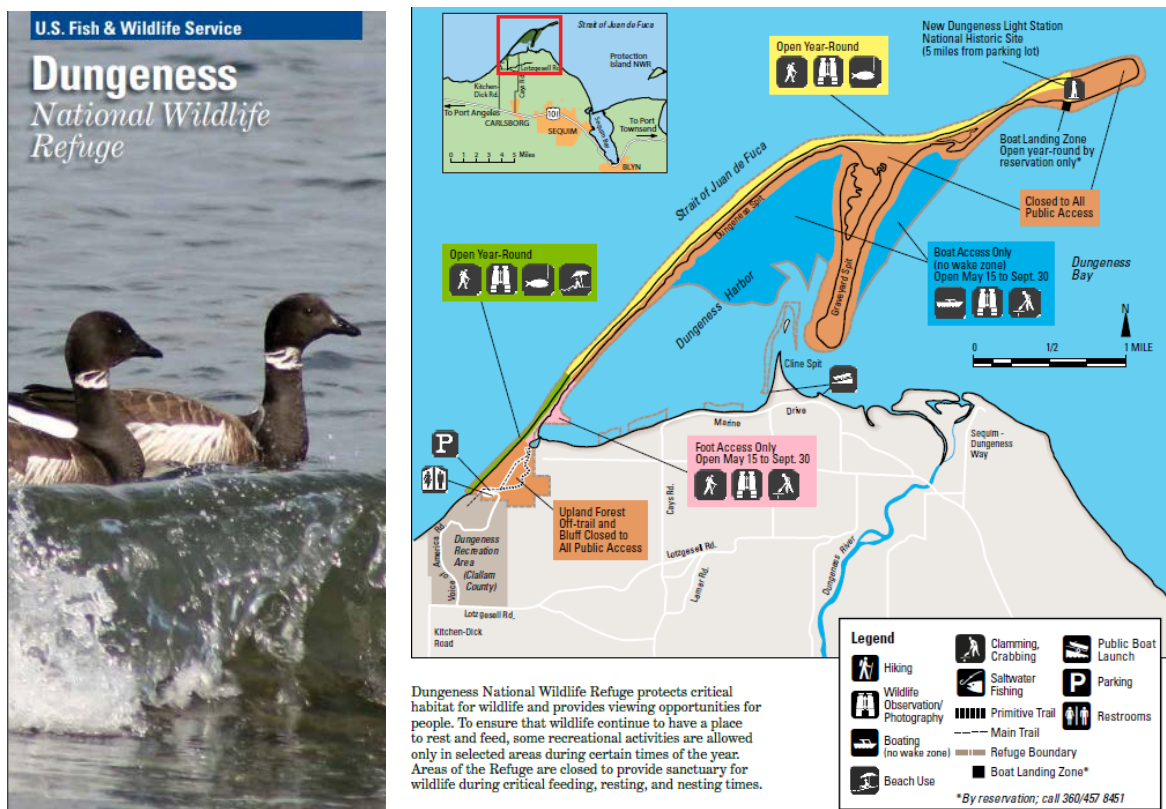
Hunters can view the Office of the Washington State Climatologist at <https://climate.washington.edu/outlook/> Climate Prediction Center’s(CPC)

September [temperature](#) outlook has increased chances of above normal temperatures statewide. The outlook for [precipitation](#) provides 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 percent. 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Dungeness Wildlife Refuge has closed areas (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.

<http://newdungenesslighthouse.com/wildlife-refuge/>

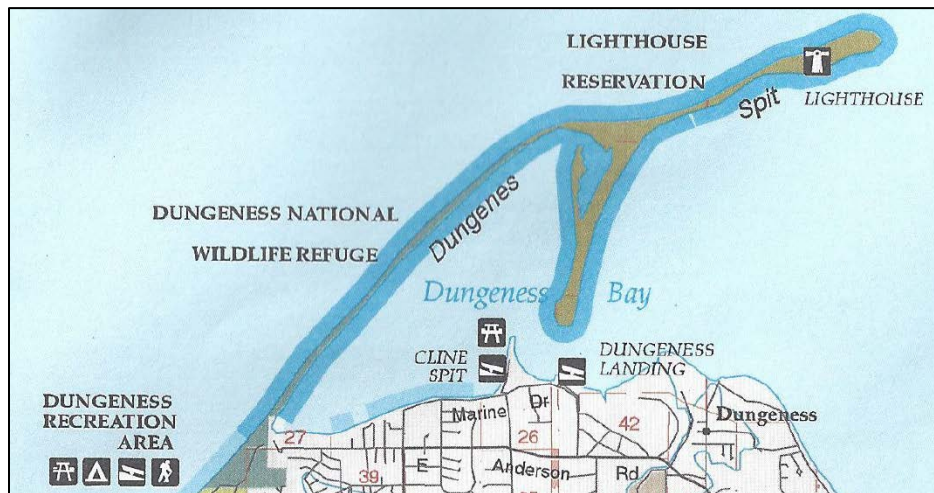
<https://wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/shellfish-beaches>



**\*IMPORTANT INFORMATION IF YOU HUNT FROM A BOAT** – When hunting from a boat, hunters should ensure the boat anchor is not 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/Tidelands:** There are some private landowners who allow limited hunting access along the saltwater shoreline. Typically, signs refers to a phone number or contact information, and in some cases the sign indicates access information. Because these vary from year to year, the hunters should tour the area and find out the current arrangements. Hunters should make sure they will be able to retrieve ducks and keep in mind the land where they have permission to hunt.

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 determine tideland ownership with assessor maps, which are available at the following websites (Figure 22):

<http://www.clallam.net/Maps/>

[https://webserv19.clallam.net/map/multipurpose\\_map/](https://webserv19.clallam.net/map/multipurpose_map/)

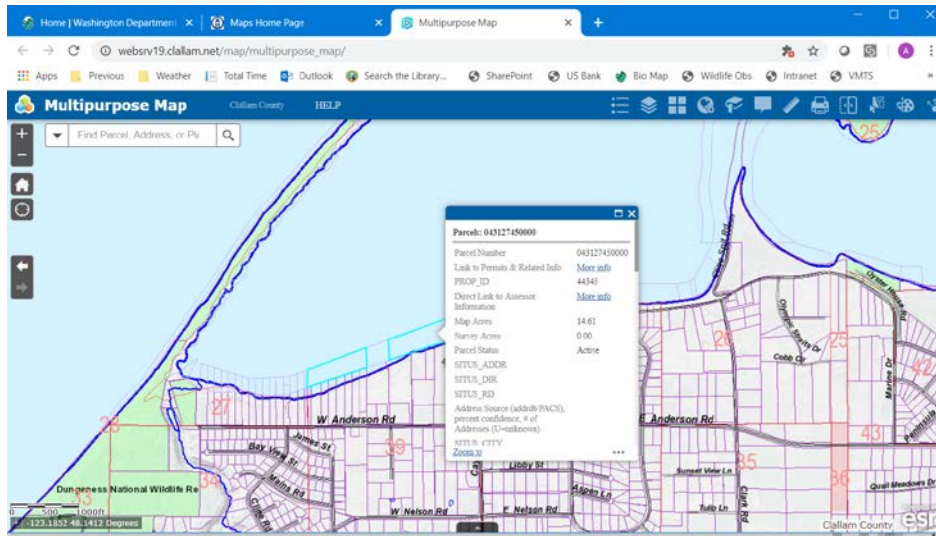


Figure 22. Clallam County website with tideland parcel information.

## PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

Most freshwater waterfowl hunting areas in the Dungeness Basin are on private lands. Public land hunting opportunities will change this year at the Lower Dungeness Unit at the mouth of the Dungeness River. Some hunters are like to find 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. Hunters should 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 seaducks (long-tailed ducks, scoter, harlequin, and goldeneye) in western Washington. To review the seaduck management strategies draft publication from 2013 visit <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01007> .

**North Olympic Wildlife Area** includes the [Dungeness Unit](https://wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-areas/dungeness-wildlife-area-unit) <https://wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-areas/dungeness-wildlife-area-unit> (Figure 23).

This unit contains multiple disjointed parcels located about 5 miles north of Sequim.

Hunting opportunities are offered ONLY at the RIVER'S END property. There is no longer access to private lands previously available. WDFW continues to evaluate the level of hunter use this reduced area can accommodate. vConsult 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 50 acres that hunters can hunt north of East Anderson Road and west of the Dungeness River. A small parking area, an information kiosk containing site rules, and a restroom are available.

**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 andTHREE CRABS PROPERTIES: Hunting management decisions are on hold until further review and planning.

Useful Links:

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



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

## 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 Canada geese usage. In the last 10 years, Canada geese have noticeably expanded into wetlands where they haven't been before.

**Brant:** Brant hunting is opening for Clallam and Whatcom counties on Jan. 16, 20, and 23, 2021 with the daily bag limit of two brant and the possession limit of six brant. Feb. 6 is the date for youth 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. Wildlife managers estimate that hunters harvested 90 brant in 2018 and 89 brant in 2019 in Clallam County. 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: <http://www.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 3-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, to further assess populations for many brant harvested from Clallam County during the 2018 and 2019 seasons..



## **POPULATION STATUS**

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

## **HARVEST TRENDS AND 2020 PROSPECTS**

Hunters harvested 310 geese in Clallam County in 2018-19, about 8 percent of Region 6's entire goose harvest. the 2018 Washington State Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons pamphlet showsharvest information on page 33.

## HUNTING TECHNIQUES

WDFW doesn't advise pass shooting geese within small acreages and patchy ownership. Local hunters were quite successful in previous seasons using a decoy spread and blinds. Hunters should get permission to hunt on private lands and follow all [firearm regulations](#). Many agricultural fields have homes 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. Hunters can typically find brant along the Dungeness shorelines that hold eelgrass but also occur in other locations from Port Angeles to Sequim Bay.

## PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

Most goose hunting opportunities are on private agricultural lands that produce barley 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 are likely to find prime forest grouse hunting on DNR and USFS lands within the district. Clallam County has one of the highest grouse harvest 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 2020 PROSPECTS

Participation in grouse hunting in District 16 continues to decline, a trend wildlife managers have 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 was 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 fall hunting prospects.

WDFW is collecting grouse wings and tails to evaluate the harvested populations. To participate, drop wings and tails off (with filled out envelopes, provided) at wing/tail barrels. Hunters can also provide them to local WDFW employees. with the date and location (GMU). Thanks in advance for helping with grouse monitoring.



## PHEASANTS

District 16 does not have viable populations of wild pheasant or pheasant release sites.

For information on current pheasant release sites, check this link to the [Western Washington Pheasant Release Program](https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/locations/pheasant-release) <https://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. Hunters can find some quail hunting opportunities on public lands in the lower foothills in clear-cuts or any early successional habitats. During 2018, hunters harvested the was 214 quail in Clallam County, with two quail harvested in Jefferson County.

## TURKEYS

District 16 is not managed for wild turkeys and the species remains relatively rare here. WDFW receives occasional reports of individuals or small groups of turkeys within GMU 603. They 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 2020 PROSPECTS**

The reported harvest of band-tailed pigeons in this district is relatively low (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.

<https://www.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. Hunters should search for areas with elderberry and cascara. Band-tailed pigeons often gather 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. WDFW estimated that hunters harvested 34 mourning doves in Clallam County in 2018. Reported harvest in Jefferson County during 2018 was 0 mourning doves. There was no reported harvest of doves in 2017 within District 16. The [2019 USFWS Mourning Dove Population Status report](#) <https://www.fws.gov/birds/news/190819mourningdove.php> contains more information.

### **Snowshoe Hare and Cottontail Rabbit**

Most all of the rabbits on the Olympic Peninsula will be snowshoe hare (see range maps below). Hunters readily observe snowshoe hare along forested roads in the western half of District 16, and are likely to find them 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. Hunters can find more information on the snowshoe hare and other rabbits at:

- [http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA\\_snowshoe\\_hare.html](http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_snowshoe_hare.html)
- [http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA\\_eastern\\_cottontail.html](http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_eastern_cottontail.html)



- [http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA\\_european\\_rabbit.html](http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_european_rabbit.html)
- [http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA\\_nuttalls\\_cottontail.html](http://naturemappingfoundation.org/natmap/maps/wa/mammals/WA_nuttalls_cottontail.html)
- [Snowshoe Hare - Canadian Wildlife Federation](http://www.hww.ca/en/wildlife/mammals/snowshoe-hare.html)  
<https://www.hww.ca/en/wildlife/mammals/snowshoe-hare.html>

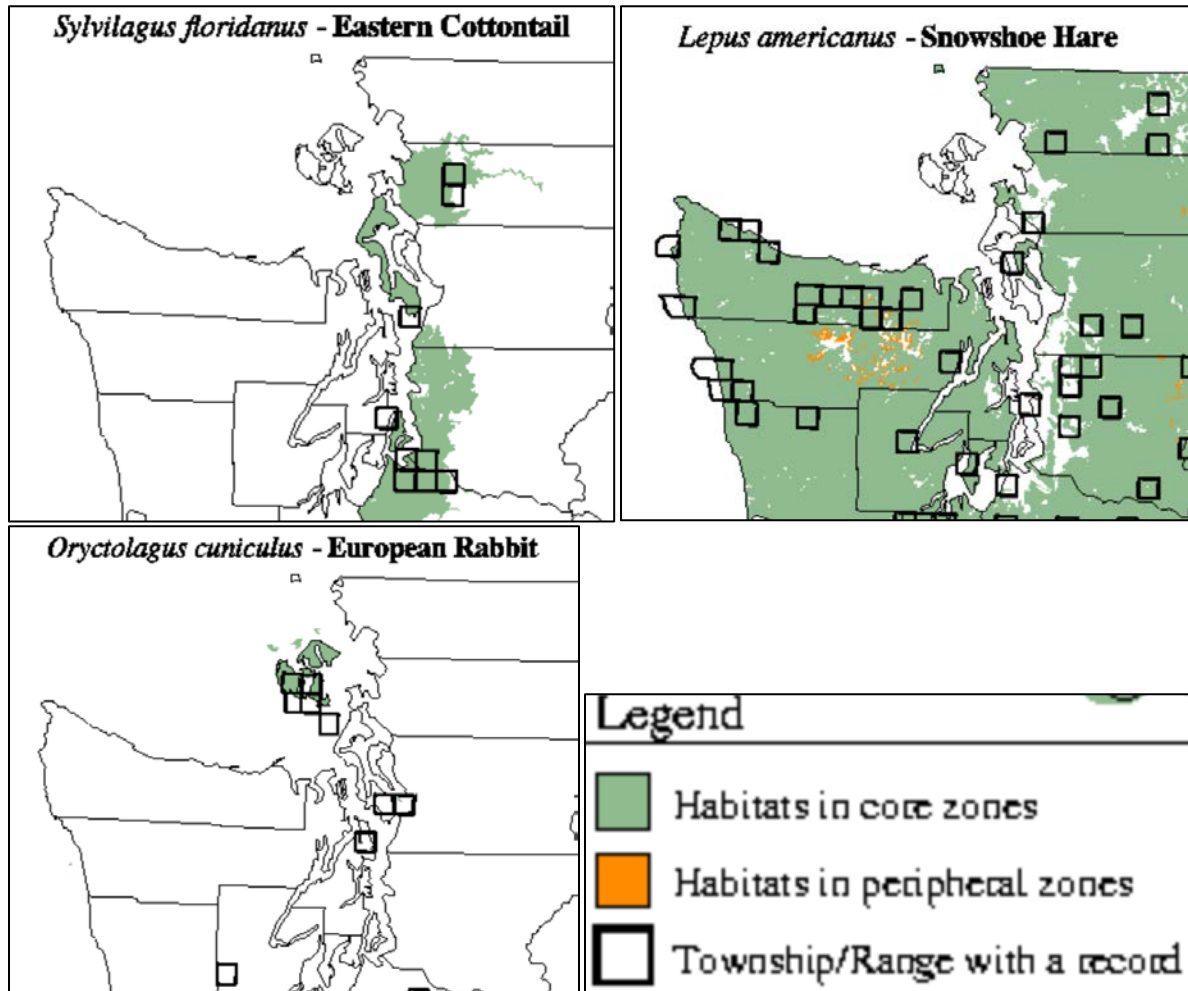


Figure 24. Range maps for snowshoe hare, eastern cottontail rabbit, and European rabbit.

## 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. Tribal governments 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:

<https://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:

- 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  
<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/ClallamCounty/html/ClallamCounty15/ClallamCounty1516.html>
- Jefferson County Code Jefferson County Shooting in the County  
<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/JeffersonCounty/html/JeffersonCounty08/JeffersonCounty0850.html>

## MAJOR PUBLIC LANDS

With mixed ownership comes a complexity of access rules by various governmental and private entities. Make sure you have 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 you might need depending on your destination.

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



[Federal Agency-Interagency Annual Pass](#)



## [Federal Agency Interagency Volunteer Pass](#)



The interagency passes include access on National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, 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 will not be allowing access for deer hunting. These areas use a lottery system 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 should scout the areas they are considering hunting and pay close attention to signs, which 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: <http://www.rayonier.com/>

IFP Office 360-452-1351

Forks Office 360-374-6565

Port Angeles 360-457-2329

Information on Rayonier Access Permits:

- <http://property.rayonierhunting.com/Permits/PermitsHome.aspx>
- <http://property.rayonierhunting.com/AvailableAreas/FindProperties.aspx>

#### **Green Crow**

Website: <http://www.greencrow.com/contact-us/locations/>

Port Angeles 360-452-3325

727 E. 8th, Port Angeles, WA 98362

#### **Merrill and Ring**

Website: <http://www.merrillring.com/contacts/>

360-452-2367

Email: [contact@merrillring.com](mailto:contact@merrillring.com)

813 East 8th Street, Port Angeles, WA 98362

## OTHER MAJOR LANDOWNERS

### Hoh River Trust

Facebook Website: <https://www.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](mailto:ddoherty@rmef.org)

### Jefferson County Sportsmen’s Association

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

Email: [info@JeffersonCountySportsmen.org](mailto:info@JeffersonCountySportsmen.org)

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

### Sportsmen for Wild Olympics

Website: [www.SportsmenForWildOlympics.org](http://www.SportsmenForWildOlympics.org)

Email: [info@sportsmenforwildolympics.org](mailto:info@sportsmenforwildolympics.org)

### Wapiti Bowmen Archery Club

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

Email: [wapitibowclub@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.backcountryhunters.org/washington_bha)

Max Cole, West Side Co-Chair

Email: [washington@backcountryhunters.org](mailto: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](mailto:papaluke@wavecable.com)

## Izaak Walton League of America Greater Seattle Chapter

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

A. William Way

Phone: 425868-4759

Email: [bway@watershedco.com](mailto:bway@watershedco.com)

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

## Washington Brant Foundation

Website: <http://www.wabrانت.org/>

Maynard Axelson

Phone: 360445-6681

Email: [info@wabrانت.org](mailto:info@wabrانت.org)

15929 Fir Island Rd, Mt Vernon, WA 98273

## Washington Outdoor Women

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

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

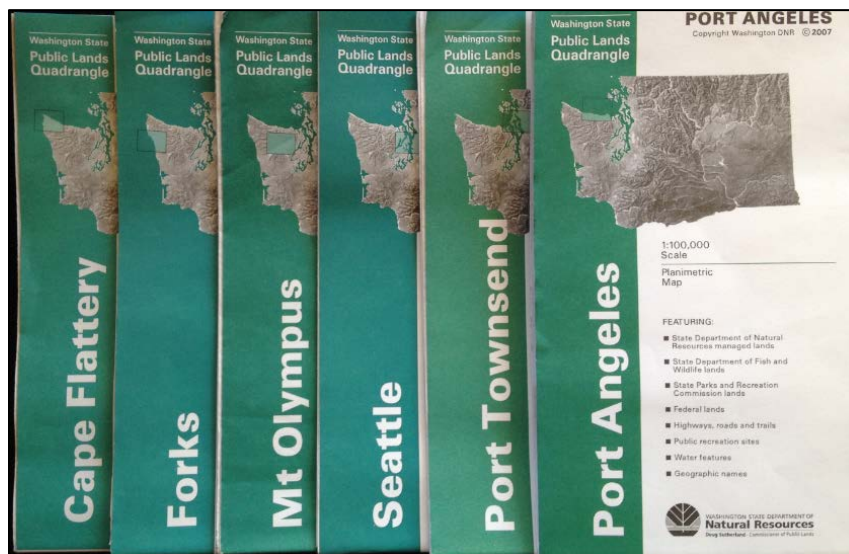
P.O. Box 1656, Bellevue, WA 98009-1656

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

## ONLINE TOOLS AND MAPS

Because land ownership can be confusing, we recommend a set of these DNR maps, which you can order online at:

<https://www.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 & 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

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Embed/index.html?webmap=fa6875f802ee43f4a21d16df47b71cec&extent=-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 <http://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: <http://www.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. If you plan ahead 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.