

Table 3-91. Mule deer numbers and herd management objectives from 1980 to 2000.

Herd Unit	Herd Numbers		Herd Mgmt Objectives	
	1980	2000	1980	2000
Baggs	11,850	9,150	9,350	18,700
Platte Valley	24,400	17,200	15,000	20,000
Sheep Mountain ¹	10,300	13,650	10,000	15,000
Iron Mountain	5,800	9,200	5,800	7,500
Laramie Peak ²	19,600	15,200	14,000	14,000
South Converse ³	8,000	16,530	8,000	16,000
Bates Hole/Hat Six ⁴	5,800	8,500	6,200	12,000
¹ Population high in the 1990s was 16,575. ² Population high in the 1990s was 19,600. ³ Population high in the 1990s was 18,100. ⁴ Population high in the 1990s was 11,800.				

Bighorn sheep are considered in detail in Appendix D under “Species of Local Concern.”

Black bear: Population estimates of black bears are difficult to obtain, and typically are assumed to be imprecise, with large margins of error. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department does not use estimates of population size in their management efforts, but rather an estimate of trend. The population management focus for black bears is to maintain a viable population, while maintaining hunting opportunity as the major management tool.

- ♦ **Laramie Peak Black Bear Management Unit:** The population currently appears to be stable and at a low density. Both spring and fall hunting opportunities exist, though harvest is very minimal. The majority of bear harvest occurs on Forest lands or on adjacent private land.

The Forest habitat is important to the relatively small numbers of bears present. Black bears occupy Forest lands year-long. Riparian, aspen, and wet meadow sites are the preferred habitat for black bears during the spring, summer, and fall period due to the lush vegetative growth. Maintaining these habitats from excessive forage use is a concern. Road density in the Albany Peak area (some of which are not Forest roads) likely has some impact on bear use of available habitat, and human disturbance, particularly ORV use, is a concern. In addition, the effects of improper food storage by campers, recreationists, and cabin owners is a concern, and will need to be addressed more thoroughly as recreational opportunities increase and expand on the Forest.

- ◆ **Snowy Range Black Bear Management Unit:** The population appears to be stable to increasing. The Forest provides very important habitat for these bears, and almost all habitats occupied by bears occurs on Forest lands. Some spring and summer use is located just off forest near developed sites.

Improved management of garbage, food storage, and developed and dispersed camping to minimize bear-human conflicts is a management issue.

- ◆ **Sierra Madre Black Bear Management Unit:** The population appears to be stable. The Forest provides very important habitat for these bears, and almost all habitats occupied by bears occur on Forest lands. Some spring and summer use is located just off the Forest near developed sites.

Riparian management is a primary management concern. Upland scrub oak management, for fall food, is a concern in the Battle Mountain, Cottonwood Rim, the Sandstone Canyons, and Battle Creek areas. Road density is an issue, as is management of garbage, food storage, and developed and dispersed camping to minimize bear-human conflicts.

Mountain lion (forestwide): Population estimates of mountain lions are difficult to obtain, and typically are assumed to be imprecise, with large margins of error. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department does not use estimates of population size in our management efforts, but rather an estimate of trend. The population management focus for lions is to maintain a viable lion population, while providing ample hunting opportunity as the primary management tool. Lion populations appear to be currently stable on the Medicine Bow Forest.

The Forest provides very important year-long habitat and hunting access for mountain lions. Forest lands, along with BLM and private lands immediately adjacent to the Forest, provide almost all the seasonal habitat for this species. Since the main prey base for mountain lions is mule deer, they will typically occupy similar habitats year-round. Hunting access and opportunity are usually dependent on snow conditions.

The trend in habitat quality for prey species (mainly deer, some elk) is the biggest influence on lion populations. For all lion areas that include the Forest, maintenance of healthy shrub communities, aspen stands, and riparian vegetation are key to mule deer production and consequently to lion populations.