

*Lion, continued . . . . .*

area is down just a bit this fall. Under the quota, 16 lions can be taken from Area 1, which is north and east of Highways 85 and 585, and eight can be taken in Area 30, which borders Area 1 to the south and runs to Highway 16. Area 24, south of Highway 16, has four lion tags that can be filled. Those numbers will change next year, Sandrini said, when they reevaluate next spring.

Area 1 is being managed to sink the population of lions, and Game and Fish hopes to keep it stable in Area 30. Early on, at least, it appears that the management plan is having the desired effect.

“I think we’re actually getting into them in Area 1, and that’s the way it was designed. Area 30 was meant to be stable, and hopefully kick the animals into Area 1,” Sandrini revealed.

*Elk, continued . . . . .*

on haystacks and other ag related forage, but increased precipitation in the past year has alleviated some of that.

“We have had a pretty good feed year this summer, and the damage hasn’t been as bad,” Sandrini noted.

Of course, hunting is only one factor involved in controlling lion populations.

“We’re starting to see a decline in deer numbers in the BH, and they are the primary prey of lions, so if those numbers start to decline, we will not be able to support as many lions here. In the next couple of years deer numbers will continue to go down, and with what we’re killing, hopefully we’ll reduce the density of lions as I think we already have in Area 1,” Sandrini claimed.

The competition for prey and territory also has an impact on numbers.

“About half of the mortality is due to other lions. They kill each other because they’re territorial, and the adult males don’t tolerate the younger ones in their territory. When the prey numbers go down, territory tends to increase, and their tolerance for each other goes down,” Sandrini indicated.

“They kill more of each other than we ever do,” Shorma agreed.

The extra moisture and forage has also served to disperse the herds a bit more, in deer and antelope as well as elk, and that means they won’t be found in as concentrated an area this fall.

“Animals are spread out a little bit more because there’s good food and water this year,” Sandrini explained.

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