**Alberta Mule Deer Collaring Project Update**

**June 21, 2026**

**Project Status**

The Alberta Mule Deer Collaring Project remains on schedule in its second year of the five-year study. During January 2026, crews deployed an additional 149 additional satellite collars (75 Southeast, 74 Southwest), bringing the project total to 265 collared deer. As of June 21, 225 deer remain active and transmitting, 35 mortalities have been recorded, and 5 collars are no longer transmitting (their fate is unknown).

**Key Findings**

Adult doe survival was high during the mild 2025-26 winter:

- Southwest: 92.7% (CI 85–100%)
- Southeast: 86.0% (CI 77–92%)

Adult buck survival will require more monitoring because of the smaller sample size:

- SE and SW combined: 72.2% (CI 54–96%)

**Population Monitoring**

Annual survival estimates are being incorporated into integrated population models to assess management objectives, population age structure, and harvest strategies. These data are also being used to inform harvest management decisions. Aerial surveys were completed in both study areas, and the results of these are available through Open Alberta.

**Body Condition**

Body condition of adult does in the Southwest was better than that of does in the Southeast, likely reflecting differences in forage productivity and drought conditions. Analysis of the relationship between body condition and survival is ongoing; however, body condition at both study sites was considered good relative to findings from other North American studies.

**Management Implications**

Adult survival rates observed during the first year of the study are relatively high compared to other mule deer populations in North America; however, the winter of 2025-26 was warmer than average, which likely contributed improved survival and body condition.

Predators account for most documented mortalities to date, with coyotes responsible for the majority. Continued monitoring will improve understanding of the influence of predation on mule deer populations and support future management discussions.

Movement data are identifying important migration corridors and seasonal habitat selection that will help inform wildlife crossing locations, winter and summer range management, fencing design, and mitigation of deer-vehicle collisions. Environmental factors, particularly drought and winter severity, are expected to have a greater influence on annual survival and population performance.

**Project Partners and Funders**

- Alberta Professional Outfitters Society (APOS)
- Alberta Conservation Association (ACA)
- Alberta Forestry and Parks – Hunting and Fishing Branch
- Alberta Environment and Protected Areas
- Minister's Special Licence Auction Grants
- Northern Alberta Chapter – Safari Club International
- Grand Slam Club Ovis Canada

**Year 3 Work Plan**

Deploy up to **120 additional doe collars** and **36 additional buck collars** within the southern Alberta study areas to further strengthen estimates of survival, movement, population trends, and harvest-management outcomes.