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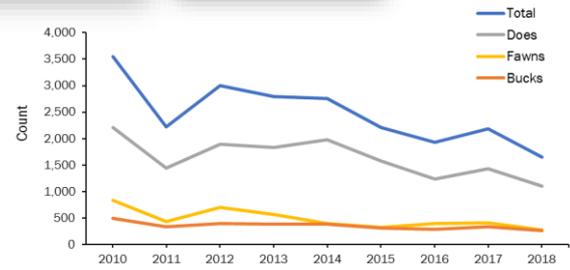


**Potential threats** to Navajo deer include human encroachment, extreme drought, and changes in forest structure and diversity, all leading to the loss of available habitat and resources. Another likely cause of declines is the direct competition for resources and disease transmission from feral horses and unauthorized livestock. Further, deer herds that are already affected by scarce resources and disease become even more susceptible to predation by mountain lions, coyotes and black bears.

# DECLINING POPULATIONS

## Why have our deer permit numbers decreased this year?

NAVAJO NATION DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

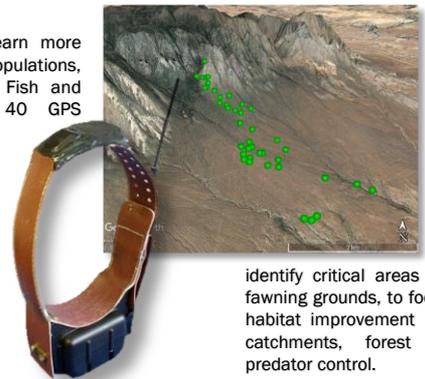


**Population declines** are shown here over the last nine years with bucks, does and fawn recruitment all decreasing over time. If current climate conditions and numbers of unauthorized livestock continue as is, deer populations are projected to continue dropping over the next decade.



**I**n the last decade, Navajo Nation has seen a steady decline in its Mule deer populations. The Department of Fish & Wildlife monitors deer herd health and population trends over time by collecting information from hunter survey cards, harvested deer, and annual aerial surveys. After finishing this year's big game population counts, the department estimated a decrease of nearly 2,000 deer within surveyed areas only in the last nine years. Considering deer are the most culturally and economically important game species on the Nation, it is critical we understand what is causing our populations to drop while also carefully managing the remaining populations against further decline. One concrete way wildlife agencies can help prevent further reductions in populations is to alleviate hunting pressure by decreasing permit numbers. It is one way, among many, that hunters contribute to the proper management and recovery of healthy wildlife populations.

**In an effort** to learn more about our deer populations, the Department of Fish and Wildlife deployed 40 GPS collars on adult does in February 2018 to monitor seasonal movement and migration, identify important migration corridors and critical use areas, and assess causes of mortality.



**Data from GPS collars** will help identify critical areas for deer, such as fawning grounds, to focus and implement habitat improvement projects like water catchments, forest treatments, and predator control.