S-0913.1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SENATE BILL 5525**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senator Short

AN ACT Relating to whitetail deer population estimates; and adding a new section to chapter 77.12 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 77.12 RCW to read as follows:

(1) The department must manage whitetail deer populations in district one of region one with the goal of increasing the deer counted per mile in the late summer surveys to fall within the range of nine to eleven deer counted per survey mile.

(2) Each year, beginning with the 2019 population assessment, in district one of region one, the department must conduct a minimum of six traditional transect counts including the Kelly hill standard transect in game management unit 105, the Douglas standard transect in game management unit 108, the Deep creek standard transect in game management units 108 and 111, the Summit valley standard transect in the central portion of game management unit 121, the Clayton standard transect in the southern portion of game management unit 117, and the Daisy-Maud standard transect in the western portion of game management unit 121.

(3)(a) In district one of region one, in addition to the transect counts required in subsection (2) of this section, beginning with the 2019 population assessment, the department must establish three fifteen mile transects on public lands, including national forest lands, bureau of land management lands, or state lands, and conduct transect counts each year on these public lands. The department must consult with interested hunters and wildlife stakeholders in developing the transects on public lands. Each of the transects on public land must be wholly contained within a single game management unit listed in subsection (2) of this section, and the three public land transects should be dispersed across district one of region one. The department must use the same transects established on public lands for subsequent transect counts under this subsection.

(b) The purpose of the data collected under (a) of this subsection is for comparison purposes only and must not be added to the data collected under subsection (2) of this section, in order to preserve the usefulness and veracity of historical trends.

(4) The transect counts under this section must track and report buck-to-doe ratios and fawn-to-doe ratios, and also demonstrate whitetail deer density and trends. The department must conduct the first set of transect counts as described in subsections (2) and (3) of this section in the month of August to determine buck-to-doe ratio, density, and overall population. The department must conduct the second set of transect counts as described in subsections (2) and (3) of this section in the month of September to determine fawn-to-doe ratio, density, and overall population. The ratios are an important factor to understand the current and future health of the whitetail deer population.

(5) To increase meaningful public participation in the establishment of hunting seasons, the department must provide the public with timely access to both compliant and noncompliant hunter harvest data. The department must make compliant hunter harvest data available to the public fourteen days after the January 31st deadline for hunters to report their harvest to the department. The department must make noncompliant hunter harvest data available no later than thirty days prior to a commission meeting to establish hunting seasons. The data must include a description of the assumptions and methodology used for determining noncompliant hunter harvest data.

(6) The department must recalculate the estimate of noncompliant hunter harvest data for 2015 through 2019 using the methodology used in 2013 and 2014. By December 31, 2019, the department must report the recalculation and the differences between the two methodologies to the natural resources committees of the legislature and the commission and make the information available to the public.

(7) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Clayton standard transect" in game management unit 117 (south) means: Start at the intersection of Garden Spot road and highway 395 near Loon lake. Go east on Garden Spot road six miles to Grove road, which is where the original transect began. Take Grove road south to Oregon road; turn right on Oregon road and go to Spotted road; turn left on Spotted road and go to Bridges road; turn left onto Bridges road; follow Bridges road to Grove road again and turn right on Grove road; follow Grove road to Mason road and turn right on Mason road; follow Mason road to where it ends at Furze road. Go north on Furze road to where the county road ends in a cul-de-sac. Then do a u-turn back and pick up again where you turned on to Furze road from Mason road. Go another seven-tenths of a mile southerly on Furze road until you cross the railroad track, which is where the transect ends. Be sure to note deer observed on the first six miles as well as the last one and eight-tenths miles beyond the large field west of Furze road, as this is not on the original transect. Total length equals seven and two-tenths miles for the original transect and fifteen miles for the standard.

(b) "Daisy-Maud standard transect" in game management unit 121 (west) means: Begin at the intersection of Records road and Addy-Gifford road and go west two and seven-tenths miles to "Maud" where the Daisy Mine road intersects Addy-Gifford road, which is the original starting point for the traditional transect. Go north on Daisy Mine road to Breckenridge road. Turn west and follow west and north to Beck road. Keep going north on Beck road until reaching Daisy Mine road again and then turn west. Follow Daisy Mine road west downhill to Miles road and turn south. Go south on Miles road back to Addy-Gifford road. Take Addy-Gifford road east to Anderson road and turn southeast. End on Anderson road at a "y" near the "tree farm" sign. Total length equals twelve and three-tenths miles for the original transect and fifteen miles for the standard.

(c) "Deep creek standard transect" in game management units 108 and 111 means: Start at the intersection of Aladdin road and south fork Mill Creek road, which is where the original transect began. Go north on Aladdin road to four and eight-tenths miles, which is where the new standard transect begins. Note the odometer mileage here along with where deer are observed to distinguish the original and standard transects. Continue north on Aladdin road to the "y" at Spirit Junction. Turn west going toward Northport and end the transect at the fields just west of the South Fork grange hall. At Rocky creek road, which is early in the route, drive in across the bridge and to the first corner past the fields to view these fields and then return to the highway. Few deer are seen early in the route; work slowly so not to be through the route too soon. Total length equals nineteen and eight-tenths miles for the original transect and fifteen miles for the standard.

(d) "Deer" means whitetail deer.

(e) "District one of region one" means the Sherman, Kelly Hill, Douglas, Aladdin, Selkirk, 49 degrees, and Huckleberry game management units located in Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Ferry counties as defined by the department as of January 1, 2019.

(f) "Douglas standard transect" in game management unit 108 means: Start at the intersection of Spanish Prairie road and highway 395. Go north to Williams Lake road and continue north to Clugston-Onion Creek road. Turn east and only go as far as to Douglas Falls road and then turn south (east at first before curve). Follow Douglas Falls road to its intersection with Gillette road (also known as Lee Hedrick road). Turn left on Gillette road, go northeasterly exactly four miles to the top of the hill, then do a u-turn and come back to Douglas Falls road. Note separately any deer observed on the survey data form for this four-mile segment along Gillette road, as this segment was not on the original transect. Once you return to Douglas Falls road, follow it south as far as Larsen road. Turn east on Larsen road and go to the end for "prime time count" where the transect ends. Total length equals eleven miles for the original transect and fifteen miles for the standard.

(g) "Kelly hill standard transect" in game management unit 105 means: Start at the intersection of Kettle River road and Burkholz road, which is where the original transect began. Go east on Burkholz to Northport-Flat Creek road. The fifteen mile long "standard transect" then begins at the intersection of Bob Anderson road with Northport-Flat Creek road. Note this new start point odometer mileage on the deer survey data form. Continue to follow Northport-Flat Creek road to its intersection with east fork Crown Creek road, which is where the transect ends. Total length equals seventeen and one-half miles for original Flat Creek transect and fifteen miles for the standard.

(h) "Summit valley standard transect" in game management unit 121 (central) means: Start on south Basin road at its intersection with McFarlane road. Go southeasterly one and four-tenths miles to Matson road. Turn southerly on Matson road and follow this for two and six-tenths miles where it ends at Naff road. Turn right on Naff road and go one and two-tenths miles to Old C.C. road. Turn to the south on Old C.C. road and follow this four and one-half miles to the start of the original, traditional Dunn mountain transect. Continue on Old C.C. road south to Summit Valley and turn east on the Summit Valley road (also called Border road) and end the transect at the east edge of the big open field before coming to the Addy-Cedonia road. Total length equals five and three-tenths miles for the original Dunn mountain transect and fifteen miles for the standard.

**--- END ---**