

Officials try the difficult task of relocating mule deer

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Creatures of habit, mule deer make poor candidates for relocation by wildlife officials. So researchers will keep an eye on 50 mule deer in greener pastures after their removal from Utah's Parowan front.

The roundup is set for Today and tomorrow north of Cedar City along Interstate 15. The deer will be trucked 100 miles to new range along the Pahvant mountain range east of Fillmore.

"Deer are so habitual," Teresa Griffin, a wildlife manager for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, said, that they become

disoriented in new surroundings.

"They take the same paths every day. They go to the same place for water every day. They'll give fawns in the same place every summer," Griffin said. "When you take them to a new place, they don't know what to do. Some take off, and others die."

The deer will be monitored and tracked on their new range by Brigham Young University graduate students working with a grant from Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife. The study will examine whether deer make better candidates for relocation in winter, when they are burning off fat

reserves, Griffin said.

Utah officials said they eliminated coyotes on the new range to better the odds of survival for the mule deer.

The Parowan front has thousands of mule deer, making it a candidate for thinning, Griffin said. Contractors will use net guns

to capture the deer, primarily does and yearlings, which are likely to be bedding down under trees this time of year, she said.

The deer will be hauled into trailers for relocation.

Utah has an estimated 400,000 mule deer, according to Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife.

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