## Mojave Deer Capture 2013 Initial Report

On 21 March, project personnel gathered at Hole in the Wall Fire Base in Mojave National Preserve for a preliminary safety meeting, and to discuss final details for the capture effort. A second meeting was convened with at 0730 on 22 March to again emphasize safety aspects and animal care. Other than the four man capture crew, which was from Leading Edge Aviation, a total of 13 personnel were assigned on site to this operation, with a 14<sup>th</sup> in a remote location and who served in a pivotal role by monitoring the automated flight following software while capture operations were underway. Participants in this effort were as follows:

CDFW Region 6 and Wildlife Division: Mr. David Elms (Project Co-Leader), Ms. Lora Konde, Dr. Becky Pierce, Dr. Ben Gonzales (Veterinary Coordinator), Dr. Vern Bleich (Project Co-leader), and Ms. Jane McKeever (in charge of flight following).

CDFW DVM Emeritus: Dr. Bud Adams

University of Nevada, Reno: Dr. Kelley Stewart, Mr. Tony Bush, Ms. Danielle Walsh, Dr. Cynthia Downs, and Ms. Robin Adams

NPS: Mr. Neal Darby and Dr. Debra Hughson

Leading Edge Aviation: Jim Pope (pilot); Luke, Will, and Grant (capture specialists)

On 22 March, we captured, sampled, collared, and released 13 adult and one yearling female mule deer: 7 individuals were captured in the east end of the New York Mountains in the water-limited portion of the study area and 7 were captured at Cima Dome in the control area; a total of 8.1 hours of rotor time was expended on 22 March. On 23 March, 7 adult females were captured in the water available part of the study area; 4.7 hours of rotor time were expended on 23 March. The aircraft was a McDonnell-Douglas 500D.

The captures were largely unremarkable, with only one animal becoming hyperthermic; it was treated by Drs. Gonzales and Adams, and the release otherwise was uneventful. No serious physical injuries were incurred by any animals, and there were no injuries to personnel, all whom performed professionally and efficiently.

The capture crew was pleasant, performed extremely well, was exceedingly skilled and efficient, and met every request of the project leaders. There was, however, an initial issue with CDFW communications equipment, for which I will provide details in a separate communication; nevertheless, the bugs were resolved prior to initiating aerial capture. SURCOM dispatch was exceedingly helpful, and communications between Bleich, McKeever, and SURCOM dispatch occurred was well coordinated and occurred without problems.

Thank you for the opportunity to again be of assistance in organizing this effort, and for your support of this collaborative project. Please look for additional details in the near future. All the best... Vern Bleich