

**STATE OF NEVADA  
BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS**

**Commission Policy Number 24**

Number: **P24**  
Title: **Hunting Opportunities Among  
Weapons and Hunter Groups**  
Reference: **NRS 501.105, 501.181**  
Effective Date: May 13, 2006

**PURPOSE**

To establish hunting opportunities for the various weapons and hunter groups.

**POLICY**

It is the policy of the Board of Wildlife Commissioners to approve the harvest levels for big game species based on the weapons and hunter groups' relative demand for hunting opportunity and their hunter success rates.

**FINDINGS**

After due deliberation and consideration of the relevant information presented to it, the Commission makes the following findings:

1. The Commission has a duty to provide reasonable hunting opportunity to Nevada's citizens.
2. Hunting in Nevada is an important activity for its citizens for many reasons, including but not limited to the following values that it supplies:
  - Providing a healthy food source;
  - Promoting family and other social interaction;
  - Maintaining a link to Nevada's outdoor history, culture and traditions;
  - Supplying connection with Nevada's natural and scenic landscape;
  - Providing a source of physical exercise important for maintaining health and fitness;
  - Encouraging appreciation for the natural habitat, which is a major component of Nevada's quality of life;
  - Engendering public support for Nevada's superior wildlife management programs;  
and
  - Providing one of the principal sources of wildlife management funding in Nevada.
3. The Commission takes administrative notice of Nevada's wildlife-limiting climatic and habitat conditions. These include precipitation averages that make Nevada the driest state in the nation, and Great Basin and Mojave Desert vegetation and geography types that provide limited forage and cover. These limiting conditions prevent Nevada's wildlife populations from reaching numbers comparable to those of other states, including other western states.

4. Due to Nevada's relatively low wildlife numbers and its increasing human population, it is necessary to ration big game hunting opportunities in the State. Consequently, Nevada is unique as the only state in the nation whose resident big game hunting opportunities are entirely rationed by a tag draw system, pursuant to which hunters must successfully draw a tag in order to be able to hunt a big game animal. An applicant who is unsuccessful in the tag drawing for any given year cannot hunt big game that year. In all other states, resident hunters either have statistically better odds in their respective states' tag draws, or have opportunities to purchase big game tags across the counter. Consequently, all other states' residents have better home-state opportunities to hunt than Nevada residents despite Nevada's limits on nonresident tags.
5. Nevada's already-limited resident hunting opportunities would be significantly lowered if nonresidents competed equally with residents for big game tags or were given a greater advantage. Such a change would be against the public interest.
6. Given the physical constraints of Nevada's natural environment, the Commission—with the support of both resident and nonresident hunters—has elected over the past thirty years to emphasize a sustained quality hunting experience rather than attempt to match the quantity of hunting opportunities available in other states. In order to do so, the Commission has consistently applied a strategy that, compared to other states, maintains a high male to female ratio among big game populations. Elimination of nonresident restrictions could require lowering the quality of the hunting experience to mitigate the impact of increased nonresident tags on resident opportunity. Such change would be contrary to the public interest and the interest of all hunters, including nonresident hunters.
7. In order to maintain the quality of big game hunting opportunities for all hunters in Nevada and also maintain reasonable resident opportunities, it may be necessary to apply restrictions upon nonresident big game tag applicants that takes into consideration the opportunity of the nonresident hunters in their home states.

## **TERMS OR DEFINITIONS**

**Big Game:** For the purpose of this policy, big game means all big game mammals except mountain lion.

**Branch-antlered elk:** An elk having at least one antler with more than one discernable point.

**Buck:** Antlered deer and antelope with horns longer than their ears.

**Bull:** Antlered elk.

**Demand:** Measure of interest that a particular hunter group has in attaining a big game tag based on the previous year's resident first choice applications or previous year's tag sales for a given hunter group.

**Expand:** Taking a projected number of harvested animals and dividing by the expected hunter success rate to generate a tag allocation.

**Hunter Groups:** Residents of Nevada, juniors, and nonresidents.

**Harvest Objectives:** The numbers of male and female big game animals that the Department has determined can be safely removed from a population through harvest without causing detrimental impacts to that population.

**Hunter Success:** Percentage of tag holders harvesting a big game animal. Hunter success will be primarily based on the previous three-year average hunter success rate for a given hunter group and unit group using both resident and nonresident hunters. A long-term or statewide average may be used to moderate erratic variations in hunter success rates.

**Junior:** In accordance with NAC 502.063, generally a person between 12 years and 16 years.

**Projected Male (bull or buck) Harvest:** A projected number of males reported to be harvested that will result in a desired post-hunt male to female ratio objective (i.e., buck or bull ratio).

**Projected Female (antlerless deer, antlerless elk, antelope with horns shorter than their ears, or ewe) Harvest:** A projected number of females reported to be harvested to achieve various management objectives; maintaining population numbers in balance with habitat conditions, optimal levels for a given species, or below a level set in local management plans; optimum sustained yield during periods of average to exceptional environmental conditions; and/or providing for recreational opportunity.

**Reasonable Harvest Levels:** Means the same as the projected male and female harvest. Harvest levels that meet or accomplish management objectives.

**Unit Groups:** A defined geographic area within Nevada within which separate or conjoined population assessments, harvest objectives, and other management actions are applied.

**Weapons Groups:** Any legal weapon, muzzleloader and archery.

### **GENERAL RULES—ALL SPECIES**

Population estimates of males and females (one year-old or older) for each unit group at the pre-hunt period (late summer) will be the basis for determining projected harvest levels for each species class.

The Commission approves the projected male (bull or buck) and female (antlerless deer and elk, short-horned antelope, or ewe) harvest levels among those weapons and hunter groups that are identified for each unit group through the public scoping process involving the county advisory boards to manage wildlife and approved by the Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

**Weapon and Hunter Groups and Animal Classes**

Hunting opportunity may be allocated among the following weapon and hunter groups and class:

	DEER			ANTELOPE		ELK		DESERT BHS	CA BHS	ROCKY MTN BHS	GOAT
	Antlered	Antlerless	Either	Horns Long	Horns Short	Antlered	Anterless	Any Ram	Any Ram	Any Ram	Either
Res Any Legal Weapon	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NR Any Legal Weapon	X	X <sup>(1)</sup>		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
NR Restricted Deer	X										
Res Jr Any Legal Weapon <sup>(2)</sup>			X								
Res Muzzleloader	X					X	X				
NR Muzzleloader	X					X	X				
Res Archery	X			X		X	X				
NR Archery	X			X		X	X				

(1) Second draw only.

(2) Weapon appropriate for the season.

**Hunting Opportunity Formula**

For determining reasonable resident and nonresident hunting opportunity, the nonresident tag quotas will fluctuate with resident opportunity. This formula establishes a minimum level of resident opportunity and corresponding nonresident quotas. The Commission will establish a goal of 50 percent resident opportunity and a minimum quota of 10 percent for all ungulates as follows:

Resident Opportunity	Nonresident Quota Percentage of Total Tags
Less or equal to 50%	10%
51-55%	11%
56-60%	12%
61-65%	13%
66-70%	14%
71 or greater	15%

**SPECIFIC RULES—BY SPECIES**

**MULE DEER**

**Allocation of Projected Harvest by Weapon Group**

Determining hunting opportunity for the junior hunter group will involve using a percentage of last year’s statewide resident junior deer tag sales and apportioning this number into unit groups based on the proportion that the group’s any legal weapon buck tag sales is of the statewide

any legal weapon tag sales. Prior to determining the big game hunting opportunity each year, the Board of Wildlife Commissioners will determine what percentage of the previous year's statewide junior tag sales to apply for the coming year.

Archery, muzzleloader and any legal weapon buck opportunities will be taken from the projected buck harvest remaining after the junior hunting opportunity has been subtracted. The remaining projected buck harvest will be divided among archery, muzzleloader and any legal weapon groups by their percent demand and then expanded to quotas based on hunter success.

Projected antlerless harvest (less the projected junior antlerless harvest) will simply be expanded based on hunter success for the any legal weapon group quota.

## **ELK**

### **Allocation of Projected Harvest by Weapon Group**

The projected bull (less projected elk incentive tag harvest), antlerless, and spike harvest will be divided among the various weapon groups identified for a given elk class and unit group. The projected harvest, once divided among the weapon groups, will be expanded to determine hunting opportunities.

## **ANTELOPE**

### **Allocation of Projected Harvest by Weapon Group**

The projected buck harvest will be divided among the various weapon groups identified for a given antelope class and unit group. The projected harvest, once divided among the weapon groups, will be expanded to hunting opportunities.

## **BIGHORN SHEEP**

### **Weapon and Hunter Groups and Animal Classes**

Bighorn ram and ewe hunting opportunities will only involve a single weapon group, any legal weapon.

### **Allocation of Projected Harvest by Hunter Group**

Hunter success rates will not be used to expand either the projected ram or ewe harvest.

## **MOUNTAIN GOAT**

### **Weapon and Hunter Groups and Animal Classes**

Mountain goat hunting opportunities consists of a single class, any mountain goat (male or female), and a single weapon group, any legal weapon.

**Allocation of Projected Harvest by Hunter Group**

Hunter success rates will not be used to expand the projected mountain goat harvest.

This policy shall remain in effect until amended, repealed or superseded by the Board of Wildlife Commissioners.

*BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS IN REGULAR SESSION, May 13, 2006.*

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Chairman Chris MacKenzie  
Board of Wildlife Commissioners