

Nevada Department of Wildlife Rationale to Changes Made in the 2011 and 2012 Big Game Season Recommendations

Pronghorn Antelope

- Spread hunter pressure in Units 041, 042, a growing antelope herd with continued strong buck ratio.
- Growing herd in Units 043 – 046 ready for limited quota.
- Expand antelope muzzleloader season opportunity to additional unit groups beyond White Pine County.
- Open new unit groups to nonresident archery because of 10% rule for nonresidents.

Elk

- Depredation Hunts – Area 10 antlered elk hunt to include both antlered and antlerless elk to encourage cow harvest if tagholder hasn't seen any bulls; eliminate bull depredation hunt for Atlanta Farms since it has not met the objectives it was intended to meet.
- Unit Groups 061,071; 062-068, 072,074; 073, and 075 in Elko County – because of the increased needs to harvest elk to maintain population objectives, a new bull and cow elk season structure was developed to spread hunter pressure and maintain success rates in early and late seasons; set earlier bull seasons because late fall weather restricts access to areas where elk are and some units have bulls that may disperse to Idaho in November. Eliminate early 072, 074 bull rifle hunt to accommodate new bull muzzleloader season dates.
- Unit Groupings expanded – new information from collared elk support splitting Unit 108 between Cherry Creek (121) and White Pine Range (131) elk hunts; growing elk herd in Area 17 can support limited elk harvest, so first add units to Area 16 hunt until we get better handle on hunter success in Area 17; consistent elk observations in Unit 223 allows it to be opened with Unit 231 hunt.
- Eliminate early bull rifle hunts in Area 13 and 16 because of individual biologist's preference that more opportunity can be accommodated with later hunts and to acknowledge a "rotation" of bull rut hunts for at least 2 years for muzzleloaders in Elko County.
- Nonresident hunts – increased quotas in resident muzzleloader and archery hunts now allow more unit groups to be offered to nonresidents based on 10% of total tags in given hunt made available to nonresidents.
- Cow elk hunts – add late seasons for all Area 11, 22 and Area 13 cow elk hunts to spread hunter pressure beyond October rifle season; Cherry Creek Range and Spruce Mountain populations ready for cow elk hunts.
- Area 23 Management bull hunt was evaluated in conjunction with Lincoln County representatives and game wardens – due to the requirement of amending current NACs for antler point and hunter eligibility restrictions, concern over violations of harvesting wrong point-class and uncertainty of the impacts of recent unlimited spike hunts in Utah and Utah discontinuing their management bull hunts, split rifle bull seasons, tag quota considerations, and more detailed analysis of survey data from both states and hunter observations will be considered in the short-term.

Bighorn Sheep

- Desert bighorn – treat Units 131 and 164 separately because of potential for Rocky Mountain bighorn rams to exist and resultant hybrid (desert/Rocky Mtn) rams to be harvested; for purposes of bonus points and applicant eligibility maintain as desert bighorn hunt but be more clear to tagholder that any ram subspecies or their hybrid is permitted to be harvested.
- Nonresident Desert bighorn – a need existed to expand units available to nonresidents because of the 10% nonresident rule (large increases in total tags over the last few years) and begin to identify new units for nonresidents that have larger quotas.
- Add new Rocky Mountain bighorn hunt in Unit 115, South Snake Range below the Great Basin National Park (GBNP); NDOW has been collaborating successfully with GBNP for 3 years to improve

the existing herd and better identify seasonal habitat areas to support limited quota on mature rams; GBNP is highly supportive of ram hunt in late winter on BLM lands of rams that summer on GBNP.

Mule Deer

- Have all Junior deer rifle seasons that occur in October to run through October 31 which will coincide with the Oct 5 – 31 1331 (adult) hunt that occurs in some unit groups; October 31 accommodates the Nevada Day weekend Sunday during both 2011 and 2012.
- Open antlerless hunt in Unit Group 043-046 to reduce the herd size in proportion to its limited available winter range due to past and recent wildfires. As with Area 6, this herd has shown good production on summer range, but one hard winter could drastically reduce the herd and cause larger winter losses than if the herd is managed closer to its winter range capacity.
- Close antlerless hunt in Area 6, since current population is below its winter range capacity.
- Antlered Hunts – Expand Unit Group 043-046 to early/late split seasons to accommodate strong buck numbers; has been supported in the past by Pershing County
- Antlered Hunts – Expand Unit Group 101 – 108 to 3 rifle seasons to spread hunter pressure and acknowledge that some public access over time has been eliminated, forcing greater pressure on the existing public access points; begin Junior hunt on Oct 1, recommended opener of the 1st 1331 hunt season.
- Area 18 – expand season dates in an attempt to accommodate deer that are difficult to access earlier in the season in thick tree cover and hard to access areas.
- Units 192, 194, and 196 (Carson Range) – eliminate late interstate hunts for firearms because of growing concern over hunter congestion in urban areas; maintain late season archery hunt; have single muzzleloader and rifle seasons in September and October/early November, respectively.
- Open early archery season for resident deer residing in Area 20 units along California border that can support limited harvest before interstate deer migration occurs in late fall.
- Eliminated late season rifle hunt in Area 24 due to concerns over PIW and nonresident guided hunters that have access to this late season.

PIW, Silver State, and Wildlife Heritage Tags

- Accommodate new Silver State Tag Hunts (drawing involving \$20 fee per applicant) for deer, pronghorn, elk, and desert bighorn in 2011; reduce respective PIW tags for a given species where Silver State tags are added; total Heritage and Silver State tags do not exceed 15 as per NRS 502.250.
- Restrict PIW elk harvest from Unit 091 because of recent bull harvest and agreement with state of Utah of bull harvest restricted to interstate hunt quota.
- Restrict PIW mountain goat harvest in Unit 103 due to limited goat population.
- For 2012, rotate out California bighorn Heritage tag for a California bighorn Silver State tag; total Heritage and Silver State tags do not exceed 15 as per NRS 502.250.