



SHED ANTLER UPDATE

August 9, 2019

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF
WILDLIFE
DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT





IMPACTS

- Displacement or harassment of animals on winter range
 - Pushes animals to less desirable forage areas
 - Precludes wildlife from their critical winter habitats
 - Forces wildlife to deplete energy reserves moving away from people during vulnerable time
 - Off road travel
 - Actually pushing animals to cause them to drop antlers

Shed Collector Gridding Hillside





Off Road Travel





2011 Legislature

➤ NRS 503.655 Shed antlers: Regulations.

1. The Commission **shall** adopt regulations for the taking of shed antlers.
2. As used in this section, “shed antlers” means antlers which have been naturally shed by any big game mammal in this State.

Western States' Shed Antler Laws

➤ Montana

- All Wildlife Management Areas are closed to all human activity Jan 1-May 15, to protect wintering big game animals and their habitat.

➤ Colorado-

- Closed to antler collection on public lands west of I-25 from January 1 through April 30, annually.
 - Daily hours May 1 – May 15 in Gunnison Basin to protect the Gunnison Sage Grouse 10 am - sunset

Western States' Shed Antler Laws

➤ Wyoming

- Closed from Jan 1 – Apr 30 west of the Continental Divide.

➤ Utah

- Shed collectors are required to take an online shed antler gathering class yearly if collecting sheds Feb. 1 –April 15. (**19,000 in 2017**)
- Emergency closure enacted on February 3rd 2017 to last through the end of March 2017.

7 Year Process to Develop a Regulation

- Issue presented on several occasions with various language options between 2008 and 2012
- January 2014 – workshop held before NBWC, changes made
- March 21, 2014 – 2nd workshop held before NBWC
- March 22, 2014 – Adoption hearing held before NBWC, passed regulation prohibiting collection of shed antlers STATEWIDE from January 1st through April 14th
- June 2014 – Legislative Commission deferred back to NBWC to add a private property exemption
- November 2014 – 3rd workshop held before NBWC
- December 2014 – Decision to hold until after legislative session
- Summer 2015 – Regulation expired

7 Year Process to Develop a Regulation

- Winter of 2016-2017 brought record snowfall in many areas of the west. Utah instituted an emergency prohibition of shed antler collection to protect stressed big game herds trying to survive a harsh winter. This pushed hundreds, if not thousands of shed hunters into Nevada. (19,000 people had taken Utah's online shed antler test for their annual shed hunting license.) This extreme pressure on Eastern Nevada deer and elk herds during a harsh winter renewed the urgency for an antler regulation in Nevada.
- Lincoln, White Pine, and Elko County Wildlife Advisory Boards again asked for a regulation

7 Year Process to Develop a Regulation

- 2014 draft was re-submitted in October of 2017 to prohibit collecting antlers statewide from January 1st to April 15th
- November 3, 2017 – NBWC amended proposal to prohibit collecting antlers from January 1st through March 31st with daily hours of 10am to sunset from April 1st through May 31st. Also amended to just 6 eastern counties
- January 26, 2018 – Amended again to drop the daily hours portion and just prohibit collection in the 6 eastern counties from January 1st through April 30th. Motion passed 7-0

2018 - 2019 Successes and Challenges



- Several saturation patrols in heavily collected areas
- Surveillance on some individuals suspected of violating season closure
- 5 citations in Lincoln County, all to Utahns
- One case in Elko County (with assistance from Elko County SO) that didn't meet burden of proof
- Some GPS-ing and caching
- Reports of greatly reduced traffic and disturbance in most of eastern NV

Some Options Going Forward

- Leave it like it is
- Antler gathering prohibited on public land from January 1st through April 30th in Elko, White Pine, Lincoln, Nye, Eureka, and Lander Counties
- Continue to work on enforcing the new regulation. Some innovative techniques

Some Options Going Forward

- Shorten the closure dates on either end
- Opening it back up on April 15th rather than May 1st would likely still accomplish the goal of protecting big game animals on their critical winter habitat during most winters
- Some sage grouse concerns with April lek activity
- Shortening up the front end by 2-4 weeks in January (Jan 15th or Feb 1st) would reduce conflicting regulations that allow cow elk and small game hunting in January but not antler gathering. Most deer don't drop until late January, if not February and March (elk even later)

Some Options Going Forward

- Increasing demerits for those caught gathering sheds during closed period – NAC 501.200
- Online shed antler ethics course like Utah
- Hunting license – statutory change
- Different dates for different counties
- Different dates for residents vs. non-residents
- Non-motorized vs. motorized
- Does Lander still need to be included?
- Daily hours in April to address sage grouse concerns

QUESTIONS?



Legalities of “Smart Scopes”

- Rifle scopes that have an internal range finding function and then self-adjust for elevation
- Different from previously discussed “smart rifles” that have a scope electronically connected to the firing mechanism

Legalities of “Smart Scopes”

NAC 503.145 Sight attached to firearm, bow or crossbow. The Commission hereby establishes... ...a sight attached to a firearm or bow that is used to hunt a game mammal or game bird, or a sight attached to a crossbow that is used to hunt a big game mammal, may be illuminated or powered by:

1. A battery contained within the sight;
2. Light-gathering fiber optics;
3. A radioactive isotope such as tritium; or
4. Iridescent or fluorescent paint.

Ê It is unlawful for a person to hunt a big game mammal, a game mammal or a game bird with a weapon that is equipped with a sight that is capable of casting or projecting a beam of light that is visible to the unaided human eye from the sight to the animal.