



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman St, Room 111
Denver, CO 80203
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TO: Parks and Wildlife Commission
FROM: Krista Heiner, Regulations Manager
RE: Discussion on limiting archery elk licenses in E-16, E-24, E-30 and E-31 and potential associated 2020-2024 Big Game Season Structure (BGSS) changes
DATE: October 29, 2019
CORRECTED November 12, 2019

BACKGROUND:

The Commission approved changes to the 2020-2024 Big Game Season Structure (BGSS) in September 2019, which specifies that unlimited either-sex and antlerless archery elk licenses will be available in certain units; however, to meet herd management objectives, either-sex licenses for elk can be specified as bull-only with limited cow licenses. Limited either-sex licenses will continue to be valid in totally limited units.

During the BGSS presentations to the Commission, which continued through the last meeting, there was back and forth discussion regarding limitation of archery elk licenses, resulting in perceived confusion. Staff would like to seek clarity on what the Commission approved as well as the intent behind that decision. Therefore, staff has brought forward an issue paper regarding archery elk hunting in E-24, E-30 and E-31 for firm guidance on how to proceed (i.e. should archery elk licenses be completely limited, just limited for cows in order to meet management objectives, or should other limiting options be available?).

Elk populations in E-24, E-30, and E-31 have not rebounded, despite decreases in cow harvest. This is in part due to low calf recruitment, which has been experienced across southern Colorado. Staff have made significant reductions to antlerless muzzleloader and rifle licenses since 2010, and most antlerless licenses in this area now require 1-2 preference points to draw. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of hunters with over-the-counter (OTC) either-sex archery elk tags since 2008, which are harvesting an increasing portion of cow elk. Crowding during archery season has also become a concern. Public meetings associated with BGSS in February 2019 in Durango and a related survey highlighted that 71% of participants identified archery as their preferred method of take. 66% of all participants were concerned with crowding during archery season, and 43% of all participants favored limiting all archery licenses.

It appears that there are biological as well as social/crowding reasons to limit archery participation in some fashion in these units. Area 15 and terrestrial staff considered various management strategies that would help to address both issues. Various alternatives were compared for their ability to control cow harvest, obtain more accurate harvest data, and control overall hunter numbers. Also considered were impacts to hunters, such as predictability of obtaining a license, amount of confusion created by each system and ability to plan a hunt.



POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES:

1. Limited bull/limited cow

The following are key points:

- Total limitation gives managers the best ability to control cow harvest.
- Total limitation gives managers the best ability to control archery hunter numbers.
- Sex-specific licenses give devoted archery cow hunters the opportunity to harvest without competing against bull hunters for limited tags.
- From an overall equity standpoint, sex-specific licenses are consistent with muzzleloader and rifle licenses and would allow managers to distribute cow license changes among all methods of take.
- Offering licenses through the draw, compared to OTC with caps, gives hunters greater predictability for getting a license and more fairly awards licenses if demand is higher than availability. It also makes planning easier since hunters will know if they are successful in June instead of having to wait for the OTC w/cap licenses to go on sale later in the summer.
- Preference points could be required to draw.
- Going from OTC either-sex to limited, sex-specific licenses is a major change for archers. They would likely have to apply for a license, be restricted to hunting in a limited geographic area, and only be able to hunt a bull or a cow.
- Depending on the quota set for each hunt code(s), there could be a potential loss of revenue due to reduced license sales.
- Without statewide archery limitation, limitation in certain units could push crowding into other units of the state.

2. Limited either-sex (E/S) archery licenses.

Key points for consideration include:

- Total limitation gives control of cow harvest, but is not as predictable as sex-specific licenses since hunters could take either sex.
- Based on the variability of cow harvest on the E/S tag, the amount of license reduction needed to reduce cow harvest will likely be higher than with the sex-specific system.
- Total limitation gives managers the best ability to control archery hunter numbers.
- Devoted cow hunters will be competing against bull hunters for E/S licenses.
- Preference points could be required to draw.
- For archery hunters, going to a limited, E/S license would be less of a change than limited, sex-specific licenses. Archers would be restricted geographically, but would still maintain the opportunity to harvest bulls or cows.
- Depending on the quota set for each hunt code(s), there could be a potential loss of revenue due to reduced license sales.
- Without statewide archery limitation, limitation in certain units could push crowding into other units of the state.

3. Limited cow/OTC bull

This assumes that an OTC bull license would be administered with a unique hunt code by DAU (e.g., EM-070-U1-A, EM-074-U1-A, and EM-075-U1-A). Key points for consideration include:

- Limited antlerless licenses give managers the ability to control cow harvest.
- Specified antlerless licenses give devoted archery cow hunters an opportunity to harvest without competing against bull hunters for tags.
- Archery hunters in these units would be restricted to a specific DAU. This is similar to the limited elk license alternatives.
- Archery hunters would be restricted to a specific sex.
- Because OTC bull licenses are unlimited in number, they are not likely to address public perceptions about hunter crowding. However, these OTC licenses will be less appealing, as they are restricted to a smaller group of units and are bull-only vs. either-sex.
- OTC bull licenses maintain the ability for archery bull hunters to purchase a license at the last minute rather than applying for a draw license.

If the Commission is supportive of alternatives 1 or 2 and would like to make the 2020-2024 BGSS framework consistent with taking such an action, there is a need to change the approved 2020-2024 BGSS framework for archery elk. Potential changes to the 2020-2024 BGSS framework associated with these alternatives are included for reference. (Note: an administrative correction to the dates of the plains muzzleloader deer season has also been included in these versions for approval.) Additionally, if alternative 1 is selected, archery licenses in E-16 would be changed from DAU-specific, sex-specific OTC licenses to limited licenses to mirror the approach in E-24, E-30 and E-31.

Support for alternative 3 would be in line with the approved season structure.

To meet big game brochure deadlines, a decision on the issue paper about limiting archery elk licenses in E-16, E-24, E-30 and E-31 would need to be made at the January Commission meeting.

ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date:

October 28, 2019

ISSUE:	Should archery licenses in GMUs 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 711, 741, 751, & 771 be limited and should they be specified as limited bull/limited cow, limited either-sex, or limited cow/over-the-counter (OTC) bull? Units in E16 are included in alternative 1 (limited bull/limited cow) only.
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DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):

Populations of elk herds in Southwest Colorado (E-24 Disappointment, E-30 Hermosa, and E-31 San Juan) reached a high around 2000 and were over management objectives. Wildlife managers began increasing cow harvest at that time through liberal antlerless licenses, either-sex licenses, and late seasons to bring populations down to management objective. After several years of aggressive harvest, populations were successfully decreased. But as elk numbers reached the lower targets, many people both within the agency and in the public started expressing concerns that populations were decreased too much. Around 2011 the number of limited antlerless and either-sex licenses, all of them being rifle or muzzleloader, began to be reduced in attempts to stabilize populations. List B-antlerless-only archery tags were not allowed beginning in 2010. Either-sex elk licenses during rifle and muzzleloader seasons were changed to bull and cow in 2018 to further reduce cow harvest. Limited antlerless licenses have continued to be reduced to date.

Although cow elk harvest has been decreased through license reductions, elk populations haven't rebounded. Part of this is due to low calf recruitment. Around 2006, a decrease in the calf to cow ratio began to be observed and has continued to trend downward since then. In E31 for example, the calf to cow ratio has historically averaged 41:100, but that number has averaged 30.5 over the last 5 years. E-24 has even worse calf recruitment with sub-30 ratios since 2012. The cause of the poor recruitment is unknown, but has been experienced across southern Colorado. It is currently being researched by CPW to try to determine the cause and how to address it. In the meantime, the only tool available to wildlife managers to try to increase elk numbers is through harvest management.

Despite the aggressive reductions to antlerless licenses (40-78%), these herds are either below or at the lower end of the objective range. These herd plans are all nearly ten years old and the informal public input that has been received indicate that the population objectives should be increased when they are revised. Although the license cuts have been necessary to stabilize the population, they have come with the cost of significant loss of opportunity for rifle and muzzleloader cow hunters. Most antlerless licenses in this area now require 1-2 preference points in order to draw.

Another factor that complicates the issue is the increase in OTC either sex archery participation that is occurring within these units. The number of archery hunters with either sex tags has increased significantly in most of these units since 2008. Although not all archery hunters are interested in taking cows, the trend has been an overall increase in the number of cows taken by archery hunters. As rifle and muzzleloader licenses have been reduced, the proportion of cows taken by archers becomes more significant.

E24- Disappointment Elk Herd- GMU's 70,71,711,72,73

- Population estimate below plan objective
- Calf:cow ratios below 30 since 2014
- From a high in 2010, a 43% reduction in muzzleloader/rifle antlerless licenses
- Increasing archery participation, approximately 20% since 2008
- Archery cow harvest accounted for 20% of the total harvest in 2018

E30- Hermosa Elk Herd- GMU's 74, 741

- Population estimate consistently below plan objective
- Calf:cow ratios at or below 30- six times since 2008
- From a high in 2010, a 77% reduction in muzzleloader/rifle antlerless licenses

- Increasing archery participation, approximately 28% since 2008
- Archery cow harvest accounted for 29% of the total harvest in 2018

E31- San Juan Elk Herd- GMU's 75, 751, 77, 78, 771

- Population estimate within current plan objective, although public wants more elk
- Calf:cow ratios at or below 30- three times since 2008
- From a high in 2008, a 68% reduction in muzzleloader/rifle antlerless licenses
- Increasing archery participation, approximately 36% since 2008
- Archery cow harvest accounted for 26% of the total harvest in 2018

Wildlife managers have made major reductions in antlerless license numbers since 2010, yet populations are not rebounding. In the NW Region, similar circumstances led to conversion of either-sex archery elk licenses to bull-only archery licenses in DAU E16 beginning with the 2019 season. Archery opportunity for antlerless elk was eliminated, also beginning with the 2019 season. Because archery harvest has become an increasing and meaningful percentage of overall antlerless harvest, Area 15 managers submitted an issue paper in 2017 that proposed limiting archery participation. That issue paper did not move beyond Regulation Review as it was determined that it should be considered during the regular Big Game Season Structure process.

Another aspect to consider in this discussion are concerns about crowding during the archery seasons. Although the perception of crowding is highly subjective and difficult to measure, wildlife managers feel that the amount of concern about archery crowding is increasing. Due to the short timeline for completion of this issue paper, staff was unable to obtain information from the hunter surveys that are performed each year. However, the recent BGSS meeting held last winter in Durango does provide some insight into public perceptions about hunting in the area. The Durango meeting was one of the better attended meetings held during the process. While the data is not an exhaustive sample of all hunters that use the area, it does show the perceptions of hunters who engaged in the BGSS process and took the time to make their views known:

It appears that there are biological as well as social/crowding reasons to limit archery participation in some fashion in these units. Area 15 and terrestrial staff considered various management strategies that would help to address both issues. Various alternatives were compared for their ability to control cow harvest, obtain more accurate harvest data, and control overall hunter numbers. Also considered were impacts to hunters, such as predictability of obtaining a license, amount of confusion created by each system and ability to plan a hunt.

Alternative 1: Limited Bull/Limited Cow The following are key points:

- Total limitation gives managers the best ability to control cow harvest.
- Total limitation gives managers the best ability to control archery hunter numbers.
- Sex specific licenses give devoted archery cow hunters that opportunity without competing against bull hunters for limited tags.
- From an overall equity standpoint, sex-specific licenses are consistent with muzzleloader and rifle licenses and would allow managers to distribute cow license changes among all methods of take.
- Offering licenses through the draw, compared to OTC with caps, gives hunters greater predictability for getting a license and more fairly awards licenses if demand is higher than availability. It also makes planning easier since hunters will know if they are successful in June instead of having to wait for the OTC w/cap licenses to go on sale later in the summer.
- Could require preference points to draw.
- Going from OTC either-sex (E/S) to limited, sex-specific licenses is a major change for archers. They would likely have to apply for a license, be restricted to hunting in a limited geographic area, and only be able to hunt a bull or cow.
- Depending on the quota set for each hunt code(s), there could be a potential loss of revenue due to reduced license sales.

- Without statewide archery limitation, limitation in certain units could push crowding into other units of the state.

Alternative 2- Limited either-sex (E/S) archery licenses. Key points for consideration include:

- Total limitation gives control of cow harvest, but is not as predictable as sex-specific since hunters could take either sex.
- Based on the variability of cow harvest on the either-sex tag, the amount of license reduction needed to reduce cow harvest will likely be higher than with the sex-specific system.
- Total limitation gives managers the best ability to control archery hunter numbers.
- Devoted cow hunters will be competing against bull hunters for E/S licenses.
- Could require preference points to draw.
- For archery hunters, going to a limited, E/S license would be less of a change than limited, sex-specific licenses. Archers would be restricted geographically, but would still maintain the opportunity to harvest bulls or cows.
- Depending on the quota set for each hunt code(s), there could be a potential loss of revenue due to reduced license sales.
- Without statewide archery limitation, limitation in certain units could push crowding into other units of the state.

Alternative 3- Limited cow/OTC bull- This assumes that an OTC bull license would be administered with a unique hunt code by DAU (ex: EM-070-U1-A, EM-074-U1-A, and EM-075-U1-A). This alternative seems to have increased confusion based on the implementation in GMU's 44, 45, 47, and 441 in the 2019 season. Key points for consideration include:

- Limited antlerless licenses give managers the ability to control cow harvest.
- Specified antlerless licenses give devoted archery cow hunters that opportunity without competing against bull hunters for tags.
- Archery hunters in these units would be restricted to a specific DAU. This is similar to the limited elk license alternatives.
- Archery hunters would be restricted to a specific sex.
- Because OTC bull licenses are unlimited in number, they are not likely to address public perceptions about hunter crowding.
- OTC bull licenses maintain the ability for archery bull hunters to purchase a license at the last minute rather than applying for a draw license.

As staff has discussed the alternatives, they would further recommend that licenses in E-24 be split between GMU 70 only and another hunt code for GMUs 71, 711, 72, and 73. This would allow a greater ability to distribute hunters throughout the landscape and address the different elk issues that are occurring.

It is also recommended that E-31 be divided into two hunt codes: GMU 75, 751 and GMUs 77, 78, 771 to help distribute hunting pressure across this large area from Durango to Wolf Creek Pass.

Both of these recommendations would be consistent with how antlerless licenses are distributed for rifle and muzzleloader seasons in these two herds.

STATE LAW REQUIRES CPW TO SOLICIT INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS THAT MAY BE AFFECTED POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY BY THE PROPOSED RULES. THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS HAVE BEEN ADVISED OF AND INVITED TO PROVIDE INPUT ON THE REGULATORY CHANGES PROPOSED IN THIS ISSUE PAPER:

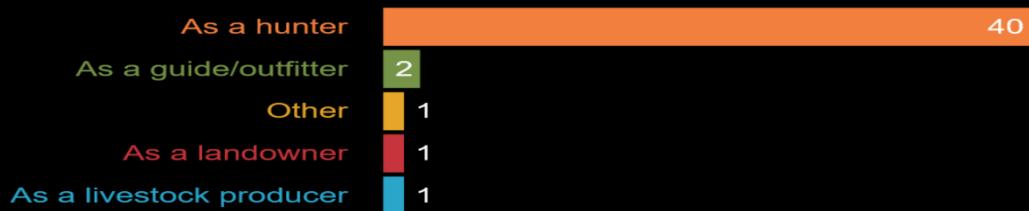
***IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL NECESSARY INTERNAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED*.**

Internal: DWMs, AWMs, Area Biologists, CSRs, licensing unit

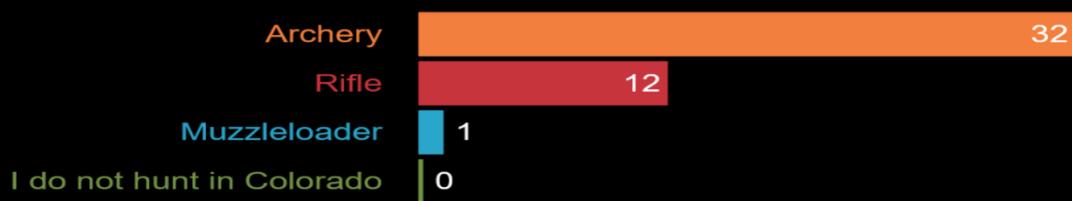
External: Archery elk hunters, rifle elk hunters, muzzleloader elk hunters, non-consumptive wildlife users, bowhunters, BGSS public meetings on February 6, 2019. Those comments are summarized below.

Individual bowhunters in the field have been asked about the issue. The overwhelming majority have been in favor of some type of limitation.

Which of the following best describes how you interact with elk or deer in Colorado (Please select one.)



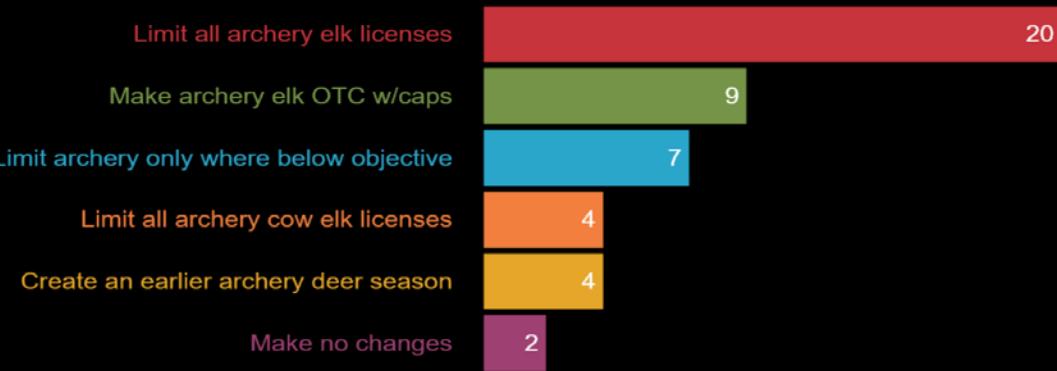
Which method of take is your preference to hunt big game in Colorado?



How concerned are you with hunter crowding during the deer and elk archery season?



If the archery season were modified to address hunter crowding, please give your #1 preference for how it could be improved.



Of the 46 participants to the survey:

- 71% identified archery as their preferred method of take
- 66% were Very Concerned or Moderately concerned with crowding during archery season
- Only 9% were not at all concerned with archery season crowding
- 43% favored limiting all archery licenses to address hunter crowding

ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):

1. Limited, sex-specific licenses issued for:

E-24- Disappointment
 EM-070-O1A, EF-070-O1A (Unit 70 only)
 EM-071-O1-A, EF-071-O1A (Unit 71, 711, 72, 73)
 E-30- Hermosa
 EM-074-O1A, EF-074-O1A (Unit 74, 741)
 E-31- San Juan
 EM-075-O1A, EF-075-O1A (Unit 75, 751)
 EM-077-O1A, EF-077-O1A (Unit 77, 78, 771)
 E-16- Frying Pan River
 EM-044-O1A (Unit 44, 45, 47, 471)
 (For consistency of application, archery licenses in DAU E-16- Frying Pan River would be changed from DAU-specific, sex-specific Over the Counter licenses to limited licenses to mirror the proposed approach in DAUs E-24, E-30, and E-31. An EF-044-O1A limited, antlerless-only hunt would be established in the future when elk numbers in E-16 recover to a point permitting increased antlerless harvest.)

2. Limited, either-sex archery licenses issued for:

E-24- Disappointment
 EE-070-O1A (Unit 70 only)
 EE-071-O1A (Unit 71, 711, 72, 73)
 E-30- Hermosa
 EE-074-O1A (Unit 74, 741)
 E-31- San Juan
 EE-075-O1A (Unit 75, 751)
 EE-077-O1A (Unit 77, 78, 771)

3. Limited cow/OTC bull:

E-24- Disappointment
 EM-070-U1A, EF-070-O1A (Unit 70 only)
 EM-071-U1A, EF-071-O1A (Units 71, 711, 72, 73)
 E-30- Hermosa
 EM-074-U1A, EF-074-O1A (Units 74, 741)

E-31- San Juan EM-075-U1A, EF-075-O1A (Units 75, 751) EM-077-U1A, EF-077-O1A (Units 77, 78, 771) 4-Status Quo	
Issue Raised by:	Area 15 and Area Biologist
Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):	Matt Thorpe and Brad Weinmeister
CC:	Scott Wait, Matt Thorpe, Renzo Del Piccolo, Area 15 DWMs, Area 18 West End DWMs, Brad Banulis
APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:	Cory Chick
REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION	Field Ops/Terrestrial
RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO

E24- Disappointment Elk Herd- GMU's 70,71,711,72,73							
Population Objective:		DAU Plan Approved:			2007		
Year	Post-Hunt Population Estimate	Calf:Cow Ratio	# of Muzzleloader/Rifle Antlerless Licenses	Muzzleloader/Rifle Cow Harvest	# of E/S Archery Hunters	E/S Archery Cow Harvest	
2008	20117	31.2	2790	1057	2076	94	
2009	21093	41.8	2965	1296	1853	101	
2010	19519	30.3	3315	1199	2267	133	
2011	19635	38.2	3155	1437	2215	122	
2012	18709	32.9	3105	1191	2002	98	
2013	19001	33.3	2695	1122	2107	126	
2014	19133	29.5	2670	894	2292	97	
2015	18640	28.2	2630	1359	2491	109	
2016	18532	27.7	2585	854	2607	88	
2017	17953	24.7	2250	732	2609	118	
2018	16889	26.5	1885	622	2562	161	

E30- Hermosa Elk Herd- GMU's 74, 741							
Population Objective:		DAU Plan Approved:			2010		
Year	Post-Hunt Population Estimate	Calf:Cow Ratio	# of Muzzleloader/Rifle Antlerless Licenses	Muzzleloader/Rifle Cow Harvest	# of E/S Archery Hunters	E/S Archery Cow Harvest	
2008	4933	30.9	1375	331	699	7	
2009	4858	38.2	1500	349	518	34	
2010	4397	27.8	1560	310	677	16	
2011	4287	25.7	1235	184	730	16	
2012	4266	36.9	960	240	650	12	
2013	4193	25	960	196	726	28	
2014	4474	38.2	875	173	830	12	
2015	4645	34.6	850	148	888	27	
2016	4589	28.2	650	191	928	47	
2017	4812	30	340	61	953	28	
2018	4809	30	355	97	966	39	

E31- San Juan Elk Herd- GMU's 75, 751, 77, 78, 771						
Population Objective:		DAU Plan Approved:			2007	
Year	Post-Hunt Population Estimate	Calf:Cow Ratio	# of Muzzleloader/Rifle Antlerless Licenses	Muzzleloader/Rifle Cow Harvest	# of E/S Archery Hunters	E/S Archery Cow Harvest
2008	17428	30.9	2594	746	1858	47
2009	17550	41.6	2202	923	1590	40
2010	17223	33	2425	754	2191	67
2011	17724	37.2	1060	487	1762	48
2012	18203	35.9	1160	412	2119	40
2013	18089	32.1	1155	446	1895	50
2014	18138	29.2	1105	406	2048	68
2015	18595	33.6	1105	459	2600	72
2016	18980	31	945	428	2529	70
2017	19261	27.9	670	239	2754	67
2018	18687	30.6	825	288	2896	102

Alternative 1- Limited Bull/Limited Cow in Specified Units/DAUs

I. Early Seasons - Deer and Elk West of I-25 and GMU 140

A. Archery - Deer and Elk Season Structure West of I-25 and GMU 140	
New	Archery season will be a 29-day season and shall open September 2 nd and close September 30 th , annually.
New	<u>Elk-</u> Unlimited either-sex and antlerless archery elk licenses are available in certain units; however, archery elk licenses can be limited and specified as antlered or antlerless-only licenses geographically to meet management objectives. Limited either-sex licenses valid in totally limited units. Over-the-Counter (OTC) List B archery elk antlerless licenses only valid in units that also have List B rifle elk antlerless licenses. <u>Deer-</u> All archery deer licenses are limited either-sex or limited buck and issued by Game Management Unit (GMU)/Data Analysis Unit (DAU).
B. Muzzleloader - Deer and Elk Season Structure West of I-25 and GMU 140 (Status Quo)	
	Muzzleloader season shall open on the second Saturday of September and run for 9 days. <u>Elk-</u> Limited either-sex or limited antlered, and limited antlerless; all licenses issued by GMU/DAU. <u>Deer-</u> Limited either-sex or limited antlered, and limited antlerless in some GMUs; all licenses issued by GMU/DAU.
C. Season Dates	
New	Archery season shall be the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020-2024- September 2 - September 30, annually. Muzzleloader season shall be the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020- 09/12- 09/20• 2021- 09/11- 09/19• 2022- 09/10- 09/18• 2023- 09/09- 09/17• 2024- 09/14- 09/22

Alternative 2- Limited Either-Sex in Specified Units/DAUs

II. Early Seasons - Deer and Elk West of I-25 and GMU 140

A. Archery - Deer and Elk Season Structure West of I-25 and GMU 140	
New	Archery season will be a 29-day season and shall open September 2 nd and close September 30 th , annually.
New	<u>Elk-</u> Unlimited either-sex and antlerless archery elk licenses are available in certain units; however, either-sex licenses for elk can be limited geographically to meet management objectives. Over-the-Counter (OTC) List B archery elk antlerless licenses only valid in units that also have List B rifle antlerless licenses. <u>Deer-</u> All archery deer licenses are limited either-sex or limited buck and issued by Game Management Unit (GMU)/Data Analysis Unit (DAU).
B. Muzzleloader - Deer and Elk Season Structure West of I-25 and GMU 140 (<i>Status Quo</i>)	
	Muzzleloader season shall open on the second Saturday of September and run for 9 days. <u>Elk-</u> Limited either-sex or limited antlered, and limited antlerless; all licenses issued by GMU/DAU. <u>Deer-</u> Limited either-sex or limited antlered, and limited antlerless in some GMUs; all licenses issued by GMU/DAU.
C. Season Dates	
New	Archery season shall be the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020-2024- September 2 - September 30, annually. Muzzleloader season shall be the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020- 09/12- 09/20• 2021- 09/11- 09/19• 2022- 09/10- 09/18• 2023- 09/09- 09/17• 2024- 09/14- 09/22

Alternative 3- As Approved (OTC Bull/Limited Cow in Specified Units/DAUs)

III. Early Seasons - Deer and Elk West of I-25 and GMU 140

A. Archery - Deer and Elk Season Structure West of I-25 and GMU 140	
New	Archery season will be a 29-day season and shall open September 2 nd and close September 30 th , annually.
New	<u>Elk</u> - Unlimited either-sex and antlerless archery elk licenses are available in certain units; however, either-sex licenses for elk can be specified as bull-only with limited cow licenses geographically to meet management objectives. Limited either-sex licenses valid in totally limited units. Over-the-Counter (OTC) List B archery elk antlerless licenses only valid in units that also have List B rifle elk antlerless licenses. <u>Deer</u> - All archery deer licenses are limited either-sex or limited buck and issued by Game Management Unit (GMU)/Data Analysis Unit (DAU).
B. Muzzleloader - Deer and Elk Season Structure West of I-25 and GMU 140 (<i>Status Quo</i>)	
	Muzzleloader season shall open on the second Saturday of September and run for 9 days. <u>Elk</u> - Limited either-sex or limited antlered, and limited antlerless; all licenses issued by GMU/DAU. <u>Deer</u> - Limited either-sex or limited antlered, and limited antlerless in some GMUs; all licenses issued by GMU/DAU.
C. Season Dates	
New	Archery season shall be the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020-2024- September 2 – September 30, annually. Muzzleloader season shall be the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2020- 09/12- 09/20• 2021- 09/11- 09/19• 2022- 09/10- 09/18• 2023- 09/09- 09/17• 2024- 09/14- 09/22

III. Plains Deer Seasons (East of I-25 except GMU 140) Corrected Muzzleloader Dates

Historically season structure for deer east of I-25 (excluding GMU 140) has differed from those seasons west of I-25 and GMU 140. The timing and length of seasons in this region have been adjusted to accommodate the different pattern of land ownership, agricultural practices including the timing of crop harvesting, weather, and the size of deer populations in the eastern plains. Prior to deer licenses being limited statewide, they were limited east of I-25 excluding GMU 140. The limited Season Choice license will be retained in specified units. The Season Choice license allows hunting in any or all of the seasons in the specified plains unit(s) until the license is filled.

F. Archery - Plains Deer Season Structure <i>(Status Quo)</i>	
	Plains archery deer season will open on October 1 and run through December 31; in addition, archery season will close during those time periods when a plains rifle season is ongoing and in those GMUs where a late rifle season is occurring. This could result in two or three splits within the season (3 in units with both regular and late plains rifle deer seasons) to avoid archery/rifle season overlap. All licenses limited, either-sex deer or antlered deer only, issued by GMU/DAU.
G. Muzzleloader - Plains Deer Season Structure <i>(Status Quo)</i>	
	Plains muzzleloader season for deer will start the second Saturday of October and run for 9 days. All licenses limited. Antlered and antlerless deer or antlered deer only, issued by GMU/DAU.
H. Rifle - Plains Deer Season Structure <i>(Status Quo)</i>	
	Plains rifle deer season shall start on the Saturday of the last full weekend of October and run for 11 days. Late plains rifle deer season shall start on December 1 and run through December 14. All licenses limited. Antlered and antlerless deer or antlered deer only, issued by GMU/DAU.
I. Season Dates	
	<u>Plains archery deer season shall be the following dates:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020- 10/01- 10/23 and 11/04- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31 OR 10/01- 10/23 and 11/04- 12/31 OR 10/01- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31 • 2021- 10/01- 10/29 and 11/10- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31 OR 10/01- 10/29 and 11/10- 12/31 OR 10/01- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31 • 2022- 10/01- 10/28 and 11/09- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31 OR 10/01- 10/28 and 11/09- 12/31 OR 10/01- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31 • 2023- 10/01- 10/27 and 11/08- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31 OR 10/01- 10/27 and 11/08- 12/31 OR 10/01- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31 • 2024- 10/01- 10/25 and 11/06- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31

OR 10/01- 10/25 and 11/06- 12/31
OR 10/01- 11/30 and 12/15- 12/31

Plains muzzleloader deer season shall be the following dates:

- 2020- 10/10- 10/18
- 2021- 10/09 - 10/17
- 2022- 10/08 - 10/16
- 2023- 10/14- 10/22
- 2024- 10/12 - 10/20

Plains rifle deer seasons shall be the following dates:

- 2020- 10/24- 11/03
- 2021- 10/30- 11/09
- 2022- 10/29- 11/08
- 2023- 10/28- 11/07
- 2024- 10/26- 11/05

Late Plains rifle deer season shall be the following dates:

- 2020-2024: December 1- December 14, annually.