



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Members of the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission
FROM: Krista Heiner, Regulations Manager
RE: Chapter W-2 Final Regulations for the January 2020 Parks and Wildlife Commission Meeting
DATE: December 31, 2020

Final regulatory changes for Chapter W-2 are summarized below. If there are questions about the agenda item below, or if additional information is needed, please feel free to contact me at 303-866-3203 x4609 or krista.heiner@state.co.us.

Agenda Items 12-15: Chapter W-2 - "Big Game" 2 CCR 406-2 and those related provisions of Chapter W-0 ("General Provisions" 2 CCR 406-0) and Chapter W-3 ("Furbearers and Small Game, Except Migratory Birds" 2 CCR 406-3) necessary to accommodate changes to or ensure consistency with Chapter W-2 (Step 2 of 2)

These regulations amend Chapter 2 - Big Game - of the Parks and Wildlife Commission Regulations and implement 2021 bighorn sheep, mountain goat, and mountain lion license numbers/harvest limits. They also amend season dates for the 2021 big game seasons. These regulations are designed to manage statewide big game herds at herd objective levels and provide a diversity of hunting recreation opportunities for resident and nonresident hunters throughout Colorado; to minimize or control local game damage situations; and to provide opportunity for landowners to cooperatively manage wildlife with the Division. These modifications are the result of extensive public involvement and application of biological information on deer, elk, pronghorn, bear, lion, and moose. All regulation changes are based on the best available biological information and are designed to manage big game herds towards stated objectives and to ensure long-term viability. Specific changes include:

Multiple Species

Changing the application deadline dates for the Secondary Draw and Fall Turkey Draw and adding the fall turkey license to the list of eligible qualifying licenses for participating in the Secondary Draw (pp. 9, 20 in Chapter W-2, p. 1 in Chapter W-3)

The application deadline for the Secondary Draw has been changed to the last business day in June annually. While this change will result in shortening the application period from one month to two weeks, it will allow more fail-to-pay licenses from the Primary Draw to be placed into the quota pool for the Secondary Draw instead of being held and placed on the Leftover List. It will also allow staff to run the Secondary Draw earlier in the year, which will allow licenses to be shipped to successful customers earlier, giving customers more time to prior to the start of the season to return the license for a refund or exchange, if desired.

Similarly, the application deadline for the Fall Turkey Draw has been changed to the last business day in May annually and the fall turkey license has been added to the list of eligible qualifying licenses for participating in a limited big game drawing. This change results in shortening the Fall Turkey Draw application window from 2 months to 1 month and moving the application period to the month of May. This will allow fall turkey licenses to be used as a qualifying license for Secondary Draw applications. It also allows staff to run the Fall Turkey Draw earlier in the year, providing additional time for customers to return the license for a refund or exchange, if desired. Finally, it also brings the length of the fall turkey application period in line with the length of the application period for the draws for other species.



Standardizing mandatory reporting regulations across species (pp. 60, 65 in Chapter W-2, p. 9 in Chapter W-0)

CPW requires mandatory reporting for several types of hunting licenses and species. Sportspeople are required to fill out a mandatory report regardless of whether they harvest an animal if they hold any type of license for mountain goat, bighorn sheep and moose, or an auction or raffle license for deer, elk and pronghorn. For these license types, sportspeople who do not harvest are required to submit a questionnaire which asks for details about where and how they hunted. Additionally, sportspeople who harvest animals are required to submit their animals for inspection by a CPW official. Mandatory reports are also required for any bear, mountain lion, or bobcat harvested in the state. The mandatory report form asks for the location of the kill/trap, in addition to several other questions. This information is used for law enforcement purposes and for biological data.

In some cases, hunters incorrectly fill out the check form to conserve the anonymity of the hunting area. This has significant consequences for population monitoring and law enforcement. The regulations relating to check forms for bear and mountain lion previously stated that the form "shall be completed accurately." However, that same wording was not included in the regulations for bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose or bobcat. Regulation #002.R has been added to Chapter W-0, stating that for all species requiring mandatory reporting, all questionnaires and check reports shall be accurately completed by the hunter. This ensures consistency among all species that require a mandatory reporting.

Creating a new season type "G" for guaranteed licenses due to natural disaster relief, adding "G" hunt codes and their quotas to denote guaranteed licenses corresponding to applicable sheep, goat and moose hunt codes, and adding regulations to indicate that returned guaranteed licenses will be manually reissued to applicants from the previous years' limited license drawing of the original hunt code (Step 1 of 1)(pp. 34, 39-40, 46-47, 178, 183 in Chapter W-2, p. 1 in Chapter W-0).

Multiple fires during the 2020 hunting seasons prevented hunters from being able to hunt. In certain cases, impacted sheep, goat and moose hunters have been guaranteed licenses for the 2021 hunting seasons. Previously, CPW did not have a process to issue guaranteed licenses from one year to another. To ensure proper processing of applications, adherence to licensing and draw rules, and proper reporting of draw results, a new season type "G" was created to identify hunt codes with a guaranteed license. These "G" hunt codes, which mirror the original hunt code, but have the letter "G" for "Guaranteed due to natural disaster relief," as the 6th character, have been added for select sheep, goat and moose licenses. The original hunt code has been denoted with an asterisk. Additionally, regulations have been added specifying that if any of the hunters who drew a "G" hunt coded license decides to return it via the normal process, that license will be reissued using the 2020 next-up list for the original hunt code.

Sheep

Invalidating the SMS4801R hunt code in select years to account for the Bighorn Sheep Access Program (BSAP) in GMU S-48 (SE) (p. 38)

Bighorn sheep in S-48 are found exclusively on private land. Since 2019, several ranches have been enrolled in the BSAP program. The total license allocation and the ratio of public to private BSAP licenses is determined by an agreement between CPW and the landowner. In order to allocate quota between the general SMS4801R hunt code and the BSAP hunt codes, in some years, all of the quota needs to be allocated to the BSAP hunt codes. This regulatory change invalidates the SMS4801R hunt code in years when it is necessary to allocate 100% of the quota to BSAP.

Mountain Lion

Implementing the West Slope Mountain Lion Management Plan, including changing harvest limit groups, making electronic calls legal for mountain lion hunting during open seasons only for harvest limit group L-

50 and the Glenwood Springs Special Management Area, and creating an April hunting season for the Glenwood Springs Special Management Area (NW and SW) (pp. 60-64 in Chapter W-2, p. 11 in Chapter W-0)

In accordance with the West Slope Mountain Lion Plan, which was approved by the Parks and Wildlife Commission at its September 2020 meeting, the Game Management Units associated with harvest limit groups have been modified. Additionally, an April hunting season has been created for the Glenwood Springs Special Management Area (GMUs 43, 44, 45, and 444). This change will begin on April 1, 2021.

Additionally, in accordance with the West Slope Mountain Lion Plan, electronic calls have been made legal for mountain lion hunting only during open seasons in harvest limit group L-50 (Game Management Units (GMUs) 60, 61, 70 west of Colo141, 72, and 73) and the Glenwood Springs Special Management Area (GMUs 43, 44, 45, and 444) only. This regulatory change (#242.A.3) will also begin on April 1, 2021.

Deer

Creating a 4th rifle season antlerless deer hunt code in the northern portion of GMUs 4, 11, 211 to manage for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) (NW) (pp. 80, 81-82, 90)

GMU 4 provides critical winter range for the D-2 herd, yet has a CWD prevalence rate of 23.9% (2017), with a hot spot detected in the northern portions of the GMU 4. In accordance with the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan, a fourth season antlerless hunt code specific to the northern part of GMU 4 was created.

GMU 11 provides critical winter range for the D-7 herd, yet has a CWD prevalence of 11.3% (2017), with hot spots detected in the northern portions of the GMU 11. In addition, there have been significant losses in the quality and quantity of winter range, which concentrates wintering deer into smaller patches of landscape, creating further transmission of CWD and malnourished mule deer. In accordance with the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan, a fourth season antlerless hunt code specific to the northern part of GMU 11 was created.

GMU 211 provides critical winter range for the D-7 herd, yet has a CWD prevalence of 26.7% (2017), with hot spots detected in the northern portions of the GMU 211. In addition, there have been significant losses in the quality and quantity of winter range, which concentrates wintering deer into smaller patches of landscape, creating further transmission of CWD, landscape degradation and malnourished mule deer. In accordance with the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan, a fourth season antlerless hunt code specific to the northern part of GMU 211 was created.

Creating a 4th rifle season antlered deer hunt code in GMU 40 (NW) (p. 85)

GMU 40 consists of ~60% public land including land managed by the Colorado National Monument, Grand Mesa National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The 3-year average buck-to-doe ratio is 38.3 bucks/does and has been increasing since licenses were limited in 1995. The management objective for the area is 30-35 bucks/does. Hunter crowding is a concern, especially during second and third rifle season, when public land that holds deer is difficult to access. A fourth season buck hunt with a limited number of licenses was created to allow hunters to harvest older age class animals, while limiting hunter crowding. This also helps to meet the sex ratio objectives of the GMU.

Eliminating the late season antlerless hunt code DF211L1R (NW) (p. 96)

Previously, a December antlerless deer season existed for a portion of GMU 211 known as the Axial Basin Triangle with the dates of December 1 - 31. This was originally established as a part of the Axial Basin Coordinate Resource Management Plan (CRMP) to mitigate mule deer-livestock competition on winter range. However, the Axial Basin CRMP was recently discontinued and the hunt is no longer needed as a management tool, so hunt code DF211L1R has been removed.

Converting the hunt code DF481L1R to DF481P5R (SE) (p. 4, 97, 107)

While the population of deer in DAU D-15 has decreased and is below the population objective, year-round densities of deer in the urban areas of Salida and Buena Vista have increased in recent decades. The DF481L1R hunt code was established to target urban deer and reduce human conflict. However, Area 13 staff believe it would be more effective if it was converted to a private land only hunt, as deer occurring on public land in the far north of the boundary are being disproportionately targeted, instead of the urban deer. As a result, DF481L1R had been converted to DF481P5R, with the same boundaries.

Creating season choice whitetail-only deer licenses in GMUs 87 and 88 (NE) (p. 3, 4, 99)

In 2012, whitetail-only deer licenses were issued for GMUs 89, 90 and 95 to reduce white-tailed deer numbers in the Data Analysis Unit (DAU) D-5, which is managed primarily for mule deer. GMUs 87 and 88 were originally excluded. To increase opportunity to harvest whitetail deer, without increasing hunter crowding, GMUs 87 and 88 have been included in the current season choice whitetail-only deer licenses. Additionally, because CWD is high in this DAU, adding these GMUs to the whitetail-only licenses increases the ability to achieve harvest and reduce CWD.

Creating private land only either sex deer hunt codes for the 4th rifle season in GMUs 3, 301, 4, 441, 5, 11, 211, 12, 13, 23, 24 (NW) (p. 101)

Deer are distributed across the winter range during the 4th rifle season in GMUs 3 and 301, but 56% of the land in these GMUs is privately owned. CWD surveillance showed prevalence rates of 11% and 16.3% in GMUs 3 and 301 respectively, with hot spots in the several areas, where the land ownership is predominately private. In accordance with the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan, a 4th season either sex private-land-only (PLO) hunt code valid for GMUs 3 and 301 was created to help distribute harvest, provide additional hunting opportunity and achieve desired management objectives.

Similarly, deer are distributed across the winter range during the 4th rifle season in GMUs 4 and 441, but 67% of the land in these GMUs is privately owned. CWD surveillance (2018) showed prevalence rates of 24% and 26% in GMUs 4 and 441 respectively, with hot spots in the several areas, where the landownership is predominately private. In accordance with the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan, a 4th season either sex PLO hunt code valid for GMUs 4 and 441 was created to help distribute harvest, provide additional hunting opportunity and achieve desired management objectives.

Public access to winter range in GMU 5 is restricted to two BLM parcels, and hunter crowding is a concern. CWD surveillance (2018) showed prevalence rates of 24% in GMUs 5, with a hot spot in the northwestern portion of the GMU. A 4th season either sex PLO hunt code was created to allow for additional hunter opportunity without crowding and help to achieve the desired management objectives of reduced CWD prevalence and herd sex ratio objectives.

Similarly, deer are distributed across the winter range during the 4th rifle season in GMUs 11 and 211, but 58% and 32% of the land in these GMUs respectively is privately owned. CWD surveillance (2017) showed prevalence rates of 11% and 27% in GMUs 1 and 211 respectively, with a large hot spot in the northeastern portion of GMU 211 centered around private land. In accordance with the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan, a 4th season either sex PLO hunt code valid for GMUs 11 and 211 was created to help distribute harvest, provide additional hunting opportunity and achieve desired management objectives.

Finally, deer are distributed across the winter range during the 4th rifle season in GMUs 12, 13, 23, 24, but a large portion of the land in these GMUs respectively is privately owned. CWD surveillance (2017) showed prevalence rates of 25%, 24%, 18% and 11% respectively in GMUs 12, 113, 23, and 24, with a large hot centered on private land. In accordance with the Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan, a 4th season either sex PLO

hunt code valid for GMUs 12, 13, 23 and 24 was created to help distribute harvest, provide additional hunting opportunity and achieve desired management objectives.

Creating private-land-only antlered and antlerless licenses in GMU 102 (NE) (p. 106)

Private land accounts for the majority of land in GMU 102, yet much of the hunter harvest occurs on public land. Deer are concentrating on the private lands, raising concerns about CWD, and there have been complaints of overcrowding on public lands in recent years, as license numbers have increased in an attempt to manage CWD. To reduce crowding on public lands and offer more opportunity on private lands, limited PLO antlered and antlerless licenses have been created for the regular [DM102P1R and DF102P1R] and late plains rifle seasons [DM102P5R and DF102P5R].

Changing the season closure date for hunt code DM391P5R to November 30 (NE) (p. 106)

Hunt code DM391P5R, which includes GMUs 391 and 461, contains very little huntable public land. A high proportion of bucks in these GMUs concentrate on private land. The buck-to-doe ratio is above objective and the CWD prevalence is estimated at 5.4% in adult male deer. The season closure date for DM391P5R has been extended to November 30th and the opening date of the hunt has been maintained at the start of the second rifle season. Lengthening the season for DM391P5R will standardize the PLO season structure with adjacent GMUs, provide additional hunting opportunity, and increase buck harvest, which is recommended to reduce the sex ratio estimate and CWD prevalence.

Elk

Converting all antlerless elk list B licenses in GMU 521 to list A licenses (SW) (p. 4, 110, 113, 115, 125, 140)

GMU 521 is part of the Grand Mesa elk herd (E-14). The Herd Management Plan (2010) calls for maintaining a stable elk population. However, over the past 10 years, the population has declined to approximately 15,300 elk. Staff observations as well as comments from hunters and outfitters, highlight that the population in GMU 521 especially is too low. Rifle and muzzleloader antlerless elk licenses were reduced over the last several years in this GMU. To better align with this strategy of reduced antlerless harvest in GMU 521, all the list B antlerless elk licenses have been converted to list A. This required removing GMU 521 from the archery hunt code EF000U1A, from the muzzleloader hunt code EF041O1M and from the rifle hunt code EF041O1R, and creating a new muzzleloader hunt code of EF521O1M and rifle hunt code of EF521O1R.

Converting either sex muzzleloader, first season rifle, and fourth season rifle elk licenses in GMU 70 to sex-specific licenses (SW) (p. 114)

E-24 has been below population objective for the past two years. In 2017, either sex rifle and muzzleloader licenses were changed to sex-specific licenses in all of the GMUs in E-24, except GMU 70. In 2020, the over-the-counter (OTC) either sex archery licenses were converted to limited, sex-specific licenses. This year, the either sex muzzleloader, first season rifle and fourth season rifle elk licenses in GMU 70 have been converted to specified antlered and antlerless licenses to better control female harvest in this GMU.

Eliminating the hunt code EF074P5R (SW) (p. 149)

The hunt code EF074P5R was created in 2006 to address agriculture conflict along the Animas River. Since that time, elk populations have decreased along with the agriculture conflicts. The Herd Management Plans for DAUs E-30 and E-31 were revised this year with new population objectives that place the populations below objective. There was also overwhelming concern for the public about low elk numbers in these areas. As a result, the hunt code EF074P5R was eliminated to decrease elk hunting opportunity and increase elk population numbers in this area.

Removing GMUs 105 and 106 from the hunt code EF104P5R (NE) (p. 150)

Hunt code EF104P5R was valid in GMUs 104, 105 and 106. The introduction of the Plains, List C, either-sex, OTC rifle license gave hunters an easier option to hunt elk in GMUs 105 and 106. To reduce confusion, GMUs 105 and 106 have been removed from EF104P5R.

Changing the season dates for the hunt code EF009L1R to September 1 - November 30 and making it list B (NE) (p. 4, 154)

GMU 9 is primarily private property and city/county owned lands in Larimer County. The herd has grown in size to 250-300 animals and the cow elk population has become permanent in GMU 9. There has been increasing game damage issues and conflict with landowners. To increase the number of cow elk harvested, EF009L1R has been converted from a list A to a list B license and the season has been lengthened to run from September 1 - November 30.

Changing the season dates for the hunt code EF085L1R to December 15 - December 31 (SE) (p. 155)

DAU E-33 contains GMUs 85, 140, and 851 and has a population objective of 14,000-16,000 elk. Historically the population was over objective, but after several years of increased harvest, the population has been successfully decreased. Landowners have expressed concern about the hunting pressure during the January season. The season dates have been changed to December 15 - December 31 to retain hunter opportunity on public land but remove the January season.

Pronghorn

Changing PH-39 archery licenses from unlimited to limited draw licenses and removing GMU 561 from the list of valid units for the either-sex unlimited pronghorn archery license (SE) (p. 158, 159)

The PH-39 pronghorn herd is currently at the population objective but below the sex ratio objective. The GMUs in PH-39 (48, 56, and 481) are currently included in the either-sex, OTC archery licenses. Participation in OTC archery season in PH-39 has increased 400% since 2010. As a result, there are concerns with hunter crowding and pronghorn are being pushed onto private lands. GMUs 48, 56, 481 and 561 have been removed from the list of units valid for the OTC archery pronghorn license and limited, sex-specific licenses (AM04801A and AF04801A) valid for GMUs 48, 56 and 481 have been created. GMU 561 was not included because pronghorn are not readily found there.

Creating a late season PLO doe pronghorn hunt code for GMUs 89 and 95 (NE) (p. 170)

There has been a growing number of complaints from landowners about large pronghorn populations and game damage in GMUs 89 and 95. Late-season PLO pronghorn doe hunt codes were created in GMUs 89 (AF089P5R) and 95 (AF095P5R) with season dates of Nov 1 - Dec 31 to provide additional doe hunting opportunity while addressing landowner complaints.

Adding buck and doe private land only hunt codes for PH-18 primary rifle season (SE) (p. 170)

PH-18 is primarily private land with less than 7% is available to the public for hunting. High numbers of hunters purchase leftover licenses and hunt on these limited public lands, creating hunter crowding and poor quality hunts. During the recent herd management planning (HMP) process (2020), stakeholders recommended limiting the number of hunters on public lands. As a result, private-land-only (PLO) buck and doe hunt codes were created to help focus harvest on private lands, where the majority of the pronghorn are found.

Moose

Creating bull and cow moose hunt codes for GMUs 25, 26 and 231 (NW) (pp. 174, 181)

Previously there was no moose hunting in GMUs 25, 26 and 231, but resident moose numbers have reached a point where limited moose hunting could be made available to the public. GMUs 25, 26 and 231 have been opened to bull and cow moose hunting by adding an antlered season choice hunt code (MM02501X) and antlerless archery, muzzleloader and rifle moose hunt codes (MF02501A/M/R) in GMUs 25, 26, and 231.

Creating cow moose hunt codes in GMU 43 (NW) (p. 175)

GMU 43 in the upper Roaring Fork Valley has been open to limited bull moose hunting since 2016. Based on regular sightings of moose of various age classes and both sexes, GMU 43 is now being opened to limited cow moose hunting, both to provide additional hunting opportunity and to proactively manage the local moose population size where there is potential for human-moose conflicts.

Creating bull and cow moose hunt codes in GMUs 47, 444 and 471 (NW) (pp. 176, 182)

The northeast portion of the Roaring Fork Valley (including GMUs 47, 444 and 471) was previously closed to moose hunting. Moose sightings in these units increased and the area can now support limited bull and cow moose hunting. This area is especially poised for human-moose conflict with several incidents of hazing/tranquilizing in the past several years, including two serious incidents. As a result, a new bull hunt code (MM04701X) and cow hunt codes (MF04701A/M/R) have been created for GMUs 47, 471 and 444.

Creating hunt code MM05601X for GMUs 56 and 561 (NW) (p. 182)

Hunt code MM04801X is currently valid for GMUs 48, 56, 481 and 561 and supports two bull moose licenses. However, much of the current hunting pressure is close to major roads. Staff recommend splitting the hunt into two hunt codes, one valid for GMUs 48 and 481 and one valid for GMUs 56 and 561, to help spread hunters across all of the GMUs, increasing hunter opportunity and decreasing hunter crowding.

Allowing antlerless moose hunters to present the entire head or an incisor during a mandatory inspection (statewide) (p. 184)

Previously, moose hunters (both antlerless and antlered) were required to provide the entire head during a mandatory inspection so that CWD sampling could be completed. Additionally, an incisor was removed to estimate the age of the harvested animal. Recently, CWD testing was made voluntary for moose, and only an incisor is required from the head of an antlerless moose during inspection (if CWD testing is not selected). Because requiring antlerless moose hunters to bring the entire head for inspection is unnecessary and inconvenient, regulation #270.E.2 has been changed to allow antlerless moose hunters to provide the entire head or a front incisor tooth for inspection, rather than the entire head.

Administrative Clean-Ups

- GMUs 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 33, 53, 63, 161, 171, 214, 231, 441, 591 have been removed from List C (#205.A.4.c.6) for bears (p. 6). This is a clean up of the regulations, as removal of these GMUs was previously omitted.
- The application procedures and locations for the public drawing for a portion of Trinchera Ranch Ranching for Wildlife licenses (#210.H.2) have been updated (pp. 28-29).
- Regulation #242.C.3 has been removed from Chapter W-2 for consistency, as it is covered in Chapter W-17 #1702.B (p. 65).