

Big Game License Distribution Public Process

Fall 2021-Fall 2022



FAQs

Big Game Hunting License Distribution Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is considering changes to policies and regulations that direct the distribution of big game hunting licenses in Colorado. To help inform this process, CPW is looking for input from residents and nonresidents interested in big game hunting.

What big game license distribution topics are being considered?

Resident/nonresident elk and deer license allocation. Currently, for the majority of hunt codes, the proportion of elk and deer licenses allocated to residents is 65 percent, with 35 percent allocated to nonresidents. For high-demand deer and elk hunt codes, defined as those hunt codes requiring an average of six or more resident preference points in the time period from 2007-2009, license allocation is 80 percent to residents and 20 percent to nonresidents.

Preference points. Due to increasing interest and application rates over time, certain high-demand big game hunts require an increasing number of preference points to draw (referred to as “point creep”). Currently, CPW offers a hybrid draw to allow individuals who have five or more preference points to enter a random drawing for elk, deer, pronghorn, and bear hunts that require 10 or more preference points to draw.

Weighted points. Weighted points are used for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mountain goat and moose draws. Weighted points increase the odds of drawing over time but do not guarantee an applicant will draw within a certain timeframe. In addition, it is still possible for an applicant with fewer weighted points to draw before applicants with a greater number of weighted points.

Over-the-counter (OTC) elk licenses. Currently, OTC licenses are not restricted in quantity but are restricted to certain game management units, seasons, and manners of take. They are available for purchase without going through the draw and do not use preference points. CPW could review whether these licenses should continue to be sold for archery and rifle elk hunts, and/or explore limits tailored to resident/nonresident OTC license allocation.

Why is CPW evaluating the big game license distribution processes right now?

The Parks and Wildlife Commission (PWC) requested consideration and review of these topics, separate from the Big Game Season Structure process, due to their complexity as well as on-going interest from numerous stakeholders. Members of the Colorado General Assembly showed interest in making changes during the last legislative session as well. In response, CPW is reviewing these issues, policies, and regulations, and preparing possible alternatives to present to the PWC in the fall of 2022. Regulatory changes, if approved by the PWC, could go into effect for the 2023 big game seasons depending on the complexity of the proposed modifications.

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How can I provide input into this process?

To inform the review of how CPW distributes big game licenses, CPW is offering multiple opportunities for the public to get involved.

- **Oct. 20- Nov. 22, 2021** - CPW is gathering public feedback online. Please respond to this [10 question comment form](#) to help identify the highest priority topic(s) for review over the next year.
- **February and March 2022** - To help inform the development of alternative strategies, CPW is conducting a Big Game Attitude Survey, that will be sent to randomly selected resident and nonresident hunters, and holding small focus group meetings. Public interested in participating in a focus group can volunteer through the [online comment form](#) through Nov 22, 2021. If you are selected, CPW will notify you.
- **May and June 2022** - CPW is hosting stakeholder workshops and public meetings to provide opportunities to review and discuss possible alternative strategies.
- **September and November 2022** - The Parks and Wildlife Commission will consider proposed policy and regulatory changes with opportunities for further public comment.



Where can I find more information?

For background on CPW license allocation policies, watch a short tutorial video online at <https://youtu.be/4SnQKrply6g>. Colorado publishes several statistical reports that contain the license quotas, application stats, post-draw stats, number of preference points used to draw each license and harvest estimates. Learn how to [read the reports online](#).

Commonly used terms

Big Game Season Structure (BGSS). The Parks and Wildlife Commission adopts a Big Game Season Structure to provide an overall framework for annual hunting regulations. Typically the BGSS is evaluated every five years; the current BGSS ends following the 2024 season and the next cycle will begin in 2025. The BGSS is intended to guide CPW's management activities in order to keep big game populations in balance with habitat and help CPW provide a broad range of hunting experiences to fit the varied preferences of different hunters. The BGSS review process is separate from license distribution.

Big Game Attitude Survey. This survey is designed to explore the attitudes, beliefs, values and activities of big game hunters in Colorado. The information collected through the survey will inform future discussions of license allocation, landowner relations, Big Game Season Structure and other issues related to big game management in Colorado.

Hybrid Draw. The hybrid draw for allocating high-demand deer, elk, pronghorn, and bear licenses through the limited license drawing was initiated in 2010 to provide more hunters a chance to draw a premier license. The hybrid draw applies to hunt codes requiring 10 or more resident preference points to draw. Any first choice hunt code application with 5 or greater points is included in the draw. Up to 20 percent of available licenses are issued through the hybrid draw.

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Preference Points. A preference point is earned when a hunter does not draw their first choice on a big game or turkey application or applies for a preference point only in the primary draw for a particular species. Accumulated preference points can help hunters to be successful in future draws, because high point holders typically have a preference for first choice licenses. For Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, moose and mountain goat points, there is an additional monetary cost for preference points and after three are accumulated, the fourth and subsequent points become weighted preference points. Preference points are not needed or used to enter the secondary draw or when purchasing big game leftover limited licenses, over-the-counter licenses, or reissued licenses. Ninety to ninety-five percent of Colorado’s GMUs require no preference points – or just a single preference point – in order to draw a limited license in those units.

Point Creep. “Point Creep” is the continuous increase in preference points required to draw high-demand licenses each year. For some high-demand licenses, there are so many applicants with so many preference points, that many of the applicants will never draw one of these licenses in their lifetime.

Preference Point Banking. A system where an applicant may use a portion of their accumulated preference points to draw a limited license. The remainder of their points can then be saved or “banked” to put toward future hunts. Preference point “banking” was implemented for one year in 2006. Hunters used only that portion of their preference points needed plus 1 additional point to draw for each species, and retained their remaining accumulated points. This practice was discontinued in 2007.

Youth Draw Preference. 15 percent of limited licenses are available for youth ages 12-17, who meet hunter education requirements, for doe pronghorn, antlerless and either-sex deer and antlerless elk are available. For more details on youth opportunities, visit this [CPW webpage](#).

Landowner Preference Program. As directed by Senate Bill 13-188, landowners receive a preference for hunting licenses to encourage private landowners to provide habitat that increases wildlife populations for the benefit of all hunters, discourage the harboring of game animals on private lands during public hunting seasons, and relieve hunting pressure on public lands by increasing game hunting on private lands.

