

**ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM**

Date: 01/06/2023

<b>ISSUE:</b>	<b>Should Chapter W-3, #304. E. be modified to remove the requirement that sportspersons pursuing furbearers need to register with the Harvest Information Program (HIP)?</b>
<b>DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):</b>	
<p>Currently, small game hunters and those pursuing furbearers are required by regulation (Chapter W-3, #304. E.) to register their intent to hunt those species before their first hunting trip of the season. The registration requirement is fulfilled with the completion of the Harvest Information Program (HIP) Survey. There are a series of furbearer-related questions in the HIP survey that were intended to help stratify furharvesters into sampling pools based on their likelihood of hunting specific species. These sampling pools were used to implement the furbearer harvest survey.</p> <p>Beginning in the 2021-2022 season, CPW added a regulatory requirement requiring anyone pursuing furbearers (except coyote) to purchase a Furbearer Harvest Permit (in addition to their small game license) or a Furbearer License. These two license/permit categories were used to generate a smaller and more appropriate furharvester sample pool than those generated by the HIP. Results from the 2021-2022 Furbearer Harvest Survey show that this new approach to sampling and defining the pool of furharvesters is much more precise than using the results of several HIP questions. Therefore, there is no need or use for the furbearer species questions on the HIP survey. Removing those questions and the requirement that furharvesters register with HIP will 1) reduce the length and complexity of the HIP survey, which has been a long-standing goal of CPW, 2) improve data quality for the remaining HIP survey questions, and 3) improve the customer experience for those small game hunters that still must complete the HIP survey. Staff does not see any reason why we would ever return to using the HIP survey responses to define our pool of furharvesters. Therefore, removing all furbearer questions from the HIP and changing the regulation to no longer include the registration requirement for furharvesters is seen as an administrative improvement.</p> <p>*Hunters that are exclusively pursuing coyotes will be required to register for the HIP, as the coyote harvest will continue to be estimated from the small game survey. Coyote Harvest is estimated from the small game survey because hunters that are exclusively pursuing coyotes can do so using a small game license without having to also purchase the Furbearer Harvest Permit.</p>	
<p><b>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:</b></p> <p><b>*IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL NECESSARY INTERNAL PARTIES HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED*.</b></p>	
<p>External publics include furharvesters that would no longer need to register intent with HIP, although they still would need a HIP number before pursuing small game or coyotes. Colorado Trappers and Predator Hunters Association (CTPHA) is supportive of removing this requirement as long as adequate harvest survey data was obtained via the furbearer harvest survey. HIP contractor web and phone survey questions can be changed easily. Some website updates would be needed to change requirement text on small game, furbearer, and HIP webpages.</p>	
<b>ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):</b>	
<p>1. <b>*Preferred Alternative*:</b> Remove the requirement that prior to their first hunt those with intent to pursue furbearers must register with the HIP. Change Ch. W-3,</p> <p>#304. E. Each hunter must call 1-866-COLOHIP (1-866-265-6447) or register online (<a href="http://www.colohip.com">www.colohip.com</a>) prior to their first hunting trip of the season to register their intent to hunt small game or <del>furbearers</del><u>coyotes</u>. For the purposes of this regulation, "season" means the period September 1 through March 15.</p>	

CPW is also planning to remove the current furbearer-related questions from the 2023-2024 HIP survey so this regulatory change would be an administrative change.

2. **Status quo.** No change to regulatory requirements. Furharvesters would be required to register for HIP, but there would not be any furbearer questions on the survey.

<b>Issue Raised by:</b>	<b>Terrestrial Programs</b>	
<b>Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):</b>	Mark Vieira	
<b>CC:</b>	<b>Regulations Managers</b>	
<b>APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:</b>	BRIAN DREHER	
<b>REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
<b>ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
<b>REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION:</b>	Terrestrial Section	
<b>RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	

## ISSUES SUBMITTAL FORM

Date: 01/06/2023

<b>ISSUE:</b>	Should CPW require the purchase of a permit, in addition to a small game license, to take greater sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and white-tailed ptarmigan?
<b>DISCUSSION (FACTS AND FIGURES, EXPLANATION OF ISSUE):</b>	
<p>The objective of this issue paper is to identify and enact a means of assessing annual harvest of greater sage-grouse (GRSG), Columbian (commonly known as “Mountain”) sharp-tailed grouse (CSTG), and white-tailed ptarmigan (WTPT). Under current regulations, all can be taken on the annual small game license, small game/fishing combination license, and a one-day small game license. CPW currently uses hunter responses to GRSG, CSTG and WTPT specific questions in the HIP survey to reduce the size of the possible sample pool. The following stratified HIP question provides CPW with some information about the registrant’s likelihood to hunt GRSG:</p> <p>How likely are you to hunt sage-grouse in 20xx?            Strata 1 = Not likely            Strata 2 = Somewhat likely            Strata 3 = Very Likely            Strata 4 = Very likely for <math>\geq 3</math> years (<i>This stratum is developed by CPW by looking at past HIP responses in conjunction with current stratum 3 respondents.</i>)</p> <p>HIP also contains questions of similar design for CSTG and WTPT.</p> <p>CPW then randomly selects harvest survey participants from the respondents to those questions. CPW developed this protocol in 1998 with the advent of HIP, theorizing that using the HIP data to direct survey sample selection would improve the precision of harvest estimates. For some species, particularly those that are widely hunted by large numbers of hunters, it does help to more precisely estimate harvest. Unfortunately, for species that relatively fewer hunters pursue, like, GRSG, CSTG, and WTPT, the HIP response data does not improve the precision of harvest estimates. GRSG have a very dedicated public that hunts annually; however, the number of GRSG hunters is very small when compared to the total number of hunters annually registering in the Harvest Information Program (HIP) database (n=55,000) or the total small game license purchasers (n=120,000). Estimates for the number of sage-grouse hunters have ranged from 300 to 1,400 since 1998; however, these data were derived from HIP driven surveys and are considered imprecise due to the difficulty of identifying the hunters that actually pursued GRSG. Fewer hunters pursue CSTG, ranging from 100 to 900 since 1998. Similarly, previous surveys estimate that 500 to 1,500 hunters pursue ptarmigan in a given year.</p> <p>The relatively low numbers of hunters that hunt these species result in poor harvest data estimates. For example, over the last 5 survey periods, CPW, used the methodology described above to survey HIP registrants and estimate GRSG and CSTG harvest. Over that period, the coefficient of variation (which is a measure of the precision of the harvest estimate) has averaged ~26% for sage-grouse and ~34% for CSTG. With variation this high, the harvest estimates are less precise. The harvest estimates produced for WTPT with the currently methodology were so unreliable that CPW curtailed harvest surveys for ptarmigan, with the exception of surveys conducted in 2005 and 2016. From these two survey efforts, Colorado averaged around 1,000 hunters pursuing ptarmigan annually, with an average harvest of approximately 1,000 birds. The coefficient of variation for harvest averaged 46.7% between these two surveys. In stark contrast to harvest estimates for other small game species, these survey results indicate that our method for estimating ptarmigan harvest is inadequate. For comparison, over the same period, spring turkey harvest has averaged 3.9% coefficient of variation. While spring turkey is not a perfect comparison, turkeys are representative of a species which requires a single species license to take (spring turkey limited or OTC).</p> <p>Similarly, CPW addressed this exact same problem of poor harvest estimates for furbearers in 2020 by requiring fur harvesters to purchase a furbearer <i>permit</i> in addition to a small game license (or the furbearer license) to take several furbearing species. The furbearer permit improved CPW’s ability to</p>	

survey fur harvesters that pursued furbearers, which resulted in more precise harvest estimates.

This problem with imprecise harvest estimates, while on a state scale, is similar to the problems encountered by USFWS when surveying band-tailed pigeon (BTPI) hunters from HIP registrations, which resulted in the requirement to purchase a BTPI hunting permit in addition to a small game license. CPW sells the BTPI for \$5.

To improve management of these 3 species, CPW is looking for alternatives to provide the agency with data sets that have better statistical support. The challenge is to provide better data sets without unduly creating a barrier to hunting. The primary alternative that has proven successful is the adoption of a permit that the hunter must purchase prior to hunting GRSG, CSTG, and WTPT through the existing license system. CPW staff suggests that survey data would significantly improve if hunters were required to purchase one (1) \$5 permit annually, in addition to the small game license, to hunt GRSG, CSTG, and WTPT. The sale of this permit would allow CPW to more easily identify sage-grouse, CSTG, and ptarmigan hunters from within the huge universe of small game license buyers and HIP registrants, resulting in higher quality harvest survey data for managers and increased survey efficiency for CPW. Staff suggests that this permit needs to cost a small amount simply to encourage hunters to purchase them judiciously, but not costly enough to serve as a barrier to hunting. As we have experienced with HIP driven questions, large numbers of hunters get free permits simply because they are free, even when they have little inclination to hunt X species.

As of 2022, GRSG, CSTG, and WTPT are the species we are proposing for this permit. Staff will continue to evaluate future harvest management thresholds and strategies, but improving harvest data collection is the first step to providing statistically supported management.

**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\*.**

**[List stakeholder groups and briefly summarize comments received]**

No stakeholders have been advised or consulted on this matter.

**ALTERNATIVES: (POSSIBLE OUTCOMES or POSSIBLE REGULATIONS):**

1. **\*Preferred Alternative\***: Require a small game license holder to purchase a greater sage-grouse, sharp-tailed grouse and white-tailed ptarmigan “permit” to hunt and take greater sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and white-tailed ptarmigan.
  - Revise regulations in Chapter W-03 #304 with the following additional language:  
  
F. Greater sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and white-tailed ptarmigan permit  
Beginning with the 2023 sage-grouse, sharp-tailed grouse and ptarmigan hunting seasons, no hunter shall take any greater sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, or white-tailed ptarmigan unless at the time of such taking they have on their person one (1) greater sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, and white-tailed ptarmigan permit in addition to a small game license. An annual greater sage-grouse, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and white-tailed ptarmigan permit can be purchased for \$5.00
2. Status quo.

<b>Issue Raised by:</b>	<b>Ed T. Gorman</b>
<b>Author of the issue paper (if different than person raising the issue):</b>	
<b>CC:</b>	<b>Banulis, Griffin, Eckert, Runge</b>
<b>APPROVED FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY:</b>	<b>Brian Dreher</b>
<b>REQUIRES NEW SPACE IN THE BROCHURE?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
<b>ARE ADEQUATE STAFF AND FUNDING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IMPLEMENT?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
<b>REGION, BRANCH, OR SECTION LEADING IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>TERP</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED FOR CONSENT AGENDA?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>