

Big Game Regulation Proposal Overview **October 4, 2013**

This overview is primarily an abbreviated version of proposals presented to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission on June 7, 2013.

This document focuses on:

- changes from 2013 regulations
- edits and changes to proposals made in June 2013 for 2014 regulations
- proposals which were not included in the June 2013 Commission packet

Many of the topics covered in this overview were covered in more detail in previous Commission packets. To reduce repetition this summary contains condensed discussions of those topics.

Proposed 2014 General Seasons

Annually most big game season dates follow a cycle in which they progress one day earlier each year then “jump” a week later, starting the cycle over again. A key date is the opening of buck deer rifle season which is the Saturday nearest October 1. Synchronized with other hunts, this year (2013) is the earliest year of the cycle. For 2014, most hunts are proposed to be adjusted back to the late end of the cycle which means most hunts will shift six days later. For example, archery season, which opens on August 24 in 2013, is proposed to open on August 30 in 2014 (Table 1).

Most seasons and controlled hunts with “fixed” dates, including General Bear and General Cougar seasons remain unchanged for 2014.

Proposed 2014 Application and Tag Sale Deadlines

Controlled hunt application deadlines are set to occur the same date each year (Table 2). Tag sale deadlines (Table 3) are set at 11:59 pm the day before each respective season opens, except general bear and general cougar tags which have the same tag sale deadline as for buck deer. For bighorn sheep and Rocky Mtn. goats the tag sale deadline is the last day of the hunt.

Table 1. Proposed general season dates and bag limits for 2014.

Species/Season	Bag Limit	Proposed 2014 Dates
DEER		
Coast Buck	Buck, 2 point+	Oct 4 – Nov 7
Cascade Buck	Buck, 2 point+	Oct 4–Oct 17 & Oct 25 – Nov 7
BEAR (Cubs, sows with cubs protected)		
Western Oregon	1 Bear	Aug 1 – Dec 31
SW Additional Bear (Units 20 – 30)	1 Bear	Aug 1 – Dec 31
Eastern Oregon	1 Bear	Aug 1 – Nov 30
COUGAR (Spotted kittens, females with spotted kittens protected)		
Statewide Tag	1 Cougar	Jan 1 – Dec 31
Additional Statewide Tag	1 Cougar	Jan 1 – Dec 31
ELK (Note: Antler restrictions apply in certain units)		
Coast First	Any Bull ^a	Nov 15 – Nov 18
Coast Second	Any Bull or Spike ONLY ^a	Nov 22 – Nov 28
Cascade	Any Bull ^a	Oct 18 – Oct 24
Rocky Mt. First	Any Bull ^a	Oct 29 – Nov 2
Rocky Mt. Second	Any Bull or Spike ONLY ^a	Nov 8 – Nov 16
Columbia Basin - E Biggs	One Elk	Oct 29 – Dec 5
ARCHERY (Note: Antler restrictions apply in certain units)		
Western Deer	Buck, 2 point+ or One Deer (varies by Unit) ^b	Aug 30– Sept 28
Saddle Mt. Deer Late Season	One Deer	Nov 29 – Dec 14
NW Deer Late Season	One Deer	Nov 22 – Dec 14
SW Deer Late Season	Buck, 2 point+ or One Deer (varies by Unit) ^b	Nov 15 – Dec 7
Eastern Deer	Buck with visible antler ^b	Aug 30 – Sept 28
Elk	Legal Bull, (varies by unit) ^a	Aug 30 – Sept 28
WESTERN GRAY SQUIRREL		
West & S Central Oregon	5/day - 15 in possession	Aug 30 – Nov 12
Hood & White R. Units	3/day - 6 in possession	Sept 13 – Oct 19

^a Bag limit for archery elk hunters and hunters with disabilities permits may be changed to include antlerless elk.

^b Bag limit for archery deer hunters and hunters with disabilities permits may be changed to include antlerless deer.

Table 2. Controlled hunt application and tag sale deadlines proposed for 2014.

Controlled Hunt Drawing	Application Deadline	Tag Claim Deadline
Spring Bear Draw	February 10	Day Before Hunt Opens
Big Game Draw ^a	May 15	Day Before Hunt Opens

^a Excludes Spring Bear.

Table 3. General season tag sale deadlines in place for 2013 and proposed for 2014.

Species or Season	2013 Deadline	2014 Deadline
Bear	Sep 27	Oct 3
SW Additional Bear	See Footnote*	See Footnote*
Cougar	Sep 27	Oct 3
Additional Cougar	See Footnote*	See Footnote*
Deer & Elk Bow	Aug 23	Aug 29
Western Deer Rifle	Sep 27	Oct 3
Cascade Elk	Oct 11	Oct 17
General Coast 1 st Season	Nov 8	Nov 14
General Coast 2 nd Season	Nov 15	Nov 21
Rocky Mt. 1st Elk	Oct 23	Oct 28
Rocky Mt. 2nd Elk	Nov 2	Nov 7

* Hunters must purchase the general season tag for that species to be eligible for the additional tag.

2014 Hunt Proposal Highlights and Changes

Pronghorn Antelope

No changes are proposed to most 2014 controlled Pronghorn seasons except for a calendar shift of 6 days later consistent with other controlled hunts. Three hunt areas will receive minor boundary changes.

Bighorn Sheep

The Department proposes deleting two Rocky Mountain bighorn hunts in 2014 (Chesnimnus and Snake River #2). One California bighorn hunt (Murderers Creek) will be replaced with a slightly smaller hunt (Aldrich #2) to account for shifts in populations. The Department proposes most bighorn seasons shift 6 days later, synchronizing them with other big game hunts.

Rocky Mountain Goat

The Department proposes three new Rocky Mountain goat hunts in 2014; Strawberry Mountains, North Wenaha, and a third hunt in the Elkhorn Mountains. With the current trend in tag numbers for Rocky Mountain goats, the Department also proposes a single nonresident tag in 2014; this tag will be in the second Elkhorn hunt period.

Bear

Spring Bear

No season changes are proposed for spring bear. The Department proposes 4,453 controlled tags in 19 hunts and 4,400 tags in the SW Oregon Limited hunt for 2014. The 4,400 proposed SW Oregon tags will be sold first-come, first-served beginning the same time 2014 hunting licenses become available (December 1, 2013), and will be available until March 31, 2014 or until the authorized number of tags are sold.

General Bear

No changes are proposed for the 2014 General Bear season. Proposed general season dates are August 1 – November 30, 2014 in eastern Oregon, and August 1 – December 31, 2014 in western Oregon. The Department recommends maintaining the second general bear opportunity with the SW Additional Bear tag valid in 10 SW Oregon Wildlife Management Units (WMU's). The additional tag may be purchased throughout the season; however, hunters must purchase the general season tag prior to the deadline to be eligible to purchase an additional tag. For 2014, the proposed tag sales deadline is October 3, 2014.

Cougar

No changes are proposed to season dates or the statewide quota of 777 cougars which has remained the same since 2006; quotas by zone are Zone A (Coast/North Cascades, 120), Zone B (Southwest Cascades, 165), Zone C (Southeast Cascades, 65), Zone D (Columbia Basin, 62), Zone E (Blue Mountains, 245), and Zone F (Southeast Oregon, 120).

Deer

General deer seasons will remain unchanged in 2014 except for a 6 day calendar shift. The archery bag limit is a legal buck except in units identified by the Commission each year.

For 2014, the following changes are proposed to controlled deer hunts. Overall, Department proposals would delete one hunt and add four new hunts. Proposed changes include:

- Add one new rifle buck hunt in southeast Oregon (NE Owyhee).
- Add a new muzzleloader buck hunt for the Interstate Unit.
- Add a new white-tailed deer doe hunt in northeast Oregon (Prairie Creek).
- Add a new youth hunt (S Bryant).
- Delete the Union County Agricultural lands hunt.
- Five hunts will have boundary changes or clarifications.

Elk

The Department proposes to maintain existing general season structure with standard calendar adjustment of six days later to most season dates for 2014. The archery bag limit is a legal bull except in units identified by the Commission each year.

For 2014, the following changes are proposed to controlled elk hunts. Overall, Department proposals would delete 12 hunts and create 24 new controlled elk hunts. However, only three hunts are completely eliminated, most are changing by being split into additional time periods or being absorbed into or being replaced by a different hunt. The three deleted hunts are in northwest Oregon and are in response to declining elk population in the region. Four of the new hunts are archery hunts, one is a muzzleloader hunt, and two are for youth only. Proposed changes include:

- Combining the Mohawk and SW McKenzie into one hunt.
- Including the Wendling hunt area in the new SW McKenzie Hunt.
- Replacing the North Powder Hunt with two new Shaw Mountain hunts.
- Splitting the North Juniper Hunt into two new time periods.
- Splitting the High Desert Controlled Elk Hunt into two time periods.
- Expanding the Tioga archery and muzzleloader sub-unit hunts to unit-wide hunts.
- New archery hunts are proposed in the Heppner, Ukiah, Snake River, and Chesnimnus WMUs.

Proposed Boundary, TMA, and Area Regulation Changes for 2014

Jackson Travel Management Area Expansion: The Department is proposing to expand the Jackson TMA for 2014. The TMA would be increased by approximately 12 sq. miles by adding a block of ~8,000 acres to the 50,000 acre TMA. The proposed addition is south of Butte Falls. Signs have been posted informing area users of the proposed addition of the area to the Jackson TMA in 2014. The additional area is already included in the existing boundary.

Meacham Travel Management Area: The Department is proposing a new TMA in Umatilla/Union Counties. The proposed boundary has been reviewed and revised (reduced from 45 to 41 sq. miles) based on ownership. The Meacham TMA would comprise ~ 41 sq. miles of Hancock Forest Management lands near the town of Meacham. Management will be coordinated in conjunction with the other Hancock TMAs in NE Oregon. The Meacham TMA will use the negative marking system whereby roads that are closed will be identified with signs. Signs were posted in the area this summer (2013) notifying area users of the proposed implementation of the TMA in 2014.

The location description for Meacham TMA would read as follows: **“Three days prior to the opening of the archery deer and elk seasons through May 31. Approximately 41 sq. mi in Units 49, 52, and 54 in townships 1 & 2 south, township 1 north, ranges 34, 35, and 36 east.”**

Mandatory Reporting

Penalty: The mandatory hunter reporting system has been operational for five full years. Overall for the first full year of reporting (2008-09 seasons) hunters reported on 15% of the tags issued (Table 2). The reporting rate doubled to 37% for 2009-10 seasons. However, by the end of March 2011 there was no apparent increase in reporting by hunters for the 2010 seasons. The Department subsequently mailed a reminder postcard to 147,000 hunters with outstanding reportable tags and an additional 54,000 reports were received which increased the reporting rate to 58%. Reporting rates for the 2011–2012 seasons

dropped to 50% without a postcard mailing. Hunter compliance continued to be too low to provide reliable information.

After two mailings for the 2012–2013 seasons (101,862 for the January 31 deadline, 3,430 for the April 15 deadline), an overall reporting rate of 82% was achieved. Although not ideal, data for most hunts can be used in the management decision making process. While it varies from hunt to hunt, overall there continues to be a slight positive bias to the data. The bias likely occurs because even with reporting rates of over 80% hunters who did not hunt or were unsuccessful are those most likely to fail to report.

Hunters can report either by telephone or through the Department's Web site. Working with the contractor, reporting by telephone was made more user-friendly by changing from an automated phone system to using live operators in a call center during 2012. Although the Department receives far fewer complaints since switching to the call center, feedback from hunters indicates it continues to be easier to successfully complete surveys on the internet. Hunters can report through the Hunter Resource section of the Web site, <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/reporting/index.asp>, or call 1-866-947-ODFW (6339) to report through the telephone call center.

Hunters who purchased bighorn sheep and Rocky Mountain goat tags do not have to report as these hunters are required to check out of the hunt area. Although bear and cougar are required

Table 4. Mandatory harvest reporting rates, 2007 – 2012.

Hunt Type	% of Tags Reported					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Controlled Antlerless Deer	5%	22%	49%	69%	64%	91%
Controlled Buck Deer	4%	21%	47%	69%	61%	91%
General Bow Deer	3%	14%	33%	53%	47%	82%
General Rifle Deer	1%	10%	25%	45%	37%	79%
Total Deer	3%	15%	35%	55%	48%	84%
Controlled Elk	4%	20%	46%	69%	62%	91%
General Bow Elk	3%	15%	35%	57%	49%	83%
General Cascades Elk	2%	12%	29%	50%	42%	81%
General Coast Elk	2%	12%	29%	50%	42%	81%
General Rocky Mtn. Elk	4%	16%	35%	59%	50%	87%
Total Elk	3%	16%	37%	60%	52%	86%
Controlled Spring Bear	6%	8%	61%	79%	79%	92%
SW Limited Spring Bear			47%	69%	66%	86%
General Fall Bear	4%	16%	35%	55%	49%	77%
Total Bear	4%	15%	37%	58%	52%	78%
Cougar	5%	17%	36%	56%	49%	73%
Pronghorn	9%	30%	61%	82%	76%	93%
General Spring Turkey	5%	3%	42%	61%	54%	79%
Controlled Fall Turkey	15%	40%	67%	84%	84%	93%
General Fall Turkey	5%	20%	37%	53%	52%	70%
Total Turkey	5%	5%	42%	61%	54%	79%
All Tags	3%	15%	37%	58%	50%	82%

to be checked in, it is important that all hunters report so the number of hunters who did not hunt, success rates for each WMU, and other information can be determined.

As an incentive for hunters to report on time, hunters that report by a specific date are entered into a drawing for special tags similar to Auction and Raffle tags (long season, statewide, etc.). Three special tags were drawn in June 2013. Hunters drawn have their choice of a deer, elk, or pronghorn tag.

For the first time hunters who did not report by the specified deadlines for deer and elk tags offered in the 2012 Big Game Regulations will not be able to purchase a 2014 hunting license without paying a \$25.00 reinstatement fee. The fee will be assessed beginning December 2013 with purchase of a 2014 license. At the end of the 2012 reporting period, there are 33,620 hunters that will be required to pay a reinstatement fee in order to purchase a 2014 license because they failed to report on time. Reports were not completed for a total of 44,706 deer and elk tags.

Potential Regulation Changes and Concepts Under Consideration

Several miscellaneous regulation concepts and proposals were mentioned in the information provided to the Department's wildlife districts for discussion at public meetings held in May. Following are proposals developed for presentation at the October 4, 2013, Commission meeting for potential inclusion in the 2014 Big Game Regulations.

Bag Limit During Archery Seasons and Disability Permits

Factors considered to determine units recommended to include antlerless elk in the bag limit include:

- The deer or elk population characteristics in the unit particularly
 - Population level relative to the population Management Objective (MO)
 - Recruitment as measured by fawn or calf ratios
- The number of antlerless firearms tags authorized in the unit
- The distribution of firearms tags in the unit

In October 2013, the Department will propose units to include an antlerless animal in the bag limit for archers and hunters with disabilities permits for fall of 2014. If the Commission adopts this proposal in October the Department will list the units with an expanded bag limit in the 2014 Big Game Regulations.

- **New Proposal Developed After the June Commission Meeting:** Elk bag limit changes in the Alsea and Trask WMUs. The Department is proposing to remove the Alsea and Trask units from the group of units that include an antlerless elk in the bag limit for archers and hunters with a disabilities permit.
 - The Alsea WMU elk population is estimated to be approximately 2,400 which is ~4,000 elk below the MO of 6,500. There are 10 unit-wide antlerless tags for a youth hunt. Other antlerless hunts in the unit are focused on areas with damage caused by elk. Rifle tags for damage hunts have been reduced from 472 in 12 hunts in 2006 to 63 tags in 6 hunts in 2013. The late archery hunt has been changed from a general season to a controlled hunt (550 tags were offered in 2013). There is also a muzzleloader hunt with 11 tags which is proposed to be deleted in 2014.

- The Trask WMU elk population is estimated to be approximately 3,700 which is ~1,500 elk below the MO of 5,200. There are 10 unit-wide antlerless tags for a youth hunt. Other antlerless hunts in the unit are focused on areas with damage caused by elk. Rifle tags for damage hunts have been reduced from 233 in 10 hunts in 2006 to 103 tags in 9 hunts in 2013. There is a muzzleloader hunt with 43 tags in 2013.

There are several additional units in NW Oregon in similar condition, below population MO, reduced rifle tags for antlerless elk, and a substantial level of antlerless harvest from sources other than controlled hunts. The Department will be meeting with archers and other constituents this fall and winter, one of the topics will be management of antlerless harvest.

- If Department proposals are approved, units that will include an antlerless elk in the bag limit would be :
 - **FOR DEER ONLY, One Deer During Buck Seasons:** Biggs, Columbia Basin (portions of the unit are closed to bowhunting- see page 50 and 51), Hood, Indigo, Maupin, McKenzie, Melrose, Santiam, and Willamette.
 - **FOR ELK ONLY, Antlerless OR Legal Bull Elk During Bull Seasons:** Applegate, Beatys Butte, Beulah, Biggs, Catherine Creek, Chesnimnus, Columbia Basin (portions of the unit are closed to bowhunting- see page 80), E Fork Rock (that portion east of Hwy 97), Fossil, Grizzly, Hood, Imnaha, Juniper, Lookout Mt, Malheur River, Maupin, Melrose, Murderers Creek, Northside, Owyhee, Paulina, Pine Creek, Ritter portion of Heppner Unit (that part of 48 south and east of N Fork John Day Rvr), Saddle Mt, Scappoose, Silvies, Siuslaw, Sixes, Sled Springs, Steens Mt, Stott Mt, S Sumpter (251B hunt area; see page 73), Wagontire, White River, Whitehorse, Willamette and Wilson. Also outside NF Lands within the Dixon, Evans Creek, Indigo, McKenzie, Rogue, and Santiam units. For the Ochoco Unit the bag limit for archers is as listed on the tag and in the hunt tables. The bag limit for hunters with an Oregon disabilities permit is an antlerless or legal bull.
- **The units with an antlerless elk in the bag limit for 2014 will not be final until adopted by the Commission in October, 2013.** Hunters need to check the Big Game Regulations each year for the final list of units with an antlerless animal in the bag limit. There is some risk which the Department believes is manageable in setting antlerless areas a year ahead of seasons. If an extreme winter was to occur causing a major reduction in deer and/or elk herds in areas with antlerless animals in the bag limit, the Department would propose an emergency rule change by April 15th to protect antlerless animals in impacted areas.

Allow Crossbows for Big Game Hunting under Certain Situations

Crossbows for Hunters with Disabilities: In response to continued requests from disabled hunters, the Department is revisiting the concept of allowing crossbows during bow seasons for some hunters with disabilities. In the information provided to districts for the public meetings held throughout the state during May to discuss regulation proposals, hunters were also asked what they thought about allowing **crossbows during rifle seasons.**

At the May Regulation Meetings, collectively, crossbows were a major topic of discussion. Because of varying formats of the meetings it is not simple to tally "votes" from each meeting; however, most comments were in opposition to allowing the use of crossbows. Comments on the use of crossbows were received from 16 Wildlife Districts, three comments supported use of

crossbows for disabled hunters and three supported use during rifle seasons (a fourth if you include "if legalized, hunters using crossbows should be confined to rifle seasons). Recurring concerns were that if crossbows were allowed at all, use would be expanded in the future; and the ability, or inability, to restrict disability permits to hunters who truly qualified.

After discussions with the USFWS ADA specialist the Department is considering implementing a pilot program allowing hunters with a category "d" Oregon Disabilities Hunting and Fishing permit and a "Special Use Permit" to use a crossbow for archery hunting. Category "d" is described below:

ORS 496.018 Person with disability under wildlife laws: "d) Has a permanent, physical impairment that prevents the person from holding or shooting a firearm or bow or from holding a fishing rod in hand".

The program under consideration would require additional information from a physician including a statement describing specifically why the hunter is unable to use "adaptive archery equipment" such as draw locks, mechanisms released by mouth, chin, etc., and devices that support the bow. As of September 4, 2013, there were 6,329 individuals with an Oregon Disabilities Hunting and Fishing Permit, of these 872 (14%) had a disability described in category "d". Recently, the Department has issued approximately 20 permits per year for individuals to use a draw lock to hold a bow at full draw.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife ADA specialist was contacted regarding Washington's program allowing the use of crossbows with a special use permit. Washington's disability criteria are generally less restrictive than Oregon's resulting in more individuals qualifying. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife recognizes ~74,000 individuals with disability status. Approximately 33,000 are veterans, in Washington a 30% veterans disability is required to qualify, compared to 65% in Oregon. At this time 3,179 individuals have the exception to use crossbows, an estimated 2,000 are active. As noted above, in Oregon less than 900 individuals with current disabilities permits would qualify to be considered for a Crossbow Special Use Permit.

Washington is in the process of revising their crossbow regulations to allow the use of "red dot" sights and scopes because almost all new crossbows are sold with some type of optical sight. Replacing the factory sighting equipment with a non-electronic option may cost over \$200 and void the crossbow warrantee.

Oregon Bow Hunters (OBH) Proposal: Comments were solicited at the May Regulation Meetings regarding a proposal the Department received from OBH: To replace general season archery bow hunting opportunity which has been reduced to only hunters possessing controlled elk tags, OBH proposes establishment of an alternate archery hunt. The hunt would include the Wenaha, Walla Walla, Mt. Emily, Sled Springs, and Chesnimnus units. The OBH proposal is a 30 day hunt from mid-November through mid-December, with a bag limit of one mule deer buck or one whitetail-tailed deer, and a minimum of 250 tags.

Most Districts did not receive comments regarding the OBH proposal. Comments received were mixed. While there was not much support for the proposal as written there were comments from both hunters who supported and those who generally did not support the concept with modifications or conditions to add. The Department is not proposing to implement the OBH

proposal at this time. Deer hunting opportunity in units where it has been limited by requiring a controlled elk tag will be discussed in the meetings with archers this fall.

Muzzleloader Bullets: The Department is proposing to allow the use of nontoxic round balls or nontoxic conical bullets with a density similar to lead during muzzleloader seasons.

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(2) Only conical bullets made of lead, lead alloy, or federally-approved nontoxic shot material, with a length that does not exceed twice the diameter, and round balls made of lead, lead alloy, or federally-approved nontoxic shot material, used with cloth, paper or felt patches are allowed during muzzleloader-only seasons and 600 series hunts where there is a weapon restriction of shotgun/muzzleloader only or archery/muzzleloader only. It is illegal to hunt with non-lead bullets except for those made of federally-approved nontoxic shot material, jacketed bullets, sabots, and bullets with plastic or synthetic tips or bases.

Bear and cougar hunting during deer and elk seasons: Regulations currently allow bear and cougar hunting during deer and elk hunts after filling a deer or elk tag. The concept of relaxing the restriction further was presented at the May Regulation meetings held throughout the state. There was limited clear support or opposition to the concept; most comments from Districts were mixed. Law enforcement and illegal take of bucks and bulls were concerns.

Some hunters have supported relaxing these restrictions to increase harvest of bear and cougar. In 2010 restrictions were reduced to allow hunters with bear and/or cougar tags to continue hunting after they filled their deer or elk tag. There is no indication the change increased bear or cougar harvest.

Year	<u>Bear Hunter Harvest</u>			<u>Cougar Hunter Harvest</u>		
	Fall Bears Checked	Tags Sold	% Success	Cougars Checked	Tags Sold	% Success
2008	826	49,073	1.7%	273	43,211	0.6%
2009	841	44,709	1.9%	274	45,375	0.6%
2010	1,154	49,840	2.3%	239	48,776	0.5%
2011	888	49,379	1.8%	241	50,889	0.5%
2012	886	50,695	1.7%	252	53,698	0.5%

The primary intent of not allowing bear and cougar hunting during deer and elk seasons is to minimize party hunting. Because there are dozens of affected deer and elk hunts with year-to-year variability in hunter success it is difficult to identify harvest specifically resulting from party hunting. Rather than look at hunter success hunt-by-hunt, hunts were grouped by the types listed in the 2013 Big Game Regulations as being restricted (with exceptions) to hunting with a centerfire or muzzleloading rifle without a valid unused deer or elk tag for that time period and area on their person. The restricted hunts are the:

- Std. Eastern Oregon controlled buck deer centerfire firearm season (Sept. 28-Oct.9, 2013)
- Cascade bull elk centerfire firearm season
- Coast bull elk 1st and 2nd centerfire firearm seasons, both General and Controlled
- Rocky Mtn. bull or either-sex elk centerfire firearm seasons
- Std. Rocky Mtn. antlerless elk centerfire firearm seasons (Nov. 16 - Nov. 24, 2013)

In 2010 regulations were liberalized to allow hunters who have a tag for one of the listed hunts to continue to hunt bear and/or cougar within the time period and area for which their deer or elk tag is valid (used or unused) provided they have a valid, unused bear and/or cougar tag. In all categories estimated hunter success was higher for the two years after the regulation was changed (2011 and 2012) than in the two years prior to the change (2008 and 2009). Data for the paired years was combined to reduce the effect of year-to year variation.

The Department recognizes there is some positive bias associated with information from Mandatory Reporting; to eliminate this concern and maintain an “apples-to-apples” comparison, information for all years in the following table is from the random telephone harvest survey.

Season	Combined % Success		% Change
	2008+2009	2011+2012	
Controlled Buck Deer	33%	37%	13%
General Cascade Elk	4%	6%	39%
General Coast 1st	10%	12%	21%
Controlled Coast 1st	14%	17%	23%
General Coast 2nd	7%	9%	20%
Controlled Coast 2nd	16%	17%	6%
General Rocky 1st	12%	17%	45%
Controlled Rocky 1st	15%	20%	30%
General Rocky 2nd	7%	10%	48%
Controlled Rocky 2nd	16%	20%	22%
Rocky Mtn Std. Antlerless	24%	34%	41%

Taking into consideration that there is no indication cougar or bear hunter success has increased, but estimated success of deer and elk hunts has increased since hunters have been allowed to hunt bear and cougar after filling their deer or elk tag, the Department is proposing to retain the restriction for currently restricted hunts that contain bucks or bulls in the bag limit but remove the restriction for the Rocky Mtn. Std. Antlerless Elk which is proposed to be November 22–30, 2014.

Allowing bear and cougar hunting without an elk tag during antlerless elk seasons may result in increased hunter success because of increased party hunting, leading to fewer tags being offered in the future. Because most antlerless hunts are intended to address damage, the Department is proposing to eliminate the requirement to have a valid elk tag while continuing to monitor success and re-evaluate changes in hunter success in three years (2016).

Revise Proof of Sex Regulations: The Department is proposing to allow the reproductive organs naturally attached to one quarter or major portion of meat as legal proof of sex for bighorn sheep, mtn. goats, and pronghorn as it is for deer and elk. This adds options for providing proof of sex for these species. Antelope and bighorn sheep suitable for mounting require caping of the head fairly quickly after harvest to avoid slipping in the hot weather that is common during early seasons. In addition to the proposed change, to address confusion by hunters, the evidence of sex regulations have been reorganized and condensed to be easier to understand.

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Tagging, Possession, Transportation and Evidence of Sex

(3) It is unlawful to possess the meat or carcass of any deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, or Rocky Mountain goat without evidence of sex while in the field, forest, or in transit on any of the highways or premises open to the public in Oregon, except processed or cut and wrapped meat. Evidence of sex for deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, or Rocky Mountain goat is:

- (a) Option 1) the animal's scalp which shall include the attached eyes and ears, if the animal is female; or ears, antlers or horns, and eyes if the animal is male, or;
- (b) Option 2) the head naturally attached to at least one quarter of the carcass or:
- (c) Option 3) reproductive organs (testicles, scrotum, or penis if male; vulva or udder (mammary) if female) naturally attached to one quarter of the carcass or to another major portion of meat.

(i) For hunts with antler or horn restrictions, if the head is not attached to the carcass, in addition to leaving the testicles, scrotum, or penis naturally attached to one quarter of the carcass or to another major portion of meat, the head or skull plate with both antlers naturally attached shall accompany the carcass or major portions of meat.

(ii) For hunts where only white-tailed deer and for hunts where only mule deer are legal: in addition to evidence of sex (testicles, scrotum, penis, vulva, udder, mammary), either the head or tail shall remain naturally attached to one quarter of the carcass or to another major portion of meat as evidence of the species taken.

Note: For animals that will be taken out of Oregon it is the hunter's responsibility to be in compliance with the regulations of other states.

Landowner Preference Update: The passage of House Bill 2027 during the 2013 Legislative Session resulted in several changes to the Landowner Preference (LOP) Program. Administrative rules will be presented to the Commission at the June 2014 Commission Meeting to implement the changes beginning with fall 2014 hunts. Following is a brief overview of the revised statutes:

- "Immediate family members" has been expanded to include brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law (husband, wife, father, mother, brothers, **brothers-in-law**, sisters, **sisters-in-law**, sons, daughters, stepchildren and grandchildren).
- Increase from the current ~1/3 to allow ~1/2 of a landowner's LOP tags for deer or elk to be transferred to a person who is not immediate family:
 - If eligible for a fraction of a tag the number is rounded up to the next whole number ($3 \div 2 = 1.5$, rounded up to 2 may go to non-family).
- The commission may specify a formula for determining the number of landowner preference tags that are available for controlled hunts for mule deer in a wildlife management unit in which the population of mule deer is less than the MO.
- Only deer tags will be "split, 1 into 2 to be used to take two antlerless animals.
- To address elk damage the SW Oregon Pilot Program has been expanded to statewide as a new "Oregon Landowner Damage Program", aspects include:
 - Addresses damage caused by elk on privately owned lands in Oregon.
 - Damage Program tags limited to antlerless elk.
 - Allows exchange of unused general season elk tags or controlled hunt elk tags
 - No limit on the number of Damage Program tags available for each landowner, except that no more than five damage tags may be valid at any one time.
 - No minimum acreage requirement for landowner participation.

- Landowners can register for the program at any time prior to the issuance of damage tags.
- Department Biologists can sell and exchange damage tags.
- Department Biologists establishes the length of time tags are valid through negotiation with landowners.
- Requires landowners to report the number of elk taken within 10 days after the end of a designated hunt period.

2013 Legislative Session

During the 2013 Legislative session, the Legislature passed House Bill 2252 and the Governor subsequently signed it into law. House Bill 2252, allows non-resident members of the uniformed services to hunt or fish in Oregon for the same cost as an Oregon resident. HB 2252 shows Oregon's appreciation for uniformed service personnel by allowing them to hunt or fish in Oregon for the same cost as an Oregon resident. The legislation applies to active duty and reservists from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard or reservists currently stationed at any base or facility in Oregon, the United States or any foreign country, the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Public Health Service of the United States Department of Health and Human Services detailed with the Army or Navy of the United States. A non-resident member of the uniformed services may purchase licenses, tags, and permits at resident rates.