

Big Game Regulation Proposal Overview **October 10, 2014**

This overview is primarily an abbreviated version of proposals presented to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission on June 6, 2014.

This document focuses on:

- changes from 2014 regulations
- edits and changes to proposals made in June 2014 for 2015 regulations
- proposals which were not included in the June 2014 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 2015 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. This “jump” occurred for the 2014 seasons, which are the latest in the cycle. For 2015, most hunts are proposed to be shifted 1 day earlier. For example, archery season, which opened on August 30 in 2014, is proposed to open on August 29 in 2015 (Table 1).

Seasons and controlled hunts with “fixed” dates, including General Bear and General Cougar seasons, remain unchanged for 2015.

Proposed 2015 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 2015.

Species/Season	Bag Limit	Proposed 2015 Dates
DEER		
Coast Buck	Buck, 2 point+	Oct 3 – Nov 6
Cascade Buck	Buck, 2 point+	Oct 3 – Oct. 16 & Oct 24 – Nov 6
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 14 – Nov 17
Coast Second	Any Bull or Spike Only ^a	Nov 21 – Nov 27
Cascade	Any Bull ^a	Oct 17 – Oct 23
Rocky Mt. First	Any Bull ^a	Oct 28 – Nov 1
Rocky Mt. Second	Any Bull or Spike Only ^a	Nov 7 – Nov 15
Columbia Basin - E Biggs	One Elk	Oct 28 – Dec 4
ARCHERY (Note: Antler restrictions apply in certain units)		
Western Deer	Buck 2 point+ or One Deer (varies by Unit) ^b	Aug 29– Sept 27
Saddle Mt. Deer Late Season	One Deer	Nov 28 – Dec 13
NW Deer Late Season	One Deer	Nov 21 – Dec 13
SW Deer Late Season	Buck 2 point+ or One Deer (varies by Unit) ^b	Nov 14 – Dec 6
Eastern Deer	Buck with visible antler ^b	Aug 29– Sept 27
Elk	Legal Bull, (varies by unit) ^a	Aug 29– Sept 27
WESTERN GRAY SQUIRREL		
West & S Central Oregon	5/day - 15 in possession	Aug 29 – Nov 11
Hood & White R. Units	3/day - 6 in possession	Sep 12 – Oct 18

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

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

Table 2. Controlled hunt application and tag sale deadlines proposed for 2015.

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 ^b

^a Excludes Spring Bear.

^b Bighorn sheep and Rocky Mountain goat are last day of the season.

Table 3. General season tag sale deadlines in place for 2014 and proposed for 2015.

Species or Season	2014 Deadline	2015 Deadline
Bear	Oct 3	Oct 2
SW Additional Bear	See Footnote*	See Footnote*
Cougar	Oct 3	Oct 2
Additional Cougar	See Footnote*	See Footnote*
Deer & Elk Bow	Aug 29	Aug 28
Western Deer Rifle	Oct 3	Oct 2
Cascade Elk	Oct 17	Oct 16
General Coast 1 st Season	Nov 14	Nov 13
General Coast 2 nd Season	Nov 21	Nov 20
Rocky Mt. 1st Elk	Oct 28	Oct 27
Rocky Mt. 2nd Elk	Nov 7	Nov 6

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

2015 Hunt Proposal Highlights and Changes

Archery Review Public Advisory Committee Recommendations

During winter 2014 the Department convened an Archery Review Public Advisory Committee (ARPAC) to discuss some issues related to archery seasons. The ARPAC included a Department Wildlife Biologist, an Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division Officer, and 20 members of the public who representing six hunting organizations (two representatives per organization) and eight hunters at large. The ARPAC developed two recommendations that were voted on by the entire membership of the Committee as discussed below.

1) Mount Emily, Walla Walla, and Wenaha WMU Archery Deer Hunting

In the Mt Emily, Walla Walla, and Wenaha Wildlife Management Units archery hunters are currently required to have a controlled archery elk tag for the unit to hunt deer during the general archery season. The regulation was put in place to minimize the number of hunters with general archery season elk tags in these WMUs where the number of tags for branch antlered bulls is extremely limited.

The ARPAC recommended that to address enforcement and management needs, rather than linking general archery deer hunting to the controlled elk tag for these units, implement controlled bow deer hunts for the first 9 days of standard archery season, the tag would also be good in other units open during the general archery season.

To address this recommendation the Department is proposing three new controlled bow deer hunts beginning in 2015 valid for the entire standard general archery season (August 29-September 27, 2015); tags would also be valid in other units during the general archery season.

2) Criteria for General Archery Season Bag Limits

Currently, factors considered to determine which units are recommended to include an antlerless deer or elk in the bag limit for general archery season and hunters with disabilities permits include: population level relative to the Population Management Objective (MO), recruitment (fawn or calf ratios) and the number and distribution of antlerless firearms tags authorized in the unit. The ARPAC expressed the desire to “break the link” to these criteria, which were initially established for hunters with disabilities permits, and recommended that the decision regarding including antlerless animals in the bag limit be based on population level relative to the Population MO and recruitment levels (fawn or calf ratios).

Specifically for elk, a WMU would qualify for an either-sex bag limit during the general bow season when the elk population is 105% of MO and rising for units with a population MO \geq 2,000 or 110% of MO and rising for units with a population MO $<$ 2,000, and the recruitment level is \geq 31 calves/100 cows in end of winter composition surveys for the previous 3 years. The Department is proposing to simplify the ARPAC recommendation for elk by using the more liberal, “105% of MO and rising” for all units including those with an elk population MO of less than 2,000. See Table 6 in the Elk section on page 10 for more details.

For mule deer, a WMU would qualify for an either-sex bag limit during the general bow season when the deer population is 110% of population MO and rising, and recruitment is \geq 45 fawns/100 adults in end of winter composition surveys for the previous 3 years. No less than 2 surveys would be needed in last 3 years to make a determination.

Concurrent with criteria for including antlerless animals in the bag limit are criteria for implementing a male only bag limit for general archery seasons. Specifically for elk, if the population is \leq 100% of population MO in a unit, declining, and recruitment is \leq 25 calves:100 cows in end of winter surveys during the last three years it would dictate the unit have a bull only bag limit for general bow season. Similarly for mule deer, a population \leq 100% of population MO, declining, and recruitment of \leq 30 fawns:100 adults in end of winter surveys during the last three years would dictate the unit have a buck only bag limit for general bow season.

It should be understood that these criteria are not absolutes; for example, the Department may recommend including an antlerless animal in the bag limit or a controlled archery hunt for antlerless animals before these criteria are met. The criteria are intended to provide some assurance to archery hunters that when the criteria are met the bag limit will include an antlerless animal unless the Department can provide a compelling reason changing the bag limit is not appropriate.

For mule deer, at this time no WMU meets either set of criteria for changing the general bow season bag limit. Using the criteria recommended by ARPAC, the Department proposes during the 2015 general bow elk season the Keating WMU (128% of MO) include antlerless elk in the bag limit. Also using these criteria, the Department is proposing that the general bow elk season bag limit for the Stott Mountain WMU (62% of MO) move from any elk to bull only. Note proposals for 2015 do include continuation of the Stott Mtn. Unit late controlled archery hunt for antlerless elk (Nov 28 - Dec 13, 2015).

The three following recommendations were not voted on by the entire membership of ARPAC, they were provided by the external committee members. Some of the following information is also included in the sections of this document where recommendations for each species are covered and in the hunt tables.

1) That ODFW consider a controlled late (October – November) white-tailed deer opportunity for archers in NE Oregon.

- The Department is proposing a controlled archery hunt for white-tailed deer in the Wenaha WMU, November 16-29, 2015, estimating 30 tags for the hunt which, as with other late season controlled deer hunts, would be the hunter's only archery deer opportunity.

2) That ODFW consider severing tied tags in the Sled Springs, Chesnimnus and Ochoco WMUs and return these units to a general deer season to provide archers more time and opportunity. Currently to archery hunt for deer in these three WMUs the hunter is required to have a controlled archery elk tag for the unit.

- The Department is proposing to sever the link and no longer require an archery elk tag to hunt deer during the archery season in the Sled Springs and Chesnimnus WMUs. The Department is not proposing to change the requirement in the Ochoco WMU where tags were linked specifically to reduce hunter numbers during the archery season to reduce disturbance on public land that contributes to animals moving to private lands where they cause damage and are generally not available to public hunters.

3) That ODFW consider returning the Mule Deer Initiative WMUs of Maury, Steens, and Warner to a general season for deer and elk, unless there is biological data which indicates this would not be prudent.

- The Department is proposing some changes to regulations in MDI units as follows:
 - Steens Mountain Unit
 - The Department is proposing to break the link between deer and elk tags and eliminate the controlled deer hunt, returning the Steens Mtn. Unit to the general archery deer season.
 - Maury and Warner Units
 - **Deer:** The Department is proposing to break the link between deer and elk tags in the Maury and Warner Units. The Department is proposing to maintain the controlled archery deer hunts in these two units. These hunts were implemented in both units to help limit harvest to increase buck ratios. Tags available for rifle hunters and landowners were reduced by ~50% in 2009. Controlled archery hunts were established in 2010 with tags set to maintain opportunity approximately equal to the number of archers hunting the units at that time.

Since reducing harvest, buck ratios in both units have increased. The three year average in the Maury increased from 15 (2008-2010) to 20 bucks/100 does (2011-2013). The North Warner Unit has a Buck Ratio MO of 25 bucks/100 does. From 1995-2010 the MO was met three times and never exceeded. The buck ratio in the north Warner for 2011, 2012, and 2013 was 27, 28, and 29 bucks/100 does respectively.

- **Elk:** The Department is proposing to break the link between deer and elk tags in the Maury and Warner WMUs. However to continue to meet the buck deer MOs of 20 bucks/100 does in the Maury WMU, and 25 in the North Warner will require adequate enforcement and the ability to control all of the buck harvest. To achieve these goals the Department is proposing to implement controlled archery elk hunts in the Maury and Warner WMUs. Tags would be valid in other units during the general elk season.

Tag Portability: Tag portability refers to whether or not a controlled hunt tag is also able to be used (valid) in other units during the general season or if it is the hunter's only archery hunting opportunity for the species. At the final ARPAC Meeting it was recognized that the issue of tag portability would be difficult to resolve as reflected in the ARPAC 2014 Final Report.

“ARPAC Recommendation: ARPAC did not reach consensus on any direction of change in tag portability since changes would lead to a reduction in opportunity for archers, and because of the lack of data tying animal displacement directly to archer disturbance. ARPAC members did not support restricting portability for all hunts; they also did not feel they would be able to develop a recommendation restricting tag portability they could all support.”

There are a wide variety of controlled hunts in Oregon and a wide variety of opinions regarding the types of hunts that should or should not have tags also valid during the general season. The Department has heard from archery hunters who believe no tags should be portable, and others who just as firmly believe all tags should be portable. Within the ARPAC members there was enough difference of opinion the group realized a consensus would not be reached.

At the June, 2014 Commission Meeting, portability was a significant topic of discussion. In addition to moving forward on consideration of many of the ARPAC Recommendations, the Department provided for Commission consideration making the Heppner, Ukiah, and Snake River, Chesnimnus and Sled Springs controlled “One Elk” bow hunts the hunter's only archery elk opportunity.

Those archery hunters present who testified at the June 2014 Commission Meeting did not support restricting portability in these hunts. At the conclusion of the discussion the Commission directed the Department to initiate additional communications with archery hunters on the topic of portability. Unfortunately the results of the survey are difficult to quantify because about half of the ARPAC members responded and although additional comments were welcome, some respondents did not answer the questions asked. However, the responses received did reaffirm not all opinions are the same regarding tag portability. Survey responses are included as Attachment 4.

Following direction from the Commission, considering feedback from ARPAC members, the Department is dropping the proposal to make the Heppner, Ukiah, and Snake River “One Elk” hunts the hunter’s only archery elk opportunity. For these hunts the change was adding antlerless elk to the general season bag limit of “One Bull Elk” resulting in a controlled hunt with a bag limit of “One Elk”. The Department is also dropping the proposal that the Sled Springs and Chesnimnus Unit “One Elk” hunts be the hunter’s only archery elk opportunity.

Pronghorn Antelope

The Department proposes that most 2015 controlled Pronghorn seasons shift one day earlier. One hunt will be deleted (E. Interstate #2, Doe/Fawn) and one new youth hunt (Hart Mtn.) would be added for 2015.

Bighorn Sheep

The Department proposes most bighorn seasons shift 1 day earlier, and proposes adding a third hunt period to the Owyhee hunt area to take advantage of increased opportunity in that herd.

Rocky Mountain Goat

The Department proposes a one day calendar shift in most 2015 Rocky Mountain goat hunts. The Department also proposes a second nonresident tag in 2015; this tag will be in the first Hat Point hunt period.

Bear

Spring Bear

The Department proposes 4,734 controlled tags in 20 hunts and 4,400 tags in the SW Oregon Limited hunt for 2015. The controlled tags numbers include one new hunt in southwestern Oregon that provides an additional opportunity of 250 tags. The 4,400 proposed SW Oregon Limited Spring Bear Tags will be sold first-come, first-served beginning December 1, 2014, and will be available until March 31, 2015 or until the authorized number of tags are sold. Hunters who purchase these tags before the application deadline for controlled Spring Bear hunts (February 10) cannot apply for Spring Bear tags or preference points in the February 2015 controlled hunt drawing.

General Bear

The Department recommends no changes to season dates. Proposed general season dates are August 1–November 30, 2015 in eastern Oregon, and August 1–December 31, 2015 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. 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 2015, the proposed tag sales deadline is October 2, 2015. The Department will continue mailing letters to all 2015 bear tag holders in an effort to inform hunters of changes to bear hunting regulations and remind them of the requirement to check in bears.

Cougar

No changes are proposed to season dates. The statewide quota of 777 cougars has remained the same since 2006. The Department is proposing changes to cougar zone quotas starting in 2015. Quota recommendations are based on the following information.

- 1) From 2006 through 2013, the most recent end-of-year modeled population estimate, the population has increased by 9% (from 5,612 to 6,115). The estimated population increase from 1994-2013 is 96% (from 3,114 to 6,115) (Table 4).

Table 4. Change in cougar population estimate by zone.

Cougar Zone	1994 Population Estimate	2006 Population Estimate	2013 Population Estimate	% Change in Population 2006-2013	% Change in Population 1994-2013
A Coast/N Cascades	428	784	960	22%	124%
B Southwest Cascades	1,245	1,515	1,394	-8%	12%
C Southeast Cascades	125	487	929	91%	643%
D Columbia Basin	80	300	322	7%	303%
E Blue Mountains	926	1,640	1,604	-2%	73%
F Southeast Oregon	310	886	906	2%	192%
Statewide	3,114	5,612	6,115	9%	96%

- 2) Current mortality rates have slowed cougar population recruitment but have not addressed conflicts as measured by non-hunting mortalities.
- 3) Non-hunting mortalities exceed objectives for all but one quota zone.
- 4) Deer and elk populations are below Management Objectives (MOs) in many areas. Most areas with MOs are WMUs, a few are portions of a WMU, such as East and West Biggs, others are a combination of WMUs, including the High Desert Area for elk comprised of six WMUs and more than half of a seventh. Deer and elk de-emphasis areas do not have MOs and are not included in the counts below.
 - a. **Elk:** Of 53 areas with elk MOs, 21 (19 in eastern Oregon) are estimated to be at or above population management objectives. However, most populations are above thresholds that would meet the criteria for a Cougar Target Area < 23 calves/100 cows for 3 years and below population MO for 3 years.
 - b. **Mule Deer:** Many deer populations are substantially below desired levels. Of 49 areas with mule deer population MOs, 46 are below MO, only Maury, Starkey, and West Biggs WMUs are at or above MO. There are 19 areas with mule deer population estimates of less than 60% of MO for the past three years, which along with populations declining by 20% over the last five years are criteria for Target Area Management of cougars.
 - c. **Black-tailed Deer:** Target area criteria for black-tailed deer are different than for mule deer because MOs have not been established for black-tailed deer. The criterion is to target cougar only when evidence indicates cougar predation threatens viability of the deer population. The Department is currently placing transmitters on black-tailed deer. Information from the study related to cause of mortality could provide information necessary to evaluate the level of cougar

predation on black-tailed deer populations. Although the information is very preliminary, predation has been the most frequent known mortality cause (40 mortalities with known causes, 16 (40%) by predation). Of the 16 mortalities caused by predation, one was caused by a bear and eight by cougar; for seven mortalities the predator that killed the deer could not be determined.

- 5) For 2015 the Department is proposing to increase quotas (Table 5) in recognition of population increases since 1994 and non-hunting mortalities related to conflicts being above objectives. If current quotas were fully met (777 cougar mortalities in 2014) the 2014 end of year cougar population estimate would be 5,819, the population decline would be 5%, which would still be 94% above the minimum population threshold of 3,000 identified as Objective One in the Cougar Management Plan.

If proposed quotas were fully met (970 cougar mortalities in 2014) the 2014 end of year cougar population estimate would be 5,550, the population decline would be 9%, which would still be 85% above the minimum population threshold of 3,000 identified as Objective One in the Cougar Management Plan.

Table 5. Cougar population and Mortality information by Zone

Cougar Zone	Objective 1 Manage for a Statewide Population ≥ 3,000		Cougar Plan Objectives		Cougar taken on livestock, safety/pet complaints Avg. 2011-2013	Current Quota	Proposed Quota
	1994 est.	2013 Population Estimate	Objective 2 Manage by Zone for Non-Hunting Mortalities <	2013 Population Estimate			
A Coast/N Cascades	1994 est. 428	960	15	45	120	180	
B Southwest Cascades	1994 est. 1,245	1,393	11	63	165	200	
C Southeast Cascades	1994 est. 125	929	5	5	65	80	
D Columbia Basin	1994 est. 80	322	5	21	62	100	
E Blue Mountains	1994 est. 926	1,604	13	17	245	270	
F Southeast Oregon	1994 est. 310	906	11	18	120	140	
Statewide	1994 est. 3,114	6,115	60	170	777	970	

Objective one of the Cougar Management Plan is to manage for a statewide cougar population of at least 3,000; population objectives are also mentioned for each zone. Meeting other objectives of the Cougar Management Plan, such as addressing conflicts, may result in a different distribution of the cougar population between zones compared to the distribution in 1994.

Is extremely unlikely the quota for any zone would be met unless there are administrative removals. However, since all known mortalities, including administrative removals, count towards the quota, proposed quotas are sufficient to accommodate administrative removals without jeopardizing the statewide cougar population.

Deer

General deer season is proposed to remain unchanged in 2015 except for a 1 day calendar shift. Due to limited support for the concepts of changing the western rifle buck season bag limit to “Buck with Visible Antler” or adding days to the end of the general rifle season staff is not proposing changes for 2015.

For 2015, the Department proposes deleting one controlled deer hunt and adding six new hunts. Proposed changes include:

- Remove the Hood and White River Units from the 100M N Muzzleloader hunt area and add a new separate muzzleloader either sex hunt for the Hood and White River Units.
- Add a new muzzleloader buck hunt for the Chetco unit.
- Adding controlled deer archery hunts for Mt. Emily, Walla Walla, and Wenaha units, and removing the requirement to have a controlled elk tag to be archery hunting deer in these units.
- Adding a controlled late bow hunt for white-tailed deer in the Wenaha unit.
- Delete the Lostine-Allen Canyon antlerless hunt (660B).

Saddle Mountain Deer Hunting Closure: The Department proposes lifting the long standing closure to deer hunting in the Saddle Mountain unit north of the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks. The closure area is ~14 square miles of the Columbia River floodplain from Astoria east to Clatskanie. This closure was established as part of the effort to protect endangered Columbian White-tailed deer (CWTD).

Elk

The Department proposes maintaining existing general season structure in 2015 except for a one day calendar shift. The General Season archery bag limit is a legal bull except in units identified by the Commission each year. The recent Archery Review Public Advisory Committee recommended criteria that would qualify a WMU to have an either-sex bag limit. The following recommendation is based on an ARPAC concept but has been modified to simplify the criteria for proposing an either sex or bull only bag limit.

Table 6. Criteria for determining General Archery Season bag limit

Species	Population Relative to Management Objective	Population Performance	Spring Recruitment Prior 3 Years	General Archery Season Bag Limit
Elk	≥ 105% of MO	Increasing	≥ 31 calves/100 cows	Either-sex
Elk	≤ 100% of MO	Decreasing	≤ 25 calves/100 cows	Bull Only
Mule Deer	≥ 110% of MO	Increasing	≥ 45 fawns/100 does	Either-sex
Mule Deer	≤ 100% of MO	Decreasing	≤ 30 fawns/100 does	Buck Only

Two WMUs currently meet criteria for changing bag limits: the Keating Unit (128% of MO), and the Stott Mountain Unit (62% of MO). Staff proposes changing the general season archery bag limit from “One Bull Elk” to “One Elk” in the Keating Unit, and from “One Elk” to “One Bull Elk” in the Stott Mountain unit.

For 2015, the following changes are proposed to controlled elk hunts. Overall, the Department proposes deleting 6 controlled antlerless elk hunts, adding 5 new rifle antlerless hunts, adding one new controlled muzzleloader bull elk hunt, and adding two new controlled archery bull hunts. The two deleted hunts in western Oregon are in response to declining populations and three deleted hunts in eastern Oregon are in response to declining conflicts with elk in the area. Proposed changes include:

- Delete the SW Santiam and NW McKenzie cow hunts

- Delete the three Schleur Park cow hunts in the Snake River WMU
- Delete the Hayes Butte-Murdoch Creek hunt and add the hunt area to an expanded Connley Hills hunt
- Add two new hunt periods in the Central Trask WMU
- Add two new antlerless elk hunts in NE Oregon (S Catherine Cr Private, Lookout Mtn #2)
- Add a new muzzleloader hunt in the Minam WMU
- Add two new archery bull hunts (Maury, Warner)

Bag Limit for Disability Permits

Factors considered to determine which units are recommended to include an antlerless deer or elk in the bag limit for general archery season and hunters with disabilities permits include: population level relative to the Population Management Objective (MO), recruitment (fawn or calf ratios) and the number and distribution of antlerless firearms tags authorized in the unit. Based on these criteria, the Department is proposing to add the Keating WMU to the list of WMUs where antlerless elk are included in the bag limit for hunters with disabilities permits. Similarly, the Department recommends that antlerless elk are no longer included in the bag limit for hunters with disabilities permits in the Stott Mountain WMU. The Department is not proposing any changes to units where antlerless deer are included in the bag limit for hunters with disabilities permits.

If Department proposals are approved, units that will include an antlerless elk in the bag limit for hunters with disabilities permits would be:

- **FOR DEER ONLY, One Deer During Buck Seasons:** Biggs, Columbia Basin, 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, E Fork Rock (that portion east of Hwy 97), Fossil, Grizzly, Hood, Imnaha, Juniper, Keating Lookout Mtn, 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 Mtn, Scappoose, Silvies, Siuslaw, Sixes, Sled Springs, Steens Mtn, 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. The bag limit for hunters with an Oregon disabilities permit is an antlerless or legal bull.

Limiting Landowner Preference Mule Deer Tags

The 2013 Legislature in House Bill 2027A made changes to Section 2 of the LOP Program and extended the Sunset to January 2, 2020. One of the significant changes was authorizing the Commission to limit mule deer buck tags in WMUs where the mule deer population is below MO.

496.146.

Sec. 2. Landowner preference tags.

(7)(c) The commission may specify by rule 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 goal specified for that wildlife management unit in the wildlife management plan for mule deer.

The Department is proposing to implement the same formula for mule deer currently used for deer and elk hunts that have limited LOP tags. In these LOP limited hunts landowner hunting preference tags are limited to five tags or 10 percent of the total controlled hunt tags for each hunt, whichever is greater.

The Department will consider other factors in addition to population relative to MO when determining which hunts to propose limiting LOP mule deer tags. For example, most antlerless hunts (600 Series) are focused on private lands to address damage; in these hunts it may not be appropriate to limit LOP tags. For 2015 the Department will be recommending limiting LOP tags for some buck hunts (100 Series). Attachment 5 provides information used to develop proposals. If implemented in 2014 using information in Attachment 5 the Department would have proposed reducing LOP buck tags for mule deer in 18 of 91 "100 Series" buck hunts. Proposals for 2015 tag numbers including hunts to have LOP limitations will be developed spring 2015 using the most current information available and provided to the Commission June 2015.

Changes Developed Since the June 2014 Commission Meeting

Following are proposals developed for presentation at the October 10, 2014, Commission meeting for potential inclusion in the 2015 Big Game Regulations and one correction to the 2014-2016 Furbearer Trapping and Hunting Regulations.

Furtaker Mandatory Reporting Date Correction: When filing the OARs for Division 050 following the June 2014 Commission Meeting, staff found the dates for mandatory reporting by furtakers had inadvertently not been updated. The Department is proposing dates be changed as follows:

635-050-0045

General Furbearer Regulations

The following general regulations apply to furbearer seasons:

- (1) The appropriate furtaker's license or hunting license for furbearers must be in possession to hunt and/or trap furbearers.
- (2) Any person possessing a valid furtaker's license or hunting license for furbearers is required to fill out and return a completed harvest report form to the Department at 4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE, Salem, OR 97302. The form shall be postmarked by April 15, 201[3]5 for the 201[2]4-201[3]5 seasons and April 15, 201[4]6 for the 201[3]5-201[4]6 seasons. Failure to do so shall deny the license holder the opportunity to purchase a hunting license for furbearers or furtaker's license for the following furbearer season, unless the non-compliant licensee pays a fee of \$50.00 and completes and returns the harvest report form prior to the requested license being issued.

Muzzleloader Bullets: Beginning with 2014 hunting seasons the Commission approved the use of round balls or conical bullets made of federally-approved nontoxic shot material for hunting game mammals during muzzleloader seasons. Recently the Department became aware of a solid copper conical bullet ("Thor Bullet") designed for muzzleloaders that does not require a sabot.

Copper plated nontoxic shot is federally approved but solid copper shot is not. However, lead free solid copper bullets are considered an acceptable alternative to bullets containing lead.

A Temporary Administrative Rule is in place to authorize the use of copper muzzleloader bullets for 2014 hunting seasons. The Department is proposing the following be adopted as permanent rule:

635-065-0705

(2) 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 jacketed bullets, sabots, and bullets with plastic or synthetic tips or bases. Only the following projectile/bullet types are allowed:

- (a) Round balls made of lead, lead alloy, or federally-approved nontoxic shot material, used with cloth, paper or felt patches;
- (b) Conical bullets made of lead, lead alloy, or federally-approved nontoxic shot material, with a length that does not exceed twice the diameter;
- (c) Lead free copper conical bullets with a length that does not exceed twice the diameter.

Point Savers For Spring Bear: There is conflicting information in the Big Game Regulations regarding the purchase of point savers for Controlled Spring Bear hunts. The SW Oregon Spring Bear Hunt was changed from a Controlled Hunt to Limited First-come First-served in 2009, wording was added to the regulations on page 35 at that time stating:

Hunters purchasing a SW Oregon spring bear tag prior to the drawing will not be eligible to apply for other controlled spring bear tags or utilize the Point Saver option for spring bear hunts. Hunters planning to apply for other controlled spring bear hunts or a Point Saver should wait until after the drawing to purchase a SW Oregon spring bear tag. Please note there is a limited number of SW Oregon spring bear tags available.

In 2012 an opportunity to purchase point savers after the controlled hunt drawing was put in place. On page 14 of the Big Game Regulations it states:

- You may purchase one Point Saver for the current year, for each series (100,200, 400, 600, and 700 [Spring Bear]) from July 1 through Nov. 30 if you did not apply during the controlled hunt drawing for that series.

The Department is proposing to make the rules consistent with the original intent and the wording on the Controlled Spring Bear Hunt page of the regulations by removing the 700 series from the point savers available from July-November as depicted by the following change.

635-060-0023

Modified Preference Point System

(12) Applicants will receive no preference points when:

- (a) Their application is not received by the appropriate application date; however, a hunter may purchase one preference point for the current year, for each series (100, 200, 400, **and** 600[, ~~and 700~~]) from July 1 through November 30 if they did not apply during the controlled hunt drawing for that series.

Standardize Bighorn Sheep Auction and Raffle Tag Dates: Rocky Mountain Goat and Pronghorn raffle tags must be claimed by a fixed date, the “must be claimed by date” does not change each year and neither does the season opening date for these species.

Currently both the season dates and the “claimed by date” for bighorn sheep auction and raffle tags vary each year because the season opening date changes from year-to-year with the opening date of the earliest bighorn sheep season. Changing dates each year necessitates change to OARs and edits to the Big Game Regulations to keep the dates matching. The Department is proposing to establish fixed dates for the seasons and for claiming the bighorn sheep raffle tag as shown below:

635-067-0032

Bighorn Sheep Auction Tag

(c) Open Season: The season shall begin on August 1 and shall end on November 30 [~~The season shall begin on the opening day of the first regularly scheduled bighorn sheep season for the current year and shall end on the last day of the last regularly scheduled bighorn sheep season for the current year.~~]

635-067-0034

Bighorn Sheep Raffle Tag

(3) (c) The season shall begin on August 1 and shall end on November 30 [~~The season shall begin on the opening day of the first regularly scheduled bighorn sheep season for the current year and shall end on the last day of the last regularly scheduled bighorn sheep season for the current year.~~]

(h) The Department will mail notification to the winner and two alternates. If the winner does not claim the tag by 5 p.m., July 1, the winner shall be disqualified and the Department will offer the tag to the first alternate. If the first alternate does not claim the tag within 10 business days of July 1, the second alternate will be contacted. If the tag is not claimed by 5 p.m., [~~August 18~~]July 31, it will not be issued.

The changes are expected to have minimal effect on the program; however, it will eliminate the need for annual rule changes and regulation edits. Since the Bighorn Sheep Raffle Tag was established in 1992 an alternate has not received the tag, it has always gone to the primary winner. Standardized season dates are also used for Access and Habitat Program auction and raffle tags for deer and elk.

Pronghorn LOP Clarification: By statute LOP pronghorn tags cannot be used to harvest buck pronghorn.

496.146 Additional powers of commission; rules; fees; penalties.

Sec. 2. Landowner preference tags. Notwithstanding any other provision of the wildlife laws, during the period beginning January 1, 1996, and ending January 2, 2020, the following provisions apply with regard to the issuance and use of landowner preference tags referred to in ORS 496.146 (4):

(4) Landowner preference tags for the hunting of antelope are not transferable and may not be used for the taking of buck antelope.

On page 19 of the 2014 Big Game Regulations it recognizes that pronghorn other than bucks may be taken during doe/fawn and either-sex pronghorn hunts, “LOP tags are only available for hunts with “doe or fawn” or “either sex” bag limits.” If LOP tags are issued for an either-sex

pronghorn hunt the bag limit is restricted to doe/fawn. Similar wording is on page 31 of the regulations. However, in OAR either-sex hunts are not mentioned. To correct this oversight the Department is proposing to make the following edits to the OARs.

635-075-0001

Eligibility

A landowner as defined in OAR 635-045-0002 and immediate family as defined in 635-045-0002, owning 40 or more contiguous acres are eligible to receive landowner hunting preference tags for controlled 600 series deer, western Oregon buck deer, western Oregon elk, and eastern Oregon antlerless elk hunts and emergency hunts occurring on their property. To be eligible to receive landowner hunting preference tags for controlled eastern Oregon buck deer, eastern Oregon bull elk, either-sex elk hunts, and **either-sex or** doe/fawn pronghorn antelope hunts [~~pronghorn antelope with horns shorter than ears~~], occurring on their land, a landowner shall own 160 or more contiguous acres. For controlled hunts see OAR divisions 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, and Emergency Hunts in OAR Division 78. Tags issued to landowners are in addition to the number of tags issued to the public and authorized in OAR divisions 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, and 78, except as described in 635-075-0020.

635-075-0005

Registration, Application and Tag Issuance Procedures and Limits for All Controlled Hunts

(3) Landowners shall submit registration forms and landowners or their designee shall submit tag distribution forms prior to September 15 for all controlled 100 series buck deer and bull elk hunts, and through the day prior to the season openings for 600 series antlerless deer, antlerless elk, and **either-sex or** doe/fawn pronghorn antelope hunts. A Landowner Preference Tag Redistribution fee \$15.00 will be charged per species for amendments made to the original tag distribution forms.

(8) The number of landowner preference tags issued is based upon a landowner's acreage. Landowner Preference tags shall be allocated by the following minimum acreage requirements:

TAGS — MINIMUM ACREAGE — HUNT TYPE

2	40 — all hunts except eastern Oregon buck deer, Eastern Oregon bull elk, either-sex elk, and either-sex or doe/fawn pronghorn antelope hunts
2	160 — all hunts
3	1,200 — all hunts
4	2,500 — all hunts
5	5,000 — all hunts
6	10,000 — all hunts
8	20,000 — all hunts
10	40,000 — all hunts
12	80,000 — all hunts
14	160,000 and greater — all hunts