

# 2024 Big Game Regulations & Tag Numbers

September 15, 2023



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# Presentation Overview

Process for big game  
regulation development

Review of 2020 hunt changes

2024 regulation proposals

- General regulations
- Species specific management updates and proposals

# Annual regulations set within an adaptive management framework

- Species management plans,
- Population surveys and trends,
- Wildlife health conditions including disease,
- Changing habitat conditions including wildfire and drought,
- Prior year harvest reporting, and
- Other data around survival and mortality, human-wildlife interactions, management concerns, and public input.



To protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations



# Big Game Season Development

- Fall to spring: Biological data collection
- March to June: Data analysis
- July: Public outreach
- September: Commission adoption
- October: Finalize Regulations for print
- December: Licenses and tags eligible for purchase

# Climate & Weather Overview



- Long term impacts of climate affecting some populations
- Severe drought in 2021 followed by moderate winter, good spring/summer forage conditions in 2022
- Fires impacted few 2022 hunts
- Mild winter, relatively wet spring, good spring/summer forage conditions in 2023



## Spikes in Western Oregon Buck Deer Bag Limit

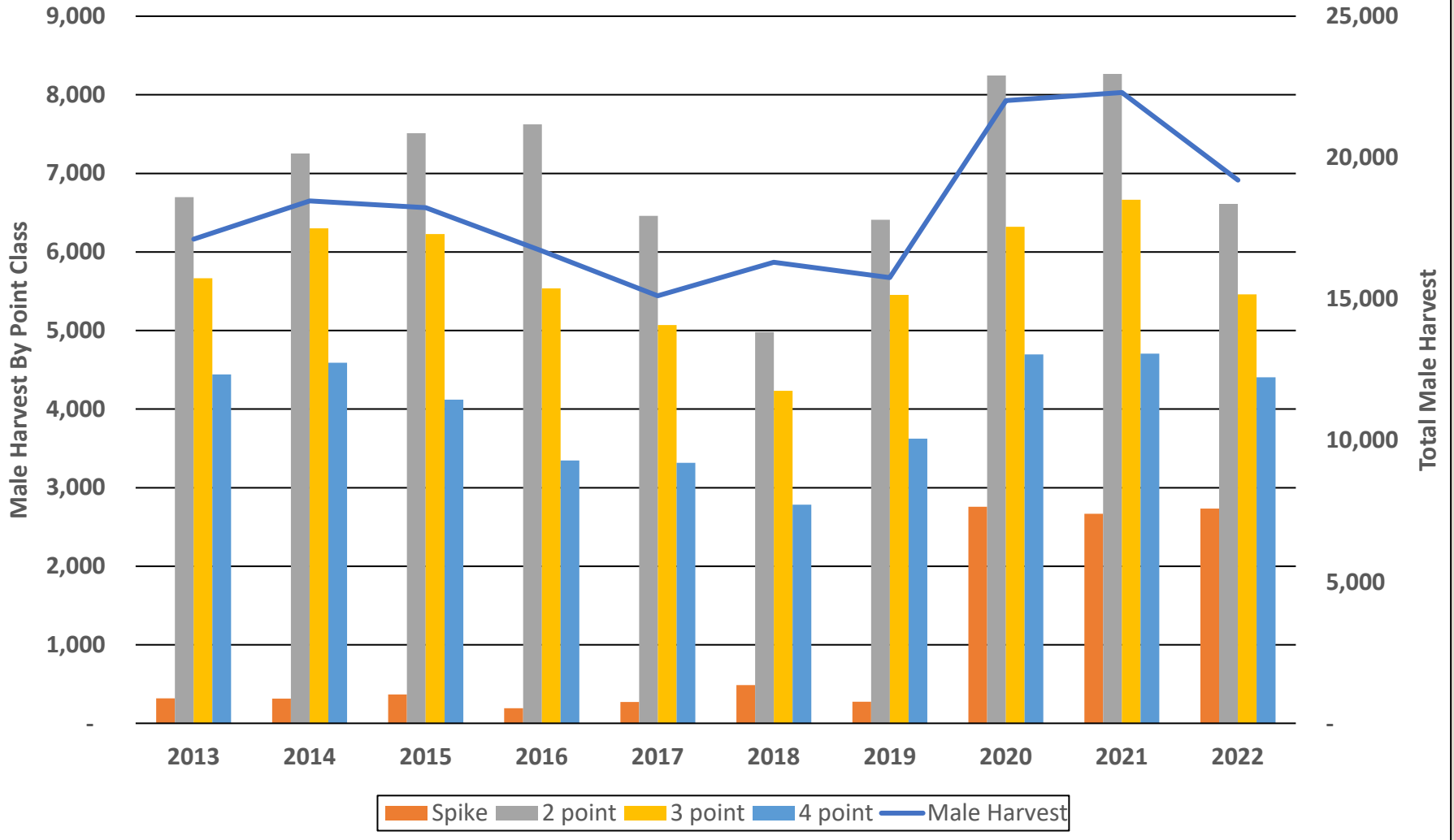
# Review of 2020 Hunt Changes

Hunt	Previous Bag Limit	Current Bag Limit
Western Oregon Buck Deer (100 Series)	One buck having not less than a forked antler	One buck with visible antler
Antlerless Deer (600 Series)	One antlerless or spike deer	One antlerless deer

# Review of 2020 Hunt Changes: Spikes in Western Oregon Buck Deer Bag Limit



Western Oregon Buck Deer Harvest by Antler Point Class





# Review of 2020 Hunt Changes

## Spikes in Western Oregon Buck Deer Bag Limit

- Inclusion of spikes in bag limit did not reduce the presence of bucks in higher point classes
- Monitoring and modeling suggests no negative population impact following this change
- Will continue to monitor harvest in the coming years

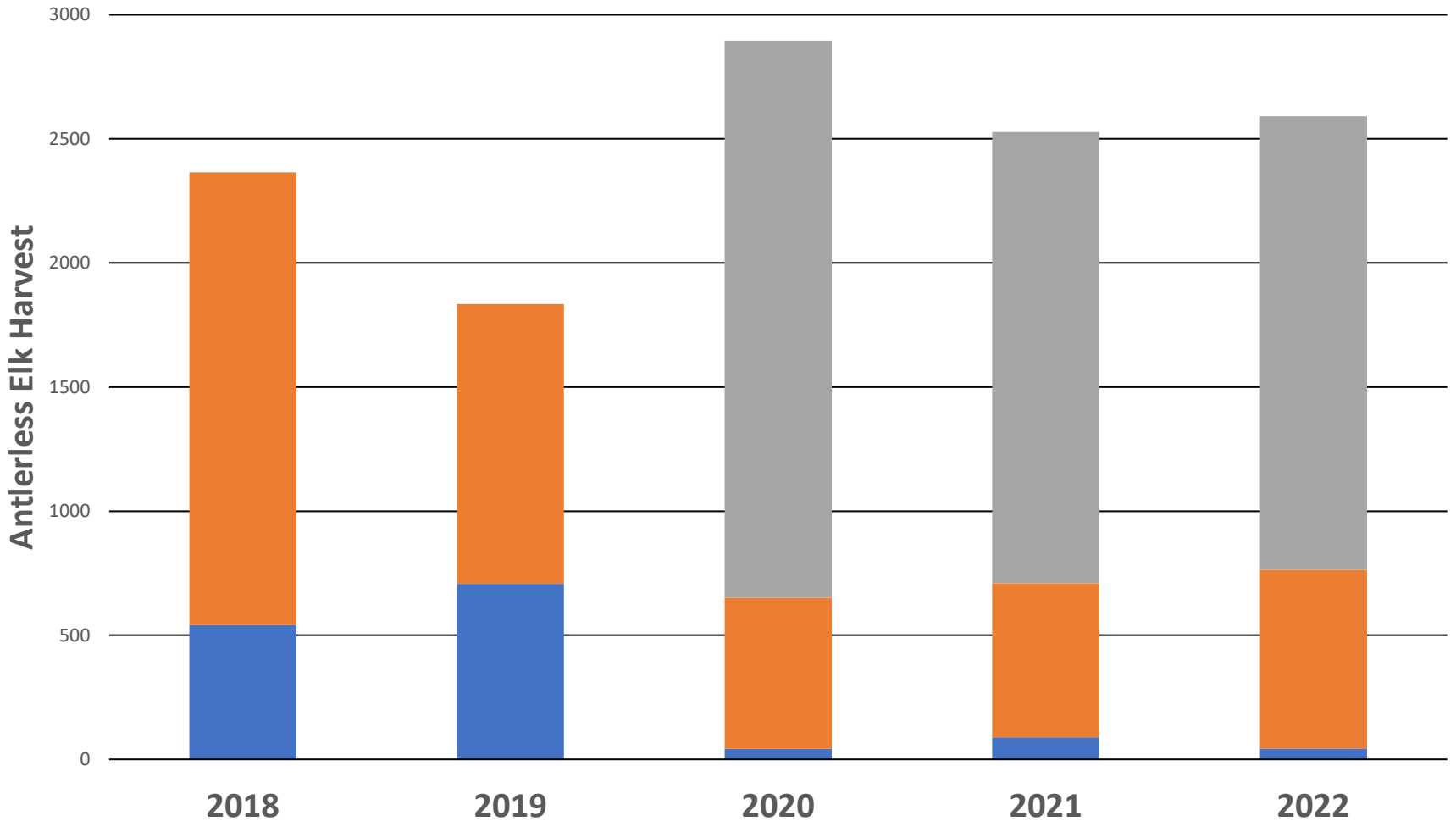


# Review of 2020 Hunt Concepts: General Season Antlerless Elk Damage Tag (GSAEDT)



## Antlerless Elk Harvest in Areas with GSAEDT

■ Damage Controlled Hunt    ■ Landowner Damage Tag





# Review of 2020 Hunt Changes

## General Season Antlerless Elk Damage Tag Hunt

- Helped increase elk harvest by 27% in areas implemented
- Reduced landowner damage tags by 22% statewide
- No evidence of negative impacts to elk populations based on monitoring
- Will continue to monitor, particularly for Roosevelt elk



# 2024 Proposals Overview

## General Regulations

## Species Specific

- Bear & Cougar
- Bighorn Sheep & Mountain Goat
- Pronghorn
- Elk
- Deer

# Cooperative Travel Management Areas (TMAs)

- Numerous TMA closures adopted in 2022
- Federal land agencies unable to match restrictions in eleven locations
- Propose returning previous language

# Bear and Cougar



# Bear Population Monitoring



## OREGON BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF  
FISH AND WILDLIFE  
10 SEPTEMBER 2012

## Black Bear Management Plan

- Health
- Conflict
- Abundance
- Ecology

Check-in for all mortalities

Harvest reporting

Use of indices and model

# Bear Population Monitoring

## Age criteria to assess take level of black bears

- Harvest sustainable if median age of males  $\geq 2$  years, females  $\geq 4$  years, and all bears  $\geq 3$  years
- No indication of unsustainable harvest

## Sex-age criteria to assess take level of black bears using 3-year running averages of all mortalities

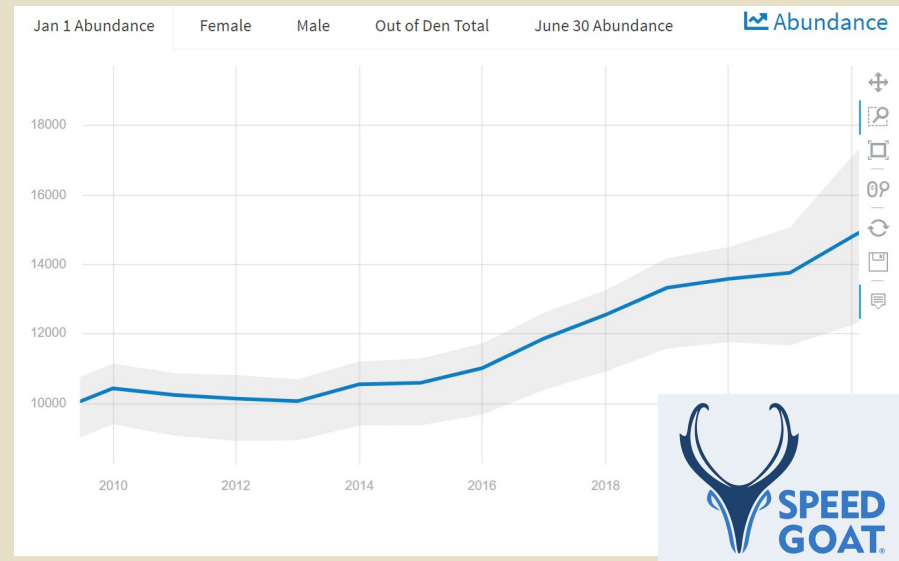
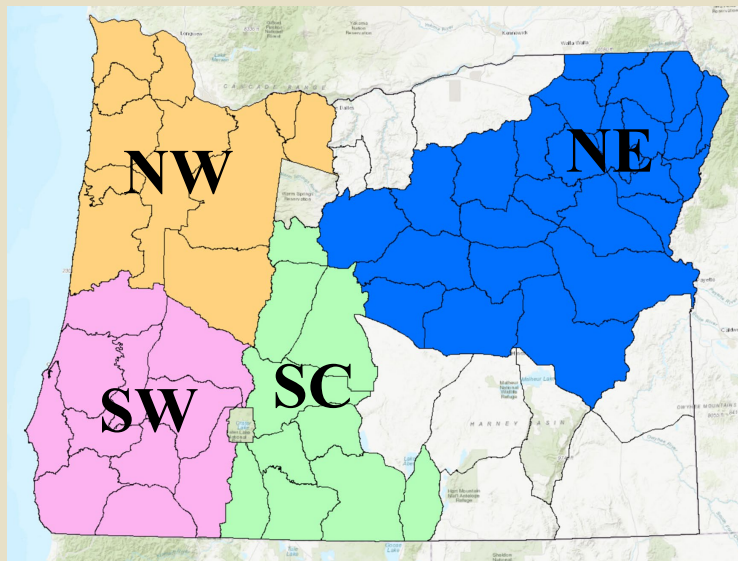
Criteria	Low	Moderate	High
% of Males $\geq 5$ yr old	>35%	25 - 35%	<25%
% Females	<30%	30 - 40%	>40%

- No indication of unsustainable harvest

# Bear Population Monitoring

## Oregon Black Bear Integrated Population Model (IPM)

- Uses primary inputs of mortalities, harvest effort, and density estimates
- Model outputs for each zone (NW, SW, NE, SC)
- Latest Statewide Estimate ~41,000

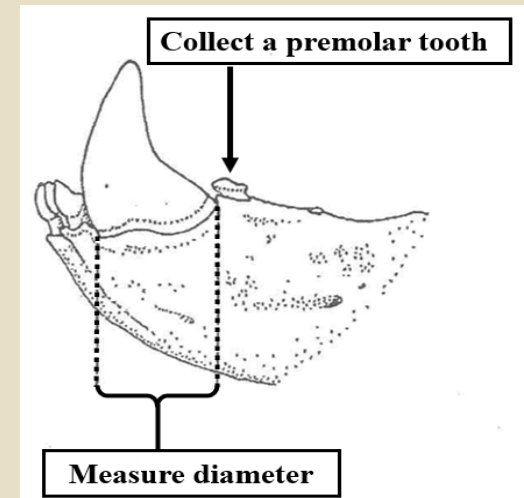


# Spring Bear 2024 Season Proposals

- Maintain dates: April 1 to May 31 statewide
- 10,773 controlled hunt tags across 18 hunts
  - Two proposed tag increases (762A Pine Cr – Keating – Catherine Cr & 731A South Central)
  - Standard adjustments for unsold tags
- Continue to protect cubs and sows with cubs
- Continue mandatory check-in

# General Bear 2024 Season Proposals

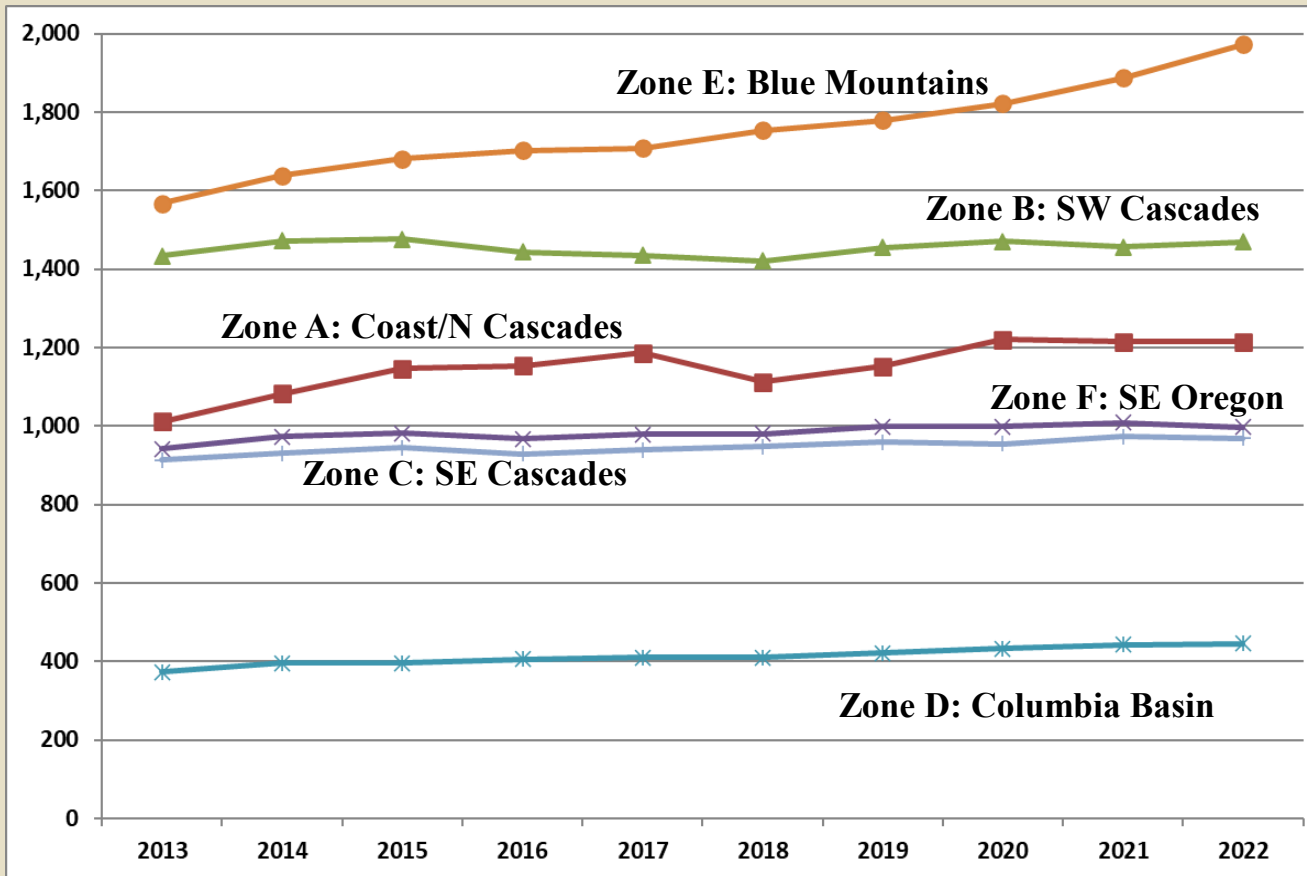
- Maintain dates: Aug 1 to Dec 31 statewide
- Maintain season structure
  - 2 bear tag opportunity, statewide additional tag
- Continue to protect cubs & sows with cubs
- Continue mandatory check-in





# Cougar Population Monitoring

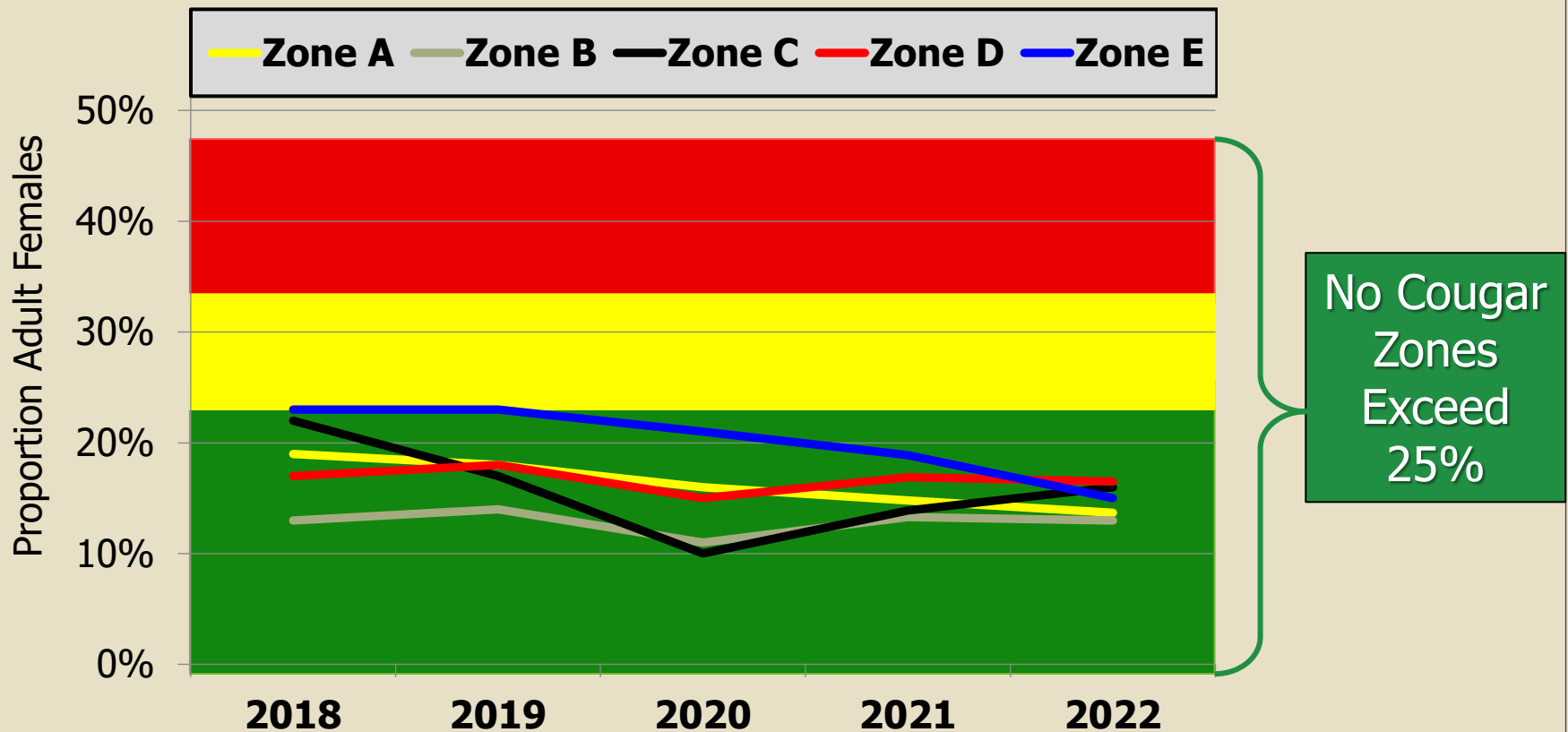
Plan Objective 1: ODFW will manage for a stable cougar population that are to not to fall below 3,000 cougars statewide



Statewide Population Estimate: ~7,000 in 2022

# Cougar Population Monitoring

- Three-year average proportion adult (3+ year old) females in the total mortality  $\leq 25-35\%$



# Cougar Population Monitoring

Zone quotas (*i.e. mortality caps*) include *all* known cougar mortalities across *all* age classes

Harvest closes when cap met but removals for damage and conflict are still permitted, and all forms of mortality are still counted

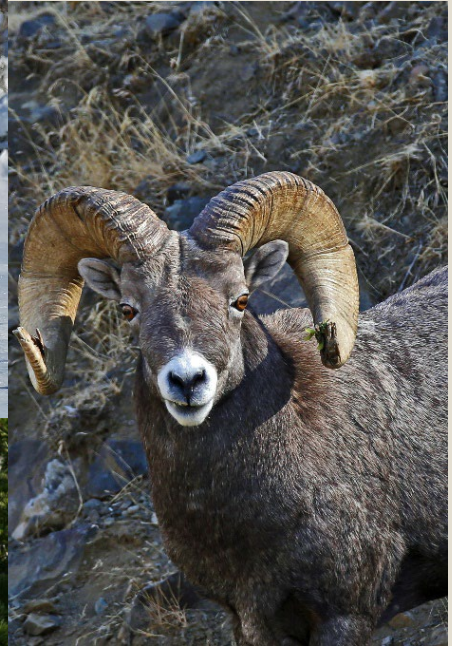
Zone	Quota (Cap)	Total Mortality					
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
A Coast/North Cascades	180	157	193	160	138	162	149
B SW Cascades	200	140	156	111	97	123	117
C SE Cascades	80	43	40	23	20	12	24
D Col. Basin	100	38	39	30	24	22	31
E Blue Mts.	270	142	117	125	102	87	105
F SE Oregon	140	51	45	42	46	32	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>458</b>

Harvest mortalities consistently below caps

# Cougar 2024 Season Proposals

- Maintain year-round season
- Maintain season structure:
  - Two cougar tag opportunity
  - Statewide additional cougar tag
- No changes to zone quotas
- Continue mandatory check-in
- Continue to protect kittens and females with kittens

# Ungulates



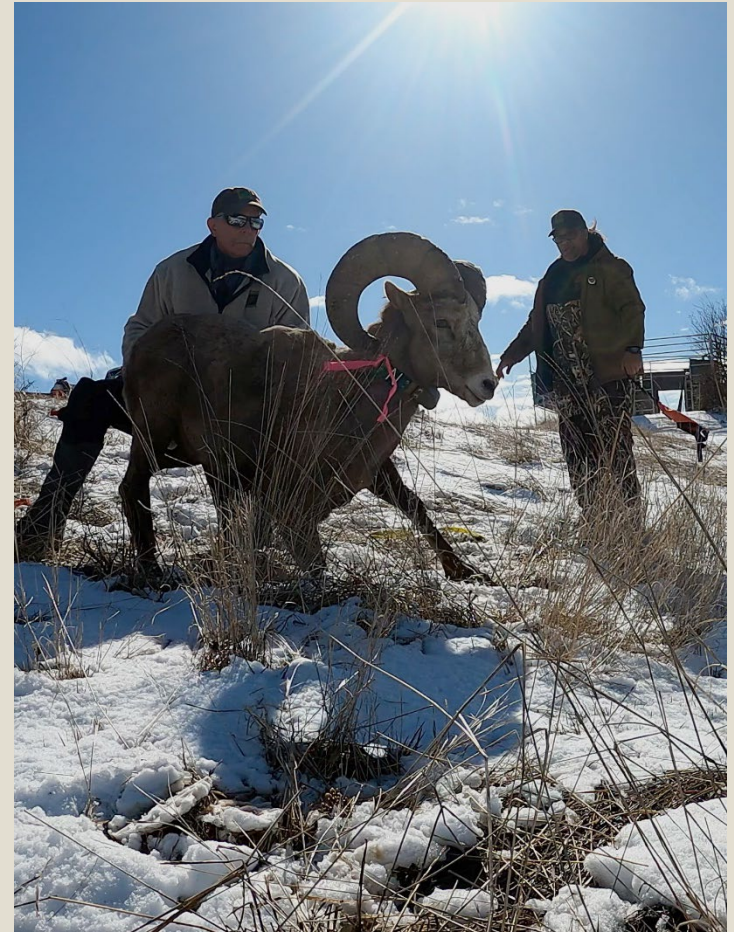
# Bighorn Sheep Population Management

## Captures winter 2022 - 2023

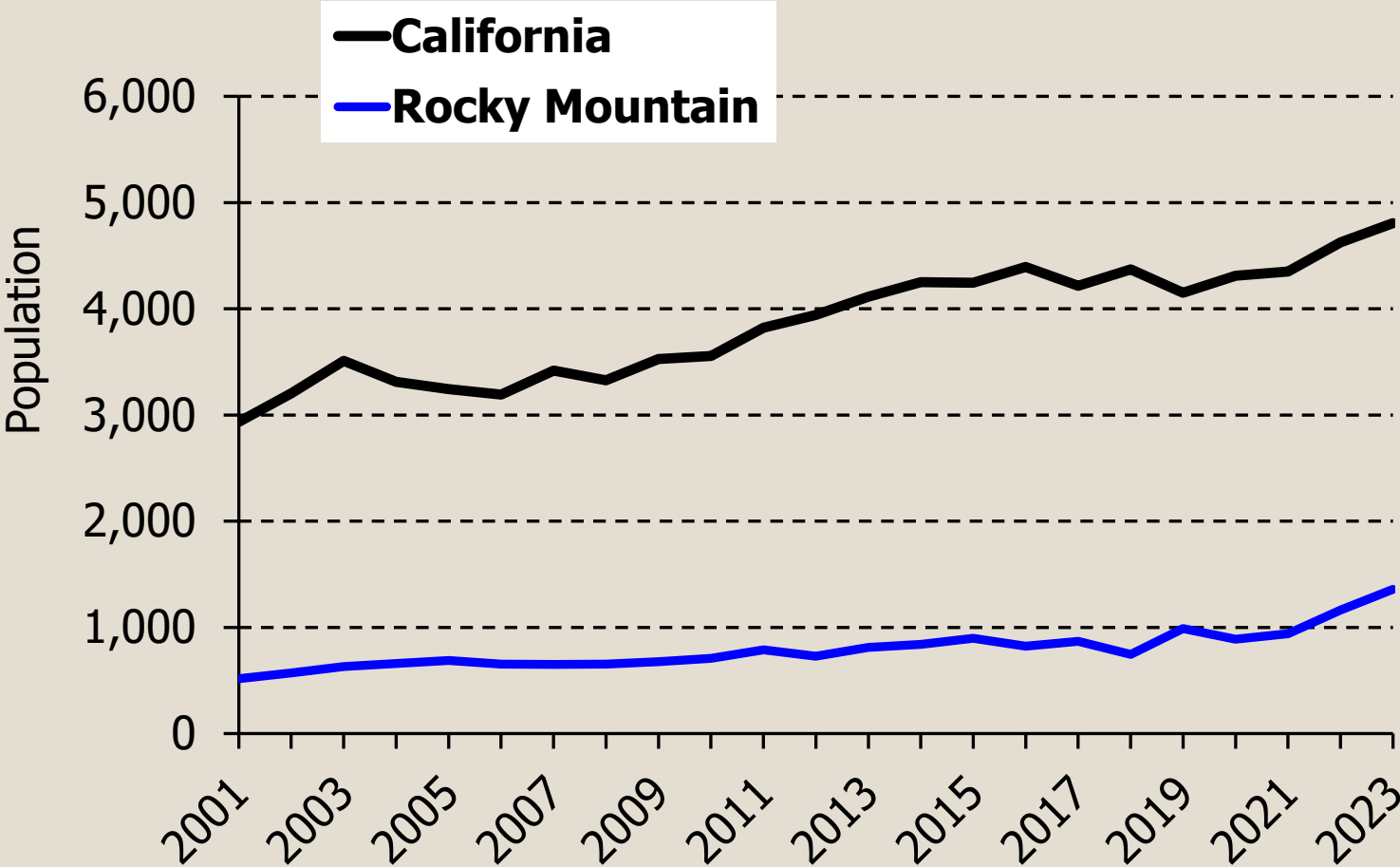
- **Disease sampling focus**
  - 46 California bighorns  
3 herds
  - 95 Rocky Mtn bighorns  
4 herds

## Winter 2023 – 2024

- Continue disease testing
- Hells Canyon Initiative



# Bighorn Sheep Population Monitoring



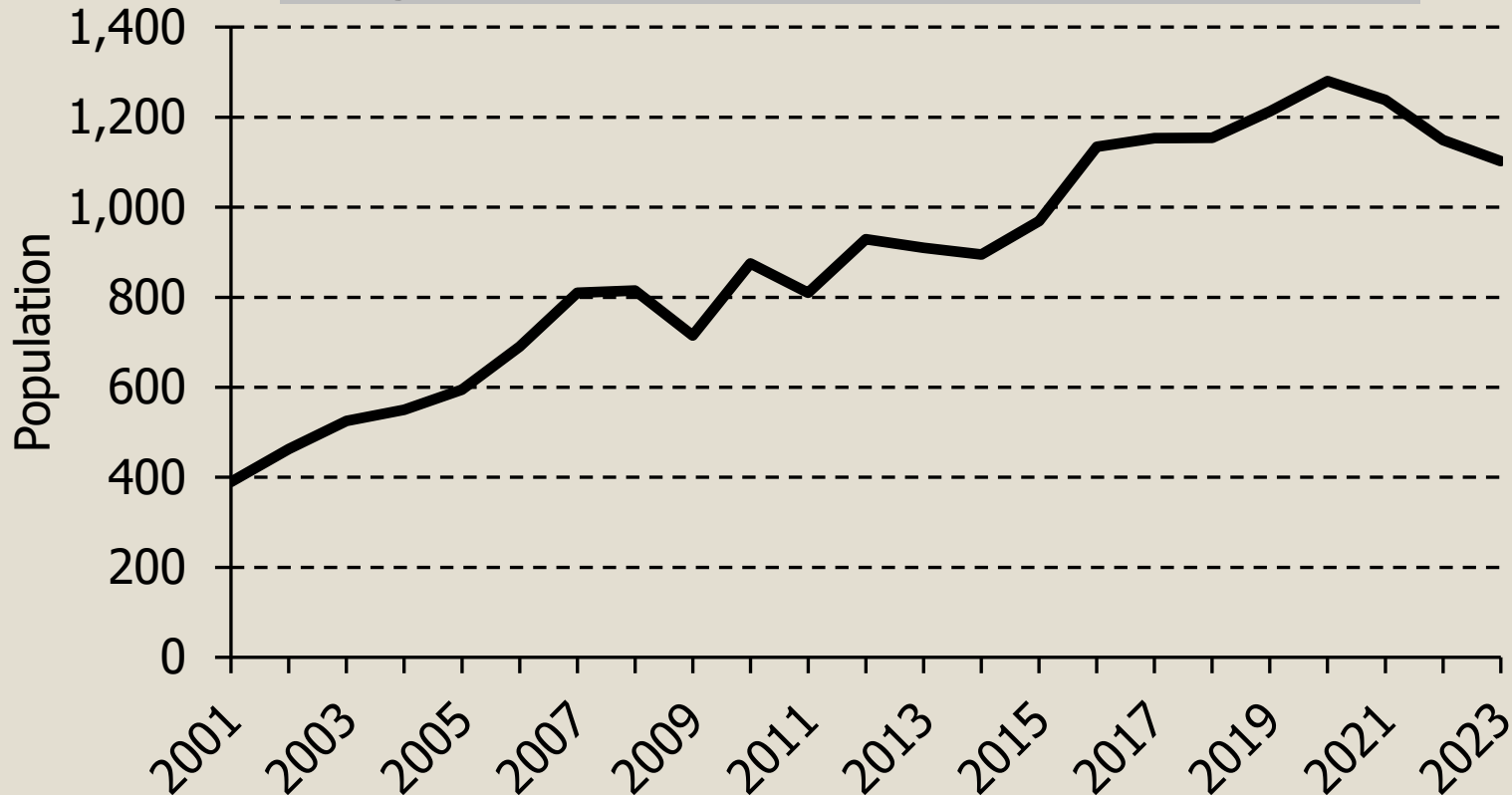
# 2024 Bighorn Sheep Tag & Season Proposals

- Five Rocky Mtn ram tags
- Delete one California ram hunt
- 77 California ram tags
- 40 California ewe tags
- Six ram, three ewe nonresident tags (7%)



# Rocky Mtn. Goat Population Monitoring

**Oregon Rocky Mtn. Goat Population Trend**



# 2024 Rocky Mtn. Goat Tag & Season Proposals

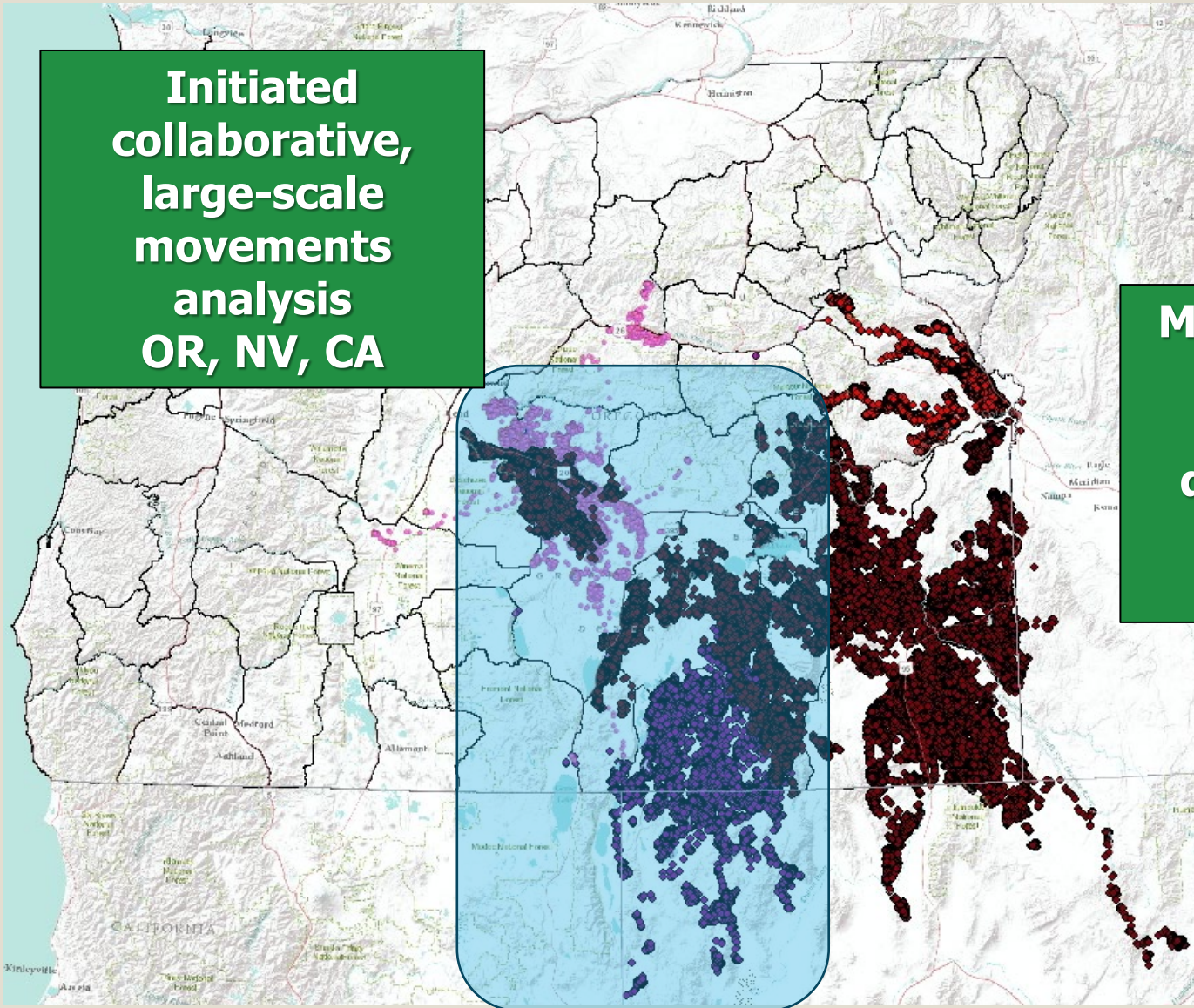
- Delete four hunts
- 21 tags proposed
- Two nonresident tags (9%)



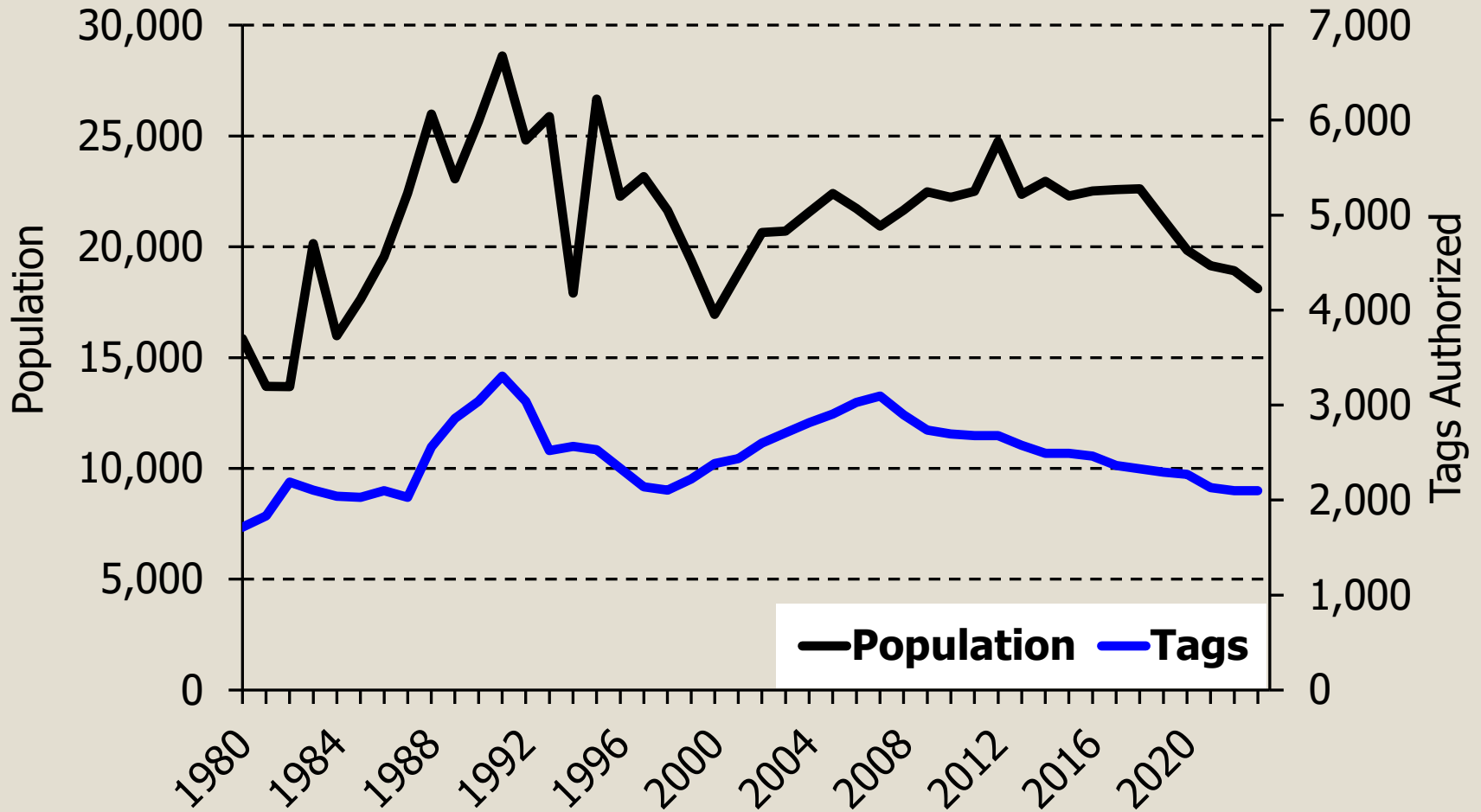
# Pronghorn Management

**Initiated  
collaborative,  
large-scale  
movements  
analysis  
OR, NV, CA**

**Multiple recent  
pronghorn  
studies  
documenting  
habitat use,  
movements**



# Pronghorn Population & Hunting



# Controlled Pronghorn Tag Proposals



- Delete one hunt
- No change in total tags

Hunt Type	2023 Tags	2024 Tags	% Change
Any Legal Weapon	1,406	1,405	<1%
Muzzleloader	138	138	<i>na</i>
Bow	491	492	<1%
Youth	37	37	<i>na</i>
Premium	26	26	<i>na</i>
Total Pronghorn	2,098	2,098	<i>na</i>

# Elk Management Information



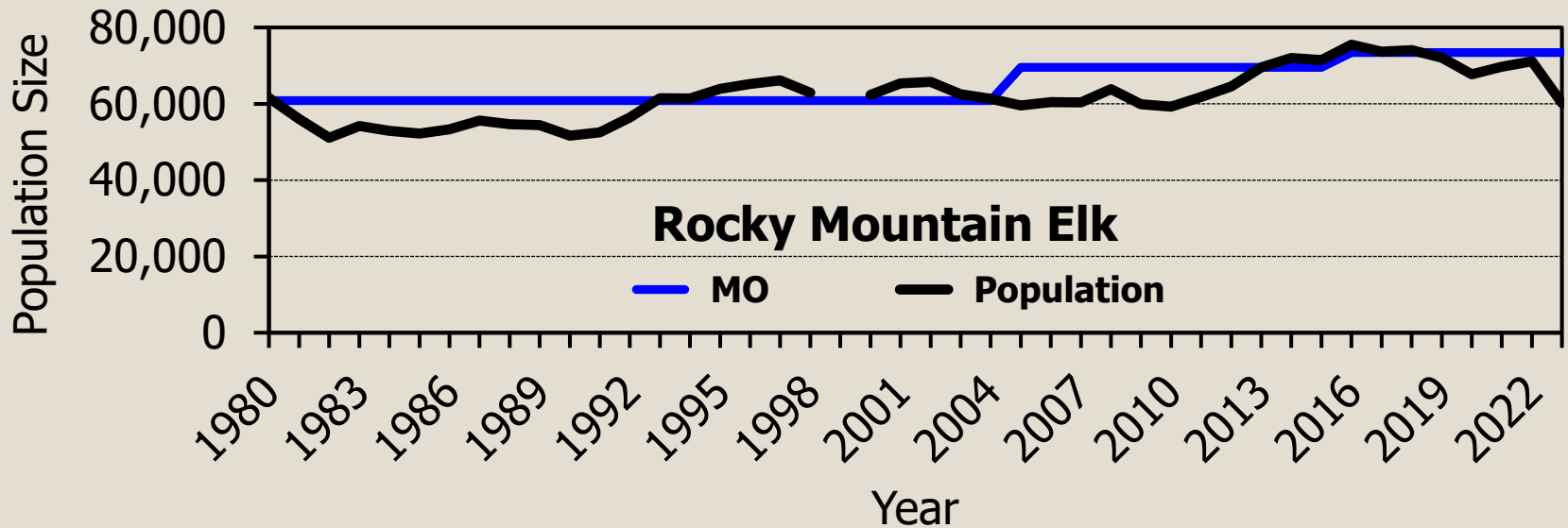
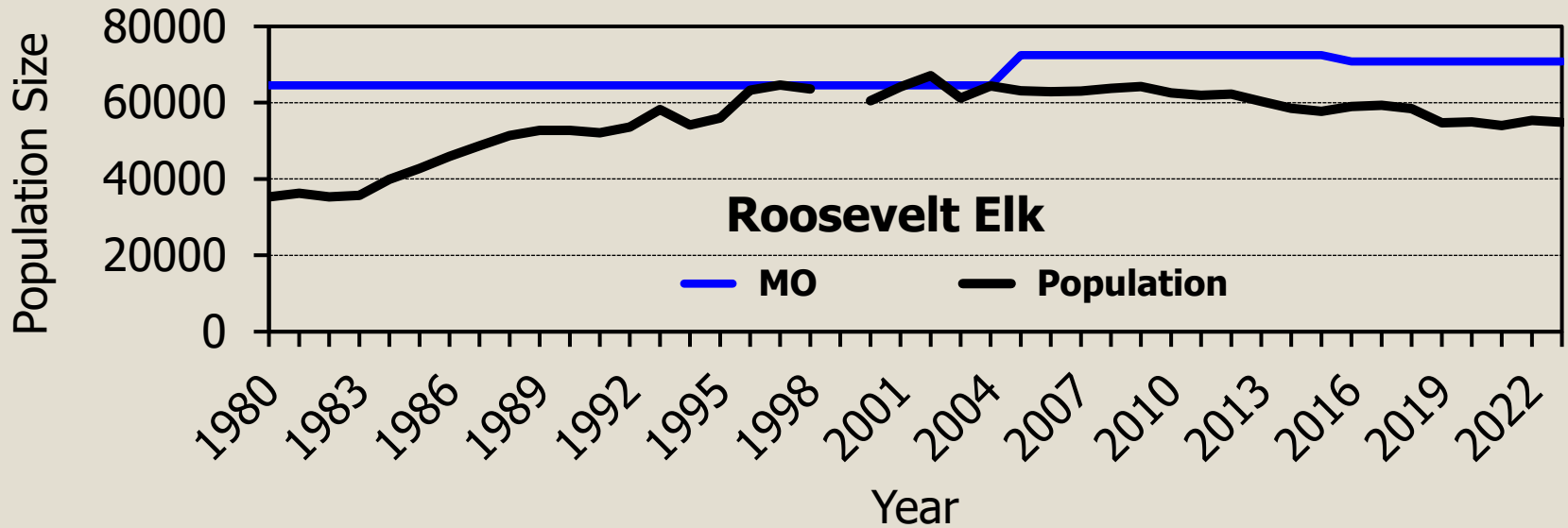
## Western Oregon Elk Survival and Herd Range Delineation

- Herd Movements
- Survival
- Seasonal Ranges
- Calf Production
- Resource Selection
- Nutrition

## Rocky Mountain Elk Herd Movements and Survival Monitoring

- Herd Movements
- Seasonal Ranges
- Survival

# Elk Population Status



# General Elk Season Proposals

<b>Season</b>	<b>2024 Season Dates</b>
Coast 1st Season	Nov. 16 - Nov. 19
Coast 2nd Season	Nov. 23 - Nov. 29
West Cascade	Nov. 9 - Nov. 15
Rocky Mtn. 2nd Season	Nov. 9 - Nov. 17
General Season Elk Damage Tag	Aug. 1 - Mar. 31; Aug. 1 - Nov. 30
General Bow	Aug. 31 - Sept. 29



# Controlled Elk Season Proposals

- Delete three antlerless hunts
- New muzzleloader bull hunt in Sixes
- New youth hunt in Interstate-Silver Lake

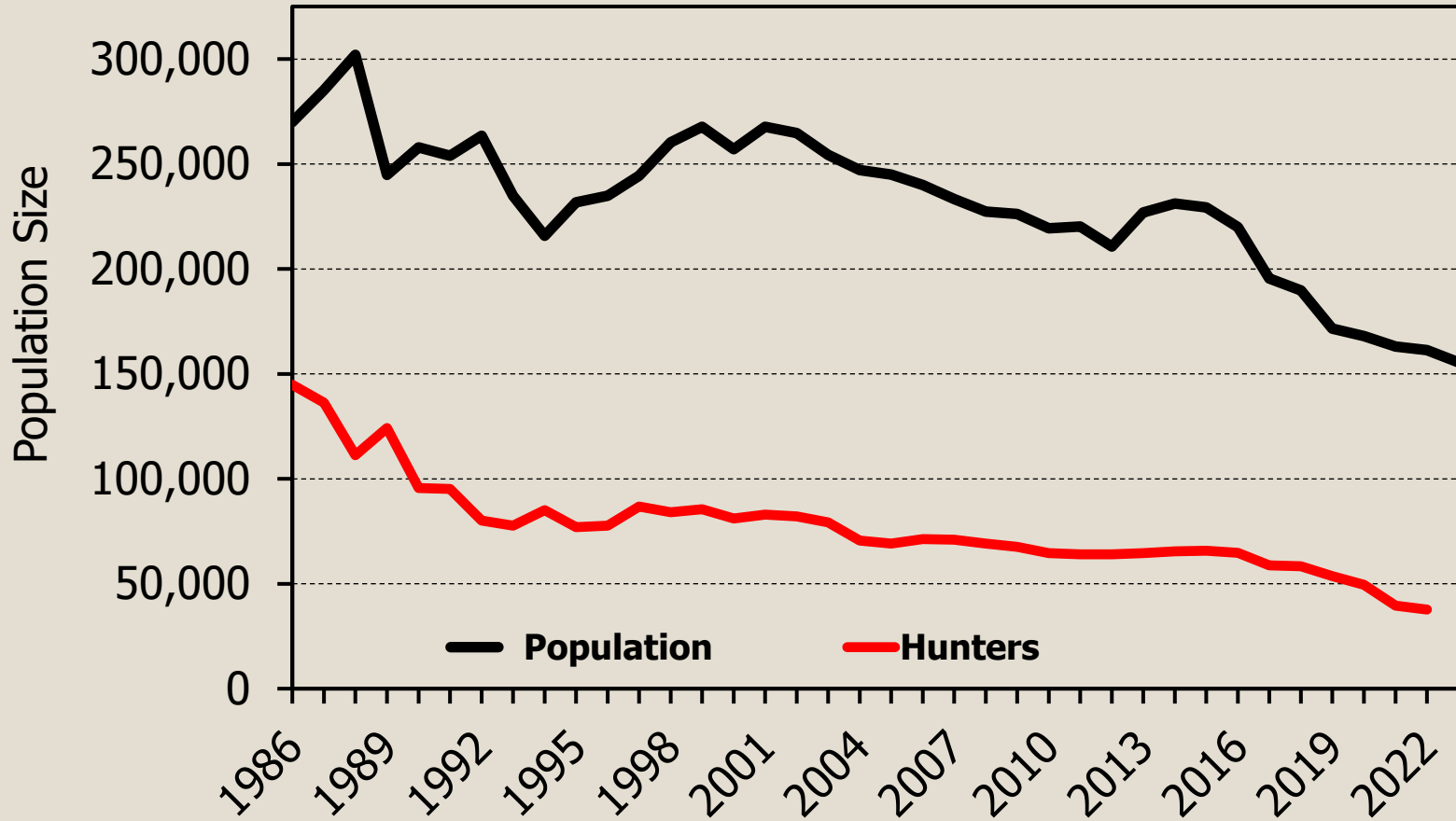
Hunt Type	2023 Tags	2024 Tags	% Change
Any Legal Weapon	46,051	45,860	<1%
Muzzleloader	2,250	2,294	2%
Bow	16,056	16,017	<1%
Youth	1,321	1,675	27%
Premium	64	64	<i>na</i>
<b>Total Elk</b>	<b>65,742</b>	<b>65,910</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>

# Mule Deer Management Plan Revision Process

- Internal scoping, early public input 2022
- Seven draft chapters released to date
- Three public webinars
- Full draft late fall 2023
- Tentative adoption early 2024



# Mule Deer Population and Hunters





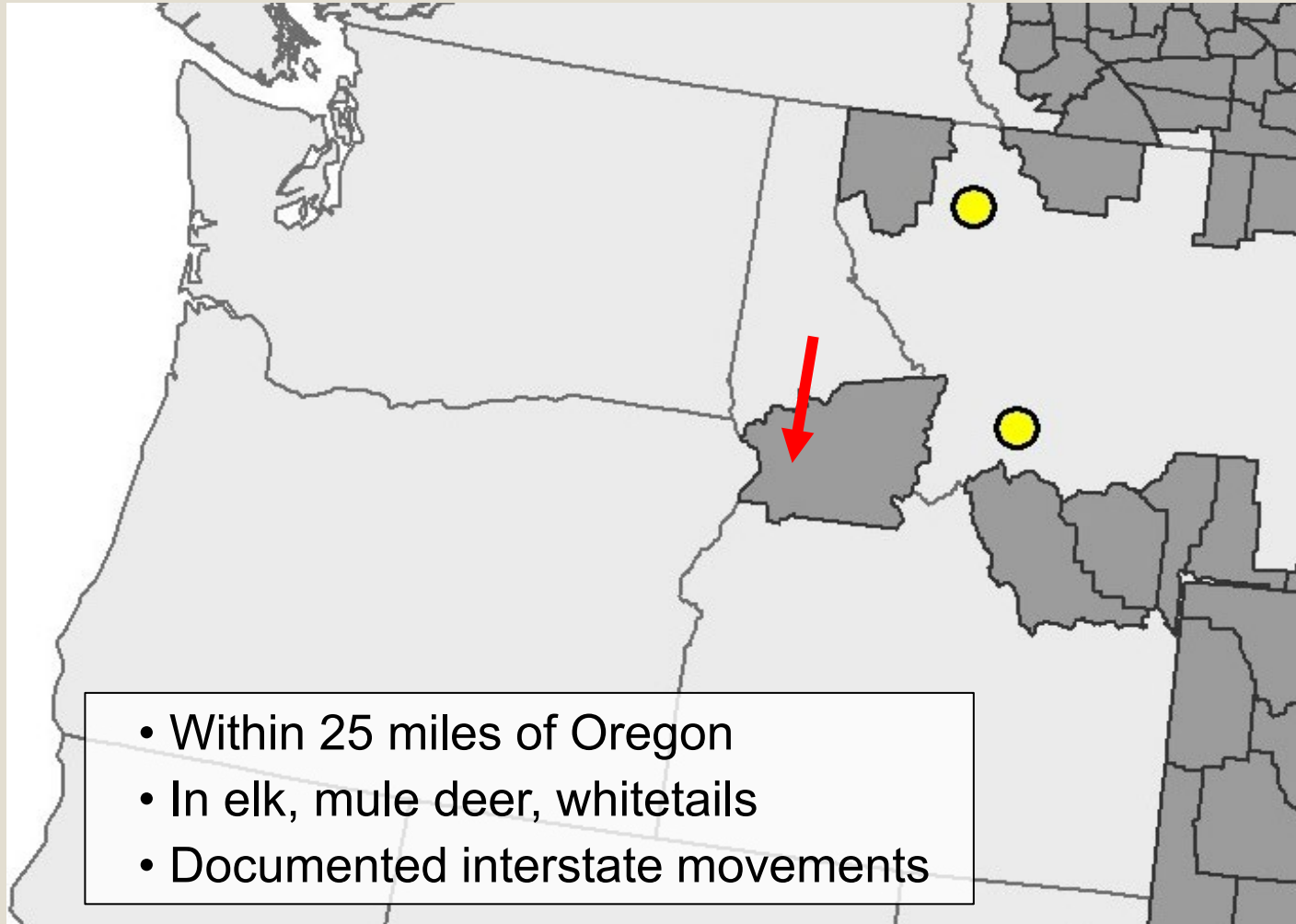
# General Deer Season Proposals

<b>Season</b>	<b>Bag Limit</b>	<b>2024 Season Dates</b>
Western General Deer	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Oct. 5 – Nov. 8
Western General Bow	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Aug. 31 – Sept. 29
NW Late Deer Bow	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Nov. 23 – Dec. 15
SW Late Deer Bow	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Nov. 16 – Dec. 8

# Controlled Deer Season & Tag Proposals

- Two-day earlier calendar shift for 2024
- One new late season white-tailed deer archery hunt in Grant County
- Five new youth hunts
- Slight (1.2%) decrease in 100 series Buck Deer and slight increase (0.4%) in 600 series Antlerless Deer

# Chronic Wasting Disease & Oregon's Deer and Elk



# 2022-2023 CWD Sampling



Species	2021 -2022	2022 -2023
Black-tailed Deer	340	939
Mule Deer	356	848
White-tailed Deer	15	47
Rocky Mtn Elk	298	782
Roosevelt Elk	90	320
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,099</b>	<b>2,936</b>

Source	2022 -2023
Check Station	573
Field/Office	757
Roadkill	674
Vendors	712
Other	220
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,936</b>



## **Staff Recommendation:**

Adopt the staff proposals in Attachment 3 and amend OAR Chapter 635, Divisions 045, 060, 065, 066, 067, 068, 069, 070, 071, 072, 073, 075, and 90 as proposed by staff.