

STATEMENT OF REASONS

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL HUNTING REGULATIONS

W. S. § 23-1-302 directs and empowers the Commission to fix seasons and bag limits, open, shorten or close seasons on any species or sex of wildlife except predatory animals, predacious birds, protected animals and protected birds, to adopt rules regulating, limiting or prohibiting the use of hunting technologies as specified and to promulgate such orders as the Commission considers necessary to carry out the intent of this act.

W. S. § 23-3-306 authorizes the Commission to establish rules and regulations for the taking of predatory animals on public or state land with the use of artificial light or lighting devices including thermal or infrared imaging or other light imaging.

The Commission proposes to amend the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Regulation Chapter 2, General Hunting Regulation to address taking of predatory animals on public or state land with artificial light or lighting devices.

Section 2, Definitions. The definition of aircraft is being removed from this regulation since it is now defined in W. S. § 23-3-306. The definition of State Trust Land is being modified to also include the term State Land for clarity.

Section 21 is added to address hunting predatory animals with artificial light or lighting devices, thermal or infrared imaging or other light imaging at night on public or state lands. Subsection (a) references the enabling legislation; subsection (b) addresses safety issues by requiring a predator hunter to use an activated infrared strobe beacon when hunting at night; and subsection (c) states that hunters cannot use artificial light, thermal or infrared imaging or other light imaging to hunt predatory animals on public or state land during regular hunting seasons; September 1 through December 31. Closing the opportunity to hunt predators with artificial light provides additional safety to public land users.

Minor grammatical and formatting edits have also been incorporated in the above regulation that do not change the intent of the regulations.

The Commission met on September 13, 2023, to review Chapter 2, General Hunting Regulations, and voted to table this chapter until its next scheduled meeting in November, 2023. No final action was taken regarding Chapter 2 in September, 2023. The formal public comment period has been closed for Chapter 2, although the Commission will accept additional public comment at their November, 2023 meeting. The Commission did take final action on two other rules at their September 13, 2023 meeting. Those two rules are Chapter 28, Regulation Governing Big or Trophy Game Animal or Game Bird or Gray Wolf Damage Claims; and Chapter 42, Mountain Lion Hunting Seasons. Chapter 2 will be forthcoming in a new rule packet once the Commission takes a final action on it.