

## **STATEMENT OF REASONS**

### **CHAPTER 6**

#### **DEER HUNTING SEASONS**

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.

The Department proposes to amend Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Regulation Chapter 6, Deer Hunting Seasons to establish annual hunting seasons, limitations and bag limits for the 2024 hunting season. The Department sets hunting seasons annually based on public input, annual harvest data, population monitoring data, individual herd unit objectives and ongoing habitat evaluations.

At the time of this filing, the 2023 deer harvest information is not yet available to the Department. Individual hunt area regular hunting season dates, special archery hunting season dates, hunt area limitations, license types and license quotas may be modified after harvest data has been evaluated. Any additional proposed changes to regular hunting season dates, special archery hunting season dates, hunt area limitations, license types, numbers of limited quota licenses, antler point restrictions, hunt area boundaries or modifications to other hunting provisions shall be made available for public comment on the Department website. An updated draft of the 2024, Chapter 6 Deer Hunting Seasons proposals will be discussed at all in-person public meetings and will be posted on the Department website in March for additional public comment.

Mule deer and white-tailed deer seasons may be separated in certain hunt areas to address management objectives for each species. Antler point restrictions may be added or removed from specific deer hunt areas to meet population objectives. Language in Section 5, Youth Deer Hunters, has been modified for additional clarity. The proposed regulation will permit youth hunters who possess a full price deer license to take any antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer during an antlered mule deer season or any deer season containing a mule deer antler point restriction. This regulation allows additional opportunity for youth deer hunters.

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