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Significant Changes to 2016 Hunting Regulations and Statutes For Big Game, Small Game, Game Bird, Trophy Game and Wild Bison Hunting Seasons

The following is a summary of significant changes to hunting regulations and statutes for the 2016 hunting seasons for big game, small game, game birds, trophy game and wild bison. Minor/annual changes (i.e. license quotas, season dates, hunt area boundary changes, limitations, doe/fawn license issuance, etc.) are not all addressed in this document.

Please refer to the 2016 individual species hunting regulations for exact regulations including season dates and limitations. For questions about particular hunting seasons or if you need additional information, please contact any Wyoming Game and Fish Department Office or visit the Department website at <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>.

2016 Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Regulation Changes

General Hunting Regulation

- Rules governing the use of aircraft (including drones) to spot or locate wildlife were amended to read “No person shall use any aircraft with the intent to spot, locate and aid in the taking of any game animal from August 1 through January 31 of the following calendar year. Nothing in this Section shall apply to the operation of an aircraft in a usual manner where there is no attempt or intent to locate any game animal, such as aircraft used for the sole purpose of passenger transport.”
- Changes were made to the number of elk licenses a person may apply for and receive. New regulatory language reads; “for elk, no person shall apply for and receive more than one (1) full price (General, Type 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 9) and one (1) reduced price (Type 6, 7 or 8) license through the initial drawing. After the initial drawing, a person may apply for and receive up to a total of three (3) elk licenses, of which no more than one (1) shall be a General, Type 0, 1, 2, 3 or 9 license. However, no person shall apply for and receive more than a total of three (3) elk licenses which shall include not more than one (1) General, Type 0, 1, 2, 3 or 9 license in a single hunting season.”

Firearm Cartridges and Archery Equipment

- *Removed* the regulatory provision that allowed a “cartridge that generally delivers at least five hundred (500) foot pounds of impact at one hundred (100) yards” for hunting any big or trophy game species.

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- Changed the regulation regarding legal calibers for taking wild turkey to “any shotgun, center-fire firearm or .17 HMR or larger rimfire firearm with an overall cartridge length greater than one (1) inch.”
- Changed the regulation governing the size of broadheads used for hunting big and trophy game animals. The regulation now requires a “broadhead that when fully expanded cannot pass through a seven-eighths (7/8) inch solid ring”. This change makes multiple blade broadheads simpler to measure and more consistent with surrounding state regulations.

Antelope Hunting Seasons

- Changes to season dates, limitations and hunt area boundaries for some hunt areas.

Deer Hunting Seasons

- Changes to season dates, limitations and hunt area boundaries for some hunt areas.
- Deer Hunt Area 20 was combined into Deer Hunt Area 19.
- Deer Hunt Area 36 has changed from general license hunting to limited quota license hunting.
- The boundary between Deer Hunt Area 17 and Deer Hunt Area 18 was significantly changed.
- New boundary descriptions for Deer Hunt Areas 17, 18 and 19.
- Archers with a general deer license can no longer take “any deer” in areas open to hunting with a general license during the special archery season, and shall only take the sex and species of deer set forth in the limitations section of the deer hunting regulation.

Elk Hunting Seasons

- Changes to season dates, limitations and hunt area boundaries for some hunt areas.

Moose Hunting Seasons

- Changes to quotas and limitations for some hunt areas.
- Moose Hunt Area 44 is open for the 2016 hunting season with the license also being valid in Moose Hunt Area 35.
- New boundary descriptions for Moose Hunt Areas 1, 10, 22 and 42.

Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goat Hunting Seasons

- Changes to quotas and limitations for some hunt areas.
- Bighorn Sheep Hunt Areas 18, 21, 24 and 26 are open for the 2016 hunting season.
- Added Mountain Goat Hunt Area 3 Type 2 licenses for the 2016 hunting season.

Upland Game Bird and Small Game Hunting Seasons

- Changes to season dates for sage grouse and pheasant hunting seasons.
- A youth only pheasant hunt day (November 19, 2016) has been designated for the Bud Love Wildlife Habitat Management Area.

Wild Bison Recreational Hunting Season

- Hunting season structures allow for alternate permits to be issued on a first-come first-served basis for hunting wild bison on the National Elk Refuge from January 11 through January 31 (season closure) or until forage/weather conditions dictate that supplemental feeding is necessary.
- Added new Wild Bison Hunt Area 3, which will be closed during the 2016 hunting season.

2016 Fall and 2017 Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Seasons

- Changes to season dates and limitations in some hunt areas.

2016-2017 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons and Light Goose Conservation Order

- Early Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons, Late Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons and the Light Goose Conservation Order have been combined into one single regulation and a single hunting season brochure. An Emergency Regulation is no longer necessary in order to set late migratory game bird hunting seasons.
- Changes to season dates and quotas for Limited Quota Sandhill Crane seasons.
- Changes to season dates for Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons.
- Changes to season dates for the Light Goose Conservation Order.

2016 Wyoming Statute Changes

Complimentary Licenses

W.S. § 23-1-705 – Complimentary licenses; one-shot antelope hunt licenses; gunpowder and buckskin hunt licenses; donated licenses.

A statutory change allows the Department to issue, without charge, lifetime bird, small game and fish licenses to any resident United States Military Purple Heart Medal recipient, provided the licensee remains a Wyoming resident.

This statute becomes effective January 1, 2017.