

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 2025 deer hunting season. The Department sets deer hunting seasons annually based on public input, annual harvest data, population monitoring data, individual herd unit objectives and ongoing habitat evaluations. The entire Chapter 6, Deer Hunting Seasons regulation is open for public comment and may be modified through this rule making process.

At the time of this filing, the 2024 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 and license quotas may be adjusted after harvest data has been evaluated. Individual license types may be added, removed or modified for existing hunt areas. 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.

The Department begins this rule making process by posting the final 2024 Chapter 6, Deer Hunting Seasons regulation for public comment. 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 2025 Chapter 6, Deer Hunting Seasons regulation proposal will be available at all in-person public meetings and through online Department presentations. All proposed changes to this regulation will be posted on the Department website in March for additional public comment.

In addition, wildlife managers are intending to modify deer Hunt Area 157, Boysen, from a limited quota to a general license structure beginning with the 2025 hunting season. This is due to an extremely high Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) prevalence within the hunt area. This change is intended to liberalize deer harvest in an attempt to curtail the spread of CWD. A general licensing structure for this hunt area also allows resident and nonresident hunters flexibility to either hunt in this area or utilize their license in another general license hunt area.