

## **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 2026 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.

Wildlife managers are intending to modify mule deer management areas in northwest Wyoming, which will lead to boundary changes in some hunt areas and nonresident regions. These proposed changes are based on substantial GPS collar data and expertise from regional managers. The proposal eliminates Deer Hunt Area 146 and incorporates parts of it into Hunt Areas 155 and 156. Additionally, it redraws the shared boundary between Hunt Areas 138 and 143. Changes are also proposed to the deer hunt areas included in nonresident regions F, H and L.

For improved clarity, the Department is proposing to change the type designation of licenses in some deer hunt areas. These proposed changes will make these hunt areas consistent with other hunt areas throughout the state in terms of license types and their associated limitations.

At the time of this filing, the 2025 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.

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 2026 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.