

## **STATEMENT OF REASONS**

### **CHAPTER 7**

#### **ELK 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 7, Elk Hunting Seasons to establish annual hunting seasons, limitations and bag limits for the 2026 elk hunting season. The Department sets elk hunting seasons annually based on public input, annual harvest data, population monitoring data, individual herd unit objectives and ongoing habitat evaluations. The entire Chapter 7, Elk Hunting Seasons regulation is open for public comment and may be modified through this rule making process.

For improved clarity, the Department is proposing to change the type designation of licenses in some elk 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 elk 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.

Any additional proposed changes to regular hunting season dates, special archery hunting season dates, hunt area limitations, license types, numbers of limited quota licenses, 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 7, Elk 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.