

STATEMENT OF REASONS

CHAPTER 9

BIGHORN SHEEP AND MOUNTAIN GOAT 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 9, Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goat Hunting Seasons to establish annual hunting seasons, limitations and bag limits for the 2026 bighorn sheep and mountain goat hunting seasons. The Department sets bighorn sheep and mountain goat hunting seasons annually based on public input, annual harvest data, population monitoring data, individual herd unit objectives and ongoing habitat evaluations. The entire Chapter 9, Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goat Hunting Seasons regulation is open for public comment and may be modified through this rule making process.

Wildlife managers propose adding a Type 2 license in Hunt Area 26 to increase harvest pressure on younger ram bighorn sheep that may be prone wandering out of the herd unit.

At the time of this filing, the 2025 bighorn sheep and mountain goat 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, numbers of limited quota licenses, license types, 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 9, Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goat Hunting Seasons regulation proposal shall be available at all in-person public meetings and through online Department presentations. All edits to this regulation shall be posted on the Department website in March for additional public comment.