

## **STATEMENT OF REASONS**

### **CHAPTER 11**

#### **UPLAND GAME BIRD AND SMALL GAME 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 11, Upland Game Bird and Small Game Hunting Seasons to establish annual hunting seasons, limitations and bag limits for the 2026 upland game bird and small game hunting seasons. The Department sets upland game bird and small game hunting seasons annually based on public input, annual harvest data, population monitoring data and ongoing habitat evaluations. The entire Chapter 11, Upland Game Bird and Small Game Hunting Seasons regulation is open for public comment and may be modified through this rule making process.

Wildlife managers are intending to modify the boundaries of sage grouse hunt areas (Hunt Areas 1 and 4) to better align with sage grouse management areas. These changes will help alleviate confusion on the sage grouse hunter harvest survey and collect more relevant data for management purposes.

At the time of this filing, the 2025 upland game bird and small game harvest information is not yet available to the Department. Hunting season dates, bag limits and hunt area limitations may be modified after harvest data has been evaluated.

Any additional proposed changes to hunting provisions provided in this Chapter shall be made available for public comment on the Department website. An updated draft of the 2026 Chapter 11, Upland Game Bird and Small Game Hunting Seasons regulation proposal shall be discussed at all public meetings and through online Department presentations. All proposed edits to this regulation shall also be posted on the Department website in March for additional public comment.