

STATE GAME COMMISSION MEETING AND RULE MAKING NOTICE

The New Mexico State Game Commission (“Commission”) will be hosting a meeting and rule hearings on Friday October 14, 2022 beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the Farm and Ranch Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Rd, Las Cruces, NM 88011. The purpose of this meeting is to hear and consider action as appropriate on the presentation of proposed changes to the following five rules: Turkey, Deer, Elk, Manner and Method of Taking, and Licensing and Application.

Synopsis:

The proposal is to amend the following rules: 1) Turkey Rule 19.31.16 NMAC, which will become effective April 1, 2023. The most recent version of the rule will expire on March 31, 2023; 2) Deer Rule 19.31.13 NMAC, which will become effective April 1, 2023. The most recent version of the rule will expire on March 31, 2023; 3) Elk Rule, 19.31.14 NMAC, which will become effective April 1, 2023. The most recent version of the rule will expire on March 31, 2023; 4) Manner and Method of Taking 19.31.10 NMAC, which will become effective on April 1, 2023. This rule does not expire; and 5) Licensing and Application 19.31.3 NMAC, which will become effective April 1, 2023. This rule does not expire.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TURKEY RULE: 1) Extend the spring season, including Entry Permit hunts, to close on May 15; 2) Adjust hunt dates by calendar date; 3) Evaluate the potential to open certain closed GMUs based on turkey population status; 4) Add a once-in-a-lifetime Entry Permit hunt for Gould’s Turkey in GMU 26 and 27 with up to 5 permits. The hunt will occur from May 1 - 30 to reduce potential impacts of hunting on breeding activity and to accommodate later breeding activity of Gould’s turkeys compared to other NM turkey subspecies; 5) Remove W.S. Huey WMA youth hunt due to low turkey numbers; 6) Define dates and permit numbers for the Washington Ranch Youth Hunt and add BLM Black River Management Area to the hunt area; 7) Add the LBar acquisition to the Marquez WMA entry hunt; 8) Prohibit shooting turkeys on the roost.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE DEER RULE:

General Statewide Proposed Changes: 1) Modify the definition of a muzzle-loader only hunts to include only those muzzle-loading firearms that do not have a scope (for all big game species); 2) Adjust season dates to account for calendar shift. For example, if a hunt normally starts on a Saturday, this date shift would be maintained throughout the rule so the hunts continue to start on a Saturday; 3) Adjust some hunts to minimize overlap of weapons used or species hunted; 4) Adjust draw license numbers based on biological data and management goals: a) Reductions in GMUs: 2B, 12, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 37, 38, 39, and 55; b) Slight increases in GMUs: 5B, 6A/6C, 7, 8, 9, 14, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 53, 56, 58, 59.

Specific Proposed Changes: 5) Create an October youth hunt in GMUs 2A and 2B; move most of the youth licenses from November into October: a) GMU 2A: 25 licenses in October, 15 licenses in November; b) GMU 2B: 125 licenses in October, 25 licenses in November 6) Create a November rifle hunt on L Bar/Marquez WMA in GMU 9 (10 licenses); 7) Designate GMU 8 as a Quality Unit; 8) Add a second hunt code for White Sands Missile Range (Rhodes Canyon and Stallion Range hunts; 5 licenses each); 9) Create new hunts where deer populations have increased: a) January FAD archery hunts in GMUs 7 and 9 (15 licenses each); b) December FAWTD rifle hunts in GMUs 21 and 26 (25 licenses each); c) September FAMD and FAWTD archery hunts in GMU 27 (30 FAMD and 15 FAWTD licenses); d) November ESWTD hunt in GMU 55A, 55B (private land, unlimited licenses); 10) Open River Ranch, Double E, and Pipkin Ranch WMAs to deer hunting for those with valid licenses for the GMU; 11) Remove language “Excluding Fort Stanton” for the GMU 36 deer hunts; 12) Reduce youth licenses on Huey WMA in GMU 33 from 2 hunts of 10 licenses each to 2 hunts of 5 licenses each.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ELK RULE:

General Statewide proposed changes: 1) Modify the definition of a muzzle-loader only hunt to include those muzzle-loading firearms that do not have a scope (for all big game species); 2) Adjust season dates to account for calendar shift. For example, if a hunt normally starts on a Saturday, this date shift would be maintained throughout the rule so the hunts continue to start on a Saturday; 3) Adjust some hunts to minimize overlap of weapons used or species hunted; 4) Adjust draw license numbers based on biological data and management goals: a) Reductions in

GMUs: 9, 16A, 16B/22, 16C, 16E, 19, 50, 53, 54 (Colin Neblett), & 55A (Valle Vidal); b) Slight increases in GMUs: 2, 4, 6B, 13, 23, 30, 34, 36, 42/47/59, 51, & 57/58.

Specific Proposed changes: 5) Increase antlerless elk licenses in GMU 2 to address expanding elk population; 6) Increase antlerless elk licenses on the Rio Chama WMA to address a more resident elk population; 7) Increase antlerless elk licenses in GMU 6B in the Valles Caldera and eliminate the mobility impaired hunt because it has not been drawn in the last 4 years and will not be in the next 4 years; 8) Increase elk licenses on Marquez WMA and combine the hunt with the newly acquired LBar property: a) Acquisition of the LBar by NMDGF shifts public ownership from 65% to 69% of Primary Management Zone within GMU 9; 9) Decrease elk licenses overall in GMU 9; 10) Shift late season antlerless elk hunt in GMU 10 to begin earlier in December; 11) Expand Primary Management Zone boundary in GMU 13 to reflect elk use: a) This expansion would shift public land ownership proportion from 58% to 63%; public license numbers will increase slightly to reflect this change; 12) Expand Primary Management Zone boundary in GMU 17, to reflect elk use; a) This expansion would shift public land ownership proportion from 86% to 83%; however, public license numbers will remain unchanged; 13) Decrease some mid and late-October mature bull rifle hunts in GMUs 16A, 16B/22, 16C, and 16E; 14) Eliminate the elk hunt of 3 licenses in GMU 19 (White Sands Missile Range); 15) Create a new antlerless elk hunt in GMU 23 south of NM highway 7; 16) Shift a hunt to later dates in GMU 24; 17) Increase licenses in GMU 30 and open GMU 29 to be hunted in conjunction; 18) Create two new antlerless elk hunts in GMU 34 to occur in late January and early February, and increase Youth Encouragement licenses; 19) Create a new antlerless elk hunt in GMU 36 in late January and increase Youth Encouragement licenses. Additionally, change all MB bag limits to ES; 20) Increase licenses in the combined elk hunts in GMUs 42/47/59 to address an increase in public land access; 21) Include GMU 39 with GMU 43 in a draw hunt - this would not increase licenses; 22) Shift the zone designation in GMU 46 from Special Management Zone to Secondary Management Zone; 23) Shift 25 archery licenses in GMU 48 into the muzzleloader and rifle hunts; 24) Re-distribute the Youth Encouragement licenses in GMU 50 to GMU 51; 25) Eliminate the antlerless hunt north of Sunshine Valley Road in GMU 53; 26) Decrease licenses on Colin Neblett WMA; 27) Decrease licenses on Valle Vidal; 28) Establish an archery hunt in the combined GMU 57/58 area; 29) Re-define "Encouragement Hunts" to be available to resident youth who did not draw a big game hunt in the draw for the first 14-days of availability, then offer to any youth after the first 14-days. This recommendation would remove the ability for seniors to purchase encouragement hunt licenses.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE MANNER AND METHOD RULE: Several changes will be made to conform with changes to other NMAC Rules, or to codify changes that were agreed upon during those rule development processes. The changes are: 1) Change the requirement that female ibex with horns that are 15 inches or longer retain the external genitalia naturally attached to the hide or carcass and be visible until arriving at a residence, taxidermist, meat processing facility or place of final storage, to female ibex with horns 20 inches or longer; 2) Include a requirement that female Barbary sheep with horns 18 inches or longer retain the external genitalia naturally attached to the hide or carcass and be visible until arriving at a residence, taxidermist, meat processing facility or place of final storage; 3) Change the definition of muzzle loader hunts to preclude the use of scopes; 4) Prohibit shooting turkeys from a roost.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LICENSING AND APPLICATION RULE: Change the requirement for proving veteran status prior to applying for the new veteran-only oryx draw hunt.

A full text of changes for all rules will be available on the Department's website at: www.wildlife.state.nm.us.

Interested persons may submit comments on the proposed changes to the rules as follows: 1) Turkey Rule at DGF-Gamebird@state.nm.us; 2) Deer Rule at DGF-Deer-Rule@state.nm.us; 3) Elk Rule at DGF-Elk-Rule@state.nm.us; 4) Manner and Method of Taking Rule and 5) Licensing and Application Rule at Elise.Goldstein@state.nm.us. Individuals may also submit written comments to the physical address below. Comments are due by 8:00 a.m. on October 13, 2022. The final proposed rules will be voted on by the Commission during a public meeting on October 14, 2022. Interested persons may also provide data, views or arguments, orally or in writing, at the public rule hearings to be held on October 14, 2022.

Full copies of text of the proposed new rules, technical information related to proposed rule changes, and the agenda can be obtained from the Office of the Director, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, 1 Wildlife Way, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507, or from the Department's website at www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/proposals-under-consideration/. This agenda is subject to change up to 72 hours prior to the meeting. Please contact the

Director's Office at (505) 476-8000, or the Department's website at www.wildlife.state.nm.us for updated information.

If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in the hearing or meeting, please contact the Department at (505) 476-8000 at least one week prior to the meeting or as soon as possible. Public documents, including the agenda and minutes, can be provided in various accessible formats. Please contact the Department at 505-476-8000 if a summary or other type of accessible format is needed.

Legal authority for this rulemaking can be found in the General Powers and Duties of the State Game Commission Sections 17-1-14, et seq. NMSA 1978; Commission's Power to establish rules and regulations Sections 17-1-26, et seq. NMSA 1978.