



State of Utah

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MEMORANDUM

Date: March 18, 2021

To: Utah Wildlife Board / Regional Advisory Council Members

From: Covy Jones, Big Game Coordinator

Subject: Overview of 2021 big game and antlerless permit recommendations

The attached tables summarize the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' recommended permit allocations for the 2021 antlerless hunts. We've made these recommendations after evaluating 2020 harvest information and conducting post-hunt assessments of herd composition.

The number of permits we're proposing for 2021 will help us achieve or maintain the objectives detailed in Utah's big game management plans for harvest size, animal quality and hunting opportunity. For specific information about how individual big game species are managed, please refer to <https://wildlife.utah.gov/> and use the search field to find the statewide management plan for the species of interest.

Below is a summary of the **2021 antlerless hunt recommendations**:

- 1) In 2020, the statewide deer population decreased (by approximately 4,300 animals) to a total of 314,850 deer. This decrease was primarily due to drought conditions in spring, summer, and fall of 2020. Populations in portions of the southern, northeastern, and northern parts of the state showed the most loss.
- 2) For 2021, we recommend reducing 240 antlerless deer permits — decreasing from 1,175 permits to 935 permits — and adding two new hunts to address depredation and urban deer issues in Price and Oak City. Antlerless deer hunts are designed to reduce depredation on private lands, tackle urban deer issues, address CWD hotspots, and help slow the decline of range conditions.
- 3) Statewide, elk populations increased slightly in 2020. Antlerless permits are needed to keep elk populations within their management objectives. The statewide elk population objective is 78,990 elk, and the current statewide estimate is 80,320 elk. We recommend 8,285 antlerless elk permits for the public drawing in 2021, as compared to 8,060 permits in 2020 — an increase of 225 permits.
- 4) For the 2021 public drawing, we recommend adding 10 antlerless elk hunts.



We recommend antlerless elk-control permits on the following seven units:

- Henry Mtns
- Chalk Creek
- Morgan-South Rich
- West Desert, Vernon
- West Desert, Tintic
- East Canyon
- Pine Valley

- 5) We recommend 8,810 private-lands-only permits on 25 units throughout the state to increase harvest and hunting pressure on private lands. We recommend season dates from Aug. 1, 2020–Jan. 31, 2021. Hunters may use any legal weapon during these hunts. Private-lands-only hunts have minimized depredation challenges in many parts of the state.

Hunt units include:

- Box Elder, East
- Beaver, East
- Cache
- Central Mtns, Manti
- Central Mtns, Nebo
- Chalk Creek
- East Canyon
- Fillmore, Oak Creek LE
- La Sal
- Morgan-South Rich
- Mt Dutton
- Nine Mile, Anthro
- North Slope, West Daggett
- Ogden
- Panguitch Lake
- Paunsaugunt
- San Juan
- San Rafael
- South Slope, Diamond Mtn/Bonanza Vernal
- South Slope, Yellowstone
- Wasatch Mtns, Avintaquin
- Wasatch Mtns, Currant Creek
- Wasatch Mtns, West
- West Desert, Tintic Valley
- Zion

- 6) We recommend eliminating 121 doe pronghorn permits, decreasing from 525 permits to 404 permits. We also recommend adding a new hunt on the Nine Mile, Anthro-Pleasant Valley unit.
- 7) We recommend eliminating 16 antlerless moose permits, decreasing from 31 permits to 15 permits.
- 8) We recommend continuing the Rocky Mountain ewe bighorn sheep hunt on the Box Elder, Newfoundland Mtns unit, with a total of 10 permits.

