



State of Utah

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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 21, 2022

To: Wildlife Board and Regional Advisory Council Members

From: Dax Mangus, Big Game Program Coordinator

Subject: 2023-2024 deer, elk and pronghorn proposed season dates

The attached documents summarize the DWR's recommended changes to the *Utah Big Game Application Guidebook*. This year, we are making recommendations for two hunting seasons: 2023 and 2024. If needed, changes to the 2024 big game seasons may be brought before the Utah Wildlife Board in the fall of 2023.

Deer, elk and pronghorn season dates for 2023-2024:

See attached tables for details.

Big game guidebook recommendations by species:

Deer

1. General-season hunts:
 - a. Currently, we hunt buck deer on the combined Chalk Creek/East Canyon/Morgan-South Rich hunting unit and manage their deer populations at the individual unit level. We recommend a change in how we hunt these units, moving to individual-unit hunting, starting in 2023. This will create three separate general-season buck deer hunting units (i.e., Chalk Creek, East Canyon and Morgan-South Rich). This change will allow us to manage the populations **and** conduct buck hunting on these units at the same scale. This will also allow for more precision in addressing emerging CWD concerns on the East Canyon unit.
 - b. We recommend discontinuing the Pine Valley, New Harmony and the Southwest Desert, Cedar Valley extended archery deer hunts. Hunter access has become an issue in these areas. We propose working directly with landowners to resolve localized depredation issues.



2. Limited-entry hunts
 - a. We are recommending limited-entry muzzleloader hunts — running Nov. 1-9, 2023 — on the Chalk Creek unit, the East Canyon unit and the Morgan-South Rich unit. (See above 1a. for rationale.)
 - b. We recommend discontinuing the HAMS hunt on the Morgan-South Rich unit.
 - c. We recommend a new HAMS buck deer hunt — running Nov. 11-30, 2023 — on the East Canyon unit. This hunt will take the place of the HAMS hunt that was on the Morgan-South Rich unit and will allow for a unique opportunity and additional buck harvest on a CWD-positive unit.

Pronghorn

1. Recommended changes:
 - a. We recommend discontinuing the Cache/Morgan-South Rich pronghorn hunts and replacing them with the Cache/Rich hunt boundary that includes the areas where pronghorn are located on accessible lands.
 - b. We recommend eliminating the Plateau, Highlands pronghorn hunts and expanding the boundary to include all of Parker Mountain. This will reflect pronghorn distribution changes in the area.
 - c. We recommend discontinuing the San Juan, Hatch Point archery pronghorn hunt because the pronghorn population in this area has substantially declined. All buck pronghorn permits for this unit would be offered as any legal weapon permits under this recommendation.

Elk

The new statewide elk plan calls for creating many new hunts and substantial changes to how we hunt elk in Utah.

1. General-season hunt dates:

We recommend having two separate 7-day any legal weapon any bull hunts. The first hunt would run from Oct. 7-13, 2023, and the second hunt would run from Oct. 14-20, 2023. In 2024, the dates will be Oct. 5-11 and Oct. 12-18, 2024.
2. General-season archery elk hunts:
 - a. We recommend that general-season archery elk permits be changed from “hunter’s choice” to “bull only.” This is part of a strategy in the new statewide elk plan to help the DWR be more precise in management and harvest.
 - b. We will also recommend a general-season archery antlerless elk hunt in the spring of 2023. The intent of this recommendation is to address point creep for antlerless elk and to provide a new opportunity for archery elk hunters that will help increase the harvest of antlerless elk.
3. Limited-entry hunts:
 - a. As part of the effort in the new elk plan to increase challenge and hunter opportunity for limited-entry elk hunters, we are recommending adding a mid-season (Oct. 7-19, 2023 and Oct. 5-17, 2024) any legal weapon hunt on the



following units that didn't previously have a mid-season hunt. This hunt overlaps the general-season spike-only hunt and the early rifle deer season on some units. It is intended to be a challenging season for elk hunters.

New mid-season limited-entry hunts (Oct. 7-19, 2023 and Oct. 5-17, 2024)

Beaver, East	Central Mtns, Nebo/San Pitch Mtns	Panguitch Lake
Book Cliffs, Bitter Creek/East	Fillmore, Pahvant	Plateau, Boulder
Book Cliffs, Little Creek Roadless	La Sal, La Sal Mtns	San Juan Bull Elk
Cache, Meadowville	Monroe	Southwest Desert, South
Cache, South	Mt Dutton	

- b. In addition, the DWR is recommending a late-season (Dec. 2-17, 2023 and Nov. 30-Dec. 15, 2024) limited-entry archery elk hunt on most of our existing limited-entry elk units. This hunt will be extremely challenging and allow a small number of bold archers to try their luck during a difficult time of year.

New late-season archery limited-entry elk hunts (Dec. 2-17, 2023 and Nov. 30-Dec. 15, 2024)

Beaver, East	Fillmore, Pahvant	Plateau, Fishlake/Thousand Lakes
Book Cliffs, Bitter Creek/East	La Sal, La Sal Mtns	San Juan Bull Elk
Cache, Meadowville	Monroe	South Slope, Diamond Mtn
Cache, South	Mt Dutton	Southwest Desert, South
Central Mtns, Manti	Panguitch Lake	Wasatch Mtns
Central Mtns, Nebo/San Pitch Mtns	Plateau, Boulder	

- c. We also recommend a late-season (Nov. 11-19, 2023 and Nov. 9-17, 2024) any legal weapon hunt on Diamond Mountain.
 - d. We recommend an adjustment to the dates for the Limited Entry HAMS elk hunts to run Nov. 11-30, 2023 and Nov. 9-30, 2024.
4. Boundary modifications/new hunts
- a. We recommend the creation of the Book Cliffs, Bitter Creek/East limited-entry elk unit and the Central Mtns, Nebo/San Pitch Mtns limited-entry elk unit to reflect boundary changes, as portions of the previous units were recommended to become any bull areas. These new units will replace the former Book Cliffs, Bitter Creek/South and the Central Mtns, Nebo units.

All other recommended hunt structure, season dates, and boundary description changes are included in the RAC and Board packet.

