



State of Utah

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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 21, 2024

To: Wildlife Board and Regional Advisory Council Members

From: Dax Mangus, Big Game Program Coordinator

Subject: 2025-2027 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 three hunting seasons: 2025, 2026 and 2027.

Deer, elk and pronghorn season dates for 2025-2027:

See attached tables for details on season dates and resident and nonresident permit availability.

Big game guidebook recommendations by species:

Deer

1. General-season deer hunts:
 - a. The DWR recommends an "Extended archery only" general-season deer permit that would allow the holders of the permit to hunt only on extended archery areas during the extended archery season dates in the hunt tables and guidebook.
 - b. If the statewide deer plan and associated research proposals pass as presented, we will have new general-season deer hunts on the following reorganized general-season deer units:
 - i. Beaver, East
 - ii. Beaver, West
 - iii. Cedar/Stansbury
 - iv. Oquirrh/Tintic
 - v. West Desert, Swasey
 - c. We recommend adding an early any legal weapon season to the Box Elder general-season deer unit to help address concerns with hunter crowding.



- d. We recommend that the Thousand Lakes general-season deer hunts be discontinued because that unit will be converted to a limited-entry unit in the statewide plan revision.
 - e. Additionally, based on the mule deer research proposal, we recommend implementing an antler point restriction that requires legal bucks to have 4 points or more (on at least one antler) for adult hunters on the Pine Valley general-season deer hunts. This restriction would not apply to youth hunters, who would be able to harvest any buck during the general-season deer hunts on the Pine Valley unit.
 - f. In accordance with the statewide deer plan revision and research proposal, we recommend that restricted weapons definitions be applied to the general-season muzzleloader and general-season any legal weapon (rifle) seasons on the following general-season units:
 - i. Cache
 - ii. Beaver, West
 - iii. Boulder/Kaiparowits
2. Limited-entry buck deer hunts
- a. We recommend adding the 5-day early any legal weapon season on the Fillmore, Oak Creek limited-entry unit to address hunter crowding concerns. (The 2025 dates would be Oct. 8-12.)
 - b. Per the statewide plan revision, the Thousand Lakes unit is changing to a limited-entry designation and will have an associated archery, muzzleloader and any legal weapon (rifle) season. In conjunction with the deer plan revision and research proposal, we recommend that the restricted weapons definitions be applied to the archery, muzzleloader and any legal weapon (rifle) hunts on that unit.
 - c. We recommend a new late-season HAMSS hunt in the San Juan, Mancos Mesa area and a new late-season any legal weapon hunt in the Henry Mtns, Little Rockies area.
 - d. We also recommend two new targeted buck deer hunts — to address a chronic wasting disease hotspot — in the La Sal, Castle Valley and La Sal, Moab Valley areas. These would be any legal weapon hunts occurring in mid-November, and hunters with these permits would be required to submit CWD testing samples if they are successful in harvesting a buck.
 - e. Please see the maps and written boundary descriptions in the RAC packet for all new deer hunt areas.

Pronghorn

- 1. Recommended changes:
 - a. We recommend adding muzzleloader seasons on the Box Elder, West and Box Elder, Snowville units to help better distribute hunters on these units.



Elk

1. New general-season hunt
 - a. We recommend the creation of a new general-season any bull hunt (valid only on private lands) within a boundary that encompasses most of the Uinta Basin, including areas with high levels of elk conflict in agricultural crops. This hunt would run from the beginning of August to mid-November each year and create a powerful tool to address conflicts and damage to agricultural crops on private lands. Please see the map and written boundary description in the RAC packet.
2. New limited-entry hunts:
 - a. We recommend the creation of two new adaptive opportunity limited-entry elk hunts on two general-season elk units in northern Utah. These units both have elk populations that exceed the current objectives as well as very high bull-to-cow ratios. These elk spend considerable time on private lands but could be available to public hunters later in the year. We anticipate conservative permit numbers, which will be set in the spring RAC cycle. We are recommending 9-day hunts in late December on the following units:
 - i. East Canyon (HAMSS)
 - ii. Morgan-South Rich (any legal weapon)
3. Please see the maps and written boundary descriptions in the RAC packet for all new elk hunts.

Boundary modification

We recommend a slight modification to the Uinta Basin extended archery boundary. (The boundary used to follow the Rockpoint Canal, which has now been piped.) The new proposed boundary follows a nearby road — and the private/public property boundary — and results in a slight expansion of the boundary to include a few additional small parcels of private land. Please see the map and written description in the RAC packet.

Details on all recommended hunt structure, season dates and boundary description changes are included in the RAC and board packet.

