

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: June 19, 2019

Agenda Item: 2019 Deer/Elk/Antelope Quotas Outside the Biennial Quota Ranges

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

The commission previously adopted quota ranges for deer, elk and antelope for each hunting district within which FWP can make changes that do not need Commission approval, but changes outside the adopted ranges do need commission approval. FWP is proposing one such change for elk, one for antelope as described below and none for deer. Detailed information on the proposals is found in the proposal justification in the commission packet.

- Reduce the number of elk 283-02 antlerless B licenses from 5 to 1 and change the biennial quota range from 5 – 150 to 1 – 150.

This is to address a large decrease in the number of observed elk in the North Hills/Evaro herd unit and proposed along with a separate companion proposal to eliminate HD 283 from antlerless harvest using the regional 002-00 B license. The population objective is 300 with a range of 240 - 360 observed elk. The latest flight found 146.

- Reduce the number of second opportunity antelope 360-30 doe/fawn B licenses from 150 to 25. There is no adopted biennial range for these types of B licenses, hence the need for commission approval.

The proximate objective of this proposed change is to reduce doe/fawn pronghorn harvest. The ultimate objective is to see stability or an increase in the herd.

Count data from 1993 through 2019 generally suggest that winter counts between 1,500 and 1,750 strike a balance of maximizing hunter opportunity while minimizing game damage. Current population counts show two consecutive years of the lowest counts since 2003 with the 2019 count being 1,540.

Public Involvement Process & Results

The elk proposal was vetted with Hellgate Hunters & Anglers and individually with several sportsmen who were supportive. It was presented to the North Hills Elk Working Group on May 29, 2019. Spring survey and proposal information has been shared with all North Hills landowners.

The antelope proposal was vetted with two landowners and the pronghorn flight report discussing the need to reduce B licenses was emailed to more than 150 landowners, sportsmen, and interested parties.

Alternatives and Analysis

No alternatives were considered.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the commission adopt the proposed changes to the 283-02 antlerless elk B licenses and 360-30 antelope doe/fawn B licenses.

Proposed Motion

I move that the commission reduce the number of elk 283-02 antlerless B licenses from 5 to 1 and change the biennial quota range from 5 – 150 to 1 – 150, and reduce the 360-30 antelope doe/fawn B licenses from 150 to 25 as proposed by FWP, and that all other aspects of the 2019 deer, elk and antelope regulations remain unchanged except if dealt with in another proposal.