



Draft Changes for 2022-2023 Hunting Regulations

Region:

- **List of Hunting Districts (HDs) that didn't change: 600, 620, 621, 640, 650, 652, 670**
- **Deer and Elk region-wide changes:**
 - Combine the single region antlerless whitetail (WT) license (006-00) and region-wide antlerless WT license 699-00 into one license (006-00) sold over-the-counter (OTC) and valid region-wide. Hunters would be able to purchase up to 7 (within the allowable 7 deer B-licenses).
 - **Biological implications:** Maintains a simple tool for whitetail population management while continuing to manage whitetail harvest at the regional scale. Currently, hunters may purchase one single-region WT license (006-00) and apply for one region-wide WT B-license (699-00). The 699-00 license routinely goes surplus and is sold OTC with a limit of up to 7 total deer B-licenses per hunter. In 2020, we sold 2,145 of the 006-00 (limit of 1 per hunter) and 2,927 of the 699-00 (quota of 3,000 and limit of 7). License vendors have not sold all the 699-00 through surplus during the last two years, indicating the proposed change would not significantly change the total amount sold.

Annual deer surveys on whitetail wintering areas, distribution of harvest across Region 6, as well as harvest success will continue to be monitored. The most recent observed white-tailed deer density on the six white-tailed deer trend areas was 9.8 deer/sq. mile, 8% below the long-term average of 10.7 deer/sq. mile. Average harvest success rate for whitetail B-licenses is 25%, with an average annual harvest of 1,400 antlerless whitetail. Harvest continues to be well distributed across Region 6, with variable whitetail abundance driving harvest distribution.

As WT populations increase over time, the proposal allows for B-licenses to continue to be available for hunters throughout the hunting season. If whitetail populations decline due to EHD, high winter mortality, or other factors, we would recommend a limit per hunter (between 1-6).

- **Social consideration:** We hear support from private landowners to maintain liberal whitetail B-licenses in order to stay ahead of spikes in whitetail populations. Even with these liberal tools, some landowners start to see game damage at average population levels due to localized deer distribution driven by weather conditions or access restrictions on neighboring properties. Local hunters and R6 CAC voiced concern about overharvest of some localized whitetail populations. We feel that being able to adjust the per-person maximum in response to population changes will alleviate that concern.

We also hear concerns about out-of-area hunters overexploiting the opportunity since there is no limit to the number sold. However, our surplus WT licenses currently do not sell out, suggesting this may not necessarily occur.

- **Other species region-wide changes:**

- Realign regional turkey boundary between R6 and R7 with known/existing regional line at HWY 200. The current boundary follows county lines.
 - This would remove the ability to use the second Region 7 turkey license in those portions of Richland, McCone and Dawson Counties in Region 6
- **Biological implication:** This would largely not change turkey management in Region 6. That portion of Richland Co. that currently allows for a second turkey harvest would likely see minor impacts as turkey populations in that area are relatively stable. Subsequently, future harvest estimates would be more difficult to compare to past estimates since those estimates are currently by county. Harvest surveys would need to estimate harvest at a different scale with this change.
- **Social consideration:** No objections from R6 CAC.

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