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MICHAEL KAPLAN
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE



ARCHIVES DIVISION
STEPHANIE CLARK
DIRECTOR

800 SUMMER STREET NE
SALEM, OR 97310
503-373-0701

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DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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& LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

FILING CAPTION: Amend Rules to Modify Formula for Setting Landowner Preference Program Tags for Mule Deer Hunts

EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/22/2026

AGENCY APPROVED DATE: 01/16/2026

CONTACT: Roxann Borisch

503-947-6314

roxann.b.borisch@odfw.oregon.gov

4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE

Salem, OR 97302

Filed By:

Roxann Borisch

Rules Coordinator

RULES:

635-075-0022, 635-190-0010

AMEND: 635-075-0022

NOTICE FILED DATE: 11/25/2025

RULE SUMMARY: These amended rules will modify the formula for setting Landowner Preference (LOP) program tags for mule deer hunts and will modify the name of some mule deer herd ranges. The amendments will align the formula with mule deer population management objectives format established in Oregon's Mule Deer Management Plan (2024) and allow the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (department) to set LOP tag numbers for mule deer hunts each year. Modification of mule deer herd range names will ensure that herd range names are different than the names used to identify Wildlife Management Units.

CHANGES TO RULE:

635-075-0022

Landowner Hunting Preference Tags for Mule Deer ¶¶

(1) This rule further implements HB 2027A whereby the 2013 Legislative Assembly directed the Department through the commission to specify a formula that bases the number of landowner preference tags available for mule deer on the management, research, and habitat needs set forth in the wildlife management plan for mule deer.¶¶

(2) For purposes of this rule, the population management objectives (MOs) for each ~~wildlife management unit~~ mule deer herd range that were adopted by the commission in June 2024 are considered representative of the management, research, and habitat needs for mule deer.¶¶

(3) The formula to determine the number of landowner hunting preference tags available for buck ~~unit~~ mule deer herd range is as follows:¶¶

(a) In those ~~wildlife management units~~ where the estimated mule deer population is less than 60% of the established population management objective, the number of landowner hunting preference tags available for buck deer in that unit may be limited to five tags or 10 percent of the total controlled buck tags authorized for the public for each hunt in that unit by the commission, whichever is greater.¶¶

(b) In those ~~wildlife management units~~ where the estimated mule deer population is equal to or more than 60% of

~~the established mule deer herd ranges where, based on the criteria in Oregon's Mule Deer Management Plan (2024), the department determines that the estimated mule deer population and average annual population change management objective, but less than 80% of the established population management objective over 5-years result in a herd range concern level of Extreme, Very High, or High, the number of landowner hunting preference tags available for buck deer in that unit may be limited to five tags or 15 percent of the total controlled buck tags authorized for the public for each hunt in that unit by the commission, whichever is greater.~~¶

~~(eb) In the Biggs, Columbia Basin, and Mount Emily wildlife management units, and in the NE Owyhee 167A Helix (HX-01), Jackknife (JK-01), North Blues 01 (NB-01), North Blues 02 (NB-02), and Northeast 03 (NE-03) deer hunt areas, and in those wildlife mdeer hunt areas within those mule deer herd rmanagement units where the estimated mule deer population is equal to or more than 80% of the established population management objective and average annual population change over 5-years results in a herd range concern level of Moderate or Low, the number of landowner hunting preference tags available for buck mule deer in that unit deer hunt area may be issued based upon a landowner's acreage as set forth in 635-075-0005(8).~~¶

~~(ec) If conditions such as but not limited to disease or harsh winter weather occur, resulting in adoption of a Temporary OAR to reduce 100 Series mule deer tags by equal to or more than 25% from the number authorized by the Commission in areas listed or described in 635-075-0022(3)(c), Limited Landowner Preference mule deer tags in those areas may be limited as described in 635-075-0022(3)(b).~~¶

(4) If landowner preference tags remain from the controlled hunts described in 635-075-0022(3)(a) or (b) after the game mammal controlled hunt drawing, the Department will issue remaining tags to qualified landowners as described in 635-075-0024.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 496.138, 496.012, 496.146, 496.162

Statutes/Other Implemented: ORS 496.138, 496.012, 496.146, 496.162

AMEND: 635-190-0010

NOTICE FILED DATE: 11/25/2025

RULE SUMMARY: These amended rules will modify the formula for setting Landowner Preference (LOP) program tags for mule deer hunts and will modify the name of some mule deer herd ranges. The amendments will align the formula with mule deer population management objectives format established in Oregon's Mule Deer Management Plan (2024) and allow the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (department) to set LOP tag numbers for mule deer hunts each year. Modification of mule deer herd range names will ensure that herd range names are different than the names used to identify Wildlife Management Units.

CHANGES TO RULE:

635-190-0010

Plan Objectives for Mule Deer Management ¶

The revised "2024 Mule Deer Population Management Objectives" (2026) and the revised "2024 Buck Ratio Management Objectives" (2026) function as a replacement to Table 1, "2024 Mule Deer Population Management Objectives" and Table 2, "2024 Buck Ratio Management Objectives" respectively, in Appendix 1 of the 2024 Oregon Mule Deer Management Plan and are incorporated here by reference into administrative rule.

Statutory/Other Authority: ORS 496.012, 496.138, 496.146, 496.162

Statutes/Other Implemented: ORS 496.012, 496.138, 496.146, 496.162

RULE ATTACHMENTS MAY NOT SHOW CHANGES. PLEASE CONTACT AGENCY REGARDING CHANGES.

Appendix 1: Table 1. 2024 Mule Deer Population Management Objectives. Twenty-two mule deer herd ranges across eastern Oregon with 2023 population estimates, 5-year growth rates, population and growth rate tiers, and overall concern level.

Herd Range	2023 Population	Average annual population change over 5-years	Tier 1	Tier 2 1-25%	Tier 3 26-50%	Tier 4 >50%	Pop. Tier	Growth Tier	Herd Range Concern Level
Juntura	11272	0.97	≤ 11333	11334 to 14167	14280 to 17000	>17000	1	1	Extreme
Jackknife	10446	1.02	≤ 9666	9667 to 12083	12180 to 14500	>14500	2	3	High
Helix	4593	1.00	≤ 3999	4000 to 5000	5040 to 6000	>6000	2	2	Very High
Devils Garden	9627	0.91	≤ 10667	10668 to 13333	13440 to 16000	>16000	1	1	Extreme
Deschutes	7082	1.03	≤ 6333	6334 to 7917	7980 to 9500	>9500	2	3	High
Painted Hills	8735	1.00	≤ 8333	8334 to 10417	10500 to 12500	>12500	2	2	Very High
Sage Hen	3858	1.01	≤ 3666	3667 to 4583	4620 to 5500	>5500	2	3	High
Keno	2381	0.92	≤ 2333	2334 to 2917	2940 to 3500	>3500	2	1	Extreme
Klamath Basin	8748	0.98	≤ 7333	7334 to 9167	9240 to 11000	>11000	2	2	Very High
Mid-Columbia	11113	1.00	≤ 10000	10001 to 12500	12600 to 15000	>15000	2	3	High
Aldrich	8275	0.98	≤ 7000	7001 to 8750	8820 to 10500	>10500	2	2	Very High
North Blues	17891	1.00	≤ 16667	16668 to 20833	21000 to 25000	>25000	2	2	Very High
Northeast	18185	1.01	≤ 16667	16668 to 20833	21000 to 25000	>25000	2	3	High
Fox	17208	0.94	≤ 18001	18002 to 22500	22680 to 27000	>27000	1	1	Extreme
Ochoco	6690	0.94	≤ 7333	7334 to 9167	9240 to 11000	>11000	1	1	Extreme
Poverty Basin	597	1.05	≤ 666	667 to 833	834 to 1000	>1000	1	4	High
South Wallowas	12906	1.00	≤ 13000	13001 to 16250	16380 to 19500	>19500	2	1	Extreme
Southeast	3480	1.02	≤ 2999	3000 to 3750	3780 to 4500	>4500	2	3	High
Steens	4275	1.03	≤ 3666	3667 to 4583	4584 to 5500	>5500	2	3	High
Elkhorn	9993	1.04	≤ 10000	10001 to 12500	12600 to 15000	>15000	1	4	High
Trout Creek	1195	1.00	≤ 1132	1133 to 1417	1428 to 1700	>1700	2	3	High
DeGarmo	2603	0.93	≤ 2533	2534 to 3167	3192 to 3800	>3800	2	1	Extreme

Appendix 1: Table 2. 2024 Mule Deer Buck Ratio Management Objectives. Bucks:100 does based on 3-year averages from 2021-2023 along with mule deer buck management objectives for 22 herd ranges in eastern Oregon.

Herd Range	2021-2023 average	Buck MO
Juntura	20	15
Jackknife	24	15
Helix	12	15
Devils Garden	17	15
Deschutes	28	25
Painted Hills	14	15
Sage Hen	20	15
Keno	13	15
Klamath Basin	19	15
Mid-Columbia	20	20
Aldrich	16	15
North Blues	21	15
Northeast	19	20
Fox	14	15
Crooked River	15	15
Poverty Basin	29	20
South Wallowas	21	15
Southeast	21	15
Steens	33	25
Elkhorn	14	15
Trout Creek	34	25
DeGarmo	22	20