

2020 Big Game Regulations and Tag Numbers

Oregon

Fish and Wildlife Commission

September 13, 2019

Gold Beach, Oregon

Meeting Overview

- **2020 Regulations Proposals**
 - **General Regulations**
 - Legislative changes
 - **Species Specific: season dates, tag numbers, etc.**
 - Carnivores
 - Ungulates

General Regulation Proposals

Area Regulations

OARs for Courtney Creek Wildlife Area

- No camping
- Closed to the public
10pm - 4am
- No open fires
- No discharging firearms
except shotguns during
authorized seasons
- Use of air guns,
BB guns,
paintball guns prohibited



General Regulations

Definition: “Traditional Bow” is a long bow or recurve bow only, no compound bows are allowed during “traditional” bow/archery hunts.

635-065-0765

Tagging, Possession, Transportation

- **(9) No person shall possess any game mammal or part thereof which has been illegally killed, found or killed for humane reasons, except lawfully obtained shed antlers,.....**

Legislative Changes

House Bill 2068:

- Increases the nonresident cap for Spring Bear controlled hunts from 3% to 5%

House Bill 2069:

- Previously statute required “Leftover Tags” be distributed first-come, first-served
- HB 2069 modified the statute, providing the ability to limit Leftover Tags to hunters who do not already have a tag
 - “Leftover Tags are not available as an additional tag.”

Legislative Changes

House Bill 2071:

- Exempts bighorn sheep ewe hunts from the “once in a lifetime” limitation for mountain sheep tags

House Bill 2294:

- Effective January 1, 2020, bans the use and possession of “commercial cervid attractants”.
 - “Commercial cervid attractant” means a marketed product that contains or is derived from cervid urine and is designed for use in luring, attracting or enticing a cervid.

Big Game Review Timelines

- Department began project to review Big Game Regulations in 2017; started with “Simplification” and outlined multiple phases as part of a complete review of all big game hunts
- Priority project for the Department, many of the changes have ripple effects, impacting adjacent Wildlife Management Units or other parts of the state
- Currently in phase 3 and is scheduled to take two years – proposing some changes this year, another round of changes next year

Big Game Review Timelines

- **Phase 3 is a big project across all big game species**
 - Department started providing public information January 2019
 - Released proposed changes as early as possible; almost four months prior to Commission action
- **Some seasons that will be reviewed for next year:**
 - Western Oregon general deer and elk seasons
 - Western Oregon late deer and elk seasons
 - Approach to archery season
 - Allocation of hunting opportunity
 - Hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation
 - Continue to identify opportunities to simplify hunt boundaries

Species Specific Information

- **Population Overview/Monitoring**
- **2020 Hunting Season Structure**
- **2020 Tag Number Proposals**

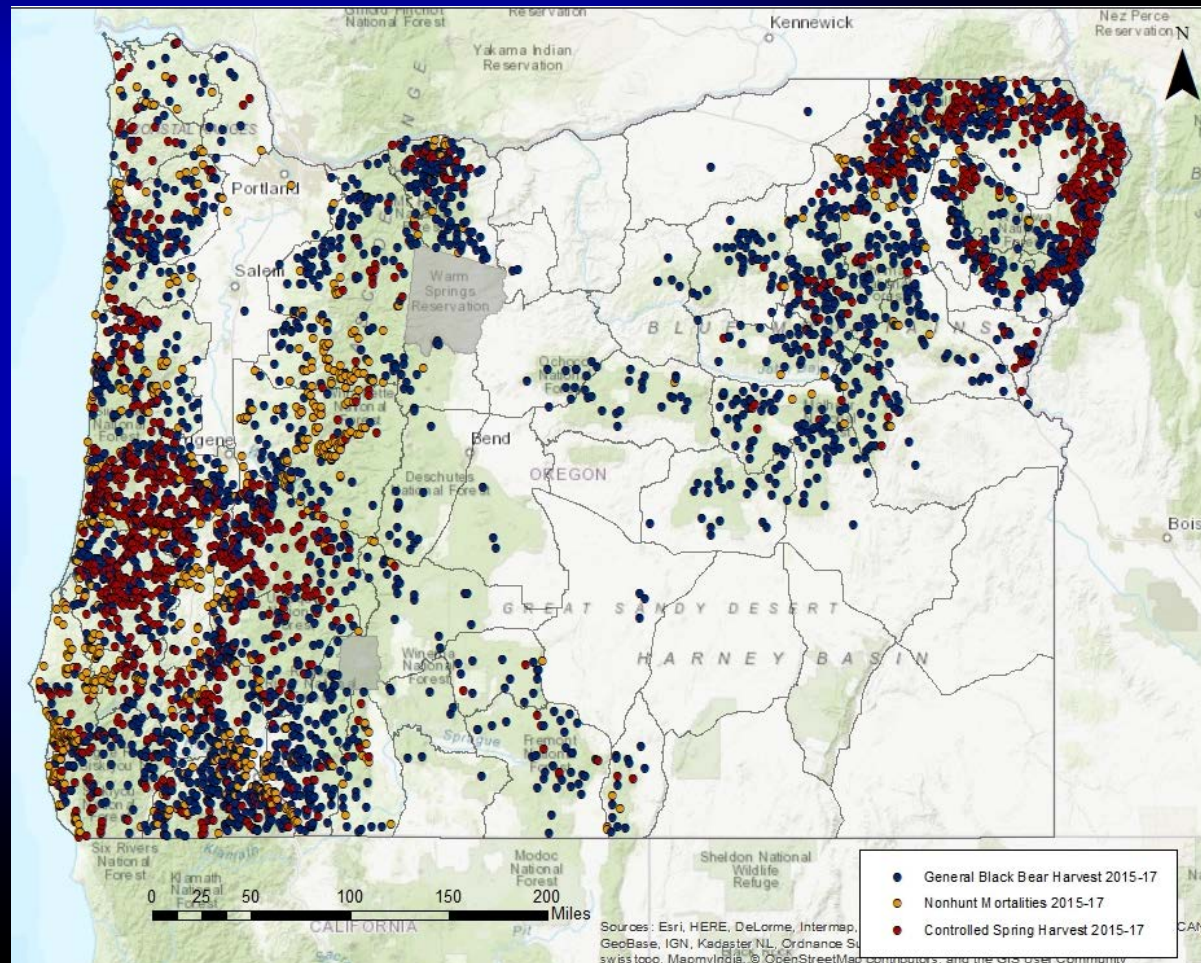
Bear and Cougar

Bear Population Monitoring

 **Black Bear Management Plan**

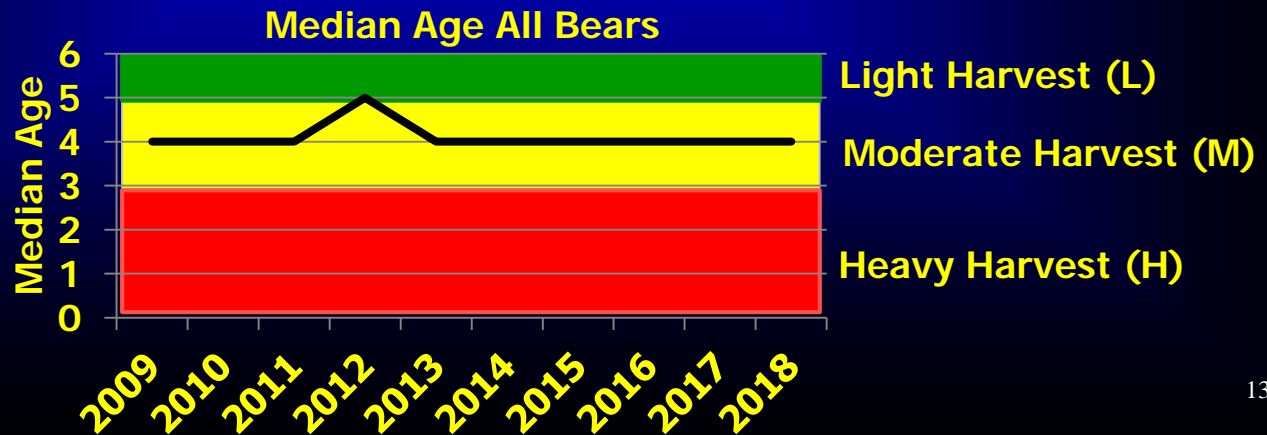
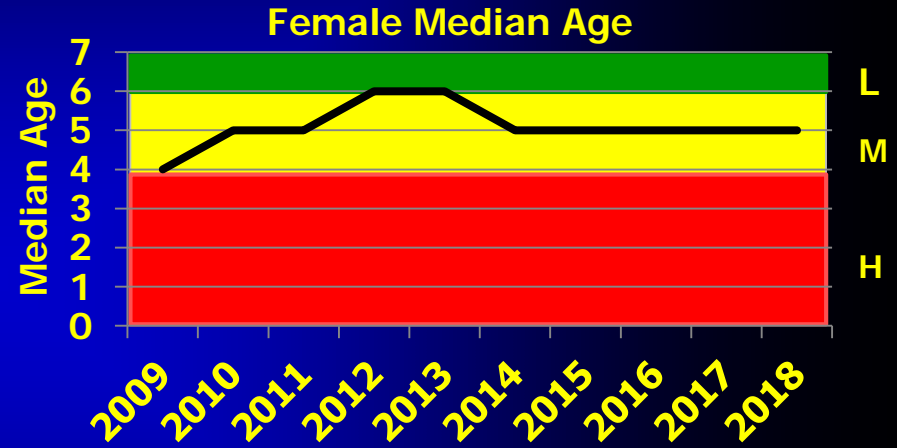
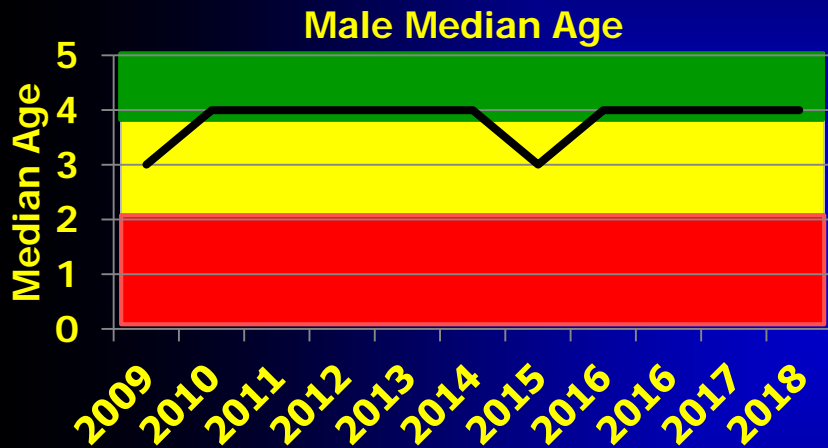
 **Check-in for all bear mortalities**

 **Mandatory harvest reporting**



Bear Population Monitoring

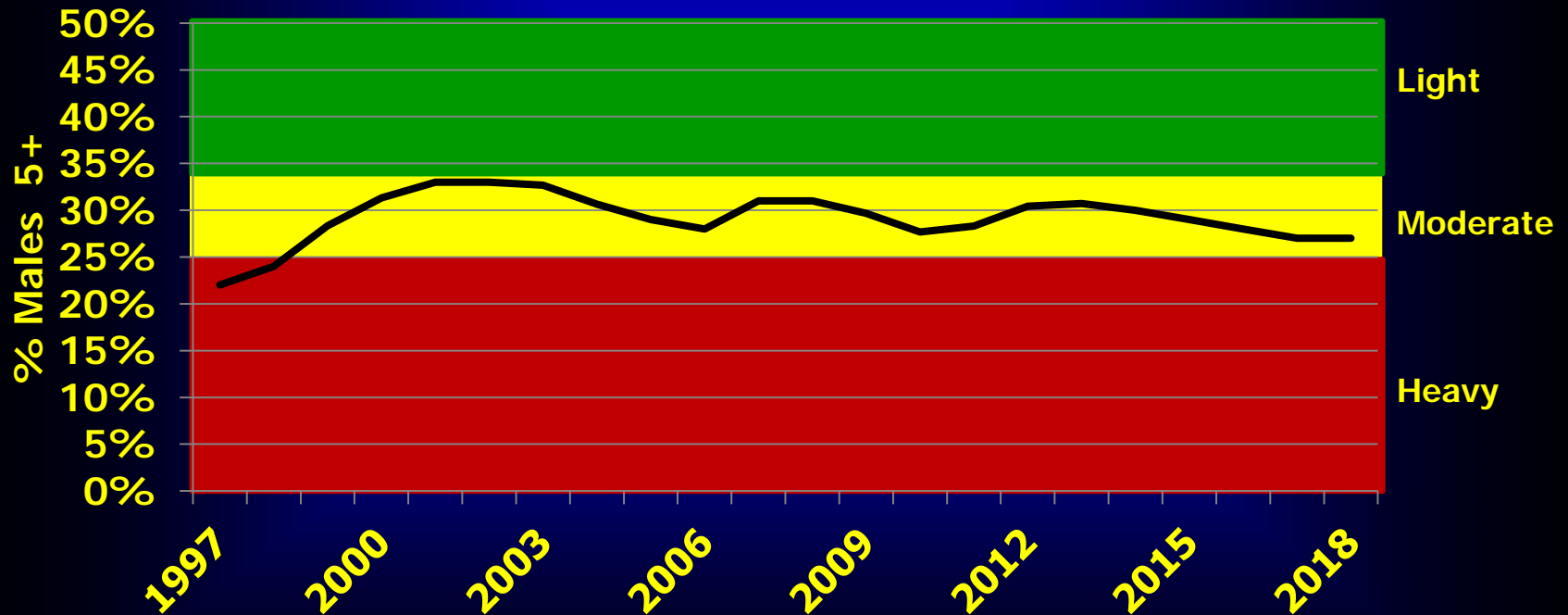
- 🐻 Harvest sustainable if median age of males ≥ 2 years, females ≥ 4 years, and all bears ≥ 3 years
- 🐻 No indication of unsustainable take



Bear Population Monitoring

Sex-age criteria to assess take level of black bears in Oregon.
Criteria based on 3-year running averages of all mortalities.

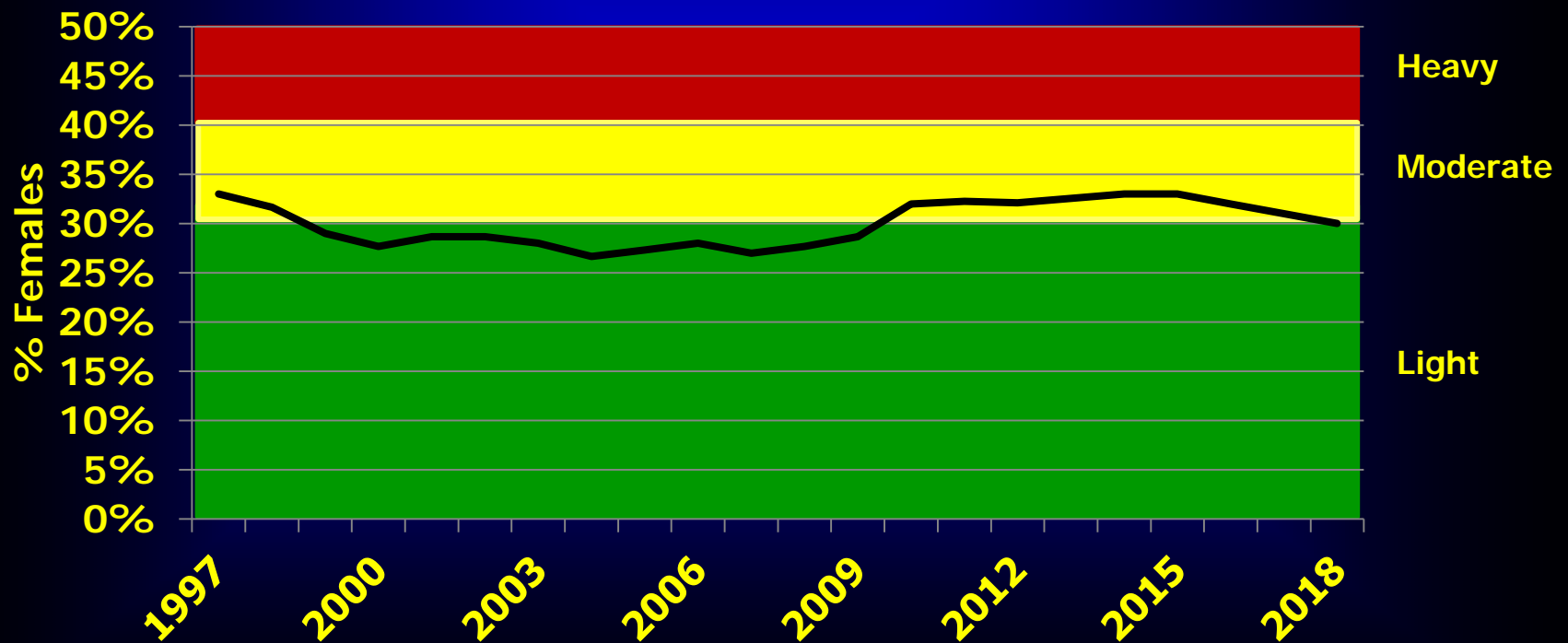
Criteria	Light	Moderate	Heavy
% Males ≥ 5 yr old	>35%	25–35%	<25%



Bear Population Monitoring

Sex-age criteria to assess take level of black bears in Oregon.
Criteria based on 3-year running averages of all mortalities.

Criteria	Light	Moderate	Heavy
% Females	<30%	30–40%	>40%



Spring Bear, 2020 Season Proposals



Change spring season dates

- Apr 1- May 31 statewide



Combine/consolidate hunts

- Three hunts into NW Oregon (710A)
- Two hunts into White River - Hood (741A)



Add Wildlife Management Units (WMUs, or Units) to hunts

- Willamette Unit to new NW Oregon (710A)
- Grizzly and Ochoco Units to S Blue Mts (746A)



Expand areas

- Entire McKenzie and Santiam Units

Spring Bear, 2020 Season Proposals

 **9,495 controlled hunt tags**

- 5,095 tags in 16 hunts
- 4,400 tags in SW Oregon

 **Continue to protect cubs & sows with cubs**

 **Continue mandatory check-in**

Spring Bear			
Year	Estimated Harvest	Teeth	Check-In Rate
2015	577	533	92%
2016	580	549	95%
2017	607	545	90%
2018	627	594	95%
2019	*	654	*

General Bear, 2020 Season Proposals

Changes to eastern OR general season dates

- Aug 1 – Dec 31 Statewide

Tag sale deadline October 2

Maintain season structure

- 2 Bear tag opportunity, statewide Additional Tag
- Protect cubs & sows with cubs

Continue mandatory check-in

Fall General Season			
Year	Estimated Harvest	Teeth	Check-In Rate
2016	1,003	825	82%
2017	1,134	943	83%
2018	1,103	935	82%

Cougar Monitoring and Zones



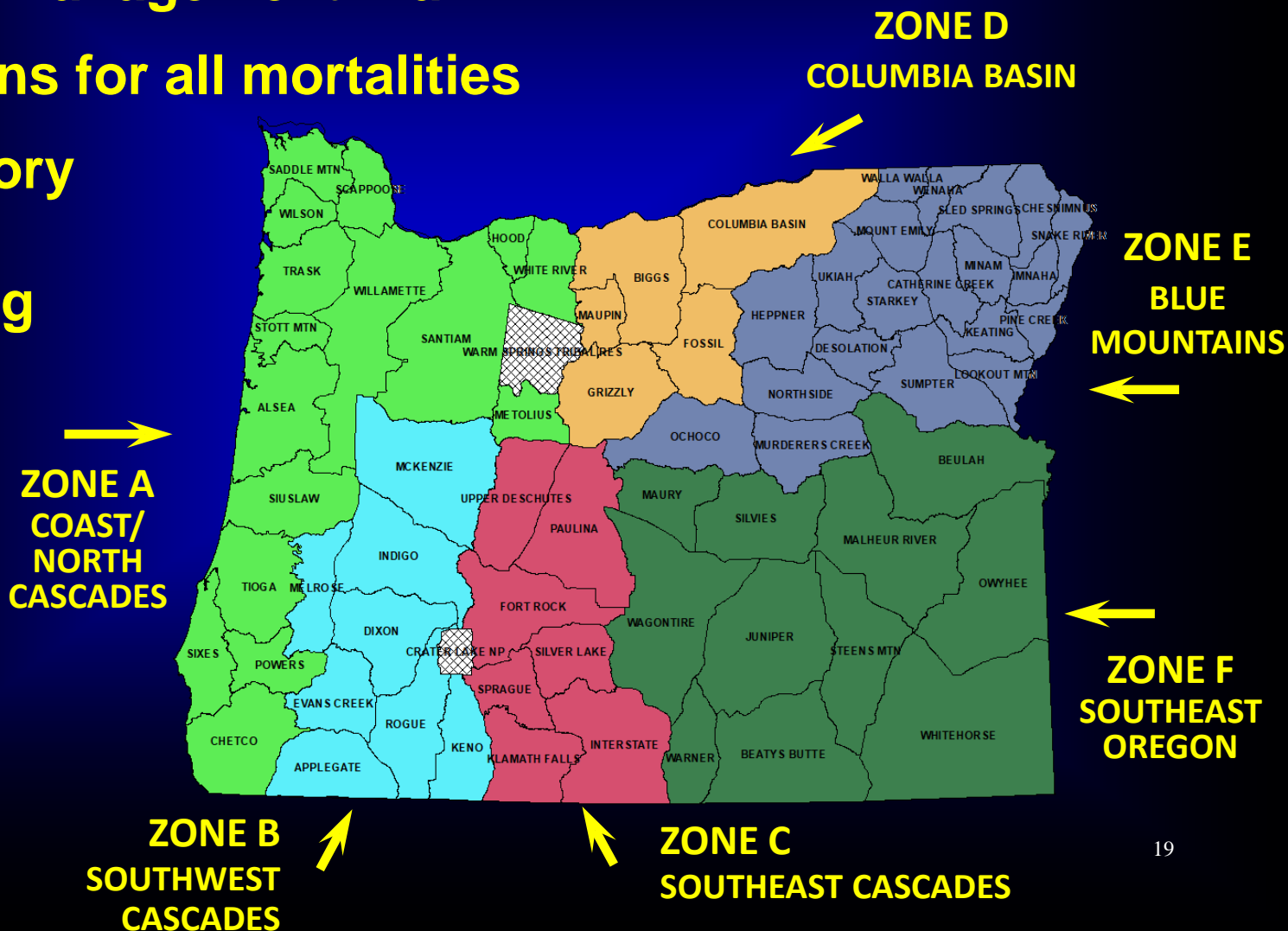
Cougar Management Plan



Check-ins for all mortalities



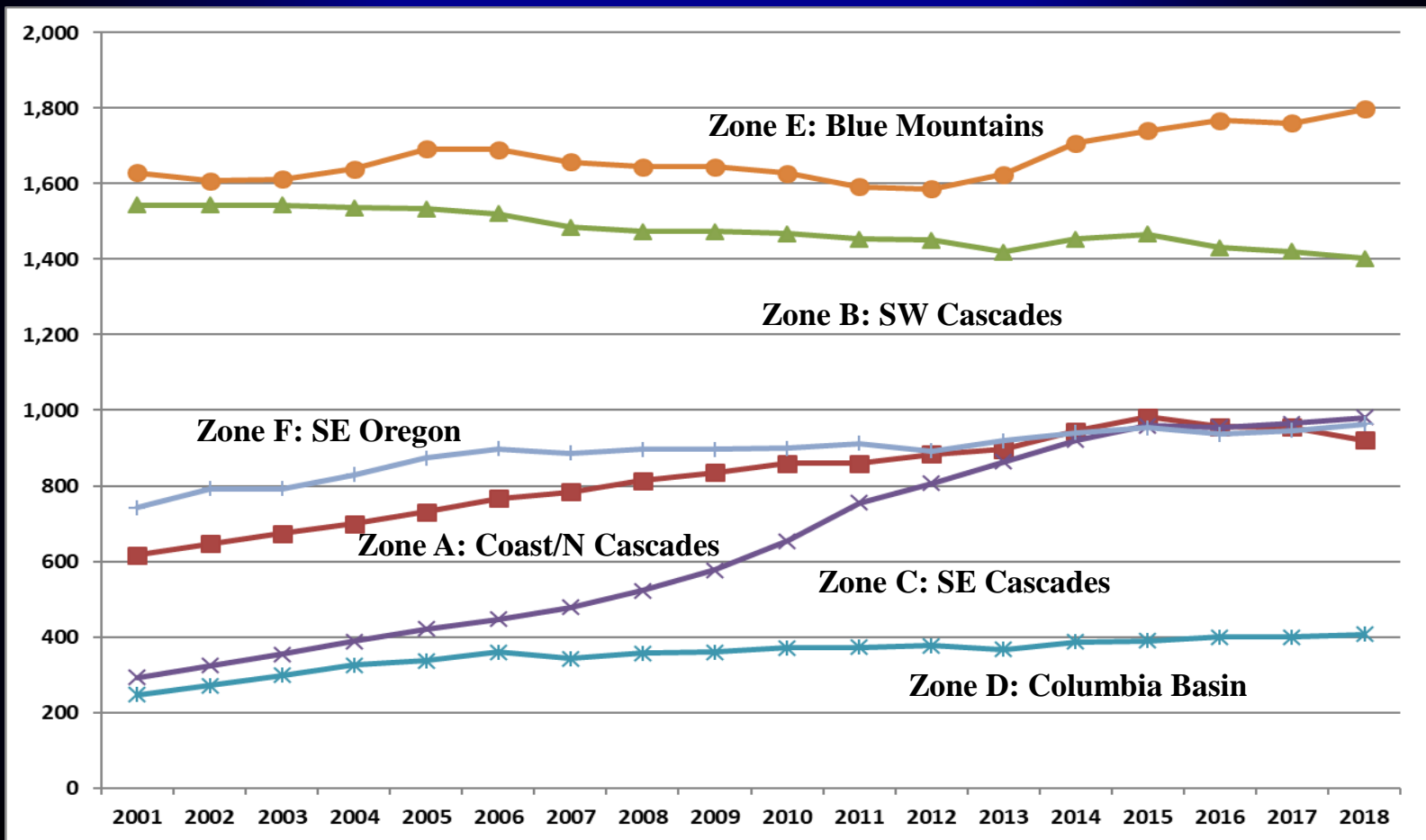
Mandatory harvest reporting



Cougar Population Monitoring

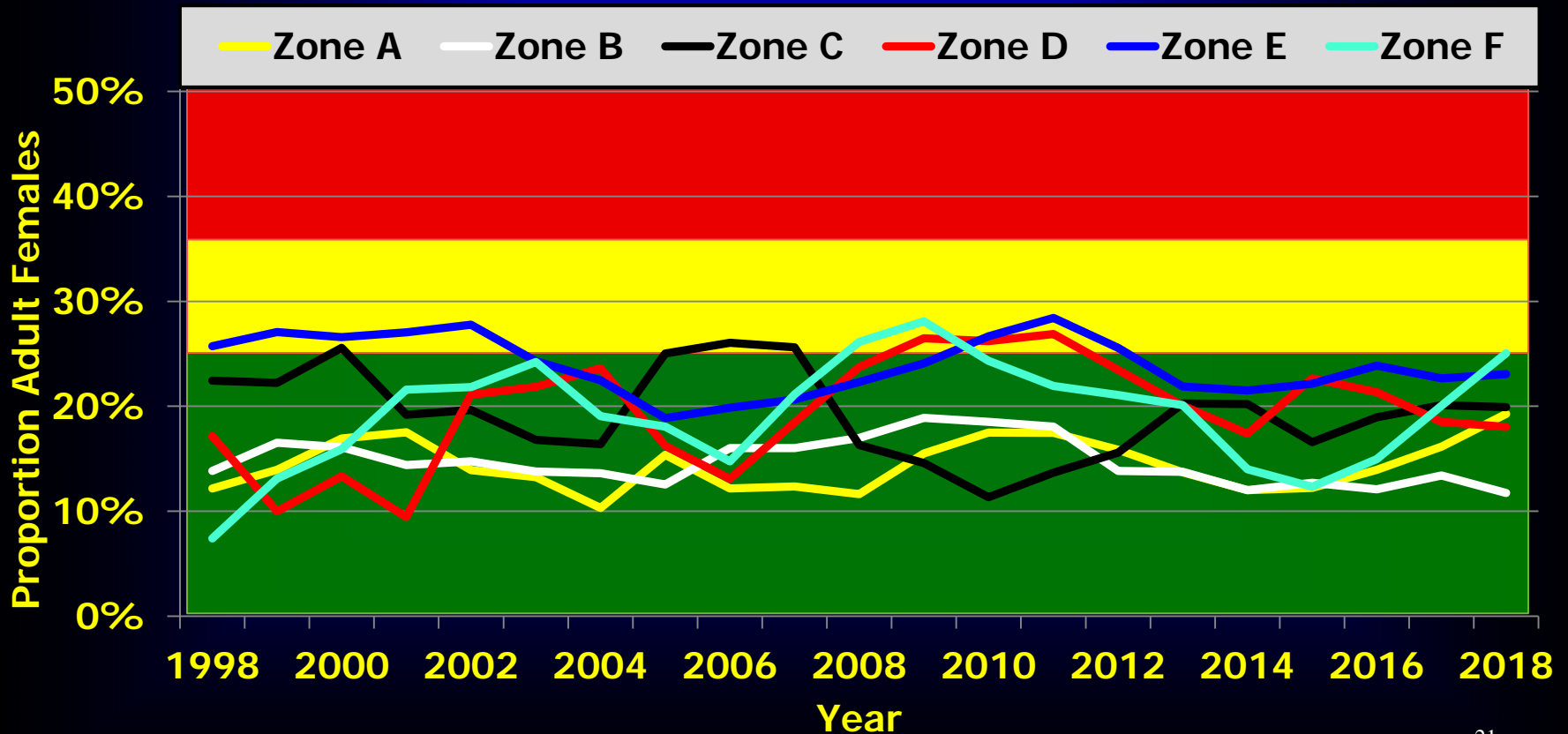
Plan Objective 1: ODFW will manage for a stable cougar population that are to not to fall below 3,000 cougars statewide

Statewide Population Estimate of 6,471 in 2018



Cougar Population Monitoring

- 🐾 Three-year average proportion adult (3+ year old) females in the total mortality $\leq 25-35\%$
- 🐾 No Cougar Zones exceed 35%








Cougar Population Monitoring

Zone quotas (i.e. mortality caps) include all known cougar mortalities

When quotas are met, all harvest ceases for rest of calendar year, removals due to damage and conflict are still permitted

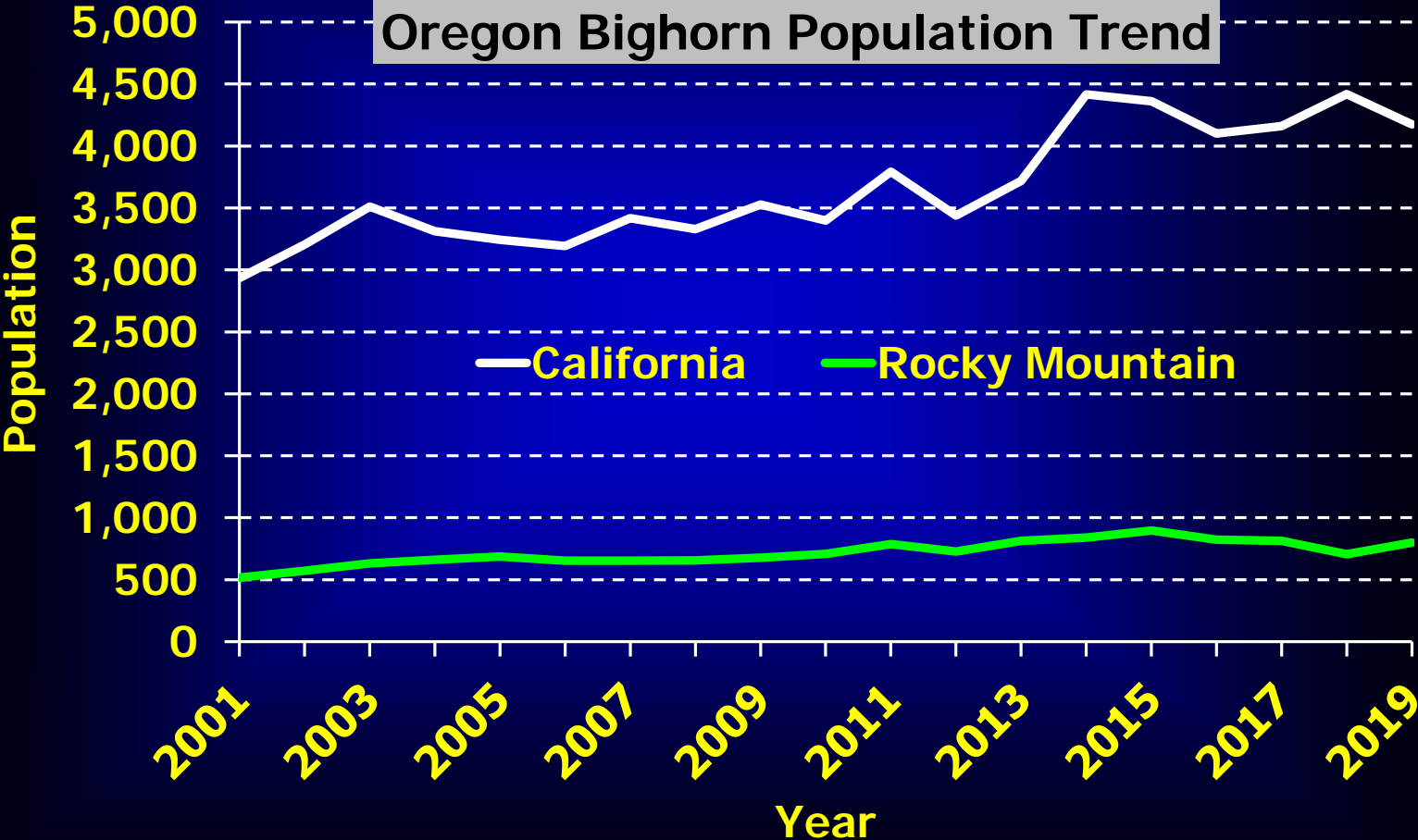
Zone	Quota	Total Mortality							Quota	Total Mortality			
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		2015	2016	2017	2018
A Coast/North Cascades	120	95	99	103	120	121	130	101	180	117	177	157	193
B SW Cascades	165	106	90	96	109	106	143	100	200	98	131	140	156
C SE Cascades	65	25	25	20	15	24	21	17	80	25	42	43	40
D Col. Basin	62	35	38	31	36	38	50	26	100	41	27	38	39
E Blue Mts.	245	174	158	163	169	164	135	93	270	106	114	142	117
F SE Oregon	120	57	63	69	57	77	52	45	140	42	55	51	45
Total	777	492	473	482	506	530	531	383	970	427	546	571	591

Cougar 2020 Season Proposals

-  **Year-round season**
-  **Two cougar tag opportunity**
 - **October 2 Tag Sale Deadline for general tag**
 - **Statewide additional cougar tag**
-  **No changes to zone quotas**
-  **Mandatory check-in**
-  **Protect kittens & females with kittens**

Ungulates

Bighorn Sheep Population Monitoring



Bighorn Sheep Population Management





Capture planned for winter 2019 – 2020 from I-84 Herd

- 5 animals to 30 Mile Canyon
- 25 animals to Utah
- 4 animals to Denver Zoo

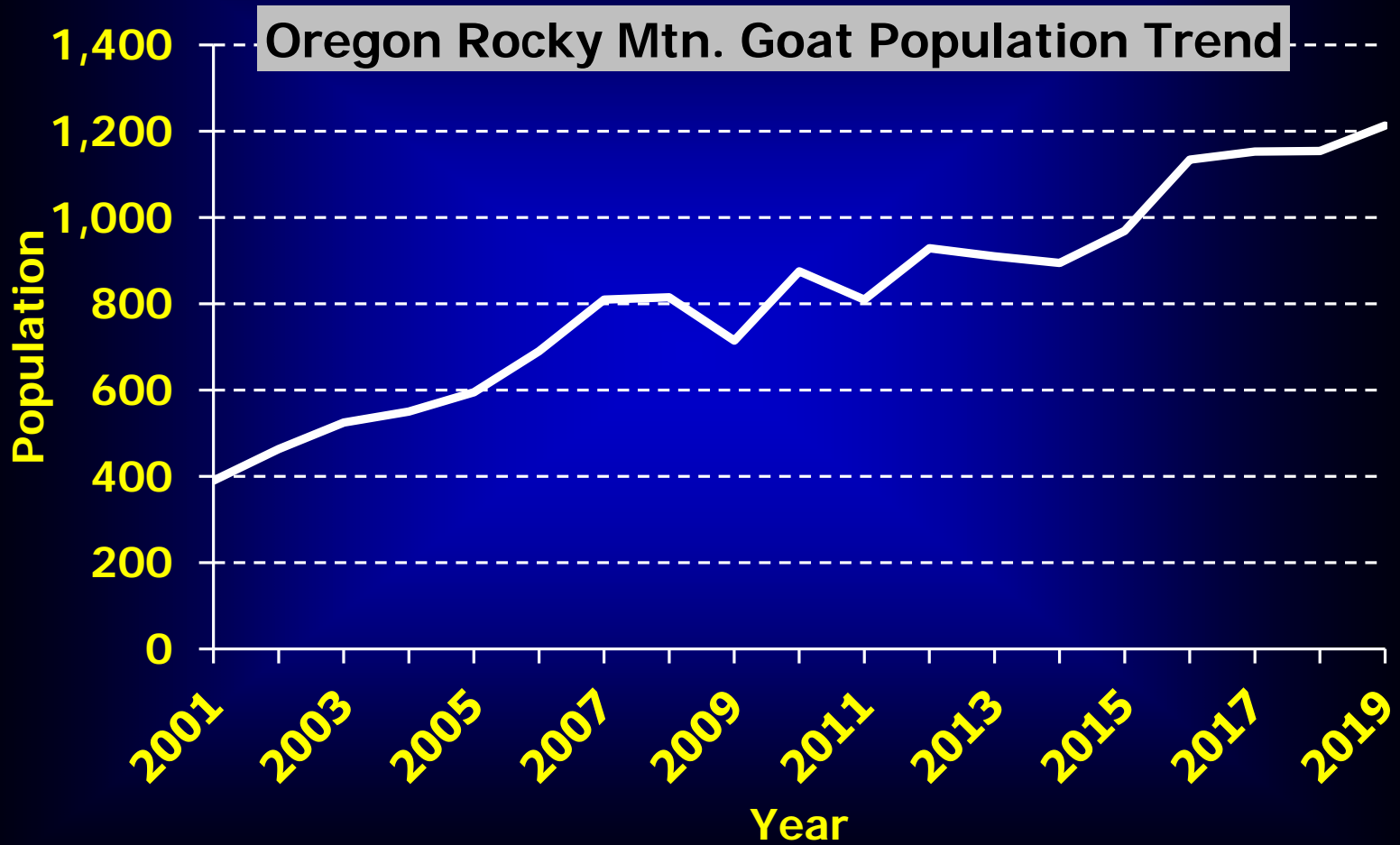
Disease Monitoring

- 30 in Aldrich/McClellan herd
- 10 in Riverside herd

Bighorn Sheep Tag & Season Proposals

-  **9 Rocky Mountain Bighorn tags in 2020**
-  **67 California Bighorn tags in 2020**
-  **Five nonresident tags(7%)**
-  **Combine E & W John Day River hunts**
-  **Combine Aldrich Hunts into one hunt**
-  **Expanded, consistent season dates for 21 hunts**
-  **Four boundary changes**

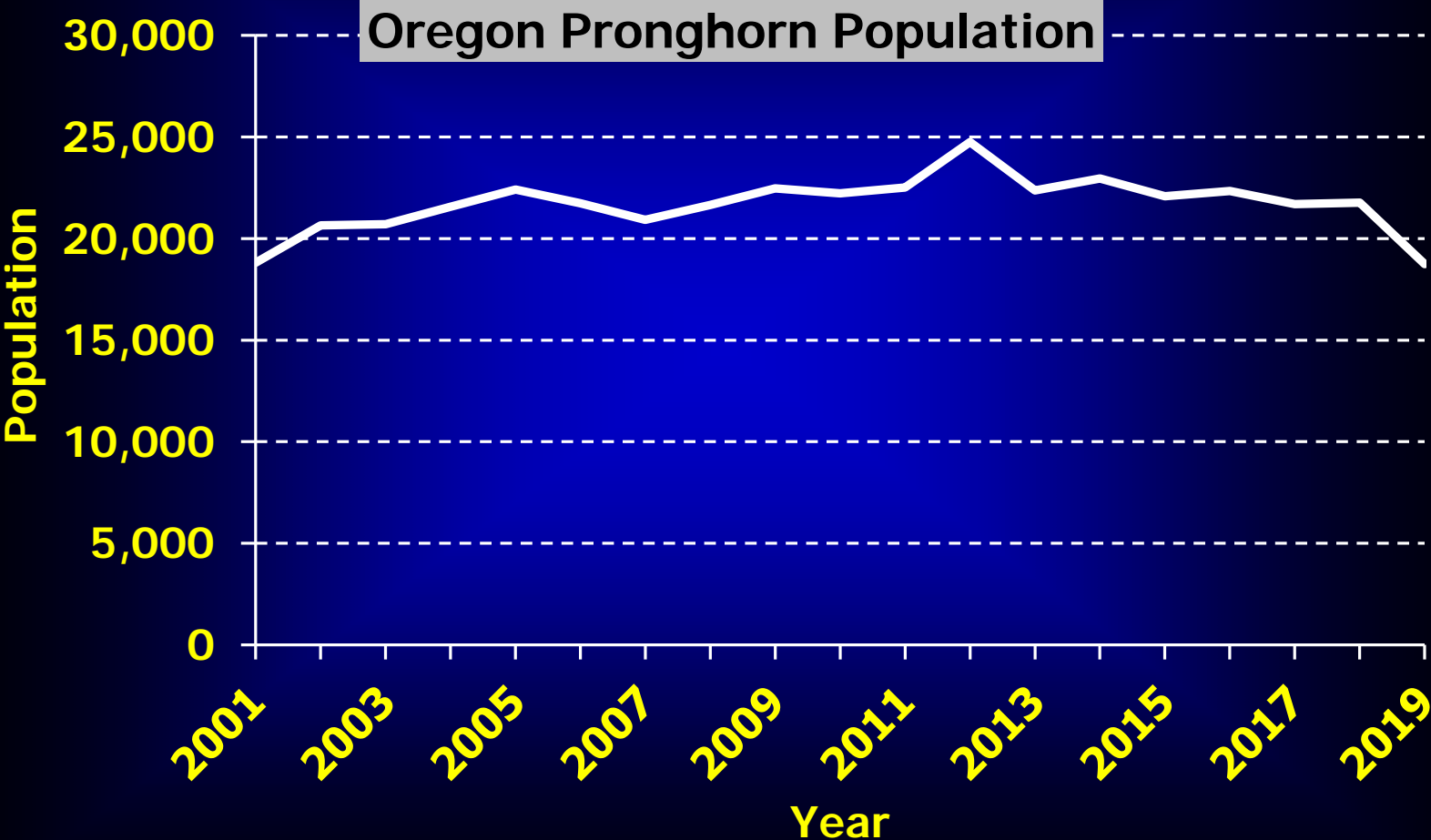
Rocky Mtn. Goat Population Monitoring



Rocky Mtn. Goat Tag & Season Proposals




- 🐐 **27 Tags in 2020**
- 🐐 **Two nonresident tags (7%)**
- 🐐 **Two new hunts**
 - **S Wallowa Mountains**
 - **Copper Creek**
- 🐐 **Longer standardized seasons for 13 hunts**
- 🐐 **Five boundary changes to simplify**

Pronghorn Population Monitoring

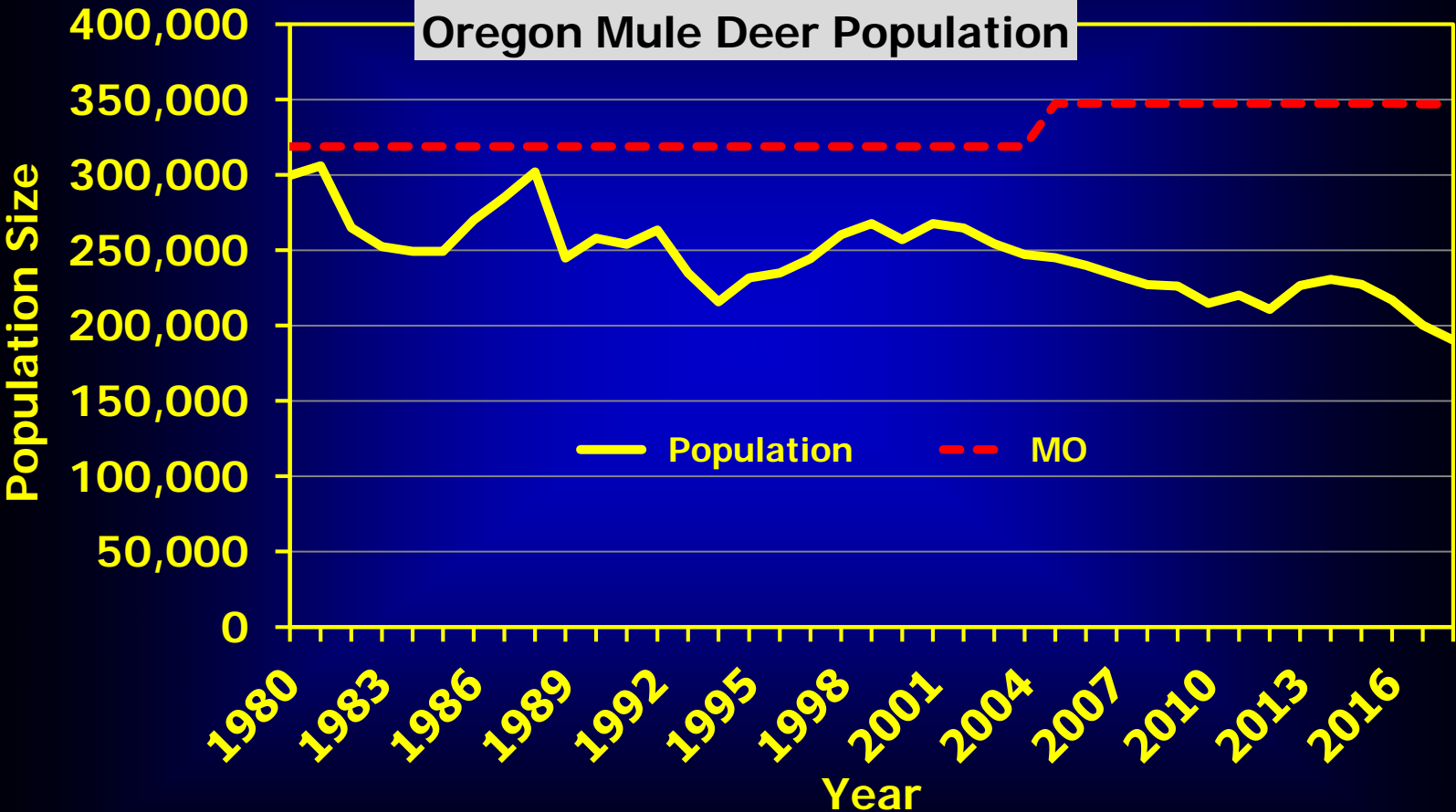


Controlled Pronghorn Tag Proposals

Hunt Type	2019 Tags	2020 Tags	% Change
Buck/Either Sex	1,376	1,330	-3.3%
Bow/Muzzleloader	719	703	-2.2%
Doe	164	170	3.7%
Youth	40	40	0.0%
Premium	27	27	0.0%
Total Pronghorn	2,326	2,270	-2.4%

-  **Consolidate 7 hunts into 4 hunts**
-  **Expanded dates for 3 hunts**
-  **Expanded/simplified boundaries for 12 hunts**







Mule Deer Population Monitoring









Controlled Deer Tag Proposals

Hunt Type	2019 Tags	2020 Tags	% Change
Buck	50,611	49,067	-3.1%
Bow/Muzzleloader	4,376	4,397	0.5%
Antlerless (600)	7,872	7,875	0.0%
Youth	1,243	1,329	6.9%
Premium	67	67	0.0%
Total Deer	64,169	62,735	-2.2%

Controlled Buck Deer Season Proposals

-  **Boundary expansion or simplification for 13 hunts**
-  **Bag limit changes for 13 hunts**
-  **Three unit-wide bow hunts combined into 1 hunt**
-  **One regional muzzleloader hunt split into 4 unit-wide hunts**
-  **Eliminate SE Whitehorse Bow and Juniper Muzzleloader hunts**
-  **Three new late-season mule deer hunts – Heppner, Fossil, and John Day River Canyon**

Controlled Antlerless Deer Proposals

-  **Consolidate 16 hunts into 7 hunts**
-  **Expand or simplify dates for 16 hunts**
-  **Lengthening all unit wide 600 series hunts in coastal units**
-  **Boundary expansion or simplification for 17 hunts**
-  **One new hunting opportunity**
-  **Bag limit changes for 38 hunts**

Black-tailed Deer Bag Limits

Current bag limit:

- One buck having not less than a forked antler
- One antlerless or spike deer

Key issue – “spike” harvest

No scientific basis for current bag limit

Unnecessarily reduces hunters success

Tags targeting antlerless deer used for spike bucks

Black-tailed Deer Bag Limits

- 🦌 **Common misconception:**
 - Spike buck = 1 year old
 - Fork buck = 2 year old
- 🦌 **Antler points dependent on nutrition and genetics**
- 🦌 **Department data; 36-43% of yearling bucks had 2+ antler points**
- 🦌 **Current bag limit focuses yearling harvest on the healthiest bucks**
- 🦌 **Protects less rigorous bucks that have the lowest post-season survival rate**

Black-tailed Deer Bag Limits




- 🦌 **Proposed bag limit:**
 - One buck with visible antler
 - One antlerless deer
- 🦌 **Easy to understand, consistent statewide**
- 🦌 **Less enforcement concern**
- 🦌 **Higher success and hunter satisfaction**
- 🦌 **Promote hunter recruitment**
- 🦌 **Scientifically justified bag limit**
- 🦌 **Antlerless deer tags used to harvest does**

Black-tailed Deer Bag Limits






Primary Public Concerns:

- Proposed bag limit will lead to less big bucks in the population
- BTD populations cannot sustain higher buck harvest success and populations will decline

Black-tailed Deer Bag Limits

-  **Misconception that antler point restrictions lead to more big bucks in the population**
-  **Antler point restrictions force more harvest on larger bucks**
-  **Spike harvest allowed in eastern Oregon, however the proportion of spikes in population is similar between black-tailed deer (18%) and mule deer (16%)**

Black-tailed Deer Bag Limits

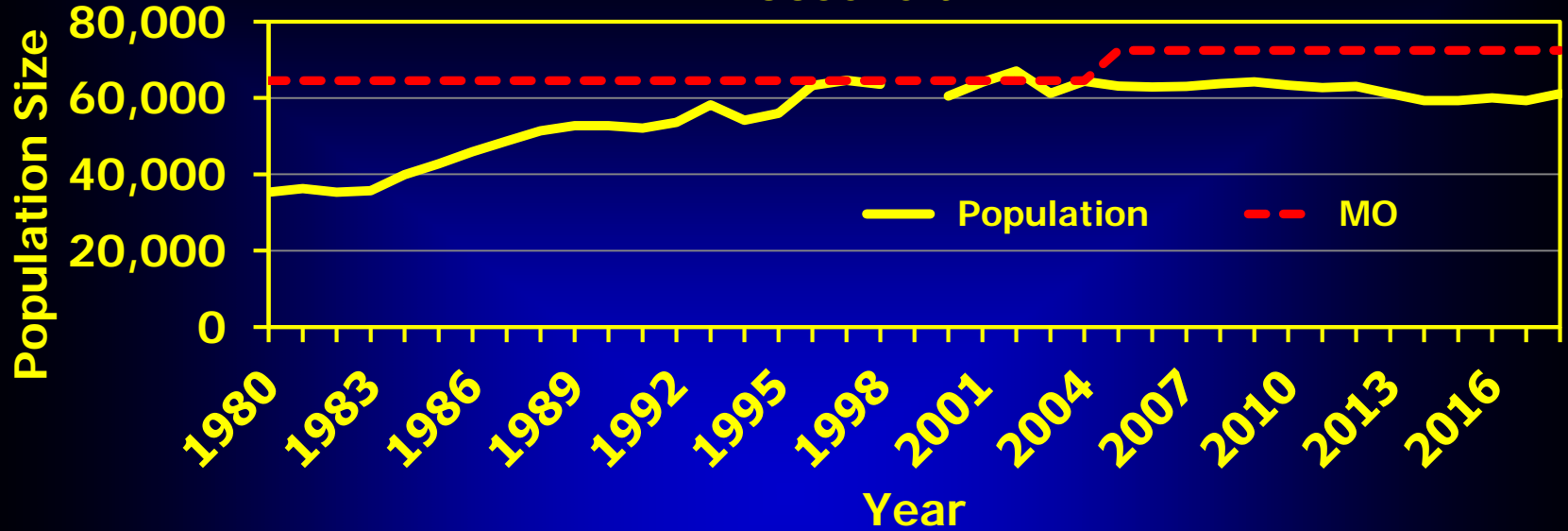
-  Adequate number of bucks to sustain increased harvest
-  All but one WMU has met or exceeded buck ratio benchmarks in 2 of last 3 years
-  Spotlight surveys underestimate buck ratios
-  SW OR remote camera data shows much higher buck ratios
-  Preliminary fecal DNA work shows much higher buck ratios – over 50 bucks per 100 does

General Deer Season Proposals

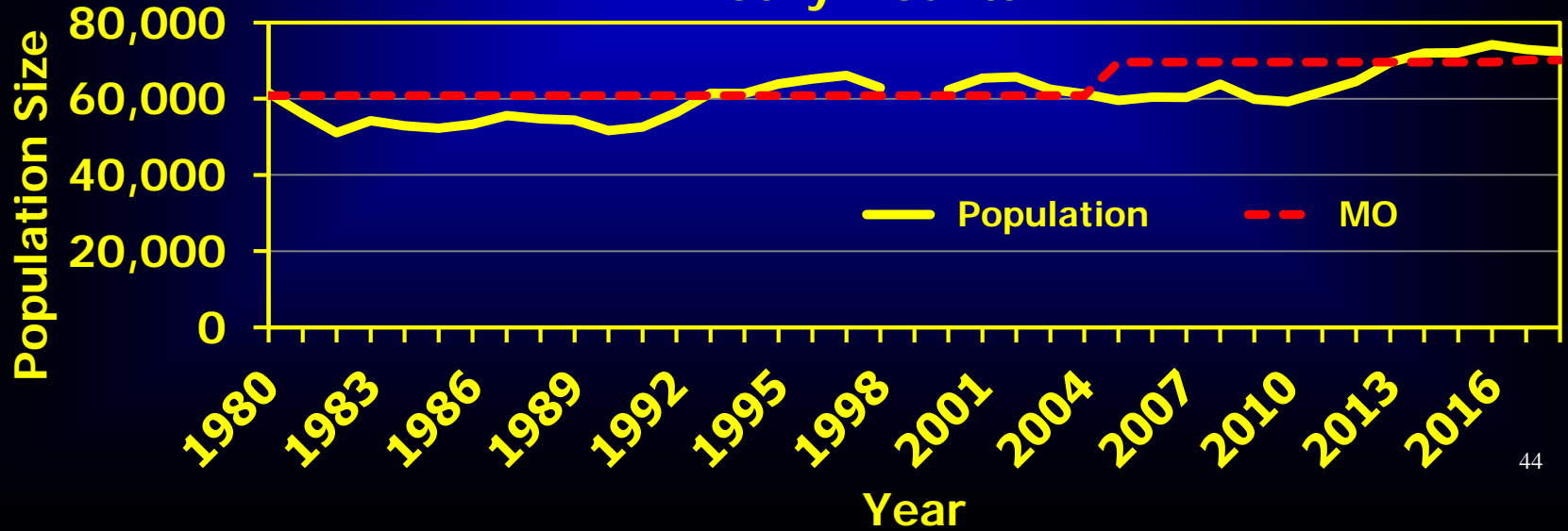
Season	Bag Limit	2020 Season
Coast Buck Rifle	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Oct. 3 – Nov. 6
Cascade Buck Rifle	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Oct. 3 – Oct. 16 Oct. 24 – Nov. 6
Western General Bow	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Aug. 29 – Sept. 27
NW Late Deer Bow	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Nov. 21 – Dec. 13
SW Late Deer Bow	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Nov. 14 – Dec. 6
Eastern General Bow	Buck w/ Visible Antler	Aug. 29 – Sept. 27

Elk Population Status

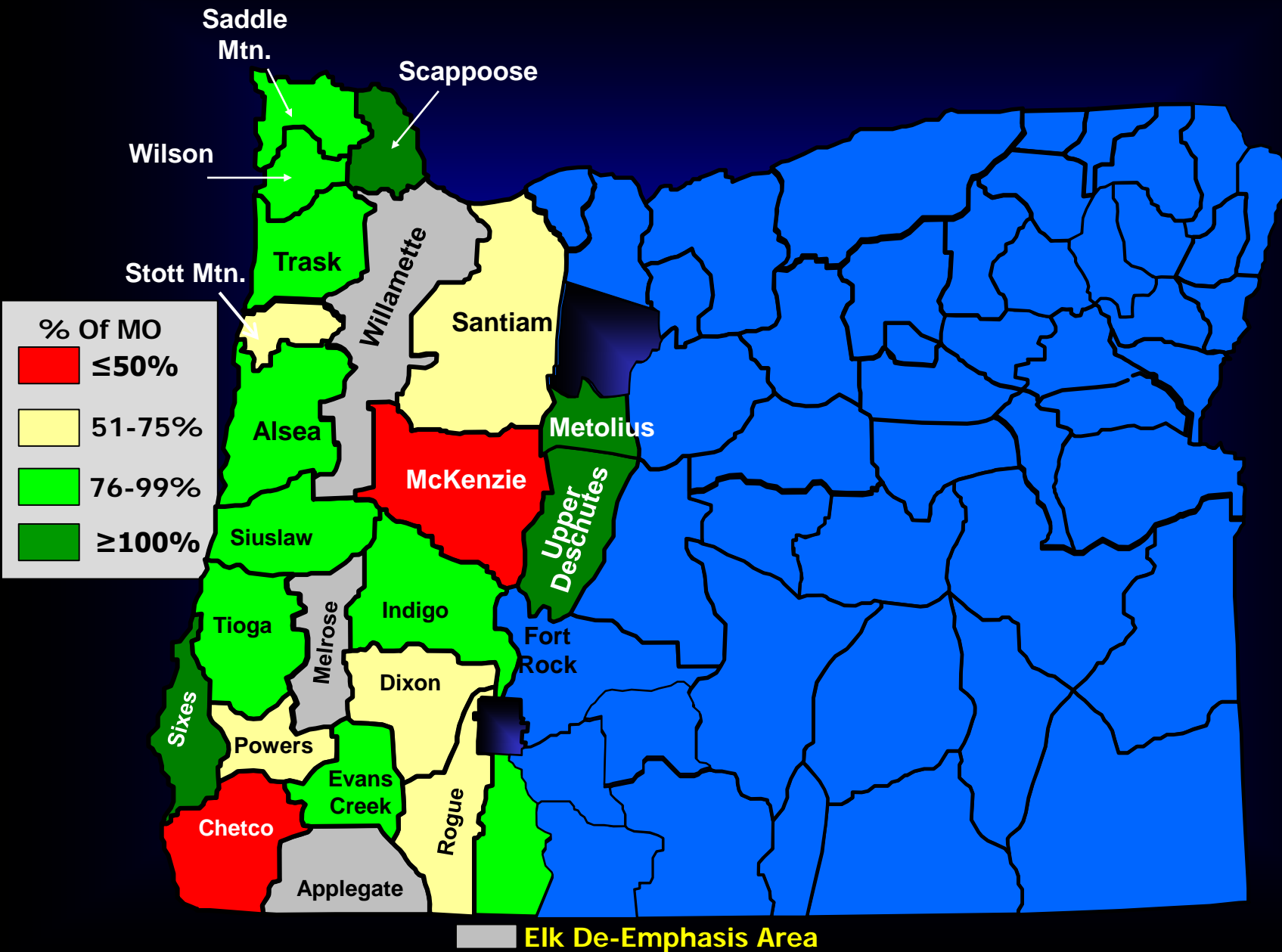
Roosevelt Elk



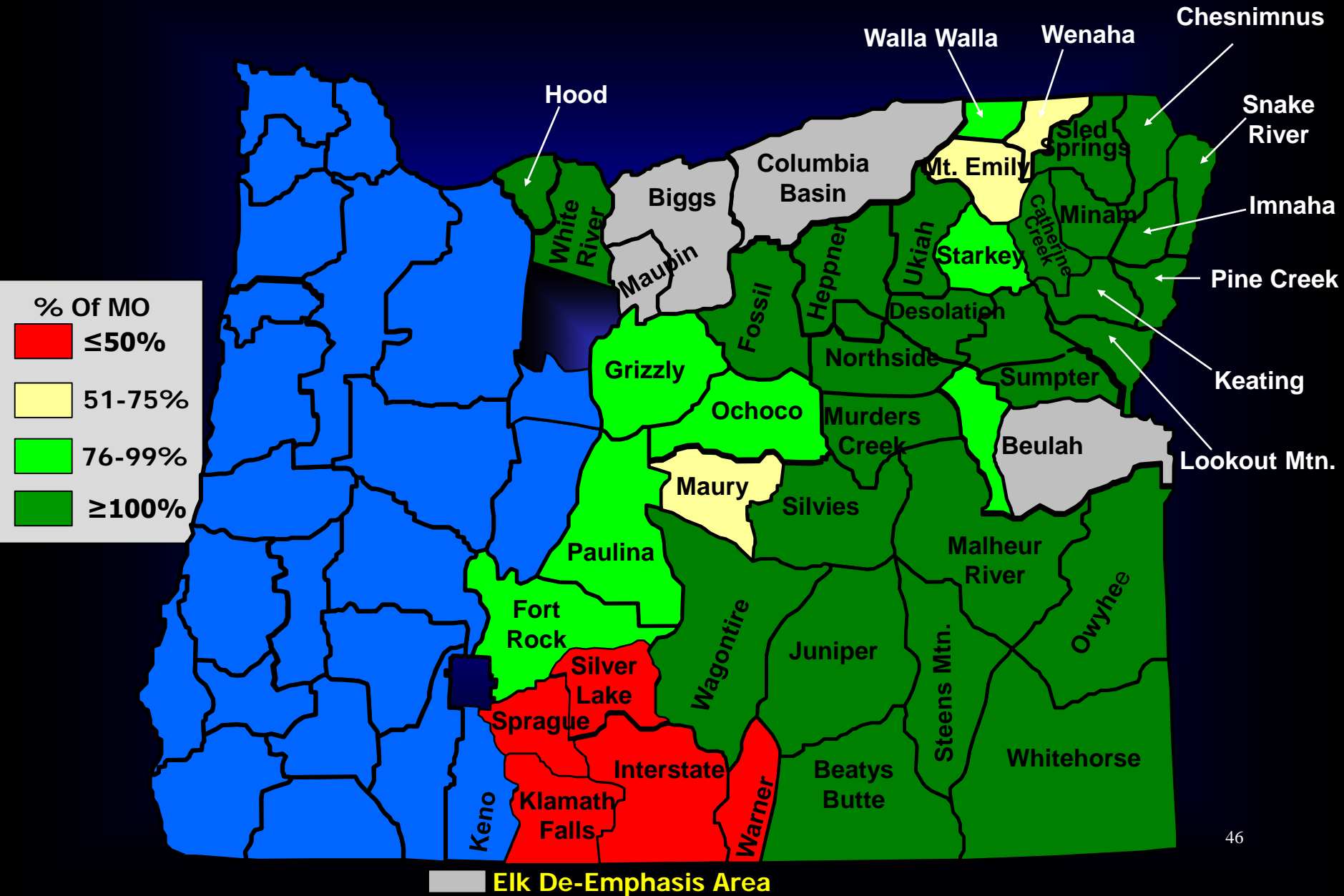
Rocky Mountain Elk



Roosevelt Elk Population MOs








Rocky Mtn. Elk Population MOs








Controlled Elk Tag Proposals

Hunt Type	2019 Tags	2020 Tags	% Change
Bull / Either Sex	35,640	37,619	5.6%
Bow/Muzzleloader	8,957	7,735	-13.6%
Antlerless	14,094	13,464	-4.5%
Youth	1,273	1,358	7.5%
Premium	64	64	0.0%
Total Elk	60,028	60,240	0.4%

2020 Controlled Hunt Changes

-  **87 Hunts consolidated into 31 hunts**
-  **Seasons expanded, simplified for 25 hunts**
-  **Boundary simplified or expanded for 25 hunts**
-  **Five bag limits made consistent**
-  **Six new hunting opportunities**

Expanding Traditional Archery

-  **Small portion of Murderer's Creek Unit prohibits hunting with compound bows during the first seven days of general archery season**
-  **1% of hunters prefer traditional archery**
-  **Anecdotal evidence suggest 20-30 hunters/year**
-  **Significant complication to general archery season**
-  **Meet goals of project by allowing all archery hunting within Murderer's Creek Unit**








Expanding Traditional Archery

Package of proposed changes:





- 🦌 **North Fork John Day Wilderness elk hunt**
- 🦌 **Commit to proposing two new traditional only hunts in western Oregon for 2021 season**
- 🦌 **Address complexity in existing hunts**
 - **Issue a set number of tags for Trout Creek traditional archery only deer hunt**
 - **Allow all archery hunters to hunt the entire Murderer's Creek Unit during general archery season**

Expanding Traditional Archery

Package of proposed changes:




-  **Increases opportunity for traditional archers to hunt without other archers**
-  **Still allows traditional archery hunting within Canyon Creek area**
-  **Replaces a poor quality hunt with a high quality hunt**
-  **Meets the goals of the Big Game Review**
-  **Seasons based on hunter preference**
-  **New hunts increase hunter opportunity**
-  **Improves regulations for hunter recruitment**

General Antlerless Elk Damage Tag

-  **Elk population increases on private, agricultural land**
-  **Project objective – reduce elk population on private land, shift populations to public land**
-  **Primarily utilize controlled hunts and Landowner Damage Program Tags**
-  **Despite tools, private land elk populations continue to increase**








General Antlerless Elk Damage Tag

Controlled hunt constraints:

-  **May 15 application deadline**
-  **Hunters must know up to 10 months in advance they have private land access and elk are present**
-  **Tags are limited, while populations warrant unlimited tags**






General Antlerless Elk Damage Tag

Landowner Damage Program tag constraints:

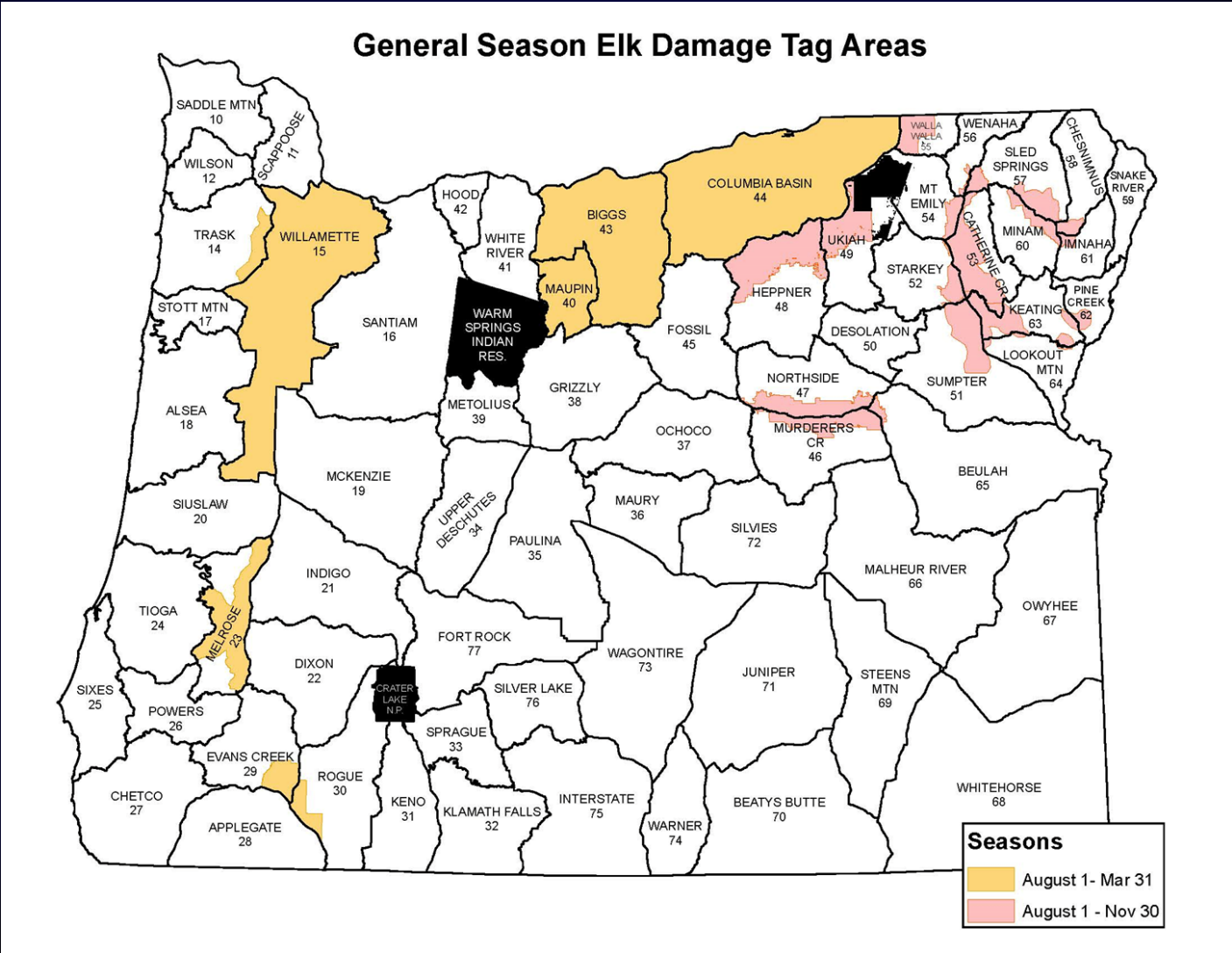
-  3,500 to 4,000 issued annually
-  Only valid on single property
-  Can only be issued when staff present at office
-  Time intensive for landowners and staff
-  Often issued when existing controlled hunts already taking place
-  Not linked to mandatory reporting
-  Most tags are being issued as an exchange and utilized as a second elk hunting opportunity

General Antlerless Elk Damage Tag

Proposal:

-  **Pilot period for 2020**
-  **Establish an over-the-counter antlerless elk tag**
-  **Valid in chronic elk damage areas identified and mapped annually**
-  **Replaces the need for Landowner Damage Program tags during designated areas and times**
-  **No tag sale deadline**

General Antlerless Elk Damage Tag



Other Elk Proposals

- ❖ **Many hunts no longer necessary due to General Antlerless Elk Damage Tag**
- ❖ **Columbia Plateau controlled elk hunt**
 - One elk: Oct. 28 to Nov. 30
 - Antlerless elk: Dec. 1 – Mar. 30
- ❖ **Eastern Cascade elk seasons; controlled**
- ❖ **Simplify archery bag in the Heppner Unit**

General Elk Season Proposals

Season	Bag Limit	2020 Season
Coast 1 st Season	One Bull	Nov. 14–17
Coast 2 nd Season	One Bull One Spike Bull (Units 12, 14, 20)	Nov. 21–27
Cascade	One Bull	Oct. 17–23
Rocky Mtn. 2 nd Season	One Spike Bull	Nov. 7–15
General Season Elk Damage Tag	Antlerless Elk	W Oregon & De- emphasis Areas, Aug. 1 – Mar. 31; E Oregon outside De- emphasis Areas Aug. 1 – Nov. 30
General Bow	Legal Bull	Aug. 29–Sept. 27

2020 Western Gray Squirrel Seasons

- 🐿 **North-Central Oregon** (Hood, White River, Metolius, Upper Deschutes, and Paulina Units)

September 15 – October 31

3/day, 6 in Possession

- 🐿 **Remainder of the State**

September 1 – November 15

5/day, 15 in Possession

- 🐿 **Portion of Rogue Unit**

January 1 – December 31

No Bag/Possession Limit

Questions?

