

Information for July 2024 Wildlife District Outreach

Migratory and Upland Game Bird Updates

2024-2025 Migratory and Upland Game Bird seasons were adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission on April 19, 2024. Setting game bird seasons in April allows the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (department) to publish the Game Bird Regulations by early July. The 2024-2025 seasons will again open a bit later this year, primarily to avoid conflict with the controlled buck deer opener. Specifically, eastside chukar, quail and partridge will open on October 12, 2024. This delay also results in concurrent openers for Zone 1 and Zone 2 duck seasons on October 12th to maximize total hunt days allowed within the federal framework.

Following is a list of major Commission adopted changes for 2024-2025 game bird seasons:

Upland Game Birds

- For most upland game birds, all aspects of the seasons (e.g., season dates, daily bag limits, possession limits) are covered by the 2020-2025 Upland Game Bird Hunting Season Framework. A summary of seasons covered by the framework is provided in the table below.

Upland Game Birds	Open Area	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
Ruffed and Blue Grouse	Statewide	Sept. 1 – Jan 31, 2025	3 each species	9 each species
Chukar and Hungarian (Gray) Partridge	Statewide	Oct. 12 – Jan. 31, 2025	8	24
Rooster Pheasant	Statewide	Oct. 12 – Dec. 31, 2024	2	8
	Western Oregon	Sept. 1 – Jan 31, 2025	10	30
Quail (California and Mountain)	Eastern Oregon	Oct. 12 – Jan 31, 2025	10 (may not include more than 2 Mtn Quail)	30 (may not include more than 6 Mtn Quail)

- The special Beardless Turkey Permit (created in 2023) allowing fall turkey hunters to harvest 3 hen wild turkeys and/or wild turkeys without a visible beard has been expanded for 2024. Hunters are still allowed to harvest 3 turkeys per day on this permit and can purchase up to 3 permits over the season. Turkeys harvested on this permit will not need to be tagged, but hunters will still need to fill out the permit (similar to a fee pheasant permit) and report their harvest. In 2024, portions of two more wildlife management units have been added to this eastern Oregon permit hunt area and a portion of western Oregon, specifically private lands excluding private industrial forestland within the boundaries of Marion, Polk, Yamhill, Benton, Linn, and eastern Lane counties was added to the permit hunt area. Also updated are permit season dates which stretch from Nov. 1 to Feb 28.
- The area open for the early fall turkey season that opens Sept. 1 in eastern Oregon was expanded to include portions of the Ochoco and Beulah Wildlife Management Units.
- Sage-grouse season length and bag limit are unchanged. Permit numbers will be finalized in late July but early lek counts look promising. Application period is July 1 – August 9 and season dates are September 7-15, 2024.

Migratory Game Birds

- Regular season dates shifts with the calendar and the concurrent opens for zone 1 and zone 2 duck seasons.
- February season dates are similar for the white and white-fronted goose seasons in the Mid-Columbia but the opening date has been moved from early November to mid-October. This keeps hunting days in February in place, which are designed to help address agricultural depredation and shift days from January to earlier in the season at the request of hunters and landowners.
- The daily bag limit of ducks continues to be seven but within the daily bag limit, hunters are now limited to not more than one harlequin duck.

Wildlife Area Hunt Program Regulations

- Through improvements in the Electronic Licensing System (ELS), hunters who have drawn a Fern Ridge, Klamath (opening day), or Sauvie Island Wildlife Area reservation hunt are no longer required to purchase the \$2 Wildlife Area Reservation Daily Hunt Permits.

Furbearer Trapping and Hunting Updates

Furbearer Trapping and Hunting Regulations are set for two-year periods and the July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026 Oregon Furbearer Trapping and Hunting Regulations were adopted at the June 14, 2024 Commission meeting. Most regulations were continued into the 2024-2026 period but the following details one notable change adopted by the Commission.

Sierra Nevada Red Fox Harvest Closure

- The Sierra Nevada Red Fox (SNRF) is a native subspecies of red fox that is found at higher elevations in the Oregon Cascades but also into California where the Sierra Nevada DPS is federally listed. ODFW and partners have been rigorously researching the Oregon SNRF population for nearly a decade to address major population questions.
- A moratorium on red fox harvest across the current SNRF range has been implemented until answers have been acquired. This closure includes areas 15 miles from the Pacific Crest Trail from the Washington border south to Interstate 5.



Figure. Red fox harvest closure area defined as 15 miles from the Pacific Crest Trail from Washington border south to Interstate 5.

Mule Deer Management Plan Update

Over the last two years, the Oregon Mule Deer Management Plan was revised by staff and utilized a large public process that included multiple webinars and in-person meetings. The end product from this large effort was a new revision of the plan that was adopted by the Commission in June.

Through the updated goal and associated objectives, this plan provides direction to the department and communicates direction to partners and the public, for navigating through the contemporary, complicated interactions of all the biological, environmental, and social factors affecting mule deer. The resulting combined effort is focused on improving mule deer populations to meet the department’s mission to protect and enhance Oregon’s fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.

Plan directed changes will not occur during the 2025 Big Game Regulation setting process but discussions about what these changes might be for 2026 may occur in the near future. For more information on the plan or to view past webinars, visit our website at www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/management_plans/mule_deer.

Big Game Regulation Overview and Species by Species Highlights

Big Game Regulations Development Process

2025 Big Game Hunting Regulations, will be adopted at the September 13, 2024 Commission meeting in The Dalles, Oregon. The meeting format will include both an in-person and virtual attendance option with the latter requiring 48-hour advanced sign-up.

The deadline for hunters to apply for deer, elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, and Rocky Mountain goat controlled hunts is May 15th with revisions or corrections to applications allowed through May 25th. Starting in 2023, draw results were released on June 12, a release date eight days earlier than previous years, providing additional time for hunt preparation and decision-making. This timeline will be continued in 2025 and beyond.

General Regulation Proposals for 2025

As a reminder, the hunting season framework was modified in 2020 so that the season dates are built off of the buck deer any legal weapon season opening on the first Saturday in October. Last year (2023) represented the latest calendar date possible for big game seasons and seasons will now start moving earlier in the year for a few years. To keep openers on the correct day of the week, the 2025 dates below are one calendar day earlier than 2024. “Standard” season dates for 2025 hunts are as follows:

Pronghorn (1 st Centerfire Season).....	Aug. 16–24
Archery Deer and Elk.....	Aug. 30–Sept. 28
Western Buck Deer and Antlerless Deer.....	Oct. 4–Nov. 7
Controlled Buck Deer.....	Oct. 4–Oct. 15
Eastern OR Antlerless Deer.....	Oct. 18–26
Cascade Bull.....	Nov. 8–14
General Coast 1 st Season.....	Nov. 15–18
General Coast 2 nd Season.....	Nov. 22–Nov. 28
Rocky Mtn. Bull Elk 1 st Season.....	Oct. 29–Nov. 2
Rocky Mtn. Bull Elk 2 nd Season.....	Nov. 8–16
Rocky Mtn. Antlerless Elk.....	Nov. 22–30

Some relevant 2025 holidays that may influence season dates are:

Labor Day.....	September 1
Thanksgiving.....	November 27

Big Game Hunting Proposals

The department is not proposing any changes to general regulations, however there are proposals to enact one Travel Management Area (TMA) closure and modify tags (section below).

The Bald Angel TMA is an existing TMA administered by the United States Forest Service in the Catherine Creek and Keating Wildlife Management Units of northeastern Oregon. This TMA is designed to reduce wildlife disturbance. The department is proposing to include the TMA in the Big Game Regulations with closure dates occurring April 30 to December 1.

Controlled Hunt Tag Numbers Summary

Total proposed controlled hunt tag numbers for 2025 seasons (149,255) (Table 1) are a decrease of less than 1% from 149,739 in 2024. See Table 1 below and the draft tag tables for controlled hunt tag numbers and details for each species/hunt series.

Table 1. Summary of proposed controlled hunt tag numbers for 2025.

Species	Series	Weapon/Type	2024 tags	Proposed 2025 tags	% Change 2024 to 2025
DEER	100	ALW ¹	42,096	42,597	1%
		Archery	15,515	15,411	-1%
		Muzzleloader	2,737	3,089	13%
		Youth	291	292	<1%
	600	ALW ¹	8,701	8,687	<-1%
		Youth	1,408	1,432	2%
	L Premium	ALW	67	67	0%
Total			70,815	71,575	1%
ELK	200	ALW ¹	45,860	44,952	-2%
		Archery	16,017	15,477	-3%
		Muzzleloader	2,294	2,294	0%
		Youth	1,675	1,670	<-1%
	M Premium	ALW ¹	64	64	0%
Total			65,910	64,457	-2%
PRONGHORN	400	ALW ¹	1,405	1,380	-2%
		Archery	492	492	0%
		Muzzleloader	138	138	0%
		Youth	37	37	0%
	N Premium	ALW ¹	26	26	0%
Total			2,098	2,073	-1%
BIGHORN	500	CA Ram	77	80	4%
		CA Ewe	40	50	82%
		RM Ram	5	6	1%
Total			122	136	12%
MTN GOAT	900	ALW ¹	21	23	10%
		Total			21
BEAR	700	ALW ¹	10,555	10,719	1%
		Youth	218	273	5%
	Total			10,773	10,992
TOTAL			149,739	149,256	<-1%

¹ Any Legal Weapon Season (ALW)

Species by Species Highlights

For species with controlled hunts (**Deer, Elk, Pronghorn Antelope, Bighorn Sheep, Rocky Mountain Goat, and Black Bear**) the details of changes to tag numbers, deleted hunts, new hunts, etc., can be found in the attached controlled hunt tag tables for each species which are also available online. Controlled hunt tag numbers are summarized in Table 1(above).

Buck Deer – 100 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- Expansion of N Bank Habitat to include all of Melrose WMU
- Increase in tags in the Sumpter, Beulah, Malheur River, Owyhee, NE Owyhee, Interstate, Silver Lake, Steens Mtn archery, Sixes muzzleloader, and Hart Mtn muzzleloader
- Three new muzzleloader hunts on private in Chesnimnus, Snake River, and Imnaha to address increasing white-tailed deer and damage. These hunts will require mandatory chronic wasting disease (CWD) sampling.

Antlerless Deer – 600 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- Increase tags in southwest Oregon hunts
- Decrease tags in Umatilla NWR

Elk – 200 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- North Plains hunts into a single hunt covering the same time period
- Decreased tags in Murderers Creek, Fossil, and Heppner
- Increased cow tags in Ukiah and Starkey AND new Ukiah private cow hunt to address damage
- Reduced tags in Mt Emily, Walla Walla, and Wenaha spike tags
- Reduction to three Zumwalt hunts but maintain full season duration
- Other reductions in tags or deletion of hunts due to reduced damage

Pronghorn – 400 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- Decreased tags in Ochoco and Steens Mtn

Bighorn Sheep – 500 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- Decreased tags in Warner
- Increased tags in six ram hunts and the two ewe hunts
- New Wenaha hunt; three-year tag rotation with CTUIR and WDFW

Rocky Mountain Goat – 900 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- Increased tags in S Wallowa Mtn
- New Central Cascades hunt

Bear – 700 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- Increased tags in S Blues and Starkey-Ukiah hunts
- New Alsea-Stott Mtn Youth hunt

Premium Hunts

Staff are proposing no changes to Premium Hunts for 2025

Western Gray Squirrel

Regulations for western gray squirrel seasons can be found in both the Big Game Regulations and Game Bird Regulations. No changes are proposed for 2025 western gray squirrel seasons.