

Proposed 2026 Transition from Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) to Deer Hunt Areas

Key Information About the New Proposed Deer Hunt Areas

Big Thanks to Hunters!

ODFW thanks Oregon hunters for their invaluable input in shaping the updated Mule Deer Management Plan! Your voices and dedication to conservation are making a real impact.

Starting with the 2026 season, we're transitioning from Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) to Deer Hunt Areas to better align hunting boundaries with Oregon's mule deer populations and management goals. Your support helps ensure a strong future for mule deer and hunting in Oregon.

The change, set to be adopted in September 2025, will affect how you apply for mule deer hunts and navigate hunting regulations. Changes may also affect where you can hunt once you have drawn your tag.

What's Changing and Why:

In June 2024, ODFW finalized the state's Mule Deer Management Plan. The plan focuses on managing and harvesting mule deer based on biological herd ranges. ODFW utilized GPS collar data from more than 1,400 mule deer to delineate 22 unique mule deer herd ranges in eastern Oregon.

Part of the 2024 mule deer plan was implementation of an improved population model which will allow improved monitoring of mule deer population trends, identification of declining populations, and rapid management response to population declines. These models require accurate harvest data within a herd range. Delaying implementation of new hunt areas further delays collection of accurate herd range scale harvest data and reduces the accuracy of new monitoring and modeling techniques.

By re-defining our Deer Hunt Areas to reflect natural herd range boundaries, ODFW can improve harvest and herd management, set more accurate tag totals, and more effectively assess population responses to management actions.

Got Questions About the New Proposed Deer Hunt Areas?

Your local district wildlife staff is your best resource for information. If you're unsure about access or how changes to hunt area boundaries may impact your favorite hunting spots, don't hesitate to reach out. More information will be posted online as it becomes available.

What Hunters Need to Know: —

New Naming System: Deer Hunt Areas will use a new alphanumeric system to identify hunt areas within herd ranges. For example, hunt area #1 within the Northeast herd range would be NE 01.

Larger Hunt Areas: Expect hunting areas that are larger than the traditional WMUs. These larger hunt areas will be less impacted by closures and allow hunters more flexibility in response to wildfire or hunting pressure.

Tag Adjustments: In the short term, there may be slight tag changes to manage hunter pressure. Adjustments could fluctuate over the next few years as hunters and ODFW adapt to these new hunt areas.

What will be affected: New hunt areas will apply to all eastern Oregon deer hunting including bucks, does, and all weapon types.

Fewer Total Hunts: Larger hunt areas mean fewer individual hunts overall.

Preference Points: There are no changes to preference points but like all new hunts, there will be a period of uncertainty regarding preference points needed to hunt a given area. Hunters should consider this uncertainty when deciding how to use preference points over the next few years.

Landowner Preference Tags: These tags may also change based on how properties fall within new herd ranges and hunt areas.

How to determine which hunt to apply for:

Written descriptions for each new hunt area will be provided in the 2026 Big Game Hunting Regulations and on MyODFW.com. In addition, maps are available showing the relationship between Wildlife Management Units and 2026 Deer Hunt Areas. Follow the links below for an interactive map or check out the printed version on the back of this document.

To view the new map, scan the QR code or visit:

go.MyODFW.com/MuleDeerPlan

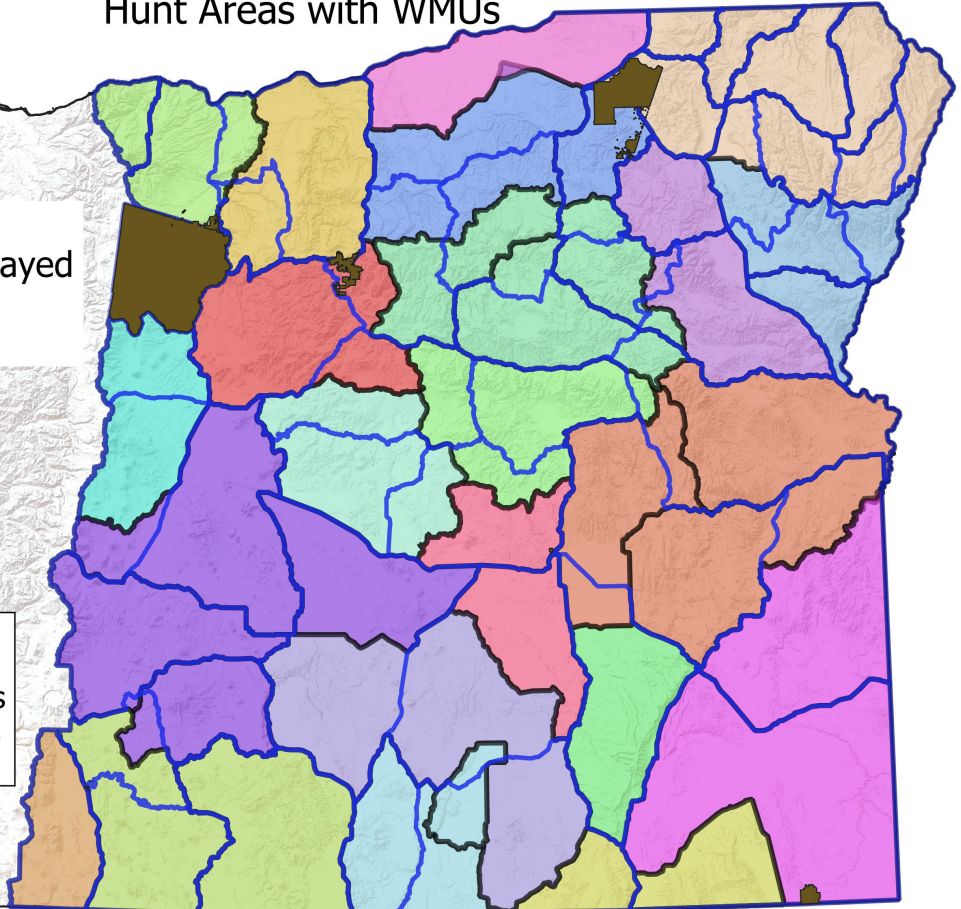


2026 Proposed Eastern Oregon Deer Hunt Areas with WMUs

Map displays traditional WMUs (blue lines) overlaid on proposed Deer Hunt Areas.

Legend

-  Eastern Oregon WMUs
-  2026 Deer Hunt Areas
-  Tribal Lands



2026 Proposed Eastern Oregon Deer Hunt Areas

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