

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE 2016-2017 AND 2017-2018 HUNTING SEASONS

**As approved by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission
September 4, 2015**

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SCHEDULE FOR FORMULATING 2016-2017 AND 2017-2018 HUNT RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROXIMATE TIMELINE	HUNT GUIDELINES SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBILITY
Dec 15, 2014	Solicit both internal and external comment on existing Hunt Guidelines	Game Branch
Dec 15, 2014	Noticed Executive Staff and Commission that the public comment period on existing Hunt Guidelines was open	Game Branch
Dec 15, 2014– Feb 15, 2015	Public comment period	Game Branch
Feb 6, 2015	Commission briefing on Hunt Guidelines and Hunt Recommendation processes and on public comments received on current Hunt Guidelines (1 st Read)	Game Branch
Feb 13–Mar 9, 2015	Individual meetings with Commissioners to discuss Hunt Guidelines	Game Branch
Feb 27, 2015	Joint meeting to initiate review of Hunt Guidelines and initial public comments	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Mar 6, 2015	Commission briefing on public comments received on current Hunt Guidelines (2nd Read)	Game Branch
May 13, 2015	Draft Hunt Guidelines to Executive Staff and Commission	Game Branch
May 20, 2015	Draft Hunt Guidelines posted on website for public; targeted email to a random sample of hunters soliciting comment	Game Branch
May 26–Jun 10, 2015	Public comment period	Game Branch
May 26–Jun 8, 2015	Hold public meetings	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Jun 12, 2015	Commission briefing on draft Hunt Guidelines and public comment received; identify alternatives for the Hunt Guidelines (3 rd Read)	Game Branch
Jul 1, 2015	Second draft of Hunt Guidelines distributed to Executive Staff, Commission, and public	Game Branch
Jul 1–31, 2015	Public comment period	Game Branch
Aug 1–15, 2015	Finalize proposed Hunt Guidelines	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Aug 15, 2015	Final Proposed Hunt Guidelines to Executive Staff and Commission	Game Branch
Aug 24, 2015	Commission memos and proposed Hunt Guidelines distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public at Regional offices and on website (one week later)	Game Branch-Director's Office
Sept 4, 2015	Proposed Hunt Guidelines for fall 2016–spring 2018 seasons presented to Commission for approval	Game Branch

<u>APPROXIMATE TIMELINE</u>	<u>HUNT RECOMMENDATION SCHEDULE</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>
Oct 10, 2015	Pronghorn, elk, and population management hunt and permit recommendations submitted in writing to Game Branch	Regional Supervisors
Oct 21–25, 2015	Hold meetings with individual Regions to finalize recommendations and analyze public input	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Nov 15, 2015	Commission memos and draft hunt recommendations distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public on website and during Regional open houses (one week later)	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Dec 7, 2015	Present hunt recommendations to Commission to set seasons and bag limits for pronghorn, elk, and population management seasons	Game Branch
Jan 2016 or upon appointment	Briefing of new Commissioner on the Hunt Recommendations and Hunt Guidelines processes	Game Branch
Mar 1, 2016	Deer, fall turkey, fall javelina, bighorn sheep, fall bison, fall bear, mountain lion, small game (2-year), trapping (2-year), predator-furbearer (2-year), and other birds and mammals (2-year) hunt and permit recommendations submitted in writing to Game Branch	Regional Supervisors
Mar 5–16, 2016	Hold meetings with individual Regions to finalize recommendations and analyze public input	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Mar 20, 2016	Commission memos and draft hunt recommendations distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public on website and during Regional open houses (one week later)	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Apr 2016	Present hunt recommendations to Commission to set seasons and bag limits for deer, fall turkey, fall javelina, bighorn sheep, fall bison, fall bear, mountain lion, small game (2-year), trapping (2-year), predator-furbearer (2-year), and other birds and mammals (2-year) seasons	Game Branch
May 25, 2016	Commission memos and draft hunt recommendations distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public on website (one week later)	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Jun 2016	Present webless migratory hunt recommendations to Commission to set permit number and bag limits	Game Branch
Jul 1, 2016	Spring turkey, javelina, bison, and bear hunt and permit recommendations submitted in writing to Game Branch	Regional Supervisors
Jul 17, 2016	Commission memos and draft hunt recommendations distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public on website and during Regional open houses (one week later)	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Aug 2016	Present spring turkey, javelina, bison, and bear and webbed migratory hunt recommendations to Commission to set permit numbers and bag limits	Game Branch
Oct 15, 2016	Pronghorn, elk, and population management hunt and permit recommendations submitted in writing to Game Branch	Regional Supervisors

<u>APPROXIMATE TIMELINE</u>	<u>HUNT RECOMMENDATION SCHEDULE</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>
Oct 2016	Hold meetings with individual Regions to finalize recommendations and analyze public input	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Nov 15, 2016	Commission memos and draft hunt recommendations distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public on website and during Regional open houses (one week later)	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Dec 2016	Present hunt recommendations to Commission to set seasons and bag limits for pronghorn, elk, and population management seasons	Game Branch
<u>APPROXIMATE TIMELINE</u>	<u>NEW HUNT GUIDELINE CYCLE AND HUNT RECOMMENDATION SCHEDULE</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>
Jan –Mar 2017	Solicit public comment on the existing hunt guidelines	Game Branch
Jan 2017 or upon appointment	Briefing of new Commissioner on the Hunt Guidelines and Hunt Recommendations processes	Game Branch
Feb-Mar 2017	Query Commission regarding hunt guidelines concerns to be evaluated during the hunt guideline review cycle (this may occur via a Commission Workshop or an agenda item at a Commission meeting)	Game Branch
Mar 1, 2017	Deer, fall turkey, fall javelina, bighorn sheep, fall bison, fall bear, mountain lion hunt and permit recommendations submitted in writing to Game Branch	Regional Supervisors
Mar 2017	Hold meetings with individual Regions to finalize hunt recommendations and analyze public input	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Mar 2017	Hunt Guidelines distributed to Department and Commission for internal review	Game Branch
Mar 20, 2017	Commission memos and draft hunt recommendations distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public on website and during Regional open houses (one week later)	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Apr 1, 2017	Hunt Guidelines distributed to public for external review	Game Branch
Apr 2017	Present hunt recommendations to Commission to set seasons and bag limits for deer, fall turkey, fall javelina, bighorn sheep, fall bison, fall bear, and mountain lion	Game Branch
May 2017	All recommended changes to Hunt Guidelines are due to Game Branch	All Regions
May 2017	Joint meeting to review Hunt Guideline recommended changes	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
May 25, 2017	Commission memos and draft hunt recommendations distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public on website (one week later)	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Jun 2017	Present webless migratory hunt recommendations to Commission to set permit number and bag limits	Game Branch

<u>APPROXIMATE TIMELINE</u>	<u>NEW HUNT GUIDELINE CYCLE AND HUNT RECOMMENDATION SCHEDULE</u>	<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>
Jun 2017	Draft Hunt Guidelines to Executive Staff and Commission for initial review	Game Branch
Jun 1–25, 2017	Hold public meetings regarding Hunt Guidelines	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Jun 30, 2017	Public comment period ends for Hunt Guidelines	Game Branch
Jul 1, 2017	Spring turkey, javelina, bison, and bear hunt and permit recommendations submitted in writing to Game Branch	Regional Supervisors
Jul 2017	Commission workshop to identify alternatives for the hunt guidelines	Game Branch
Jul 17, 2017	Commission memos and draft hunt recommendations distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public on website and during Regional open houses (one week later)	Game Branch and Regional Personnel
Aug 2017	Present spring turkey, javelina, bison, and bear and webbed migratory hunt recommendations to Commission to set permit numbers and bag limits	Game Branch
Aug 2017	Proposed Hunt Guidelines to Executive Staff and Commission for review	Game Branch
Aug 23, 2017	Commission memos and proposed Hunt Guidelines distributed to e-staff, Commission, and Regions. Available to public at Regional offices and on website (one week later)	Game Branch-Director's Office
Sep 2017	Draft Hunt Guidelines for fall 2018–spring 2020 seasons presented to Commission for approval	Game Branch

OBJECTIVE

The hunt guidelines are designed to be used by Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) wildlife managers when formulating hunt recommendations. The hunt guidelines are intended to provide general guidance on the parameters for which hunted or trapped species are managed. Like hunt recommendations, the hunt guidelines are shared with the Arizona Game and Fish Commission (Commission) and approved in public session following a regular review cycle described in the preceding pages.

The hunt guidelines themselves are one piece of an overall planning approach used by the Commission and Department in managing wildlife. While hunt guidelines describe what the Department manages toward, species management guidelines are protocols that describe how that data is collected. Management plans (e.g., Comprehensive Game Management Plan, species management plans, and management focus area plans) describe landscape level objectives, opportunities for habitat enhancement, specific herd management objectives (e.g., increase population), and management challenges (e.g., persistent low fawn recruitment for pronghorn).

The Department also operates under a Commission-approved strategic plan that provides agency vision, an operational plan that is shared with the Commission and developed by the Department that identifies specific objectives that the agency plans to complete within the time period covered by the operational plan, and an annual implementation plan that ties together budgets, specific tasks, and work units for the upcoming year.

The Department manages Arizona's wildlife within the biological limits of each species. Management strategies are developed to meet social acceptability, which is routinely more conservative than the limits at which wildlife may be biologically managed.

Ultimately, the Department manages wildlife in the public trust for all of Arizona. All game animals, from predators to big game, are managed as part of an important ecosystem to be sustained for future generations of Arizonans to enjoy. These hunt guidelines have been developed to meet a variety of hunting desires and strive to provide adequate opportunity for all. The guidelines are based on the best available biological and social science. Arizona has a diverse wildlife resource, yet many of these resources are limited in supply. The following guidelines attempt to provide the diversity of experiences desired by the hunters of Arizona, while providing the necessary management so that all Arizonans will benefit from diverse wildlife populations in the future.

HUNT GUIDELINE APPROACHES

The Department and Commission will revisit the guideline package with the public every 2 years in the summer. The 2-year hunt guideline framework aligns with the following approaches:

- Obtain input from the Commission on hunt guideline concerns that were brought to their attention; use this input to guide public survey questions.
- Use all necessary public outreach and information gathering avenues to ensure inclusion of all affected and interested customers in guideline and recommendation development.
- Maintain consistent wildlife survey protocol and interpretation to develop hunt recommendations across the state in accordance with the Species Management Guidelines and other pertinent plans (e.g., Comprehensive Game Management Plan, species management plans, and management focus area plans). Population management objectives for specific units may be described within these pertinent species management plans.
- Provide standardized and consistent hunt structures across the state; minimize and simplify hunt regulations and restrictions related to the hunt structure. Standardized and simplified hunt structures should not obstruct diversity of opportunity.

- Provide for a diversity of hunter opportunity while maintaining wildlife population health, structure, and integrity. Guidelines for this approach are:
 - Minimize hunt opportunity when the legal animals are most vulnerable (e.g., breeding period) in standard management areas.
 - Allocate hunt opportunity with respect to weapon type demand.
 - Maximize big game opportunity where practicable through the use of over-the-counter nonpermit-tags.
 - Use population management hunts to address specific management objectives that are not being achieved through standard hunt structures.
 - Use stratified hunt structure to reduce user conflicts and hunter densities.
 - Provide dispersed and limited alternative management (i.e., objectives are high hunt success and/or harvest of older age class animals) across the state.
 - Use targeted and liberalized big game harvest by hunters to address human-wildlife conflicts.
- Strive to distribute limited big game harvest opportunity commensurate with demand by method of take and success rates where practical. Emphasize youth and new big game hunter opportunities. In doing so, provide diverse and dispersed hunt opportunities to allow equitable availability and minimal conflict with other users.
- Emphasize small game, predator-furbearer, and other wildlife hunt opportunities. Guidelines for this approach are:
 - Liberalize bag and possession limits as well as season lengths within sustainable biological means to encourage hunter participation.
 - Maintain consistent season opener and structure to reduce hunter confusion among years.
- Allocate permits equitably with the Hopi tribe in proportion to the area and populations of big game that occupy Hopi sovereign lands when a reciprocal access agreement exists.

COMMISSION ORDER 2: DEER

The Department's Deer Management Goal is to maintain and, where possible, enhance deer populations at levels that provide maximum and diverse recreational opportunities, while avoiding adverse impacts to the species and its habitat. Guidelines for both species are grouped into "Standard" or "Alternative" hunt management.

Season prescriptions:

1. Hunts will be for "antlered mule deer," "antlered whitetail deer," or "any antlered deer." "Antlerless deer" or "any deer" permits may be recommended for units where the deer population requires reduction or stabilization, or when conflicts with other land management uses exist.
2. Separate hunts for mule deer and white-tailed deer will occur in units having adequate populations of both species of deer.
3. General and muzzleloader deer hunts will occur on standard opening dates. When stratified, a series of 7-day hunts may occur throughout October and November with all hunts opening on a specific Friday. A December white-tailed deer hunt will open the Friday of week 50 and continue to the end of the year. The following seasons will be available:

White-tailed or Mule Deer on Friday of week 43 (October 21, 2016 and October 27, 2017)
White-tailed or Mule Deer on Friday of week 44 (October 28, 2016 and November 3, 2017)
White-tailed or Mule Deer on Friday of week 45 (November 4, 2016 and November 10, 2017)
Mule Deer on Friday of week 46 (November 11, 2016 and November 17, 2017)
White-tailed on Friday of week 48 (November 25, 2016 and December 1, 2017)

If only a single early deer season is selected in October or November, the season should run for 10 days, unless data indicates harvest should be reduced then either permits will be reduced or the season will decrease to 7 days. If a white-tailed deer season is offered during week 48, the season will run for 10 days. Antlerless elk seasons will not overlap with a general or muzzleloader deer season in units with hunts for both species. Season dates will be selected to avoid such overlaps. If the unit is managed under Alternative Hunt Management, 10-day seasons may also be used. Rotation of units and season timing of muzzleloader hunts should be considered.

If a deer hunt has unissued permits after the hunt has ended 2 out of 3 years after returning to an online application system, then those tags may be allocated to a December hunt structure the following year.

4. A limited amount of December mule deer harvest opportunity may be offered in no more than 10 mule deer units that have adequate populations with at least one offered in each Region; no more than 40 permits will be offered per unit except in units that have had a December season structure. A limited amount of December white-tailed deer harvest opportunity will be offered in most white-tailed deer units. A total of up to 5% of all white-tailed deer permits statewide will be offered in December.

White-tailed or Mule Deer on Friday of week 50 (December 9, 2016 and December 15, 2017)

5. At least 5% of all general deer permits will be allocated to youth-only hunts. There will be at least 1 general youth-only deer hunts offered in each Region and should be structured to provide a 7 or 10-day season encompassing a school holiday, such as Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas and should avoid youth-only elk seasons in the same unit when possible. One muzzleloader youth-only seasons will start on Friday of week 51 (December 16, 2016 and December 22, 2017) and run through December 31. Youth-only seasons for antlered mule deer will not be held within alternative mule deer management units. Youth-only deer seasons may begin on

Youth-only on Friday of week 41 (October 7, 2016 and October 13, 2017)
Youth-only on Friday of week 45 (November 4, 2016 and November 10, 2017)
Youth-only on Friday of week 47 (November 18, 2016 and November 24, 2017)
Youth-only Muzzleloader on Friday of week 51 (December 16, 2016 and December 22, 2017)

6. Archery deer seasons may begin on
 - Friday of week 34 (August 19, 2016 and August 25, 2017) and run for 21 days
 - Friday of week 50 (December 9, 2016 and December 15, 2017) and run through end of December or January 31 of the following year
 - January 1 and run through 2 weekends (January 15, 2017 and January 14, 2018) or through January 31
7. "Alternative Hunt Management" will provide opportunities to harvest older age class animals, for lower hunter densities, and for higher hunt success. Alternative hunt management for mule deer will occur in Units 3A/3C, 12A, 12B, 13A, 13B, 17A, 45A, 45B, and 45C; hunts will be managed in accordance with the parameters below. Alternative hunt management for white-tailed deer will occur in Units 6A, 23, 30B, 31, and 36C; hunts will be managed in accordance with the parameters below. A limited amount of December white-tailed deer harvest opportunity will be offered in most white-tailed deer units, but up to 30% of the harvest will be allocated with December permits in those units managed under Alternative Hunt Management. A total of up to 5% of all white-tailed deer permits statewide will be offered in December.
8. Population management hunts may be established in accordance with A.R.S. 17-239 and R12-4-115 to meet management objectives with goals, recommendations, or guidelines that were not met during regular seasons.

Opportunity prescriptions for Mule Deer:

- A. Wildlife Managers will manage mule deer for the center of guideline ranges, while keeping confidence intervals in mind. Emphasis should be placed on the current year's fawn:doe ratio, considering its effect on next year's buck:doe ratio. For all parameters, emphasize last year's data when a clear trend exists or emphasize the most recent 3-year mean data when no clear trend exists. Hunting opportunities should be maximized, providing an equitable allocation of harvest among weapon types.

Standard Mule Deer Hunt Objectives

Parameters	Decrease	No change	Increase
Fawns:100 Does	<40	40 to 50	>50
Bucks:100 Does	<20	20 to 30	>30
Hunt Success	<15%	15 to 25%	>25%
Population Trend	Decreasing	Stable	Increasing

Alternative Mule Deer Hunt Objectives

Alternative mule deer hunt objectives are designed to be considered in specific units to provide more abundant, older-age class deer. These guidelines result in a more conservative harvest and provide greater opportunity to harvest an older age class buck. Emphasis will be placed on the age class parameters. Harvest will be reduced when the 3-year mean is below guidelines or when a downward trend exists and the current year's data falls below guidelines.

Parameters	12A, 12B (late general hunts)	13A, 13B (general hunts)	3A/3C (general hunts)	17A, 45A, 45B, 45C (general hunts)
Fawns:100 Does	>60 (12A)	—	—	—
Bucks:100 Does	>35	>35	>30	>30
Hunt Success	50–70%	50–70%	50-70%	30-50%
% of Buck harvest \geq 3 yrs	65-80%	65–80%	45-65%	45–65%
% of Buck harvest \geq 5 yrs	25-35%	45–55%	—	—
Hunter Density	<0.5/mi ²	<0.5/mi ²	<0.5/mi ²	<0.5/mi ²

Season dates for the alternative management hunts in Units 3A and 3C may occur as early as the Friday of week 41.

Unit 12A will be managed for an optimum but sustainable population level without negatively impacting deer condition or habitat condition. Chronic low fawn:doe ratios may indicate poor maternal nutritional status or fawn survival, which will be considered for increasing antlerless harvests if habitat measures, deer health indices, or yearling buck weights suggest poor nutritional availability. Mean yearling buck weights ≤ 90 lbs may suggest a decline in range quality. Hunt success and age structure of harvest during late season hunts will be used to adjust permits for alternative structure hunts. Permits during early season hunts in Units 12A and 12B will be adjusted to meet desired buck:doe ratios. Hunter density guidelines are provided to maintain low hunter density during alternative management hunts. Early season dates in Units 12A and 12B will begin on Friday of week 43 (October 21, 2016 and October 27, 2017). Juniors-only hunts in these units should encompass a school holiday. Should permit numbers for a single juniors-only season in Unit 12A West exceed 400, a stratified season structure will be recommended.

Vegetation in Unit 12A West will be monitored annually to determine range quality and deer use trends on the winter range. Yearling buck weights will be measured during the fall in Unit 12A from hunter-killed animals. Deer body condition from live deer will also be monitored every three years during spring pending funding availability. If deer health is deemed to be poor during one of these efforts, an additional health assessment will be recommended for the next calendar year.

If necessary, population management measures through antlerless harvest in Unit 12A will be implemented according to the following matrix. This matrix is intended to guide management decisions and not be used as a hard and fast rule. Each parameter will be considered in relation to the other parameters with no parameter being considered independently; yearling buck weights will receive the greatest emphasis. For all parameters, emphasize last year's data when a clear trend exists or emphasize the most recent 3-year mean data when no clear trend exists.

Parameters	Winter Range Condition/Vegetation Monitoring Trend	Yearling Buck Weights	Body Condition	Response
Population Increase	Good to Excellent Condition and Increasing Trend		Excellent	Limited Youth Antlerless Permits
Population Stabilization	Fair and Stable Condition or Good and Declining Vegetation Trend	< 90 Pounds	Acceptable	Youth Antlerless Permits
Population Reduction	Poor to Fair and Declining Vegetation Trend	< 90 Pounds	Poor	Antlerless Permits

Opportunity prescriptions for White-tailed Deer:

- B. Wildlife Managers will manage white-tailed deer for the center of guideline ranges, while keeping confidence intervals in mind. Emphasis will be placed on the current year's fawn:doe ratio, considering its effect on next year's buck:doe ratio. For all other parameters, emphasize last year's data when a clear trend exists or emphasize the most recent 3-year mean data when no clear trend exists. Hunting opportunities should be maximized, providing an equitable allocation of harvest among weapon types.

Standard White-tailed Deer Hunt Objectives

Parameters	Decrease	No change	Increase
Fawns:100 Does	<30	30 to 40	>40
Bucks:100 Does	<20	20 to 30	>30
Hunt Success	<15%	15 to 25%	>25%
Population Trend	Decreasing	Stable	Increasing

Alternative White-tailed Deer Hunt Objectives

Parameters	Guidelines
Fawns:100 Does	35 to 45
Bucks:100 Does	>30
Hunt Success	20 to 30%
Population Trend	Stable

Alternative white-tailed deer hunt objectives are designed to be considered in specific units to provide more abundant, older-age class deer. These guidelines result in a more conservative harvest and provides for a population that will provide greater opportunity to harvest an older age class buck.

Opportunity prescriptions for Archery Deer:

Archery deer opportunity for units located north of the Colorado River (Units 12A, 12B, 13A, and 13B) will be offered through archery-only hunt permit-tags during the August-September season. Archery deer opportunity for units where a harvest objective has been established will be offered through archery-only hunt permit-tags during the August-September season. Archery-only deer hunt permit-tags will be set to achieve an archery deer harvest that represents a minimum of 20% of the overall harvest in each of these units or harvest will be allocated to meet demand of first-choice applicants among firearms and archery seasons, whichever is greater.

Archery hunt opportunity for units south of the Colorado River will be offered according to the table below. Archery deer harvest will generally be managed not to exceed 20% of the overall harvest in a unit. When mean (3-year) archery deer harvest meets or exceeds 20% of the harvest for either species, the Wildlife Manager may recommend restrictions in archery hunt opportunity according to the following prescriptions unless the unit has only archery and muzzleloader seasons. These restrictions may result in archery seasons of varying lengths for any antlered deer, antlered mule deer, or antlered white-tailed deer.

Current Archery Hunt Structure in Unit	Overall Harvest	Management Action
August–September and December–January	20% or greater	Eliminate December Opportunity
August–September and January	20% or greater	Eliminate last 2 weeks of January
August–September and first 2 weeks of January	20% or greater	Eliminate January Opportunity
August–September Only	20% or greater	August–September for which a harvest objective may be established
December–January Only	20% or greater	Eliminate December Opportunity
January Only	20% or greater	August–September or December for which a harvest objective may be established

If mean (3-year) archery deer harvest is less than 10% of the total harvest for a nonpermit-tag archery unit, additional opportunity will be added incrementally until archery harvest is between 10–20% of the total deer take (i.e., reverse in above table). Alternative Management Units that do not currently have a January season will not be managed under this guideline. In addition, units that have only an archery and/or muzzleloader season will not be managed under this guideline.

COMMISSION ORDER 3: PRONGHORN ANTELOPE

The Department's Pronghorn Antelope Management Goal is to maintain and, where possible, enhance pronghorn antelope populations at levels that provide diverse recreational opportunities, while avoiding adverse impacts to the species and its habitat.

Season prescriptions:

1. All pronghorn antelope permits will be for "buck only."
2. All pronghorn hunts will occur on standard opening dates and may be stratified. General and muzzleloader hunts will run for 10 days, unless stratified, then hunts will run for 7 days each. Archery hunts will run for 14 days, when stratified the first 14 day hunt will begin on Friday of week 32. Regions may select the units in which archery-only seasons may be provided annually.

Archery on Friday of week 32 (August 5, 2016 and August 11, 2017) and run for 14 days
 Archery on Friday of week 34 (August 19, 2016 and August 25, 2017) and run for 14 days
 General or Muzzleloader on Friday of week 36 (September 2, 2016 and September 8, 2017) and run for 7 or 10 days
 General or Muzzleloader on Friday of week 37 (September 9, 2016 and September 15, 2017) and run for 7 days

3. To the extent possible, harvest will be allocated to meet first-choice applicant demand among weapon types (5-year means).

Opportunity prescriptions:

- A. Wildlife Managers will manage pronghorn for the center of guideline ranges, while keeping confidence intervals in mind. The most recent 3-year mean or trend in buck:doe ratios should receive greater emphasis than fawn:doe ratios when determining permit levels. For all other parameters, emphasize last year's data when a clear trend exists or emphasize the most recent 3-year mean data when no clear trend exists.
- B. If the population is within guidelines, permit numbers should reflect a desired harvest of 15 to 25% of the estimated number of available bucks in the population. If the buck to doe ratio is below guidelines, permit numbers should reflect <25% of the estimated number of available bucks in the population,

Guideline	Decrease	Stay the Same	Increase
Bucks:100 Does	<20	20 to 30	>30
Fawns:100 Does	<35	35 to 45	>45
Population Trend	Decreasing	Stable	Increasing

COMMISSION ORDER 4: ELK

The Department's Elk Management Goal is to maintain and, where possible, enhance elk populations at levels that provide maximum and diverse recreational opportunities, while avoiding adverse impacts to the species and its habitat and minimizing land use conflicts. Guidelines are grouped into "Standard" or "Alternative" hunt management.

Management Zones:

- I. Standard Elk Management Zone
 - A. Units 3BS, 3C, 6A, 6B, 7E, 7W, 8, 9, 10, 22, and 23 and portions of Units 1, 4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, 21, and 27.

- B. Zone Description: Areas of summer and winter range where the presence of elk is desired for the long-term at levels that provide for diverse recreational opportunities.
 - C. Management Objective: Maintain elk population at levels that provide diverse recreational opportunities, while avoiding adverse impacts to the species, its habitat, or the habitat of other wildlife, and with minimal substantiated depredation complaints.
 - D. Harvest Guidelines: Population surveys will be conducted and the survey data used to determine appropriate annual harvest of elk in standard management zones. Population surveys will be conducted and harvest recommendations made in accordance with species management guidelines, hunt guidelines, the Statewide Elk Management Plan and/or the Comprehensive Game Management Plan, if it exists.
 - E. Harvest Alternatives:
 - 1. Standard season structures for limited permit-tag bull, antlerless, or any elk fall hunts.
 - 2. Limited Opportunity season structures may be established to address population management concerns during times that best meet management objectives.
- II. Winter-Range Elk Management Zone
- A. Portions of Units 1, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3BN, 4A, 4B, 5A, and 5B
 - B. Zone Description: Areas where the presence of spring through fall elk populations results in unacceptable levels of conflict with other public or private resources. Winter-range elk management zones will be managed for winter elk use only.
 - C. Management Objective: Manage to substantially reduce or eliminate spring through fall (generally April through October) elk populations to enhance habitat quality for wintering elk, and to reduce or eliminate conflicts with other public or private resources during spring through fall months.
 - D. Harvest Guidelines: Population surveys may not apply in determining appropriate annual harvest of resident elk within winter-range management zones. The Statewide Elk Management Plan may include alternative methods that may be used for indexing populations within winter-range management zones. Harvest recommendations will be made in accordance with hunt guidelines, the Statewide Elk Management Plan and/or the Comprehensive Game Management Plan.
 - E. Harvest Alternatives:
 - 1. Standard season structures for limited permit-tag bull, antlerless, or any elk fall hunts.
 - 2. Limited Opportunity season structures may be established to address population management concerns during times that best meet management objectives.
 - 3. Liberal season structures may use unlimited nonpermit-tag antlerless elk hunts occurring during any portion of the spring through fall (generally April-October).
 - a. Maximum removal of resident elk from winter-range areas.
 - b. Facilitates hunting by local area residents who will likely be more effective at locating and taking elk desired for harvest.
 - 4. Population management hunts: restricted nonpermit-tag for bull, antlerless or any elk.
- III. Flexible Elk Management Zone
- A. Units 15A, 15B, 16A, 17A, 17B, 18A, 18B, 19A, 19B, 20A, 20C, and 24A and portions of Units 2B, 2C, 3BN, 21, and 27.
 - B. Zone Description: Areas where the presence of elk is recently established or self maintained at low densities, but the management of other wildlife species may be a higher priority. Flexible elk management zone would allow management of elk populations in areas where habitat conditions were not conducive to high density populations but where it was socially and biologically suitable for maintaining elk populations.
 - C. Management Objective: Manage elk populations to reduce or eliminate conflicts with other public, private or wildlife resources by maintaining population densities as deemed appropriate.
 - D. Harvest Guidelines: Population surveys may not apply in determining appropriate annual harvest of elk within flexible elk management zones. The Statewide Elk Management Plan may include alternative methods that may be used for indexing populations within flexible elk management zones. Harvest recommendations will be made in accordance with hunt guidelines, the Statewide Elk Management Plan and/or the Comprehensive Game Management Plan.
 - E. Harvest Alternatives:

1. Standard season structures for limited permit-tag bull, antlerless, or any elk fall hunts.
 2. Limited Opportunity season structures may be established to address population management concerns during times that best meet management objectives.
 3. Unlimited nonpermit-tag bull, antlerless or any elk hunts occurring during any portion of the year.
 4. Population management hunts: nonpermit-tag for bull, antlerless or any elk.
 5. Population management hunts: restricted nonpermit-tag elk hunts occurring concurrent with other permitted big game hunts in specified units authorized by Commission Order. These elk nonpermit-tags would be available for hunters possessing permit-tags for other big game species and would be valid concurrently with the other big game species hunt.
- IV. Minimal Occurrence Elk Management Zone
- A. Specific areas within Units 2A, 3A, (4A, 4B), (6A, 19A, 21), (12A, 12B), (16A, 44A), 21, (28, 31, 32), and 29
 - B. Zone Description: Areas where the presence of elk is minimal and not essential to the long-term maintenance of elk populations and the management of other wildlife species is a higher priority. Minimal occurrence elk management zones will be managed for extremely low densities.
 - C. Management Objective: Manage elk populations to reduce or eliminate conflicts with other public, private or wildlife resources by maintaining extremely low population densities, or eliminating populations, as deemed appropriate.
 - D. Harvest Guidelines: Population surveys may not apply in determining appropriate annual harvest of elk within minimal occurrence elk management zones. The Statewide Elk Management Plan may include alternative methods that may be used for indexing populations within minimal occurrence elk management zones. Harvest recommendations will be made in accordance with hunt guidelines and the Statewide Elk Management Plan and/or the Comprehensive Game Management Plan.
 - E. Harvest Alternatives:
 1. Limited Opportunity season structures may be established to address population management concerns during times that best meet management objectives.
 2. Liberal season structures may use unlimited nonpermit-tag bull, antlerless, or any elk hunts occurring during any portion of the year.
 3. Population management hunts: nonpermit-tag for bull, antlerless or any elk.
 4. Population management hunts: restricted nonpermit-tag elk hunts occurring concurrent with other permitted big game hunts in specified units authorized by Commission Order. These elk nonpermit-tags would be available for hunters possessing permit-tags for other big game species and would be valid concurrently with the other big game species hunt.

Season prescriptions:

1. Antlerless elk hunts are used to influence population trajectory whereas bull hunts are used to influence bull to cow ratios. Antlerless permits should decrease to allow population growth to meet management objectives. Conversely, antlerless permits should increase to reduce a population or limit growth.
2. Hunts will be for “bull elk,” “antlerless elk,” or “any elk.” “Antlerless elk” and “any elk” permits may be recommended for units where the elk population requires reduction or stabilization, or when conflicts with other land management uses exist. The number of permits may be adjusted annually to reduce, stabilize, or increase elk populations according to those objectives or annual forage monitoring results.
3. *Standard season structure.* General elk hunts will occur on standard opening dates and run for 7 or 10 days. At least 6 general early bull elk hunts will be offered annually; 2 each in Regions 1 and 2 and 1 each in Regions 3 and 6. Additional general elk seasons may be established as needed to address elk management objectives.

Early general bull on Friday of week 39 (September 23, 2016 and September 29, 2017) or week 37 (September 9, 2016 and September 15, 2017) if an early archery bull hunt starts on Friday of week

Early general antlerless elk on Friday of week 42 (October 14, 2016 and October 20, 2017)
Late general bull on Friday of week 48 (November 25, 2016 and December 1, 2017)
Late general antlerless elk on Friday of week 49 (December 2, 2016 and December 8, 2017)

Muzzleloader elk hunts will occur on standard opening dates and run for 7 or 10 days. At least 6 muzzleloader bull elk seasons will be offered annually; 2 each in Regions 1 and 2 and 1 each in Regions 3 and 6. Additional muzzleloader elk seasons may be established as needed to address population objectives. Rotation of units should be considered.

Early muzzleloader bull on Friday of week 39 (September 23, 2016 and September 29, 2017) or week 37 (September 9, 2016 and September 15, 2017) if an early archery bull hunt starts on Friday of week 38

Late muzzleloader bull on Friday of week 46 (November 11, 2016 and November 17, 2017)

At least 5% of the total elk permits will be allocated to youth-only antlerless seasons. Youth-only elk seasons should be structured to encompass a school holiday, such as Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, or Christmas, and should avoid youth-only deer seasons in the same unit whenever possible. Youth-only elk seasons should run for 7 or 10 days.

Youth-only antlerless elk on Friday of week 41 (October 7, 2016 and October 13, 2017)
Youth-only antlerless elk on Friday of week 45 (November 4, 2016 and November 10, 2017)
Youth-only antlerless elk on Friday of week 51 (December 16, 2016 and December 22, 2017)

Early archery hunts will occur on standard opening dates and run for 14 days. All units contained within standard elk management zones (not including winter-range, flexible, and minimal occurrence management zones) will have an early hunt structure and may have late archery hunt structure. Late archery elk hunts should occur on standard opening dates and run for 7 or 14 days. Late archery elk hunts may be used where they do not create conflicts with other hunts and to help address population objectives or distribute hunt pressure. Additional archery elk seasons may be established as needed to address population objectives.

Early archery on Friday of week 37 (September 9, 2016 and September 15, 2017) or week 38 (September 16, 2016 and September 22, 2017) if an early general bull hunt starts on Friday of week 37

Late archery elk on Friday of week 45 (November 4, 2016 and November 10, 2017) or week 46 (November 11, 2016 and November 17, 2017)

4. *Limited opportunity season structure.* Limited opportunity elk hunts may be recommended to address population management concerns during times that best meet management objectives.
5. *CHAMP* elk hunts may be offered in units that provide suitable access at times when elk are accessible and the hunts can be rotated among units.
6. *Liberal season structure.* Liberal season structures may be offered as unlimited over-the-counter nonpermit-tags during times that best meet management objectives.
7. *Population management hunts.* Population management hunts may be established in accordance with A.R.S. 17-239 and R12-4-115 to meet management objectives when goals, recommendations, or guidelines were not met during regular seasons.
8. Habitat-based management guidance will be included in Elk Management Plan or Management Focus Area plan objectives, using forage monitoring results per Department protocol, for individual elk herd units where this data is available. This information may include opportunities for herd growth.
9. Field ages from harvested elk may be used in the determination of elk population objectives and trends.

10. Harvest will be allocated to meet demand of first-choice applicants among general, muzzleloader, and archery seasons (including late archery bull) by sex of elk (5-year means), excluding limited opportunity, CHAMP, military, and Hopi hunts. The allocation is accomplished by first dividing the applicant percentage by the hunt success percentage. The result is divided by a proportioning factor for weapon type.

Opportunity prescriptions:

- A. Wildlife Managers will manage elk for the center of guideline ranges, while keeping confidence intervals in mind. The most recent 3-year mean and trend for all population indices should be used along with current forage monitoring data or Elk Management Plan objectives when determining permit adjustments. When a clear trend exists, emphasize last year's data. When no clear trend exists, emphasize 3-year mean data.
- B. The following table will be used when determining bull permits for units in standard management zones. Emphasis should be placed on 3-year bull:cow and cow:calf ratios over 3-year mean hunt success. Hunt opportunity should be maximized where possible.

Standard Elk Hunt Objectives

Bull Permits should	Decrease	Stay the Same	Increase
Calves:100 Cows	<30	30 to 40	>40
Bulls:100 Cows	<25	25 to 35	>35
Late Bull Hunt Success	<25%	25 to 35%	>35%
Population Trend	Decreasing	Stable	Increasing

Alternative Elk Hunt Objectives

Units 1, 9, 10, and 23 will be managed under Alternate Elk Hunt Objectives. Each unit will have an early archery bull hunt, with an early general or early muzzleloader bull hunt which may be offered during alternate years.

Bull Permits should	Decrease	Stay the Same	Increase
Calves:100 Cows	<30	30 to 40	>40
Bulls:100 Cows (Units 1, 9, and 23)		≤40	>40
Bulls:100 Cows (Unit 10)		35-50	>50
Percent Bulls ≥6 antler points per side on a side	<70	≥70	
Population Trend	Decreasing	Stable	Increasing

COMMISSION ORDER 5: TURKEY

The Department's Turkey Management Goal is to maintain and, where possible, enhance turkey populations at levels that provide maximum and diverse recreational opportunities. Habitat quality, population status, hunter density, and hunt success will be used to determine hunting opportunities for both spring and fall seasons.

Season prescriptions:

1. Spring limited weapon shotgun shooting seasons will be stratified. The first stratified season will open on Friday of week 17 (April 28, 2017 and April 27, 2018) for 7 days, close for 7 days, and reopen for 14 days.
2. The second stratified spring limited weapon shotgun shooting season shall open on the Friday of week 18 (May 5, 2017 and May 4, 2018) and run for 21 consecutive days. Stratified seasons will result in the overlap of the last 14 days of the first and second seasons.
3. Archery-only turkey spring seasons will open on Friday of week 19 (May 12, 2017 and May 11, 2018) and run for 14 consecutive days. The entire archery season will overlap the last 14 days of the limited weapon shotgun shooting season and youth-only seasons.
4. Youth-only spring limited weapon shotgun shooting seasons will open on Friday of week 16 (April 21, 2017 and April 20, 2018) for 7 days, close for 14 days, and then reopen for 14 days.
5. Gould's turkey hunts may start on a later date if data indicates that Gould's turkeys have a later nest initiation.
6. Limited weapon shotgun shooting fall season will start on Friday of week 40 (September 30, 2016 and October 6, 2017) and run for 7 days.
7. Archery-only turkey fall seasons will open and close to coincide with early fall archery deer season; starting the Friday of week 34 (August 19, 2016 and August 25, 2017) and run for 21 days..
8. Youth-only shotgun shooting fall seasons will be recommended with season dates concurrent with limited weapon shotgun shooting fall seasons; starting on Friday of week 40 (September 30, 2016 and October 6, 2017) and run for 7 days.

Opportunity prescriptions:

Hunting opportunity will be determined through a Turkey Management Worksheet (located in the Species Management Guidelines), which involves a 4-step process of:

- A. Determining spring and fall hunt structures by unit.
- B. Determining permit changes by unit.
- C. Determining maximum spring hunter density by unit.
- D. If harvest by archery-only hunters on a spring nonpermit-tag hunt exceeds 5% of the total spring harvest in that unit, the archery-only hunt should be closed, or revert to a permitted archery hunt, with permit numbers set to manage for about 5% of the spring harvest.
- E. If the 3-year average harvest by youth-only hunters on a spring nonpermit-tag hunt exceeds 35% of the total spring harvest in that unit, the youth-only hunt should revert to a permitted youth hunt, with permit numbers set to manage for about 30–35% of the spring harvest.

Management guidelines are:

- F. Hunt structure will fall into one of the following categories as determined by a score generated from the Habitat Quality Scorecard (located in the Species Management Guidelines) and a decision of status within the unit. The Habitat Quality Scorecard for a particular unit should be reviewed at least once every 3 years and/or after any major landscape-level changes such as wildfires, prescribed burns, habitat treatments, or similar event.
- i. If the score is A, the unit will have a permitted fall hunt and permitted spring hunts for non-youth seasons. Archery-only nonpermit-tags will be offered for spring and fall hunts, except as specified in Opportunity Prescriptions (D). Youth-only seasons will be offered as over-the-counter nonpermit-tags for spring and fall hunts in these units, except as specified in Opportunity Prescriptions (E).
 - ii. If the score is B, the unit will have a permitted fall hunt and permitted spring hunts for non-youth seasons. Archery-only seasons will be offered for fall hunts. Youth-only seasons will be offered as over-the-counter nonpermit-tags for spring hunts in these units, except as specified in Opportunity Prescriptions (E).
 - iii. If the score is C, the unit may have a permitted fall hunt and permitted spring hunts for non-youth seasons. Permits should be set to remove about 10% of the female segment (fall seasons) or 30% of the male segment (spring seasons). Archery-only seasons will be offered for fall hunts. Youth-only hunts, if offered in these units, should be permitted.
 - iv. If the score is D, the unit may have a permitted fall hunt and/or permitted spring hunt for non-youth seasons. Permits should be set to remove less than 10% of the female segment (fall seasons) or 30% of the male segment (spring seasons). Archery-only seasons may be offered for fall hunts in these units. Youth-only hunts should not be offered in these units.
 - v. If the score is A, the unit will offer archery companion tags for fall turkey seasons that correspond with and are available to archery elk hunters in that unit.
 - vi. If the fall hunt success is less than 5% for at least two of the last 3 years, the unit's permitted fall hunt may be closed for up to 3 years. The Habitat Quality Scorecard, spring turkey hunt success, number of observations, poult:hen ratios, and archery elk hunter turkey observations will be reviewed to determine when a permitted fall hunt may be recommended.
- G. Permit changes for each hunt and unit will be determined using hunt success. When a significant ($P < 0.2$) 3-year trend exists, emphasize the last year's data. If no trend exists, use the most recent 3-year mean in hunt success. Permit options are as follows.
- i. Permit numbers will increase when:
 - a. Mean hunt success is 15–20% and hunt success trend is increasing, or
 - b. Mean hunt success is greater than 20% and hunt success is stable or increasing.
 - ii. Permit numbers will remain unchanged when:
 - a. Mean hunt success is less than 15% and hunt success trend is increasing, or
 - b. Mean hunt success is 15–20% and hunt success trend is stable, or
 - c. Mean hunt success is greater than 20% and hunt success is declining.
 - iii. Permit numbers will decrease when:
 - a. Mean hunt success is less than 15% and hunt success is stable or declining, or

- b. Mean hunt success is 15–20% and hunt success trend is declining.

COMMISSION ORDER 6: JAVELINA

The Department's Javelina Management Goal is to maintain javelina populations at levels that provide diverse recreational opportunities, while avoiding adverse impacts to the habitat, and minimizing substantiated depredation and nuisance complaints.

- 1. Spring general, handgun, archery, and muzzleloader (HAM) and youth-only javelina hunts will occur on standard opening dates. General and HAM hunts may run for 7 or 10 days (or 11 days to encompass a Monday holiday should it occur on the 11th day). Youth-only hunts will run for 10 days. Archery hunts will begin on January 1 and run through Thursday of week 4.

General on Friday of week 8 (February 24, 2017 and February 23, 2018)
 HAM on Friday of week 6 (February 10, 2017 and February 9, 2018)
 Archery on January 1 and extend through Thursday of week 4 (January 26, 2017 and January 25, 2018).
 Youth-only on Friday of week 4 (January 27, 2017 and January 26, 2018)

- 2. Most javelina hunt areas will offer general, HAM, and archery hunting opportunities.
- 3. To the extent possible, permits will be allocated to meet first-choice application demand among weapon types (5-year means).
- 4. Fall permits will be allocated to youth-only firearm hunts and will run concurrent with youth-only deer hunt seasons Youth-only javelina permits may be offered exclusively to youth-only deer permit holders during fall hunts.
- 5. Metro units and Units 1–5, 7, and 9 may have over-the-counter nonpermit-tags for archery from January 1 through January 31. Metro units and Units 1–5, 7, and 9 may have over-the-counter seasons that run concurrent to August–September and December archery deer seasons.
- 6. Population management hunts may be established in accordance with A.R.S. 17-239 and R12-4-115 to meet management objectives with goals, recommendations, or guidelines that were not met during regular seasons.

Opportunity prescriptions:

- A. Manage for a mean herd size of 6–9 adults per herd or 7–10 total javelina per herd. A decrease in permits is indicated when the mean herd size is below 6 adults or 7 total javelina. An increase in permits is indicated when the mean herd size exceeds 9 adults or 10 total javelina.
- B. Permit recommendations should consider current recruitment. A juvenile javelina will be considered to be any javelina that is less than one-half grown. A decrease in permits is indicated when recruitment is less than 20 juveniles:100 adults. An increase in permits is indicated when recruitment exceeds 30 juveniles:100 adults.

Permits should	Decrease	Stay the Same	Increase
Herd size	<6 adult or 7 total	6 to 9 adult or 7 to 10 total	>9 adult or 10 total
Juv:100 adults	<20	20 to 30	>30
Hunt Success	<20%	20 to 25%	>25%
Population Trend	Declining	Stable	Increasing

- C. Survey data, hunt success, mean hunter days/kill, and total harvest should be evaluated on at least a 3-year trend basis. A decrease in permits is indicated when the above data demonstrate a declining trend in the javelina population. An increase in permits is indicated when the above data demonstrate an increasing trend.
- D. Population management hunts may be established to meet management objectives with goals, recommendations, or guidelines that were not met during regular seasons.
- E. If a javelina hunt has unissued permits after the hunt has ended two out of three years, then that unit and hunt structure should move into an over-the-counter nonpermit-tag hunt structure the following year.

COMMISSION ORDER 7: BIGHORN SHEEP

The Department's Bighorn Sheep Management Goals are to increase bighorn sheep populations and to provide diverse recreational opportunities, while avoiding adverse impacts to the habitat.

Season prescriptions:

- 1. Units may be subdivided into smaller hunt units to prevent hunters concentrating in specific areas within mountain ranges or to encourage hunting within areas with available rams that may be avoided because of access difficulty.
- 2. All hunts will be general seasons.
- 3. All seasons will run for the month of December except when stratification of a hunt is warranted. Hunt areas may also be opened earlier depending on hunter access and historical success.
- 4. Hunts may be stratified when hunter densities warrant. Stratified hunts will run for 3 weeks each with the first hunt starting on Friday November 18 in 2016 and Friday, November 17 in 2017. The second hunt will start on Friday, December 9 in 2016 and Friday, December 8 in 2017.

Opportunity prescriptions:

- A. Hunt recommendations should be developed using estimated populations based on survey protocols and sighting rates described in species management guidelines, or developed from simultaneous double count surveys, or other empirical research projects (such as Hervert et al. 1998, Sighting rates of bighorn sheep during helicopter surveys on the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Arizona, Desert Bighorn Council Transaction 42:11–26). When a clear trend in population parameters exists, emphasize the most recent year's data. When no clear trend exists, emphasize 3-year mean data.
- B. Harvest will be managed to allow for the take of 15 to 25% of the estimated Class III and Class IV rams. Wildlife Managers will manage bighorn sheep within the guideline range, while keeping confidence intervals in mind.

COMMISSION ORDER 8: BISON

The Department's Bison Management Goal is to maintain bison populations at levels, which provide maximum and diverse recreational opportunities, while avoiding adverse impacts to the habitat. The Department will manage to meet objectives within management plans for bison herds. The Department will encourage hunters to remain flexible in scheduling their hunt to enhance the effectiveness of this wildlife management effort.

Season prescriptions:

- 1. Seasons dates and structures will be designed to meet population management objectives.

2. The number and age class of bison to be harvested will be determined from annual herd inventory data.

Opportunity prescriptions:

- A. All general hunts will be limited by permits to meet herd management objectives. Permits will be for "adult bull only," "cow only," "yearling only," "cow or yearling only," or "any bison."
- B. Population management hunts may be established in accordance with A.R.S. 17-239 and R12-4-115 to meet management objectives with goals, recommendations, or guidelines that were not met during regular seasons.

COMMISSION ORDER 9: BEAR

The Department's Bear Management Goal is to manage black bear population numbers and distribution as an important part of Arizona's fauna, while providing maximum hunting and other related recreational opportunities. The hunt recommendation goal is to allow as much bear hunting opportunity as possible, while minimizing the harvest of adult females.

Season prescriptions:

1. Stratified seasons may be used during bear seasons to distribute female harvest throughout the fall. If 3 hunts are recommended for a given unit during the fall, at least 1 season will be archery. In units with female harvest limits that total less than 4, a single season may be offered. Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 will each have at least 1 archery bear season. Regions will manage hunt structure to ensure that a release site is available for nuisance bears. Any combination of the following hunts may be used during the fall.

Early fall general hunt beginning on Friday of week 32 (August 5, 2016 and August 11, 2017) and end on Thursday of week 34 (August 18, 2016 and August 24, 2017).

Fall general or archery season beginning on Friday of week 34 (August 19, 2016 and August 25, 2017,) and run for up to 38 days.

Late fall general bear season will open on Friday of week 40 (September 30, 2016, October 6, 2017) and run through the end of the year. A delayed or stratified late fall general bear season may be established as needed to address population objectives.

2. Restricted seasons, where dogs may not be used for pursuit of bears, may be used during the fall. Female harvest limits will apply.
3. Any combination of the following hunts may be used during the spring. The seasons may be permitted or offered as over-the-counter nonpermits-tags. Both hunt options will be coupled with a female harvest limit.

Spring bear season begin on Friday of week 12 (March 24, 2017 and March 23, 2018) and may run 42 or 63 days.

Spring bear season begin on Friday of week 18 (May 5, 2017 and May 4, 2018) and run through July 31.

Opportunity prescriptions:

- A. Each unit will have an annual female harvest limit that coincides with the calendar year. The annual female harvest limit should approximate 10% of the female segment of the estimated population. Individual hunts in each unit will also have a female harvest limit for each hunt to distribute opportunity and will close specific hunts when achieved. Female harvests will be cumulative and include any female bears killed by the Department. Once the annual female harvest limit for a unit is achieved, all subsequent bear hunts in that unit will be closed for the remainder of the year.

- B. Implement hunt structures (season dates, season length) which direct harvest toward the male segment of the bear population.
- C. Evaluate data on a unit basis to determine population status and effect of harvest. Age and sex data from previous harvests should help evaluate the status of a unit's bear population and establish an appropriate female harvest limit. Median age of harvested females should be >5 years of age.
- D. In units where median age of harvested female is <5 years and female harvest limits are exceeded in 3 of 5 years, seasons should be modified to open on or after November 1. Seasons may be reduced in number or shortened to 3 days in length if only a single season exists to address consistently exceeding female harvest limits. If the female harvest limit cannot be met in any other fashion, seasons in specific units may be closed for a period of 1–2 years to affect median age of harvested female.
- E. Population management hunts may be established to meet management objectives with goals, recommendations, or guidelines that were not met during regular seasons.
- F. Restricted seasons may be offered in a single fall hunt within units that offer more than a single fall bear season to reduce disturbance during other big game hunting seasons that overlap with the bear season.
- G. Additional spring bear seasons may be added as needed to help address nuisance bear issues or other resource concerns while allowing for additional bear hunting opportunities. The seasons may be permitted or offered as over-the-counter nonpermits-tags.

COMMISSION ORDER 10: MOUNTAIN LION

The Department's Lion Management Goal is to manage the mountain lion population, its numbers and distribution, as an important part of Arizona's fauna while providing maximum mountain lion hunting and other recreational opportunities.

Management zones:

- I. Standard Lion Management Zone
 - A. Units: Statewide except Units 15B West, 15C, 15D, 39, 40A, 40B, 41, 42, 43A, 43B, 44A, 44B, 45A, 45B, 45C, 46A, and 46B.
 - B. Zone Description: A grouping of units where the presence of lions is desired at levels that provide maximum lion hunting and other recreational opportunities.
 - C. Management Objective: Maintain lion population at levels that provide diverse recreational opportunities, while minimizing negative impacts to the lion population due to hunting or to big game prey species due to predation.
 - D. Harvest Guidelines: Zone harvest trends will be managed to keep adult (≥ 3 year old) female harvest <35% of the total take. Should 2-year mean adult female harvest comprise >35% of the harvest for the zone, female harvest limits may be established to reduce the overall female harvest in that zone. Zones with established female harvest limits may close to mountain lion take for the season or a portion of the season if the female harvest limit is met.
 - E. Harvest Alternatives:
 - 1. Standard season structure
 - 2. Multiple bag limit seasons in those units where prey populations are below management objectives and mountain lion predation is implicated as a contributing factor, where a translocation is being limited by mountain lion predation, or when mountain lion predation is identified as a limiting factor in a management focus area plan or other management plan.
- II. Minimal Occurrence Lion Management Zone
 - A. Units: 15B West, 15C, 15D, 39, 40A, 40B, 41, 42, 43A, 43B, 44A, 44B, 45A, 45B, 45C, 46A, and 46B.

- B. Zone Description: Areas where historical lion populations have been non-existent or very low and the management of other wildlife species is a higher priority. Minimal Occurrence lion management zones will be managed for extremely low lion densities.
- C. Management Objective: Manage lion populations to reduce or eliminate conflicts with other public, private or wildlife resources by maintaining extremely low population densities as deemed appropriate.
- D. Harvest Guidelines: Sex and age of the lion harvest will not apply in determining appropriate annual harvest of lions within minimal occurrence lion management zones. Harvest recommendations will be made in accordance with hunt guidelines and/or the Comprehensive Game Management Plan.
- E. Harvest Alternatives:
 - 1. Liberal season structure, to include yearlong season and 3 mountain lions/person/year bag limit.
 - 2. Multiple bag limit in those units where prey populations are below management objectives and mountain lion predation is implicated as a contributing factor, where a translocation is being limited by mountain lion predation, or when mountain lion predation is identified as a limiting factor in a management focus area plan or other management plan..

Season prescriptions:

1. Hunt recommendations will be made on a unit or subzone (grouping of biologically similar units with established female harvest limits) basis.
2. A unit may be recommended for closure if necessary to maintain a lion population.
3. *Standard season structure.* Standard seasons shall run yearlong. Statewide harvest trends will be managed to keep adult (≥ 3 year old) female harvest $< 35\%$ of the total take within the standard management zone. Should 2-year mean female harvest comprise $> 35\%$ of the harvest for a group of units that biologically may be combined as a subzone, the season may be restricted during July – September and female harvest limits may be established to reduce the overall female harvest in that subzone. Subzones with established female harvest limits may close to mountain lion take for the season or a portion of the season if the female harvest limit is met. If season structure allows, restrictions to hunting methods may be authorized.
4. *Multiple bag season structure.* Multiple bag limits may be offered in hunt units or a portion of a hunt unit to increase lion hunting opportunity. These should be designed to assist in achieving population objectives for another wildlife species. When targets have been achieved for which multiple bag limits were established, the multiple bag limit hunt structure should be removed from that unit.
5. *Liberal season structure.* Minimal occurrence zones may have yearlong seasons (July 1 to June 30) with a bag limit of up to 3 mountain lions/person/year.
6. *Restricted season structure.* Restricted seasons may be used to meet management objectives during the months of July through September in units where mountain lion populations may be decreasing inconsistent with management objectives. Restricted seasons may also be used to address specific needs within predation management plans.

COMMISSION ORDERS 11–12, 15–22, AND 24: SMALL GAME

The Department's Small Game Management intent is to provide as much small game hunting opportunity as possible. Seasons will be designed to allow standardization and simplification of hunt regulations, better distribution of hunters, and the opportunity to hunt more than 1 species at the same time.

1. Small game seasons, excluding migratory game birds, will be set for a 2-year time period.
2. Small game seasons will be open statewide.

Gambel's, scaled, and California quail season will open on Friday of week 40 (September 30, 2016 and October 6, 2017) and close on Sunday of week 7 (February 12, 2017 and February 11, 2018) the following year.

Falconry-only quail season will open September 1 and close the Thursday of week 10 (March 9, 2017 and March 8, 2018).

Mearns' quail season will open Friday of week 49 (December 2, 2016 and December 8, 2017) and close on Sunday of week 7 (February 12, 2017 and February 11, 2018) the following year.

Pheasant seasons will be open for up to 5 weeks. Seasons will run a minimum of 3 days and a maximum of 7 days. The seasons may begin as early as September and close in December. Since pheasant hunting conditions are dependent on local agricultural practices, the dates should remain flexible to take advantage of these conditions.

Blue grouse season will open on September 1 and close on Sunday of week 46 (November 6, 2016 and November 12, 2017).

Chukar season will open on September 1 and close on Sunday of week 7 (February 12, 2017 and February 11, 2018).

Tree Squirrel will open on Friday of week 40 (September 30, 2016 and October 6, 2017) and close December 31. Tassel-eared squirrel season in Unit 31 will be yearlong. Tassel-eared squirrel season in Unit 33 will close May 31.

Cottontail rabbit season will be open yearlong.

3. Migratory game bird seasons and bag limits will be set by the Commission annually according to Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Pacific Flyway guidelines.
4. Possession limits for small game and migratory game birds will be three times the daily bag limit.

COMMISSION ORDERS 13 AND 23: PREDATORY AND FUR-BEARING MAMMALS AND TRAPPING

The Department's predatory and fur-bearing mammals management intentions are to maintain present range, distribution, and population levels in Arizona; and to allow for maximum recreational, economic, and aesthetic uses commensurate with existing populations statewide. Predatory and fur-bearing mammal seasons will be set for a 2-year time period. Seasons and season dates will be reviewed with the Commission.

1. Bobcat trapping season will open November 1 and close on the last day of February the following year.
2. Coyote daylong seasons may be opened for a unit where a prey species is below management goals and coyote predation is believed to be a major contributing factor, or when coyote predation is identified as a limiting factor in a management focus area plan or other management plan. Daylong seasons will be in place for no less than three years and will be removed when the prey populations reach management objectives.

COMMISSION ORDER 14: OTHER BIRDS AND MAMMALS

The taking of nongame birds and mammals will be consistent with the Department's desire to allow recreational opportunities, commensurate with existing populations statewide. Other birds and mammal seasons will be set for a 2-year time period. Units with black-tailed prairie dogs will not be open to prairie dog hunting. Seasons and season dates will be reviewed with the Commission.