

STATE WILDLIFE COMMISSION MEETING AND RULE MAKING NOTICE

The New Mexico State Wildlife Commission (“Commission”) will be hosting a meeting and rule hearing on Friday, August 21, 2026 beginning at 9:00 a.m. at New Mexico Highlands University Student Center, 800 National Ave., Las Vegas, NM 87701. Please check the Department’s website for any updates at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/commission/meeting-agendas/>. The purpose of this meeting is to hear and consider action as appropriate on the proposed changes to the: 1) Bighorn Sheep Rule; 2) Pronghorn Antelope Rule; 3) Deer Rule; and 4) Elk Rule.

Synopsis:

Bighorn Sheep Rule

The proposal is to amend the Bighorn Sheep Rule 19.31.17 NMAC which will become effective April 1, 2027. The most recent version of the rule will expire on March 31, 2027. Proposed changes include:

- 1) The Department reestablished a population of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the Manzano mountains (Game Management Units [GMUs] 14 and 18) in the late 1970s. GMUs 14 and 18 have been included in the Bighorn Rule in the past however, new GPS collar data indicates this population primarily occupies private property year-round. To provide a mechanism for authorizing Rocky Mountain bighorn hunting in GMUs 14 and 18, the Department recommends adding these units as “open GMUs or areas” under the private land provisions of the rule. This change would allow for private land hunting opportunities, with dates jointly established for license years 2027-2028 through 2030-2031. The Department has a hunting agreement where 50% of the licenses would be allocated through the public draw and 50% would be provided to the participating landowner.
 - a. The Department will establish two hunt periods for the Manzanos: October 1-15 (Period 1) and October 16-30 (Period 2). We anticipate the first hunt being in 2027. The first hunter on the Manzanos will be a public draw hunter.
 - b. The Department will increase the bag limit for Rocky Mountain ram tags to better reflect bighorn abundance across a greater number GMUs, including the Manzanos.
- 2) The Department reestablished a population of desert bighorn sheep in the Sacramento mountains (GMU 34) in 2018. The initial reintroduction and subsequent translocations have resulted in older age class rams available for harvest. The Department will open GMU 34 with one hunt period: December 1-15.
- 3) In response to public comments, the Department will shift the hunt periods for the Little Hatchets and Big Hatchets desert bighorn hunts from September and October, to December. Both hunt areas would have two concurrent hunt periods from December 1-15 and December 16-30.
- 3) The Department will make adjustments to season dates in some areas. For example, if a hunt normally starts on a Saturday, this date shift would be maintained throughout the rule so the hunts continue to start on Saturday or adjusting to calendar starts for consistency.
- 4) Require the purchase of a license at least one day prior to hunting.

Pronghorn Antelope Rule

The proposal is to amend the Pronghorn Antelope Rule 19.31.15 NMAC which will become effective April 1, 2027. The most recent version of the rule will expire on March 31, 2027. Proposed changes include:

- 1) Require the purchase of a license at least one day prior to hunting. For hunts where published season dates are less than 6 days, hunters will no longer be able to buy a license once the hunt starts.
- 2) Implement a ranch registration process for purchase of private land OTC pronghorn licenses, similar to the current registration process used for private land elk licenses in Secondary management zones.
- 3) Implement a cap on private land OTC licenses and consider a more even distribution in hunts, similar to the public draw. If license distribution within a GMU is disproportionately skewed toward a particular hunt due to private land sales patterns, licenses will be redistributed to reduce that skew, though not necessarily distributed equally across all hunts. See table in Appendix 1 for details.
- 4) Shift GMU 4/50/52 rifle hunt to muzzleloader hunt
- 5) Adjust season dates where necessary. For example, shifting start dates to maintain hunts

beginning on Saturday or adjusting calendar day starts for consistency.

6) Based on discussions with McGregor and White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) staff, we recommended the following:

- a. McGregor: Decrease from 2 hunts of 7 licenses down to 2 hunts of 2 licenses
- b. WSMR: Decrease from 1 hunt of 5 down to 1 hunt of 3, and adjusting the bag limit from

ES to MB

7) Include GMU 48 alongside GMU 47 to allow hunters to access both GMUs during their draw hunt. Licenses will remain the same.

8) Similar to bighorn sheep and ibex, shift all F-IM license numbers to be “up to,” allowing the Department to adjust draw licenses up or down depending on population surveys.

9) Decrease license numbers in GMUs 41, 47, 56, 57, 58, and 59 to match current hunting levels. Specifically, the 20% license reduction implemented in 2025 will be retained as the baseline for the 2027-2030 seasons, rather than reverting to pre-2025 license numbers.

10) Public draw hunt license numbers will remain unchanged from the 2023-2026 rule cycle, except those outlined in point 9 above.

11) Shift season dates in SW later to address a later breeding and fawning period, with hunts beginning mid-September.

Deer Rule

The proposal is to amend the Deer Rule 19.31.13 NMAC which will become effective April 1, 2027. The most recent version of the rule will expire on March 31, 2027. Proposed changes include:

Northwest

- 1) Reduce deer licenses in GMU 2B based on input received during current rule cycle.
- 2) In addition to general license reductions in GMU 2B, based on input received during the current rule cycle, the Department analyzed the total number of license reductions required to move GMU 2B to a Quality Hunt unit. Moving GMU 2B to a Quality Hunt unit would require a reduction of 885 deer licenses across public and private land (see table 1 below).
- 3) Create new rifle hunt code in GMU 51A to spread out pressure. The overall license numbers will remain the same.
- 4) Create a public muzzleloader deer hunt on Wildlife Management Areas in GMU 4 to coincide with the private land hunt (10 licenses).

Southwest

- 1) Structure the January hunt on White Sands Missile Range (GMU 19 WSMR only) as a youth hunt.
- 2) Create a December rifle hunt for Coues white-tailed deer in GMUs 16 and 22 (20 licenses in each GMU) to be consistent with Coues white-tailed deer hunts in the southwest.
- 3) GMU 23 and 24 archery hunters who do not harvest an FAD, will no longer be permitted to hunt the Silver City Management Area antlerless hunt. A new hunt code will be created for the Silver City Management Area antlerless archery hunt (50 public licenses and 20 private licenses).
- 4) Change youth rifle hunts in GMUs 13 and 17 to youth muzzleloader hunts to match elk weapon type for the same time and increase licenses for muzzleloader hunts in these units.
- 5) No longer include Fort Bayard as a special management area. Hunters drawing a tag for GMU 24 can hunt any legally accessible land in GMU 24, including Fort Bayard management area.
- 6) Create a public rifle hunt for Mimbres River WMA in GMU 24 (5 licenses).

Southeast

- 1) Remove the REG antlerless hunt in GMU 32 Roswell and Fort Sumner Hunt Areas. Keep Youth Only antlerless hunt (15 public and 20 private licenses).
- 2) Remove the antlerless hunt on the Huey WMA; change the ES hunt to FAD bag limit.
- 3) Significantly reduce licenses in GMUs 29 (-120), 30 (-525), and 34 (-100).

Northeast

Adjust license numbers to meet management strategies and reflect changes in deer herd dynamics (see table 2 below).

General Statewide Proposed Changes

- 1) Adjust license numbers to meet management strategies and reflect changes in deer herd dynamics (Table 2).
- 2) Adjust season dates (Table 2).
 - a. Adjust season dates to ensure harvest is biologically sustainable.
 - b. Shift start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to maintain consistent hunt structure.
 - c. When possible, adjust season dates for hunt structure consistency across the state.
 - d. Adjust season dates to avoid overlapping hunts with mixed-weapon types.
- 3) Designate the premium statewide deer hunt as a Quality Hunt.
- 4) Require the purchase of a license at least a day prior to the start of the hunt. For hunts where published season dates are less than 6 days, hunters will no longer be able to buy a license once the hunt starts.
- 5) Require a “ranch registration” process for OTC private-land deer licenses, similar to the current registration process used for private land elk hunting in Secondary Management Zones.
- 6) Implement a cap on private-land only OTC deer licenses for each GMU. If license distribution within a GMU is disproportionately skewed toward a particular hunt due to private land sales patterns, licenses will be redistributed to reduce that skew, though not necessarily distributed equally across all hunts (Table 3).

Elk Rule

The proposal is to amend the Elk Rule 19.31.14 NMAC which will become effective April 1, 2027. The most recent version of the rule will expire on March 31, 2027. Proposed changes include:

General Statewide Proposed Changes

- 1) Adjust season dates where necessary
 - a. Shifting start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to calendar day starts for consistency.
 - b. Evaluate season dates for hunt structure consistency across the state.
 - c. Evaluate season dates to ensure harvest is biologically sustainable.
- 2) Consider aligning most primary management zone hunts to have a muzzleloader hunt first, followed by any-legal-weapon hunts. Early October hunts shift to muzzleloader to address increased male susceptibility to harvest.
- 3) Adjust some hunts to minimize overlap of weapons used for species hunted.
- 4) Adjust draw license numbers based on biological data and management goals.
 - a. Possible reductions in the following herd units: Greater Gila, Jemez (A), Valle Vidal (A).
 - b. Possible slight increases in the San Juan, Northcentral, Sacramento, and Ruidoso herd units.
 - c. Consider establishing elk hunts in GMU 32 to address an increasing elk population in the area.
- 5) Designate the premium statewide elk hunt (currently ELK-1-700) as a Quality hunt.
- 6) Require the purchase of a license at least one day prior to hunting. For hunts where published season dates are less than 6 days, hunters will no longer be able to buy a license once the hunt starts.
- 7) Possible adjustment of management zone boundaries.
- 8) Re-assess public/private land split due to land ownership changes over the last 4 years.

Specific Proposed Changes

Youth Encouragement

- 1) Eliminate all Youth Encouragement hunts within the Greater Gila elk herd unit (GMUs 15, 16A, 16C, 16D, 16E) to reduce harvest pressure on adult females. Population indices suggest these elk herds are declining as a result of low calf recruitment and high adult female mortality, further intensified by drought conditions. A portion of these licenses will be redistributed to other Youth Encouragement hunts throughout the state.
- 2) Create two new Youth Encouragement hunts of 75 licenses each within GMU 2 to increase harvest pressure on adult females and increase youth opportunity.
- 3) Increase Youth Encouragement hunt licenses within GMUs 34 and 36 to increase harvest pressure on adult females within increasing elk populations in the Sacramento mountains.
- 4) Increase Youth Encouragement hunt licenses within GMU 51.

Northwest Region

- 1) Increase antlerless ('A') licenses within December Youth Only (YO) and December 2C only rifle hunts.
- 2) Change early October Mature Bull ('MB') licenses from any legal weapon to muzzleloader hunts in GMU 5A (10 licenses).

North Central Region

- 1) Create a muzzleloader hunt within the Sargent WMA to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB/A', 10 licenses.
- 2) Create a muzzleloader hunt within the Humphries/Rio Chama WMAs to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB/A', 10 licenses.
- 3) Create a muzzleloader hunt within GMU 5B to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 56 licenses.
- 4) Redistribute 37 December 'MB' rifle licenses to the muzzleloader hunt in GMU 5B. Muzzleloader hunts typically have lower success rates; thus, these licenses are redistributed at a ratio of 1:1.5
- 5) Create a muzzleloader hunt within GMU 50 to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 65 licenses.
- 6) Redistribute 45 late October and early November 'MB' rifle licenses to new muzzleloader hunt in GMU 50 at a ratio of 1:1.5
- 7) Create a muzzleloader hunt within GMU 51 to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be Either-Sex ('ES'), 145 licenses. All licenses for this hunt were redistributed from the existing December muzzleloader hunt in GMU 51.
- 8) Increase 'A' licenses within GMU 51 for both mid and late November hunts from 251 to 265 licenses.

Southwest Region

- 1) Create a muzzleloader hunt within GMU 12 to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 35 licenses.
- 2) Create a muzzleloader hunt within GMUs 16A, 16B/22, 16C, and 16D to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 35 licenses for each GMU. Redistribute 15 'MB' rifle licenses from GMU 16A to new muzzleloader hunt at a 1:1.5 ratio. Although overall 'MB' licenses will increase slightly within the Greater Gila elk herd, anticipated harvest should be stable or slightly decrease as muzzleloader hunters, on average, have lower success rates. Additionally, pushing rifle 'MB' hunts later in the season will decrease bull susceptibility to harvest during rut. Similar redistributions of rifle hunt licenses shall occur in GMUs 16B/22, 16C, and 16D.
- 3) Reduce 'A' rifle licenses within GMU 16A, 16C, 16D, and 16E by 27-30% and shift cow hunts earlier in the season to reduce adult female mortality in the Greater Gila elk herd unit.
- 4) Create a muzzleloader hunt within GMU 21A to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 15 licenses.

Southeast Region

Increase 'A' licenses within both late season (Jan/Feb) cow hunts within GMU 34 from 200 to 230 licenses to increase harvest on adult females in an increasing elk herd unit.

Northeast Region

- 1) Create a muzzleloader hunt within GMU 49 to begin after archery and before rifle hunt seasons. Bag limit shall be 'MB', 20 licenses.
- 2) Redistribute 'MB' a total of 13 October rifle licenses to new muzzleloader hunt in GMU 49 at a ratio of 1:1.5.

Secondary Management Zones

- 1) Create new 'A' late-season rifle hunt in GMUs 29/30 to address increased population within these units (20 licenses).

- 2) Create two new 'ES' rifle hunts within GMU 32 as elk have moved into this region and become more resident than seasonal (30 licenses total).
- 3) Create 2 new 'ES' bow hunts with 20 licenses each in GMU 38 as this elk population is becoming more established.

Special Management Zones

Reduce 'A' licenses by 17% within the Valle Vidal (GMU 55A) to reduce adult female mortality.

A full text of changes for all rules will be available on the Department's website at: <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/>. Interested persons may submit comments on the proposed changes as follows: Bighorn Sheep Rule to DGF-waterfowl@state.nm.us; Pronghorn Antelope Rule to DGF-Exotics-Rule@dgf.nm.gov; Deer Rule to DGF-Deer-Rule@dgf.nm.gov; and Elk Rule to DGF-Deer-Rule@dgf.nm.gov. Individuals may also submit written comments to the physical address below. Comments are due by 1:00 p.m. on August 18, 2026. The final proposed rules will be voted on by the Commission during a public meeting on August 21, 2026. Interested persons may also provide data, views or arguments, orally or in writing, at the public rule hearings to be held on August 21, 2026.

Full copies of text of the proposed new rules, technical information related to proposed rule changes, and the agenda can be obtained from the Office of the Director, New Mexico Department of Wildlife, 1 Wildlife Way, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507, or from the Department's website at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/commission/proposals-under-consideration/>. This agenda is subject to change up to 72 hours prior to the meeting. Please contact the Director's Office at (505) 476-8000, or the Department's website at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/> for updated information.

If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in the hearing or meeting, please contact the Department at (505) 476-8000 at least one week prior to the meeting or as soon as possible. Public documents, including the agenda and minutes, can be provided in various accessible formats. Please contact the Department at 505-476-8000 if a summary or other type of accessible format is needed.

Legal authority for this rulemaking can be found in the General Powers and Duties of the State Game Commission 17-1-14, et seq. NMSA 1978; Commission's Power to establish rules and regulations 17-1-26, et seq. NMSA 1978.

TITLE 19 NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE
CHAPTER 31 HUNTING AND FISHING
PART 17 BIGHORN SHEEP

19.31.17.1 ISSUING AGENCY: New Mexico ~~department of game and fish~~ department of wildlife.
[19.31.17.1 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.1 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.2 SCOPE: Sportspersons interested in bighorn sheep management and hunting. Additional requirements may be found in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, and Chapters 30, 31, 32 and 33 of Title 19 NMAC.
[19.31.17.2 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.2 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Sections 17-1-14 and 17-1-26 NMSA 1978 provide that the New Mexico state game wildlife commission has the authority to establish rules and regulations that it may deem necessary to carry out the purpose of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and all other acts pertaining to protected mammals, birds, and fish.
[19.31.17.3 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.3 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.4 DURATION: April 1, 2025~~2027~~ through March 31, 2027~~2031~~.
[19.31.17.4 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.4 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.5 EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2025~~2027~~ unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.
[19.31.17.5 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.5 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.6 OBJECTIVE: Establishing open hunting seasons and regulations, rules, and procedures governing the distribution and issuance of bighorn sheep licenses by the department.
[19.31.17.6 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.6 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.7 DEFINITIONS:

- A. **"Department"** shall mean the New Mexico ~~department of game and fish~~ department of wildlife.
 - B. **"Director"** shall mean the director of the New Mexico ~~department of game and fish~~ department of wildlife.
 - C. **"Either sex" or "ES"** shall mean any one animal of the species.
 - D. **"Ewe"** shall mean any female bighorn sheep.
 - E. **"Game management unit" or "GMU"** shall mean those areas as described in 19.30.4 NMAC Boundary Descriptions for Game Management Units.
 - F. **"Ram"** shall mean any male bighorn sheep.
 - G. **"Wildlife management areas" or "WMAs"** shall mean those areas as described in 19.34.5 NMAC Wildlife Management Areas.
- [19.31.17.7 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.7 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.8 ADJUSTMENT OF LICENSES: The director, with the verbal concurrence of the New Mexico state wildlife-game commission chairperson or their designee, may adjust the number of bighorn licenses to address significant changes in population levels or to address critical department management needs. The director may change or cancel any or all hunts on military lands to accommodate closures on those lands; if changed, the season length and bag limit shall remain the same as assigned on the original hunt code.
[19.31.17.8 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.8 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.9 BIGHORN SHEEP LICENSE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS:

- A. **Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ram once-in-a-lifetime hunts:** It shall be unlawful for anyone to apply for a Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ram license if one has previously held a license to hunt a Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ram in New Mexico, except those who have held a youth-only, private land-only (not obtained through the public draw), population management license for ram or ES that the director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson or their designee, has decided does not qualify as once-in-a-lifetime, auction, and/or raffle bighorn ram license(s). A person that has received the youth-only ram license is eligible for this hunt only once as a youth (under age 18), but may apply for the other Rocky mountain and desert bighorn once-in-a lifetime hunts as long as they are eligible.

B. Desert bighorn sheep ram once-in-a-lifetime hunts: It shall be unlawful for anyone to apply for a desert bighorn sheep ram license if one has previously held a license to hunt a desert bighorn sheep ram in New Mexico, except those who have held a youth-only, private land-only (not obtained through the public draw), population management license for ram or ES that the director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson or their designee, has decided does not qualify as once-in-a-lifetime, auction, and/or raffle bighorn ram license(s). A person that has received the youth-only ram license is eligible for this hunt only once as a youth (under age 18), but may apply for the other Rocky mountain and desert bighorn once-in-a lifetime hunts as long as they are eligible.

C. Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ewe hunts: This hunt is not a once-in-a-lifetime hunt. A person that has previously held a license to hunt Rocky mountain bighorn rams or ewes is eligible to apply for this hunt. [19.31.17.9 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.9 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.10 SEALING OF RAM HORNS: A seal shall be affixed to a horn of every bighorn sheep ram head taken in New Mexico, imported into New Mexico, or found in the field in New Mexico subsequent to August 17, 1973. Bighorn sheep heads found in the field within New Mexico shall remain the property of the state until disposed of by permit from the director. The seal shall authorize possession and transportation of the head within New Mexico.

A. Such sealing shall be done within ten days after the bighorn sheep ram head is taken, imported, or found in the field and before the bighorn sheep head is exported from New Mexico. Bighorn sheep ram heads not so declared shall be seized. Only legally taken and possessed bighorn sheep ram heads **from New Mexico** shall be sealed.

B. Bighorn sheep ram heads legally sealed in other countries, states, tribal entities, provinces, and territories, and possessing a valid visible seal attached, are exempted.

C. It shall be unlawful to possess any bighorn sheep ram head which has not been sealed as described in this section.

[19.31.17.10 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.10 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.11 BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING SEASONS: The **2023-242027-28** through **2026-272030-31** hunting seasons shall be as indicated below, listing the GMUs or **areas** open **areas**, eligibility requirements or restrictions, hunt dates, hunt codes, sporting arms, number of licenses, and bag limit. Additional eligibility requirements and restrictions are defined in Section 9 of 19.31.17 NMAC above.

A. Rocky mountain bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms (**BHS-1-201BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB**). Hunters applying for **BHS-1-201BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB** will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for **BHS-1-201BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB** will be up to 60 with a bag limit of one ram.

open GMUs or areas for BHS-1-201	2023-2024 hunt dates	2024-2025 hunt dates	2025-2026 hunt dates	2026-2027 hunt dates
6	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24
	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15
14, 18	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
16B, 22, 23, 24: including Double E-WMA	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31
45	8/4-8/13	8/9-8/18	8/8-8/17	8/7-8/16
	8/18-8/27	8/23-9/1	8/22-8/31	8/21-8/30
45, youth only	8/18-8/27	8/23-9/1	8/22-8/31	8/21-8/30
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15
	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/4-8/13	8/9-8/18	8/8-8/17	8/7-8/16
	8/18-8/27	8/23-9/1	8/22-8/31	8/21-8/30
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24
	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15
	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15/2023-1/15/2024	8/15/2024-1/15/2025	8/15/2025-1/15/2026	8/15/2026-1/15/2027

58	8/15/2023 1/15/2024	8/15/2024 1/15/2025	8/15/2025 1/15/2026	8/15/2026 1/15/2027
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Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
6	8/10-8/24 9/1-9/15	8/10-8/24 9/1-9/15	8/10-8/24 9/1-9/15	8/10-8/24 9/1-9/15
14, 18	10/1-10/15 10/16-10/30	10/1-10/15 10/16-10/30	10/1-10/15 10/16-10/30	10/1-10/15 10/16-10/30
16B, 22, 23, 24: including Double E, Glenwood, and Mimbres WMAs	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31
45	8/6-8/15 8/20-8/29	8/11-8/20 8/25-9/3	8/10-8/19 8/24-9/2	8/9-8/18 8/23-9/1
45, youth only	8/20-8/29	8/25-9/3	8/24-9/2	8/23-9/1
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522	8/6-8/15 9/1-9/10	8/6-8/15 9/1-9/10	8/6-8/15 9/1-9/10	8/6-8/15 9/1-9/10
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/6-8/15 8/20-8/29	8/11-8/20 8/25-9/3	8/10-8/19 8/24-9/2	8/9-8/18 8/23-9/1
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	8/10-8/24 9/1-9/15 11/1-11/15	8/10-8/24 9/1-9/15 11/1-11/15	8/10-8/24 9/1-9/15 11/1-11/15	8/10-8/24 9/1-9/15 11/1-11/15
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31
58	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31

B. Private land Rocky mountain bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms. The number of licenses available will be up to 6 10 with a bag limit of one ram. The hunt code shall be BHS-RM-R-RAM-PVT.

open GMUs or areas	2023-2024 hunt dates	2024-2025 hunt dates	2025-2026 hunt dates	2026-2027 hunt dates
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15/2023 1/15/2024	8/15/2024 1/15/2025	8/15/2025 1/15/2026	8/15/2026 1/15/2027
58	8/15/2023 1/15/2024	8/15/2024 1/15/2025	8/15/2025 1/15/2026	8/15/2026 1/15/2027

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-R-RAM-PVT	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
14, 18	10/1-10/15 10/16-10/30	10/1-10/15 10/16-10/30	10/1-10/15 10/16-10/30	10/1-10/15 10/16-10/30
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31
58	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31

C. Rocky mountain bighorn ewe hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-202BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB). Hunters applying for BHS-1-202BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-202BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB will be up to 150 with a bag limit of one ewe.

open GMUs or areas for BHS-1-202	2023-2024 hunt dates	2024-2025 hunt dates	2025-2026 hunt dates	2026-2027 hunt dates
45	9/16-9/20 9/30-10/4	9/21-9/25 10/5-10/9	9/20-9/24 10/4-10/8	9/19-9/23 10/3-10/7
45, youth only	9/30-10/4	10/5-10/9	10/4-10/8	10/3-10/7
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	10/14-10/22 11/18-11/26	10/12-10/20 11/16-11/24	10/11-10/19 11/15-11/23	10/10-10/18 11/21-11/29

	<u>12/9-12/17</u>	<u>12/14-12/22</u>	<u>12/13-12/21</u>	<u>12/12-12/20</u>
<u>49, 50, 53 west of NM 522, youth only</u>	<u>11/18-11/26</u>	<u>11/16-11/24</u>	<u>11/15-11/23</u>	<u>11/21-11/29</u>
<u>53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522</u>	<u>9/23-9/27</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>	<u>9/20-9/24</u>	<u>9/19-9/23</u>
	<u>10/7-10/11</u>	<u>10/5-10/9</u>	<u>10/4-10/8</u>	<u>10/3-10/7</u>
<u>53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522, youth only</u>	<u>9/23-9/27</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>	<u>9/20-9/24</u>	<u>9/19-9/23</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950</u>	<u>9/16-9/20</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>	<u>9/20-9/24</u>	<u>9/19-9/23</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only</u>	<u>9/16-9/20</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>	<u>9/20-9/24</u>	<u>9/19-9/23</u>

<u>Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB</u>	<u>2027-2028 hunt dates</u>	<u>2028-2029 hunt dates</u>	<u>2029-2030 hunt dates</u>	<u>2030-2031 hunt dates</u>
<u>45</u>	<u>9/18-9/22</u>	<u>9/16-9/20</u>	<u>9/15-9/19</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>
	<u>10/2-10/6</u>	<u>9/30-10/4</u>	<u>9/29-10/3</u>	<u>10/5-10/9</u>
<u>45, youth only</u>	<u>10/2-10/6</u>	<u>9/30-10/4</u>	<u>9/29-10/3</u>	<u>10/5-10/9</u>
<u>49, 50, 53 west of NM 522</u>	<u>10/9-10/17</u>	<u>10/14-10/22</u>	<u>10/13-10/21</u>	<u>10/12-10/20</u>
	<u>11/20-11/28</u>	<u>11/18-11/26</u>	<u>11/17-11/25</u>	<u>11/16-11/24</u>
	<u>12/11-12/19</u>	<u>12/9-12/17</u>	<u>12/8-12/16</u>	<u>12/14-12/22</u>
<u>49, 50, 53 west of NM 522, youth only</u>	<u>11/20-11/28</u>	<u>11/18-11/26</u>	<u>11/17-11/25</u>	<u>11/16-11/24</u>
<u>53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522</u>	<u>9/25-9/29</u>	<u>9/23-9/27</u>	<u>9/22-9/26</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>
	<u>10/2-10/6</u>	<u>10/7-10/11</u>	<u>10/6-10/10</u>	<u>10/5-10/9</u>
<u>53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522, youth only</u>	<u>9/25-9/29</u>	<u>9/23-9/27</u>	<u>9/22-9/26</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950</u>	<u>9/18-9/22</u>	<u>9/16-9/20</u>	<u>9/15-9/19</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only</u>	<u>9/18-9/22</u>	<u>9/16-9/20</u>	<u>9/15-9/19</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>

D. Rocky mountain bighorn ewe hunt for bow only (~~BHS-2-203~~BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB). Hunters applying for ~~BHS-2-203~~BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for ~~BHS-2-203~~BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB will be up to 60 with a bag limit of one ewe.

<u>open GMUs or areas for BHS-2-203</u>	<u>2023-2024 hunt dates</u>	<u>2024-2025 hunt dates</u>	<u>2025-2026 hunt dates</u>	<u>2026-2027 hunt dates</u>
<u>45</u>	<u>9/1-9/10</u>	<u>9/6-9/15</u>	<u>9/5-9/14</u>	<u>9/4-9/13</u>
<u>49, 50, 53 west of NM 522</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>
<u>53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950</u>	<u>9/2-9/15</u>	<u>9/7-9/20</u>	<u>9/6-9/19</u>	<u>9/5-9/18</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only</u>	<u>9/2-9/15</u>	<u>9/7-9/20</u>	<u>9/6-9/19</u>	<u>9/5-9/18</u>

<u>Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB</u>	<u>2027-2028 hunt dates</u>	<u>2028-2029 hunt dates</u>	<u>2029-2030 hunt dates</u>	<u>2030-2031 hunt dates</u>
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<u>45</u>	<u>9/3-9/12</u>	<u>9/1-9/10</u>	<u>9/7-9/16</u>	<u>9/6-9/15</u>
<u>49, 50, 53 west of NM 522</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>
<u>53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950</u>	<u>9/4-9/17</u>	<u>9/2-9/15</u>	<u>9/1-9/14</u>	<u>9/7-9/20</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only</u>	<u>9/4-9/17</u>	<u>9/2-9/15</u>	<u>9/1-9/14</u>	<u>9/7-9/20</u>

E. Desert bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-204BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB). Hunters applying for BHS-1-204BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-204BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB will be up to 60 with a bag limit of one ram.

<u>open GMUs or areas for BHS-1-204</u>	<u>2023-2024 hunt dates</u>	<u>2024-2025 hunt dates</u>	<u>2025-2026 hunt dates</u>	<u>2026-2027 hunt dates</u>
<u>13, 17</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>
	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>
<u>19</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>
	<u>12/27/2023-1/3/2024</u>	<u>12/27/2024-1/3/2025</u>	<u>12/27/2025-1/3/2026</u>	<u>12/27/2026-1/3/2027</u>
<u>20: south of NM 51</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>
	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>
<u>20: north of NM 51</u>	<u>8/18-8/27</u>	<u>9/13-9/22</u>	<u>8/15-8/24</u>	<u>9/11-9/20</u>
		<u>10/11-10/20</u>		<u>10/9-10/18</u>
<u>20: north of NM 51, youth only</u>	<u>11/17-11/26</u>		<u>11/21-11/30</u>	
<u>26, west of NM 81</u>	<u>9/15-9/30</u>	<u>9/15-9/30</u>	<u>9/15-9/30</u>	<u>9/15-9/30</u>
	<u>10/1-10/15</u>	<u>10/1-10/15</u>	<u>10/1-10/15</u>	<u>10/1-10/15</u>
<u>26, east of NM 81</u>	<u>9/15-9/30</u>	<u>9/15-9/30</u>	<u>9/15-9/30</u>	<u>9/15-9/30</u>
	<u>10/1-10/15</u>	<u>10/1-10/15</u>	<u>10/1-10/15</u>	<u>10/1-10/15</u>
<u>27</u>	<u>11/1-11/15</u>	<u>11/1-11/15</u>	<u>11/1-11/15</u>	<u>11/1-11/15</u>
	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>

<u>Open GMUs or areas for BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB</u>	<u>2027-2028 hunt dates</u>	<u>2028-2029 hunt dates</u>	<u>2029-2030 hunt dates</u>	<u>2030-2031 hunt dates</u>
<u>13, 17</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>
	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>
<u>19</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>
	<u>12/27-1/3/28</u>	<u>12/27-1/3/29</u>	<u>12/27-1/3/30</u>	<u>12/27-1/3/31</u>
<u>20: south of NM 51</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>
	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>
<u>20: north of NM 51</u>	<u>8/20-8/29</u>	<u>9/8-9/17</u>	<u>8/17-8/26</u>	<u>9/13-9/22</u>
		<u>10/13-10/22</u>		<u>10/11-10/20</u>
<u>20: north of NM 51, youth only</u>	<u>11/19-11/28</u>		<u>11/16-11/25</u>	
<u>26, west of NM 81</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>
	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>
<u>26, east of NM 81</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>

	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31
27	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15
	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30
34	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15

F. Private land desert bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms. The number of licenses available will be up to 6 with a bag limit of one ram. The hunt code shall be BHS-D-R-RAM-PVT.

open GMUs or areas	2023-2024 hunt dates	2024-2025 hunt dates	2025-2026 hunt dates	2026-2027 hunt dates
20: north of NM 51	9/15-9/24	8/16-8/25	9/12-9/21	8/14-8/23
	10/13-10/22	11/22-12/1	10/10-10/19	11/20-11/29

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-D-R-RAM-PVT	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
20: north of NM 51	9/10-9/19	8/18-8/27	9/14-9/23	8/16-8/25
	10/8-10/17	11/17-11/26	10/12-10/21	11/22-12/1

[19.31.17.11 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.11 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.12 SPECIAL BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES: Bighorn sheep enhancement program:

A. **Program description:** The director shall collect all proceeds generated through the auction and lottery of special bighorn sheep permits, and such monies shall be deposited in the game protection fund. These monies shall be made available for expenditure by the department solely for programs and projects to benefit bighorn sheep and for costs incurred in carrying out these programs. These monies shall be used to augment, and not replace, monies appropriated from existing funds available to the department for the conservation, restoration, utilization, and management of bighorn sheep.

B. Requirements for issuance of special bighorn sheep licenses:

(1) The state **wildlifegame** commission authorizes the director to issue not more than four special bighorn sheep licenses in any one license year to take one ram per license. The director shall allow the sale of one Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep authorization and one desert bighorn sheep authorization through auction to the highest bidder, and one Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep authorization and one desert bighorn sheep authorization to a person selected through a random drawing of a lottery ticket. The drawing will be conducted by the department or an incorporated, non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of **bighorn sheep wildlife**.

(2) Unless their hunting privileges have been revoked pursuant to law, any person is eligible to submit a bid for the special bighorn sheep auction authorization or purchase lottery tickets in an attempt to be selected for the special bighorn sheep lottery authorization.

(3) The special bighorn sheep authorizations issued through auction and lottery may be transferred, through sale, barter or gift by the successful individuals only to other individuals qualified to hunt.

(4) Special bighorn sheep licenses granted through auction or lottery, as described above, shall not be considered **once-in-a-lifetime** licenses.

C. **Enhancement hunts:** These licenses shall be valid for any big game sporting arms statewide where hunting is allowed. The bag limit shall be one ram.

(1) Holders of the auction licenses must declare their exclusive hunt area by June 30 annually to hunt the designated subspecies in one of the open hunt areas. Each holder of the raffle license must declare their exclusive hunt area by July 20 annually to hunt the designated subspecies in one of the open hunt areas not declared by the auction hunter.

(2) The remaining hunt units open to bighorn hunting not declared by the auction or raffle hunter as their exclusive hunt area, may be hunted by either the auction or raffle hunter.

(3) The hunt dates for the auction and raffle licenses shall be 8/1-12/31 annually, except GMU 53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522 is closed 8/16 to 8/31 annually to all bighorn sheep hunters.

[19.31.17.12 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.12 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.13 BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION MANAGEMENT HUNTS:

A. The director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson of the New Mexico state **wildlifegame** commission or their designee, may authorize population management hunts for bighorn sheep when justified in writing by department personnel and must be based on biological information or a potential to compromise population viability.

B. The director shall designate the sporting arms, season dates, season lengths, bag limits, hunt boundaries, specific requirements or restrictions, and number of licenses to be issued.

C. In the event that an applicant is not able to hunt on the dates specified, the applicant's name shall be moved to the bottom of the list and another applicant may be contacted for the hunt.

D. In those instances where a population management hunt is warranted on deeded private lands, the landowner may suggest eligible hunters of their choice by submitting a list of prospective hunters' names to the department for licensing consideration. No more than one-half of the total number of licenses authorized shall be available to landowner identified hunters. The balance of prospective hunters shall be identified by the department.

E. The director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson of the New Mexico state **wildlifegame** commission or their designee, may deem some ram or either-sex population management licenses not once-in-a-lifetime; a person that has held a once-in-a-lifetime ram license(s) is not disqualified from this hunt.
[19.31.17.13 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.13 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

HISTORY OF 19.31.17 NMAC:

Pre-NMAC History: The material in this part was derived from that previously filed with the State Records Center and Archives under:

Regulation No. 482, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, Elk, Antelope, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 5/31/1967;

Regulation No. 487, Establishing 1967 Seasons On Javelina And Barbary Sheep, filed 12/15/1967;

Regulation No. 489, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring of 1968, filed 3/1/1968;

Regulation No. 491, Establishing Big Game Seasons For 1968 For Jicarilla Reservation, filed 3/1/1968;

Regulation No. 492, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, Elk, Antelope, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 6/6/1968;

Regulation No. 495, Establishing A Season On Bighorn Sheep, filed 10/2/1968;

Regulation No. 496, Establishing An Elk Season In The Tres Piedras Area, Elk Area P-6, filed 12/11/1968;

Regulation No. 502, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1969, filed 3/5/1969;

Regulation No. 503, Establishing 1969 Deer Seasons For Bowhunting Only And Big Game Seasons For The Jicarilla Indian Reservation, filed 3/5/1969;

Regulation 504, Establishing Seasons on Deer, Bear, Turkey, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 6/4/6199;

Regulation No. 507, Establishing A Season On Bighorn Sheep, filed 8/26/1969;

Regulation No. 512, Establishing Turkey Season For The Spring Of 1970, filed 2/20/1970;

Regulation No. 513, Establishing Deer Season For Bowhunting Only In Sandia State Game Refuge, filed 2/20/1970;

Regulation No. 514, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, Elk, Antelope, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, filed 6/9/1970;

Regulation No 520, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1971, filed 3/9/1971;

Regulation No. 522, Establishing 1971 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/9/1971;

Regulation No. 523, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, filed 6/9/1971;

Regulation No. 531, Establishing A Season On Javelina, filed 12/17/1971;

Regulation No. 532, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1972, filed 3/20/1972;

Regulation No. 534, Establishing 1972 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/20/1972;

Regulation No. 536, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, filed 6/26/1972;

Regulation No. 542, Establishing A Season On Javelina, filed 12/1/1972;

Regulation No. 545, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1973, filed 2/26/1973;

Regulation No. 546, Establishing 1973 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 2/26/1973;

Regulation No. 547, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, And Javelina, filed 5/31/1973;

Regulation No. 554, Establishing Special Turkey Seasons For The Spring of 1974, filed 3/4/1974;
 Regulation No. 556, Establishing 1974 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/14/1974;
 Regulation No. 558, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex, filed 5/29/1974;
 Regulation No. 565, Establishing Special Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1975, filed 3/24/1975;
 Regulation No. 567, Establishing 1975 Seasons On Deer, Bear, And Turkey On The Jicarilla Apache And Navajo Indian Reservations And On Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/24/1975;
 Regulation No. 568, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 6/25/1975;
 Regulation No. 573, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/23/1976;
 Regulation No. 583, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/11/1977;
 Regulation No. 590, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/15/78;
 Regulation No. 596, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/23/1979;
 Regulation No. 603, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1980 through March 31, 1981, filed 2/22/1980;
 Regulation No. 609, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1981 through March 31, 1982, filed 3/17/1981;
 Regulation No. 614, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1982 through March 31, 1983, filed 3/10/1982;
 Regulation No. 622, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1983 through March 31, 1984, filed 3/9/1983;
 Regulation No. 628, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1984 through March 31, 1985, filed 4/2/1984;
 Regulation No. 634, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1985 Through March 31, 1986, filed 4/18/1985;
 Regulation No. 640, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1986 through March 31, 1987, filed 3/25/1986;
 Regulation No. 645, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1987 through March 31, 1988, filed 2/12/1987;
 Regulation No. 653, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1988 through March 31, 1989, filed 12/18/1987;
 Regulation No. 663, Establishing Opening Spring Turkey For The Period April 1, 1989 through March 31, 1990, filed 3/28/1989;
 Regulation No. 664, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1989 through March 31, 1990, filed 3/20/1989;
 Regulation No. 674, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1990 through March 31, 1991, filed 11/21/1989;
 Regulation No. 683, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1991 through March 31, 1992, filed 2/8/1991;
 Regulation No. 689, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1992 through March 31, 1993, filed 3/4/1992;
 Regulation No. 700, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1993 through March 31, 1995, filed 3/11/1993.

History of Repealed Material:

19.31.8 NMAC, Big Game, filed 3-1-2001 - duration expired 3/31/2003.
 19.31.8 NMAC, Big Game and Turkey, filed 3/3/2003 - duration expired 3/31/2005.
 19.31.8 NMAC, Big Game and Turkey, filed 12/15/2004 - duration expired 3/31/2007.
 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 12/1/2006 - duration expired 3/31/2009.
 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 2/26/2009 - duration expired 3/31/2011.
 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 9/15/2010 - duration expired 3/31/2015.

19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 3/17/2015 - duration expired 3/31/2019.
19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 5/31/2018 - duration expired 3/31/2023.
19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 8/25/2022 - duration expired 3/31/2025.
19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 8/15/2024 - duration expired 3/31/2027.

NMAC

Transmittal Form



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Volume: Issue: Publication date: Number of pages: (ALD Use Only) Sequence No.

Issuing agency name and address: Agency DFA code:

Contact person's name: Phone number: E-mail address:

Type of rule action: New ☒ Amendment ☐ Repeal ☐ Emergency ☐ Renumber ☐ (ALD Use) Recent filing date:

Title number: Title name:

Chapter number: Chapter name:

Part number: Part name:

Amendment description (If filing an amendment): Amendment's NMAC citation (If filing an amendment):

Are there any materials incorporated by reference? Yes ☐ No ☒ Please list attachments or Internet sites if applicable.

If materials are attached, has copyright permission been received? Yes ☐ No ☐ Public domain ☐

Specific statutory or other authority authorizing rulemaking:

Notice date(s): Hearing date(s): Rule adoption date: Rule effective date:

Concise Explanatory Statement For Rulemaking Adoption:

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STATE DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH

Findings required for rulemaking adoption:

2026 AUG 27 PM 3:05

Findings MUST include:

- Reasons for adopting rule, including any findings otherwise required by law of the agency, and a summary of any independent analysis done by the agency;
- Reasons for any change between the published proposed rule and the final rule; and
- Reasons for not accepting substantive arguments made through public comment.

The rulemaking was undertaken to adopt a new Bighorn Sheep Rule 19.31.17 NMAC which will become effective April 1, 2027. The most recent version of the rule will expire on March 31, 2027.

The new rule includes:

- 1) A mechanism for authorizing Rocky Mountain bighorn hunting in the Mazano Mountains, GMUs 14 and 18, the Department recommends adding these units as "open GMUs or areas" under the private land provisions of the rule. This change would allow for private land hunting opportunities, with dates jointly established for license years 2027-2028 through 2030-2031. The Department has a hunting agreement where 50% of the licenses would be allocated through the public draw and 50% would be provided to the participating landowner.
 - a. The Department will establish two hunt periods for the Manzanos: October 1-15 (Period 1) and October 16-30 (Period 2). We anticipate the first hunt being in 2027. The first hunter on the Manzanos will be a public draw hunter.
 - b. The Department will increase the bag limit for Rocky Mountain ram tags to better reflect bighorn abundance across a greater number GMUs, including the Manzanos.
- 2) The Department reestablished a population of desert bighorn sheep in the Sacramento mountains (GMU 34) in 2018. The initial reintroduction and subsequent translocations have resulted in older age class rams available for harvest. The Department will open GMU 34 with one hunt period: December 1-15.
- 3) In response to public comments, the Department will shift the hunt periods for the Little Hatchets and Big Hatchets desert bighorn hunts from September and October, to December. Both hunt areas would have two concurrent hunt periods from December 1-15 and December 16-30.
- 4) The Department will make adjustments to season dates in some areas. For example, if a hunt normally starts on a Saturday, this date shift would be maintained throughout the rule so the hunts continue to start on Saturday or adjusting to calendar starts for consistency.
- 5) Requiring the purchase of a license at least one day prior to hunting.

There have been no changes between the published proposed rule and the final rule. There were no substantive arguments made through public comment that were not accepted. To view public comments, please visit www.wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/commission/hearing-archive/ and click on the 2026 tab. The resulting rule was based on what was best for the resource and overall hunter satisfaction.

Issuing authority (If delegated, authority letter must be on file with ALD):

Name:

Michael B. Sloane

Check if authority has been delegated

☐

Title:

Director, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

Signature: (BLACK ink only OR Digital Signature)

Date signed:

Michael B. Sloane

Digitally signed by Michael B. Sloane
Date: 2026.08.27 08:33:34 -06'00'

TITLE 19 NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE
CHAPTER 31 HUNTING AND FISHING
PART 17 BIGHORN SHEEP

19.31.17.1 ISSUING AGENCY: New Mexico department of wildlife.
[19.31.17.1 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.1 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.2 SCOPE: Sportspersons interested in bighorn sheep management and hunting. Additional requirements may be found in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, and Chapters 30, 31, 32 and 33 of Title 19 NMAC.
[19.31.17.2 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.2 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Sections 17-1-14 and 17-1-26 NMSA 1978 provide that the New Mexico state wildlife commission has the authority to establish rules and regulations that it may deem necessary to carry out the purpose of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and all other acts pertaining to protected mammals, birds, and fish.
[19.31.17.3 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.3 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.4 DURATION: April 1, 2027 through March 31, 2031.
[19.31.17.4 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.4 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.5 EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2027 unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.
[19.31.17.5 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.5 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.6 OBJECTIVE: Establishing open hunting seasons and regulations, rules, and procedures governing the distribution and issuance of bighorn sheep licenses by the department.
[19.31.17.6 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.6 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.7 DEFINITIONS:

- A. "Department" shall mean the New Mexico department of wildlife.
- B. "Director" shall mean the director of the New Mexico department of wildlife.
- C. "Either sex" or "ES" shall mean any one animal of the species.
- D. "Ewe" shall mean any female bighorn sheep.
- E. "Game management unit" or "GMU" shall mean those areas as described in 19.30.4 NMAC Boundary Descriptions for Game Management Units.
- F. "Ram" shall mean any male bighorn sheep.
- G. "Wildlife management areas" or "WMAs" shall mean those areas as described in 19.34.5 NMAC Wildlife Management Areas.

[19.31.17.7 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.7 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.8 ADJUSTMENT OF LICENSES: The director, with the verbal concurrence of the New Mexico state wildlife commission chairperson or their designee, may adjust the number of bighorn licenses to address significant changes in population levels or to address critical department management needs. The director may change or cancel any or all hunts on military lands to accommodate closures on those lands; if changed, the season length and bag limit shall remain the same as assigned on the original hunt code.
[19.31.17.8 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.8 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.9 BIGHORN SHEEP LICENSE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS:

A. **Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ram once-in-a-lifetime hunts:** It shall be unlawful for anyone to apply for a Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ram license if one has previously held a license to hunt a Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ram in New Mexico, except those who have held a youth-only, private land-only (not obtained through the public draw), population management license for ram or ES that the director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson or their designee, has decided does not qualify as once-in-a-lifetime, auction, and/or raffle bighorn ram license(s). A person that has received the youth-only ram license is eligible for this hunt only once as a youth (under age 18), but may apply for the other Rocky mountain and desert bighorn once-in-a lifetime hunts as long as they are eligible.

B. **Desert bighorn sheep ram once-in-a-lifetime hunts:** It shall be unlawful for anyone to apply for a desert bighorn sheep ram license if one has previously held a license to hunt a desert bighorn sheep ram in New

Mexico, except those who have held a youth-only, private land-only (not obtained through the public draw), population management license for ram or ES that the director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson or their designee, has decided does not qualify as once-in-a-lifetime, auction, and/or raffle bighorn ram license(s). A person that has received the youth-only ram license is eligible for this hunt only once as a youth (under age 18), but may apply for the other Rocky mountain and desert bighorn once-in-a lifetime hunts as long as they are eligible.

C. Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ewe hunts: This hunt is not a once-in-a-lifetime hunt. A person that has previously held a license to hunt Rocky mountain bighorn rams or ewes is eligible to apply for this hunt. [19.31.17.9 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.9 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.10 SEALING OF RAM HORNS: A seal shall be affixed to a horn of every bighorn sheep ram head taken in New Mexico, imported into New Mexico, or found in the field in New Mexico subsequent to August 17, 1973. Bighorn sheep heads found in the field within New Mexico shall remain the property of the state until disposed of by permit from the director. The seal shall authorize possession and transportation of the head within New Mexico.

A. Such sealing shall be done within ten days after the bighorn sheep ram head is taken, imported, or found in the field and before the bighorn sheep head is exported from New Mexico. Bighorn sheep ram heads not so declared shall be seized. Only legally taken and possessed bighorn sheep ram heads shall be sealed.

B. Bighorn sheep ram heads legally sealed in other countries, states, tribal entities, provinces, and territories, and possessing a valid visible seal attached, are exempt.

C. It shall be unlawful to possess any bighorn sheep ram head which has not been sealed as described in this section. [19.31.17.10 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.10 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.11 BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING SEASONS: The 2027-28 through 2030-31 hunting seasons shall be as indicated below, listing the GMUs or open areas, eligibility requirements or restrictions, hunt dates, hunt codes, sporting arms, number of licenses and bag limit. Additional eligibility requirements and restrictions are defined in Section 9 of 19.31.17 NMAC above.

A. Rocky mountain bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB). Hunters applying for BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB will be up to 60 with a bag limit of one ram.

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
6	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24
	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15
14, 18	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15
	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30
16B, 22, 23, 24: including Double E, Glenwood, and Mimbres WMAs	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31
45	8/6-8/15	8/11-8/20	8/10-8/19	8/9-8/18
	8/20-8/29	8/25-9/3	8/24-9/2	8/23-9/1
45, youth only	8/20-8/29	8/25-9/3	8/24-9/2	8/23-9/1
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15
	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/6-8/15	8/11-8/20	8/10-8/19	8/9-8/18
	8/20-8/29	8/25-9/3	8/24-9/2	8/23-9/1
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24
	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15
	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31
58	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31

B. Private land Rocky mountain bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms. The number of licenses available will be up to 10 with a bag limit of one ram. The hunt code shall be BHS-RM-R-RAM-PVT.

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-R-RAM-PVT	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
14, 18	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15
	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31
58	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31

C. Rocky mountain bighorn ewe hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB). Hunters applying for BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB will be up to 150 with a bag limit of one ewe.

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
45	9/18-9/22	9/16-9/20	9/15-9/19	9/21-9/25
	10/2-10/6	9/30-10/4	9/29-10/3	10/5-10/9
45, youth only	10/2-10/6	9/30-10/4	9/29-10/3	10/5-10/9
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	10/9-10/17	10/14-10/22	10/13-10/21	10/12-10/20
	11/20-11/28	11/18-11/26	11/17-11/25	11/16-11/24
	12/11-12/19	12/9-12/17	12/8-12/16	12/14-12/22
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522, youth only	11/20-11/28	11/18-11/26	11/17-11/25	11/16-11/24
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522	9/25-9/29	9/23-9/27	9/22-9/26	9/21-9/25
	10/2-10/6	10/7-10/11	10/6-10/10	10/5-10/9
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522, youth only	9/25-9/29	9/23-9/27	9/22-9/26	9/21-9/25
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	9/18-9/22	9/16-9/20	9/15-9/19	9/21-9/25
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only	9/18-9/22	9/16-9/20	9/15-9/19	9/21-9/25

D. Rocky mountain bighorn ewe hunt for bow only (BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB). Hunters applying for BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB will be up to 60 with a bag limit of one ewe.

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
45	9/3-9/12	9/1-9/10	9/7-9/16	9/6-9/15
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	9/16-9/30	9/16-9/30	9/16-9/30	9/16-9/30
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522	9/11-9/17	9/11-9/17	9/11-9/17	9/11-9/17
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	9/4-9/17	9/2-9/15	9/1-9/14	9/7-9/20
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only	9/4-9/17	9/2-9/15	9/1-9/14	9/7-9/20

E. Desert bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB). Hunters applying for BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB will be up to 60 with a bag limit of one ram.

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
13, 17	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15
	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31

19	12/14-12/21	12/14-12/21	12/14-12/21	12/14-12/21
	12/27-1/3/28	12/27-1/3/28	12/27-1/3/28	12/27-1/3/31
20: south of NM 51	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30
	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15
20: north of NM 51	8/20-8/29	9/8-9/17	8/17-8/26	9/13-9/22
		10/13-10/22		10/11-10/20
20: north of NM 51, youth only	11/19-11/28		11/16-11/25	
26, west of NM 81	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15
	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31
26, east of NM 81	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15
	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31
27	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15
	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30
34	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15

F. Private land desert bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms. The number of licenses available will be up to 6 with a bag limit of one ram. The hunt code shall be BHS-D-R-RAM-PVT.

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-D-R-RAM-PVT	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
20: north of NM 51	9/10-9/19	8/18-8/27	9/14-9/23	8/16-8/25
	10/8-10/17	11/17-11/26	10/12-10/21	11/22-12/1

[19.31.17.11 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.11 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.12 SPECIAL BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES: Bighorn sheep enhancement program:

A. **Program description:** The director shall collect all proceeds generated through the auction and lottery of special bighorn sheep permits, and such monies shall be deposited in the game protection fund. These monies shall be made available for expenditure by the department solely for programs and projects to benefit bighorn sheep and for costs incurred in carrying out these programs. These monies shall be used to augment, and not replace, monies appropriated from existing funds available to the department for the conservation, restoration, utilization and management of bighorn sheep.

B. **Requirements for issuance of special bighorn sheep licenses:**

(1) The state wildlife commission authorizes the director to issue not more than four special bighorn sheep licenses in any one license year to take one ram per license. The director shall allow the sale of one Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep authorization and one desert bighorn sheep authorization through auction to the highest bidder, and one Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep authorization and one desert bighorn sheep authorization to a person selected through a random drawing of a lottery ticket. The drawing will be conducted by the department or an incorporated, non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife.

(2) Unless their hunting privileges have been revoked pursuant to law, any person is eligible to submit a bid for the special bighorn sheep auction authorization or purchase lottery tickets in an attempt to be selected for the special bighorn sheep lottery authorization.

(3) The special bighorn sheep authorizations issued through auction and lottery may be transferred, through sale, barter or gift by the successful individuals only to other individuals qualified to hunt.

(4) Special bighorn sheep licenses granted through auction or lottery, as described above, shall not be considered once-in-a-lifetime licenses.

C. **Enhancement hunts:** These licenses shall be valid for any big game sporting arms statewide where hunting is allowed. The bag limit shall be one ram.

(1) Holders of the auction licenses must declare their exclusive hunt area by June 30 annually to hunt the designated subspecies in one of the open hunt areas. Each holder of the raffle license must declare their exclusive hunt area by July 20 annually to hunt the designated subspecies in one of the open hunt areas not declared by the auction hunter.

(2) The remaining hunt units open to bighorn hunting not declared by the auction or raffle hunter as their exclusive hunt area, may be hunted by either the auction or raffle hunter.

(3) The hunt dates for the auction and raffle licenses shall be 8/1-12/31 annually, except GMU 53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522 is closed 8/16 to 8/31 annually to all bighorn sheep hunters. [19.31.17.12 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.12 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.13 BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION MANAGEMENT HUNTS:

A. The director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson of the New Mexico state wildlife commission or their designee, may authorize population management hunts for bighorn sheep when justified in writing by department personnel and must be based on biological information or a potential to compromise population viability.

B. The director shall designate the sporting arms, season dates, season lengths, bag limits, hunt boundaries, specific requirements or restrictions, and number of licenses to be issued.

C. In the event that an applicant is not able to hunt on the dates specified, the applicant's name shall be moved to the bottom of the list and another applicant may be contacted for the hunt.

D. In those instances where a population management hunt is warranted on deeded private lands, the landowner may suggest eligible hunters of their choice by submitting a list of prospective hunters' names to the department for licensing consideration. No more than one-half of the total number of licenses authorized shall be available to landowner identified hunters. The balance of prospective hunters shall be identified by the department.

E. The director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson of the New Mexico state wildlife commission or their designee, may deem some ram or either-sex population management licenses not once-in-a-lifetime; a person that has held a once-in-a-lifetime ram license(s) is not disqualified from this hunt. [19.31.17.13 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.13 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

HISTORY OF 19.31.17 NMAC:

Pre-NMAC History: The material in this part was derived from that previously filed with the State Records Center and Archives under:

Regulation No. 482, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, Elk, Antelope, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 5/31/1967;
Regulation No. 487, Establishing 1967 Seasons On Javelina And Barbary Sheep, filed 12/15/1967;
Regulation No. 489, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring of 1968, filed 3/1/1968;
Regulation No. 491, Establishing Big Game Seasons For 1968 For Jicarilla Reservation, filed 3/1/1968;
Regulation No. 492, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, Elk, Antelope, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 6/6/1968;
Regulation No. 495, Establishing A Season On Bighorn Sheep, filed 10/2/1968;
Regulation No. 496, Establishing An Elk Season In The Tres Piedras Area, Elk Area P-6, filed 12/11/1968;
Regulation No. 502, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1969, filed 3/5/1969;
Regulation No. 503, Establishing 1969 Deer Seasons For Bowhunting Only And Big Game Seasons For The Jicarilla Indian Reservation, filed 3/5/1969;
Regulation 504, Establishing Seasons on Deer, Bear, Turkey, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 6/4/1969;
Regulation No. 507, Establishing A Season On Bighorn Sheep, filed 8/26/1969;
Regulation No. 512, Establishing Turkey Season For The Spring Of 1970, filed 2/20/1970;
Regulation No. 513, Establishing Deer Season For Bowhunting Only In Sandia State Game Refuge, filed 2/20/1970;
Regulation No. 514, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, Elk, Antelope, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, filed 6/9/1970;
Regulation No 520, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1971, filed 3/9/1971;
Regulation No. 522, Establishing 1971 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/9/1971;
Regulation No. 523, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, filed 6/9/1971;
Regulation No. 531, Establishing A Season On Javelina, filed 12/17/1971;
Regulation No. 532, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1972, filed 3/20/1972;
Regulation No. 534, Establishing 1972 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/20/1972;

Regulation No. 536, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, filed 6/26/1972;

Regulation No. 542, Establishing A Season On Javelina, filed 12/1/1972;

Regulation No. 545, Establishing Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1973, filed 2/26/1973;

Regulation No. 546, Establishing 1973 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 2/26/1973;

Regulation No. 547, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep And Bighorn Sheep, And Javelina, filed 5/31/1973;

Regulation No. 554, Establishing Special Turkey Seasons For The Spring of 1974, filed 3/4/1974;

Regulation No. 556, Establishing 1974 Seasons On Deer, Bear, Turkey, And Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/14/1974;

Regulation No. 558, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex, filed 5/29/1974;

Regulation No. 565, Establishing Special Turkey Seasons For The Spring Of 1975, filed 3/24/1975;

Regulation No. 567, Establishing 1975 Seasons On Deer, Bear, And Turkey On The Jicarilla Apache And Navajo Indian Reservations And On Elk On The Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation, filed 3/24/1975;

Regulation No. 568, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 6/25/1975;

Regulation No. 573, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Dusky Grouse, Tassel-Eared And Chickaree Squirrel, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/23/1976;

Regulation No. 583, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/11/1977;

Regulation No. 590, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/15/78;

Regulation No. 596, Establishing Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex, filed 2/23/1979;

Regulation No. 603, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1980 through March 31, 1981, filed 2/22/1980;

Regulation No. 609, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1981 through March 31, 1982, filed 3/17/1981;

Regulation No. 614, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1982 through March 31, 1983, filed 3/10/1982;

Regulation No. 622, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1983 through March 31, 1984, filed 3/9/1983;

Regulation No. 628, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1984 through March 31, 1985, filed 4/2/1984;

Regulation No. 634, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1985 Through March 31, 1986, filed 4/18/1985;

Regulation No. 640, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1986 through March 31, 1987, filed 3/25/1986;

Regulation No. 645, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1987 through March 31, 1988, filed 2/12/1987;

Regulation No. 653, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1988 through March 31, 1989, filed 12/18/1987;

Regulation No. 663, Establishing Opening Spring Turkey For The Period April 1, 1989 through March 31, 1990, filed 3/28/1989;

Regulation No. 664, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1989 through March 31, 1990, filed 3/20/1989;

Regulation No. 674, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1990 through March 31, 1991, filed 11/21/1989;

Regulation No. 683, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1991 through March 31, 1992, filed 2/8/1991;

Regulation No. 689, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1992 through March 31, 1993, filed 3/4/1992;

Regulation No. 700, Establishing Open Seasons On Deer, Turkey, Bear, Cougar, Elk, Antelope, Barbary Sheep, Bighorn Sheep, Javelina, Oryx, And Ibex For The Period April 1, 1993 through March 31, 1995, filed 3/11/1993.

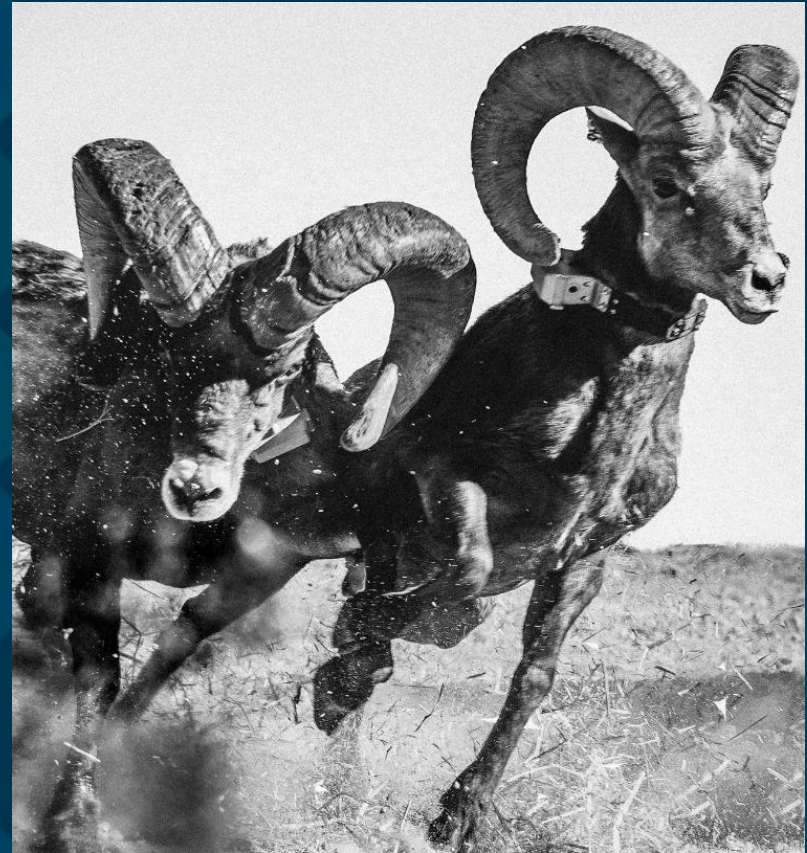
2026 AUG 27 PM 3:06

History of Repealed Material:

- 19.31.8 NMAC, Big Game, filed 3-1-2001 - duration expired 3/31/2003.
- 19.31.8 NMAC, Big Game and Turkey, filed 3/3/2003 - duration expired 3/31/2005.
- 19.31.8 NMAC, Big Game and Turkey, filed 12/15/2004 - duration expired 3/31/2007.
- 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 12/1/2006 - duration expired 3/31/2009.
- 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 2/26/2009 - duration expired 3/31/2011.
- 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 9/15/2010 - duration expired 3/31/2015.
- 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 3/17/2015 - duration expired 3/31/2019.
- 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 5/31/2018 - duration expired 3/31/2023.
- 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 8/25/2022 - duration expired 3/31/2025.
- 19.31.17 NMAC, Bighorn Sheep, filed 8/15/2024 - duration expired 3/31/2027.



Bighorn Sheep Rule 19.31.17 NMAC



August 21, 2026
New Mexico State Game Commission Meeting



Manzanos Ram Hunt



- GMUs 14 & 18
- Has never been hunted
- Bighorn spend 90% of time on Tierra Grande lands
- Proposed changes:
 - Define as open GMU under Private Land
 - 2 hunt periods: Oct 1-15, Oct 16-30
 - Start ram hunt ~2027



Sacramentos Ram Hunt

- GMU 34
- Re-established in 2018, has never been hunted
- Proposed changes:
 - Define as open GMU in rule
 - 1 hunt period: Dec 1-15
 - Start ram hunt ~2027



Little Hatchets and Big Hatchets Ram Hunts



- GMU 26 west of NM 81 and east of NM 81
- Currently two hunt periods each:
 - Sept 15-30, Oct 1-15
- Public comment desiring later hunt periods
- Proposed changes:
 - Shift the two hunt periods from Sept and Oct to Dec 1-15 and Dec 16-30



Public Outreach

- **Held 2 hybrid in-person/virtual public meetings**
 - March 11, 2026, Albuquerque
 - March 12, 2026, Las Cruces
 - ~40 people in attendance
- **Public comment summary:**
 - 29 comments received through 8/18/20206
 - Support for shifting desert hunts from Sept/Oct to Dec
 - Support for opening new GMUs to ram hunting
 - Other various comments



DGF-Bighorn-Rule@dgf.nm.gov



NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE



Suggested Motion

The Department respectfully suggests the following motion unless Commission discretion indicates a different course of action:

Move to repeal and replace 19.31.17 NMAC as presented by the Department and allow the Department to make minor corrections to comply with filing this rule with State Records and Archives.



Summary of Recommended Changes to the Bighorn Rule

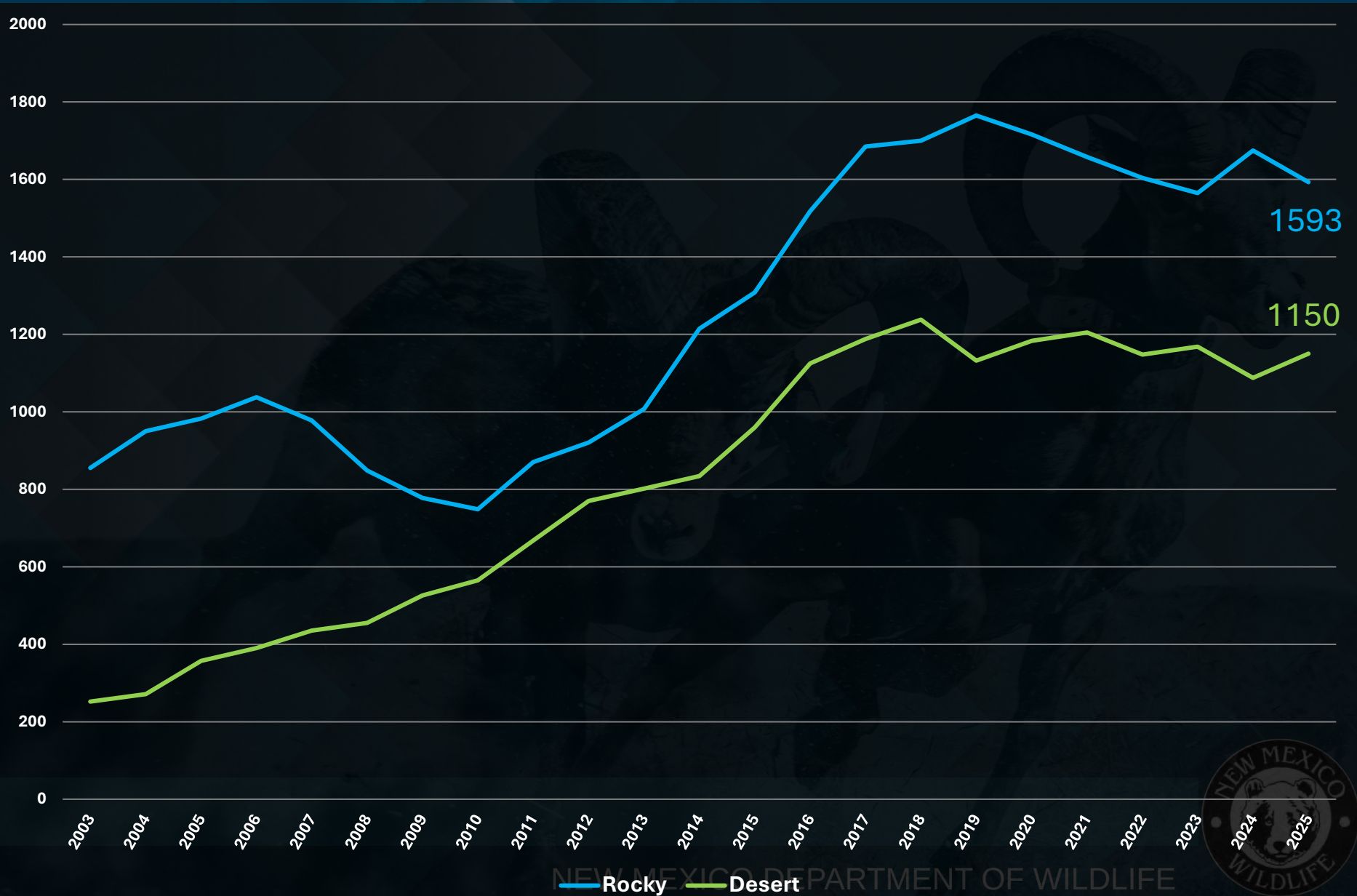
- Open Manzanos (GMU 14 & 18) to ram hunting
 - Authorize 2 hunt periods: Oct 1-15, Oct 16-30
 - Increase RMBHS private tag allocations from 6 to 10
- Open Sacramentos (GMU 34) to ram hunting
 - Authorize 1 hunt period: Dec 1-15
- Shift Little and Big Hatchets (GMU 26 w and e of NM 81) hunt periods
 - From Sept 15-30 & Oct 1-15 to Dec 1-15 & Dec 16-30
- General date shifts for consistency



Extra Slides



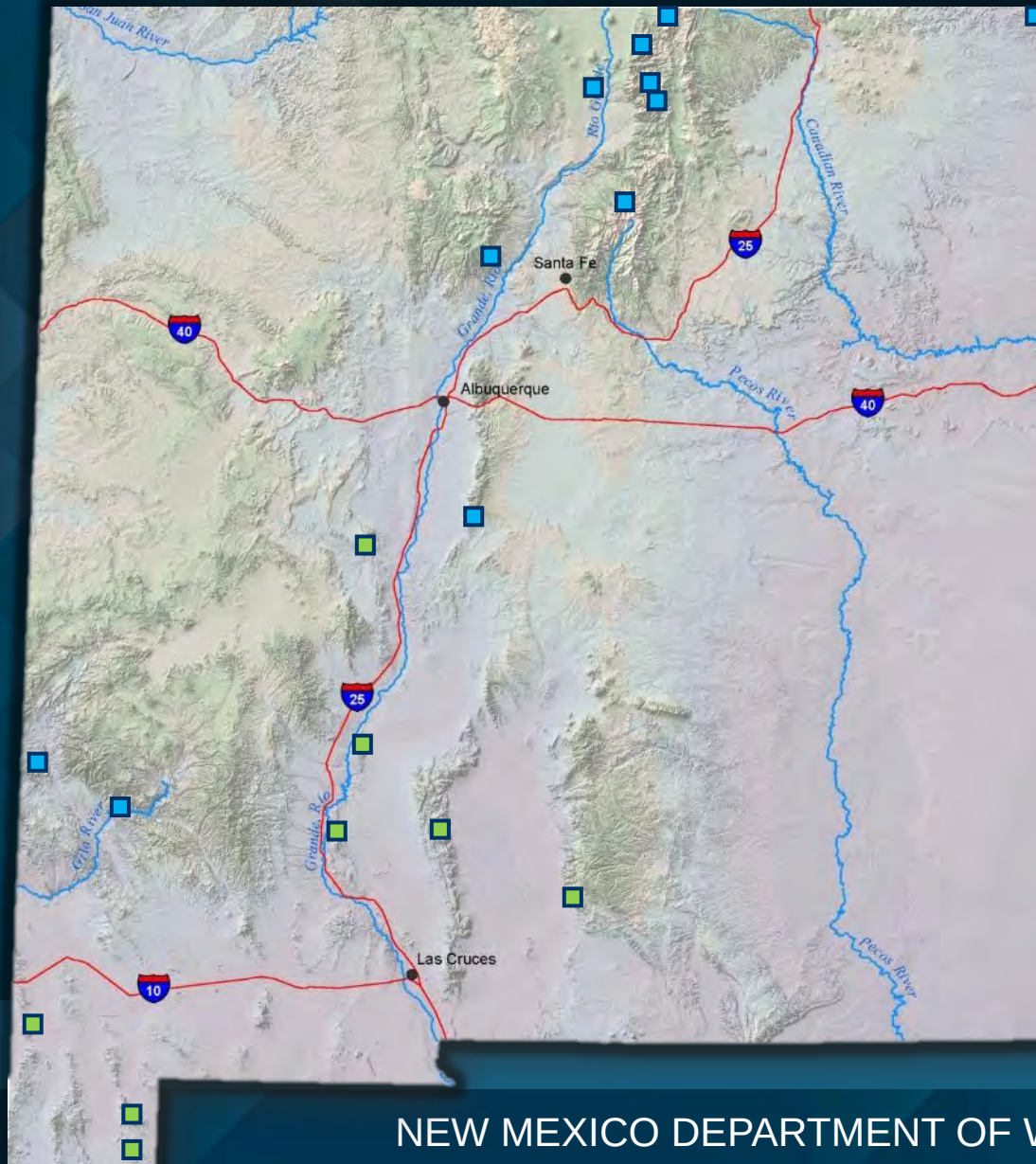
Statewide Bighorn Estimate



Bighorn Population Distribution

■ 8

Desert
Populations
~1,150



■ 11

Rocky
Mountain
Populations
~1,593

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE



Bighorn Projects

- Captures
 - 2022-2025: 305 bighorn captured/collared

Translocations

- 2023: 28 bighorn from Red Rock to Alamo Huecos
- 2025: 37 bighorn from Caballos to Sacramentos; 32 bighorn from Red Rock to Peloncillos

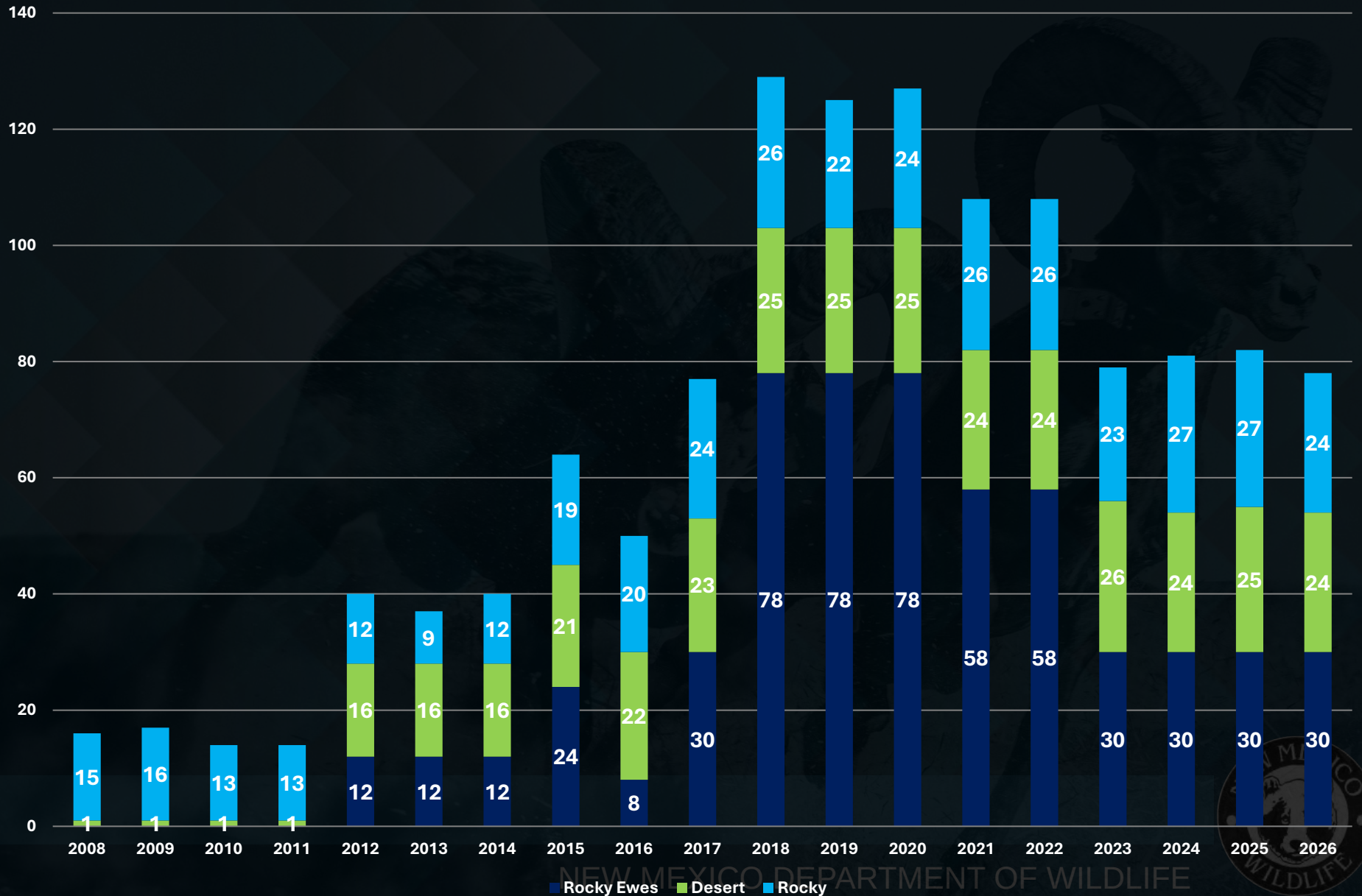


Bighorn Projects

- Testing GPS solar ear tags vs GPS collars
- Improving survey precision
- Diet analysis
- Alternative survey methods



NM Bighorn Sheep Hunting



General

- Adjust season dates appropriately (including date adjustments)



BIGHORN SHEEP PROPOSED RULE CHANGES SUMMARY

Date of update: 6/10/2026

**The Department remains actively engaged in reviewing biological data and considering public input as the rule development process progresses. Please check back regularly for updates and additional information as decisions are finalized.*

BIGHORN SHEEP BIOLOGY

Bighorn sheep population growth is driven by both adult female and lamb annual survival. Because bighorn sheep populations in New Mexico are relatively small, the Department predominantly prescribes a conservative male-only harvest regime. The aim of this strategy is to maintain a huntable number of older age class males while not affecting overall reproduction and population productivity. In cases where bighorn populations are large enough to be limited by winter range or where limiting dispersal behavior is desirable (i.e., high risk of unwanted disease transmission), the Department prescribes a conservative ewe harvest to maintain populations at appropriate levels. Bighorn sheep biology and the Department's harvest strategy result in hunting demand annually exceeding tag availability, therefore ram hunting opportunities are limited, and a "once-in-a-lifetime" random tag distribution system is administered. Bighorn populations are monitored annually, and hunting opportunities are based upon a suite of data gathered throughout the year.

For more information on bighorn biology and management in New Mexico, see this report:

<https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/download/new-mexico-bighorn-sheep-management/?wpdmdl=51880&refresh=699f5145ed4dd1772048709>

PROPOSED CHANGES TO BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING

- 1) The Department reestablished a population of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the Manzano mountains (Game Management Units [GMUs] 14 and 18) in the late 1970s. GMUs 14 and 18 have been included in the Bighorn Rule in the past however, new GPS collar data indicates this population primarily occupies private property year-round. To provide a mechanism for authorizing Rocky Mountain bighorn hunting in GMUs 14 and 18, the Department recommends adding these units as "open GMUs or areas" under the private land provisions of the rule. This change would allow for private land hunting opportunities, with dates jointly established for license years 2027-2028 through 2030-2031. The Department has a hunting agreement where 50% of the licenses would be allocated through the public draw and 50% would be provided to the participating landowner.
 - The Department will establish two hunt periods for the Manzanos: October 1-15 (Period 1) and October 16-30 (Period 2). We anticipate the first hunt being in 2027. The first hunter on the Manzanos will be a public draw hunter.
 - The Department will increase the bag limit for Rocky Mountain ram tags to better reflect bighorn abundance across a greater number GMUs, including the Manzanos.
- 2) The Department reestablished a population of desert bighorn sheep in the Sacramento mountains (GMU 34) in 2018. The initial reintroduction and subsequent translocations have resulted in older age class rams available for harvest. The Department will open GMU 34 with one hunt period: December 1-15..
- 3) In response to public comments, the Department will shift the hunt periods for the Little Hatchets and Big Hatchets desert bighorn hunts from September and October, to December.
 - Both hunt areas would have two concurrent hunt periods from December 1-15 and December 16-30.
- 4) The Department will make adjustments to season dates in some areas. For example, if a hunt normally starts on a Saturday, this date shift would be maintained throughout the rule so the hunts continue to start on Saturday or adjusting to calendar starts for consistency.
- 5) Require the purchase of a license at least one day prior to hunting.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Department continues to receive public comment. If you would like to comment on the proposals, please send an email to: DGF-Bighorn-Rule@dgf.nm.gov

TECHNICAL INFORMATION FOR BIGHORN SHEEP RULE DEVELOPMENT 2027-2031



PURPOSE

Maintain current bighorn sheep populations and manage for older age class rams in both Rocky Mountain and desert herds across New Mexico.

BIGHORN SHEEP BIOLOGY

Bighorn sheep population growth is driven by both adult female and lamb survival. Because bighorn sheep populations are small, the Department manages populations to maintain a huntable number of older age class males. Bighorn sheep biology and the Department's harvest strategy mean that few ram hunting opportunities exist. Populations are monitored annually and hunting opportunities are based upon survey observations. In some Rocky Mountain bighorn populations, the Department may implement limited female harvest to achieve population goals.

Disease is a primary threat to wild sheep populations throughout North America. Most concerning are respiratory pathogens carried by domestic sheep and goats. Although domestic sheep and goats may be unaffected by these pathogens, cross-transmission during comingling events can result in severe pneumonia and possibly die-offs in wild bighorn sheep populations. Many states rely on cooperation from neighboring stakeholders and members of the public to improve separation techniques and to alert state wildlife management agency personnel when contact between wild sheep and domestic sheep and goats is observed.

BIGHORN SHEEP HARVEST METRICS

In consideration of the most recent and best available data for a given population, a suite of metrics is used to guide tag allocation for ram harvest. The metrics that guide license determination for rams are the average number across the following factors: 2.5% of total minimum count, 2.5% of total estimate, 10% of total rams observed, 10% of total ram estimate, 25% of Class III and Class IV rams observed, and 25% of Class III and Class IV ram estimate. The estimate terms are derived by multiplying the observed count by a correction factor that is independently determined for each population under the assumption that surveys are imperfect and individuals in a given population are inevitably missed due to a suite of factors that limit visibility. Other criteria, including age and sex ratios, are also factored in when determining annual tag quotas. Lamb to ewe ratios provide a metric of productivity within a population. A lamb:ewe ratio range between 20-40:100 is generally desirable for maintaining a stable to increasing population. Consistent lamb:ewe ratios <20:100 can result in declining population abundance over time.

A commonly prescribed male:female ratio for social ungulates is 20:100 in the presence of regulated harvest. This is considered biologically "safe", because enough males remain on the landscape to meet breeding requirements while having no impact on population productivity. NMDOW considers a desirable ram:ewe ratio range to be between 20-40:100 as this objective retains additional rams for breeding, ensures maintenance of age structure diversity among the male segment of the population, and improves hunting and viewing opportunities. A ram ratio <20:100 may reduce harvest opportunities and can pose problems for reproductive phenology, productivity, and recruitment within a population.

Figure 1. The total number of ram licenses issued annually for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and harvest rate as a percentage of the statewide estimate (N) 2008-2025.

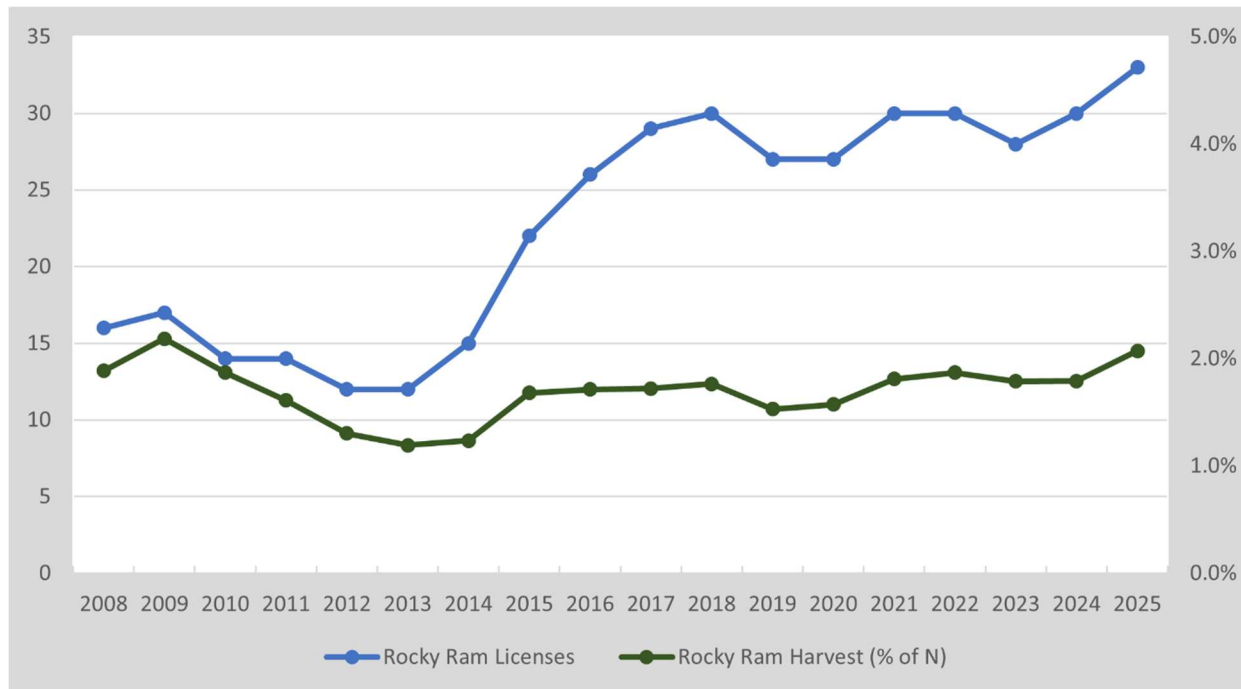


Figure 2. The total number of ram licenses issued annually for desert bighorn sheep and harvest rate as a percentage of the statewide estimate (N) 2012-2025.

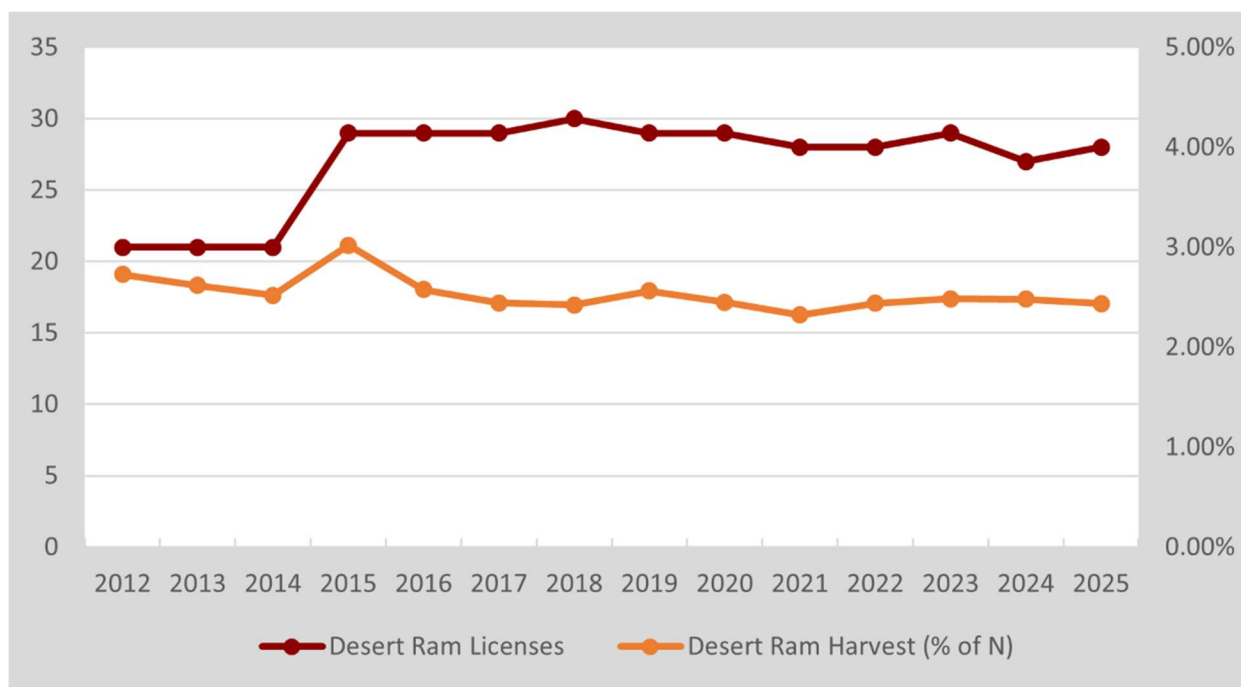


Figure 3. The total number of public Rocky Mountain and desert bighorn sheep licenses issued annually, 2008-2026.

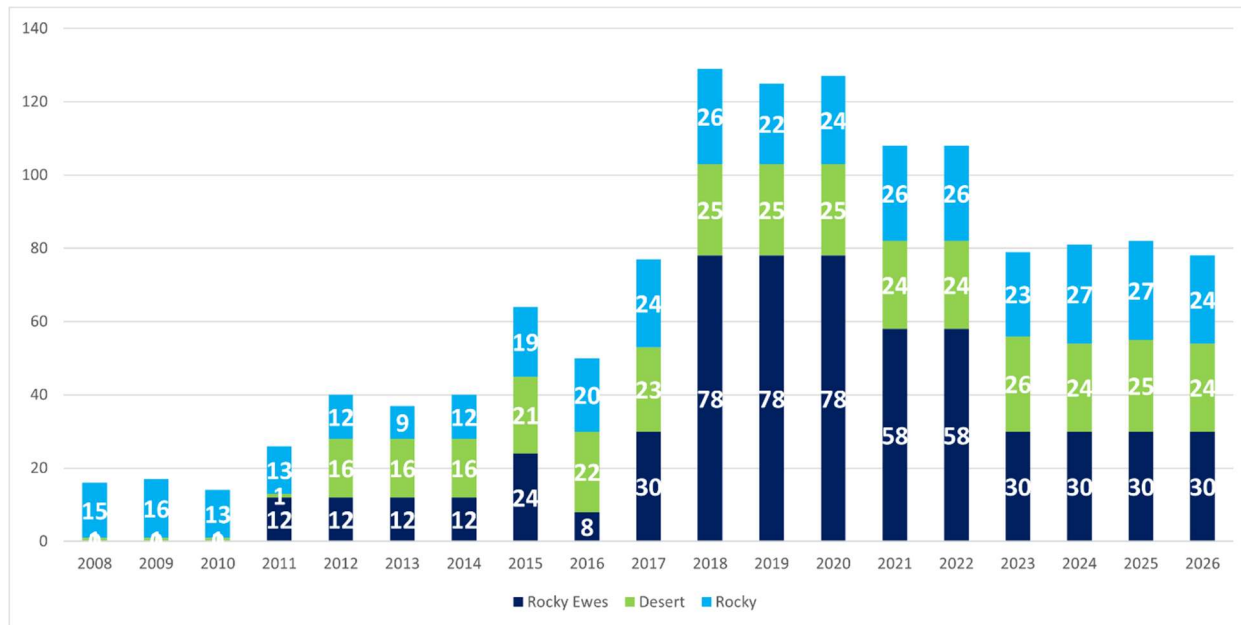


Figure 4. (A) Five-year (2021-2025) average ram score for Rocky Mountain bighorn in New Mexico within discrete populations and across all populations. (B) Five-year (2021-2025) average age-at-harvest for Rocky Mountain bighorn rams in New Mexico within discrete populations and across all populations combined. The abbreviations for discrete populations are: Pco = Pecos, Ltr = Latir, Jz = Jemez, Cu = Culebras, RGG = Rio Grande Gorge, SF/TC = San Francisco/Turkey Creek, and DC = Dry Cimarron. Note the Jemez score is averaged across two years only, the inaugural 2024 and 2025 hunt seasons for this population.

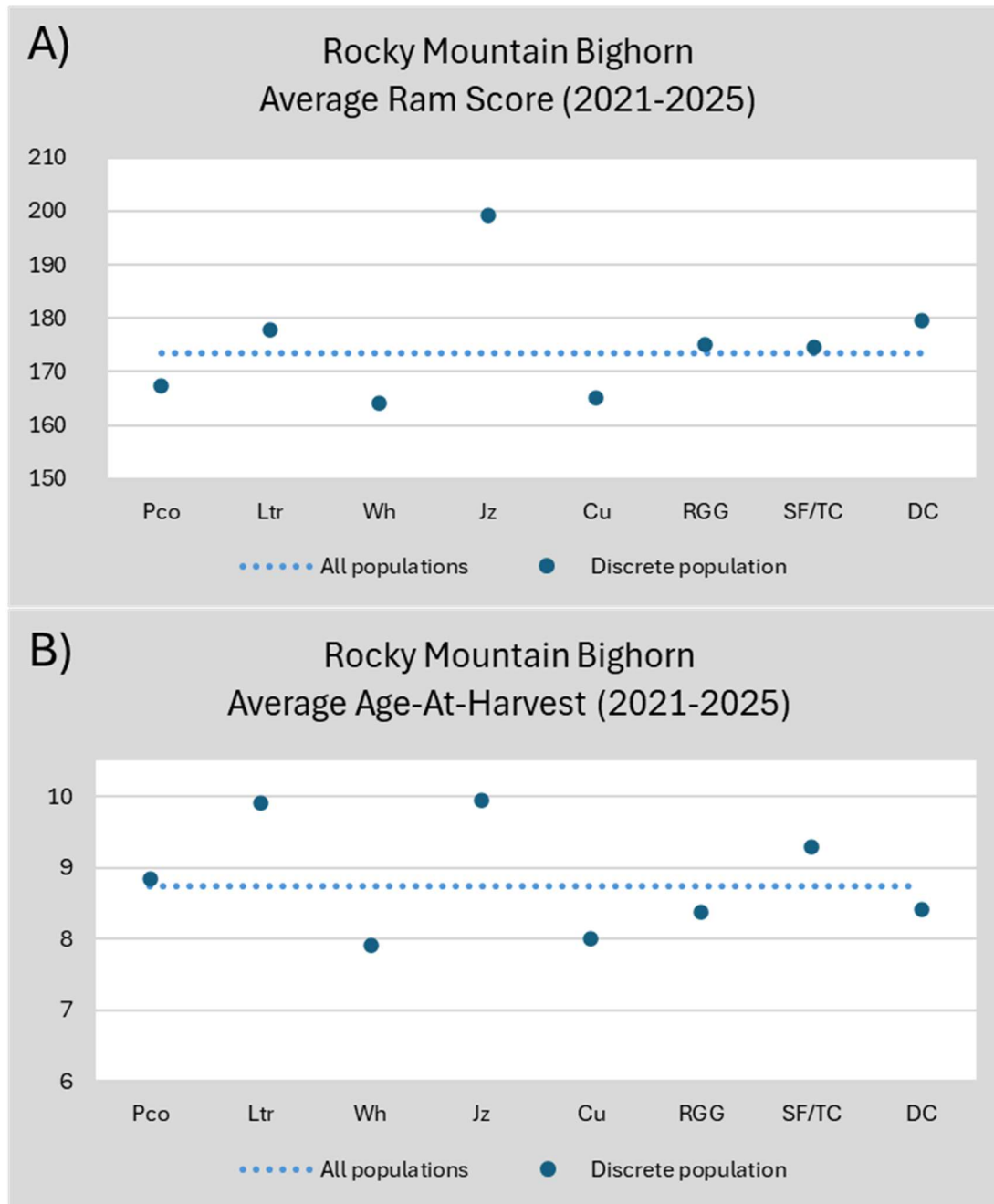


Figure 5. (A) Five-year (2021-2025) average ram score for desert bighorn in New Mexico within discrete populations and across all populations combined. (B) Five-year (2021-2025) average age-at-harvest for desert bighorn rams in New Mexico within discrete populations and across all populations combined. The abbreviations for discrete populations are: Pel = Peloncillos, BH/AH = Big Hatchets/Alamo Huecos, LH = Little Hatchets, Cab = Caballos, Lad = Ladrons, FC = Fra Cristobals, and SA = San Andres.

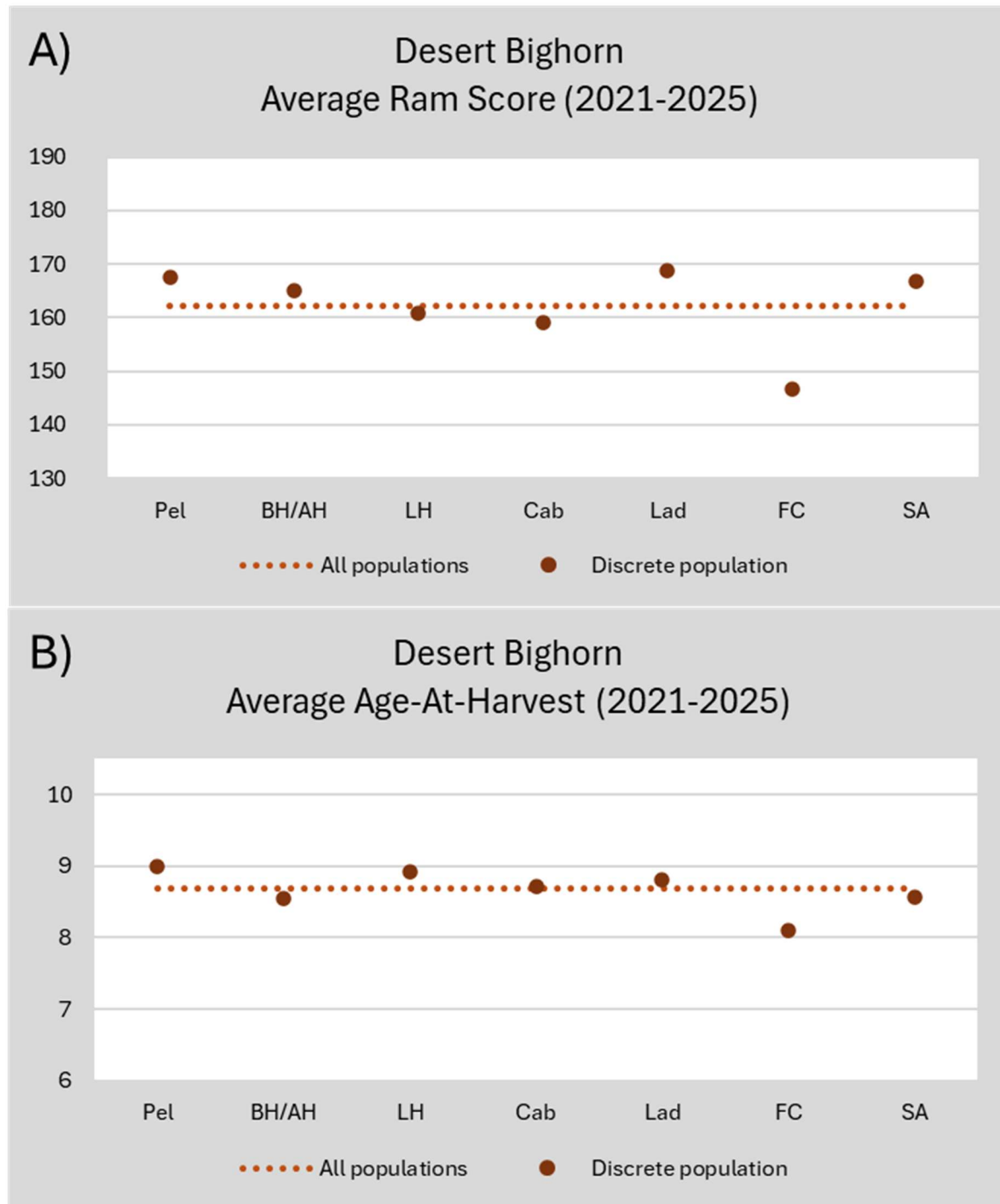


Table 1. Bighorn sheep harvest results, 2023-2024.

Type	Hunt Code	Weapon	Bag Limit	# Sold	# Reporting	% Reporting	Success Rate*	Rams	Ewes	Satisfaction Rating	Days Hunted
Public	BHS 1-201	Any	Ram	23	23	100%	100%	22	.	4.7	1.8
	BHS 1-202	Any	Ewe	19	15	79%	64%	.	7	3.1	1.1
	BHS 2-203	Bow	Ewe	10	9	90%	33%	.	2	2.6	1.9
	BHS 1-204	Any	Ram	26	26	100%	100%	26	.	4.0	3.0
Private	BHS 1-201	Any	Ram	3	3	100%	100%	3	.	.	.
	BHS 1-204	Any	Ram	1	1	100%	100%	1	.	.	.
Auction	BHS 1-500	Any	Ram	2	2	100%	100%	2	.	.	.
Raffle	BHS 1-600	Any	Ram	2	2	100%	100%	2	.	.	.
				86	81	96%	87%	56	9	3.6	2.0

*Success Rate applies to hunters that went afield

Table 2. Bighorn sheep harvest results, 2024-2025.

Type	Hunt Code	Weapon	Bag Limit	# Sold	# Reporting	% Reporting	Success Rate*	Rams	Ewes	Satisfaction Rating	Days Hunted
Public	BHS 1-201	Any	Ram	27	27	100%	96%	23	.	4.7	3
	BHS 1-202	Any	Ewe	18	18	100%	53%	.	8	4.3	2
	BHS 2-203	Bow	Ewe	10	6	60%	50%	.	2	4.5	7.3
	BHS 1-204	Any	Ram	24	24	100%	96%	22	.	4.5	3.9
Private	BHS 1-201	Any	Ram	1	1	100%	100%	1	.	.	.
	BHS 1-204	Any	Ram	1	1	100%	100%	1	.	.	.
Auction	BHS 1-500	Any	Ram	2	2	100%	100%	2	.	.	.
Raffle	BHS 1-600	Any	Ram	2	2	100%	100%	2	.	.	.
				85	81	96%	87%	51	10	4.5	4.1

*Success Rate applies to hunters that went afield

Table 3. Bighorn sheep harvest results, 2025-2026.

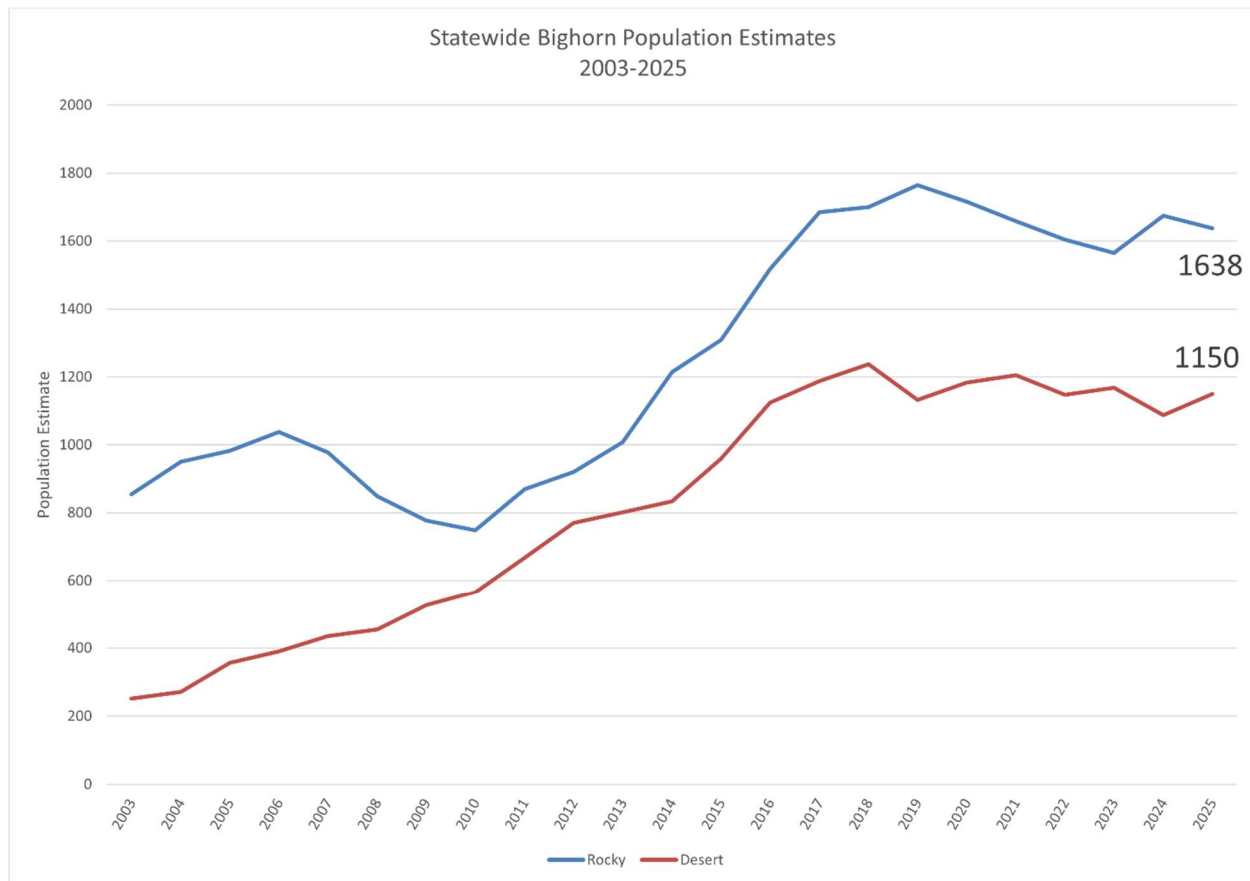
Type	Hunt Code	Weapon	Bag Limit	# Sold	# Reporting	% Reporting	Success Rate ¹	Rams	Ewes	Satisfaction Rating ²	Days Hunted ²
Public	BHS 1-201	Any	Ram	28	28	100%	100%	28	.	4.5	2.1
	BHS 1-202	Any	Ewe	20	15	75%	80%	.	8	4	1.6
	BHS 2-203	Bow	Ewe	9	9	100%	50%	.	4	3.9	2.9
	BHS 1-204	Any	Ram	25	25	100%	100%	25	.	4.6	2.9
Private	BHS 1-201	Any	Ram	3	3	100%	100%	3	.	.	.
	BHS 1-204	Any	Ram	1	1	100%	100%	1	.	.	.
Auction	BHS 1-500	Any	Ram	2	2	100%	100%	2	.	.	.
Raffle	BHS 1-600	Any	Ram	2	2	100%	100%	2	.	.	.
				90	85	97%	91%	61	12	4.3	2.4

¹Applies to hunters that went afield

²Applies to hunters that completed harvest report

BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION TRENDS AND METRICS

Figure 6. Midpoint population estimates for Rocky Mountain and desert bighorn sheep, 2003-2025.



Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep

Table 4. Summer/Fall lamb:ewe ratios and population estimates for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep populations in New Mexico, 2025-2026. Estimate trends are noted as increasing (+), stable (=), and decreasing (-).

Herd	L:E (lambs/100 ewes)	Population Estimate
Pecos	41:100	340-390 =
Wheeler Peak	17:100	165-215 =
Latir	70:100	65-80 =
Culebra	70:100	55-75 =
Rio Grande Gorge	25:100	200-250 =
Dry Cimarron	34:100	190-230 ⁻¹
San Francisco River	31:100	50-80 =
Turkey Creek	0:100	30-40 =
Manzanos	Not surveyed	50-70 =
Jemez	25:100	225-300 =
Red River Valley	Not surveyed	75-100 =
Totals	35:100	1,445-1,830 Midpoint= 1,638

¹ Population estimate increased as of February 2026 aerial survey, but trend is decreasing due to disease onset in April 2026

Table 5. Pecos bighorn sheep helicopter surveys, 2017–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewe	Y. Ewe	L	Y. R	CI	CI I	CIII	CIV	Tot Ram	Unk	L:E	Est. No	Type
2017 July	277	134		51		7	36	26	23	92		38:100	350-400	A (2.5)
2018 July	324	178	1	77		13	15	12	28	68		43:100	350-400	A (2.9)
2019 July	289	167		38		13	21	18	32	84		23:100	310-360	A (2.7)
2020 July	315	187		53		5	19	22	29	75		28:100	340-390	A (2.0)
2022 July	357	204		75		7	13	14	30	64	14E	37:100	380-420	A (1.9)
2023 July	293	180	3	39		17	8	15	28	68	3	22:100	350-400	A (1.9)
2024 July	321	151	5	75		11	22	21	37	91		48:100	350-400	A (2.0)
2025 August	261	156		64		3	7	9	18	41		41:100	340-390	A (2.1)

Table 6. Wheeler Peak Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2017–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewe	Y. Ewe	L	YR	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Tot Rams	Unk	L:E	Est. No	Type
2017 August	133	77	5	32	2	8	3	6	0	19	19	39:100	230-275	G
2018 July	174	81		33	3	15	11	11	20	60	60	41:100	230-275	A (1.8)
2019 July	176	96		14		14	5	10	23	14* 61	14	69:100	265-300	A (1.4)
2021 July	165	52	11	19		6	9	15	11	71	30/12	30:100		G
2022 July	200	138		20		14	6	12	10	42	42	65:100	230-275	A (1.7)
2023 July	153	94	1	17		6	1	3	7	40	1/23 R*	82:100	175-225	A (1.7)
2023	72	32		9	1	2	1	1	1		25	28:100	175-225	G
2024	152	82		44		4		11	12	27		54:100	175-225	A (1.3)
2024	46	25	2	7		1	4	3	2	10	2	28:100	175-225	G
2025	97	75	2	13		1		2	4	7		17:100	165-215	A (1.1)

Table 7. Latir Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2017–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewe	Y. Ewe	L	YR	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Tot Ram	Unk	L:E	Est. No	Type
2017 August	43	28	2	3		2	7		1	10		10:100	60-70	G
2017 October	43	18		5		2	7	6	5	20		28:100	60-70	A (0.8)
2018 July	43	28		3		2	4	3	3	12		11:100	55-70	A (1.0)
2019 July	55	33		1		2	4	8	7	21		3:100	60-75	A (0.6)
2019 August	36	27		7		2				2		26:100	60-75	G
2021 July	62	25	2	10	4	3	5			25	13R	34:100	65-80	G
2022 July	63	31		12*		2	4	9	5	20		39:100	65-80	A (0.6)
2023 July	29	5		2		4	5	7	6	22		40:100	65-80	A (0.7)
2024 July	38	14	1	1 1			1	2	9	12		73:100	65-80	A (0.5)
2024 August	45	22		17		1	1	1	3	6		77:100	65-80	G
2025 August	29	10		7		1		7	4	12		70:100	65-80	A (0.5)

Table 8. Culebra Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2017–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewe	Y. Ewe	L	YR	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Tot Ra m	Unk	L:E	Est. No	Type
2017 July	38	25	0	7		1	0	5	0	6	5*	28:100		A
2017 August	63	28	4	21		1	3	1		8	5*	66:100	65-70	G
2018 July	52	31		18		1		1	1	3		58:100	55-60	A (1.1)
2018 August	50	33		16		1				1		48:100	55-60	G
2019 July	48	32		15		1				1		47:100	55-60	A (0.9)
2019 August	48	22	4	10	4	1	2	1	1	9	3	38:100	55-60	G
2020 August	60	34	1	14		6	2	1	2	11		40:100	60-65	G
2021 July	41	14	2	10		5	1		2	8	7	62:100	55-75	G
2022 July	37	27		9			1			1		33:100	55-75	A (0.7)
2022 August	35	16	7	8	1	3				4		50:100	55-75	G
2023 July	8	3		1		1				1				A (0.7)
2023 July	40	23		12		1	2			3	2	52:100	55-75	G
2024 July	22	14		5			1	1				36:100	55-75	A (0.7)
2024 August	33	19		10				1	1			53:100	55-75	G
2025 July	37	25		7			2				4	28:100	55-75	G
2025 August	33	18		14		1				1		78:100	55-75	A (0.4)

Table 9. Rio Grande Gorge Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep fall ground (G) surveys, 2014–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	Unk	L:E	Est. No.	Type
2014	227	106	9	22	9	33	32	12	86		27:100	230-250	G
2015	245	113		57	9	26	27	9	71		69:100	265-290	G
2016	222	80	9	33	18	11	19	10	58		73:100	320-350	G
2017	271	118	11	45	35	23	16	17	84		35:100	355-400	G
2018	291	104	10	34	20	40	30	14	104		30:100	375-420	G
2019	296	78	7	50	19	32	23	9	83		54:100	375-420	G
2020	288	93	10	23	24	44	47	18	133		22:100	375-420	G
2021	210	89	3	14	11	32	35	19	100		16:100	290-320	G
2022	153	71	6	9	8	11	36	12	67		11:100	225-275	G
2023	176	63	7	9	13	23	33	11	80		14:100	225-275	G
2024	132	56	7	13	2	11	21	18	55	3	23:100	225-275	G
2025	55	37	1	16	1			1	2		43:100	200-250	A (2.2)
2025	178	85	7	23	6	6	25	21	58	4	25:100	200-250	G

Table 10. Dry Cimarron Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep ground (G) surveys, 2014–2026.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Unk	Tot Rams	L:E	Est. No	Type
2014	86	41		19	5	6	14	1		26	46:100	105-130	G
2015	110	47		27	7	6	10	12	1	36	57:100	105-130	G
2016	116	52		28	7	7	15	3	4	36	52:100	145-165	G
2017	140	66	1	34	10	7	11	9	2	39	50:100	170-190	G
2018	140	64		32	12	11	13	8		44	50:100	170-190	G
2019	118	60	2	22	6	8	14	6		34	37:100	150-170	G
2020	125	56	4	24	9	14	13	5		31	40:100	150-170	G
2021	138	61	10	23	10	15	9	10		33	32:100	155-175	G
2022	138	67	6	28	5	15	9	8		37	38:100	155-175	G
2023	140	61	6	25	8	15	13	10	2	48	41:100	155-175	G
2024	115	53		24	4	5	14	15		38	28:100	155-175	G
2026	206	105		36	10	16	13	26		65	34:100	190-230	A (5.25)

Table 11. San Francisco River Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2012–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	UNK	Tot Rams	L:E	Est. No	Type
2012	11	4		3			1	2	1	3	75:100	20-30	A (2.2)
2013	25	8		8	2		5	3		10	100:100	25-35	A (3.7)
2014	72	27	2	16		1	12	6	8	27	59:100	75-90	A (2.2)
2015	47	21	2	4	2	1	10	7		20	19:100	50-75	A (3.2)
2016	58	34		9	1	3	7	4		15	26:100	65-80	A (3.5)
2018	29	18	3	5	2	1				3	28:100	50-70	A (2.8)
2019	47*	23				4	4		16	8	0:100	50-70	A
2021	35	18		8	3	2	3	1		9	44:100	50-70	A (1.9)
2023	79	26		11	14	7	9	12		31	42:100	80-100	A (2.7)
2024	25	16		3		1	3	2		6	19:100	50-80	A (4.0)
2025	31	13		4	2	1	1	10	0	14	31:100	50-80	A (3.0)
2025*	9	4		1		1		3		4	25:100	10-20	A (0.5)

*Saddle Mountain

Table 12. Turkey Creek Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2009–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	UNK	Tot Rams	L:E	Est. No	Type
2009	38	12	4	8	1	1	5	3	4	14	50:100	50-70	A (2.6)
2010	14	3		2	1		4	4		9	67:100	30-50	A (2.5)
2012	4	4									0:100	15-30	A (2.2)
2012	9	3		2		3	1			4	67:100	15-30	A (2.0)
2013	4	1					2	1		3	0:100	20-25	A (1.8)
2013	18	12		2		1		3		4	17:100	20-25	G
2015	16										0:100		
2018	1	1									0:100	20-30	A (2.0)
2018	30	12	3	5	3	2	2	2		9	33:100	30-35	Photo
2023	7	7									0:100	20-30	A (1.2)
2024	23	12		4		1	2	4		7	33:100	30-40	A (5.0)
2025	5	2	2					1			0:100	30-40	A (1.5)

Table 13. Manzanos Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2010–2024.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Tot Rams	L:E	Est. No	Type
2010	17	10		4	2			1	3	40:100	25-35	G
2012	27	9	4	6	2	3		1	6	67:100	30-40	G
2012	51	30	4	10	1	5		1	7	20:100	52-60	G
2013	41	20	2	9	4	4	1		9	45:100	45-55	G
2014	45	37				1	5	2	8	0:100	45-55	G
2014	52	24	6	15	4	3			7	63:100	52-60	G
2015	35	21	2	7	1	1	3		5	33:100	36-50	G
2015	52	26	2	9	3	8	4		15	37:100	52-60	G
2018	48	25	2	8	1	2	7	3	13	32:100	50-70	A (2.9)
2019	55	19	2	12	3	5	12	2	22	63:100	60-80	G
2022	50	11	4	8	2	9	3	7	22	73:100	50-70	G
2024	55	22		7	1	5	7	13	26	32:100	50-70	G

Table 14. Jemez Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2015–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Tot Rams	L:E	Est. No	Type
2015	48	28	3	0	4		1	2	6	0:100	45	Release
2016	62	28	2	15	10	4		3	17	54:100	60-75	G
2017	65	38	5	10	6	5	1		12	15:100	105-115	G
2018	15	4		4		6	1		7	27:100	120-140	G
2019	86	56	2	20	7	1			8	36:100		G
2021	89	51		7	3	4	12	7	26	14:100	150-200	A(3.1)
2022	76	38		23	2	1	8	4	15	61:100		G
2023	88	59		17	3		5	12	20	28:100	150-200	A(1.4)
2024	134	74		22	4	5	6	28	43	30:100	225-300	A(4.2)
2025	86	40		20	3	4	4	13	24	50:100	225-300	A (4.8)

Desert Bighorn Sheep

Table 15. Summer/Fall lamb:ewe ratios and population estimates for desert bighorn sheep populations in New Mexico, 2025. Estimate trends are noted as increasing (+), stable (=), and decreasing (-).

Herd	L:E (lambs/100 ewes)	Population Estimate
Peloncillos	13:100	60-70 ¹ -
Big Hatchets	53:100	85-115 =
Alamo Huecos	40:100	50-80 =
Little Hatchets	60:100	85-105 =
Ladrons	39:100	125-175 =
Sacramentos	Insufficient data	70-80 + ²
San Andres	36:100	210-250 =
Caballos	27:100	200-230 =
Fra Cristobals	25:100	130-180 =
Totals	37:100	1,015-1,285 Midpoint = 1,150

¹Estimate following release of 32 desert bighorn from Red Rock

²Increasing following release of 37 desert bighorn from Caballos

Table 16. Peloncillo Mountains desert bighorn sheep spring helicopter survey results 2009–2025.

Year	Total	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	L:E	Est. No	Type (hours)
2009	44	20	2	10	2	2	7	1	12	50:100	75-85	A (7.1)
2010	49	17	3	10	3	3	5	8	19	59:100	75-85	A (3.7)
2011	54	20	4	12	0	1	11	7	19	60:100	70-85	A (3.7)
2012	56	26	2	18	1	1	3	5	10	69:100	110-135	A (4.1)
2013	62	34	5	7	5	1	8	2	16	21:100	100-125	A (4.1)
2014	46	24	2	10	5	1	2	2	10	42:100	85-110	A (2.1)
2015	79 (86)	36	6	12	12	4	2 (+7)*	7	25	29:100	90-115	A (3.9)
2016	103	51	1	38	3	6	1	3	13	73:100	125-145	A (4.1)
2017	99	42	5	21	4	5	11	9	29	45:100	130-150	A (6.0)
2018	98	51	2	19	1	6	12	7	26	36:100	130-150	A (4.5)
2019	105	49	1	19	4	4	9	19	36	38:100	140-160	A (6.2)
2021	81	47	2	19	0	2	3	8	13	39:100	120-140	A (4.9)
2022	50	22	0	14	1	1	5	7	14	64:100	120-140	A (4.1)
2023	29	8	1	4	2	0	6	5	13	44:100	75-125	A (3.6)
2024	24	14	0	6	0	2	1	1	4	43:100	40-60	A (6.5)
2025	20	7	1	1	1	2	0	8	11	13:100	30-40	A (7.5)
2025	32	15	1			4	5	7	16		60-70	Release

Table 17. Big Hatchet desert bighorn sheep helicopter survey results 2010–2025. All surveys were performed in the spring unless otherwise noted.

Year	Total	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	L:E	Est. No.	Type (hours)
2010	57	22	0	11	2	4	7	12	25	50:100	65-70	A (3.5)
2011	47	12	4	9	6	1	9	6	22	56:100	60-75	A (4.4)
2012 ^a	71	27	0	13	4	8	6	13	31	48:100	75-85	A (5.1)
2013 ^a	51	21	2	1	9	5	6	7	27	4:100	55-65	A (5.7)
2014 ^a	47	18	1	6	3	9	4	6	22	32:100	55-65	A (4.4)
2014 Nov	113	46	1	6	0	0	0	0	58	13:100	120-130	Additional release
2015 ^a	99*	47	3	15	2	7	6	19	34	30:100	120-150	A (6.4)
2016	116	47	10	21	7	9	10	12	38	37:100	135-155	A (5.5)
2017	112	45	6	17	4	16	9	15	44	33:100	135-155	A (5.9)
2018	84	34	2	18	6	5	8	11	30	50:100	110-140	A (5.25)
2019	68	31	2	16	2	3	6	8	19	48:100	85-115	A (4.3)
2021	71	28	4	16	2	3	4	15	24	47:100	85-115	A (4.0)
2022	73	32	2	16	1	7	3	12	23	47:100	85-115	A (4.4)
2023	68	32	0	17	2	3	5	8	18	53:100	85-115	A (4.5)
2024	45	19	0	8	4	2	5	7	19	42:100	85-115	A (4.3)
2025	66	25	7	12	3	8	5	10	26	48:100	85-115	A (4.5)

*99 observed + 20 missed collars—some may have been in Little Hatchets

^a = autumn

Table 18. Alamo Huecos desert bighorn sheep spring helicopter survey results 2017–2025.

Year	Total	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	L:E	Est. No	Type (hours)
2017	10	4	3	1	0	2	0	0	2	25:100		
2021	46	23	4	0	4	6	3	6	19	0:100	50-55	Release
2022	38	17	0	6	0	3	9	3	15	35:100	50-55	A (3.2)
2023	30	8	1	5	0	0	4	12	16	56:100	50-55	A (2.3)
2023	28	11	1	2	0	0	7	7	14	18:100	50-80	Release
2024	45	22	2	21	0	0	0	0	0	95:100	50-80	A (0.8)
2025	40	20	8	8	0	0	0	3	3	40:100	50-80	A (3.2)

Table 19. Little Hatchets desert bighorn sheep helicopter survey results 2008–2025. All surveys were performed in the spring unless otherwise noted.

Year	Total	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	L:E	Est. No.	Type (hours)
2008	58	19	2	12	6	4	4	9+2	25	63:100	60-65	A (2.15)
2009	43	16	3	9	1	3	5	6	15	47:100	65-70	A (2.6)
2010 _a	45	17	0	6	4	4	9	5	22	35:100	60-70	A (1.4)
2012 _a	41	18+4	0	4	1	5	8	5	19	58:100	60-70	A (0.6)
2013 _a	66	27	0	13	7	7	5	7	26	48:100	75-85	A (2.4)
2014 _a	57	27	1	5	9	10	3	1	23	18:100	60-70	A (1.75)
2015	68	27	5	10	10	3	12	1	26	31:100	75-85	A (1.9)
2016	89	42	2	23	4	5	6	7	22	52:100	90-110	A (2.2)
2017	52	24	6	13	4	2	1	2	9	43:100	70-90	A (2.3)
2019	72	29	1	16	3	6	3	14	26	53:100	75-90	A (?)
2021	48	19	4	6	0	7	6	6	19	26:100	70-90	A (2.6)
2022	39	16	1	11	1	2	4	4	11	65:100	45-65	A (2.1)
2023	47	21	2	9	6	1	6	1	15	41:100	45-65	A (2.2)
2024	79	34	2	18	4	6	2	13	25	53:100	90-110	A (3.0)
2025	63	20	11	12	3	6	4	7	20	60:100	85-105	A (2.1)

_a = autumn

Table 20. Ladron desert bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) survey results, 2010–2025. All surveys were performed in the spring unless otherwise noted.

Year	Total	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	L:E	Est. No.	Type (hours)
2010	29	9	1	7	2	3	4	3	12	70:100	35-45	A (6.7)
2011	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	50:100		A (6.4)
2012 _a	48	23	1	8	1	4	6	5	16	33:100	50-60	A/G
2013 _a	57	18	0	11	3	5	10	7	25	61:100	65-75	A/G
2014	40	12	1	11	4	1	6	5	16	92:100	70-80	A (6.7)
2016 _a	49	18	2	5	3	2	2	6	13	25:100	80-90	A/G
2018	121	58	0	30	9	3	5	9	26	46:100	125-150	A (11.9)
2019	47	24	3	8	5	3	2	1	11	30:100		G
2021	161	92	2	23	7	6	20	11	44	24:100	185-215	A (7.1)
2022	53	22	1	4	4	2	11	9	26	17:100	185-215	A (2.4)
2024	105	41	6	20	1	9	4	24	38	44:100	125-175	A (7.1)
2025	90	44	3	17	5	4	4	13	26	39:100	125-175	A (4.0)

_a = autumn

Table 21. Sacramento desert bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) survey results, 2018–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	Unk	L:E	Est. No.	Type (hours)
2018	34	18	1	0F/6M		6	2	1				30	Release
2019	17	10		5		1	1					30-40	G
2020	24	20			2		2					61-71	
2021	34	20				6	5	3	14		0:100	35-45	A (1.9)
2022	41	21	6			7	3	3	13	1	28:100	41-45	G
2023	38	21	4		7	1		5	13		19:100	41-45	A (3)
2024	29	16		3	2	2	2	4	10		19:100	40-45	A (2.5)
2025	5	3	2									30-35	A (4.2)
2025	37	27	2		1	4	3	0	8			70-80	Release

Table 22. San Andres desert bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2007–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	Unk	L:E	Est. No.	Type (hours)
2007	72	36		12	4	4	12	4	24		33:100	80-90	A (7.6)
2008	73	31	5	9	6	8	11	3	28		29:100	85-95	A (12.6)
2009	69	32	3	12	4	3	10	5	22		38:100	95-105	G
2010	115	44	8	15	8	14	15	11	48		34:100	115	Est.
2012	102	56	2	11	1	10	7	15	33		20:100	110-125	A (15.8)
2015	174	81	4	12	7	20	19	30	76		15:100	110-125	A (17.9)
2016	142	71		22	5	12	11	20	48	1	31:100	180-220	A (15.9)
2017	190*	93	1	25	10	15	17	29	71		27:100	200-240	A (20.8)
2019	174	72	3	21	12	22	26	15	75		29:100	210-250	A (14.7)
2021	178	84	7	24	8	21	14	20	63		29:100	185-225	A (13.4)
2022	50**	27	2	3	3	2	8	6	19		11:100	190-230	A (4.6)** inc. survey
2024	153	86	3	18	1	10	5	30	46		21:100	180-220	A (17.7)
2025	228	117	3	43	5	15	14	27	61		36:100	210-250	A (13.8)

Table 23. Caballos desert bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2012–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	Unk	L:E	Est. No.	Type (hours)
2012	93	37	4	18	4				30		44:100	95-100	G
2013	85	34	3	13	9	8	9	9	35		38:100	105-115	A (5.8)
2014	67	30	1	7	2	7	9	11	29		23:100	105-115	A (5.4)
2015	115	48	2	14	3	18	10	20	51		29:100	125-145	A (6.4)
2016	130	50	3	29	3	15	13	17	48		55:100	145-165	A (4.7)
2017	165	74	1	28	9	22	13	18	62		38:100	170-190	A (3.9)
2018	199	74	9	41	17	17	25	15	74	1	49:100	200-230	A (6.1)
2019	187	86	2	25	9	35	23	6	73		28:100	230-260	A (5.3)
2021	143	69	14	25	4	5	19	6	34		30:100	220-250	A (5.0)
2022	133	58	3	13	7	7	23	21	58	1	22:100	175-205	A (5.2)
2023	216	82	4	51	6	17	33	18	74	4	59:100	210-240	A (4.3)
2024	70	45		10	2	1	2	9	14		22:100	210-240	A (1.6)
2025	185	88	6	25	7	25	11	21	64		27:100	200-230	A (4.2)

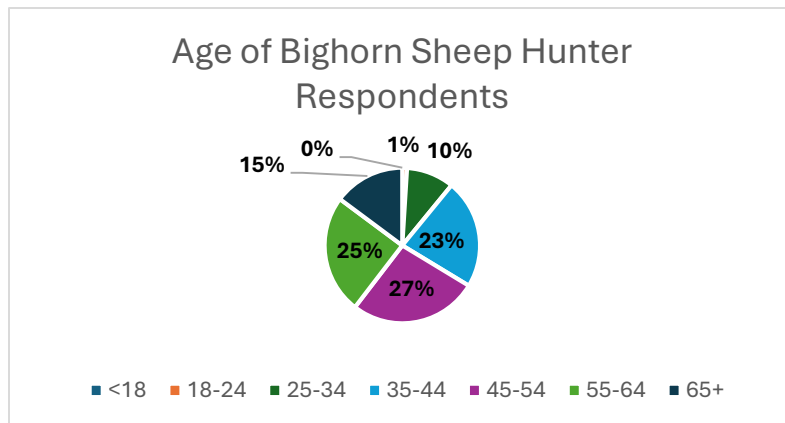
Table 24. Fra Cristobals desert bighorn sheep aerial (A) and ground (G) surveys, 2015–2025.

Year	Tot	Ewes	Y. Ewe	Lambs	CI	CII	CIII	CIV	Total Rams	Unk	L:E	Est. No.	Type (hours)
2015	193	72	8	31	16	21	28	17	81		39:100	230-250	A (5.4)
2015	221	108	10	34	11	22	14	22	68		31:100	230-260	A (5.4)
2016	263	110		68	2	39	28	13	83	1	62:100	290-320	A (5.3)
2017	272	138	7	40	14	32	31	10	87		29:100	300-350	A (5.8)
2017	242	112	14	27	15	30	36	8	89		21:100	300-350	A (6.3)
2018	179	77	2	25	22	27	24	2	75		32:100	225-275	A (5.8)
2019	134	52	5	12	6	16	34	9	64		21:100	160-210	A (4.7)
2020	112	54		26	4	9	12	7	32		48:100	165-215	A
2021	117	65	6	18	6	5	13	4	28		25:100	160-180	A (3.4)
2023	132	68	1	28	7	6	17	4	34	1	41:100	160-200	A (3.7)
2024	64	12		2	13	7	8	12	48	10	17:100	130-180	A (3.0)
2025	101	54	2	14	2	8	13	8	31		25:100	130-180	A (2.9)

Appendix A. Results of questionnaire distributed to all past bighorn sheep hunters. This report was generated on 3/16/2026. In total, 259 responses were received.

Respondent Background:

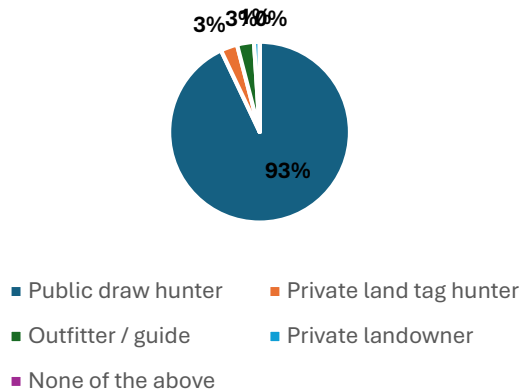
Age:



Response	Count	Percentage
<18	0	0%
18-24	2	1%
25-34	26	10%
35-44	58	23%
45-54	69	27%
55-64	64	25%
65+	38	15%

Hunter Type:

Hunter Type of Bighorn Sheep Hunter
Respondents

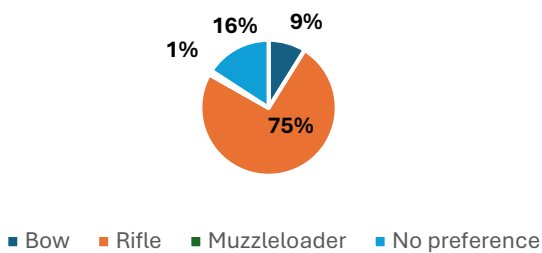


Response	Count	Percentage
Public draw hunter	239	93%
Private land tag hunter	8	3%
Outfitter / guide	7	3%
Private landowner	2	1%
None of the above	0	0%

Hunting Insights

Preferred Weapon Type

Preferred Weapon Type for Bighorn
Sheep Hunters

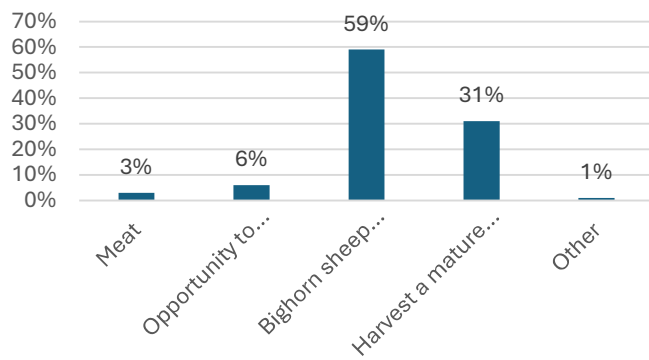


Response	Count	Percentage
Bow	22	9%
Rifle	193	75%
Muzzleloader	2	1%
No preference	40	16%

Primary Objectives

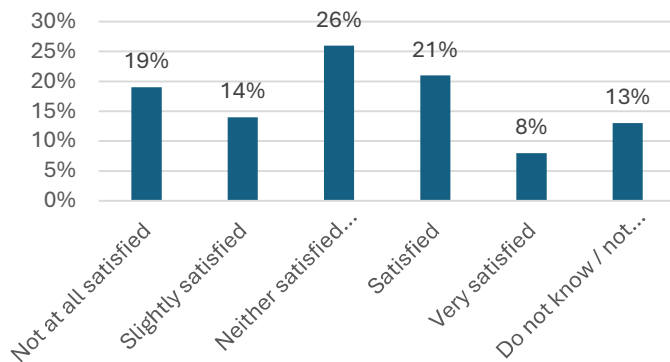
Response	Count	Percentage
Meat	8	3%
Opportunity to hunt big game species	15	6%
Bighorn sheep hunting experience	152	59%
Harvest a mature ram	80	31%
Other	2	1%

Primary Objectives of Bighorn Sheep Hunters



Most Recent Hunt Experience

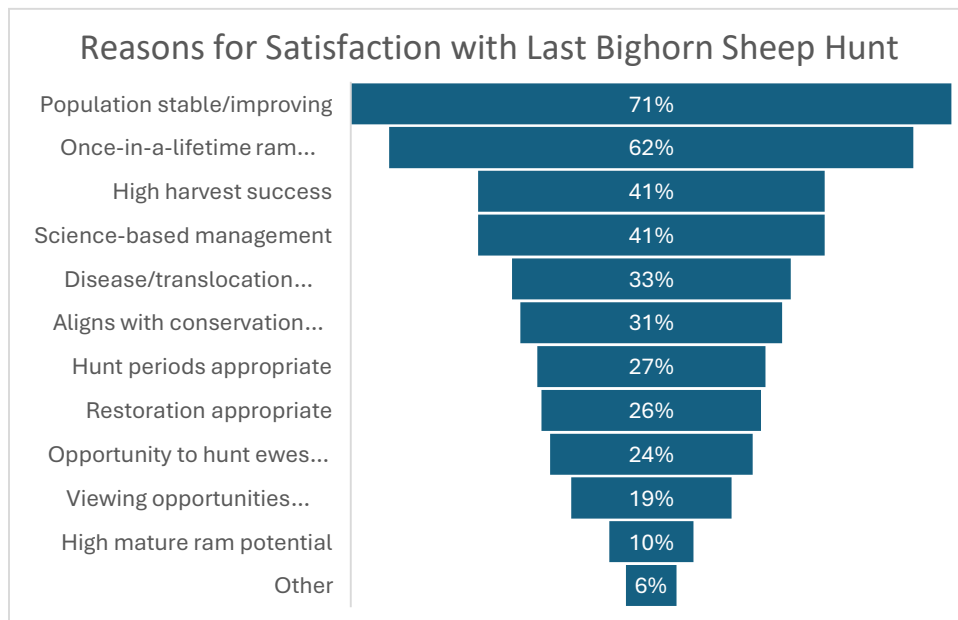
Hunter Satisfaction with Last Bighorn Sheep Hunt



Response

Response	Count	Percentage
Not at all satisfied	48	19%
Slightly satisfied	35	14%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	66	26%
Satisfied	53	21%
Very satisfied	21	8%
Do not know / not applicable	33	13%

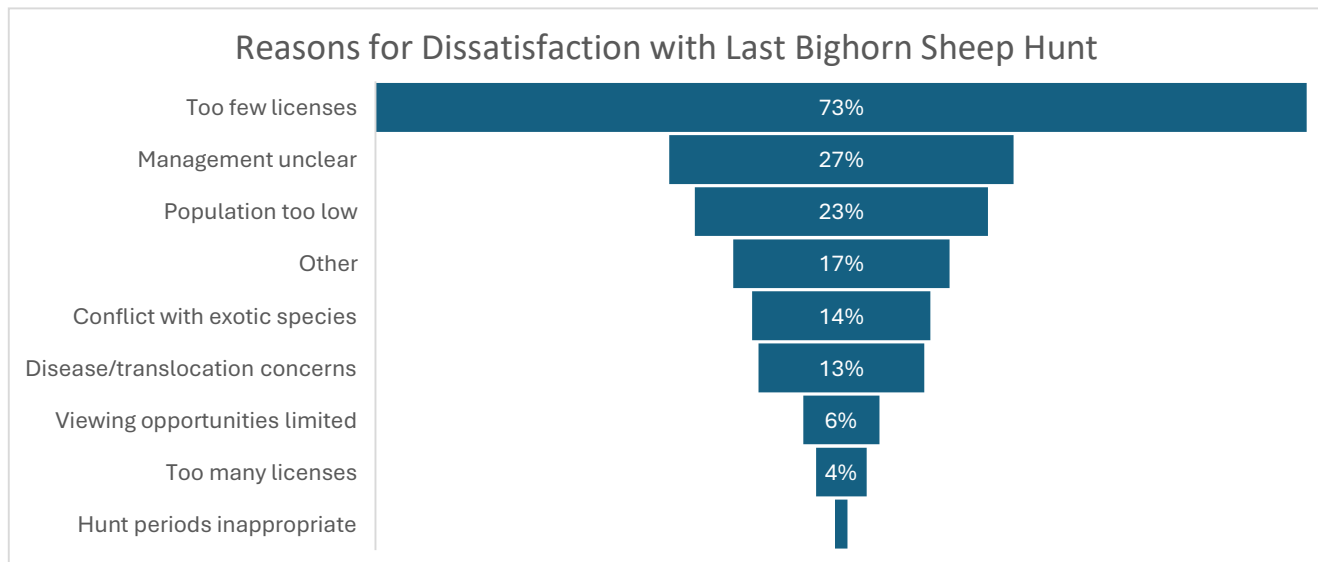
Reasons for Satisfaction (asked to those that indicated some level of satisfaction)



Primary (top 3) reasons hunters were satisfied with most recent hunt:

Population stable/improving	120	71%
Once-in-a-lifetime ram licenses	105	62%
High harvest success	70	41%

Reasons for Dissatisfaction (asked to those that indicated some level of dissatisfaction)

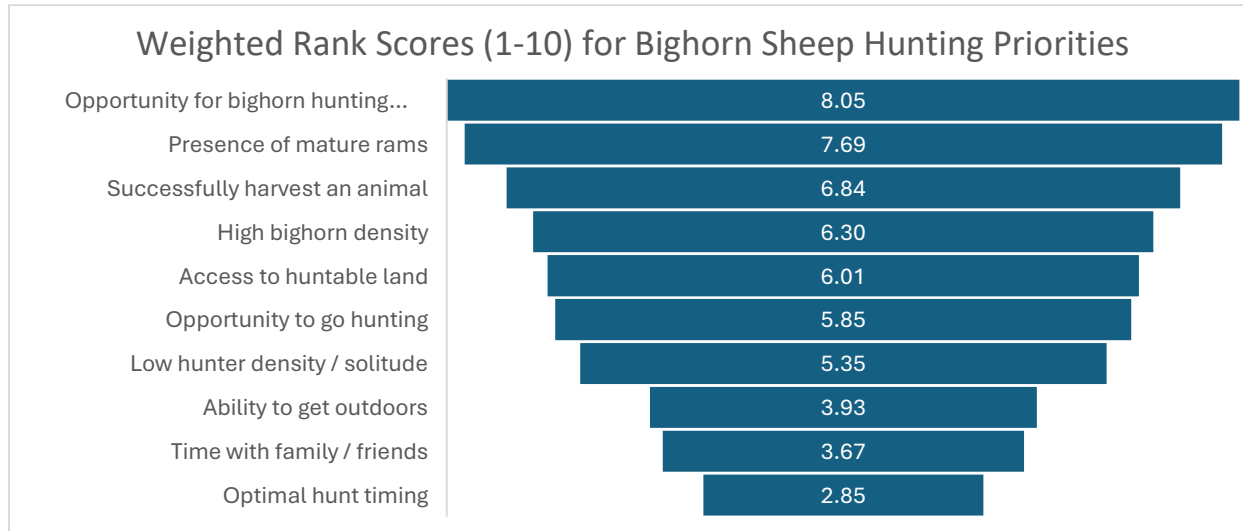


Primary (top 3) reasons hunters were dissatisfied with most recent hunt:

Too few licenses	136	73%
Management Unclear	51	27%
Population too low	43	23%

Ranking Question

- Quantified weighted scores, can break down further if needed



Category	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
High bighorn density	11%	12%	15%	11%	13%	8%	12%	6%	8%	2%
Successfully harvest an animal	17%	10%	18%	12%	16%	7%	9%	5%	6%	0%
Presence of mature rams	19%	28%	16%	12%	5%	8%	7%	3%	0%	1%
Low hunter density / solitude	1%	4%	15%	17%	17%	14%	9%	6%	14%	5%
Access to huntable land	5%	9%	14%	17%	14%	17%	9%	10%	3%	3%
Opportunity for bighorn hunting experience	40%	13%	11%	8%	12%	12%	3%	2%	0%	0%
Optimal hunt timing	0%	4%	2%	8%	7%	4%	10%	3%	10%	53%
Ability to get outdoors	3%	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	11%	23%	25%	11%
Opportunity to go hunting	9%	16%	7%	9%	7%	15%	11%	18%	6%	1%
Time with family / friends	4%	6%	3%	5%	5%	5%	13%	19%	22%	20%

From: [cody creager](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2026 10:53:57 PM

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Please stop the illegal hunt code lumping. The residents of New Mexico deserve our shot at these hunts. We are the ones that live here work here and die here in this state but you guys continue to appease the extremely rich non-residents. There's absolutely no reason that a hunt occurring in the jemez mountains in August and a hunt occurring in the Gila in December should be the same hunt code You're only doing that so outfitters can get their welfare. You need to cut this out and put New Mexico residents first. Each hunt should be unique individual hunt code.

From: [Crystal Sims](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big horn sheep hunts
Date: Saturday, May 2, 2026 2:32:54 PM

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Hello. I would like to advocate for moving the bighorn sheep hunts in September to later dates that align with the rest of the bighorn hunts. It's far too hot that time of year in that part of the state and also overlaps with the elk rut. Thank you.

Robert Palmer
Palmer Brewery and Cider House
505-508-0508

From: [Thomas Austin](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Big Horn Sheep Rule
Date: Monday, March 2, 2026 1:26:51 PM

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Only allow 3 choices total instead of 3 rocky 3 desert and ewe choices.

From: [Brent Taft](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn Comments
Date: Saturday, March 7, 2026 8:56:43 PM

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The Department is doing a great job with the bighorn herds.

I would like to request that the Department consider a couple of licenses for once in a lifetime archery ram hunts.

Thanks,
Brent

From: [Kevin Rodden](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn Recommendations
Date: Friday, May 8, 2026 3:35:03 PM

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Other than the Fra Cristobal and San Andres bighorn hunts, which are held through agreements with the Armendaris Ranch and WSMR respectively, I recommend moving the Desert Bighorn Sheep hunts to cooler timeframes during December. Current GMU's 13 and 17 (Ladrones) are held Dec. 1-15 and Dec. 16-31. The Caballo's, the Big Hatchets, and Little Hatchets have 2 hunts currently. Move those hunts to Dec. 1-15 and Dec. 16-31. Currently the Peloncillos have one hunt, which could be moved to Dec. 1-15. If the population in the Peloncillos recovers to warrant 2 hunts, keep the Dec. 1-15 hunt and add a Dec. 16-31 hunt. These are once-in-a-lifetime hunts therefore should be a more enjoyable experience. If a hunt is to be proposed/held in the Sacramento Mts., offer the same Dec. hunt timeframe.

Thanks for consideration,

Kevin W. Rodden
kevin.rodde48@gmail.com
575-343-6549

From: dsheft82@pvtm.net
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn Rule Comments
Date: Thursday, March 5, 2026 8:29:33 AM

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I would like to make the following comments to the proposed bighorn rule for 2027-2030.

I DO NOT support removing ram tags from the general hunt codes for an archery only ram hunt. There are too few tags overall for this to be feasible with this species with too much demand and controversy over the current tag allocation. Given the few number of tag holders in the field on any given hunt someone choosing to use archery equipment would have little to no interference from other weapon holders. On most hunts there is only one or two tag holders.

Eliminate the youth only ram hunts. A significant number of general draw tags are already being drawn by youth hunters. Ram tags for this species has never been an appropriate youth tag hunt.

Change the first ewe hunt in the Pecos to issue all 10 tags to youth hunters. This would increase the total number of tags available for youth allowing them the experience of sheep hunting and still be able to apply for once in a lifetime ram tags.

Issue tag numbers appropriate to maintaining the age structure of the harvest. The recent decline in average age of desert rams harvested should be of concern.

David L. Heft
PO Box 13
Mayhill, NM 88339
575-687-4207

From: [Jebb Norton](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn rules
Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 12:22:39 PM

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I'm a lifetime NM resident. I understand that I have a low chance to draw a bighorn hunt of any kind due to low populations. That being said, the dgf has artificially bent the rules to allow the low hunt numbers to be high enough for non-residents. Applying for all other species is based on how many can be harvested in that specific unit based on science. Bighorn sheep are artificially lumped all together statewide in order to have enough numbers to give the 16% to out of state and outfitters. It's the only animal we do this with and I disagree with its principle. If money is needed from out of state hunters, there are other ways to get it besides stealing bighorn hunts from residents. Please stop this practice.

Jebb Norton
Santa Fe County

From: [Rex Martensen](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn Sheep Dates
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2026 12:14:52 PM

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I support moving the Desert Bighorn hunt dates from the existing September timeframe to a November/December timeframe.

Sincerely,
Rex Martensen
General Manager
LOH Outfitters

From: [chris neary](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn sheep hunting
Date: Friday, March 6, 2026 10:31:06 AM

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I support separate hunt codes for each species and sex of sheep for each hunt area and date interval.

I understand that auctioning licenses for sheep is authorized by law, but I recommend the commission support making all hunting licenses as affordable as possible. Raffling all licenses would raise funds for management and put all licenses in reach of as many applicants as possible. The commission could explore non-refundable applications for sheep licenses essentially raffling licenses for the cost of the license.

Chris Neary
Raton, NM
575 643 9016

From: [Troy West](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn sheep rule making
Date: Thursday, May 28, 2026 12:48:05 PM

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Good afternoon i would like to support the END of the bighorn sheep hunt code lumping.
Thanks Cole

From: [Chris Smith](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn Sheep- rule
Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026 5:24:00 PM

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The department needs to really change the way the draw works. EACH hunt should have its own draw hunt code. NOT Rocky Mountain has one draw code with each choice. I believe this system is flawed. Same with Desert, each draw code for each hunt. Make people choose 3 different hunts and not one big pool.

I say hold off on Unit 34 hunts for another 2-3 years.

Adjust some of the hunts to be longer hunts. Bring back the whole month of November for Unit 27.

Adjust Wheeler Peak hunt to earlier

Adjust the Jemez dates to later August for 1st hunt

--

Chris Smith

From: [Troy West](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn sheep
Date: Thursday, May 28, 2026 5:23:27 PM

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I encourage the Department and Commission to:

Stop lumping separate bighorn hunt codes together for allocation purposes

Calculate resident and nonresident quotas independently for each hunt code

Increase resident allocation percentages on bighorn sheep hunts

Improve transparency regarding how quota calculations are performed

Ensure draw procedures fully align with both the letter and intent of New Mexico resident allocation laws

These changes would improve fairness, transparency, and resident opportunity while maintaining the integrity of New Mexico's bighorn sheep management system.

From: [Mike Matthews](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Change dates of in Big and Little Hatchet hunts
Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 9:31:31 AM

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For a once in a life time hunt I think it would make a better hunt for everyone who is lucky to draw those tags to move the hunt later and cooler time frames. Late September and early October are very hot and limits how much country a hunter can effectively hunt. Thanks for considering.

Mike

From: [Wild Trout](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment
Date: Monday, March 23, 2026 8:02:17 AM

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Support all recommendations for changes to Bighorn sheep.

Jeff Young
Sandia Park

From: [Ahlgrim, Brian J CIV USARMY ATEC \(USA\)](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on proposed rule changes - [UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 10:08:04 AM
Attachments: [EXTERNAL Comments on proposed rule changes - UNCLASSIFIED.msg](#)

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From: [gabe maes](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Desert Bighorn September hunt date
Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 11:42:13 AM

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In effort to be consistent with other Desert Bighorn hunt dates, it seems reasonable to move the September hunt date for GMU 20 and GMU 26 to October and November respectively. This would align with other dates and would provide a better hunting experience for the once in a lifetime hunt.

From: [Scott Mabray](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Desert Sheep Public Comment - Season Date Change
Date: Tuesday, May 12, 2026 8:09:38 AM

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I am writing to formally recommend consideration of adjusting the current season dates for the desert bighorn sheep hunt in the Hatchet Mountains. As a wildlife biologist and a licensed New Mexico guide with significant field time across the state's desert ranges, I believe this adjustment would meaningfully improve hunter safety and experience without negative biological consequences to the herd.

The current September season in the Hatchet Mountains presents several serious concerns: Water availability is critically limited in that terrain during September, and hunters pursuing a multi-day hunt are at genuine risk of running out of water. The Hatchets offer little to no natural shade, and combined with high ambient temperatures, the conditions create real danger during extended physical exertion. Beyond safety, the September heat creates significant logistical problems following a successful harvest. Meat spoilage risk is elevated, and cape damage on once-in-a-lifetime trophies for most hunters who draw this tag is a real and avoidable outcome. These are tags hunters may wait decades to draw; the current season structure puts the quality of that experience at unnecessary risk.

I would respectfully suggest aligning the Hatchet Mountains season with the December or January timing currently used in the Caballos and Peloncillo units. That timing has not demonstrated negative effects on herd health or harvest objectives in those units. Cooler temperatures would eliminate the water and heat risks, reduce meat spoilage and cape loss, and provide a hunting experience more appropriate to the caliber of tag this represents.

Respectfully,

Scott Mabray

From: dsheft82@pvtm.net
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Draft Bighorn Rule comments
Date: Wednesday, July 1, 2026 11:41:12 AM

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I wish to formally comment on the draft bighorn rule for the 2027-31 rule cycle.

I adamantly oppose the proposed draft rule. The up to number of ram licenses for both desert and rocky mountain subspecies is a 150% increase over current license numbers. Given that no rocky mountain bighorn populations are currently shown as increasing (and one is decreasing), and the only desert population that increased was due to a transplant no license increases should be considered over an up to number of 30. The Departments own technical information showing the metrics for license issuance does not support the proposed numbers.

I also adamantly oppose youth ram licenses not being once in a lifetime.

Given the controversy over license allocation and fairness for this species that has occurred over the last 4 years all public draw licenses should be once in a lifetime.

David L. Heft
PO Box 13
Mayhill, NM 88339

From: [Mitch Morris](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] For Public Comment - Proposal
Date: Monday, March 9, 2026 10:28:25 AM

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For proposal;

Create individual hunt codes, based on the species, sex, and unit for Bighorn Sheep, much like all other big game species. The current format limits the individual hunt codes to four hunt codes (BHS-#-201 through BHS-#-204). The hunter then selects the "Hunt Area" they would like to choose as an option for the hunt code. The current methodology asymmetrically reduces opportunity for hunters to draw a less desirable hunt area.

Thank you,

Mitch Morris
Farmington, NM

From: [Louie Gonzales](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hatchet BHS dates
Date: Thursday, April 30, 2026 9:44:43 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from lgonzalesappraisal@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good morning,

I am sending this to voice my opinion on changing the dates of the hatchet DBHS hunt to the cooler months of December versus the current dates in September. The cooler days will make for a much more enjoyable once in a lifetime experience.

Regards,

Louie Gonzales
505-690-3712

From: [John Valdez](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hunt dates change request
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2026 9:17:15 AM

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To whom it may concern,

I support changing the hunt dates for the Desert Sheep hunts in the Big and Little Hatchets from the current start dates of September 15 and October 1 to later in the fall, preferably November 15 and December 1. This would provide cooler temperatures and create a more enjoyable once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Thank you in advance,

John Valdez

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From: [James Comins](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hunt start dates for the Little and Big Hatchets bighorn sheep hunts
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 5:28:16 PM

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To whom it may concern,

Please accept this email as a request to change the start hunt dates for the Little and Big Hatchets desert bighorn sheep hunts. Currently, the start dates for these hunts are September 15 and October 1. The temperatures during these hunts can exceed 90 degrees for daytime highs. These extreme temperatures can limit a hunter's ability to access certain hunt areas, increase the risk of meat and hide spoilage, and expose the hunter to a higher risk of dehydration, heat stroke and rattlesnake interactions. My simple request is to align these hunt dates with the Caballos hunt start dates (November 16 and Dec 1) . This would allow for a much more enjoyable and safer once-in-a-lifetime hunt.

Thank you for your consideration,

James Comins

Sent from [Outlook](#)

From: [Doug Cline](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Cc: [Bryan Bartlett](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manzaano Big Horn Sheep
Date: Saturday, February 28, 2026 6:25:39 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from dcline09@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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What a waste of potential bighorn hunting opportunities! Not sure of history and introduction in this area, but would like to see some hunting opportunity if possible. I think if at all possible, purchase of private property is the best long term solution. Big rams equal big \$\$\$\$. If you can't purchase property from current owner(s), deal with the inheritors/successors. Lots of available \$\$\$ through auction/raffle tags and other conservation NGO's. Let's get this done! Anxious to hear your thoughts.

From: TERRY SINGELTARY
To: DGF-Deer-Rule
Cc: DGF-Elk-Rule; DGF-Pronghorn-Rule; DGF-Bighorn-Rule; DGF-Javelina-Rule; DGF-Exotics-Rule; Stump, Richard, DGF; Clemente, Fernando, DGF; Fulfer, Gregg, DGF; Harwood, Kyle, DGF; Lopez, Tirzio, DGF; Witt, Christopher, DGF
Subject: [EXTERNAL] New Mexico CWD TSE Prion Confirmed Total To Date May 2026, Wild and Captive Cervid, Anyone's Guess
Date: Thursday, May 14, 2026 2:26:14 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from flounder9@verizon.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated outside of our organization. Exercise caution prior to clicking on links or opening attachments.

New Mexico CWD TSE Prion Confirmed Total To Date May 2026, Wild and Captive Cervid, Anyone's Guess

AS i have said countless times, about the great state of New Mexico, and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish NMDGF, and NMDA et al, and the information about Chronic Wasting Disease CWD TSE Prion, that they put out to the public about CWD Surveillance, or the lack there from, Testing, sample sizes, confirmed positives to date, confirmed positives annually, locations, info on animal, in a CWD Dashboard someone can read, in both free range and captive cervid is absolutely horrible, imho. it's been that way. it's like the NMDGF and NMDA don't want the public to have easy access to this CWD TSE prion information, and that's dangerous imo, you must educate the public about this CWD with all the facts and data, that is easily accessible...so, with that, i submit the following for the public from my files.

terry

As of March 2026, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) reported a cumulative total of **26 confirmed cases** of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in the state. Out of these, four cases were found in harvested elk.

<https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/conservation/invasive-species-and-diseases/chronic-wasting-disease/>

CWD Results

<https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/download/cwd-results/?wpdmdl=48316>

AI Overview

Based on reports from the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) and wildlife experts, approximately 59 to 65 cumulative cases of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) have been identified in free-ranging deer and elk in New Mexico since it was first discovered in 2002. [1, 2]

<https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/conservation/invasive-species-and-diseases/chronic-wasting-disease/>

DEER MANAGEMENT NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH

Prepared by Orrin Duvuvuei, Deer program Manager Updated May 2025

snip...

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is the biggest disease concern for New Mexico's deer populations. CWD is a fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk, and other members of the deer family (Family Cervidae). Because CWD is always fatal, it can negatively impact population growth when prevalence rates are high. CWD has been detected in GMUs 19, 28, 29, and 34, special restrictions apply for deer and elk harvested in these units. The Department continues to expand CWD testing throughout the state. For more information see this fact sheet on CWD developed by the WAFWA Mule Deer Working Group.

snip...

Diseases and Parasites In most cases, disease by itself does not generally determine deer abundance, but stressors such as drought can exacerbate the impact of diseases in a population. When diseases are present in a population, they rarely cause large-scale deer die-offs; mortality events are typically smaller scale or productivity is reduced.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is the biggest disease concern for New Mexico's deer populations. CWD is a fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk, and other members of the deer family (Family Cervidae). Because CWD is always fatal, it can negatively impact population growth when prevalence rates are high. CWD has been detected in GMUs 19, 28, 29, and 34, special restrictions apply for deer and elk harvested in these units. The Department continues to expand CWD testing throughout the state. For more information see this fact sheet on CWD developed by the WAFWA Mule Deer Working Group.

snip...

BIOLOGY – Deer in this DMZ are largely resident; they may make short seasonal movements in response to weather patterns or water and food distributions. If deer make seasonal movements, they will return to their home ranges when conditions become favorable. Aerial surveys are not conducted regularly in this DMZ. Thus, population trajectories are monitored using hunter harvest data. The Black Hills deer herd is considered stable. CWD has been detected a few miles from GMU 41 in Texas.

snip...

BIOLOGY – Deer in the Guadalupe Mountains are year-round residents, but they might make short movements to take advantage of favorable conditions in this arid landscape. Hunter harvest data provides an index of population productivity. Deer densities and the resulting population size in the Guadalupe Mountains are considered low. CWD has been detected in GMUs 28 and 29.

BIOLOGY – Deer in the Sacramento Mountains DMZ are partially migratory. They will migrate out of high elevations during periods of high snowpack and return as the snow melts. In lower elevations, deer do not tend to migrate and are year-round residents. Overall, the Sacramento Mountains have good deer numbers, and densities can be higher in some pockets. The deer population is considered stable. CWD has been detected in GMU 34.

snip...

BIOLOGY – The deer in the San Juan Basin DMZ are a mix of migratory, partially migratory, and resident deer. Deer in GMU 2B are predominately migratory; these deer migrate 40-70 miles from their high elevation summer range in Colorado to winter west of Jicarilla Apache tribal lands in GMU 2B. Migration starts in the middle of October each year regardless of snowpack, and the deer arrive on the winter range within ~14 days. Deer in GMU 9 are partially migratory; some of these deer will summer on Mount Taylor and move to lower elevations when snowpack is high. Deer in GMUs 2A, 2C, 7, and 10 are considered year-round residents. Although considered stable, the deer population in this DMZ is lower than historically reported. CWD has been detected in...

snip...

BIOLOGY – Deer in the Southern Desert DMZ are year-round residents. However, they may make seasonal movements in response to monsoonal rain patterns, livestock use, or breeding behavior. Some of these movements might be substantial to escape unfavorable conditions, such as when water sources dry up. They typically return to their known ranges when conditions become favorable. Deer numbers in this area are largely influenced by the timing and amount of rainfall. As such, deer densities can be sporadic in these desert habitats, but good numbers can be found in pockets. The deer population in this DMZ is low but stable. CWD has been detected in GMU 19.

<https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/download/new-mexico-deer-hunting-prospects/?wpdmdl=45001&refresh=699f46e7a03421772046055>

NEW MEXICO EXPERT TO DISCUSS CHRONIC WASTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE DISEASES

By BEN NEARY

NMWF Conservation Director

ALBUQUERQUE -- A scientist who tracks chronic wasting and other animal diseases around the state will be the featured speaker at the New Mexico Wildlife Federation's Wildlife Wednesday event in July.

Dr. Kerry Mower, animal health specialist with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, has been tracking chronic wasting disease since it first turned up in some southern New Mexico herds in 2002.

These days, Mower also has been tracking the recent outbreak of rabbit hemorrhagic fever and serves on a state/federal task force on the lookout for signs that the coronavirus now sweeping the world as a global pandemic is spreading to wildlife populations.

Mower's Wildlife Wednesday presentation about his work on animal diseases will be livestreamed on Zoom starting at 5:30 p.m., July 8. To join the meeting, use this LINK. Meeting ID: 924 3162 5461.

Mower, who started working with the game department as a contract employee 30 years ago, holds a Ph.D. from Ohio State in animal science. In addition to tracking wildlife diseases, he typically gets involved when the department captures wildlife for transplanting or other reasons.

Chronic wasting, a contagious neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose, was first discovered in New Mexico in the foothills of the Organ Mountains, near Las Cruces. Since then, it's spread to some areas of the Sacramento Mountains.

"Most of the cases right now are in Unit 28, which is the McGregor Range, the southern foothills of the Sacramento Mountains," Mower said. "So it doesn't seem to be spreading quickly, but the presence seems to be remaining fairly high, and consistently high on the McGregor Range."

In New Mexico, CWD primarily turns up in free-ranging mule deer, Mower said. He said it also occurs in elk, but said the state has never detected it among animals in any of the roughly 25 private game farms in the state.

Scientists believe that the most common mode of transmission of chronic wasting among animals is nose-to-nose contact.

"And in some areas, if we have a high density, they can pick it up from the ground," Mower said. "They can pick it up with contact from urine and fecal matter on the ground. There's some evidence that it might be uptaken in plants, and that the infective agent may bind to the soil, and they can pick it up from the soil. But probably most common is nose-to-nose contact and ingestion of the agents that way."

Most scientists think it's unlikely hunters could contract CWD through handling, field dressing and processing an infected animal and eating its meat, Mower said.

"They say that based on the fact that there's no known human case of transmission with this disease to humans. And we do know that large numbers of these infected animals have been consumed by humans probably since the 1960s," Mower said. "Furthermore, there's a disease in domestic sheep that is very similar, and there's no known transmission of that disease to humans, with humans in contact with and eating sheep for over 400 years."

It probably would be possible to infect a human with CWD experimentally through a radical procedure such as injecting it into the person's brain, Mower said. "And experimentally with this disease, they can move it from one species to another by injecting either the agent directly, or sometimes other forms of the infected agent. But it seems unlikely given the history that it could happen through casual contact. But then, like most things in biology and science, I'm never going to say never."

To keep CWD from spreading, the game department has implemented carcass removal restrictions in areas where the disease occurs. Hunters are required to leave high-risk tissues such as the brain and spinal cord and bones in the field.

"So, when they leave, we'd like them to take the meat, but leave behind the tissues that are most likely to be contaminants in a new area," Mower said. "We ask them really just to take skeletal muscle, the meat, out with them. They can take the skin, they can take antlers they can take the ivories out of elk. But if they take the skull cap, we'd like it cleaned out so that they're removing just the antlers with the skull cap, leaving behind the rest of the skull and the brain."

The prevalence of CWD doesn't seem to be high enough anywhere in New Mexico to merit the removal of whole animal herd, Mower said. "On the McGregor Range, that might be an exception, but it would require probably removal of a large portion of those deer and it seems to be one of the more sought-after places to hunt," he said.

Especially when an animal is in the early stages of suffering from CWD, it's not obvious to hunters that they have the disease.

"It will look just like the next one," Mower said of an infected animal. "And most of the cases that we've dealt with that have come from hunters have been exactly that: no critical manifestations at all. But then we do make it a practice in our management that whenever we find a sick deer or elk, and we

ethanize it, we test every one of them. So occasionally we do pick up an animal with the disease and it is obviously sick.”

Hunting rifle hunting seasons, the NMGF keeps collection stations in the field in areas where the disease is known to occur.

“Hunters can take a head, where the brainstem is not damaged, and we’ll take those tissues and we’ll test all of them for hunters,” Mower said. “Alternatively, any hunter can take a head and present it at one of our area offices. We’ll take the head and test it. Beyond that, hunters can contact laboratory officials or their veterinarian, and have it done completely privately if they’d rather do that.”

The field test stations are only in game management units 34, 28 and 19, Mower said. “And I get a total number of tests every year that numbers around 400, and those are primarily voluntary. Out of all the tests I run, I get between two and four positive cases in any given year.”

Over all of the years of testing, Mower said the game department has found about 65 cases of the disease, of which all were in deer except for about seven or eight in elk.

The federal Centers for Disease Control CDC offers hunters tips to avoid CWD exposure. It advises that hunters shouldn’t shoot, handle or eat meat from an animal that looks sick or is acting strangely, or that’s found dead such as a roadkill.

When field-dressing an animal and handling the meat, the CDC advises hunters to wear latex or rubber gloves and to minimize handling the organs of the animal, particularly the brain or spinal cord tissues. It advises not to use household knives or other kitchen utensils for field dressing.

In addition to discussing CWD, Mower’s talk will address the recent occurrence of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease, which was discovered for the first time in wild rabbit populations this spring when wild rabbits started turning up dead in New Mexico.

People previously believed that the disease only occurred in domestic rabbits, Mower said. Since its discovery in New Mexico, it’s been discovered in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada and Texas, he said.

Mower also serves on a group of state and federal officials that focuses on the risk of COVID-19 spreading to wildlife. Other agencies involved in tracking the disease behind the ongoing worldwide pandemic include the federal Centers for Disease Control, the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Department of Agricultural, as well as livestock and wildlife agencies from New Mexico and other states.

The group is particularly concerned that COVID-19 could spread to bats in North America, Mower said. “We don’t know that it has, but it would be bad if, all of a sudden, we had our North American bats serving as our reservoir for the virus to reinfect humans at a later time,” he said.

So far, COVID-19 has been found in various places to have infected domestic cats, as well as in a lion and tiger in a zoo, Mower said. “There are cases in the Netherlands of the virus moving into mink on mink ranches,” he said.

“The single thing that we have done here in New Mexico is we have declared a halt on all research and wildlife rehabilitation involving bats,” Mower said. “So we have tried from a regulatory standpoint to prevent human contact with bats, all except for one research project that was proposed and funded and that was to capture bats and monitor specifically for the sign of COVID virus in New Mexico populations.”

The New Mexico Wildlife Federation has staged its Wildlife Wednesday events at Marble Brewery's Northeast Heights location before the pandemic forced it to go to online presentations earlier this year.

WildlifeWildlife Disease

<https://www.nmwildlife.org/news/new-mexico-expert-to-discuss-chronic-wasting-and-other-wildlife-diseases>

New Mexico Chronic Wasting Disease CWD TSE Prion Confirmed CWD Results 2-15-2024

New Mexico Chronic Wasting Disease CWD TSE Prion Confirmed

CWD Results 2-15-2024

LICENSE # Results Obex Results Lymph Node

4807917 Detected Detected

https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/conservation/invasives-diseases/CWD-Collection-Data-2023-Website-List-2_15.pdf

2024*** PLEASE NOTE, New Mexico updated CWD results and information there from, to date, are extremely difficult to get out of New Mexico Wildlife et al. even more difficult from NM department of agriculture. IN fact, New Mexico [wildlife.state.nm](https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us) CWD page is terrible. woefully outdated. AS WELL, THE CWD confirmed cases to date is questionable imo., and their page is extremely outdate i.e. 2018, still holding at 59 confirmed cwd cases. IT'S 2024! i question that figure! SO, until otherwise, i don't believe there is a true cwd total count to date, in wild and captive cervid, that is available for the public. not one that i can find anyway. i believe that New Mexico and it's CWD surveillance to date is woefully lacking, and, there is no real accurate cwd data coming out of New Mexico, to date, imo...terry

Some Facts about CWD in New Mexico

CWD is the acronym for Chronic Wasting Disease

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish began testing suspect deer for CWD in the 1990's

The first case of CWD in New Mexico was confirmed in 2002. This was a deer from Main Post on White Sands Missile Range

Since 2002, CWD has been detected in both free-ranging deer and elk

Found in Units 19, 28, and 34

In New Mexico, CWD has not been found in any Class A Game Park

Cumulative positive animals found with CWD in New Mexico since 2002 is 59 as of 1 January 2018 and includes:

<https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/invasive-species-and-diseases/chronic-wasting-disease/>

New Mexico Chronic Wasting Disease CWD TSE Prion Cases Update May 2022

New Mexico Chronic Wasting Disease CWD TSE Prion Cases Update

New Mexico Most recent CWD results: CWD Results 03-22-2022

NM530 28 1541x22, 3927798 Detected

NM528 28 x552857 Detected

https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/conservation/invasives-diseases/CWD-Results-03_22_2022.pdf

see archived link;

http://web.archive.org/web/20220322220224/https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/conservation/invasives-diseases/CWD-Results-03_22_2022.pdf

archived url ;

http://web.archive.org/web/20220301212742/https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/conservation/invasives-diseases/CWD-Results-02_02_2022.pdf

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 2021

New Mexico CWD TEST RESULTS: 1/19/2021 update

NM18-290 28 3418801 Detected

NM18-293 28 3446090 Detected

NM475 29 3460171 Detected

NM518 28 3464748 Detected

NM515 28 3500214 Detected

NM778 34 3510401 Detected

https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/conservation/invasives-diseases/CWD-Results-01_19_2021.pdf

archived url;

http://web.archive.org/web/20210427154826/https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/conservation/invasives-diseases/CWD-Results-01_19_2021.pdf

<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2021/08/new-mexico-cwd-test-results-1192021.html>

Confirmed Cases of Chronic Wasting Disease in New Mexico 2002 to 2016

Confirmed Cases of Chronic Wasting Disease in New Mexico

GMU Collection Date Kill Date Location Tissue Species

19 June 1, 2002 June 1, 2002 WSMR main post (first CWD Positive in NM) CWD Area Deer

19 November 4, 2002 November 4, 2002 WSMR Main Post CWD Area Deer

19 November 12, 2002 November 12, 2002 WSMR Main Post CWD Area Deer

19 December 17, 2002 December 17, 2002 WSMR Main Post Tonsil Biopsy Deer

19 January 1, 2003 January 1, 2003 Organ Mtns. Hunter Harvest Deer

19 January 4, 2003 January 4, 2003 Dripping Springs Hunter Harvest Deer

19 November 14, 2003 November 14, 2003 WSMR MAIN POST CWD Area Deer

34 January 13, 2004 January 13, 2005 15 miles NE of Pinon CWD Suspect Deer

19 December 14, 2004 December 14, 2004 West Organs, W of Massey Tank Tonsil Biopsy Deer

19 December 14, 2004 December 14, 2004 West Organs, W of Dripping Spring Visitor Center Tonsil Biopsy Deer

19 April 5, 2005 April 5, 2005 WSMR - Tag # 482 Tonsil Biopsy Deer

19 April 11, 2005 WSMR, SW of Antelope Hill CWD Area Deer

19 April 15, 2005 April 15, 2005 SW of Dripping springs CWD Area Deer

34 June 6, 2005 June 5, 2005 Timberon CWD Suspect Deer

34 October 1, 2005 October 1, 2005 Hughes Canyon CWD Suspect Elk

34 October 3, 2005 October 3, 2005 Wayland Canyon Hunter Harvest Elk

19 December 10, 2005 Antelope Hill Tonsil Biopsy Deer

34 March 24, 2006 March 24, 2006 Timberon CWD Suspect Deer

19 April 21, 2006 April 21, 2006 N of sewage plant (Bishops Cap) CWD Area Deer

19 June 2, 2006 June 2, 2006 WSMR SW of Red Butte, Stallion range Found Dead Deer

34 August 12, 2006 August 12, 2006 Timberon CWD Area Deer

34 October 27, 2006 October 27, 2006 West of Pinon Hunter Harvest Deer

19 July 13, 2007 July 13, 2007 South of Bishop's Cap CWD Suspect Deer

28 October 14, 2007 October 14, 2007 Mc Gregor Hunter Harvest Deer

34 October 30, 2007 October 28, 2007 Unit 34 private land Hunter Harvest Deer

19 December 13, 2007 December 13, 2007 WSMR Main Post CWD Area Deer

28 October 12, 2008 October 12, 2008 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer

28 October 13, 2008 October 12, 2008 McGregor Hunter Harvest Deer

34 October 29, 2008 October 25, 2008 Private land Hunter Harvest Deer

34 March 2, 2009 March 1, 2009 Rio Penasco CWD Suspect Elk

34 December 6, 2009 December 6, 2009 Wills Canyon CWD Suspect Elk

28 May 9, 2010 CWD Area Deer

28 October 10, 2010 October 10, 2010 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer

28 November 17, 2010 November 17, 2010 McGregor CWD Area Deer

34 November 27, 2010 November 27, 2010 Lookout Station Hunter Harvest Elk

28 March 12, 2011 March 12, 2011 McGregor CWD Area Deer

28 March 13, 2011 March 13, 2011 McGregor CWD Area Deer

28 March 13, 2011 March 13, 2011 McGregor CWD Area Deer

28 October 9, 2011 October 9, 2011 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer

28 October 9, 2011 October 9, 2011 McGregor Range South Hunter Harvest Deer

28 October 10, 2011 October 9, 2011 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer

28 February 17, 2012 February 17, 2012 McGregor Rectal Biopsy Deer

28 February 18, 2012 February 18, 2012 McGregor Rectal Biopsy Deer

34 October 27, 2012 October 27, 2012 Timberon Hunter Harvest Deer

28 October 5, 2013 October 5, 2013 McGregor Hunter Harvest Deer

28 December 11, 2013 December 9, 2013 McGregor Hunter Harvest Elk

28 December 11, 2013 December 11, 2013 McGregor Hunter Harvest Elk

28 December 11, 2013 December 11, 2013 McGregor Hunter Harvest Elk

19 February 12, 2014 February 12, 2014 NASA CWD Suspect Deer

19 April 6, 2014 April 5, 2014 East of Las Cruces CWD Suspect Deer
28 November 21, 2015 November 21, 2015 McGregor Range Deer
28 November 21, 2015 November 21, 2015 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer
28 November 21, 2015 December 21, 2015 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer
28 November 22, 2015 November 21, 2015 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer
28 November 22, 2015 November 22, 2015 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer
28 November 27, 2016 November 26, 2016 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer
28 November 27, 2016 November 27, 2016 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Deer
28 December 12, 2016 December 12, 2016 McGregor Range Hunter Harvest Elk

Showing 1 to 58 of 58 entries

<https://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/invasive-species-and-diseases/chronic-wasting-disease/>
<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2022/03/new-mexico-chronic-wasting-disease-cwd.html>

here's one i can't even find on NM web site from 2023;

2023

New Mexico Confirms CWD In Mule Deer

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) has informed Texas officials that three mule deer harvested a few miles from the Texas border last hunting season have tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

The deer were harvested in the Hueco Mountains, which extend into Texas northeast of El Paso in Hudspeth County. New Mexico has been monitoring annually for CWD since it was first discovered 10 years ago and this event is the closest to Texas that the disease has been detected.

Texas also has had an active CWD-surveillance program for the past decade, and CWD has not yet been detected in the state. However, state wildlife officials have been preparing for the possibility since 2002.

"While this finding is not a big surprise, we're not going to ignore it," said Mitch Lockwood, Big Game Program Director for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "We are working with TPWD's Wildlife Health Working Group to develop a more intensive strategy for sampling, and to determine the geographical extent of the disease if it is detected in Texas."

The Wildlife Health Working Group is comprised of wildlife biologists, veterinarians and other animal-health experts from TPWD, Texas Animal Health Commission, Department of State Health Services, Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine, and USDA. NMDGF is also involved in the discussion.

While several thousand deer have been tested for CWD in Texas, wildlife officials express concern that the Trans Pecos region is underrepresented because of the very low number of deer and the relatively low deer harvest in that region. Samples are obtained from hunter-harvested deer, deer found dead on public roadways, and deer showing clinical symptoms.

TPWD is determining how many more deer need to be sampled and deer hunters in the region could be asked for their assistance during the next hunting season. "We are using disease models to determine the intensity of sampling that would be required to detect CWD in that deer population if it is present with a prevalence of at least two percent," said Ryan Schoeneberg, Big Game Program Specialist with TPWD.

CWD was first recognized in 1967 in captive mule deer in Colorado and has also been documented in captive and/or free-ranging deer in nearly two dozen states and Canadian provinces, including New Mexico. Although fatal in deer, there is no evidence that CWD poses a risk to humans or livestock in the natural environment.

CWD is a member of the group of diseases called transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). Other diseases in this group include scrapie in sheep and goats, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or mad cow disease) in cattle, and Cruetzfeldt-Jakob disease in people. CWD is a progressive, fatal disease that affects deer, elk, moose, and other cervid species and there is no vaccine or other biological method that prevents it. "It would be almost impossible to eradicate the disease once it becomes established in a population," said Lockwood. "But, what we can do is manage the disease and minimize the risk of it spreading."

<https://tth.com/new-mexico-confirms-cwd-in-mule-deer/>

From: TSS

Subject: CWD TWO NEW CASES NEAR WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE NEW MEXICO

Date: June 27, 2005 at 4:43 pm PST

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

Contact: Dan Williams, (505) 476-8004

dan.williams@state.nm.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, JUNE 24, 2005:

TWO MULE DEER TEST POSITIVE FOR CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

ANGLER LANDS STATE RECORD BLUE CATFISH AT ELEPHANT BUTTE LAKE

TWO MULE DEER TEST POSITIVE FOR CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

SANTA FE – Two mule deer captured in the Organ Mountains as part of an ongoing research project near White Sands Missile Range have tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal neurological disease that attacks the brains of infected deer and elk, the Department of Game and Fish announced.

The number of confirmed CWD cases in New Mexico now stands at 11 since 2002, when the disease was first confirmed in a deer found near the eastern foothills of the Organ Mountains.

All 11 CWD-infected deer were found in the same general area of southern New Mexico.

The origin of the disease in New Mexico remains unknown.

The carcasses of the infected deer will be incinerated, said Kerry Mower, the Department's lead wildlife disease biologist.

Chronic wasting disease causes animals to become emaciated, display abnormal behavior, lose bodily functions and die.

The disease has been found in wild deer and elk, and in captive deer and elk, in eight states and two Canadian provinces.

There currently is no evidence of CWD being transmitted to humans or livestock.

Mower said the most recent CWD-positive deer showed no obvious physical signs of having the disease.

They were captured in April 2005 and tested as part of a 3-year-old research project studying deer population dynamics in southern New Mexico.

More than 140 deer have been captured alive and tested for the study, in which researchers hope to find the cause of a 10-year decline in the area deer population.

Study participants include the Department of Game and Fish, the U.S. Army at White Sands Missile Range and Fort Bliss, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey at New Mexico State University, and San Andres National Wildlife Refuge.

Hunters can assist the Department in its CWD research and prevention efforts by bringing their fresh, legally harvested deer or elk head to an area office, where officers will remove the brain stem for testing. Participants will be eligible for drawings for an oryx hunt on White Sands Missile Range and a trophy elk hunt on the Valle Vidal. For more information about the drawing and chronic wasting disease, visit the Department web site at www.wildlife.state.nm.us.

http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/publications/press_releases/documents/0624CWDandcatfish.pdf

archived url;

http://web.archive.org/web/20051227235120/http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/publications/press_releases/documents/0624CWDandcatfish.pdf

SEE MAP ;

<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/disease/cwd/documents/cwdmap.pdf>

archived url;

<http://web.archive.org/web/20050305150837/http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/disease/cwd/documents/cwdmap.pdf>

New Mexico Captive Deer

<https://www.srca.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/attachments/19.35.7new.pdf>

Greetings list members,

I am deeply concerned with these CWD mad deer so close to the Texas border. WHAT keeps them from crossing the border to Texas ??? IF these illegal aliens can so easily cross our borders, why not these infected deer? maybe we should get these minute men to start watching for mad deer coming in to Texas from New Mexico.

I mentioned my concerns several other times before;

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Current status of CWD testing in Texas

Date: Tue, 10 May 2005 09:09:47 -0500

From: "kschwaus"

To:

Mr. Singeltary,

I was asked to provide you with the following information. If you have any other questions regarding CWD sampling in Texas, please do not hesitate to give me a call. My office number is below.

Below I have included a chart showing CWD samples that have been tested since the fall of 2002 through the present at the eco-region level. The second chart shows the totals on a given year. The unknown location samples come from private individuals sending in samples directly to the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab (TVMDL). Due to the confidentiality laws that the TVMDL operates under, they are unable to provide TPWD with the location of those samples.

Region Population Estimate

Sampling from Fall 2002 to Present

snip...

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I would like to thank Kevin and TPWD for there prompt reply with updated data.

I am still concerned about the Texas, New Mexico border and New Mexico's apparent lack of CWD testing updates. Makes one wonder about there CWD testing program. NO report/reply back from New Mexico about there CWD testing update yet. ...

TSS

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MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

New Mexico Chronic Wasting Disease CWD TSE PrP Confirmed February 2022

<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2022/03/new-mexico-chronic-wasting-disease-cwd.html>

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 2021

New Mexico CWD TEST RESULTS 1/19/2021 update

<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2021/08/new-mexico-cwd-test-results-1192021.html>

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 08, 2019

New Mexico Chronic Wasting Disease CWD TSE Prion Update 2018-2019?

<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2019/02/new-mexico-chronic-wasting-disease-cwd.html>

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 07, 2018

New Mexico Bans All Live Cervid Importation Due To CWD TSE Prion still NO Final 2017 Positives Update for N.M.

<http://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2018/02/new-mexico-bans-all-live-cervid.html>

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 02, 2017

New Mexico Chronic Wasting Disease CWD Figures 2016 - 2017 Update ???

The great state of New Mexico has been notorious for keeping information about Chronic Wasting Disease CWD TSE prion aka Mad Deer Disease outdated and pretty much to themselves. urls to map links on cwd zones and such are not working anymore, that i can find. seems they are being mum again. so, i must give an outdated update as well, but here is what i have to date...

<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2017/11/new-mexico-chronic-wasting-disease-cwd.html>

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

New Mexico CWD confirmed in 5 McGregor Range deer during the 2015-16 hunting season

<http://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2016/09/new-mexico-cwd-confirmed-in-5-mcgregor.html>

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2015

Chronic Wasting Disease CWD Cases Confirmed In New Mexico 2013 and 2014 UPDATE 2015

<http://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2015/03/chronic-wasting-disease-cwd-cases.html>

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2012

New Mexico DGF EXPANDS CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE CONTROL AREAS, while Texas flounder

<http://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2012/09/new-mexico-dgf-expands-chronic-wasting.html>

Monday, March 26, 2012

3 CASES OF CWD FOUND NEW MEXICO MULE DEER SEVERAL MILES FROM TEXAS BORDER

<http://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2012/03/3-cases-of-cwd-found-new-mexico-mule.html>

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 04, 2009

CWD NEW MEXICO SPREADING SOUTH TO TEXAS 2009

<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2009/10/cwd-new-mexico-spreading-south-to-texas.html>

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2013

TEXAS CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE CWD Four New Positives Found in Trans Pecos

<http://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2013/02/texas-chronic-wasting-disease-cwd-four.html>

Tuesday, July 10, 2012

Chronic Wasting Disease Detected in Far West Texas

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/releases/?req=20120710a>

<http://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2012/07/chronic-wasting-disease-detected-in-far.html>

> TEXAS HISTORY OF CWD <

Singeltary telling TAHC, that CWD was waltzing into Texas from WSMR around Trans Pecos region, starting around 2001, 2002, and every year, there after, until New Mexico finally shamed TAHC et al to test where i had been telling them to test for a decade. 2012 cwd was detected first right there where i had been trying to tell TAHC for 10 years.

> Singeltary on Texas Chronic Wasting Disease CWD TSE Prion History <

<http://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2017/08/texas-chronic-wasting-disease-cwd-tse.html>

> Texas CWD Cases 1,310 Cases Detected To Date May, 9, 2026 <

<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2026/05/texas-cwd-cases-1310-cases-detected-to.html>

<https://prpsc.proboards.com/thread/218/texas-cases-detected-date-2026>

> CWD Transmission To, Cattle, Pigs, Sheep, Primates, oh my! <

Transmission of the chronic wasting disease agent from elk to cattle after oronasal exposure

Justin Greenlee, Jifeng Bian, Zoe Lambert, Alexis Frese, and Eric Cassmann Virus and Prion Research Unit, National Animal Disease Center, USDA-ARS, Ames, IA, USA

Aims: The purpose of this study was to determine the susceptibility of cattle to chronic wasting disease agent from elk.

Materials and Methods: Initial studies were conducted in bovinized mice using inoculum derived from elk with various genotypes at codon 132 (MM, LM, LL). Based upon attack rates, inoculum (10% w/v brain homogenate) from an LM132 elk was selected for transmission studies in cattle. At approximately 2 weeks of age, one wild type steer (EE211) and one steer with the E211K polymorphism (EK211) were fed 1 mL of brain homogenate in a quart of milk replacer while another 1 mL was instilled intranasally. The cattle were examined daily for clinical signs for the duration of the experiment. One steer is still under observation at 71 months post-inoculation (mpi).

Results: Inoculum derived from MM132 elk resulted in similar attack rates and incubation periods in mice expressing wild type or K211 bovine PRNP, 35% at 531 days post inoculation (dpi) and 27% at 448 dpi, respectively. Inoculum from LM132 elk had a slightly higher attack rates in mice: 45% (693 dpi) in wild type cattle PRNP and 33% (468) in K211 mice. Inoculum from LL132 elk resulted in the highest attack rate in wild type bovinized mice (53% at 625 dpi), but no K211 mice were affected at >700 days. At approximately 70 mpi, the EK211 genotype steer developed clinical signs suggestive of prion disease, depression, low head carriage, hypersalivation, and ataxia, and was necropsied. Enzyme immunoassay (IDEXX) was positive in brainstem (OD=4.00, but non-detect in retropharyngeal lymph nodes and palatine tonsil. Immunoreactivity was largely limited to the brainstem, midbrain, and cervical spinal cord with a pattern that was primarily glia-associated.

Conclusions: Cattle with the E211K polymorphism are susceptible to the CWD agent after oronasal exposure of 0.2 g of infectious material.

***> cwd to pigs

Chronic wasting disease prions in cervids and wild pigs in North America Preliminary Outbreak Assessment DEFRA 26 January 2026

DEFRA 26 January 2026 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Preliminary Outbreak Assessment

Chronic wasting disease prions in cervids and wild pigs in North America

26 January 2026

Disease report

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal neurodegenerative disease of cervids, such as deer, elk, moose and reindeer. It is caused by prions – infectious proteins that cause normal cellular prion proteins to misfold (CIDRAP, 2025). The disease is widespread in captive and free-ranging cervids in North America (Figure 1). For the first time, CWD prions have also been detected in the tissues of wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*) caught in CWD-affected areas of the USA (Soto et al. 2025). This discovery emerged from a study designed to investigate potential interactions between wild pigs and CWD prions, as wild pigs often coexist with cervids, which can shed prions into the environment. The following assessment discusses the epidemiology of CWD in North America and the detection of CWD prions in wild pigs. It also considers the potential implications for Great Britain.

Figure 1. Distribution of CWD in cervids in North America as of 11 April 2025 (USGS, 2025). Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Situation assessment

CWD is considered one of the most important cervid diseases due to its capacity for infectious spread, high mortality rate and associated socio-economic impacts on cervid farming and hunting-related industries (Kincheloe et al., 2021, CFSPH, 2024). The disease is always fatal, with no cure or vaccine (CFSPH, 2024).

CWD was first reported among captive cervids in the USA in the 1960s (Kincheloe et al., 2021). It has since been detected in captive and/or free-ranging cervids in 36 US states and 5 Canadian provinces, as well as South Korea, Norway, Finland and Sweden (Silva, 2022, USGS, 2025). While the South Korean strains are thought to have originated from North America, the European strains appear to have emerged independently (Silva, 2022).

Transmission between cervids occurs by direct contact with infected animals or indirectly, through contact with a contaminated environment, most likely via the oral route (Otero et al., 2021). The disease may also be vertically transmitted from doe to fawn (Nalls et al., 2013, Salariu et al., 2015). Environmental contamination occurs when infected animals shed infectious prions in various secretions and excretions, such as urine, faeces and saliva (Otero et al., 2021). It can also occur when infected carcasses decompose and release prions into the surrounding soil and vegetation (Miller et al., 2004). The minimum number of CWD prions required to cause infection in cervids is unknown but appears to be low (Denkers et al., 2020).

The disease is difficult to control, as infected animals can also be subclinical for months or years. During this time, they can shed CWD prions, which can remain infectious in the environment for at least 2 years (Miller et al., 2004, CFSPH, 2024). Diagnosis usually relies on post-mortem tests, which may fail to identify infected animals during the early stages of the disease (CFSPH, 2024, CIDRAP, 2025). Control efforts are further hampered by lack of evidence to inform effective CWD management and control strategies (Uehlinger et al., 2016, Mori et al., 2024).

CWD in North American cervids

CWD has been reported in a range of North American cervids, including white-tailed deer, mule deer, black-tailed deer, moose, wapiti, reindeer (captive) and red deer (captive) (EFSA BIOHAZ Panel, 2023). It was first reported in captive mule deer and black-tailed deer at research facilities in Colorado and Wyoming in the late 1960s (Otero et al., 2021). These animals were derived from wild populations. The disease was later identified in Rocky Mountain elk at these facilities and subsequently, in free-ranging populations of mule deer and elk in Wyoming and Colorado. The geographic expansion of CWD in North America is thought to reflect the commercial movement of subclinical animals and natural cervid migration (Otero et al., 2021). Epidemiological data suggest that the disease spread from the USA to Canada and then to South Korea through imports of infected cervids (Otero et al., 2021). A retrospective analysis revealed that, in 1978, a Colorado-born mule deer at Toronto Zoo in Ontario, Canada, died of CWD (Dubé et al., 2006). In 1996, the disease was detected in captive elk in Saskatchewan (Williams and Miller, 2002).

The disease

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has since been detected in captive cervids in Alberta and Quebec and free-ranging cervids in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan (USGS, 2025). The origin of the outbreak in free-ranging Canadian cervids is unknown (Otero et al., 2021).

While the spread of CWD across North America is often described as ‘rapid,’ it has been suggested that this may reflect widening disease surveillance, rather than a ‘real-time’ indication of geographic spread. CWD epidemics appear to develop relatively slowly compared with other

wildlife diseases (EFSA BIOHAZ Panel, 2023). Field and modelling data from North America suggest that it may take 15 to 20 years for CWD prevalence to reach 1% in free-ranging cervid populations, although more rapid transmission may occur in captive populations. The surveillance sensitivity in North America means that the disease may have been present for 10 years or more in some areas before it was detected (Miller et al., 2000).

The prevalence of CWD in affected populations or species varies across North America. In captive herds, prevalence may reach 100% over time, while in affected free-ranging populations, reported prevalence ranges from <1% to >30%. Most clinical cases are observed in cervids 2 to 7 years old, especially males, which is believed to be due to behavioural differences rather than differences in susceptibility between sexes (EFSA BIOHAZ Panel, 2023). At least 13 different risk factors may contribute towards CWD spread in North America, such as host genetics, high deer density or inappropriate disposal of deer carcasses and slaughter by-products (EFSA BIOHAZ Panel, 2019).

Approaches towards CWD control and surveillance in captive and free-ranging deer vary widely across North America within and between jurisdictions (CIDRAP, 2025). A summary of the measures in place in each US state and Canadian province is available from the CWD Alliance (2026), a coalition of wildlife conservation agencies, dedicated to providing accurate information on CWD and supporting strategies to minimise its impact on free-ranging cervids. Wildlife agencies rely on voluntary testing of hunted deer carcasses as the main mechanism for CWD surveillance and management, usually using post-mortem ELISA or immunohistochemistry methods (CIDRAP, 2025).

In the USA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) operates the CWD Herd Certification Programme (HCP) in collaboration with state and wildlife agencies. This is a voluntary scheme which aims to provide a consistent, national approach to controlling CWD in farmed cervids and preventing interstate spread by establishing control measures such as fencing, detailed record keeping and CWD testing of all cervids over 12 months old that die for any reason. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) operates a similar programme, the CWD Herd Certification Programme. As of December 2025, 28 states were participating in the USA's CWD HCP and 5 Canadian provinces and one Canadian territory were participating in the Canadian programme (USDA, 2025b, CFIA, 2025).

Control methods fall within three general categories: prevention, containment, and control and suppression. Prevention and containment aim to prevent CWD introduction into areas where it has not previously been reported and to limit its geographical spread once it has been introduced, respectively. Both tend to include regulatory measures such as bans on the movement of live cervids, cervid carcasses or specified risk materials. Control and suppression aim to stabilise or reduce infection rates within a herd or population through measures such as selective or random culling (EFSA BIOHAZ Panel, 2017).

Despite control efforts, CWD has continued to spread among captive and free-ranging cervids in North America, with increasing prevalence in affected areas (Uehlinger et al., 2016, CFSPH, 2024). Eradicating CWD from North America appears infeasible due to its extent of geographic spread and epidemiological characteristics, such as environmental persistence (EFSA BIOHAZ Panel, 2017).

CWD in wild pigs in the USA

Wild pigs are an invasive population in the USA, especially in the south (Figure 2). They comprise escaped domestic swine, Eurasian wild boar and hybrids of the two (Smyser et al., 2020). Wild pigs frequently coexist with cervids in areas where CWD is endemic and may be exposed to CWD prions through rooting in contaminated soil, scavenging deer carcasses and predation on fawns. These ecological interactions provide multiple routes by which wild pigs could encounter prions from infected deer (Soto et al. 2025).

Under experimental conditions, domestic pigs can become infected with CWD by oral and intracerebral routes, suggesting that wild pigs might also be susceptible. Domestic pigs rarely develop clinical signs of CWD but accumulate prions in the lymphoid tissues in their heads and gut, suggesting that, like cervids, they could shed the prions in saliva and faeces (Moore et al., 2017).

Against this background, Soto et al. (2025) investigated potential interactions between wild pigs and CWD prions. They analysed over 300 brain and lymph node samples from 178 wild pigs living across Arkansas and Texas, USA. The animals were captured by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) between 2020 and 2021. None of the pigs included in the study were reported to be displaying clinical signs of disease.

Using an ultra-sensitive laboratory method (protein misfolding cyclic amplification (PMCA)), the researchers identified CWD prions in up to 37% of the lymph node samples and 15% of brain samples. The lowest detection rates were in the Texas samples (below 16%), matching the lower CWD prevalence in the state's cervid population. These findings indicate that wild pigs are naturally exposed to CWD prions in areas where the disease is present (Soto et al., 2025).

When intracerebrally inoculated with tissues from wild pigs, a small proportion of mice expressing deer prion protein developed subclinical prion infection. No transmission was detected in mice expressing pig prion protein. This suggests that wild pig tissues only contain low levels of infectious prions and that wild pigs are relatively resistant to natural infection. However, they could still contribute to CWD transmission, influencing its epidemiology, geographic distribution and interspecies spread (Soto et al., 2025). While their exact role and importance in CWD transmission is unclear, wild pigs have considerable home ranges in North America (1.1 to 5.32 km on average), which may increase when food is scarce. This mobility could complicate efforts to control the disease if they play a role in its transmission (Soto et al., 2025).

The USDA's APHIS does not currently conduct active surveillance for CWD in wild pigs (USDA, 2025a).

Figure 2. Geographic distribution of wild pigs (purple) in the USA as of 27 January 2025, comprising escaped domestic pigs, Eurasian wild boar and hybrids of the two (adapted from USDA, 2026). Yellow (Texas) and green (Arkansas) circles indicate the states where CWD prions were detected in wild pig tissues.

Implications for Great Britain

CWD is a notifiable animal disease in Great Britain, but no cases have ever been reported (Defra and APHA, 2018, CIDRAP, 2025).

The introduction of CWD into Great Britain's cervid population could have devastating socio-economic and animal welfare impacts, resulting in marked population declines, as seen in the USA (Miller et al., 2008). There could also be significant losses to cervid farming, hunting and rural tourism industries, as well as significant costs associated with controlling the spread of the disease. The UK venison market alone is worth an estimated £100 million (Scotland Food and Drink, 2018).

There are several discrete wild pig populations in Great Britain, including wild boar and feral pigs. The largest known population is in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire, with an estimated 583 wild boar as of 2025/2026, although Forestry England (2025) aims to reduce the number to 400 to protect other species, such as plants and insects. Pockets of wild boar and feral pigs exist in other parts of the country, but their exact numbers are unknown (Mathews et al., 2018). The potential impact of CWD introduction into Great Britain's wild pig population is uncertain because their role in disease transmission remains unclear. While they appear to be relatively resistant to natural CWD infection and disease, they could potentially contribute towards the maintenance and spread of CWD in Great Britain's cervid population (Soto et al., 2025).

To reduce the risk of CWD introduction, Great Britain suspended the import of live cervids and high-risk cervid products in June 2023, including urine hunting lures, from all countries where CWD has been reported. Fresh cervid meat, excluding offal and spinal cord, can only be imported into Great Britain from CWD-affected countries if it has tested negative for CWD using an approved diagnostic method, such as immunohistochemistry, and originates from an area where CWD has not been reported or officially suspected in the last 3 years (Defra and APHA, 2026).

The current risk of CWD prions being introduced into Great Britain's wild pig or cervid population ranges from very low (event is very rare but cannot be excluded) to negligible (event is so rare it does not merit consideration). This is based on the risk of incursion tool, developed by Roberts et al., (2011). It is also supported by a recent Defra and APHA (2025) risk assessment. While this assessment identified a few theoretical entry pathways, such as contaminated equipment, that could not be fully assessed due to limited data, there is no definitive evidence that they have ever resulted in the introduction of CWD into a new area.

Detection of CWD prions in wild pigs in the USA is unlikely to affect Great Britain's CWD risk level, as the USA is not approved to export live wild pigs to Great Britain (Defra, 2025). Import of infected wild pig meat or wild pig by-products from the USA could theoretically introduce CWD prions into Great Britain, but the risk of this is also very low. To date, CWD prions have only been reported in lymph node and brain tissue samples in wild pigs, at levels too low to cause disease in mouse models

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(Soto et al., 2025). However, their presence in other tissues cannot be excluded. The USA is approved to export wild pig meat and certain wild pig by-products to Great Britain, excluding offal, minced meat and germplasm (Defra, 2025), but there appears to be limited trade in these commodities.

It is difficult to quantify the exact amount of wild pig meat exported to Great Britain, as available trade data does not always distinguish between meat of wild and domestic pigs. However, based on HMRC data, the last known export of non-domestic pig meat from the USA to Great Britain was in 2013 (4,881 kg).

Conclusion

CWD has continued to spread among captive and free-ranging cervids in North America since it was first detected in the 1960s. The finding of CWD prions in wild pigs in the USA suggests they could contribute towards transmission of the disease, influencing its epidemiology, geographic distribution and interspecies spread. However, further research is needed to confirm this. CWD has never been reported in Great Britain and the current risk of CWD prions being introduced into Great Britain's wild pig or cervid population ranges from very low to negligible.

Readers are reminded to be vigilant for signs of CWD. Information on how to spot the disease can be found here. Suspected cases must be reported immediately to the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301. In Wales, call 0300 303 8268. In Scotland, contact your local Field Services Office. Failure to do so is an offence. We will continue to monitor the situation.

Authors • Lawrence Finn • Dr. Lauren Perrin • John Spiropoulos • Dr. Helen Roberts
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

References

snip...see;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/697a3b013c71d838df6bd413/CWD_Prions_in_Cervids_and_Wild_Pigs_in_North_America.pdf

Shedding, retention and spreading of chronic wasting disease prions in the environment

Project Number 2R01AI132695-06A1 Former Number 2R01AI132695-06 Contact PI/Project Leader MORALES, RODRIGO

Abstract Text

ABSTRACT

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a prion disease affecting natural and captive cervid populations. This disease is progressively spreading across the United States and new foci of infectivity are constantly being reported. Despite decades of research, there are still several unanswered questions concerning CWD.

Compelling evidence suggest that CWD prions enter the environment through carcasses from diseased animals or by the progressive accumulation of prions shed in excreta. Unfortunately, the role that plants, parasites, predators, and scavengers play in CWD spreading has been poorly studied. During the past funding cycle, our group made important technical and conceptual contributions in this field.

Data from our group and others (in collaboration) demonstrate that plants can bind prions into their surfaces as well as transport them from soils to leaves. This is relevant, considering that prions are shown to progressively accumulate in soils and strongly suggests plants as potential vectors for CWD transmission. Unfortunately, the previously mentioned evidence has been collected using proof-of-concept conditions, including the exposure of high titers of rodent (laboratory generated) adapted prions, and grass plants only.

We have generated preliminary data showing that carrots grown in CWD infected soil carry prions in their roots and leaves as evaluated by bioassays. In contrast, tomato plants do not share these features. The significance of these findings cannot be ignored considering the interaction of CWD prions with a human and animal edible vegetable. Considering the use of carrots roots and leaves in human and animal nutrition, and the still unknown zoonotic potential of CWD, future research involving edible plants is urgently needed.

Another relevant (published) finding from our laboratory involves the high CWD infectivity titers found in nasal bots, a common cervid parasite that develops in the nasal cavity (a hotspot of prion infectivity). These parasites are found in large quantities in CWD pre-clinical and clinical deer, and may importantly contribute to environmental CWD transmission. Our research also identified CWD prions in naturally exposed flies, ticks, and dermestid beetles. However, the prion infectivity titers in these parasites have not been evaluated.

Finally, animals other than cervids, including hunters and scavengers, are expected to be exposed to CWD prions. Interestingly, we identified CWD prions and de novo generated porcine prions in tissues from wild pigs living in areas with variable CWD epidemiology. We plan to further investigate all these events and their relevance in natural prion transmission using a complementary set of techniques, including in vitro and in vivo systems. Emphasis will be made in analyzing the strain properties and zoonotic potentials of the prion agents under investigation. For this purpose, we gathered a unique group of collaborators able to supply us with the samples and expertise required to execute this project. Outcomes from this research are expected to deliver new insights on this animal prionopathy and provide regulatory agencies with useful information to control its continuous spread.

Public Health Relevance Statement

PROJECT NARRATIVE Despite decades of research, several questions remain unanswered for the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) epidemic affecting several deer species in the United States. Continuing with our previous R01 project, we will explore novel factors mediating the spread of CWD prions, including different plant types, invertebrate parasites (e.g., ticks, nasal bots) and scavengers (wild boars). These potential disease vectors will be studied for their ability to transmit disease within and across species, including humans.

<https://reporter.nih.gov/search/VYlhnadNtUiur19eYERpog/project-details/11227445#description>

Infectious prions in brains and muscles of domestic pigs experimentally challenged with the BSE, scrapie, and CWD agents

Authors: Francisca Bravo-Risi, Fraser Brydon, Angela Chong, Kane Spicker, Justin J. Greenlee <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2202-3054>, Glenn Telling, Claudio Soto <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3412-0524>, Sandra Pritzkow, Marcelo A. Barria, Rodrigo Morales

ABSTRACT

Experimental studies suggest that animal species not previously described as naturally infected by prions are susceptible to prion diseases affecting sheep, cattle, and deer. These interspecies transmissions may generate prions with unknown host ranges. Pigs are susceptible to prions from different origins, including deer chronic wasting disease (CWD), sheep scrapie, and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Here, we studied prions in brains and muscles from pigs previously infected with these different prion sources. Specifically, we measured the total prion protein (PrP) and PK-resistant PrP by western blot. Seeding activity in these tissues was evaluated using the protein misfolding cyclic amplification (PMCA) technique. We found that BSE-infected pigs contained substantially more seeding competent prions compared with those infected with CWD and scrapie. Moreover, the zoonotic potential of porcine-BSE prions seems to be relevant, as both brains and muscles from BSE-infected pigs induced the misfolding of the human prion protein in vitro. This study helps to understand the potential fate of naturally existing prion strains in a relevant host and calls for caution considering the co-existence between feral swine and other prion-susceptible animal species.

IMPORTANCE

Prions (PrP^{Sc}) are proteinaceous, infectious pathogens responsible for prion diseases. Some livestock are highly susceptible to prion diseases. These include cattle (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE), sheep and goat (scrapie), and cervids (chronic wasting disease, CWD). Unfortunately, BSE has been reported to be naturally transmitted to humans and other animal species. Domestic pigs, a relevant livestock animal, have not been reported to be naturally affected by prions; however, they are susceptible to the experimental exposure to BSE, scrapie, and CWD prions. Given the widespread consumption of porcine food products by humans, we aimed to evaluate the levels of pig-derived BSE, scrapie, and CWD prions from experimentally challenged domestic pigs in brain and meat cuts (leg, cheek meat, skirt meat, and tenderloin). We detected pig-adapted prions in the brains and some muscles of these animals. Additionally, we evaluated the in vitro compatibility between pig prions and the human prion protein (as a surrogate of zoonosis). Our results show that only pig-derived BSE prions were able to induce the

misfolding of the cellular human prion protein. This data highlights the consequences of prion spillovers to other animal species and their potential availability to humans.

Snip...

In summary, our data shows the dynamic of animal prions when exposed to infectious pigs, as well as their distributions and zoonotic potentials. The data presented here may be relevant to understanding the fate of naturally existing prions in a sympatric animal species relevant for human consumption. This acquires importance considering a recent report describing the interaction between CWD and wild pigs in natural settings.

<https://journals.asm.org/doi/10.1128/mbio.01800-25>

Volume 31, Number 1—January 2025

Dispatch

Detection of Prions in Wild Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) from Areas with Reported Chronic Wasting Disease Cases, United States

Paulina Soto, Francisca Bravo-Risi, Rebeca Benavente, Tucker H. Stimming, Michael J. Bodenchuk, Patrick Whitley, Clint Turnage, Terry R. Spraker, Justin Greenlee, Glenn Telling, Jennifer Malmberg, Thomas Gidlewski, Tracy Nichols, Vienna R. Brown, and Rodrigo Morales Author affiliation: The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Texas, USA (P. Soto, F. Bravo-Risi, R. Benavente, T.H. Stimming, R. Morales); Centro Integrativo de Biología y Química Aplicada, Universidad Bernardo O'Higgins, Santiago, Chile (P. Soto, F. Bravo-Risi, R. Morales); US Department of Agriculture, Fort Collins, Colorado, USA (M.J. Bodenchuk, P. Whitley, C. Turnage, J. Malmberg, T. Gidlewski, T. Nichols, V.R. Brown); Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, USA (T.R. Spraker, G. Telling); US Department of Agriculture, Ames, Iowa, USA (J. Greenlee)

Abstract

Using a prion amplification assay, we identified prions in tissues from wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*) living in areas of the United States with variable chronic wasting disease (CWD) epidemiology. Our findings indicate that scavenging swine could play a role in disseminating CWD and could therefore influence its epidemiology, geographic distribution, and interspecies spread.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a prion disease of particular concern because of its uncontrolled contagious spread among various cervid species in North America

<https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/distribution-chronic-wasting-disease-north-america>

its recent discovery in Nordic countries (1), and its increasingly uncertain zoonotic potential (2). CWD is the only animal prion disease affecting captive as well as wild animals. Persistent shedding of prions by CWD-affected animals and resulting environmental contamination is considered a major route of transmission contributing to spread of the disease. Carcasses of CWD-affected animals represent relevant sources of prion infectivity to multiple animal species that can develop disease or act as vectors to spread infection to new locations.

Free-ranging deer are sympatric with multiple animal species, including some that act as predators, scavengers, or both. Experimental transmissions to study the potential for interspecies CWD transmissions have been attempted in raccoons, ferrets, cattle, sheep, and North American rodents (3–7). Potential interspecies CWD transmission has also been addressed using transgenic (Tg) mice expressing prion proteins (PrP) from relevant animal species (8). Although no reports of natural interspecies CWD transmissions have been documented, experimental studies strongly suggest the possibility for interspecies transmission in nature exists (3–7). Inoculation and serial passage studies reveal the potential of CWD prions to adapt to noncervid species, resulting in emergence of novel prion strains with unpredicted features (9–11).

Wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*), also called feral swine, are an invasive population comprising domestic swine, Eurasian wild boar, and hybrids of the 2 species (12). Wild pig populations have become established in the United States (Appendix Figure 1, panel A), enabled by their high rates of fecundity; omnivorous and opportunistic diet; and widespread, often human-mediated movement (13). Wild pigs scavenge carcasses on the landscape and have an intimate relationship with the soil because of their routine rooting and wallowing behaviors (14). CWD prions have been experimentally transmitted to domestic pigs by intracerebral and oral exposure routes (15), which is relevant because wild pigs coexist with cervids in CWD endemic areas and reportedly prey on fawns and scavenge deer carcasses. Considering the species overlap in many parts of the United States (Appendix Figure 1, panel , we studied potential interactions between wild pigs and CWD prions.

Snip...

Conclusions

In summary, results from this study showed that wild pigs are exposed to cervid prions, although the pigs seem to display some resistance to infection via natural exposure. Future studies should address the susceptibility of this invasive animal species to the multiple prion strains circulating in the environment. Nonetheless, identification of CWD prions in wild pig tissues indicated the potential for pigs to move prions across the landscape, which may, in turn, influence the epidemiology and geographic spread of CWD.

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/31/1/24-0401_article

THURSDAY, JANUARY 08, 2026

Confucius Ponders, what about Wild Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) and CWD TSE Prion, and the Environment, what if?

Confucius Ponders, what about Wild Pigs (*Sus scrofa*), they can cover some distance rather quickly, what about Wild Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) digging up the terrain, and as they do it, what if these Wild Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) were exposed to CWD TSE Prion, and then they go on exposing and saturating the land with CWD TSE Prion, then the soil becomes contaminated with CWD TSE Prion, then what about the plants that grow from that soil for the decades to come, what if???

<https://prpsc.proboards.com/thread/190/confucius-ponders-wild-pigs-scrofa>

<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2026/01/confucius-ponders-what-about-wild-pigs.html>

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026

Chronic wasting disease prions in cervids and wild pigs in North America Preliminary Outbreak

<https://journals.asm.org/doi/10.1128/mbio.01800-25>

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/31/1/24-0401_article

https://media.ark.org/agri/Moore_2017_Swine_CWD.pdf

<https://transmissiblespongiformencephalopathy.blogspot.com/2026/01/chronic-wasting-disease-prions-in.html>

***> CWD to sheep, Scrapie to Cervid

Chronic Wasting Disease CWD vs Scrapie TSE Prion

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=410511>

Detection of infectivity in orally inoculated pigs using mouse bioassay raises the possibility that naturally exposed pigs could act as a reservoir of CWD infectivity. Currently, swine rations in the U.S. could contain animal derived components including materials from deer or elk. In addition, feral swine could be exposed to infected carcasses in areas where CWD is present in wildlife populations. The current feed ban in the U.S. is based exclusively on keeping tissues from TSE infected cattle from entering animal feeds. These results indicating the susceptibility of pigs to CWD, coupled with the limitations of the current feed ban, indicates that a revision of the feed ban may be necessary to protect swine production and potentially human health.

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=353091>

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/project/?accnNo=432011&fy=2017>

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=337105>

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=326166>

> However, at 51 months of incubation or greater, 5 animals were positive by one or more diagnostic methods. Furthermore, positive bioassay results were obtained from all inoculated groups (oral and intracranial; market weight and end of study) suggesting that swine are potential hosts for the agent of scrapie. <

*** Although the current U.S. feed ban is based on keeping tissues from TSE infected cattle from contaminating animal feed, swine rations in the U.S. could contain animal derived components including materials from scrapie infected sheep and goats. These results indicating the susceptibility of pigs to sheep scrapie, coupled with the limitations of the current feed ban, indicates that a revision of the feed ban may be necessary to protect swine production and potentially human health. <***

***> Results: PrPSc was not detected by EIA and IHC in any RPLNs. All tonsils and MLNs were negative by IHC, though the MLN from one pig in the oral <6 month group was positive by EIA. PrPSc was detected by QuIC in at least one of the lymphoid tissues examined in 5/6 pigs in the intracranial <6 months group, 6/7 intracranial >6 months group, 5/6 pigs in the oral <6 months group, and 4/6 oral >6 months group. Overall, the MLN was positive in 14/19 (74%) of samples examined, the RPLN in 8/18 (44%), and the tonsil in 10/25 (40%).

***> Conclusions: This study demonstrates that PrPSc accumulates in lymphoid tissues from pigs challenged intracranially or orally with the CWD agent, and can be detected as early as 4 months after challenge. CWD-infected pigs rarely develop clinical disease and if they do, they do so after a long incubation period. This raises the possibility that CWD-infected pigs could shed prions into their environment long before they develop clinical disease. Furthermore, lymphoid tissues from CWD-infected pigs could present a potential source of CWD infectivity in the animal and human food chains.

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=353091>

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Conclusions: This study demonstrates that PrPSc accumulates in lymphoid tissues from pigs challenged intracranially or orally with the CWD agent, and can be detected as early as 4 months after challenge. CWD-infected pigs rarely develop clinical disease and if they do, they do so after a long incubation period. This raises the possibility that CWD-infected pigs could shed prions into their environment long before they develop

clinical disease. Furthermore, lymphoid tissues from CWD-infected pigs could present a potential source of CWD infectivity in the animal and human food chains.

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=337105>

Research Project: Elucidating the Pathobiology and Transmission of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies

Location: Virus and Prion Research

Title: Differentiation of scrapie from chronic wasting disease in white-tailed deer

snip...

Accomplishments

***> 1. 01 Determined that white-tailed deer (WTD) infected with scrapie from sheep can transmit the disease to other deer under conditions mimicking natural exposure. It has long been suggested that prion disease in deer (chronic wasting disease (CWD)) was caused by the prion agent from sheep. The prion disease that affects sheep, scrapie, has been recognized for hundreds of years. However, chronic wasting disease, a similar disease found in WTD, has only been recognized since the 1960s. ARS researchers in Ames, Iowa, showed that white-tailed deer sick with scrapie from sheep can infect other deer under conditions mimicking natural exposure. Furthermore, this work shows that CWD is difficult to differentiate from WTD infected with scrapie. WTD scrapie prions accumulate in the lymphoreticular system in a manner similar to CWD, meaning that environmental contamination may occur through feces, saliva, and other body fluids of scrapie affected WTD as has been shown for CWD. The presence of WTD infected with scrapie could confound mitigation efforts for chronic wasting disease. This information informs regulatory officials, the farmed cervid industry, and officials tasked with protecting animal health such as state Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, or Parks and Wildlife with regard to a disease similar to CWD but arising from sheep scrapie that could be present in WTD that have contact with scrapie affected sheep and/or goats.

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/project/?accnNo=440677&fy=202>

Chronic Wasting Disease CWD vs Scrapie TSE Prion

Volume 30, Number 8—August 2024

Research

Scrapie Versus Chronic Wasting Disease in White-Tailed Deer

Zoe J. Lambert¹, Jifeng Bian, Eric D. Cassmann, M. Heather West Greenlee, and Justin J. Greenlee

Author affiliations: Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, USA (Z.J. Lambert); US Department of Agriculture, Ames, Iowa, USA (Z.J. Lambert, J. Bian, E.D. Cassmann, J.J. Greenlee); Iowa State University, Ames (Z.J. Lambert, M.H. West Greenlee)

Suggested citation for this article

Abstract

White-tailed deer are susceptible to scrapie (WTD scrapie) after oronasal inoculation with the classical scrapie agent from sheep. Deer affected by WTD scrapie are difficult to differentiate from deer infected with chronic wasting disease (CWD). To assess the transmissibility of the WTD scrapie agent and tissue phenotypes when further passaged in white-tailed deer, we oronasally inoculated wild-type white-tailed deer with WTD scrapie agent. We found that WTD scrapie and CWD agents were generally similar, although some differences were noted. The greatest differences were seen in bioassays of cervidized mice that exhibited significantly longer survival periods when inoculated with WTD scrapie agent than those inoculated with CWD agent. Our findings establish that white-tailed deer are susceptible to WTD scrapie and that the presence of WTD scrapie agent in the lymphoreticular system suggests the handling of suspected cases should be consistent with current CWD guidelines because environmental shedding may occur.

snip...

The potential for zoonoses of cervid-derived PrP^{Sc} is still not well understood (6,18,45–47); however, interspecies transmission can increase host range and zoonotic potential (48–50). Therefore, to protect herds and the food supply, suspected cases of WTD scrapie should be handled the same as cases of CWD.

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/30/8/24-0007_article

Western blots done on samples from the brainstem, cerebellum, and lymph nodes of scrapie-infected WTD have a molecular profile similar to CWD and distinct from western blots of samples from the cerebral cortex, retina, or the original sheep scrapie inoculum. WTD are susceptible to the agent of scrapie from sheep and differentiation from CWD may be difficult.

<https://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publication/?seqNo115=336834> Component 6: Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies

Sheep scrapie agent can infect white-tailed deer after oronasal exposure.

The origin of chronic wasting disease (CWD) is not known, but it has many similarities to the sheep prion disease called scrapie. It has long been hypothesized that CWD arose through transmission of sheep scrapie to deer. ARS researchers in Ames, Iowa, conducted research to determine if scrapie derived from sheep could be transmitted to white-tailed deer. The deer inoculated with sheep scrapie developed clinical signs and the abnormal prion protein could be detected in a wide range of tissues. These results indicate that deer may be susceptible to sheep scrapie if exposed to the disease in natural or agricultural settings. In addition, several strong similarities between CWD in white-tailed deer and the experimental cases of scrapie in white-tailed deer suggests that it would be difficult to distinguish scrapie from CWD in deer or identify scrapie if a case occurs. This information should be considered by deer farmers for keeping their herds free from prion diseases.

https://www.ars.usda.gov/ARSEUserFiles/np103/AnnualReports/NP103%20FY2023%20Annual%20Report_Final.pdf

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https://www.ars.usda.gov/ARSEUserFiles/np103/AnnualReports/NP103%20FY2023%20Annual%20Report_Final.pdf

> ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE CWD AND OR SCRAPIE <

Chronic wasting disease prions on deer feeders and wildlife visitation to deer feeding areas

Miranda H. J. Huang, Steve Demarais, Marc D. Schwabenlander, Bronson K. Strickland, Kurt C. VerCauteren, William T. McKinley, Gage Rowden, Corina C. Valencia Tibbitts ... See all authors

First published: 10 February 2025

<https://doi.org/10.1002/jwmg.70000>

Snip...

Finally, we swabbed 19 feeders in 2 areas where CWD was newly detected, finding prion contamination on swabs from 4 feeders. We show that deer feeders in free-ranging populations with high CWD prevalence become contaminated with CWD prions quickly, becoming a potential site of exposure of deer to CWD prions. Our results also demonstrate the ability to find evidence of prion contamination on deer feeders, even in areas where CWD is newly detected.

Snip...

We found that supplemental feeding increased the risk of exposure to CWD prions due to contamination of feeders, increased deer visitation, and increased deer-to-deer contact.

The 12-fold increase in deer visitation to feeders compared to mast trees and 2-fold increase compared to food plots demonstrates increased risk for direct disease spread.

<https://wildlife.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jwmg.70000>

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) prion detection in environmental and biological samples from a taxidermy site and nursing facility, and instruments used in surveillance activities

Paulina Soto a b , Nancy Ho a , Mitch Lockwood c , Austin Stolte c , J. Hunter Reed c , Rodrigo Morales a b

Received 20 September 2024, Revised 27 February 2025, Accepted 31 March 2025, Available online 9 April 2025, Version of Record 9 April 2025.

Cite <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2025.179318>

Highlights

- CWD prions were identified in a taxidermy and deer nursing facility.
- Contaminated samples included waters, soils, dermestid beetles, domestic flies and a dumpster.
- Surgical instruments used to collect deer samples can get contaminated with CWD prions.
- Some of the infectious particles are readily released from surgical instruments when washed.
- Our results suggest that taxidermy practices actively contribute in the spreading of CWD.

Snip...

In this study, we evaluated the presence of CWD prions in a taxidermy facility where deer heads are processed to prepare skull mounts. Analyses were made using the protein misfolding cyclic amplification (PMCA) technique in various biological and environmental samples. In addition, we also tested the persistence of CWD prions in surgical materials used in surveillance procedures. Our results show, for the first time, CWD-prion detection in a potentially exposed taxidermy facility. In addition, we also tested the persistence of CWD prions in surgical materials used in surveillance procedures. This information has important implications on several fronts of CWD research including environmental spreading, human-related practices, and exposure of humans to infectious animal prions.

Section snippets

Samples

The samples were collected from a taxidermy and free-ranging deer rehabilitation facility located on the same property in Val Verde County, Texas. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) staff were initially notified of a CWD clinical suspect on this property; this animal was ultimately euthanized and confirmed positive for CWD by the National Veterinary Services Laboratory on January 5th, 2020. Samples were collected from different areas on this property where deer heads were processed to Screening of CWD prions in environmental and processing elements from a taxidermy facility

The European mount technique is a widely utilized taxidermy practice aiming to produce a skull of an animal that is free of tissue. The first critical step in making a European mount is removing the flesh from the animal's head. This is achieved by removing the majority of the external flesh, eyeballs, ears, and the brain. Then, the de-meated skull is subjected to a maceration process using bacteria. The purpose of this step is to soften and degrade any remaining tissue on the skull. This Discussion

CWD continues expanding in distribution and prevalence in North America. Hence, an essential factor in limiting the spread of this disease is to monitor and contain infectivity foci. This has proven to be difficult considering the limited diagnostic tools available to effectively identify the CWD infectious agent (prions). Identifying and mitigating the negative role that anthropogenic activities have in promoting CWD transmission is an essential step in developing a prevention strategy. The Conclusion

In summary, the information provided in this report demonstrate how anthropogenic activities, specifically taxidermy practices, animal processing, and rehabilitation of CWD susceptible species, may facilitate CWD transmission through the environmental dissemination of CWD prions. This study, along with future research efforts characterizing the overall level of infectivity, provides relevant information on managing CWD and to control its rapid geographic expansion. ...

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0048969725009544>

Chronic wasting disease detection in environmental and biological samples from a taxidermy site

Paulina Sotoa,b, J. Hunter Reedc, Mitch Lockwoodc, and Rodrigo Moralesa,b aDepartment of Neurology, McGovern Medical School, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Texas, USA; bUniversidad Bernardo O'Higgins, Santiago, Chile; cTexas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas, USA

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy affecting captive and free-ranging cervids (e.g., mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, reindeer, and moose). Nowadays, CWD is widely distributed in North America. It is suggested that CWD spreads due to direct animal contact or through exposure to contaminated environments previously inhabited by infected animals. CWD may also be spread through the movement of infected animals and carcasses. Taxidermy practices involve processing deer tissues (or whole animal carcasses). In many cases, the CWD status of processed animals is unknown. This can generate risks of disease spread and transmission. Taxidermy practices include different steps involving physical, chemical, and biological procedures. Without proper tissue handling or disposal practices, taxidermist facilities may become a focus of prion infectivity.

Aims: In this study, we evaluated the presence of infectious prions in a taxidermy facility believed to be exposed to CWD. Detection was performed using the Protein Misfolding Cyclic Amplification (PMCA) technique in biological and inert environmental samples.

Methods: We collected biological and environmental samples (plants, soils, insects, excreta, and others) from a taxidermy facility, and we tested these samples using the PMCA technique. In addition, we swabbed different surfaces possibly exposed to CWD-infected animals. For the PMCA reaction, we directly used a swab piece or 10 µL of 20% w/v homogenized samples.

Results: The PMCA analysis demonstrated CWD seeding activity in some of the components of this facility, including insects involved in head processing, soils, and a trash dumpster.

Conclusions: Different areas of this property were used for various taxidermy procedures. We were able to detect the presence of prions in i) soils that were in contact with the heads of dead animals, ii) insects involved in the cleaning of skulls, and iii) an empty dumpster where animal carcasses were previously placed. This is the first report demonstrating that swabbing is a helpful method to screen for prion infectivity on surfaces potentially contaminated with CWD. These findings are relevant as this swabbing and amplification strategy may be used to evaluate the disease status of other free-ranging and captive settings where there is a concern for CWD transmissions, such as at feeders and water troughs with CWD-exposed properties. This approach could have substantial implications for free-ranging cervid surveillance as well as in epidemiological investigations of CWD.

Funded by: USDA Grant number: AP20VSSPRS00C143

PRION 2022 ABSTRACTS, AND A BIG THANK YOU TO On behalf of the Prion2020/2022 Congress Organizing Committee and the NeuroPrion Association, we heartily invite you to join us for the International Conference Prion2020/2022 from 13.-16. September 2022 in Göttingen.

Prion 2022 Conference abstracts: pushing the boundaries

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19336896.2022.2091286>

Artificial mineral sites that pre-date endemic chronic wasting disease become prion hotspots

Heather N'te Inzalaco^{1,1}, Marie L. Gilbertson¹, Stephanie J. Katircioglu¹, Kenny Lepard², Jordan McEarl², Austin Bibb², Jeremy Dennison², Dan Grove³, Allen Houston⁴, Dan J. Storm⁵, Dan P. Walsh⁶, Wendy C. Turner⁷, Stuart S. Lichtenberg⁸ ¹Wisconsin Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Madison, USA. ²Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Jackson, USA. ³University of Tennessee Extension, Nashville, USA. ⁴University of Tennessee -Knoxville, School of Forest, Wildlife, and Fisheries, Ames Research and Education Center, Grand Junction, USA. ⁵Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Eau Claire, USA. ⁶U.S. Geological Survey, Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Department of Ecosystem and Conservation Sciences, University of Montana, Missoula, USA. ⁷U.S. Geological Survey, Wisconsin Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Madison, USA. ⁸Department of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, University of Minnesota, Minnesota, USA

Abstract

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a highly contagious, fatal neurodegenerative disease caused by infectious prions (PrPCWD) affecting wild and captive cervids. As CWD continues to spread broadly over North America, factors influencing geographic expansion remain poorly understood. CWD-infected cervids shed infectious prions in urine, feces, and saliva. Activities that result in cervids aggregating and shedding PrPCWD may result in 'hot spots' of environmental PrPCWD deposition, however empirical data regarding the impact of deer attractants on environmental PrPCWD deposition is lacking. Filling this knowledge gap could inform deer and disease management. In 2018, the southwest region of Tennessee, U.S.A. experienced a CWD outbreak. The Ames Research and Educational Center property, centrally located within the CWD zone of southwest Tennessee, contains 49 historical mineral supplementation sites that were decommissioned in 2012. Here, we demonstrate that 32 of the 49 (65%) mineral sites within Ames established prior to the regional CWD outbreak, serve as foci of environmental PrPCWD contamination. Detection of PrPCWD in soils from these artificial mineral sites was dependent on site-specific management efforts. Soil physical properties were very similar across sites and no correlation between PrPCWD detection and soil physical properties was found. The detection of PrPCWD in soils at attractant sites within an endemic CWD zone significantly advances our understanding of environmental PrPCWD accumulation dynamics, providing valuable information for advancing adaptive CWD management approaches.

<https://intcwdsympo.files.wordpress.com/2023/06/final-agenda-with-abstracts.pdf>

Shedding of Chronic Wasting Disease Prions in Multiple Excreta Throughout Disease Course in White-tailed Deer

Nathaniel D. Denkersa, Erin E. McNulty, Caitlyn N. Krafta, Amy V. Nallsa, Joseph A. Westricha, Wilfred Goldmannb, Candace K. Mathiasona, and Edward A. Hoovera

aPrion Research Center, College of Veterinary Medicine and Biological Sciences, Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Pathology; Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, USA; bDivision of Infection and Immunity, The Roslin Institute and the Royal Dick School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh, Midlothian, UK

Aims: Chronic wasting disease (CWD) now infects cervids in South Korea, North America, and Scandinavia. CWD is unique in its efficient transmission and shedding of prions in body fluids throughout long course infections. Questions remain as to the magnitude of shedding and the route of prion acquisition. As CWD continues to expand, the need to better understand these facets of disease becomes more pertinent. The purpose of the studies described was to define the longitudinal shedding profile of CWD prions in urine, saliva, and feces throughout the course of infection in white-tailed deer.

Material and Methods: Twelve (12) white-tailed deer were inoculated with either 1 mg or 300ng of CWD. Urine, saliva, and feces were collected every 3-month post-inoculation (MPI) throughout the study duration. Cohorts were established based on PNRP genotype: codon 96 GG (n = 6) and alternate codons 96 GS (n = 5) & 103NT (n = 1). Urine and saliva were analyzed using iron-oxide magnetic extraction (IOME) and real-time quaking induced conversion (RT-QuIC)(IQ). Feces were subjected to IOME, followed by 4 rounds protein misfolding cyclic amplification (PMCA) with products analyzed by RT-QuIC (IPQ). To determine whether IPQ may be superior to IQ, a subset of urine and saliva were also tested by IPQ. Results were compared with clinical disease status.

Results: Within the 96 GG cohort, positive seeding activity was detected in feces from all deer (100%), in saliva from 5 of 6 (83%), and in urine from 4 of 6 (66%). Shedding in all excreta occurred at, or just after, the first positive tonsil biopsy result. In the 96 GS/103NT cohort, positive seeding activity could be detected in feces from 3 of 6 (50%) deer, saliva in 2 of 6 (33%), and urine in 1 of 6 (16%). Shedding in excreta was detected >5 months after the first tonsil positive result. Four of six 96 GG deer developed clinical signs of CWD, whereas only 2 of the 96 GS/103NT did. Shedding was more frequently detected in deer with clinical disease. The IPQ protocol did not significantly improve detection in saliva or urine samples, however, it significantly augmented detection in feces by eliminating non-specific background commonly experienced with IQ. Negative control samples remained negative in samples tested.

Conclusions: These studies demonstrate: (a) CWD prion excretion occurs throughout infection; (2) PRNP genotype (GG>GS/NT) influences the excreta shedding; and (3) detection sensitivity in excreta can vary with different RT-QuIC protocols. These results provide a more complete perspective of prion shedding in deer during the course of CWD infection.

Funded by: National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Grant number: RO1-NS061902-09 R to EAH, PO1-AI077774 to EAH, and R01-AI112956-06 to CKM

Acknowledgement: We abundantly thank Sallie Dahmes at WASCO and David Osborn and Gino D'Angelo at the University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources for their long-standing support of this work through provision of the hand-raised, CWD-free, white-tailed deer used in these studies...snip

End

PRION 2022 ABSTRACTS, AND A BIG THANK YOU TO On behalf of the Prion2020/2022 Congress Organizing Committee and the NeuroPrion Association, we heartily invite you to join us for the International Conference Prion2020/2022 from 13.-16. September 2022 in Göttingen.

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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19336896.2022.2091286>

Research Paper Prion forensics: a multidisciplinary approach to investigate CWD at an illegal deer carcass disposal site

Pages 72-86 | Received 15 Jan 2024, Accepted 10 Apr 2024, Published online: 26 Apr 2024

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19336896.2024.2343298#d1e740>

Characterizing Hydrological Transport Pathways of Chronic Wasting Disease in the Environment

Authors Anu Wille, Diana L Karwan, Stuart Siegfried Lichtenberg, Madeline Grunklee, Gage Rowden, Victoria Ferguson-Kramer, Marc D Schwabenlander, Tiffany M Wolf, Peter A Larsen Publication date 2024/6 Journal Water Science Conference (WaterSciCon24 Pages 110-04

Description Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal neurodegenerative prion disease found in deer, moose, and elk. Cases of CWD in Minnesota have risen considerably over the last few years, raising wildlife, environmental, and public health concerns.

Infectious prions, such as those causing CWD, enter the environment through bodily fluids or decomposing carcasses of infected individuals and can persist for at least fifteen years in soil and water.

Previous studies have shown strong prion sorption to various mineral particles in soils.

Through field observation and laboratory experimentation, we observed that prions readily partition to the particulate fraction of environmental waters, suggesting that hydrological transport of prions is likely sediment-facilitated.

To effectively contain the spread of CWD through the environment, it is imperative to predict prion transport times and pathways in the context of specific landscape and ...

Scholar articles Characterizing Hydrological Transport Pathways of Chronic Wasting Disease in the Environment

A Wille, DL Karwan, SS Lichtenberg, M Grunklee... - Water Science Conference (WaterSciCon24, 2024 Related articles

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[view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=cVqWACIAAAAJ&cstart=20&pagesize=80&citation_for_view=cVqWACIAAAAJ:0EnyYjriUFMC](https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=cVqWACIAAAAJ&cstart=20&pagesize=80&citation_for_view=cVqWACIAAAAJ:0EnyYjriUFMC)

Characterizing Hydrological Transport Pathways of Chronic Wasting Disease in the Environment

Wille, Anu search by orcid.svg ; Karwan, Diana L. search by orcid.svg ; Lichtenberg, Stuart Siegfried ; Grunklee, Madeline ; Rowden, Gage ; Ferguson-Kramer, Victoria ; Schwabenlander, Marc D. ; Wolf, Tiffany M. ; Larsen, Peter A.

<https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2024wsc..conf11004W/abstract>

<https://agu.confex.com/agu/hydrology24/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/1502243>

Characterizing Hydrological Transport Pathways of Chronic Wasting Disease in the Environment

Wille, Anu search by orcid ; Karwan, Diana L. search by orcid ; Lichtenberg, Stuart Siegfried ; Grunklee, Madeline ; Rowden, Gage ; Ferguson-Kramer, Victoria ; Schwabenlander, Marc D. ; Wolf, Tiffany M. ; Larsen, Peter A.

Abstract Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal neurodegenerative prion disease found in deer, moose, and elk. Cases of CWD in Minnesota have risen considerably over the last few years, raising wildlife, environmental, and public health concerns. Infectious prions, such as those causing CWD, enter the environment through bodily fluids or decomposing carcasses of infected individuals and can persist for at least fifteen years in soil and water. Previous studies have shown strong prion sorption to various mineral particles in soils. Through field observation and laboratory experimentation, we observed that prions readily partition to the particulate fraction of environmental waters, suggesting that

hydrological transport of prions is likely sediment-facilitated. To effectively contain the spread of CWD through the environment, it is imperative to predict prion transport times and pathways in the context of specific landscape and watershed conditions. Our purpose is to characterize the hydrological transport of prions through watersheds at multiple scales. Through spatial analysis, we mapped surface flow pathways from CWD hotspots in Minnesota to identify how they overlap with major rivers and regions of high soil erosion. Based on in-stream measurements and sediment characterization, we used empirical equations to predict sediment mobilization conditions and transport rates in CWD-contaminated regions with diverse flow regimes. In order to model subsurface prion transport, we began conducting flow-through column experiments testing various flow rates and soil matrices.

Publication: Water Science Conference (WaterSciCon24), held in St. Paul, Minnesota, 24-27 June 2024, Session: Learning from observations / Catchment and Critical Zone Science - Understanding Ecosystems through Monitoring, Analysis, and Experimentation III Oral (Coupled Workshop: 231), id. 110-04. Pub Date: June 2024

<https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2024wsc..conf11004W/abstract>

So, this is what we leave our children and grandchildren?

> CWD TSE Prion Zoonotic Zoonosis Humans, What if? <

CDC CWD TSE Prion Update 2025

KEY POINTS

Chronic wasting disease affects deer, elk and similar animals in the United States and a few other countries.

The disease hasn't been shown to infect people.

However, it might be a risk to people if they have contact with or eat meat from animals infected with CWD.

2024 archived link

<https://web.archive.org/web/20241203173112/https://www.cdc.gov/chronic-wasting/about/index.html>

2026 new link with new wording, based on same science, see cwd zoonosis risk factors below...terry

<https://www.cdc.gov/chronic-wasting/about/index.html>

Prions in Muscles of Cervids with Chronic Wasting Disease, Norway

Volume 31, Number 2—February 2025

Research

Prions in Muscles of Cervids with Chronic Wasting Disease, Norway

Snip...

In summary, the results of our study indicate that prions are widely distributed in peripheral and edible tissues of cervids in Norway, including muscles. This finding highlights the risk of human exposure to small amounts of prions through handling and consuming infected cervids.

Appendix

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/31/2/24-0903-app1.pdf>

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/31/2/24-0903_article

Volume 31, Number 2—February 2025

Dispatch

Detection of Chronic Wasting Disease Prions in Raw, Processed, and Cooked Elk Meat, Texas, USA

Snip...

Of note, our data show that exposure to high temperatures used to cook the meat increased the availability of prions for in vitro amplification. Considering the potential implications in food safety and public health, we believe that the findings described in this study warrant further research. Our results suggest that although the elk meat used in this study resisted different manipulations involved in subsequent consumption by humans, their zoonotic potential was limited. Nevertheless, even though no cases of CWD transmission to human have been reported, the potential for human infection is still unclear and continued monitoring for zoonotic potential is warranted.

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/31/2/24-0906_article

Detection of chronic wasting disease prions in processed meats

Results: Our results show positive prion detection in all the samples analyzed using deer and elk substrates. Surprisingly, cooked meats displayed increased seeding activities. This data suggests that CWD-prions are available to people even after meats are processed and cooked.

Conclusions: These results suggest CWD prions are accessible to humans through meats, even after processing and cooking. Considering the fact that these samples were collected from already processed specimens, the availability of CWD prions to humans is probably underestimated.

"Our results show positive prion detection in all the samples analyzed using deer and elk substrates. Surprisingly, cooked meats displayed increased seeding activities."

Meeting-book-final-version prion 2023 Prion 2023 Congress Organizing Committee and the NeuroPrion Association, we invite you to join us for the International Conference Prion2023 from 16-20 October 2023 in Faro, Portugal.

<https://prion2023.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Meeting-book-final-version2.pdf>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20250828201533/https://prion2023.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Meeting-book-final-version2.pdf>

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Syed-Zahid-Shah/publication/378314391_Meeting-book-final-version_prion_2023/links/65d44dad28b7720cecdca95f/Meeting-book-final-version-prion-2023.pdf

DETECTION OF CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE PRIONS IN PROCESSED MEATS.

In this study, we analyzed different processed meats derived from a pre-clinical, CWD-positive free-ranging elk. Products tested included filets, sausages, boneless steaks, burgers, ham steaks, seasoned chili meats, and spiced meats. CWD-prion presence in these products were assessed by PMCA using deer and elk substrates. Our results show positive prion detection in all products. To confirm the resilience of CWD-prions to traditional cooking methods, we grilled and boiled the meat products and evaluated them for any remnant PMCA seeding activity. Results confirmed the presence of CWD-prions in these meat products suggesting that infectious particles may still be available to people even after cooking. Our results strongly suggest ongoing human exposure to CWD-prions and raise significant concerns of zoonotic transmission through ingestion of CWD contaminated meat products.

Products tested included filets, sausages, boneless steaks, burgers, ham steaks, seasoned chili meats, and spiced meats.

CWD-prion presence in these products were assessed by PMCA using deer and elk substrates.

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Results confirmed the presence of CWD-prions in these meat products suggesting that infectious particles may still be available to people even after cooking.

Our results strongly suggest ongoing human exposure to CWD-prions and raise significant concerns of zoonotic transmission through ingestion of CWD contaminated meat products.

https://intcwdsympo.files.wordpress.com/2023/06/final-agenda-with-abstracts.pdf?force_download=true

Transmission of prion infectivity from CWD-infected macaque tissues to rodent models demonstrates the zoonotic potential of chronic wasting disease.

Further passage to cervidized mice revealed transmission with a 100% attack rate.

Our findings demonstrate that macaques, considered the best model for the zoonotic potential of prions, were infected upon CWD challenge, including the oral one.

The disease manifested as atypical in macaques and initial transgenic mouse transmissions, but with infectivity present at all times, as unveiled in the bank vole model with an unusual tissue tropism.

Epidemiologic surveillance of prion disease among cervid hunters and people likely to have consumed venison contaminated with chronic wasting disease

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https://intcwdsympo.files.wordpress.com/2023/06/final-agenda-with-abstracts.pdf?force_download=true

Fortuitous generation of a zoonotic cervid prion strain

Aims: Whether CWD prions can infect humans remains unclear despite the very substantial scale and long history of human exposure of CWD in many states or provinces of USA and Canada. Multiple in vitro conversion experiments and in vivo animal studies indicate that the CWD-to-human transmission barrier is not unbreakable. A major long-term public health concern on CWD zoonosis is the emergence of highly zoonotic CWD strains. We aim to address the question of whether highly zoonotic CWD strains are possible.

Materials and Methods: We inoculated several sCJD brain samples into cervidized transgenic mice (Tg12), which were intended as negative controls for bioassays of brain tissues from sCJD cases who had potentially been exposed to CWD. Some of the Tg12mice became infected and their brain tissues were further examined by Western blot as well as serial passages in humanized or cervidized mice.

Results: Passage of sCJDMM1 in transgenic mice expressing elk PrP (Tg12) resulted in a “cervidized” CJD strain that we termed CJDElkPrP. We observed 100% transmission of the original CJDElkPrP in transgenic mice expressing human PrP. We passaged CJDElkPrP two more times in the Tg12mice. We found that such second and third passage CJDElkPrP prions retained 100% transmission rate in the humanized mice, despite that the natural elk CWD isolates and CJDElkPrP share the same elk PrP sequence. In contrast, we and others found zero or poor transmission of natural elk CWD isolates in humanized mice.

Conclusions: Our data indicate that highly zoonotic cervid prion strains are not only possible but also can retain zoonotic potential after serial passages in cervids, suggesting a very significant and serious long-term risk of CWD zoonosis given that the broad and continuing spread of CWD prions will provide fertile grounds for the emergence of zoonotic CWD strains over time.

<https://prion2023.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Meeting-book-final-version2.pdf>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20250828201533/https://prion2023.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Meeting-book-final-version2.pdf>

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Syed-Zahid-Shah/publication/378314391_Meeting-book-final-version_prion_2023/links/65d44dad28b7720ccedca95f/Meeting-book-final-version-prion-2023.pdf

Transmission of cervid prions to humanized mice demonstrates the zoonotic potential of CWD

Samia Hannaoui¹ · Irina Zemlyankina¹ · Sheng Chun Chang¹ · Maria Immaculata Arifn¹ · Vincent Béringue² · Debbie McKenzie³ · Hermann M. Schatzl¹ · Sabine Gilch¹

Received: 24 May 2022 / Revised: 5 August 2022 / Accepted: 7 August 2022

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Abstract

Prions cause infectious and fatal neurodegenerative diseases in mammals. Chronic wasting disease (CWD), a prion disease of cervids, spreads efficiently among wild and farmed animals. Potential transmission to humans of CWD is a growing concern due to its increasing prevalence. Here, we provide evidence for a zoonotic potential of CWD prions, and its probable signature using mice expressing human prion protein (PrP) as an infection model. Inoculation of these mice with deer CWD isolates resulted in atypical clinical manifestation with prion seeding activity and efficient transmissible infectivity in the brain and, remarkably, in feces, but without classical neuropathological or Western blot appearances of prion diseases. Intriguingly, the protease-resistant PrP in the brain resembled that found in a familial human prion disease and was transmissible upon second passage. Our results suggest that CWD might infect humans, although the transmission barrier is likely higher compared to zoonotic transmission of cattle prions. Notably, our data suggest a different clinical presentation, prion signature, and tissue tropism, which causes challenges for detection by current diagnostic assays. Furthermore, the presence of infectious prions in feces is concerning because if this occurs in humans, it is a source for human-to-human transmission. These findings have strong implications for public health and CWD management.

Keywords Chronic wasting disease · CWD · Zoonotic potential · Prion strains · Zoonotic prions

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS STUDY

Our results suggest that CWD might infect humans, although the transmission barrier is likely higher compared to zoonotic transmission of cattle prions. Notably, our data suggest a different clinical presentation, prion signature, and tissue tropism, which causes challenges for detection by current diagnostic assays. Furthermore, the presence of infectious prions in feces is concerning because if this occurs in humans, it is a source for human-to-human transmission. These findings have strong implications for public health and CWD management.

In this study, we evaluated the zoonotic potential of CWD using a transgenic mouse model overexpressing human M129-PrPC (tg650 [12]). We inoculated tg650mice intracerebrally with two deer CWD isolates, Wisc-1 and 116AG [22, 23, 27, 29]. We demonstrate that this transgenic line was susceptible to infection with CWD prions and displayed a distinct leading clinical sign, an atypical PrP^{Sc} signature and unusual fecal shedding of infectious prions. Importantly, these prions generated by the human PrP transgenic mice were transmissible upon passage. Our results are the first evidence of a zoonotic risk of CWD when using one of the most common CWD strains, Wisc-1/CWD1 for infection. We demonstrated in a human transgenic mouse model that the species barrier for transmission of CWD to humans is not absolute. The fact that its signature was not typical raises the questions whether CWD would manifest in humans as a subclinical infection, whether it would arise through direct or indirect transmission including an intermediate host, or a silent to uncovered human-to-human transmission, and whether current detection techniques will be sufficient to unveil its presence.

Our findings strongly suggest that CWD should be regarded as an actual public health risk. Here, we use humanized mice to show that CWD prions can cross the species barrier to humans, and remarkably, infectious prions can be excreted in feces.

Our results indicate that if CWD crosses the species-barrier to humans, it is unlikely to resemble the most common forms of human prion

diseases with respect to clinical signs, tissue tropism and PrPSc signature. For instance, PrPSc in variable protease-sensitive prionopathy (VPSPr), a sporadic form of human prion disease, and in the genetic form Gerstmann-Sträussler-Scheinker syndrome (GSS) is defined by an atypical PK-resistant PrPSc fragment that is non-glycosylated and truncated at both C- and N-termini, with a molecular weight between 6 and 8 kDa [24, 44–46]. These biochemical features are unique and distinctive from PrPSc (PrP27-30) found in most other human or animal prion disease. The atypical PrPSc signature detected in brain homogenate of tg650 mice #321 (1st passage) and #3063 (2nd passage), and the 7–8 kDa fragment (Figs. 2, 4) are very similar to that of GSS, both in terms of migration profile and the N-terminal cleavage site.

CWD in humans might remain subclinical but with PrPSc deposits in the brain with an unusual morphology that does not resemble the patterns usually seen in different prion diseases (e.g., mouse #328; Fig. 3), clinical with untraceable abnormal PrP (e.g., mouse #327) but still transmissible and uncovered upon subsequent passage (e.g., mouse #3063; Fig. 4), or prions have other reservoirs than the usual ones, hence the presence of infectivity in feces (e.g., mouse #327) suggesting a potential for human-to-human transmission and a real iatrogenic risk that might be unrecognizable.

“suggesting a potential for human-to-human transmission and a real iatrogenic risk that might be unrecognizable.”

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00401-022-02482-9>

snip...see full text;

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00401-022-02482-9>

<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s00401-022-02482-9.pdf>

Transmission of Cervid Prions to Humanized Mice Demonstrates the Zoonotic Potential of CWD

Samia Hannaoui, Irina Zemlyankina, Sheng Chun Changa, Maria Immaculata Arifina, Vincent Béringue, Debbie McKenzie, Hermann M. Schatzl, and Sabine Gilch

Results: Here, we provide the strongest evidence supporting the zoonotic potential of CWD prions, and their possible phenotype in humans. Inoculation of mice expressing human PrP^C with deer CWD isolates (strains Wisc-1 and 116AG) resulted in atypical clinical manifestations in > 75% of the mice, with myoclonus as leading clinical sign. Most of tg650 brain homogenates were positive for seeding activity in RT-QuIC. Clinical disease and presentation was transmissible to tg650 mice and bank voles. Intriguingly, protease-resistant PrP in the brain of tg650 mice resembled that found in a familial human prion disease and was transmissible upon passage. Abnormal PrP aggregates upon infection with Wisc-1 were detectable in thalamus, hypothalamus, and midbrain/pons regions.

Unprecedented in human prion disease, feces of CWD-inoculated tg650 mice harbored prion seeding activity and infectious prions, as shown by inoculation of bank voles and tg650 with fecal homogenates.

Conclusions: This is the first evidence that CWD can infect humans and cause disease with a distinctive clinical presentation, signature, and tropism, which might be transmissible between humans while current diagnostic assays might fail to detect it. These findings have major implications for public health and CWD-management.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19336896.2022.2091286>

Macaque tissues to rodent models demonstrates the zoonotic potential of chronic wasting disease.

Samia Hannaoui^{1,2}, Ginny Cheng^{1,2}, Wiebke Wemheuer³, Walter Schulz-Schaeffer³, Sabine Gilch^{1,2}, Hermann Schatzl^{1,2} ¹University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada. ²Calgary Prion Research Unit, Calgary, Canada. ³Institute of Neuropathology, Medical Faculty, Saarland University, Homburg/Saar, Germany

Snip...

***> Further passage to cervidized mice revealed transmission with a 100% attack rate.

***> Our findings demonstrate that macaques, considered the best model for the zoonotic potential of prions, were infected upon CWD challenge, including the oral one.

***> The disease manifested as atypical in macaques and initial transgenic mouse transmissions, but with infectivity present at all times, as unveiled in the bank vole model with an unusual tissue tropism.

***> Epidemiologic surveillance of prion disease among cervid hunters and people likely to have consumed venison contaminated with chronic wasting disease

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https://intcwdsympo.files.wordpress.com/2023/06/final-agenda-with-abstracts.pdf?force_download=true

18. Zoonotic potential of moose-derived chronic wasting disease prions after adaptation in intermediate species

Tomás Barriola, Jean-Yves Doueta, Alvina Huora, Séverine Lugana, Naïma Arona, Hervé Cassarda, Sylvie L. Benestad, Juan Carlos Espinosac, Juan María Torresc, Olivier Andréoletti

aUnité Mixte de Recherche de l'Institut National de Recherche pour l'Agriculture, l'Alimentation et l'Environnement 1225 Interactions Hôtes-Agents Pathogènes, École Nationale Vétérinaire de Toulouse, 31076 Toulouse, France; bNorwegian Veterinary Institute, P.O. Box 64, NO-1431 Ås, Norway; cCentro de Investigación en Sanidad Animal (CISA-INIA), 28130, Valdeolmos, Madrid, Spain

Aims: Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is an emerging prion disease in Europe. To date, cases have been reported in three Nordic countries and in several species, including reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*), moose (*Alces alces*) and red deer (*Cervus elaphus*). Cumulating data suggest that the prion strains responsible for the European cases are distinct from those circulating in North America. The biological properties of CWD prions are still poorly documented, in particular their spillover and zoonotic capacities. In this study, we aimed at characterizing the interspecies transmission potential of Norwegian moose CWD isolates.

Materials and Methods: For that purpose, we performed experimental transmissions in a panel of transgenic models expressing the PrPC sequence of various species.

Results: On first passage, one moose isolate propagated in the ovine PrPC-expressing model (Tg338). After adaptation in this host, moose CWD prions were able to transmit in mice expressing either bovine or human PrPC with high efficacy.

Conclusions: These results suggest that CWD prions can acquire enhanced zoonotic properties following adaptation in an intermediate species.

Funding

Grant number: AAPG2020 EU-CWD, ICRAD2020 TCWDE, NRC2022 NorCWD

Acknowledgement

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19336896.2024.2424058>

“ After adaptation in this host, moose CWD prions were able to transmit in mice expressing either bovine or human PrPC with high efficacy.”

“Also, we do not claim that "no-one has ever been infected with prion disease from eating venison." Our conclusion stating that we found no strong evidence of CWD transmission to humans in the article you quoted or in any other forum is limited to the patients we investigated.”

*** now, let's see what the authors said about this casual link, personal communications years ago, and then the latest on the zoonotic potential from CWD to humans from the TOKYO PRION 2016 CONFERENCE.

see where it is stated NO STRONG evidence. so, does this mean there IS casual evidence ????

“Our conclusion stating that we found no strong evidence of CWD transmission to humans”

Subject: CWD aka MAD DEER/ELK TO HUMANS ???

Date: September 30, 2002 at 7:06 am PST

From: "Belay, Ermias"

To: Cc: "Race, Richard (NIH)" ; ; "Belay, Ermias"

Sent: Monday, September 30, 2002 9:22 AM

Subject: RE: TO CDC AND NIH - PUB MED- 3 MORE DEATHS - CWD - YOUNG HUNTERS

Dear Sir/Madam, In the Archives of Neurology you quoted (the abstract of which was attached to your email), we did not say CWD in humans will present like variant CJD. That assumption would be wrong. I encourage you to read the whole article and call me if you have questions or need more clarification (phone: 404-639-3091).

Also, we do not claim that "no-one has ever been infected with prion disease from eating venison." Our conclusion stating that we found no strong evidence of CWD transmission to humans in the article you quoted or in any other forum is limited to the patients we investigated.

Ermias Belay, M.D. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Subject: TO CDC AND NIH - PUB MED- 3 MORE DEATHS - CWD - YOUNG HUNTERS

Sunday, November 10, 2002 6:26 PMsnip.....end.....TSS

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: Sunday, September 29, 2002 10:15 AM

To: rr26k@nih.gov; rrace@niaid.nih.gov; ebb8@CDC.GOV

Subject: TO CDC AND NIH - PUB MED- 3 MORE DEATHS - CWD - YOUNG HUNTERS

Sunday, November 10, 2002 6:26 PMsnip.....end.....TSS

Thursday, April 03, 2008

A prion disease of cervids: Chronic wasting disease 2008 1: Vet Res. 2008 Apr 3;39(4):41 A prion disease of cervids: Chronic wasting disease Sigurdson CJ.

snip...

*** twenty-seven CJD patients who regularly consumed venison were reported to the Surveillance Center, however there have been no unusual or novel prion subtypes that might indicate the appearance of a new prion strain [7, 41].

snip... full text ;

<https://www.vetres.org/articles/vetres/abs/2008/04/v08092/v08092.html>

<https://chronic-wasting-disease.blogspot.com/2008/04/prion-disease-of-cervids-chronic.html>

“regular venison eating associated with a 9 FOLD INCREASE IN RISK OF CJD”

Subject: Re: DEER SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY SURVEY & HOUND STUDY

Date: Fri, 18 Oct 2002 23:12:22 +0100

From: Steve Dealler Reply-To: Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy Organization: Netscape Online member

To: BSE-L@ ...

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy <BSE-L@UNI-KARLSRUHE.DE>

Dear Terry,

An excellent piece of review as this literature is desparately difficult to get back from Government sites. What happened with the deer was that an association between deer meat eating and sporadic CJD was found in about 1993. The evidence was not great but did not disappear after several years of asking CJD cases what they had eaten. I think that the work into deer disease largely stopped because it was not helpful to the UK industry...and no specific cases were reported.

Well, if you dont look adequately like they are in USA currently then you wont find any!

Steve Dealler

<http://mailhost.rz.uni-karlsruhe.de/warc/bse-l.html>

Subject: DEER SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY SURVEY & HOUND STUDY

From: "Terry S. Singeltary Sr." <flounder@WT.NET>

Reply To: Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy <BSE-L@UNI-KARLSRUHE.DE>

Date: Thu, 17 Oct 2002 17:04:51 -0700

snip...

"The association between venison eating and risk of CJD shows similar pattern, with regular venison eating associated with a 9 FOLD INCREASE IN RISK OF CJD (p = 0.04)."

CREUTZFELDT JAKOB DISEASE SURVEILLANCE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM THIRD ANNUAL REPORT AUGUST 1994

snip...see full report ;

<http://web.archive.org/web/20090506050043/http://www.bseinquiry.gov.uk/files/yb/1994/08/00004001.pdf>

<http://web.archive.org/web/20090506050007/http://www.bseinquiry.gov.uk/files/yb/1994/10/00003001.pdf>

<http://web.archive.org/web/20090506050244/http://www.bseinquiry.gov.uk/files/yb/1994/07/00001001.pdf>

Stephen Dealler is a consultant medical microbiologist deal@airtime.co.uk BSE Inquiry Steve Dealler Management In Confidence BSE: Private Submission of Bovine Brain Dealler

snip...end

<http://mailhost.rz.uni-karlsruhe.de/warc/bse-l.html>

*** These results would seem to suggest that CWD does indeed have zoonotic potential, at least as judged by the compatibility of CWD prions and their human PrPC target. Furthermore, extrapolation from this simple in vitro assay suggests that if zoonotic CWD occurred, it would most likely effect those of the PRNP codon 129-MM genotype and that the PrPres type would be similar to that found in the most common subtype of sCJD (MM1).***

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.4161/pri.28124?src=recsys>

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.4161/pri.28124?needAccess=true>

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/20/1/13-0858_article

Two Hunters from the Same Lodge Afflicted with Sporadic CJD: Is Chronic Wasting Disease to Blame?

(P7-13.002) Jonathan Trout, Matthew Roberts, Michel Tabet, Eithan Kotkowski, and Sarah Horn
AUTHORS INFO & AFFILIATIONS April 9, 2024 issue 102 (17_supplement_1) <https://doi.org/10.1212/WNL.0000000000204407>

Abstract Publication History Information & Authors Metrics & Citations Share Abstract

Objective:

This study presents a cluster of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) cases after exposure to chronic wasting disease (CWD)-infected deer, suggestive of potential prion transmission from CWD-infected deer to humans.

Background:

CJD is a rapidly progressive central nervous system disorder caused by misfolded prion proteins. CWD, a prion disease prevalent in North American deer, has raised concerns due to its possible link to CJD. Although no conclusive evidence of cross-species prion transmission exists, vigilance for such cases is crucial for public health.

Design/Methods:

Not applicable.

Results:

In 2022, a 72-year-old man with a history of consuming meat from a CWD-infected deer population presented with rapid-onset confusion and aggression. His friend, who had also eaten venison from the same deer population, recently died of CJD, raising concerns about a potential link between CWD and human prion disease. Despite aggressive symptomatic treatment of seizures and agitation, the patient's condition deteriorated and he died within a month of initial presentation. The diagnosis was confirmed postmortem as sporadic CJD with homozygous methionine at codon 129 (sCJDMM1). The patient's history, including a similar case in his social group, suggests a possible novel animal-to-human transmission of CWD. Based on non-human primate and mouse models, cross-species transmission of CJD is plausible. Due to the challenge of distinguishing sCJDMM1 from CWD without detailed prion protein characterization, it is not possible to definitively rule out CWD in these cases. Although causation remains unproven, this cluster emphasizes the need for further investigation into the potential risks of consuming CWD-infected deer and its implications for public health.

Conclusions:

Clusters of sporadic CJD cases may occur in regions with CWD-confirmed deer populations, hinting at potential cross-species prion transmission. Surveillance and further research are essential to better understand this possible association.

Disclosure: Mr. Trout has nothing to disclose. Dr. Roberts has nothing to disclose. Dr. Tabet has nothing to disclose. Dr. Kotkowski has nothing to disclose. Dr. Horn has received personal compensation in the range of \$500-\$4,999 for serving as a Consultant for Cala Trio. The institution of Dr. Horn has received research support from Alzheimer's Association.

<https://www.neurology.org/doi/abs/10.1212/WNL.0000000000204407>

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2021

A Unique Presentation of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in a Patient Consuming Deer Antler Velvet

Conclusion

We believe that our patient's case of CJD is highly suspicious for cervid etiology given the circumstances of the case as well as the strong evidence of plausibility reported in published literature. This is the first known case of CJD in a patient who had consumed deer antler velvet. Despite the confirmed diagnosis of CJD, a causal relationship between the patient's disease and his consumption of deer antler velvet cannot be definitively concluded.

Supplemental data including molecular tissue sample analysis and autopsy findings could yield further supporting evidence. Given this patient's clinical resemblance to CBD and the known histological similarities of CBD with CJD, clinicians should consider both diseases in the differential diagnosis of patients with a similarly esoteric presentation. Regardless of the origin of this patient's disease, it is clear that the potential for prion transmission from cervids to humans should be further investigated by the academic community with considerable urgency.

<https://thescpub.com/pdf/ajidsp.2021.43.48.pdf>

"We believe that our patient's case of CJD is highly suspicious for cervid etiology given the circumstances of the case as well as the strong evidence of plausibility reported in published literature. This is the first known case of CJD in a patient who had consumed deer antler velvet. Despite the confirmed diagnosis of CJD, a causal relationship between the patient's disease and his consumption of deer antler velvet cannot be definitively concluded."

<https://thescpub.com/pdf/ajidsp.2021.43.48.pdf>

CREUTZFELDT JAKOB DISEASE: A Unique Presentation of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in a Patient Consuming Deer Antler Velvet

i was warning England and the BSE Inquiry about just this, way back in 1998, and was ask to supply information to the BSE Inquiry. for anyone that might be interested, see;

Singeltary submission to the BSE Inquiry on CJD and Nutritional Supplements 1998

ABOUT that deer antler spray and CWD TSE PRION... I have been screaming this since my neighbors mom died from cjd, and she had been taking a supplement that contained bovine brain, bovine eyeball, and other SRMs specified risk materials, the most high risk for mad cow disease. just saying...

I made a submission to the BSE Inquiry long ago during the BSE Inquiry days, and they seemed pretty interested.

Sender: "Patricia Cantos"

To: "Terry S Singeltary Sr. (E-mail)"

Subject: Your submission to the Inquiry

Date: Fri, 3 Jul 1998 10:10:05 +0100 3 July 1998

Mr Terry S Singeltary Sr. E-Mail: Flounder at wt.netRef: E2979

Dear Mr Singeltary, Thank you for your E-mail message of the 30th of June 1998 providing the Inquiry with your further comments. Thank you for offering to provide the Inquiry with any test results on the nutritional supplements your mother was taking before she died. As requested I am sending you our general Information Pack and a copy of the Chairman's letter. Please contact me if your system cannot read the attachments. Regarding your question, the Inquiry is looking into many aspects of the scientific evidence on BSE and nvCJD.

I would refer you to the transcripts of evidence we have already heard which are found on our internet site at ;

<http://www.bse.org.uk>.

Could you please provide the Inquiry with a copy of the press article you refer to in your e-mail? If not an approximate date for the article so that we can locate it? In the meantime, thank you for you comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me on... snip...end...tss

everyone I tell this too gets it screwed up...MY MOTHER WAS NOT TAKING THOSE SUPPLEMENTS IPLEX (that I ever knew of). this was my neighbors mother that died exactly one year previously and to the day of sporadic CJD that was diagnosed as Alzheimer's at first. my mother died exactly a year later from the Heidenhain Variant of Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease hvCJD, and exceedingly rare strains of the ever growing sporadic CJD's. both cases confirmed. ...kind regards, terry

2001 Singeltary on CJD, Journal of American Medical Association

February 14, 2001

Diagnosis and Reporting of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

Terry S. Singeltary, Sr

Author Affiliations

JAMA. 2001;285(6):733-734. doi:10-1001/pubs.JAMA-ISSN-0098-7484-285-6-jlt0214

To the Editor: In their Research Letter, Dr Gibbons and colleagues¹ reported that the annual US death rate due to Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) has been stable since 1985. These estimates, however, are based only on reported cases, and do not include misdiagnosed or preclinical cases. It seems to me that misdiagnosis alone would drastically change these figures. An unknown number of persons with a diagnosis of Alzheimer disease in fact may have CJD, although only a small number of these patients receive the postmortem examination necessary to make this diagnosis. Furthermore, only a few states have made CJD reportable. Human and animal transmissible spongiform encephalopathies should be reportable nationwide and internationally.

February 14, 2001

Diagnosis and Reporting of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease

Terry S. Singeltary, Sr

Author Affiliations

JAMA. 2001;285(6):733-734. doi:10-1001/pubs.JAMA-ISSN-0098-7484-285-6-jlt0214

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/1031186>

RE-Monitoring the occurrence of emerging forms of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the United States 2003 Singeltary Journal of Neurology

26 MARCH 2003

RE-Monitoring the occurrence of emerging forms of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the United States

Terry S. Singeltary, retired (medically)

I lost my mother to hvCJD (Heidenhain Variant CJD). I would like to comment on the CDC's attempts to monitor the occurrence of emerging forms of CJD. Asante, Collinge et al [1] have reported that BSE transmission to the 129-methionine genotype can lead to an alternate phenotype that is indistinguishable from type 2 PrP^{Sc}, the commonest sporadic CJD. However, CJD and all human TSEs are not reportable nationally. CJD and all human TSEs must be made reportable in every state and internationally. I hope that the CDC does not continue to expect us to still believe that the 85%+ of all CJD cases which are sporadic are all spontaneous, without route/source. We have many TSEs in the USA in both animal and man. CWD in deer/elk is spreading rapidly and CWD does transmit to mink, ferret, cattle, and squirrel monkey by intracerebral inoculation. With the known incubation periods in other TSEs, oral transmission studies of CWD may take much longer. Every victim/family of CJD/TSEs should be asked about route and source of this agent. To prolong this will only spread the agent and needlessly expose others. In light of the findings of Asante and Collinge et al, there should be drastic measures to safeguard the medical and surgical arena from sporadic CJDs and all human TSEs. I only ponder how many sporadic CJDs in the USA are type 2 PrP^{Sc}?

<https://www.neurology.org/doi/10.1212/01.WNL.0000036913.87823.D6>

2023

<https://creutzfeldt-jakob-disease.blogspot.com/2023/09/professor-john-collinge-on-tackling.html>

Good Luck!

Terry S. Singeltary Sr.

Sent from my iPad

From: [mark.rinsler](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] new proposals; Here in Gila, Grant County, herds we had seen for years are now gone and only rare sightings of a few individuals are possible. I would argue for more restraints on hunting.
Date: Friday, May 15, 2026 5:36:19 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from rinslermark@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated outside of our organization. Exercise caution prior to clicking on links or opening attachments.

From: [Edwards, Travis](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Bighorn Rule
Date: Monday, May 18, 2026 11:42:28 AM

CAUTION: This email originated outside of our organization. Exercise caution prior to clicking on links or opening attachments.

Hello,

I wanted to comment again on the Bighorn rule. I've read the most recent proposals. Thank you for the update on the Hachet mountain timeframe! December hunts are much better than September for Desert sheep! I really appreciate you taking my comments and assuming other people's comments and incorporating them in the updated proposals. Really appreciate it!

One additional comment I wanted to make is the language regarding 50% of the Bighorn licenses for the new Manzano herd going to private. While I recognize that having some compensation to the private landowner is necessary to hunt this herd, 50% seems very excessive. If there are quite a few older age class animals that reach big trophy status, this landowner could get 600K to a Million dollars for 1 tag! That definitely feels like an over compensation and is just a example of selling our wildlife that I think is a dangerous precedent. Auctions are different because that money goes back into Sheep conservation, this money is going directly into the landowner's pocket. Please reconsider this proposal. Language should be changed from 50% to 1 tag maximum. Better yet, I would rather money be taken from another fund to pay the landowner to give access for public hunters and make all tags public!

Thanks again for taking my comments.

Travis Edwards

From: Edwards, Travis
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 2:00 PM
To: DGF-bighorn-rule@dgf.nm.gov
Subject: Bighorn Rule

Hello,

I wanted to comment on Bighorn Rule for the next 4 year cycle (2027 – 2030). I listened to the commission meeting on Feb 20th and heard what has been initially proposed.

I'm in favor of everything that was proposed and am very glad to see new herds being opened up for hunting! That is great news!

One thing I wanted to propose is I wish the department could make some of the desert sheep opportunities later in the season. There is several hunts that occur in September and early

October. I purposely avoid these hunts because it's just way too hot in the desert country. Why are there no hunts in late January? There is minimal activity happening at that time. February Javelina season opens so I can see that being a problem, but why not January?

Really appreciate taking my comments and thanks for all you do!

Thanks,

Travis Edwards

From: [Tatman, Nicole, DGF](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn Rule
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 1:30:38 PM

Re-sending so Tom and Katie can see. We don't have to reply to these emails unless we feel inclined. I typically do not because hundreds of these come to my inbox.

Nicole Tatman

Big Game Program Manager
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
One Wildlife Way
Santa Fe, NM 87507
Cell: (505) 469-3966

From: Edwards, Travis <Travis.Edwards@T-Mobile.com>
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2026 2:00 PM
To: DGF-Bighorn-Rule <DGF-Bighorn-Rule@dgf.nm.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn Rule

Some people who received this message don't often get email from travis.edwards@t-mobile.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated outside of our organization. Exercise caution prior to clicking on links or opening attachments.

Hello,

I wanted to comment on Bighorn Rule for the next 4 year cycle (2027 – 2030). I listened to the commission meeting on Feb 20th and heard what has been initially proposed.

I'm in favor of everything that was proposed and am very glad to see new herds being opened up for hunting! That is great news!

One thing I wanted to propose is I wish the department could make some of the desert sheep opportunities later in the season. There is several hunts that occur in September and early October. I purposely avoid these hunts because it's just way too hot in the desert country. Why are there no hunts in late January? There is minimal activity happening at that time. February Javelina season opens so I can see that being a problem, but why not January?

Really appreciate taking my comments and thanks for all you do!

Thanks,

Travis Edwards

From: [Tatman, Nicole, DGF](#)
To: [DGF-Bighorn-Rule](#)
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn sheep rule
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 1:31:38 PM

Another email that was sent.

Nicole Tatman

Big Game Program Manager
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
One Wildlife Way
Santa Fe, NM 87507
Cell: (505) 469-3966

From: Cole Burns <muleycrazy98@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 10:44 AM
To: DGF-Bighorn-Rule <DGF-Bighorn-Rule@dgf.nm.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn sheep rule

Some people who received this message don't often get email from muleycrazy98@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated outside of our organization. Exercise caution prior to clicking on links or opening attachments.

Good morning, I am writing in support of what was brought as proposals to the commission on the bighorn sheep rule. Glad to see that it looks like the state is able to open up a couple more areas for hunting. I would like to see the outfitter split taken away from the bighorn draw especially. Make it a 90% resident draw and 10% nonresident draw. This outfitter draw set aside welfare needs to STOP. Any outfitter worth their salt will get plenty of business and it will weed out the bad apples. In my opinion the way you all do the bighorn draw different from the others so the outfitters and NRs both get their splits is not right. Need to do desert, rockys and ewes completely separate just like you do with elk, antelope ect.

Thanks for your consideration.

Cole Burns

From: [Benham, Erin, DGF](#)
To: [Batter, Thomas, DGF](#); [Piecora, Kaitlyn, DGF](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Sheep Comment
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 12:58:00 PM

Hi Tom and Katie,

This rule comment email showed up in the Pronghorn Rule email, but their subject is "Sheep Comment". I'm making the assumption they intended to email the sheep rule email? Their email is below.

Thanks,
Erin

From: Gary Smith
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 4:17 PM
To: DGF-Pronghorn-Rule
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] Sheep Comment

Some people who received this message don't often get email from gds1aw@email.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated outside of our organization. Exercise caution prior to clicking on links or opening attachments.

How does New Mexico justify allocating only 6% of licenses to non-residents when those non-residents are hunting on Federal lands. Federal lands (National Forests and BLM) are owned by **all** U.S. citizens and supported by the tax dollars of **all** U.S. citizens. It is discriminatory and a violation of the Commerce Clause to deny non-residents equal access when hunting on Federal lands.

Judge Gary D. Smith
440-570-7696

Erin Benham
Pronghorn Biologist
New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
1 Wildlife Way
Santa Fe, NM 87507
Cell: (505) 637-2435

COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA BRIEFING

Meeting Date: August 21, 2026

Agenda Number: X

Presenter: Stewart Liley

Corroborator: N/A

Agenda Title: Rule Making Hearing on Final Rule Changes on the Bighorn Sheep Rule (19.31.17 NMAC) for the 2027 – 2030 hunting seasons.

1. Summary of Agenda Item

The Department will present proposed changes to the Bighorn Sheep Rule (19.31.17 NMAC) based on survey information, management goals and public comment. The Department held two hybrid in-person/virtual public meetings and has also received comments regarding the Bighorn Sheep Rule.

The Department is proposing the following changes to 19.31.17 NMAC:

Rocky Mountain Bighorn:

- Opening the Manzanos (Game Management Units (GMUs) 14 & 18) for ram hunting under both public and private sections of the rule.
- Establishing two hunt periods for the Manzanos: October 1-15 and October 16-30
- Increasing the bag limit for private Rocky Mountain bighorn ram licenses from 6 to 10 to accommodate a new herd being opened for hunting (Manzanos)

Desert bighorn:

- Opening the Sacramentos (GMU 34) for ram hunting under (Dec. 1-15 hunt period)
- Shifting the hunt periods for both the Little Hatchets (GMU 26, west of NM 81) and Big Hatchets (GMU 26, east of NM 81) from September 15-30 and October 1-15 to December 1-15 and December 16-30

General

- Adjusting season dates where necessary. For example, shifting start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to calendar day starts for consistency

2. Background Information

The bighorn sheep rule (19.31.17 NMAC) is re-evaluated every 4 years and changed based on population data, harvest data, management goals, and public feedback. The Department has reached out to the public for input.

Bighorn sheep hunting in New Mexico is conservative and managed to produce older age class rams for harvest. Ram licenses are once in a lifetime (Rocky Mountain and desert) and are quite limited in number every year. In cases where bighorn populations

are large enough to be limited by winter range or issues involving dispersal behavior (i.e., some Rocky Mountain bighorn populations) the Department prescribes a conservative ewe harvest to maintain populations at appropriate levels. Currently there are no desert bighorn populations large enough to support ewe harvest and the Department is actively restoring desert populations to historical vacant range when surplus sheep are available.

3. Strategic Plan References and Possible Impacts of Agenda Item

The process as presented to the Commission meets the Conservation Services Program Objectives 1, 2 and 5 of the Department's Strategic Plan: FY 2019 – FY 2023

4. Considerations Regarding Duplications and/or Conflicts with Existing Rules or Statutes

None

5. Description and Summary of Public Involvement Process and Results

The Department held two hybrid in-person/virtual public meetings in Albuquerque and Las Cruces. Public comments will be presented at the Commission meeting. Proposed changes to the Bighorn Sheep Rule have been posted on the Department's website.

6. Suggested Motion

The Department respectfully suggests the following motion unless Commission discretion indicates a different course of action:

“Move to adopt the proposed changes to 19.31.17 NMAC as presented by the Department and allow the Department to make minor corrections to comply with filing this rule with State Records and Archives.”

TITLE 19 NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE
CHAPTER 31 HUNTING AND FISHING
PART 17 BIGHORN SHEEP

19.31.17.1 ISSUING AGENCY: New Mexico ~~department of game and fish~~ department of wildlife.

[19.31.17.1 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.1 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.2 SCOPE: Sportspersons interested in bighorn sheep management and hunting. Additional requirements may be found in Chapter 17 NMSA 1978, and Chapters 30, 31, 32 and 33 of Title 19 NMAC.

[19.31.17.2 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.2 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Sections 17-1-14 and 17-1-26 NMSA 1978 provide that the New Mexico state game wildlife commission has the authority to establish rules and regulations that it may deem necessary to carry out the purpose of Chapter 17 NMSA 1978 and all other acts pertaining to protected mammals, birds, and fish.

[19.31.17.3 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.3 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.4 DURATION: April 1, ~~2025~~2027 through March 31, ~~2027~~2031.

[19.31.17.4 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.4 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.5 EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, ~~2025~~2027 unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.

[19.31.17.5 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.5 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.6 OBJECTIVE: Establishing open hunting seasons and regulations, rules, and procedures governing the distribution and issuance of bighorn sheep licenses by the department.

[19.31.17.6 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.6 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.7 DEFINITIONS:

A. **"Department"** shall mean the New Mexico ~~department of game and fish~~ department of wildlife.

B. **"Director"** shall mean the director of the New Mexico ~~department of game and fish~~ department of wildlife.

C. **"Either sex" or "ES"** shall mean any one animal of the species.

D. **"Ewe"** shall mean any female bighorn sheep.

E. **"Game management unit" or "GMU"** shall mean those areas as described in 19.30.4 NMAC Boundary Descriptions for Game Management Units.

F. **"Ram"** shall mean any male bighorn sheep.

G. **"Wildlife management areas" or "WMAs"** shall mean those areas as described in 19.34.5 NMAC Wildlife Management Areas.

[19.31.17.7 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.7 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.8 ADJUSTMENT OF LICENSES: The director, with the verbal concurrence of the New Mexico state ~~wildlife-game~~ commission chairperson or their designee, may adjust the number of bighorn licenses to address significant changes in population levels or to address critical department management needs. The director may change or cancel any or all hunts on military lands to accommodate closures on those lands; if changed, the season length and bag limit shall remain the same as assigned on the original hunt code.

[19.31.17.8 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.8 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.9 BIGHORN SHEEP LICENSE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS:

A. Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ram once-in-a-lifetime hunts: It shall be unlawful for anyone to apply for a Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ram license if one has previously held a license to hunt a Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ram in New Mexico, except those who have held a youth-only, private land-only (not obtained through the public draw), population management license for ram or ES that the director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson or their designee, has decided does not qualify as once-in-a-lifetime, auction, and/or raffle bighorn ram license(s). A person that has received the youth-only ram license is eligible for this hunt only once as a youth (under age 18), but may apply for the other Rocky mountain and desert bighorn once-in-a lifetime hunts as long as they are eligible.

B. Desert bighorn sheep ram once-in-a-lifetime hunts: It shall be unlawful for anyone to apply for a desert bighorn sheep ram license if one has previously held a license to hunt a desert bighorn sheep ram in New Mexico, except those who have held a youth-only, private land-only (not obtained through the public draw), population management license for ram or ES that the director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson or their designee, has decided does not qualify as once-in-a-lifetime, auction, and/or raffle bighorn ram license(s). A person that has received the youth-only ram license is eligible for this hunt only once as a youth (under age 18), but may apply for the other Rocky mountain and desert bighorn once-in-a lifetime hunts as long as they are eligible.

C. Rocky mountain bighorn sheep ewe hunts: This hunt is not a once-in-a-lifetime hunt. A person that has previously held a license to hunt Rocky mountain bighorn rams or ewes is eligible to apply for this hunt.

[19.31.17.9 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.9 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.10 SEALING OF RAM HORNS: A seal shall be affixed to a horn of every bighorn sheep ram head taken in New Mexico, imported into New Mexico, or found in the field in New Mexico subsequent to August 17, 1973. Bighorn sheep heads found in the field within New Mexico shall remain the property of the state until disposed of by permit from the director. The seal shall authorize possession and transportation of the head within New Mexico.

A. Such sealing shall be done within ten days after the bighorn sheep ram head is taken, imported, or found in the field and before the bighorn sheep head is exported from New Mexico. Bighorn sheep ram heads not so declared shall be seized. Only legally taken and possessed bighorn sheep ram heads from New Mexico shall be sealed.

B. Bighorn sheep ram heads legally sealed in other countries, states, tribal entities, provinces, and territories, and possessing a valid visible seal attached, are exempted.

C. It shall be unlawful to possess any bighorn sheep ram head which has not been sealed as described in this section.

[19.31.17.10 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.10 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.11 BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING SEASONS: The 2023-242027-28 through 2026-272030-31 hunting seasons shall be as indicated below, listing the GMUs or areas open areas, eligibility requirements or restrictions, hunt dates, hunt codes, sporting arms, number of licenses, and bag limit. Additional eligibility requirements and restrictions are defined in Section 9 of 19.31.17 NMAC above.

A. Rocky mountain bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-201BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB). Hunters applying for BHS-1-201BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-201BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB will be up to 60 with a bag limit of one ram.

open GMUs or areas for BHS-1-201	2023-2024 hunt dates	2024-2025 hunt dates	2025-2026 hunt dates	2026-2027 hunt dates
6	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24

	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15
14, 18	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
16B, 22, 23, 24: including Double E WMA	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31
45	8/4-8/13	8/9-8/18	8/8-8/17	8/7-8/16
	8/18-8/27	8/23-9/1	8/22-8/31	8/21-8/30
45, youth only	8/18-8/27	8/23-9/1	8/22-8/31	8/21-8/30
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15
	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/4-8/13	8/9-8/18	8/8-8/17	8/7-8/16
	8/18-8/27	8/23-9/1	8/22-8/31	8/21-8/30
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24
	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15
	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15/2023-1/15/2024	8/15/2024-1/15/2025	8/15/2025-1/15/2026	8/15/2026-1/15/2027
58	8/15/2023-1/15/2024	8/15/2024-1/15/2025	8/15/2025-1/15/2026	8/15/2026-1/15/2027

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-R-RAM-PUB	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates
6	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24
	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15
14, 18	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15
	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30
16B, 22, 23, 24: including Double E, Glenwood, and Mimbres WMAs	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31	1/1-1/31
45	8/6-8/15	8/11-8/20	8/10-8/19	8/9-8/18
	8/20-8/29	8/25-9/3	8/24-9/2	8/23-9/1

45, youth only	8/20-8/29	8/25-9/3	8/24-9/2	8/23-9/1
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15	8/6-8/15
	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10	9/1-9/10
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/6-8/15	8/11-8/20	8/10-8/19	8/9-8/18
	8/20-8/29	8/25-9/3	8/24-9/2	8/23-9/1
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24	8/10-8/24
	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15	9/1-9/15
	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31
58	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31

B. Private land Rocky mountain bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms. The number of licenses available will be up to 6 10 with a bag limit of one ram. The hunt code shall be BHS-RM-R-RAM-PVT.

<u>open GMUs or areas</u>	<u>2023-2024 hunt dates</u>	<u>2024-2025 hunt dates</u>	<u>2025-2026 hunt dates</u>	<u>2026-2027 hunt dates</u>
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15/2023-1/15/2024	8/15/2024-1/15/2025	8/15/2025-1/15/2026	8/15/2026-1/15/2027
58	8/15/2023-1/15/2024	8/15/2024-1/15/2025	8/15/2025-1/15/2026	8/15/2026-1/15/2027

<u>Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-R-RAM-PVT</u>	<u>2027-2028 hunt dates</u>	<u>2028-2029 hunt dates</u>	<u>2029-2030 hunt dates</u>	<u>2030-2031 hunt dates</u>
14, 18	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15
	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30	10/16-10/30
55 north of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31
58	8/15-1/15/28	8/15-1/15/29	8/15-1/15/30	8/15-1/15/31

C. Rocky mountain bighorn ewe hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-202BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB). Hunters applying for BHS-1-202BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB will be allowed to

select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for **BHS-1-202BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB** will be up to 150 with a bag limit of one ewe.

open GMUs or areas for BHS-1-202	2023- 2024 hunt dates	2024- 2025 hunt dates	2025- 2026 hunt dates	2026- 2027 hunt dates
45	9/16-9/20	9/21-9/25	9/20-9/24	9/19-9/23
	9/30-10/4	10/5-10/9	10/4-10/8	10/3-10/7
45, youth only	9/30-10/4	10/5-10/9	10/4-10/8	10/3-10/7
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	10/14- 10/22	10/12- 10/20	10/11- 10/19	10/10- 10/18
	11/18- 11/26	11/16- 11/24	11/15- 11/23	11/21- 11/29
	12/9- 12/17	12/14- 12/22	12/13- 12/21	12/12- 12/20
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522, youth only	11/18- 11/26	11/16- 11/24	11/15- 11/23	11/21- 11/29
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522	9/23-9/27	9/21-9/25	9/20-9/24	9/19-9/23
	10/7- 10/11	10/5-10/9	10/4-10/8	10/3-10/7
53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522, youth only	9/23-9/27	9/21-9/25	9/20-9/24	9/19-9/23
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	9/16-9/20	9/21-9/25	9/20-9/24	9/19-9/23
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only	9/16-9/20	9/21-9/25	9/20-9/24	9/19-9/23

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-R-EWE-PUB	2027- 2028 hunt dates	2028- 2029 hunt dates	2029- 2030 hunt dates	2030- 2031 hunt dates
45	9/18-9/22	9/16-9/20	9/15-9/19	9/21-9/25
	10/2-10/6	9/30-10/4	9/29-10/3	10/5-10/9
45, youth only	10/2-10/6	9/30-10/4	9/29-10/3	10/5-10/9
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	10/9- 10/17	10/14- 10/22	10/13- 10/21	10/12- 10/20

	<u>11/20-11/28</u>	<u>11/18-11/26</u>	<u>11/17-11/25</u>	<u>11/16-11/24</u>
	<u>12/11-12/19</u>	<u>12/9-12/17</u>	<u>12/8-12/16</u>	<u>12/14-12/22</u>
<u>49, 50, 53 west of NM 522, youth only</u>	<u>11/20-11/28</u>	<u>11/18-11/26</u>	<u>11/17-11/25</u>	<u>11/16-11/24</u>
<u>53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522</u>	<u>9/25-9/29</u>	<u>9/23-9/27</u>	<u>9/22-9/26</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>
	<u>10/2-10/6</u>	<u>10/7-10/11</u>	<u>10/6-10/10</u>	<u>10/5-10/9</u>
<u>53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522, youth only</u>	<u>9/25-9/29</u>	<u>9/23-9/27</u>	<u>9/22-9/26</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950</u>	<u>9/18-9/22</u>	<u>9/16-9/20</u>	<u>9/15-9/19</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only</u>	<u>9/18-9/22</u>	<u>9/16-9/20</u>	<u>9/15-9/19</u>	<u>9/21-9/25</u>

D. Rocky mountain bighorn ewe hunt for bow only (BHS-2-203BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB). Hunters applying for BHS-2-203BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-2-203BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB will be up to 60 with a bag limit of one ewe.

<u>open GMUs or areas for BHS-2-203</u>	<u>2023-2024 hunt dates</u>	<u>2024-2025 hunt dates</u>	<u>2025-2026 hunt dates</u>	<u>2026-2027 hunt dates</u>
<u>45</u>	<u>9/1-9/10</u>	<u>9/6-9/15</u>	<u>9/5-9/14</u>	<u>9/4-9/13</u>
<u>49, 50, 53 west of NM 522</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>
<u>53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>	<u>9/11-9/17</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950</u>	<u>9/2-9/15</u>	<u>9/7-9/20</u>	<u>9/6-9/19</u>	<u>9/5-9/18</u>
<u>53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only</u>	<u>9/2-9/15</u>	<u>9/7-9/20</u>	<u>9/6-9/19</u>	<u>9/5-9/18</u>

<u>Open GMUs or areas for BHS-RM-B-EWE-PUB</u>	<u>2027-2028 hunt dates</u>	<u>2028-2029 hunt dates</u>	<u>2029-2030 hunt dates</u>	<u>2030-2031 hunt dates</u>
<u>45</u>	<u>9/3-9/12</u>	<u>9/1-9/10</u>	<u>9/7-9/16</u>	<u>9/6-9/15</u>
<u>49, 50, 53 west of NM 522</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>	<u>9/16-9/30</u>

53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522	9/11-9/17	9/11-9/17	9/11-9/17	9/11-9/17
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950	9/4-9/17	9/2-9/15	9/1-9/14	9/7-9/20
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only	9/4-9/17	9/2-9/15	9/1-9/14	9/7-9/20

E. Desert bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms (**BHS-1-204BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB**). Hunters applying for **BHS-1-204BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB** will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for **BHS-1-204BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB** will be up to 60 with a bag limit of one ram.

open GMUs or areas for BHS-1-204	2023-2024 hunt dates	2024-2025 hunt dates	2025-2026 hunt dates	2026-2027 hunt dates
13, 17	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15
	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31	12/16-12/31
19	12/14-12/21	12/14-12/21	12/14-12/21	12/14-12/21
	12/27/2023-1/3/2024	12/27/2024-1/3/2025	12/27/2025-1/3/2026	12/27/2026-1/3/2027
20: south of NM 51	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30
	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15	12/1-12/15
20: north of NM 51	8/18-8/27	9/13-9/22	8/15-8/24	9/11-9/20
		10/11-10/20		10/9-10/18
20: north of NM 51, youth only	11/17-11/26		11/21-11/30	
26, west of NM 81	9/15-9/30	9/15-9/30	9/15-9/30	9/15-9/30
	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15
26, east of NM 81	9/15-9/30	9/15-9/30	9/15-9/30	9/15-9/30
	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15	10/1-10/15
27	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15	11/1-11/15
	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30	11/16-11/30

Open GMUs or areas for BHS-D-R-RAM-PUB	2027-2028 hunt dates	2028-2029 hunt dates	2029-2030 hunt dates	2030-2031 hunt dates

<u>13, 17</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>
	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>
<u>19</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>	<u>12/14-12/21</u>
	<u>12/27-1/3/28</u>	<u>12/27-1/3/29</u>	<u>12/27-1/3/30</u>	<u>12/27-1/3/31</u>
<u>20: south of NM 51</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>
	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>
<u>20: north of NM 51</u>	<u>8/20-8/29</u>	<u>9/8-9/17</u>	<u>8/17-8/26</u>	<u>9/13-9/22</u>
		<u>10/13-10/22</u>		<u>10/11-10/20</u>
<u>20: north of NM 51, youth only</u>	<u>11/19-11/28</u>		<u>11/16-11/25</u>	
<u>26, west of NM 81</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>
	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>
<u>26, east of NM 81</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>
	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>	<u>12/16-12/31</u>
<u>27</u>	<u>11/1-11/15</u>	<u>11/1-11/15</u>	<u>11/1-11/15</u>	<u>11/1-11/15</u>
	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>	<u>11/16-11/30</u>
<u>34</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>	<u>12/1-12/15</u>

F. Private land desert bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms. The number of licenses available will be up to 6 with a bag limit of one ram. The hunt code shall be BHS-D-R-RAM-PVT.

<u>open GMUs or areas</u>	<u>2023-2024 hunt dates</u>	<u>2024-2025 hunt dates</u>	<u>2025-2026 hunt dates</u>	<u>2026-2027 hunt dates</u>
<u>20: north of NM 51</u>	<u>9/15-9/24</u>	<u>8/16-8/25</u>	<u>9/12-9/21</u>	<u>8/14-8/23</u>

	10/13-10/22	11/22-12/1	10/10-10/19	11/20-11/29
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Open GMUs or areas for BHS-D-R-RAM-PVT	<u>2027-2028 hunt dates</u>	<u>2028-2029 hunt dates</u>	<u>2029-2030 hunt dates</u>	<u>2030-2031 hunt dates</u>
	<u>9/10-9/19</u>	<u>8/18-8/27</u>	<u>9/14-9/23</u>	<u>8/16-8/25</u>
<u>20: north of NM 51</u>	<u>10/8-10/17</u>	<u>11/17-11/26</u>	<u>10/12-10/21</u>	<u>11/22-12/1</u>

[19.31.17.11 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.11 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.12 SPECIAL BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES: Bighorn sheep enhancement program:

A. Program description: The director shall collect all proceeds generated through the auction and lottery of special bighorn sheep permits, and such monies shall be deposited in the game protection fund. These monies shall be made available for expenditure by the department solely for programs and projects to benefit bighorn sheep and for costs incurred in carrying out these programs. These monies shall be used to augment, and not replace, monies appropriated from existing funds available to the department for the conservation, restoration, utilization, and management of bighorn sheep.

B. Requirements for issuance of special bighorn sheep licenses:

(1) The state ~~wildlifegame~~ commission authorizes the director to issue not more than four special bighorn sheep licenses in any one license year to take one ram per license. The director shall allow the sale of one Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep authorization and one desert bighorn sheep authorization through auction to the highest bidder, and one Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep authorization and one desert bighorn sheep authorization to a person selected through a random drawing of a lottery ticket. The drawing will be conducted by the department or an incorporated, non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of bighorn sheep wildlife.

(2) Unless their hunting privileges have been revoked pursuant to law, any person is eligible to submit a bid for the special bighorn sheep auction authorization or purchase lottery tickets in an attempt to be selected for the special bighorn sheep lottery authorization.

(3) The special bighorn sheep authorizations issued through auction and lottery may be transferred, through sale, barter or gift by the successful individuals only to other individuals qualified to hunt.

(4) Special bighorn sheep licenses granted through auction or lottery, as described above, shall not be considered ~~once-in-a-lifetime~~ licenses.

C. Enhancement hunts: These licenses shall be valid for any big game sporting arms statewide where hunting is allowed. The bag limit shall be one ram.

(1) Holders of the auction licenses must declare their exclusive hunt area by June 30 annually to hunt the designated subspecies in one of the open hunt areas. Each holder of the raffle license must declare their exclusive hunt area by July 20 annually to hunt the designated subspecies in one of the open hunt areas not declared by the auction hunter.

(2) The remaining hunt units open to bighorn hunting not declared by the auction or raffle hunter as their exclusive hunt area, may be hunted by either the auction or raffle hunter.

(3) The hunt dates for the auction and raffle licenses shall be 8/1-12/31 annually, except GMU 53 south of NM 38 and east of NM 522 is closed 8/16 to 8/31 annually to all bighorn sheep hunters.
[19.31.17.12 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.12 NMAC, 4/1/2027]

19.31.17.13 BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION MANAGEMENT HUNTS:

A. The director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson of the New Mexico state wildlifegame commission or their designee, may authorize population management hunts for bighorn sheep when justified in writing by department personnel and must be based on biological information or a potential to compromise population viability.

B. The director shall designate the sporting arms, season dates, season lengths, bag limits, hunt boundaries, specific requirements or restrictions, and number of licenses to be issued.

C. In the event that an applicant is not able to hunt on the dates specified, the applicant's name shall be moved to the bottom of the list and another applicant may be contacted for the hunt.

D. In those instances where a population management hunt is warranted on deeded private lands, the landowner may suggest eligible hunters of their choice by submitting a list of prospective hunters' names to the department for licensing consideration. No more than one-half of the total number of licenses authorized shall be available to landowner identified hunters. The balance of prospective hunters shall be identified by the department.

E. The director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson of the New Mexico state wildlifegame commission or their designee, may deem some ram or either sex population management licenses not once-in-a-lifetime; a person that has held a once-in-a-lifetime ram license(s) is not disqualified from this hunt.

[19.31.17.13 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.13 NMAC, 4/1/2027]