

COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA BRIEFING

Meeting Date: January 9, 2026

Agenda Number: 15

Presenter: Stewart Liley

Corroborator: N/A

Agenda Title: Initial discussion on Barbary sheep, oryx, and Persian ibex rule (19.31.12 NMAC) for the 2027 – 2030 hunting seasons.

1. Summary of Agenda Item

The Department will present biological and background information on the Exotics Rule (19.31.12 NMAC). We are currently compiling and analyzing data.

Preliminary Proposed changes include:

Oryx:

- Potential increases to off-range hunts
- Adjusting season dates where necessary. For example, shifting start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to calendar day starts for consistency.

Ibex:

- Decreasing licenses as a result of smaller ibex population and low success rates
- Adjusting season dates where necessary.

Barbary sheep:

- Adjusting season dates where necessary.

2. Background Information

The exotics rule is re-evaluated every four years and changed based on biological data, harvest data, and management goals. In addition, the Department will receive public feedback and consider it in the context of the species biological and management goals. The Department will begin reaching out to the public for input.

Exotic species in New Mexico are managed under different strategies. For ibex, the Department's objective is to maintain a quality opportunity to hunt mature males. Additionally, the Department attempts to manage the ibex population so they remain isolated to the Florida Mountain range. A major concern is that ibex may spread disease to adjacent desert bighorn sheep herds, a species the Department is still actively trying to recover. In the past, there have been significant license swings ranging from 4-1,433 licenses sold annually. The Department is striving to move away from these large swings in license numbers, to a more stable population size and stable annual license numbers. The Department has made progress in the strategy for monitoring ibex in recent years, moving towards thermal imaging from aircraft.

Barbary sheep are managed for sustainable hunting opportunities in the southeastern part of the state. The Department discourages the expansion of Barbary sheep populations outside of these areas, so licenses are offered over-the-counter. The Department monitors Barbary sheep populations using hunter harvest indices.

Oryx are managed for sustainable hunting opportunities on White Sands Missile Range (WSMR). The Department works closely with WSMR personnel to develop hunt structures that fit within the mission of the Range as a military installation. Oryx hunts are unique and most either sex oryx hunts on range are offered as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Hunting also occurs off of WSMR, in these areas the Department offers hunting opportunities to discourage further expansion of oryx.

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 is at the beginning of the public involvement process. Proposed changes to the exotics rule will be posted on the Department's website. Input will be gathered from mail, email, and public meetings with interested members of the public.

Suggested Motion

This is a discussion item and no motion is necessary, unless Commission discretion dictates otherwise.