

STATE GAME COMMISSION MEETING AND RULE MAKING NOTICE

The New Mexico State Game Commission (“Commission”) will be hosting a meeting and rule hearing on Thursday June 25, 2026 beginning at 9:00 a.m. at Eastern New Mexico University, 1500 S. Avenue K, Portales, NM 88130. 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: 1) the Migratory Game Bird Rule; and 2) the Barbary Sheep, Oryx, and Persian Ibex Rule.

Synopsis:

Migratory Game Bird Rule

The proposal is to amend the Migratory Game Bird Rule 19.31.6 NMAC which will become effective September 1, 2026. The most recent version of the rule expired on March 31, 2026. Proposed changes include:

- 1) Changes to regular waterfowl season dates based on public comment and calendar dates
- 2) Increase sandhill crane permits in SW draw hunts by 18 total, to be distributed among existing hunts.

Barbary Sheep, Oryx, and Persian Ibex Rule

The proposal is to amend the Barbary Sheep, Oryx, and Persian Ibex Rule 19.31.12 NMAC which will become effective April 1, 2027. The most recent version of the rule will expire on March 31, 2027. Proposed changes include:

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.

Persian ibex

- 1) Similar to bighorn sheep, shift ibex license numbers to be “up to,” allowing the Department to adjust draw licenses up or down depending on population surveys. It is possible that the Department may draw zero licenses for certain hunts (for example,
- 2) F-IM, based on population metrics).
 - a. For once-in-a-lifetime hunts, up to 15 licenses
 - b. For archery, up to 40 licenses (over 2 hunt periods)
 - c. For F-IM, up to 40 (with 2 hunt periods)
 - d. For muzzleloader, up to 15
 - e. For youth-only, up to 5
- 3) Adjust season dates where necessary and shifting start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to calendar day starts for consistency.

Oryx

- 1) Increase the number of off-range licenses by 5%, as harvest success rates for off-range oryx are high, suggesting there is more opportunity.
 - a. For youth hunts increase from 24 to 25 licenses
 - b. For regular licenses increase from 96 to 101 licenses
- 2) Require a ranch registration process for OTC private-land oryx licenses, similar to the current registration process used for private land elk hunting in Secondary Management Zones.
- 3) Adjust season dates where necessary. This includes adjustments of hunt dates on military ranges consistent with access and military missions (Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range). And shifting start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to calendar day starts for consistency.
- 4) Shift the 70 years and older hunt based on public comment to allow hunters of any age to apply.
- 5) Clarify the definition of a broken-horned oryx to ensure hunters know they can take an oryx with no horns. Proposed clarifying definition: “Broken-horned oryx” or “BHO” shall mean an oryx of either sex that has at least one horn missing at least 25% of its normal growth, or any oryx which has no horn(s) shall be considered a broken horned oryx.

Barbary sheep

- 1) In collaboration with McGregor Range (Fort Bliss) several changes are recommended:
 - a. Increase the 2 ES hunts (1 military and 1 civilian hunt) from 10 to 20 licenses.
 - b. Increase F-IM hunts by 20 (from 130 to 150) and spreading the licenses out over 1-month hunt windows. Hunters will be able to access the range over all weekends in that month when there is not a military mission occurring.
- 2) Require a ranch registration process for purchase of private land Barbary sheep license.
- 3) Adjust season dates where necessary. Including adjustments of hunt dates on military ranges consistent with access and military missions (Bliss, WSMR). And shift start dates to maintain hunts beginning on Saturday or adjusting to calendar day starts for consistency.
- 4) Split draw hunts in GMUs 29 & 30, maintaining the same number of total licenses but distributing hunters across the GMUs to address overcrowding issues.
 - a. For hunts of 200 licenses, the split would be 75 licenses in GMU 29 and 125 in GMU 30
 - b. For hunts with 75 licenses, the split would be 25 licenses in GMU 29 and 50 in GMU 30

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 for the Migratory Game Bird Rule to waterfowl@state.nm.us, and for the Barbary Sheep, Oryx, and Persion Ibex Rule to DFG-Exotics-Rule@dgf.nm.gov. Individuals may also submit written comments to the physical address below. Comments are due by 1:00 p.m. on June 23, 2026. The final proposed rules will be voted on by the Commission during a public meeting on June 25, 2026. Interested persons may also provide data, views or arguments, orally or in writing, at the public rule hearings to be held on June 25, 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 Game and Fish, 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.