

STATE GAME COMMISSION MEETING AND RULE MAKING NOTICE

The New Mexico State Game Commission (“Commission”) will be hosting a meeting and rule hearing on Friday August 9, 2024 beginning at 9:00 a.m. in Taos, NM. The exact location will be posted on the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish website at www.wildlife.state.nm.us/commission/meeting-agendas. The purpose of this meeting is to hear and consider action as appropriate on the following: 1) presentation of proposed changes to the Migratory Game Bird Rule; and 2) presentation of proposed changes to the Bighorn Sheep 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, 2024. The most recent version of the rule expired on March 31, 2024.

- Changes to regular waterfowl season dates based on public comment and calendar dates
- Change certain season dates to be later in the year because of calendar shift
- Based on population survey data, increase sandhill crane permits in MRGV and SW draw hunts by 35 total, to be distributed among existing hunts
- Bag limit for northern pintail to remain at 1 per USFWS regulatory framework
- Central Flyway scaup limit to decrease from 3 to 1 per USFWS regulatory frameworks
- Open Bernardo Unit D to handicap accessible waterfowl hunting during the regular season
- Open Bernardo Unit D to handicap accessible hunting for the Light Goose Conservation Order on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday during the hours of ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset
- Open Bernardo Ponds Unit for the Light Goose Conservation Order on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday during the hours of ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset

Bighorn Sheep Rule

The proposal is to amend the Bighorn Sheep Rule 19.31.17 NMAC which will become effective April 1, 2025. The current rule will expire on March 31, 2025.

- Extend the bighorn sheep rule for two more years. This extension would align the Bighorn Rule with the expiration of the other Big Game rules and future rule development.

A full text of changes for all rules will be available on the Department’s website at: www.wildlife.state.nm.us. Interested persons may submit comments on the proposed changes for the Migratory Game Bird Rule to DFG-waterfowl@state.nm.us. Interested persons may submit comments on the proposed changes for the Bighorn Sheep Rule to DFG-Bighorn-Rule@state.nm.us. Individuals may also submit written comments to the physical address below. Comments are due by 5:00 p.m. on August 7, 2024. The final proposed rules will be voted on by the Commission during a public meeting on August 9, 2024. Interested persons may also provide data, views or arguments, orally or in writing, at the public rule hearings to be held on August 9, 2024.

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 www.wildlife.state.nm.us/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 www.wildlife.state.nm.us 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.
[19.31.17.1 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.1 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Sections 17-1-14 and 17-1-26 NMSA 1978 provide that the New Mexico state game 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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.4 DURATION: April 1, 2023 through March 31, **2025 2027**.
[19.31.17.4 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.4 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.5 EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2023 unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.
[19.31.17.5 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.5 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.7 DEFINITIONS:

- A. “Department”** shall mean the New Mexico department of game and fish.
- B. “Director”** shall mean the director of the New Mexico department of game and fish.
- 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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.8 ADJUSTMENT OF LICENSES: The director, with the verbal concurrence of the New Mexico state 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, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.11 BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING SEASONS: The 2023-24 through 2026-27 hunting seasons shall be as indicated below, listing the GMUs or areas open, 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-1-201). Hunters applying for BHS-1-201 will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-201 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

B. Private land Rocky mountain 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.

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

C. Rocky mountain bighorn ewe hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-202). Hunters applying for BHS-1-202 will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-202 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

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

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

E. Desert bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-204). Hunters applying for BHS-1-204 will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-204 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

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.

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

[19.31.17.11 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.11 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

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 game 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.

(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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.13 BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION MANAGEMENT HUNTS:

A. The director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson of the New Mexico state game 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 game 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, 4/1/2025]

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.

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.

NMAC

Transmittal Form



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:

Findings required for rulemaking adoption:

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 amend the Bighorn Sheep Rule 19.31.17 NMAC which will become effective April 1, 2025. The current rule will expire on March 31, 2025

The new rule will include extending the bighorn sheep rule for two more years. This extension would align the Bighorn Rule with the expiration of the other Big Game rules and future rule development.

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.state.nm.us/commission/meeting-agendas/ and click on the Hearing Archive 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: 2024.08.13 11:17:35 -06'00'

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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.
[19.31.17.1 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.1 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Sections 17-1-14 and 17-1-26 NMSA 1978 provide that the New Mexico state game 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, 4/1/2025]

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

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

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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.7 DEFINITIONS:

- A. **“Department”** shall mean the New Mexico department of game and fish.
- B. **“Director”** shall mean the director of the New Mexico department of game and fish.
- 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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.8 ADJUSTMENT OF LICENSES: The director, with the verbal concurrence of the New Mexico state 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, 4/1/2025]

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

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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, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.11 BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING SEASONS: The 2023-24 through 2026-27 hunting seasons shall be as indicated below, listing the GMUs or areas open, 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-1-201). Hunters applying for BHS-1-201 will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-201 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

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	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

B. Private land Rocky mountain 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.

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

C. Rocky mountain bighorn ewe hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-202). Hunters applying for BHS-1-202 will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-202 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

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

open GMUs or areas for BHS-2-203	2023-2024 hunt dates	2024-2025 hunt dates	2025-2026 hunt dates	2026-2027 hunt dates
45	9/1-9/10	9/6-9/15	9/5-9/14	9/4-9/13
49, 50, 53 west of NM 522	9/16-9/30	9/16-9/30	9/16-9/30	9/16-9/30

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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	9/2-9/15	9/7-9/20	9/6-9/19	9/5-9/18
53 north of NM 38 and east of NM 522; 55 south of NM 196/FS Rd 1950, youth only	9/2-9/15	9/7-9/20	9/6-9/19	9/5-9/18

E. Desert bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-204). Hunters applying for BHS-1-204 will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-204 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

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.

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

[19.31.17.11 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.11 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

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 game 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

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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.

(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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.13 BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION MANAGEMENT HUNTS:

A. The director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson of the New Mexico state game 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 game 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, 4/1/2025]

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;

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Regulation 504, Establishing Seasons on Deer, Bear, Turkey, Dusky Grouse, Chickaree And Tassel-Eared Squirrel, And Barbary Sheep, filed 6/4/1999;

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;

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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.

Bighorn Sheep 19.31.17 NMAC

August 9, 2024

New Mexico State Game Commission Meeting

Taos, NM



S. Liley August 9, 2024

Amend: Bighorn Sheep 19.31.17 NMAC

Extend the bighorn sheep rule for two more years as it is set to expire on March 31, 2025. This extension would align the Bighorn Rule with the expiration of the other Big Game rules and future rule development.



Public Comment Bighorn Sheep 19.31.17 NMAC

1 Public Comment received supporting the
date extension



Questions?



S. Liley August 9, 2024

Summary of Proposed Changes Bighorn Sheep 19.31.17 NMAC

Background

During the previous rule development in 2022 the duration of the bighorn rule was shortened from four years to two years during the rule hearing. The decision to shorten the rule was based on potential proposed legislation from individuals or groups outside of the Department. No legislative changes have occurred pertaining to the draw quota statues and the Department is recommending continuing issuing bighorn licenses as it currently does.

Proposal

Extend the bighorn sheep rule for two more years as it is set to expire on March 31, 2025. This extension would align the Bighorn Rule with the expiration of the other Big Game rules and future rule development.



"Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountain."

August 4, 2024

New Mexico Wild Sheep Foundation
PO Box 134
Garfield, NM 87936

New Mexico State Game Commission:

Richard Stump, Chair.
Sharon Salazar Hickey
Tirzio Lopez
Greg Fulfer
Sabrina Pack
Edward Garcia
Fernando Clemente Jr.

Re: August 9, 2024, NM Game Commission Meeting.

Bighorn Sheep Rule, 19.31.17

Dear New Mexico State Game Commissioners,

The purpose of this letter is to give our New Mexico Wild Sheep Foundation's support for the NMDGF proposal to extend the bighorn sheep rule for two more years, as it is set to expire on March 31, 2025.

The New Mexico Wild Sheep Foundation is a 250 member New Mexico 501.c.3 non-profit organization dedicated to Wild Sheep Conservation.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank the NMDGF for their successful management of the New Mexico Bighorn Sheep program for the last 35-40 years. As we have seen across the western US and Canada, successfully managing bighorn sheep development is a difficult and expensive challenge. Through the NMDGF tireless and persistent dedication to bighorn sheep conservation, we now have over 1,300 Rocky



Mountain BHS and over 1100 Desert BHS on 16 different NM mountain ranges. This is a remarkable accomplishment considering that in 1978 there were only 700 RMBHS and less than 80 DBHS remaining in only six locations in the State.

This notable success has resulted in the ability to offer over 50 ram BHS hunting licenses every year. This year NMDGF has allocated 49 public ram draw licenses and 4 BHS enhancement licenses.

Credit should also be given to the hundreds of sportsmen and sportswomen who have contributed considerable funds to the NM BHS Enhancement tag program. These funds leveraged 3 to 1 with Pittman-Robertson federal money have helped the NMDGF achieve these outstanding results and continue with ongoing efforts.

Once again, congratulations and thanks to the NMDGF. We, the NM Wild Sheep Foundation and the Wild Sheep Foundation are committed to our continued support to NMDGF in their ongoing work to put and keep more wild sheep on our NM mountains.

Thank you for your time and dedication to New Mexico wildlife and healthy habitat.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Bartlett". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Bryan Bartlett, President, NM Wild Sheep Foundation

575-635-3499

COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA BRIEFING

Meeting Date: August 9, 2024

Agenda Number: 7

Presenter: Stewart Liley

Corroborator: N/A

Agenda Title: Hearing on the Bighorn Sheep Rule 19.31.17 NMAC.

1. Summary of Agenda Item

The Department will present a proposed amendment to extend the bighorn rule for two more years as it is set to expire on March 31, 2025. This extension would align the Bighorn Rule with the expiration of the other Big Game rules and future rule development.

2. Background Information

During the previous rule development process the duration of the bighorn rule was shortened from four years to two years during the rule hearing. The decision to shorten the rule was based on potential proposed legislation from individuals or groups outside of the Department, to change the draw quota statute as it pertains to bighorn. No legislative changes have occurred pertaining to the draw quota statutes and the Department is recommending continuing issuing bighorn licenses as it currently does.

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 posted proposed changes to the bighorn rule on its website and opened a public comment period.

Suggested Motion

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

“Move to amend 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.”

CHAPTER 31 HUNTING AND FISHING
PART 17 BIGHORN SHEEP

19.31.17.1 ISSUING AGENCY: New Mexico department of game and fish.
[19.31.17.1 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.1 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Sections 17-1-14 and 17-1-26 NMSA 1978 provide that the New Mexico state game 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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.4 DURATION: April 1, 2023 through March 31, **2025 2027**.
[19.31.17.4 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.4 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.5 EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2023 unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.
[19.31.17.5 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.5 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.7 DEFINITIONS:

- A. **“Department”** shall mean the New Mexico department of game and fish.
- B. **“Director”** shall mean the director of the New Mexico department of game and fish.
- 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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.8 ADJUSTMENT OF LICENSES: The director, with the verbal concurrence of the New Mexico state 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, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.11 BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING SEASONS: The 2023-24 through 2026-27 hunting seasons shall be as indicated below, listing the GMUs or areas open, 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-1-201). Hunters applying for BHS-1-201 will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-201 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

B. Private land Rocky mountain 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.

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

C. Rocky mountain bighorn ewe hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-202). Hunters applying for BHS-1-202 will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-202 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

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

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

E. Desert bighorn ram hunt for any big game sporting arms (BHS-1-204). Hunters applying for BHS-1-204 will be allowed to select and rank up to three open areas/hunt dates. The number of licenses available for BHS-1-204 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

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.

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

[19.31.17.11 NMAC - Rp, 19.31.17.11 NMAC, 4/1/2025]

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 game 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.

(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, 4/1/2025]

19.31.17.13 BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION MANAGEMENT HUNTS:

A. The director, with verbal concurrence of the chairperson of the New Mexico state game 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 game 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, 4/1/2025]