

PRONGHORN PROPOSED RULE CHANGES SUMMARY

Date of update: 3/23/2026

**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.*

PRONGHORN BIOLOGY

Pronghorn population growth is driven by both adult female and fawn survival and is typically not greatly affected by male harvest. Except for in a few very specific instances to address nuisance issues, the Department allows male harvest only. Population trajectories are driven by adult female and fawn survival; both adult female and fawn survival rates need to be adequate for stable populations. Weather, disease, predation and human induced mortality can all impact adult female and fawn survival; however, availability of forage and concealment cover can lessen or intensify the effect of these individual factors. Pronghorn have a polygamous breeding strategy where a single male will breed many females within a season. Because of this breeding strategy, almost all (>95%) breeding age females become pregnant each year even though there are generally fewer males than females in a population. Studies have shown that when the number of bucks stays above 10 bucks per 100 does, pregnancy rates are consistent and high. As such, buck mortality, including mortality from harvest, does not negatively impact population growth because females carry pregnancies and almost all of them are pregnant each year.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PRONGHORN HUNTING

- 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) Evaluate a potential 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) Consider a cap on private land OTC licenses.
- 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) Work with the military on hunts that occur on Department of Defense lands.
- 7) Adjust license numbers to meet management strategies and reflect changes in pronghorn herd dynamics.
- 8) Shift season dates in SW later to address a later breeding and fawning period.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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