

PRONGHORN PROPOSED RULE CHANGES SUMMARY

Date of update: 5/13/2026

**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) 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.
- 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 decreasing licenses in both areas.
 - McGregor: Recommend decreasing from 2 hunts of 7 licenses down to 2 hunts of 2 licenses
 - WSMR: Recommend decreasing 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. In addition, increase licenses in these draw hunts as follows:
 - Youth only hunt: currently 5 ES → 10 MB
 - First rifle hunt: currently 25 MB → 30 MB
- 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, we recommend that the 20% licenses reduction implemented in 2025 be retained as the baseline for the 2027-2030 seasons, rather than reverting to pre-2025 license numbers.
- 10) Shift season dates in SW later to address a later breeding and fawning period, likely shifting into mid-September and early October.

PUBLIC INVOLVMENT

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