

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 11, 2016

Agenda Item: 2016-2017 Antelope Hunting Seasons, Quota Ranges and HD Boundaries

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted biennially for most game species. This happens every other year between December and final adoptions in February. In proposing regulations to the Commission, FWP proposes adopting the existing (2015) structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

For the 2016 and 2017 antelope season structure changes include increased quotas and quota ranges to address increased and growing populations. A new hunting district, HD 313, is proposed in the upper Yellowstone because a new population of antelope has become established there over the past several years. There is also an informational item that does not require Commission action that the antelope drawing will be moved to the 1st week of August to accommodate biologists' surveys, which cannot begin before mid-July because of antelope biology. This will mean that hunters who apply for the 900-20 archery license will not learn if they drew it until shortly before the season opens on Aug. 15.

For other proposed changes see Commission Master List for the December meeting.

FWP is proposing no changes to those adopted in December.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Antelope season comments were received during scoping and included interest in fewer licenses in response to lower populations. Public comment ran from Dec. 10 to Jan 22. We received 37 comments with 8 speaking to general support, one wanting to expand the 900-20 early archery license opportunity to R2 HDs, and others speaking to either increasing or decreasing licenses in specific areas. All comments are in the Commission packet.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2015 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationale for individual proposals was included in the Dec. 10th Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Feb. 11th Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt the final 2016 and 2017 Antelope Hunting Seasons and Hunting Districts as presented by FWP. I also move to adopt all other portions of the previous 2014-2015 antelope season regulations not affected by the Commission's actions today.