

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 7, 2017

Agenda Item: 2018-2019 Antelope Hunting Seasons, Quota Ranges and Hunting District Boundaries

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

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 (2017) structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

For the 2018 and 2019 antelope season structure changes include increased quotas and quota ranges to address increased and growing populations. FWP is proposing that the 900-20 early archery-only license application be a first and only choice with a separate, earlier drawing to be held in mid-July. This would allow successful applicants more time to plan their hunt before the Aug. 15 opening date. It would also allow FWP biologists a much-needed extra week to complete survey flights and make final quota changes for all the other any-weapon licenses, which could then be drawn in mid-Aug. Survey flights cannot start before early July because doe/fawn groups are not aggregated any earlier, and final quota adjustments are made using data from these surveys.

FWP also proposes to expand HD 313 in the upper Yellowstone because a new population of antelope has become established there over the past several years.

All proposed changes are on the Commission Master List and their justifications are in the Commission Packet.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Antelope season comments were received during the Aug.20 – Sept. 21 scoping and generally expressed satisfaction with antelope seasons. In addition to public comment at the Dec. 7 Commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 24, 2018. Any final adoptions will take place at the Feb. 2018 Commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2017 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationale for individual proposals is included in Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec. 7 Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt for public comment the 2018 and 2019 antelope hunting seasons and hunting districts as presented by FWP, and that all other aspect of the regulations remain unchanged.