

A photograph of two mountain goat kids standing in a rocky crevice. The kid in the foreground is looking directly at the camera, while the one behind it is partially obscured. The rocks are grey and jagged.

2026 BIG GAME REGULATIONS

SEPTEMBER 12, 2025

DEREK BROMAN
GAME PROGRAM MANAGER

DON WHITTAKER
UNGULATE COORDINATOR

SAMANTHA FINO
CARNIVORE COORDINATOR

BRIAN WOLFER
WILDLIFE DIVISION DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR



BIG GAME MANAGEMENT & REGULATION PROCESS

REVIEW
2022 HUNT
CHANGES

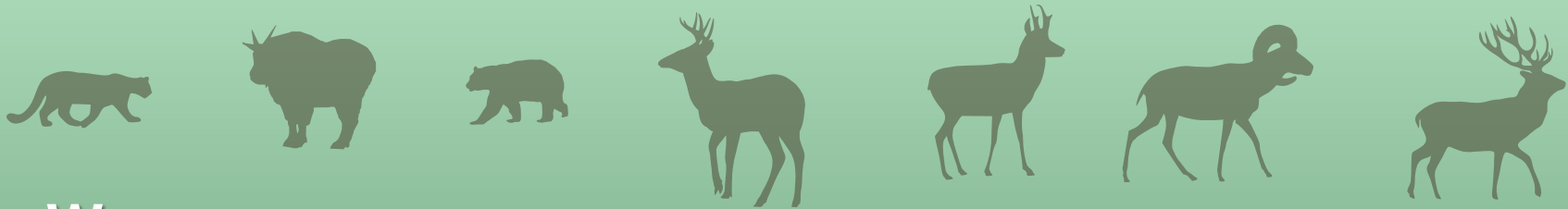
GENERAL
REGULATIONS

2026 HUNT
PROPOSALS

APPLICATION
FEES

CWD

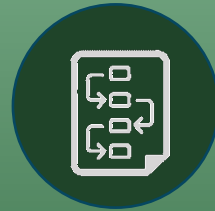




We manage populations for long term health



Informed by data
Population surveys
Habitat surveys
Disease sampling
Harvest reporting
Research



Guided by plans
Strategies and
actions to address
limiting factors
Sustainable harvest
frameworks



On-the-Ground-Action
Protect & Restore
habitat
Manage conflict
Manage harvest

REVIEW OF 2022 HUNT CHANGES

CONTROLLED ARCHERY ELK HUNTS IN NE OREGON

New controlled hunt
areas and hunts

High opportunity

Flexible and equitable
management tool



GENERAL REGULATION PROPOSALS

Prohibited devices
and equipment

Prohibit Hunting at
Wildlife Crossings



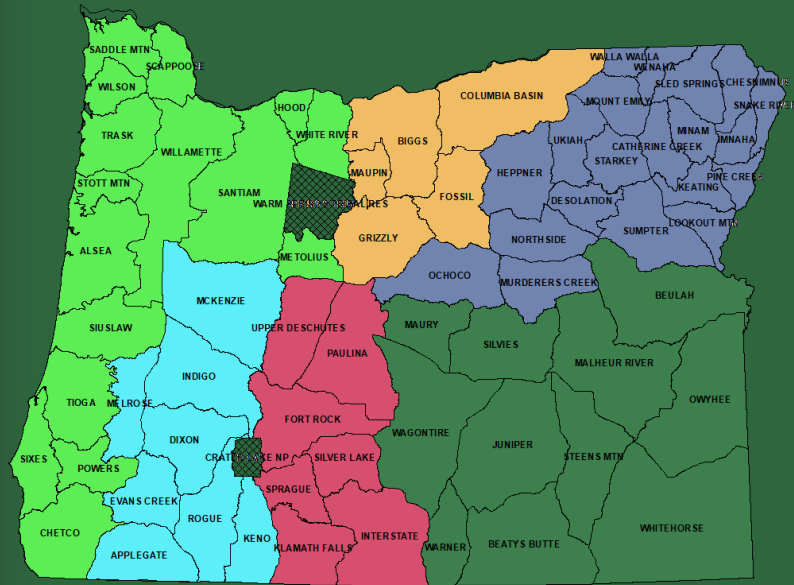
2026 Big Game Hunt Proposals



BIG GAME SEASON DEVELOPMENT



A photograph of a cougar (Puma concolor) in a forest setting, walking towards the left. The cougar has a tawny coat and is surrounded by dense green foliage and trees.

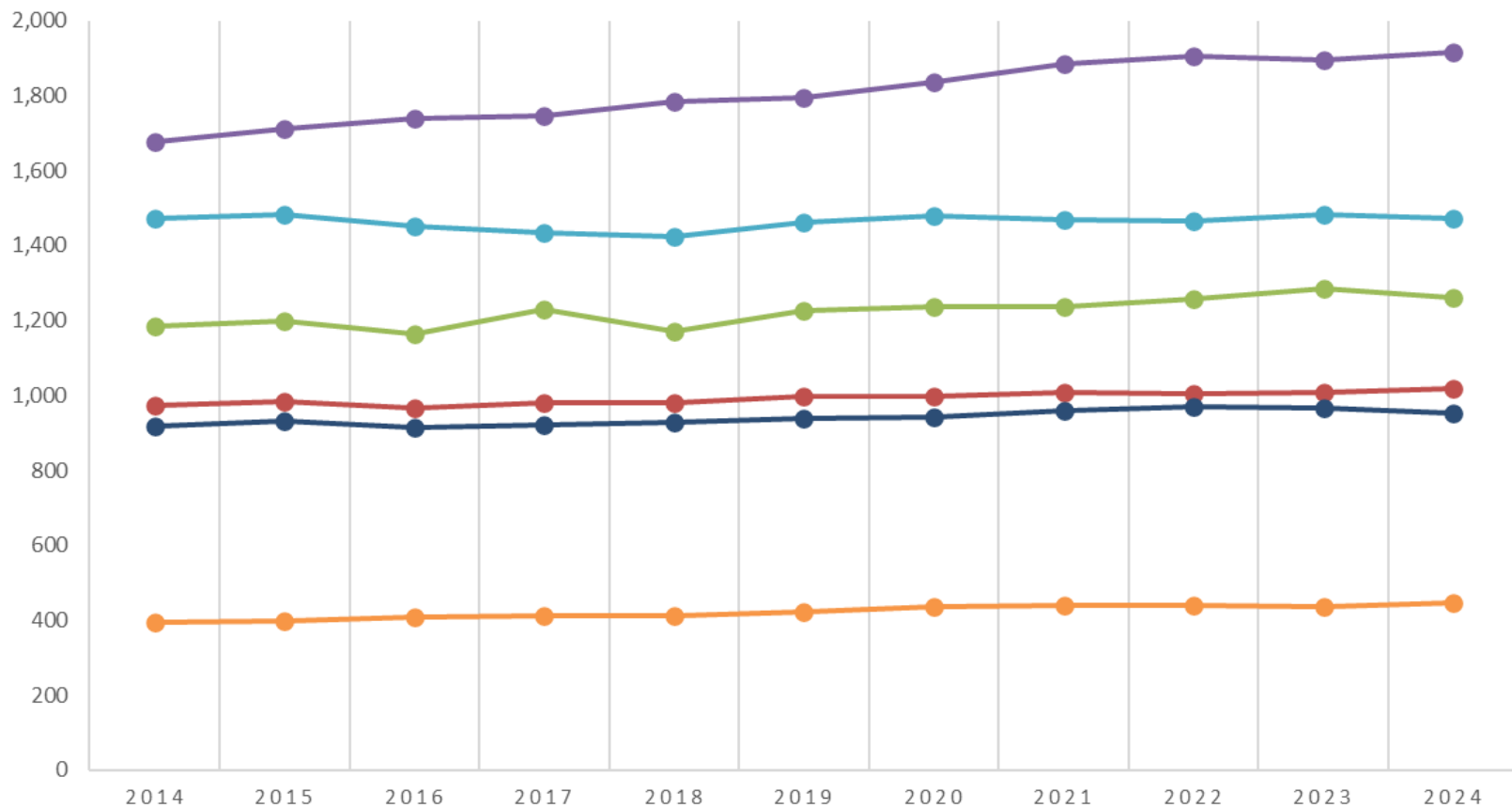


COUGAR POPULATIONS AT CARRYING CAPACITY

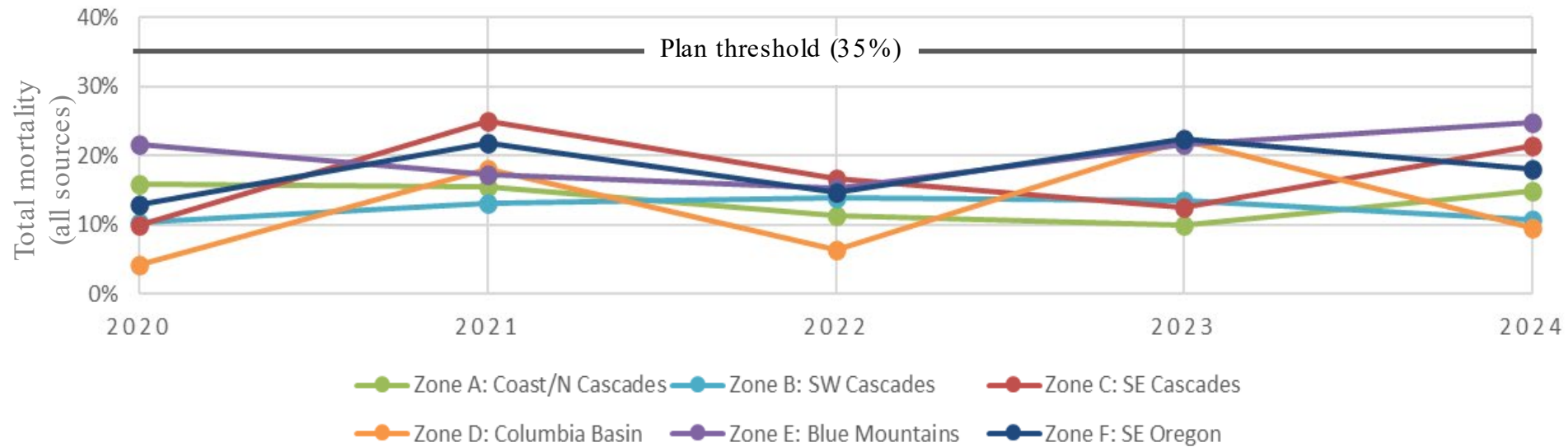
Statewide
Population
Estimate:
~7,000

COUGAR POPULATION ESTIMATE BY ZONE

Zone A: Coast/N Cascades Zone B: SW Cascades Zone C: SE Cascades
Zone D: Columbia Basin Zone E: Blue Mountains Zone F: SE Oregon



Female mortality remains below plan threshold





2026 COUGAR PROPOSALS

Maintain season dates and structure

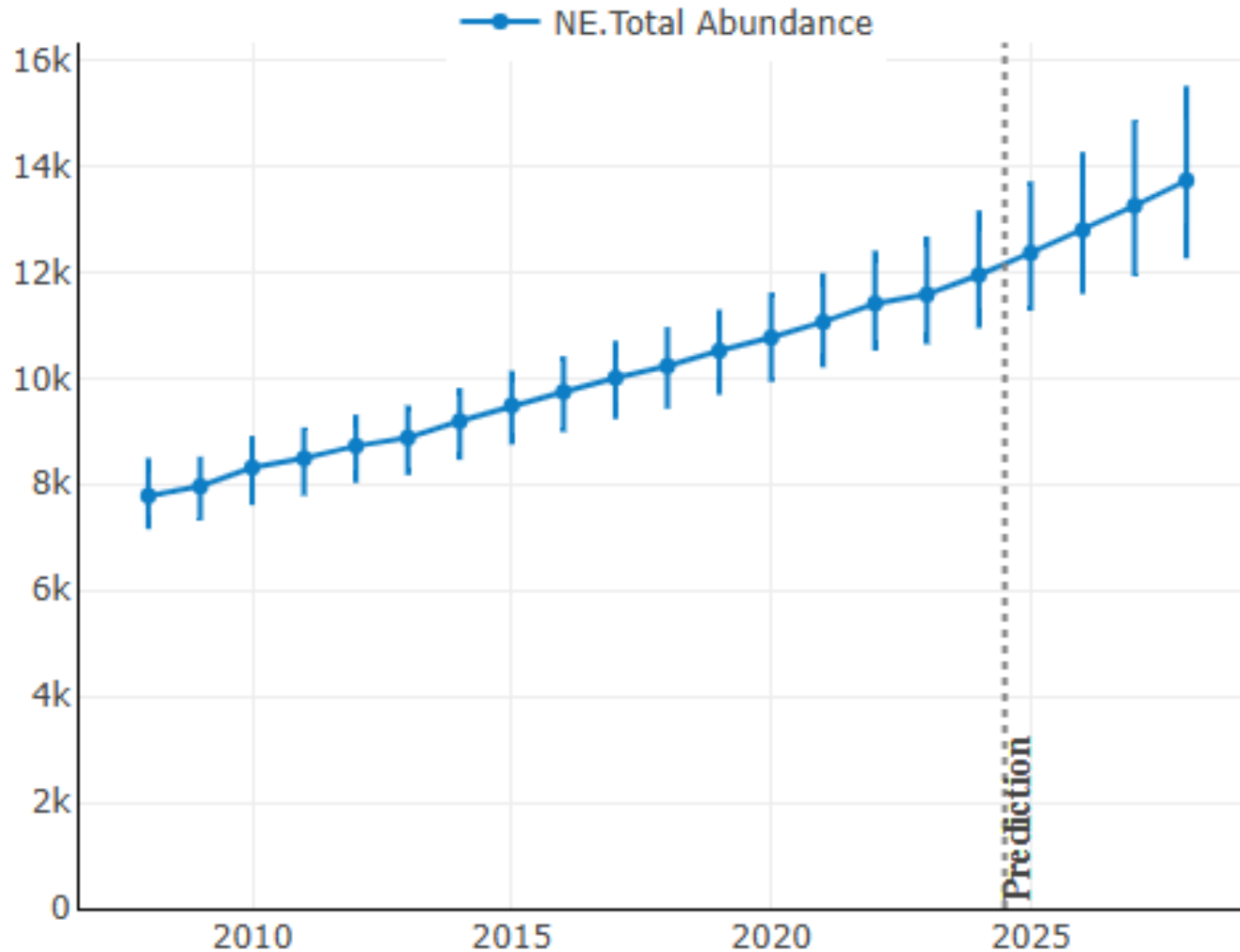
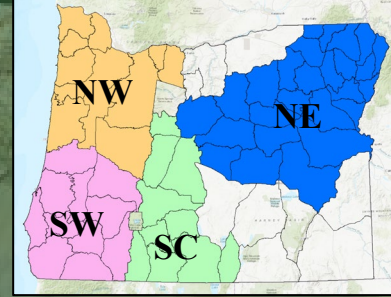
Protect kittens and females with kittens



BLACK BEAR POPULATION MANAGEMENT



OREGON'S BLACK BEAR POPULATION IS INCREASING



2026 SPRING BEAR PROPOSALS

Propose 1% tag increase

Continue to protect cubs
and sows with cubs





2026 FALL BEAR PROPOSALS

Maintain season dates and structure

Continue to protect cubs and sows with cubs

UNGULATES

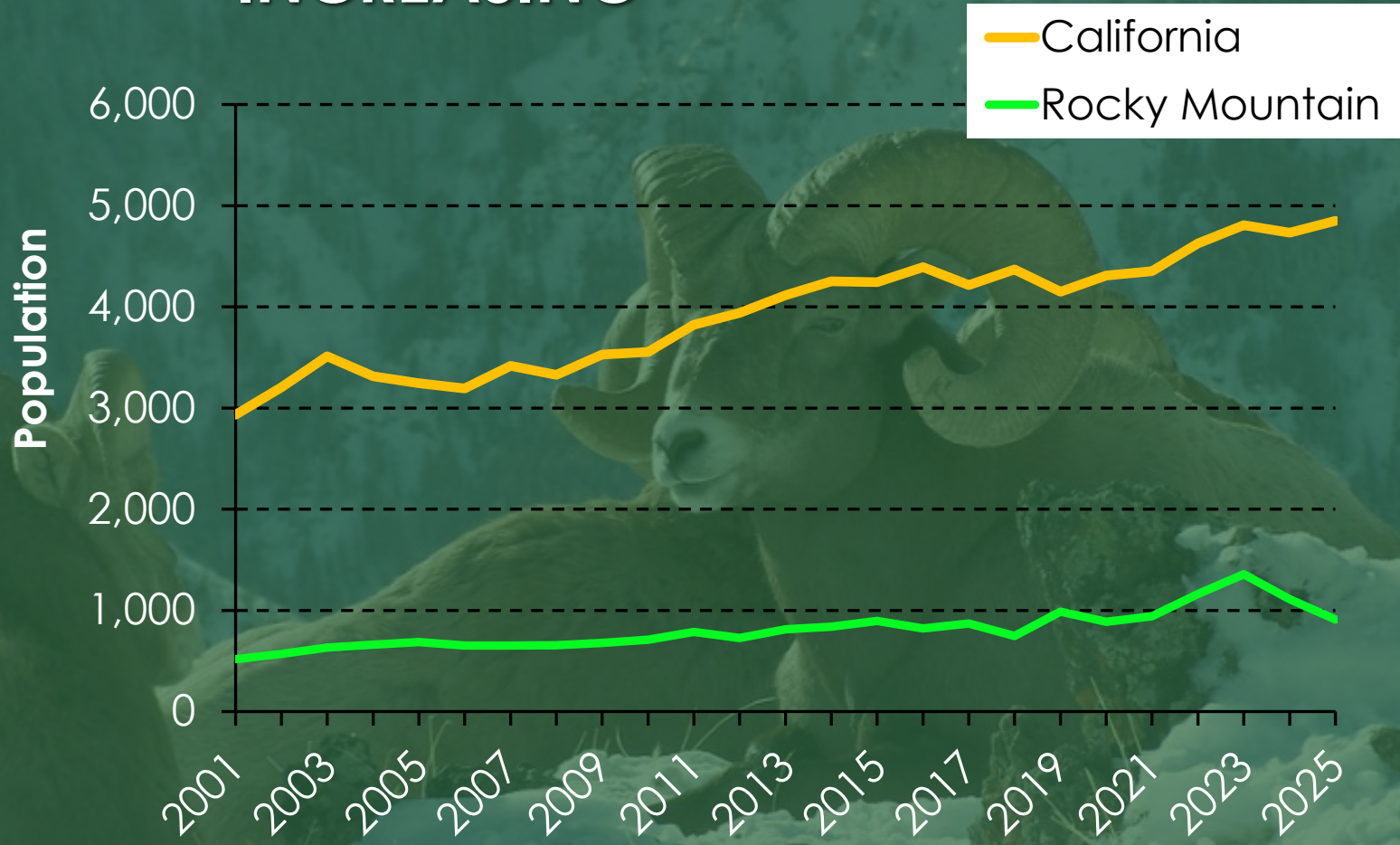


BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION MANAGEMENT

Disease sampling



TOTAL BIGHORN POPULATION INCREASING



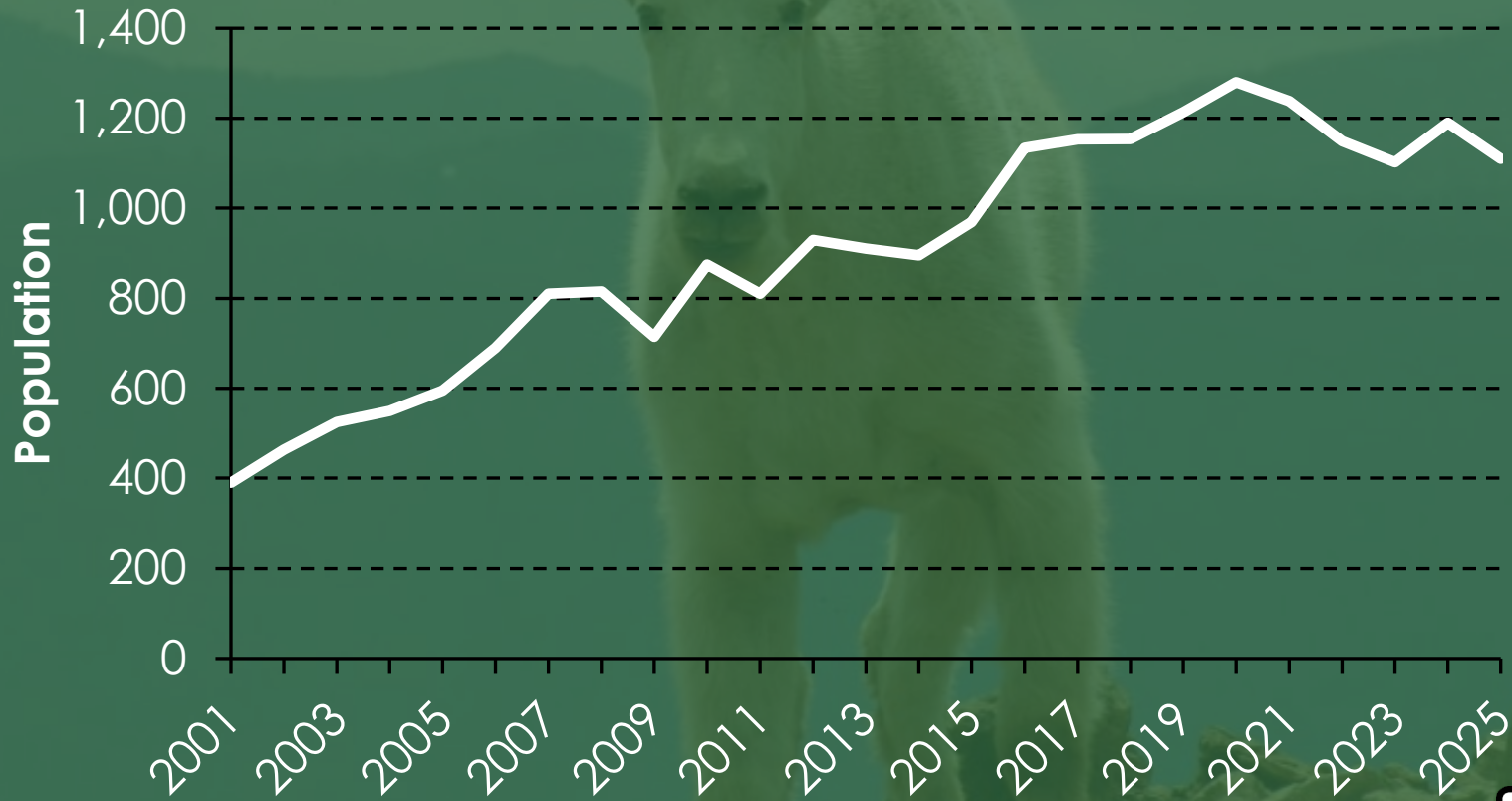
2025 BIGHORN SHEEP PROPOSALS

No tag in Wenaha
rotational hunt

Increase in
California tags



STABLE ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT POPULATION





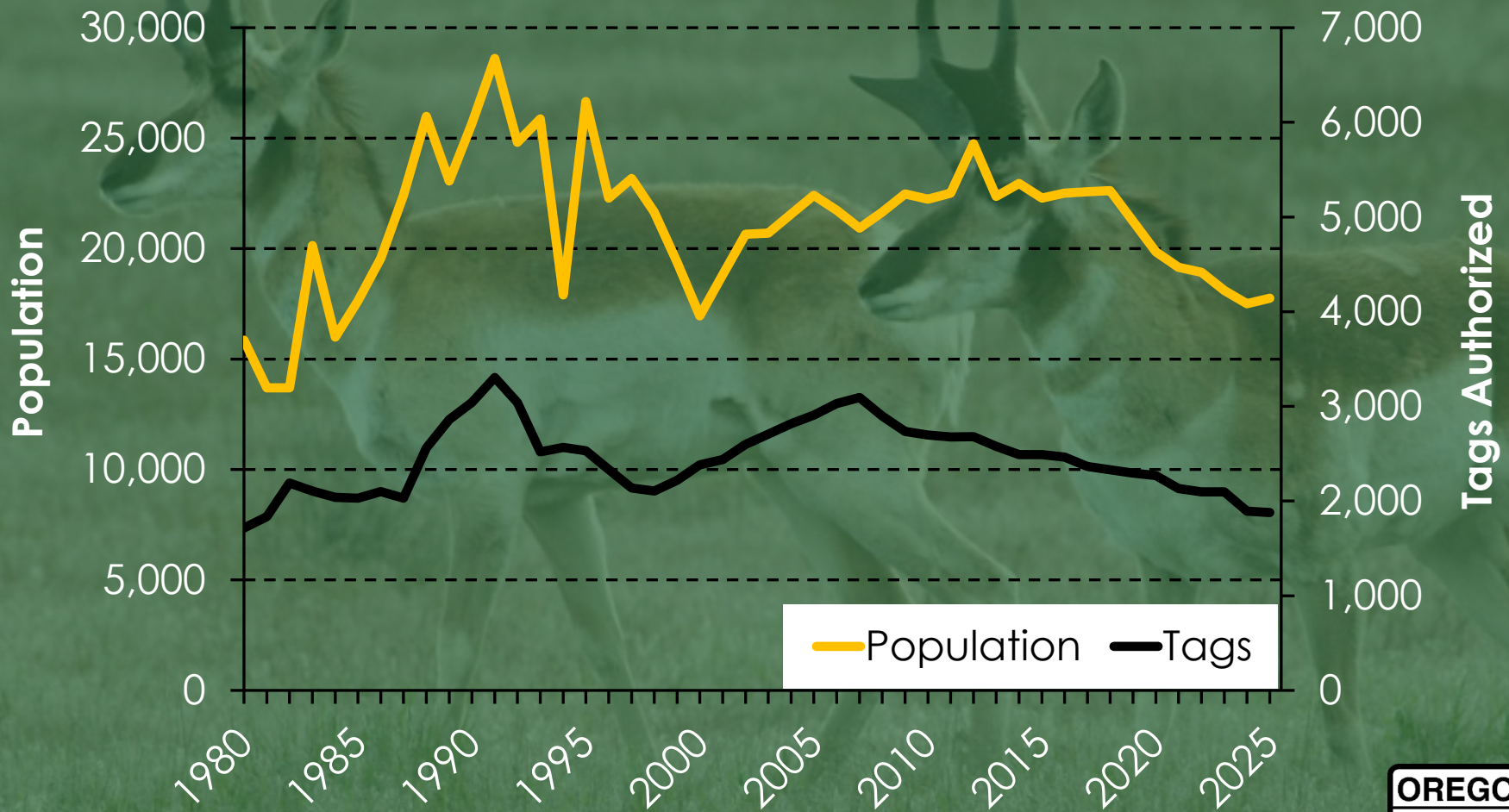
2026 ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOAT PROPOSALS

**No Central Cascades
hunt, rotating hunt**

Slight decrease in tags



Pronghorn Population Mirrors Drought Conditions



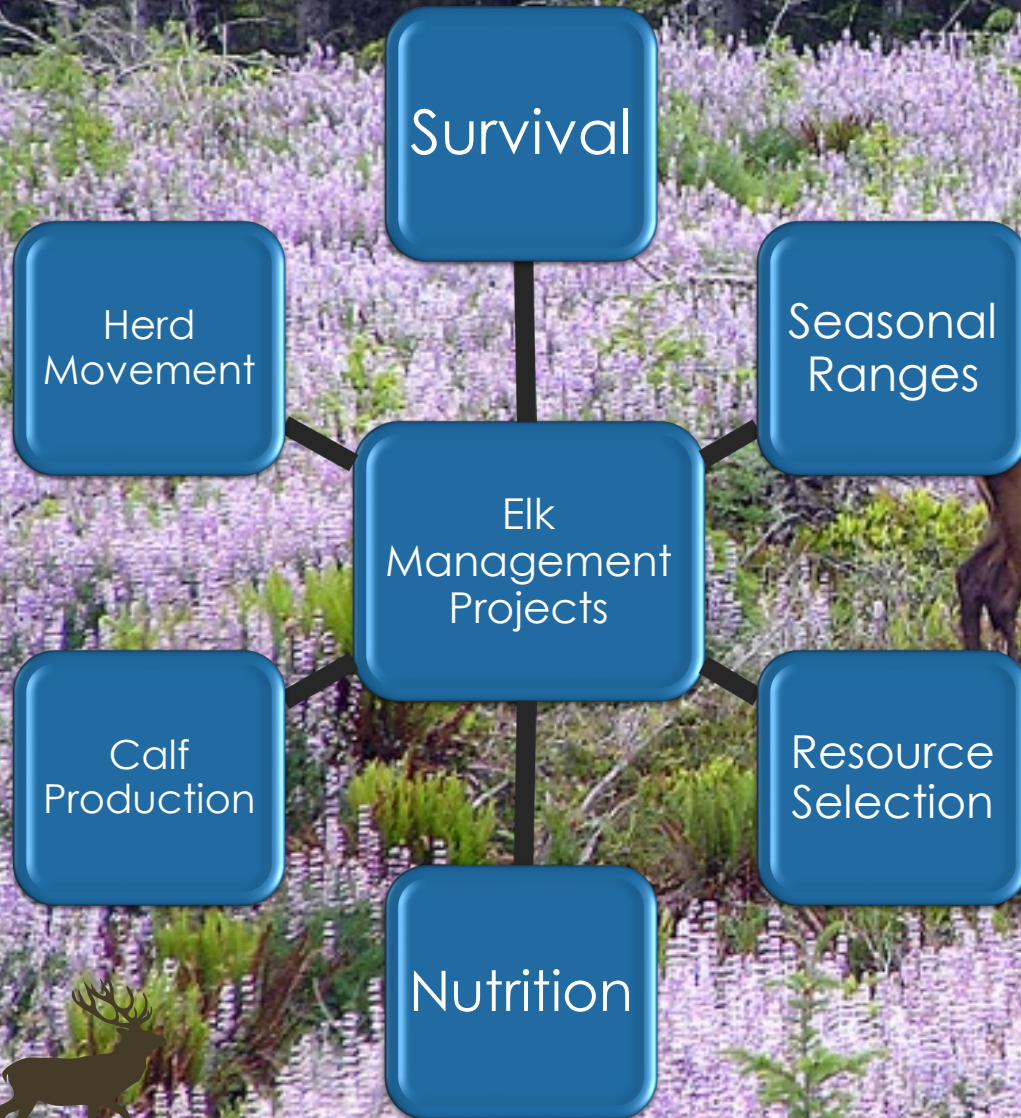


2025 PRONGHORN PROPOSALS

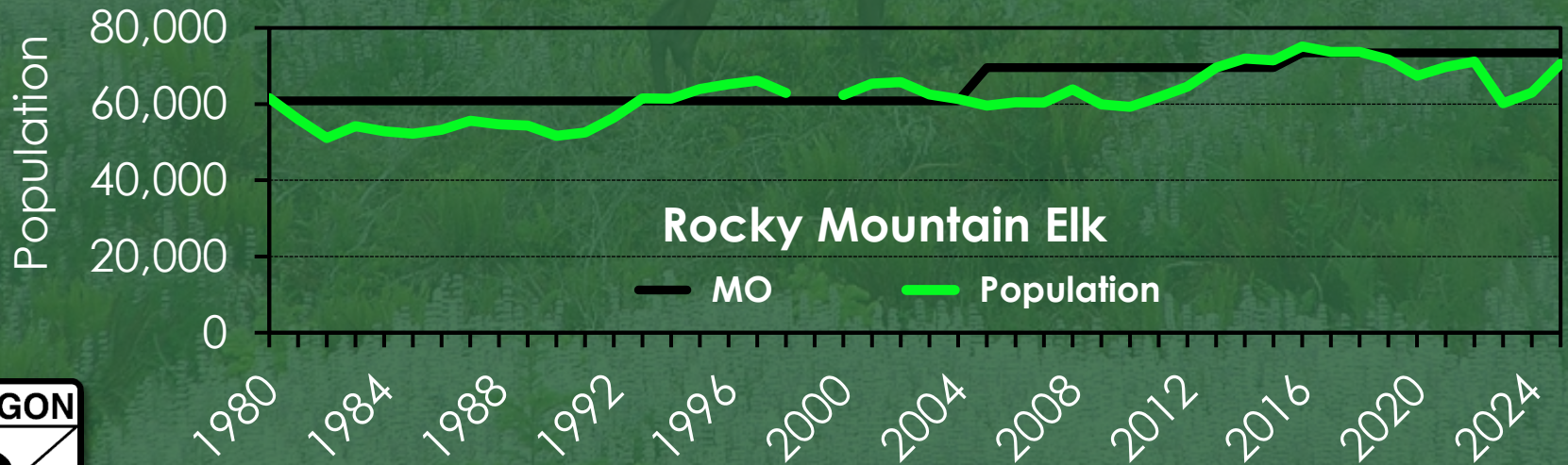
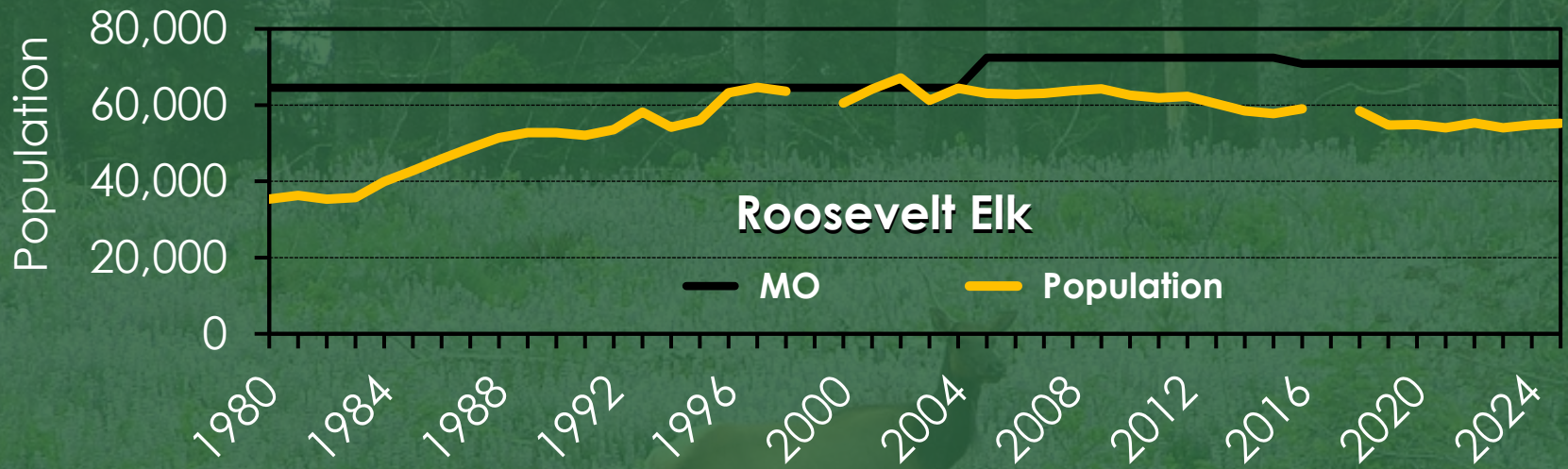
No major
changes



Elk Population Management

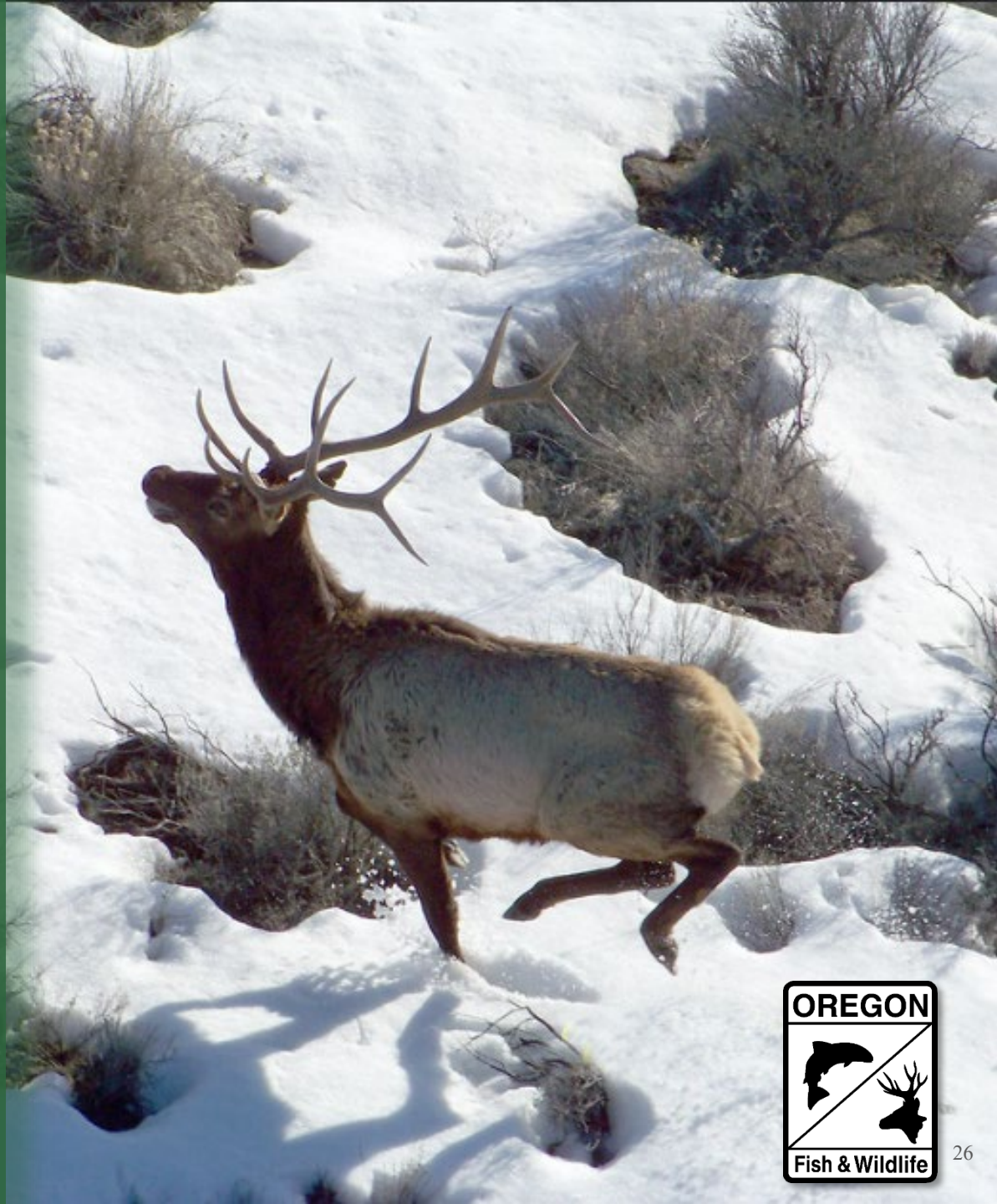


Elk Population Monitoring



2025 GENERAL ELK PROPOSALS

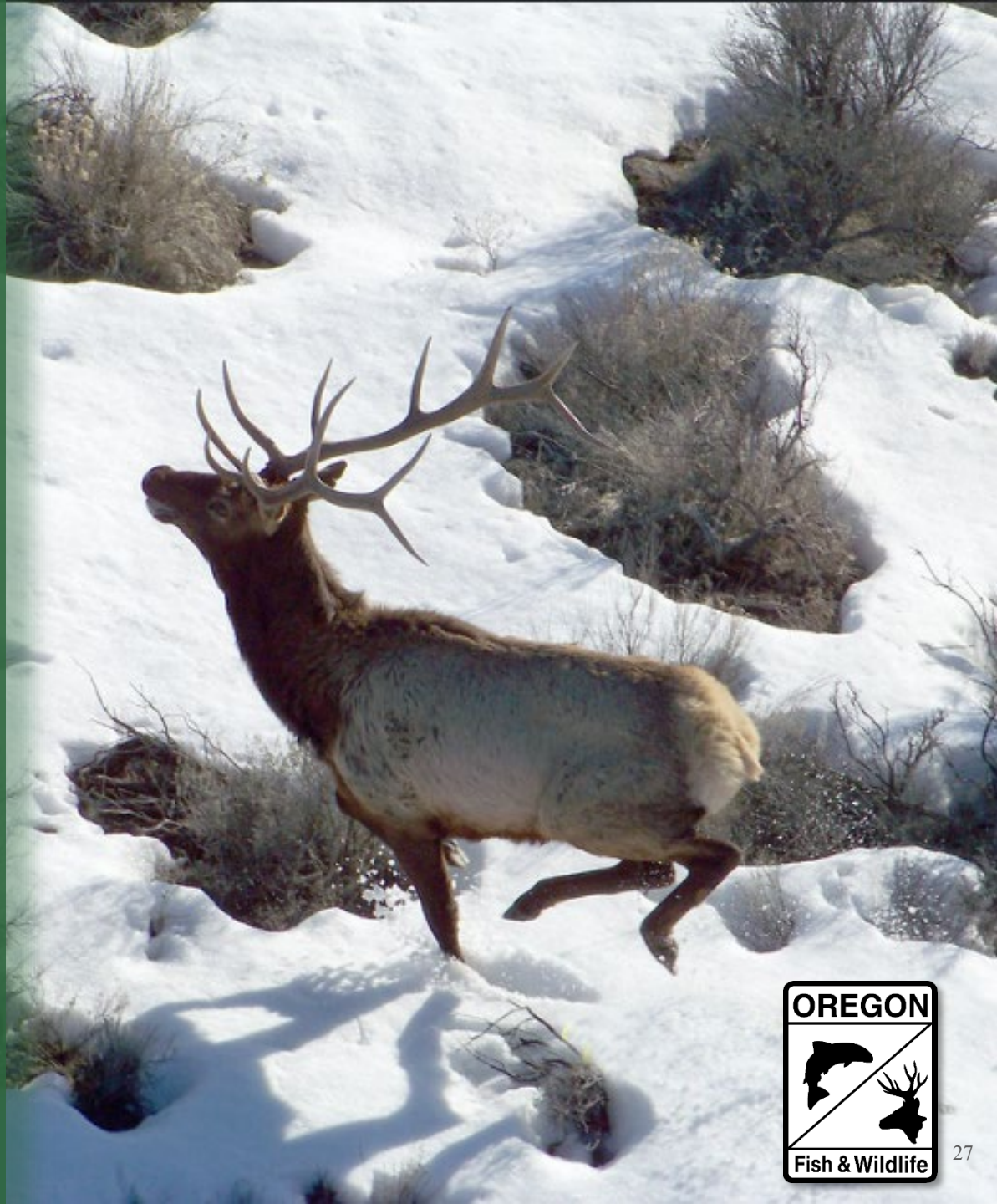
No major changes

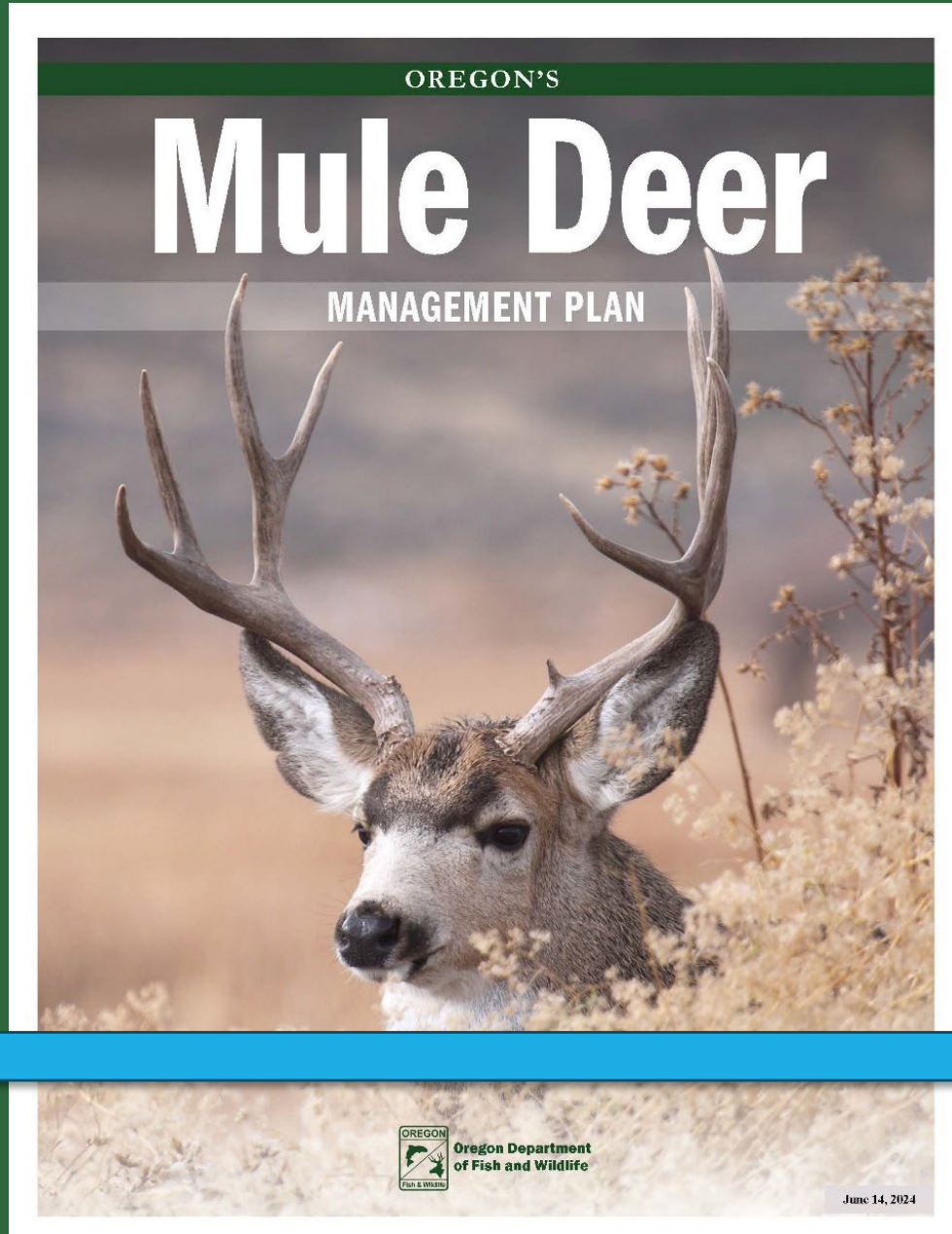


2025 CONTROLLED ELK PROPOSALS

Delete 5 western hunts,
reduce tags in another
concurrent with reduced
conflict

Three new and 2
deleted eastern
antlerless hunts



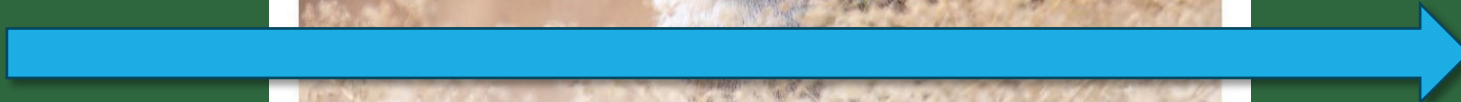


2024

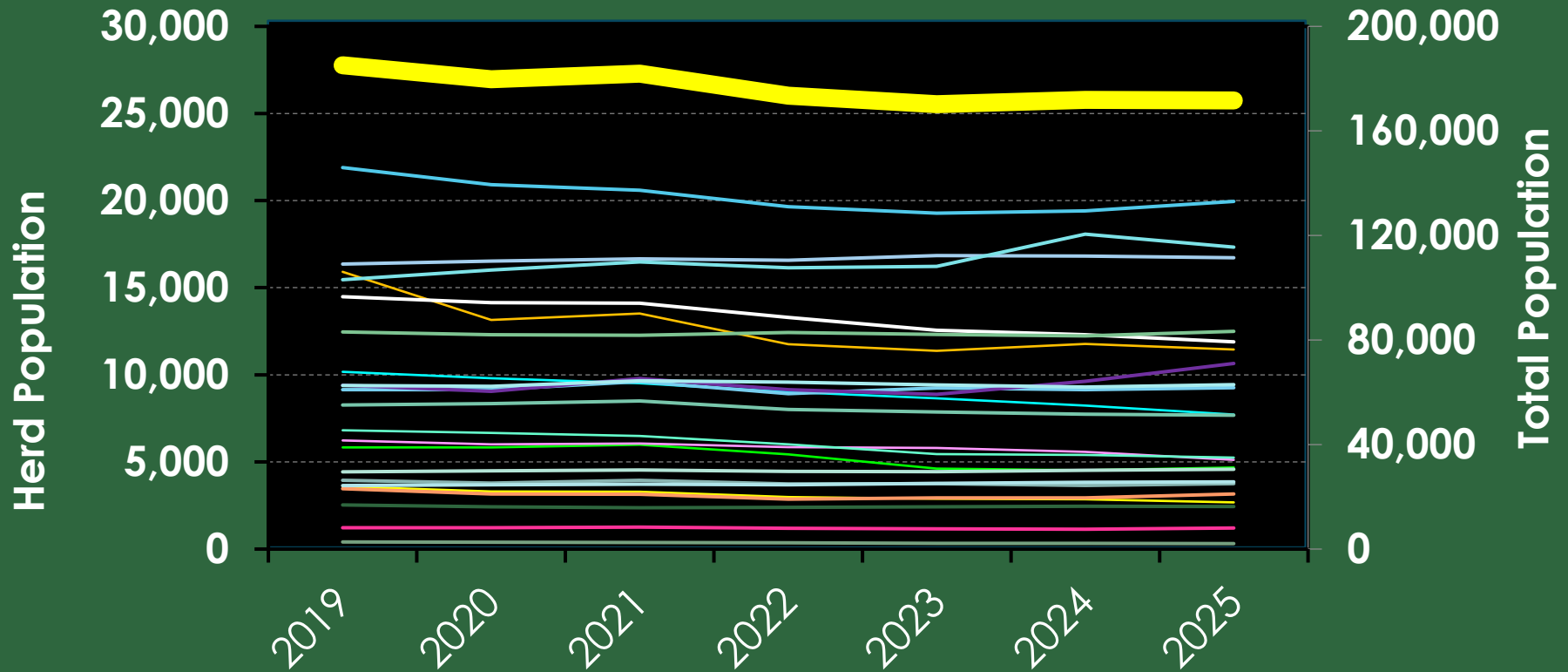
**Adopted by
the commission**

2026

**Implement
plan-directed
changes**



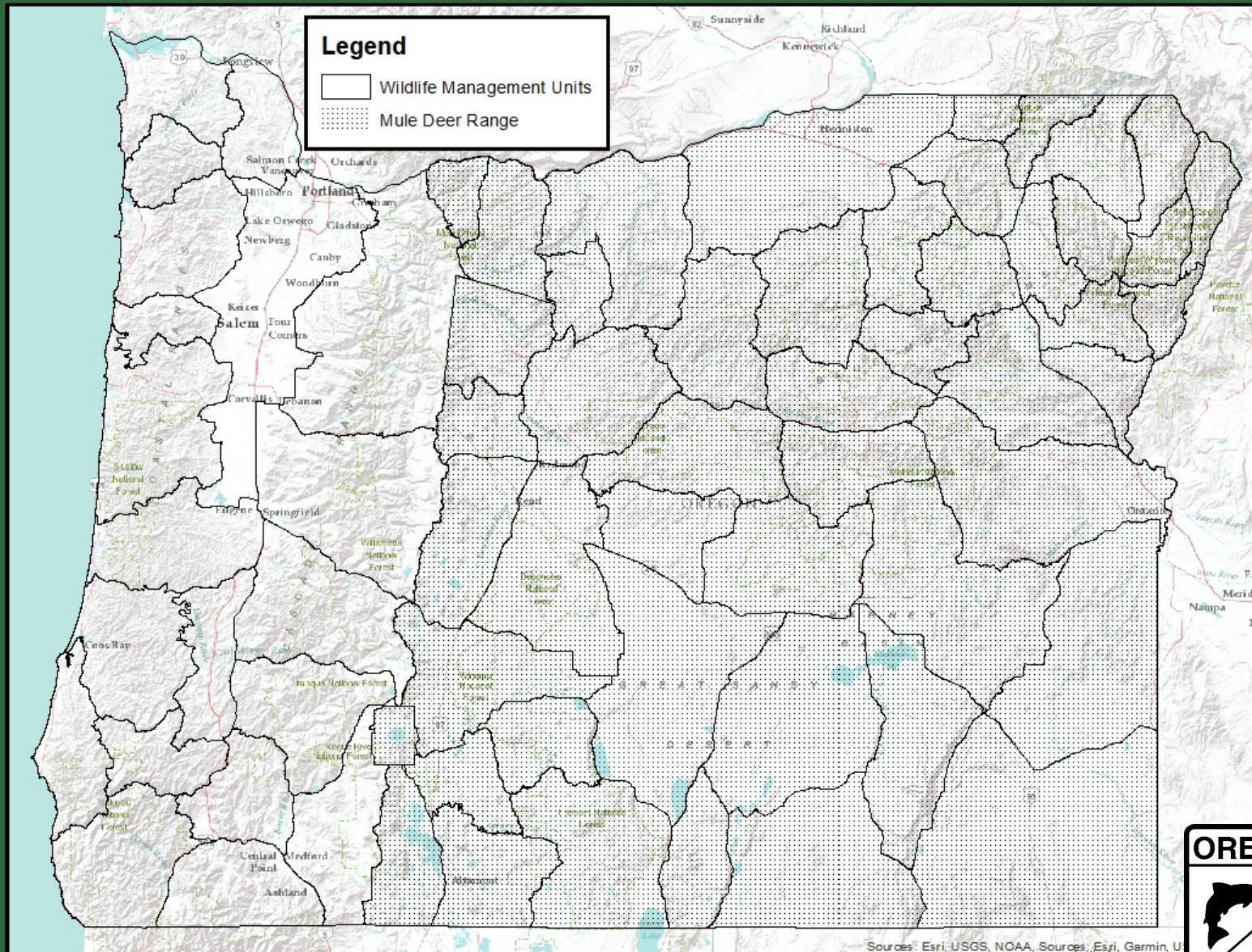
Mule Deer Population Monitoring



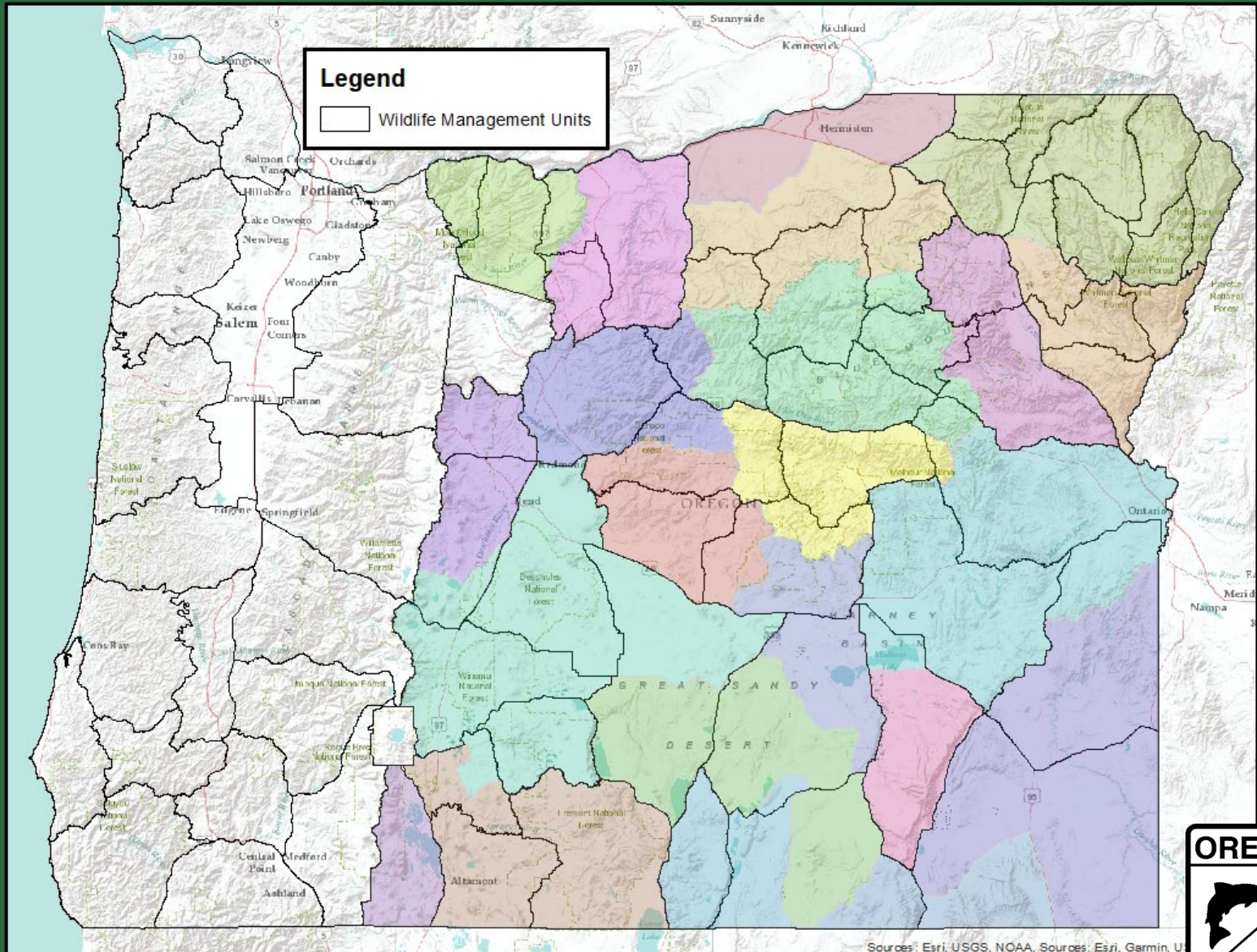
- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| — Aldrich | — Crooked River | — DeGarmo | — Deschutes |
| — Devils Garden | — Elkhorn | — Fox | — Helix |
| — Jackknife | — Juntura | — Keno | — Klamath Basin |
| — Mid Columbia | — North Blues | — Northeast | — Painted Hills |
| — Poverty Basin | — Sage Hen | — South Wallowas | — Southeast |
| — Steens | — Trout Creek | — Total | |



CHANGES TO HARVEST MANAGEMENT SCALE



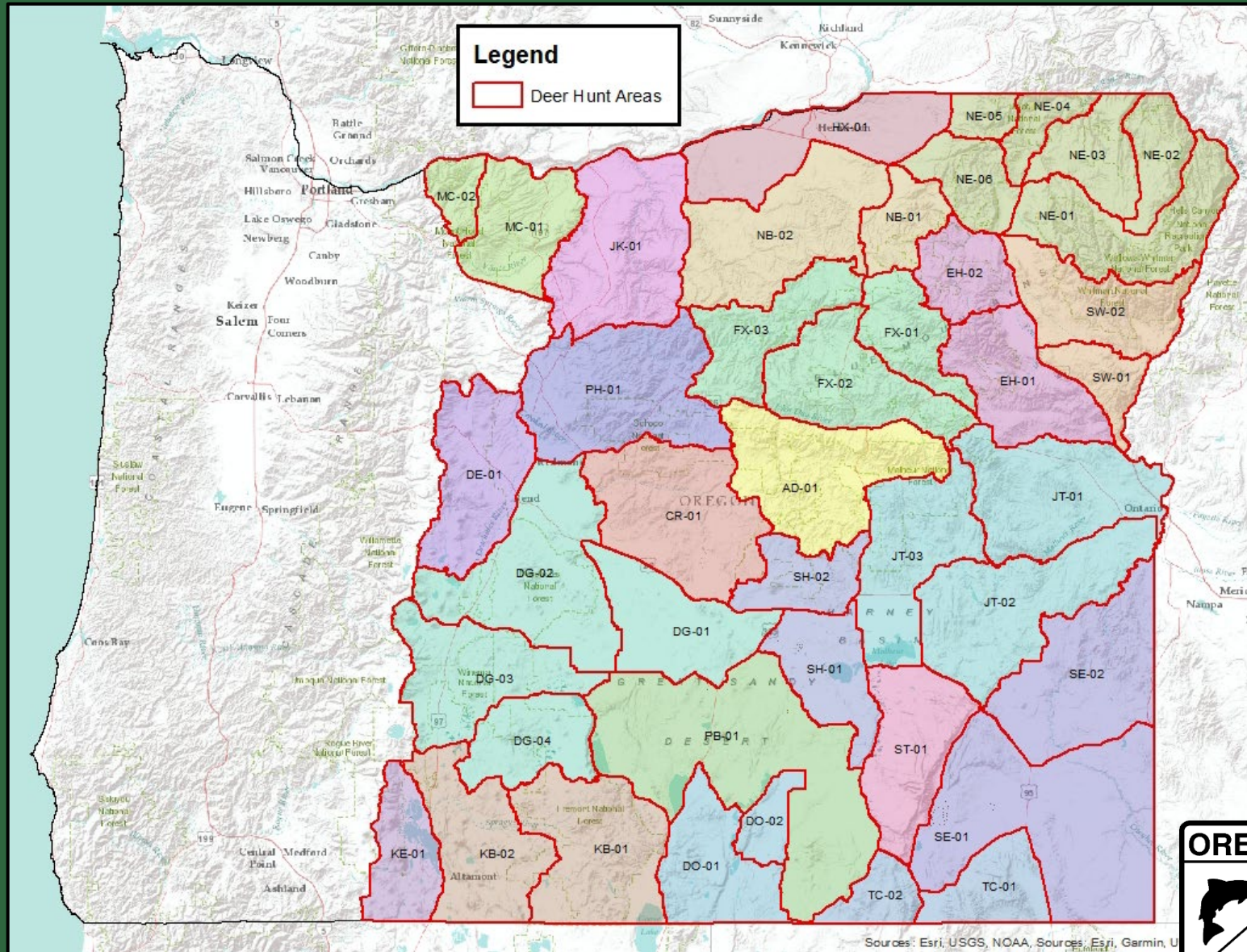
MULE DEER DEFINED HERD RANGE BOUNDARIES



Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA, Sources: Esri, Garmin, U



HUNT AREAS WITHIN HERD RANGES



Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA, Sources: Esri, Garmin, U



EXTENSIVE OUTREACH



Print Media



Digital Media



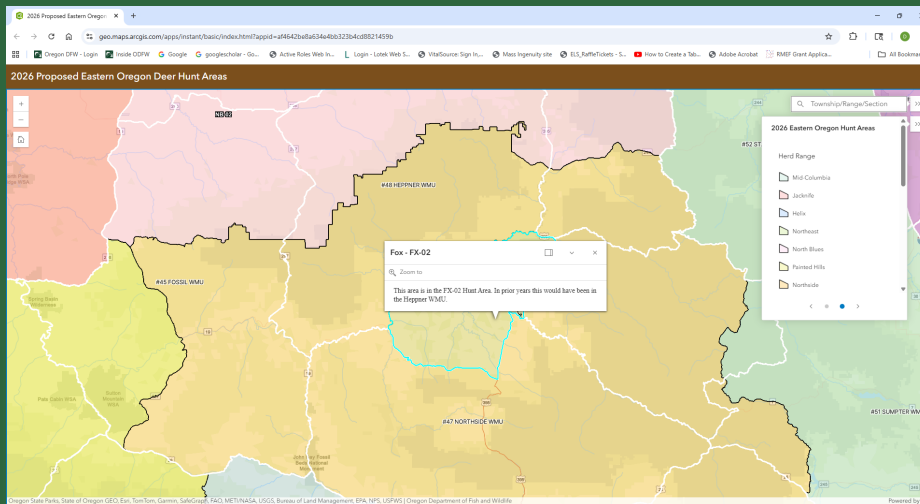
Targeted Outreach



Direct Communication



Tools and Information



Transitioning from Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) to Mule Deer Hunt Areas

Key Information About the New Deer Hunt Areas

Big Thanks to Hunters!

ODFW thanks Oregon hunters for their invaluable input in shaping the updated Mule Deer Management Plan! Your voices and dedication to conservation are making a real impact. Starting with the 2026 season, we're transitioning from Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) to Deer Hunt Areas to better align hunting boundaries with Oregon's mule deer populations and management goals. Your support helps ensure a strong future for mule deer and hunting in Oregon.

The change, set to be adopted in September 2025, will affect how you apply for mule deer hunts and navigate hunting regulations. Changes may also affect where you can hunt once you have drawn your tag.

What's Changing and Why:

In June 2024, ODFW finalized the state's Mule Deer Management Plan. One focus of the plan is on harvest of mule deer based on herd ranges, which were identified through extensive monitoring efforts. These efforts led to the identification of 22 unique mule deer herd ranges in eastern Oregon.

Most herd ranges encompass more than one of the traditional WMUs, while some WMUs contain portions of 2 or 3 distinct herd ranges. These differences in alignment make it challenging to manage and monitor harvest as it relates to a distinct mule deer population.

By re-defining our Deer Hunt Areas to reflect natural herd range boundaries, ODFW can improve harvest and herd monitoring and management, set more accurate tag totals, and more effectively assess population responses to management actions.

Questions?

Your local district wildlife staff is your best resource for

What Hunters Need to Know:

New Boundary Descriptions: New hunting areas will come with new detailed boundary descriptions. Hunters will need to review descriptions carefully when desiring to hunt their favorite spots.

New Naming System: Deer Hunt Areas will use a new alphanumeric system to identify hunt areas within herd ranges. For example, hunt area #1 within the Northeast herd range would be NE 01.

Larger Hunt Areas: Expect hunting areas that are larger than the traditional WMUs. Large herd ranges will likely still contain more than one hunt area.

Fewer Total Hunts: Larger hunt areas mean fewer individual hunts overall.

Tag Adjustments: In the short term, there may be slight tag reductions to manage hunter pressure. Tags could increase later if there's no biological need to maintain lower levels.

Use Your Points Wisely: If you've been saving points for a specific mule deer hunt, a thorough review of proposed hunt areas and tag numbers will be important. If your hunt area is changing dramatically, consider using your points in 2025.

Landowner Preference Tags: These tags may also change based on how properties fall within new herd ranges and hunt areas.

Tips for Finding the Best Hunting Spots:

The methods for choosing your hunting location remain the same. Use ODFW's publicly available deer harvest data, including harvest statistics, success rates, buck ratios, and decision-making.

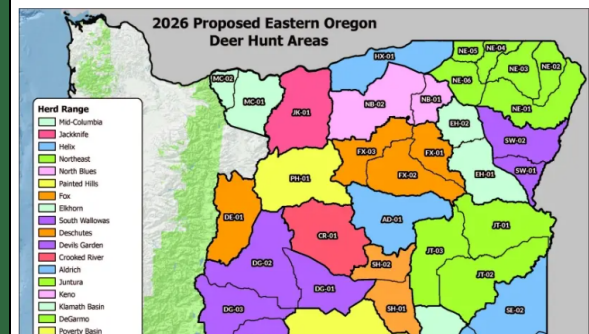
ARTICLES | April 2, 2025

Eastern Oregon Deer Hunts

From WMUs to Deer Hunt Areas in 2026

MULE DEER, BIG GAME HUNTS, OREGON, MULE DEER PLAN, EASTERN OREGON DEER HUNTING

Hunters should be aware of potential changes coming for deer hunts in Eastern Oregon in 2026. Hunts will be structured based on Deer Herd Ranges, not WMUs, to reflect mule deer biology and allow for more accurate monitoring and management.





2026 DEER PROPOSALS

WESTERN OREGON

No changes to Western Oregon buck hunts

Increase Applegate doe tags

EASTERN OREGON

145 new eastern buck hunts
replace 142 deleted WMU hunts

22 eastern doe hunts replace
21 WMU based hunts

Split out WTD



Mule Deer Hunt Next Steps



Landowner Preference (LOP)



Outreach & Resources

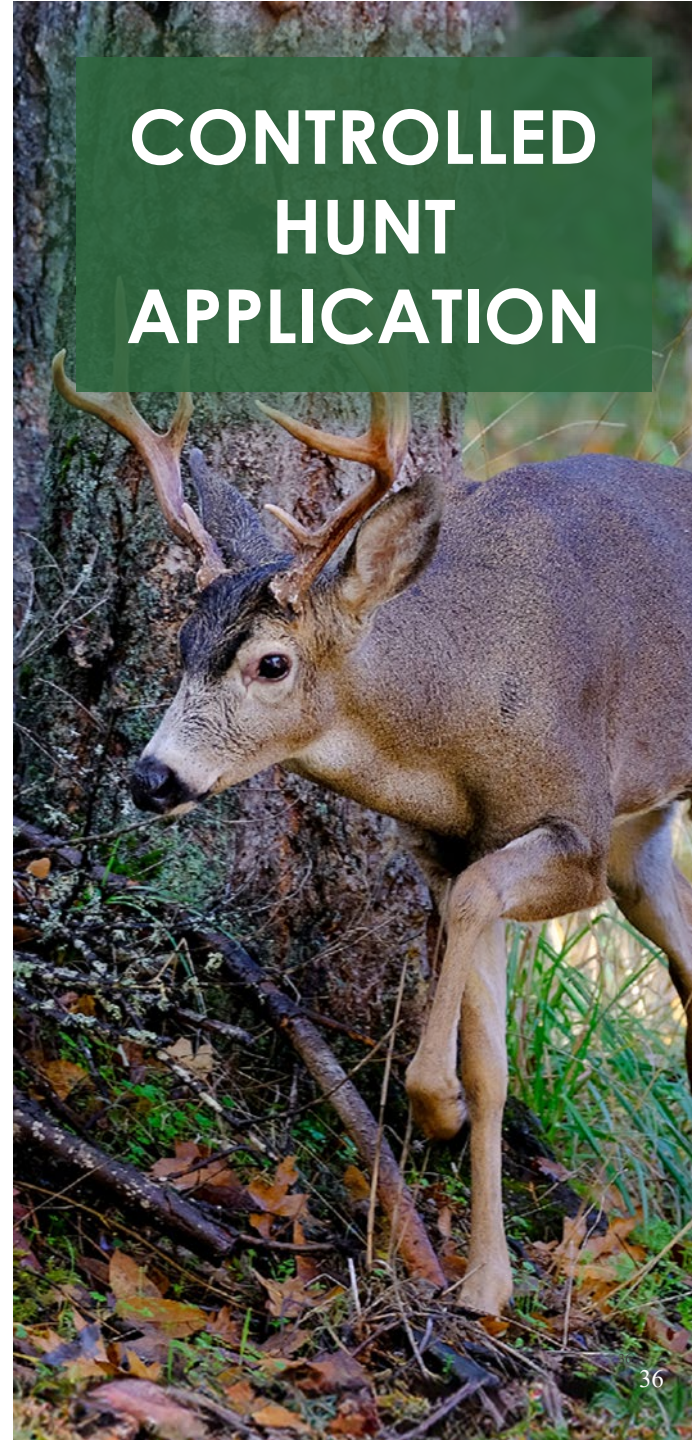


Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Proposed Recreational License Fee Schedule

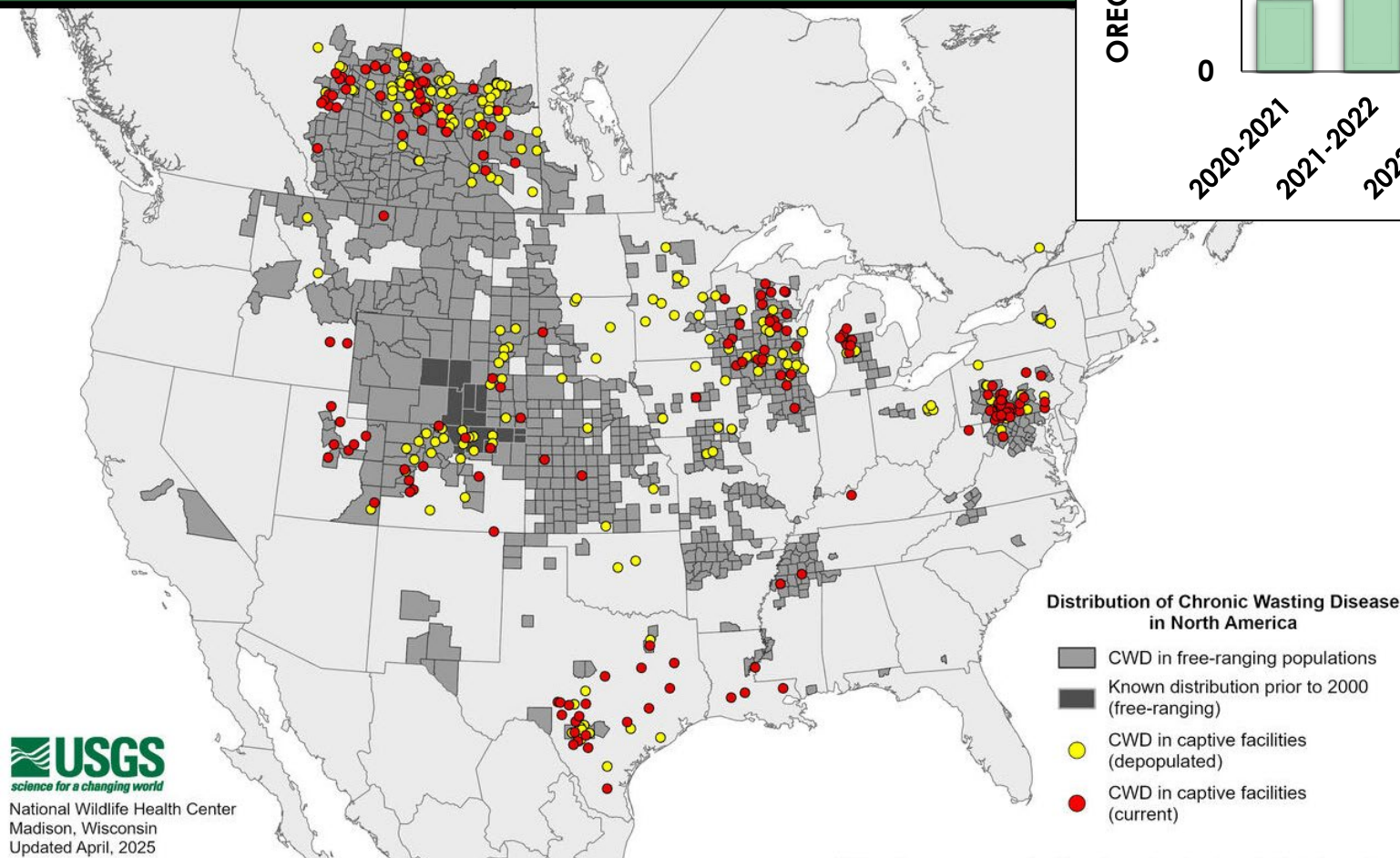
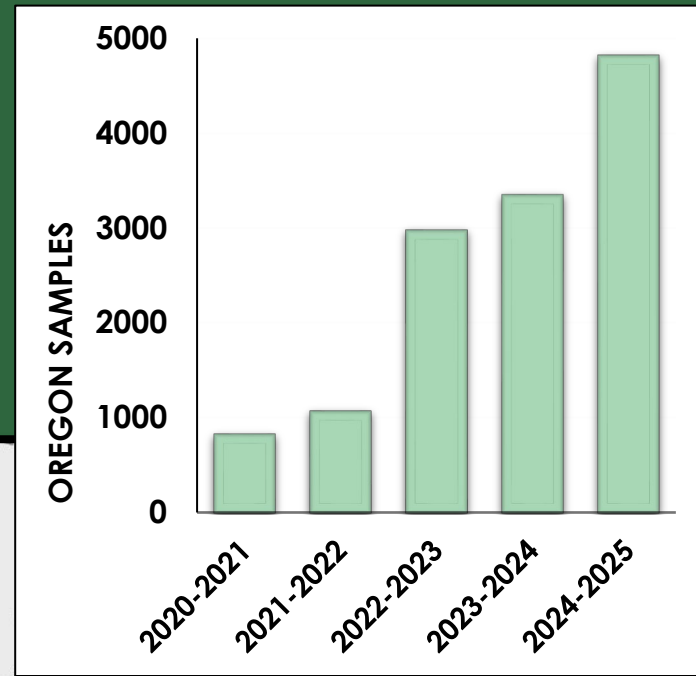
Costs include \$2 Agent fee

	Current	Effective 2026	Effective 2028	Effective 2030
HUNTING LICENSES				
RESIDENT HUNTER	\$34.50	\$39.00	\$42.00	\$45.00
RESIDENT SENIOR HUNTER	\$22.00	\$25.00	\$27.00	\$29.00
UNIFORMED SERVICES HUNTER (R)	\$17.00	\$19.00	\$21.00	\$23.00
UNIFORMED SERVICES HUNTER (NR)	\$34.50	\$39.00	\$42.00	\$45.00
NONRESIDENT HUNTER	\$172.00	\$193.00	\$208.00	\$225.00
NONRESIDENT 3-DAY BIRD	\$32.50	\$36.00	\$39.00	\$42.00
HUNTING TAGS/VALIDATIONS/FEES				
RESIDENT DEER	\$28.50	\$33.00	\$36.00	\$39.00
NONRESIDENT DEER	\$443.50	\$500.00	\$540.00	\$585.00
RESIDENT ELK	\$49.50	\$56.00	\$60.00	\$65.00
SPECIAL ELK (DV/Pioneer)	\$26.00	\$29.00	\$31.00	\$33.00
NONRESIDENT ELK	\$588.00	\$660.00	\$715.00	\$775.00
RESIDENT BLACK BEAR	\$16.50	\$16.50	\$16.50	\$16.50
NONRESIDENT BLACK BEAR	\$16.50	\$16.50	\$16.50	\$16.50
RESIDENT TURKEY	\$26.50	\$26.50	\$26.50	\$26.50
YOUTH TURKEY	\$10.50	\$10.50	\$10.50	\$10.50
NONRESIDENT TURKEY	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$90.00	\$90.00
RESIDENT ANTELOPE	\$51.50	\$58.00	\$63.00	\$68.00
NONRESIDENT ANTELOPE	\$395.50	\$443.00	\$478.00	\$516.00
RESIDENT MOUNTAIN SHEEP	\$142.00	\$159.00	\$172.00	\$186.00
NONRESIDENT MOUNTAIN SHEEP	\$1,513.50	\$1,695.00	\$1,831.00	\$1,977.00
RESIDENT COUGAR	\$16.50	\$16.50	\$16.50	\$16.50
NONRESIDENT COUGAR	\$16.50	\$16.50	\$16.50	\$16.50
RESIDENT MOUNTAIN GOAT	\$142.00	\$159.00	\$172.00	\$186.00
NONRESIDENT MOUNTAIN GOAT	\$1,513.50	\$1,695.00	\$1,831.00	\$1,977.00
PHEASANT TAG	\$25.00	\$28.00	\$30.00	\$32.00
YOUTH PHEASANT TAG	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$12.00	\$13.00
RESIDENT UPLAND BIRD STAMP	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$12.00	\$13.00
YOUTH UPLAND BIRD STAMP	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00
RESIDENT WATERFOWL STAMP	\$13.50	\$15.00	\$16.00	\$17.00
YOUTH WATERFOWL STAMP	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00
NONRESIDENT BIRD- WATERFOWL STAMP	\$44.50	\$50.00	\$54.00	\$58.00
UNIFORMED SERVICES (NR) BIRD- WATERFOWL STAMP	\$21.50	\$24.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
CONTROLLED HUNT APPLICATION	\$8.00	\$10.00	\$11.00	\$12.00
MANDATORY REPORTING PENALTY FEE	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00

CONTROLLED HUNT APPLICATION



Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance Sampling Increasing





Staff Recommendation

Adopt the staff proposals in Amended Attachment 3 and amend OAR Chapter 635, Divisions 045, 060, 065, 066, 067, 068, 069, 070, 071, 072, 073, and 075 as proposed by department staff, with continued authority to correct grammar, punctuation, and consistency.