

July 2026 Wildlife District Meeting

Migratory and Upland Game Bird Updates

2026-2027 Migratory and Upland Game Bird seasons were adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission on April 24, 2026. Setting game bird seasons in April allows the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (department) to publish the Game Bird Regulations by early July. The 2026-2027 seasons will again open a bit later this year, primarily to avoid conflict with the controlled buck deer opener. Specifically, eastside chukar, quail, partridge and waterfowl in Zone 2 will open on October 10, 2026. The Zone 2 opener is early enough in October this year to allow for a split waterfowl opener, and Zone 1 will open on October 17, 2026.

Following is a list of major Commission adopted changes for 2026-2027 game bird seasons:

Upland Game Birds

- For most upland game birds, all aspects of the seasons (e.g., season dates, daily bag limits, possession limits) are covered by the Upland Game Bird Hunting Season Framework (framework), which is reviewed every five years. The framework was approved last year, resulting in the 2025-2030 framework that will guide decision-making over the next five seasons. A summary of 2026-2027 seasons covered by the framework is provided in the table below.

Upland Game Birds	Open Area	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
Ruffed and Blue Grouse	Statewide	Sept. 1 – Jan 31, 2027	3 each species	9 each species
Chukar and Hungarian (Gray) Partridge	Statewide	Oct. 10 – Jan. 31, 2027	8	24
Rooster Pheasant	Statewide	Oct. 10 – Dec. 31, 2026	2	8
Quail (California and Mountain)	Western Oregon	Sept. 1 – Jan 31, 2027	10	30
	Eastern Oregon	Oct. 10 – Jan 31, 2027	10 (may not include more than 2 Mtn Quail)	30 (may not include more than 6 Mtn Quail)

- Final Greater Sage-Grouse permit numbers will be adopted in the August Commission Meeting.

Migratory Game Birds

- No changes to dove and pigeon seasons.
- Normal season date shifts with the calendar (one day earlier) for most waterfowl seasons but opening days will be split by zone this year, after opening concurrently for the past three seasons (Zone 2 opens October 10 and Zone 1 opens October 17).
- The daily bag limit of ducks continues to be seven, with the daily bag limit for pintail remaining at three per day.
- The white-fronted goose bag limit has been reduced from 10 to 6 per day, statewide.
- Reductions in Canada/cackling goose bag limit and season length in the Northwest

Permit Goose Zone remain in place for this season. The daily bag limit is two Canada/cackling geese per day and the third season period closes on February 14 instead of March 10.

Wildlife Area Hunt Program Regulations

- The rules regarding when you can hunt game mammals at Summer Lake Wildlife Area with a firearm have been modified in the Game Bird Hunting Regulations to match those in the Big Game Hunting Regulations. The change includes allowing game mammal hunting with firearms east of state highway 31 at Summer Lake Wildlife Area.

Big Game Regulation Overview and Species Highlights

Big Game Regulations Development Process

2027 Big Game Hunting Regulations, will be adopted at the September 18, 2026 Commission meeting in La Grande, Oregon. The meeting format will include both an in-person and virtual attendance option with the latter requiring 48-hour advanced sign-up.

Like previous years, the deadline for hunters to apply for deer, elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, and Rocky Mountain goat controlled hunts was May 15th with revisions or corrections to applications allowed through May 25th. Draw results were released on June 12, giving most hunters many months of time for hunt preparation and decision-making.

General Regulation Proposals for 2027

The hunting season framework was modified in 2020 so that the season dates are built off of the buck deer any legal weapon season opening on the first Saturday in October. To keep openers on the correct day of the week, the 2027 dates below are one calendar day earlier than 2026.

“Standard” season dates for 2027 hunts are as follows:

Pronghorn (1st Centerfire Season)	Aug. 14–22
Archery Deer and Elk	Aug. 28–Sept. 26
Western Buck Deer and Antlerless Deer	Oct. 2–Nov. 5
Controlled Buck Deer	Oct. 2–Oct. 13
Eastern OR Antlerless Deer	Oct. 16–24
Cascade Bull	Nov. 6–12
General Coast 1st Season	Nov. 13–16*
General Coast 2nd Season	Nov. 20–Nov. 26*
Rocky Mtn. Bull Elk 1st Season	Oct. 27–31
Rocky Mtn. Bull Elk 2nd Season	Nov. 6–14
Rocky Mtn. Antlerless Elk	Nov. 20–28

Some relevant 2027 holidays that may influence season dates are:

Labor Day.....	September 6
Thanksgiving.....	November 25

*Proposed changes to the Elk General Western Oregon Coast 1st and 2nd Season dates, units, and bag limits are in consideration for 2027. See “Elk – 200 Series” section below.

Controlled Hunt Tag Numbers Summary

Total proposed controlled hunt tag numbers for 2027 seasons (140,747) (Table 1) are a decrease of 1% from 142,862 in 2026. See Table 1 below and the draft tag tables for controlled hunt tag numbers and details for each species/hunt series.

Table 1. Summary of proposed controlled hunt tag numbers for 2027.

Species	Series	Weapon/Type	2026 tags²	Proposed 2027 tags	% Change 2026-2027
DEER	100	ALW ¹	38,730	38,689	<-1%
		Archery	13,314	13,313	<-1%
		Muzzleloader	3,180	3,168	4%
		Youth	344	344	0%
	600	ALW ¹	8,451	8,463	<1%
		Youth	1,433	1,431	<-1%
	L Premium	ALW	63	63	0%
	Total		65,515	65,471	<-1%
ELK	200	ALW ¹	44,655	43,594	-2%
		Archery	15,192	14,750	-3%
		Muzzleloader	2,404	1,931	5%
		Youth	1,724	1,731	<1%
	M Premium	ALW ¹	64	64	0%
	Total		64,039	62,070	-3%
PRONGHORN	400	ALW ¹	1,399	1,354	-3%
		Archery	490	431	-12%
		Muzzleloader	133	127	-5%
		Youth	37	35	-5%
	N Premium	ALW ¹	26	25	-4%
	Total		2,086	1,972	-6%
BIGHORN	500	CA Ram	81	81	0%
		CA Ewe	50	50	0%
		RM Ram	5	5	0%
	Total		136	136	0%
MTN GOAT	900	ALW ¹	19	18	-5%
	Total		19	18	-5%
BEAR	700	ALW ¹	10,794	10,806	<1%
		Youth	273	274	<1%
	Total		11,067	11,080	<1%
TOTAL			142,862	140,747	-1%

¹ Any Legal Weapon Season (ALW)

² Includes 2026 Hunt Cancellations/Tag Reductions

Species by Species Highlights

For species with controlled hunts (**Deer, Elk, Pronghorn Antelope, Bighorn Sheep, Rocky Mountain Goat, and Black Bear**) the details of changes to tag numbers, deleted hunts, new hunts, etc., can be found in the controlled hunt tag tables for each species which are also available online. Controlled hunt tag numbers are summarized in Table 1(above).

Buck Deer – 100 Series

Eastern Oregon Deer As a reminder, numerous changes to deer hunts in eastern Oregon are already in place for the 2026 season. These changes include shift in mule deer hunts to better align with herd-range structure and associated tag reductions driven by boundary changes and biological considerations. Hunters should also note added white-tailed deer opportunities in northeast Oregon due to separating mule deer and white-tailed deer bag limits. Limited changes to these eastern Oregon deer hunts are being proposed for 2027.

Notable proposed changes include:

- No changes for western Oregon
- Decreased tags for Southeast 02 ALW hunt.

Antlerless Deer – 600 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- No changes for eastern Oregon
- Increased tags in Applegate

Elk – 200 Series

General Season ALW Coastal Bull The Stott Mtn WMU has been below the bull MO for 10+ years and an observed decline in both harvest and hunters due to poor bull ratios and declining hunt quality. The Alsea WMU has also been below bull MO for most of the last decade. Coastal WMUs that have implemented a spike-only season in one of their general seasons (Siuslaw, Trask, Wilson) have observed bull ratios at or above MOs but have struggled with overcrowding issues.

Changes to the General Western Oregon Coast seasons are being considered to improve bull escapement and increase bull: cow ratios in WMUs that are below MO and better distribute hunters in units that are experiencing overcrowding issues.

There are two primary proposals for public consideration. The first proposal would move the spike hunt to the 1st season and include the Scappoose, Stott Mt, and Alsea units. Both the 1st and 2nd seasons would be open for five days. This option would be designed to help address the bull MO and overcrowding issues.

The second proposal would be to just include the Scappoose, Stott Mt, and Alsea units to the spike hunt but keep everything else the same (e.g., spike hunt is 2nd season, hunt durations remain four days for 1st, seven days for 2nd season). This option would be designed to help

address the bull MO but not likely address overcrowding issues.

Public feedback, ideas, and discussion are greatly desired on this topic.

West Cascades Initial changes were made for 2026 to reduce cow harvest in the West Cascades Units (Santiam, McKenzie, Indigo, Dixon, Evan's Creek, Rogue) and additional changes are proposed for 2027. This includes deleting Harness Mtn hunt and removing antlerless elk from the bag limits of the General Archery Season Tag, Santiam Unit Traditional Bow hunt (216R1), Cascade Muzzleloader tag (200M), and for holders of an Oregon Hunting and Fishing Disability Permit (PDP tag) in the Western Cascade WMUs.

Other Notable proposed changes include:

- Deletion of Buick Canyon hunt and reduce West Trask cow tags in the North Coast
- Decreased tags in the McKenzie
- New Scappoose archery hunt, Walla Walla Private ALW hunt
- Increased White River and Willow Creek (Heppner) cow tags.
- Decreased Zumwalt hunts and tags
- Deletion of Sled Springs antlerless hunts
- Decrease cow harvest in the southern Blue Mountains (Silvies, Murderers Creek, Fossil, Northside) by reduced cow tags, “one bull elk” bag limit for Maury, Ochoco and Silvies Units Bow, and deletion of Silvies/Juniper ALW cow hunts.

Pronghorn – 400 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- Decreased tags in Ochoco, Owyhee, Ft Rock/Silver Lake, and Riley (Silvies) Units
- Delete 477R East Slope Bow hunt

Bighorn Sheep – 500 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- John Day River and Deschutes River Ewe hunts to each be split into two separate hunts and hunt areas to better distribute harvest.
- New Lower Owyhee hunt
- No Wenaha hunt again for 2027: three-year tag rotation with CTUIR and WDFW

Rocky Mountain Goat – 900 Series

Notable proposed changes include:

- Central Cascades hunt returns for 2027; two-year tag rotation with CTWS
- Strawberry Mtn tag increase for 2027; two-year tag rotation with CTWS
- Decreased Elkhorn tags
- Snake River tags match emergency tag reduction for 2026

Bear – 700 Series

No changes are proposed for 2027.

Premium Hunts

Notable proposed changes include:

- Combine Klamath Falls and Sprague pronghorn hunt units and maintain one tag across the larger hunt area.
- No changes are proposed for other Premium Hunts for 2026.

Western Gray Squirrel

No changes are proposed for 2027.