



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

Date: January 29, 2025

Agenda Item No. 5B

*Agenda Item: Season Setting: Moose, Bighorn Sheep,
Mountain Goat (Action)*

Bureau Chief Approval: SR

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Position/Title: Wildlife Staff Biologist

Background:

Season dates and tag numbers for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat harvest seasons are established for a two-year period and are presented to the Commission for approval in January of each odd-numbered year. Regional staff scoped proposals for season changes and controlled hunt tag limits through the Department's website and in person at regional meetings December 19, 2024 – January 9, 2025. Following assessment of public input, regional staff submit recommendations to the Wildlife Bureau and a final package of recommendations will be developed for the 2025-2026 hunting seasons for presentation to the Commission. The following are not finalized recommendations, but are a summary of preliminary recommended season changes scoped with the public:

Moose

The Department is proposing changes in moose tags using management guidance from the *Idaho Moose Management Plan 2020-2025*, information gathered during aerial surveys, and other population metrics including calf survival and recruitment, adult female survival, and harvest metrics. Proposed statewide changes would result in a cumulative reduction of 13 bull tags (from 514 to 501 total tags).

- Proposed decrease of antlered tags in the Panhandle, Clearwater, and Salmon Regions.
- Proposed increase of antlered tags and proposed new hunt in the Magic Valley Region.
- Proposed boundary changes to Hunt Areas 1-3, 55, and 57.

Bighorn Sheep

The Department is proposing changes to bighorn sheep tags using management guidance from the *Idaho Bighorn Sheep Management Plan 2022-2027*, information gathered during aerial and ground surveys, and harvest information. Proposed statewide changes would result in a cumulative increase in Rocky Mountain bighorn ram tags from 83 to 94 and a decrease in California bighorn ram tags from 13 to 7.

- Proposed boundary changes in Hunt Areas 26, 27-1, and 27L.



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- Proposed increases in Rocky Mountain ram tags in the Southwest (McCall), Upper Snake, and Salmon Regions.
- Proposed 2 new late hunts in the Southwest (McCall), Upper Snake, and Salmon Regions.
- Proposed reduction in California ram tags in the Southwest Region (Nampa).

Mountain Goat

The Department is proposing changes in mountain goat tags using management guidance from the *Idaho Mountain Goat Management Plan 2019-2024*, recent survey information, and harvest information. Proposed statewide changes would result in a cumulative decrease of 1 mountain goat tag (from 41 to 40 total tags).

- Proposed reduction of tags in the Clearwater Region.
- Proposed Hunt Area boundary change in the Clearwater Region.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104 authorizes the Commission to establish rules for the taking of wildlife consistent with state policy. Species management plans provide Commission direction for population and harvest management. This agenda item is to establish statewide hunting seasons and tag numbers for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat hunts for the 2025 and 2026 seasons.

Public Involvement Process:

Proposed changes were scoped with the public through the Department's website and at in person regional meetings. The Department also collected public input from calls/emails/letters to IDFG offices. Public outreach efforts were advertised through news releases to media outlets, email, social media, and the Department website. Proposals were posted on the Department website on December 19, 2024 for public review. Public comment ran December 19, 2024 – January 9, 2025. Public input will be evaluated and a summary will be provided during presentation of the agenda item.

Justification:

Action is required to establish hunting seasons and tag numbers for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat for the 2025 and 2026 seasons.

Staff Recommendation:

Preliminary recommendations were reviewed with the Commission in November and final proposals were scoped with the public in December 2024 and January 2025. After an



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assessment of public comments and regional input, staff will provide final recommendations during the presentation of this agenda item.

Suggested Motion:

I move the Commission adopt the staff recommendations for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat hunting seasons, tag numbers, and hunt boundaries for the 2025 and 2026 seasons as presented.