



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

May 2026 Commission Meeting

Agenda Item: Elk Landowner Permission Hunt Season

Adjustment Unit 14 (**Action**)

Prepared by: Rick Ward

Position/Title: State Wildlife Manager

Agenda Item No.: 5F

Bureau Chief Approval: SR

Background:

Elk depredation concerns within Game Management Unit 14 have increased in recent years, largely driven by a growing elk population in the area. As elk numbers have risen, so have their use of private agricultural lands, where they spend a significant portion of the year. This has resulted in ongoing and, in some cases, escalating damage to cultivated crops and rangeland intended for livestock grazing.

The structure of existing Landowner Permission Hunts (LPH) in GMU 14 (Hunt Nos. 2601 and 2602) has partly affected elk numbers and behavior but has not adequately mitigated agricultural damage. Elk distribution patterns have limited hunter access and reduced the effectiveness of existing hunts. Landowners within this area have expressed a desire to continue utilizing the LPH framework as a primary management tool but have suggested that modifications to season timing and structure would better align with elk use patterns and improve harvest success.

LPH hunt number 2601 is in area 14-1, has 80 tags, and is currently Commission approved to run December 10 -December 31, 2026. The proposal is to change this hunt to an extra antlerless elk LPH tag, increase tags to 150, and retain the original hunt dates for the 2026 season.

LPH hunt number 2602 is in hunt area 14-2, has 80 tags, and is currently Commission approved to run August 1- December 31, 2026. The proposal is to change this hunt to an extra antlerless elk LPH tag, increase tags to 100, and retain the original hunt dates for the 2026 season.

Additionally, the proposal adds the following new LPH hunts in early 2027:

- Hunt area 14-1, 100 extra antlerless elk LPH tags, January 10 - February 28, 2027
- Hunt area 14-2, 50 extra antlerless elk LPH tags, January 10 - February 28, 2027

Adjusting the LPH season structure in GMU 14 is necessary to better align harvest opportunity with elk presence on private lands, to increase the effectiveness of the program in addressing depredations, and to maintain landowner support for public hunting as a key management tool.



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Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104 authorizes the Commission to set hunting seasons and limits. IDAPA 13.01.08 establishes Landowner Permission Hunt eligibility criteria and bag and possession limits.

Public Involvement Process:

The Department and Commission receive input from deer and elk hunters year-round, in the field, by phone and email, and through input received through surveys, online, and at public meetings and open houses during season setting processes, management plan development, and through testimony at Fish and Game Commission meetings. In addition, we receive regular input from landowners and others affected by wildlife damage. The public may comment on this agenda item at the Commission public meeting.

Justification:

Commission action is required to adopt changes to the 2026/2027 LPH hunting seasons that were originally set by Commission proclamation in March 2024.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommend the Commission adjust LPH Hunt 2601 to an extra antlerless elk tag and increase tag number to 150 and adjust LPH Hunt 2602 to an extra antlerless elk tag and increase tag numbers to 100 for the 2026 season. Additionally, staff recommend the Commission create a new LPH hunt in hunt area 14-1 with 100 extra antlerless elk tags and dates from Jan 10 - Feb 28, 2027 and a new LPH hunt in hunt area 14-2 with 50 extra antlerless elk tags and dates from Jan 10 - Feb 28, 2027.

Suggested Motion:

I move the commission modify existing LPH hunts 2601 and 2602 for the 2026 season and create two new LPH hunts in hunt areas 14-1 and 14-2 for 2027 as proposed by staff.