

State of California
Fish and Game Commission
Initial Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action

Amend Sections 364 and 364.1
Title 14, California Code of Regulations
Re: Elk Hunting

I. Date of Initial Statement of Reasons:

II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings

(a) Notice Hearing

Date: December 15, 2022

Location: San Diego

(b) Discussion Hearing

Date: February 8, 2023

Location: Sacramento

(c) Adoption Hearing

Date: April 19, 2023

Location: Fresno/Bakersfield

III. Description of Regulatory Action

(a) Statement of Specific Purpose of Regulatory Change and Factual Basis for Determining that Regulation Change is Reasonably Necessary.

Unless otherwise specified, all section references in this document are to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

Background

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has identified regulated hunting as a preferred tool to both manage elk populations and provide public recreation opportunities. The Fish and Game Commission (Commission) periodically considers the recommendations of the Department in establishing elk hunting regulations. Considerations include recommendations for adjusting tag quotas, setting hunt periods, modifying zone boundaries, and authorizing methods of take, among others, to help achieve management goals and objectives.

To maintain appropriate harvest levels, it is necessary to periodically adjust elk hunting regulations, including tag quotas and hunt zone boundaries, in response to dynamic environmental, biological, and social conditions. Current regulations in Section 364 specify elk tag quotas for each hunt zone and establish hunt zone boundaries in accordance with management goals and objectives described in the Department's Elk Conservation and Management Plan. Similarly, current regulations in Section 364.1 specify elk tag quotas for each hunt zone that may be distributed to the public to allow access to hunt elk on specific properties that enter into the Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) program. A limited number of public elk hunting tags are offered annually via the

Big Game Drawing and SHARE program drawing, and public demand for elk hunting tags (as indicated by elk tag draw applications) has annually exceeded tag availability for the last ten years. In addition to harvest opportunity, public elk hunting also provides data that enhances the Department's ability to monitor elk populations including spatial, age, genetic, and disease information. As described in the Department's Elk Conservation and Management Plan (2018), the Department's goal is to increase elk hunting opportunities where feasible and compatible with population objectives, in which case recommendations will be offered to the Commission.

Current Regulations

Section 364 provides definitions, hunting zone descriptions, season opening and closing dates, methods of take (e.g., general methods, archery only, muzzleloader only), tag designations (e.g., bull, spike bull, antlerless, and either-sex), tag quotas (total number of hunting tags to be made available), and bag and possession limits for elk hunting. Section 364.1 provides season opening and closing dates, methods of take, tag designations, tag quotas, and bag and possession limits for elk hunting administered through the SHARE hunt program. Individuals are awarded an elk hunting tag through the Department's Big Game Drawing or SHARE hunt program drawing.

Harvest of an elk is authorized for an individual awarded a tag for a respective hunt zone or SHARE property and season. Tag quotas are established based on a variety of factors including population density and abundance, age and sex composition, elk distribution, and human-elk conflict levels, among other population objectives, factors, and considerations. The Department has identified the following areas where increased public elk hunting opportunities are feasible and support achievement of population objectives:

- Tejon Rocky Mountain Elk Management Unit. Currently there is no hunt zone established which authorizes public elk harvest in the Tejon Rocky Mountain Elk Management Unit.
- Bear Valley and Cache Creek Tule Elk Hunt Zones. Current (2022) public tag quota for these zones are 1 antlerless tag and 2 bull tags (Bear Valley), and 1 apprentice bull tag, 2 antlerless tags, and 2 bull tags (Cache Creek).
- Siskiyou Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone. Current (2022) public tag quota for the Siskiyou Hunt Zone is 20 antlerless tags and 20 bull tags. The bull and antlerless hunt periods are concurrent.
- Northwestern Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone. Current (2022) public tag quota for the Northwestern Hunt Zone is 15 antlerless tags, 3 bull tags, and 3 either-sex tags.
- La Panza Tule Elk Hunt Zone and Central Coast Tule Elk Management Unit. Current (2022) public tag quotas for the La Panza Hunt Zone is 1 apprentice antlerless tag, 11 antlerless tags across two hunt periods (5 and 6 tags, respectively), and 12 bull tags across two hunt periods (6 and 6, respectively). There is currently no authorized public elk harvest in the Central Coast Tule Elk Management Unit.

Figure 1 below outlines the affected elk management units and proposed hunt zones.

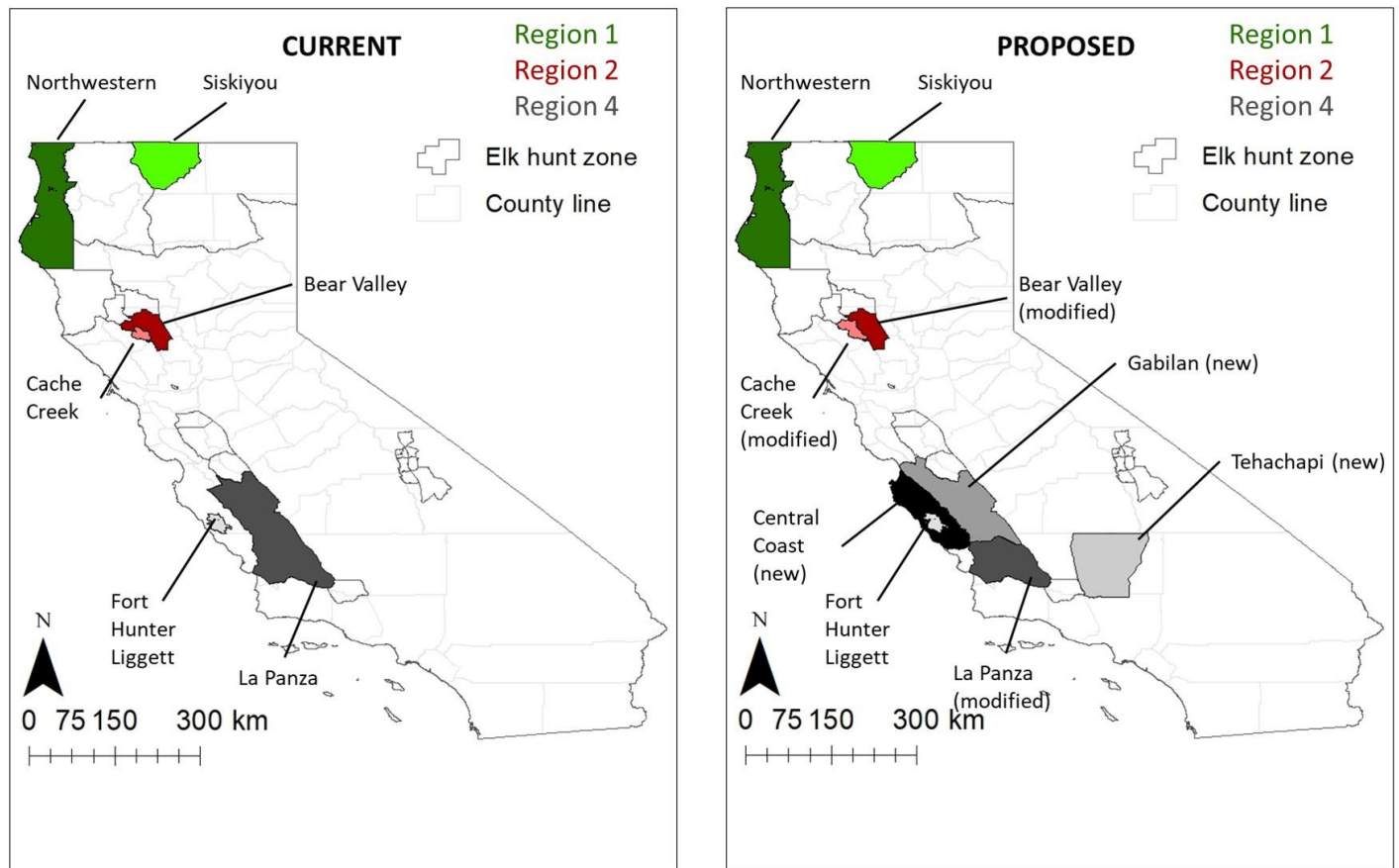


Figure 1. Elk management units affected by proposed regulation. Map on left outlines current hunt zones, and the map on the right shows the proposed revisions to existing hunt zone boundaries and new hunt zones.

Proposed Regulations

The regulatory changes the Department is proposing are described below by subsection.

The proposed changes to Section 364 and Section 364.1 include the following:

Tejon Rocky Mountain Elk Management Unit

- Add subsection 364(b)(2)(A) to establish the Tehachapi Rocky Mountain Elk Hunt.
- Add subsection 364.1(j)(2)(1), 364.1(j)(2)(2), and 364.1(j)(2)(B) to authorize bull harvest, antlerless harvest, and hunt area for the Tehachapi General Methods SHARE Rocky Mountain Elk hunt.

Tejon Rocky Mountain Elk Management Unit: currently there is no hunt zone established which authorizes public elk harvest within the Tejon Rocky Mountain Elk Management Unit. Regulated elk harvest occurs on the Tejon Ranch operated under the Private Lands Management program. Non-native Rocky Mountain elk were imported to the Rex C. Ellsworth Ranch in 1967, in what is now the community of Stallion Springs. The importation was permitted as part of a fenced game farming operation. Elk escaped the enclosure and persisted on adjacent properties, particularly Tejon Ranch. Elk populations have since increased in abundance and expanded beyond the Tejon Ranch into surrounding communities in Kern County and the Southern Sierras. Human-

elk conflict has exceeded tolerable levels in some areas. Current abundance levels are above objectives outlined in the 2018 Elk Conservation and Management Plan. Observed bull:cow ratios (47mm:100ff) are also above the Elk Conservation and Management Plan objective (25mm:100ff). Continued range expansion may result in non-native Rocky Mountain elk overlapping with endemic tule elk in the Owens Valley, resulting in hybridization between the two subspecies. This presents a threat to genetic integrity of the endemic tule elk population, and it is desirable to prevent hybridization between these subspecies from occurring as described in the Elk Conservation and Management Plan.

To help address these concerns for the Tejon Elk Management Unit, the Department recommends establishing a Tehachapi Rocky Mountain Elk Hunt Zone and General Methods Hunt to help achieve goals and objectives outlined in the 2018 Elk Conservation and Management Plan.

Bear Valley and Cache Creek Tule Elk Hunt Zones

- Amend subsections 364(d)(1)(A) and 364(d)(17)(A) to modify the boundaries of the Cache Creek General Methods Tule Elk Hunt and the adjacent Bear Valley General Methods Tule Elk Hunt.

Bear Valley and Cache Creek Tule Elk Hunt Zones: current (2022) public tag quota for these zones is one antlerless tag and two bull tags (Bear Valley) and one apprentice bull tag, two antlerless tags, and two bull tags (Cache Creek). Current Hunt Zone boundaries are outdated relative to observed population dynamics including spatial and genetic data; additionally, a problematic and potentially exploitative protrusion of the Bear Valley Hunt Zone into the western portion of Cache Creek Hunt Zone needs to be addressed.

The Department recommends modifying the adjacent Hunt Zone boundaries to bound closed populations (i.e., demographically and genetically interacting populations). The intended results of this recommendation will enhance regulated harvest assessment towards achieving management objectives and eliminate a problematic boundary protrusion.

Siskiyou Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone

- Amend subsection 364(r)(1)(A)(2) to increase antlerless tag quota in the Siskiyou Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone.
- Add subsection 364(r)(1)(B)(5) to adjust the Siskiyou Bull hunt season from September to October.

Siskiyou Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone: current (2022) public tag quota for the Siskiyou Hunt Zone is 20 antlerless tags and 20 bull tags. The bull and antlerless hunt periods are concurrent. Elk populations in this Hunt Zone tend to concentrate on private property and human-elk conflict has exceeded tolerable levels in some areas. The observed bull:cow ratio (3mm:100ff) is below the Elk Conservation and Management Plan objective (25mm:100ff). The concurrent bull and antlerless hunt seasons have resulted in bull and antlerless hunter conflict and poor hunt experiences.

The Department recommends increased antlerless harvest and shifting the bull season to a later hunt period. The intended results of this recommendation will provide more public hunt opportunity, reduce elk density, reduce conflict, achieve sex ratio objective, and distribute bull and antlerless hunters across different hunt seasons, increasing quality of the hunt experience.

Northwestern Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone

- Amend subsection 364(r)(2)(A)(1) to increase bull tag quota in the Northwestern Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone.

Northwestern Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone: current (2022) public tag quota for the Northwestern Hunt Zone is 15 antlerless tags, three bull tags, and three either-sex tags. Elk populations in this Hunt Zone tend to concentrate on private property and human-elk conflict has exceeded tolerable levels in some areas. High elk density may also contribute to increased disease transmission. The observed bull:cow ratios (32mm:100ff) are above the Elk Conservation and Management Plan objective (15mm:100ff).

The Department recommends increasing public bull harvest in this hunt zone. The intended results of this recommendation include increased public hunt opportunity, reduced population density, reduced disease transmission, reduced conflict, and trend toward achieving the sex ratio objective.

La Panza Tule Elk Hunt Zone and Central Coast Tule Elk Management Unit

- Amend subsection 364(d)(2)(A) to modify the boundaries of the La Panza General Methods Tule Elk Hunt.
- Amend subsection 364(d)(3)(A) to establish the Central Coast General Methods Tule Elk Hunt.
- Amend subsection 364(d)(4)(A) to establish the Gabilan General Methods Tule Elk Hunt.
- Add subsections 364(s)(2)(A)(1), 364(s)(2)(A)(2), and 364(s)(2)(A)(5) to authorize bull harvest, antlerless harvest, and establish season dates for the Tehachapi General Methods Rocky Mountain Elk Hunt.
- Add subsections 364(u)(3)(A)(1), 364(u)(3)(A)(2), and 364(u)(3)(A)(5) to authorize bull harvest, antlerless harvest, and establish season dates for the Central Coast General Methods Tule Elk Hunt.
- Add subsections 364(u)(4)(A)(1), 364(u)(4)(A)(2), and 364(u)(4)(A)(5) to authorize bull harvest, antlerless harvest, and establish season dates for the Gabilan General Methods Tule Elk Hunt.

La Panza Tule Elk Hunt Zone and Central Coast Tule Elk Management Unit: current (2022) public tag quotas for the La Panza Hunt Zone include 1 apprentice antlerless tag, 11 antlerless tags across two hunt periods (5 and 6 tags, for La Panza Periods 1 and 2, respectively), and 12 bull tags across two hunt periods (6 and 6 tags, for La Panza Periods 1 and 2, respectively). The tule elk population has expanded into the Central Coast Tule Elk Management Unit and increased substantially within the Camp Roberts and Salinas/Fremont Peak Tule Elk Management Units. There is no authorized

public elk harvest in those three units. Elk conflict has exceeded tolerable levels in some areas. The observed bull:cow ratios for the modified La Panza (33mm:100ff) and new Gabilan (41mm:100ff) Hunt Zones are above the Elk Conservation and Management Plan objective (25mm:100ff) for the La Panza and Salinas/Fremont Peak Tule Elk Management Units. The observed bull:cow ratio for the new Central Coast Hunt Zone (29mm:100ff) is above the the Elk Conservation and Management Plan objective (25mm:100ff).

The Department recommends modifying the La Panza hunt zone to a smaller area, creating a new Gabilan Tule Elk Hunt Zone and General Methods Hunt from most of the Salinas/Fremont Peak Elk Management Unit and the full extent of the remaining La Panza Hunt Zone, and creating a new Central Coast Tule Elk Hunt Zone and General Methods Hunt, which will incorporate the Camp Roberts Tule Elk Management Unit. The modified and new zones will bound closed populations which will enhance regulated harvest assessment towards achieving management objectives outlined in the 2018 Elk Conservation and Management Plan.

Table 1. Proposed Additional Elk Tags and Change in Hunt Zone Acreage

Hunt Zone	Proposed Number of Additional Tags	Proposed Hunt Zone Acreage	Proposed Net Acreage Change
Northwestern	22	2,412,822	0
Siskiyou	10	1,362,945	0
Bear Valley (modified)	0	496,865	-79,608
Cache Creek (modified)	0	178,481	+79,608
Gabilan (new)	10	2,370,013	+2,370,013
Central Coast (new)	20	1,581,657	+1,581,657
La Panza (modified)	0	1,657,396	-1,997,315
Tehachapi (new)	50	2,468,810	+2,468,810
Totals	112	12,528,989	+4,423,165

Other changes

- Several non-substantive changes are proposed to provide consistency among Title 14 sections. These revisions are necessary to provide consistency and clarity in the regulatory language across the section
 - Amend subsections 364(a) through 364(q) to:
 - Consistently use a hyphen between place names, such as state and county lines.
 - Consistently use “along” for non-road boundaries, such as state and county lines, creeks, and the coastline.

- Consistently use “on” for road boundaries.
- Consistently refer to Interstates as “Interstate #.”
- Consistently end zone boundary segments with a semicolon.
- Consistently capitalize “County” when in reference to one or more specific counties; use lowercase “county line” when in reference to the county line.
- Remove the word “California” from hunt names, as all hunts are located in California.
- Consistently use “intersection” in zone boundaries in which roads meet; use “junction” when at least one non-road forms the boundary.
- Consistently reference a numbered road first, then in parentheses, reference the name of the road, if applicable.
- Consistently begin a hunt zone description with “In that (singular)/those (plural) portions...” and follow the county name(s) with “within a line.”
- Consistently capitalize “Section” in zone boundaries.
- Amend section 364(i) to:
 - Correct the spelling of “fundraising.”
 - Replace en- and em-dashes with hypens.
 - Insert colon after the hunt name.
- Amend Section 364(r) to:
 - Clarify that apprentice hunt tagholders under 18 years of age shall be accompanied by a nonhunting, licensed adult chaperone 18 years of age or older.
 - Correct the spelling of “chaperone.”
- Amend Sections 364(r) through 364(aa) to:
 - Standardize season language.
 - Insert zeros in place of blank cells.
 - Remove the word “California” from hunt names, as all hunts are located in California.
 - Consistently use “continue” to describe the hunt season length.
 - Capitalize “Period” in reference to a hunt period, followed by a numeral.
 - Specify section number and hunt name for all hunts.
- Amend Sections 364(u), 364(w), and 364.1(l) to correct the spelling of “Tinemaha.”
- Amend Section 364(x) to correct the spelling of “muzzleloader.”
- Amend Section 364(z) to correct the spelling of “fundraising/er.”

(b) Goals and Benefits of the Regulation

The goals and benefits of the regulations are to help achieve management objectives related to current environmental, biological, and social conditions related to relevant elk populations.

(c) Authority and Reference Sections from Fish and Game Code for Regulation

Authority: Section(s) 200, 203, 203.1, 265, 332 and 1050, Fish and Game Code

Reference: Section(s) 325,332,1050,1570,1571, 1572, 1573 and 1574, Fish and Game Code

(d) Specific Technology or Equipment Required by Regulatory Change

None

(e) Identification of Reports or Documents Supporting Regulation Change

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. (2018). [2018 Elk Management Plan. https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=162912&inline](https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=162912&inline)

(f) Public Discussions of Proposed Regulations Prior to Notice Publication

Wildlife Resources Committee, May 19, 2022

Wildlife Resources Committee, September 15, 2022

IV. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action

(a) Alternatives to Regulation Change

No alternatives were identified by or brought to the attention of Commission staff that would have the same desired regulatory effect.

(b) No Change Alternative

If the proposed amendments are not adopted, elk conflict will continue and may increase in some areas, and result in increased requests for elk depredation permits to alleviate conflict; disease, including treponeme associated hoof disease (TAHD), may continue to spread resulting in significant animal welfare issues; non-native Rocky Mountain elk may continue to expand their range and result in overlap with endemic tule elk in the Owens Valley; hunt experience may continue to be poor for some hunters if the relevant antlerless and bull periods remain concurrent; hunt zone boundaries may not accurately reflect observed biological processes, resulting in inaccurate interpretation of harvest metrics, and a problematic boundary protrusion may be exploited in the future by hunters with a tag for the adjacent hunt zone. The Department will miss opportunity to gain additional age and genetic data, among other information, from harvested elk to assist in population monitoring, lessening the Department's ability to better understand and manage the populations that are currently unharvested.

V. Mitigation Measures Required by Regulatory Action

The proposed regulatory action will have no significant adverse effect on the environment, and therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

VI. Impact of Regulatory Action

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

(a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States

The proposed regulation will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. This regulatory action will not impose cost impacts that a representative business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed regulation.

- (b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment.

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs within the state, the creation of new business, the elimination of existing businesses, or the expansion of businesses in California because the expected economic impacts of the proposed regulations are unlikely to be substantial enough to substantially stimulate demand for goods or services related to elk hunting. If greater numbers of hunters visit the areas in the state with increased opportunities, businesses that provide goods and services to elk hunters could benefit from small increases in sales. The Commission does not anticipate direct benefits to the general health and welfare of California residents, the environment, or to worker safety, however California residents will benefit generally through access to the expanded recreational opportunities created by the proposed changes.

- (c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business

The Commission is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

- (d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State

The Department anticipates an estimated \$57,891 increase in tag sales revenue with the implementation of the proposed regulation for the potential sale of 111 resident elk tags and 1 non-resident elk tag. Changes to elk hunt zone boundaries and the creation of new zones is not anticipated to have a costs or savings impact, as existing zones for other species under Department jurisdiction will overlap with those proposed. Therefore, no operational changes are necessary.

- (e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies

None.

- (f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts

None.

- (g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code

None.

- (h) Effect on Housing Costs

None.

VII. Economic Impact Assessment

(a) Effects of the Regulation on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs within the state.

(b) Effects of the Regulation on the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses Within the State

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on the creation of new business, the elimination of existing businesses within the state because the expected economic impacts of the proposed regulations are unlikely to be substantial enough to stimulate demand for goods or services related to elk hunting.

(c) Effects of the Regulation on the Expansion of Businesses Currently Doing Business Within the State

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on the expansion of businesses currently doing business within the state because the expected economic impacts of the proposed regulations are unlikely to be substantial enough to stimulate demand for goods or services related to elk hunting.

(d) Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents

(e) Hunting is an outdoor activity that can provide several health and welfare benefits to California residents. Hunters and their families benefit from fresh game to eat, and from the benefits of outdoor recreation, including exercise. People who hunt have a special connection with the outdoors and an awareness of the relationships between wildlife, habitat, and humans, and can be a family tradition and a bonding activity. Benefits of the Regulation to Worker Safety

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on worker safety.

(f) Benefits of the Regulation to the State's Environment

As set forth in Fish and Game Code section 1700, it is the policy of the state to encourage the conservation, maintenance, and utilization of fish and wildlife resources for the benefit of all the citizens of the state. The objectives of this policy include, but are not limited to, the maintenance of populations of elk to ensure their continued existence and supporting recreational opportunity. Adoption of scientifically-based elk seasons and tag quotas provides for the maintenance of elk populations to ensure those objectives are met. The fees that hunters pay for licenses and tags help fund wildlife conservation.

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Current regulations in Section 364 provide definitions, hunting zone descriptions, season opening and closing dates, methods of take (e.g., general methods, archery only, muzzleloader only), tag designations (e.g., bull, spike bull, antlerless, and either-sex), tag quotas (total number of hunting tags to be made available), and bag and possession limits for elk hunting. Section 364.1 provides season opening and closing dates, methods of take, tag designations, tag quotas, and bag and possession limits for elk hunting administered through the SHARE hunt program. Individuals are awarded an elk hunting tag through the Department's Big Game Drawing or SHARE hunt program drawing.

Harvest of an elk is authorized for an individual awarded a tag for a respective hunt zone or SHARE property and season. Tag quotas are established based on a variety of factors including population density and abundance, age and sex composition, elk distribution, and human-elk conflict levels, among other population objectives, factors, and considerations. The Department has identified the following areas where increased public elk hunting opportunities are feasible and support achievement of population objectives:

Tejon Rocky Mountain Elk Management Unit. Currently there is no hunt zone established which authorizes public elk harvest in the Tejon Rocky Mountain Elk Management Unit

Bear Valley and Cache Creek Tule Elk Hunt Zones. Current (2022) public tag quota for these zones are 1 antlerless tag and 2 bull tags (Bear Valley), and 1 apprentice bull tag, 2 antlerless tags, and 2 bull tags (Cache Creek).

Siskiyou Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone. Current (2022) public tag quota for the Siskiyou Hunt Zone is 20 antlerless tags and 20 bull tags. The bull and antlerless hunt periods are concurrent.

Northwestern Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone. Current (2022) public tag quota for the Northwestern Hunt Zone is 15 antlerless tags, 3 bull tags, and 3 either-sex tags.

La Panza Tule Elk Hunt Zone and Central Coast Tule Elk Management Unit. Current (2022) public tag quotas for the La Panza Hunt Zone is 1 apprentice antlerless tag, 11 antlerless tags across two hunt periods (5 and 6 tags, respectively), and 12 bull tags across two hunt periods (6 and 6, respectively). There is currently no authorized public elk harvest in the Central Coast Tule Elk Management Unit.

The proposed regulatory changes will:

Siskiyou Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone. Set public tag quota for the Siskiyou Hunt Zone to 20 bull tags and 30 antlerless tags. Shift the bull season from September to October.

Northwestern Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone. Set public tag quota for the Northwestern Hunt Zone to 25 bull tags, 15 antlerless tags, and 3 either-sex tags.

Bear Valley and Cache Creek Tule Elk Hunt Zones. Modify adjacent Hunt Zone boundaries to bound demographically and genetically interacting populations.

The goals and benefits of the regulations are to help achieve management objectives related to current environmental, biological, and social conditions related to relevant elk populations.

Tejon Rocky Mountain Elk Management Unit. Create a Tehachapi Rocky Mountain Elk Hunt Zone and General Methods Hunt, with tag allowances set at 5 bull and 10 antlerless.

La Panza Tule Elk Hunt Zone and Central Coast Tule Elk Management Unit. Decrease the size of the La Panza Hunt Zone, create a new Gabilan Tule Elk Hunt Zone, and create a new Central Coast Tule Elk Zone, which incorporates the existing Camp Roberts Tule Elk Management Unit. For each of the new Hunt Zones, create a General Methods Hunt, with tag allowances set at: 6 bull and 5 antlerless (La Panza Period 1), 6 bull and 5 antlerless (La Panza Period 2), 10 bull and 10 antlerless (Central Coast), and 4 bull and 6 antlerless (Gabilan).

Benefit of the Regulations:

The proposed regulatory action is designed to help achieve management objectives related to current environmental, biological, and social conditions, as outlined in the Elk Conservation and Management Plan.

Consistency and Compatibility with Existing Regulations:

Article IV, Section 20 of the State Constitution specifies that the Legislature may delegate to Commission such powers relating to the protection and propagation of fish and game as the Legislature sees fit. Commission staff has searched the California Code of Regulations and has found no other state regulations that address the definitions, hunting zone descriptions, season opening and closing dates, methods of take (e.g., general methods, archery only, muzzleloader only), tag designations (e.g., bull, spike bull, antlerless, and either-sex), tag quotas (total number of hunting tags to be made available), and bag and possession limits for elk hunting. The Commission has reviewed its own regulations and finds that the proposed regulations are consistent with other big game mammal regulations in Title 14, CCR, and therefore finds that the proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations.