



BIG GAME PROGRAMS

Updates and Regulatory Proposals
Presentation to the Wildlife Resources Committee of the California
Fish and Game Commission

September 12, 2024
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Presentation Overview

- Elk tag quota and season proposals
- Pronghorn update
- Black-tailed deer/ Mule deer
 - Late season hunt
 - Chronic wasting update
 - Preference point reinstatement
- Black bear management plan update
- Desert bighorn sheep
 - Conservation and Management Plan update
 - Fundraising tag amendments
 - Tag quota proposals
 - Zone boundary change proposal





ELK

Regulatory Proposals

Section 364 Elk and 364.1 SHARE Elk

- General & SHARE Hunt Opportunities
 - Lake Pilsbury EMU
 - Bear Valley EMU
- Archery Only Opportunities
 - Siskiyou EMU
 - Central Coast EMU
 - La Panza EMU
- Address SHARE hunt season for coastal conflict zones



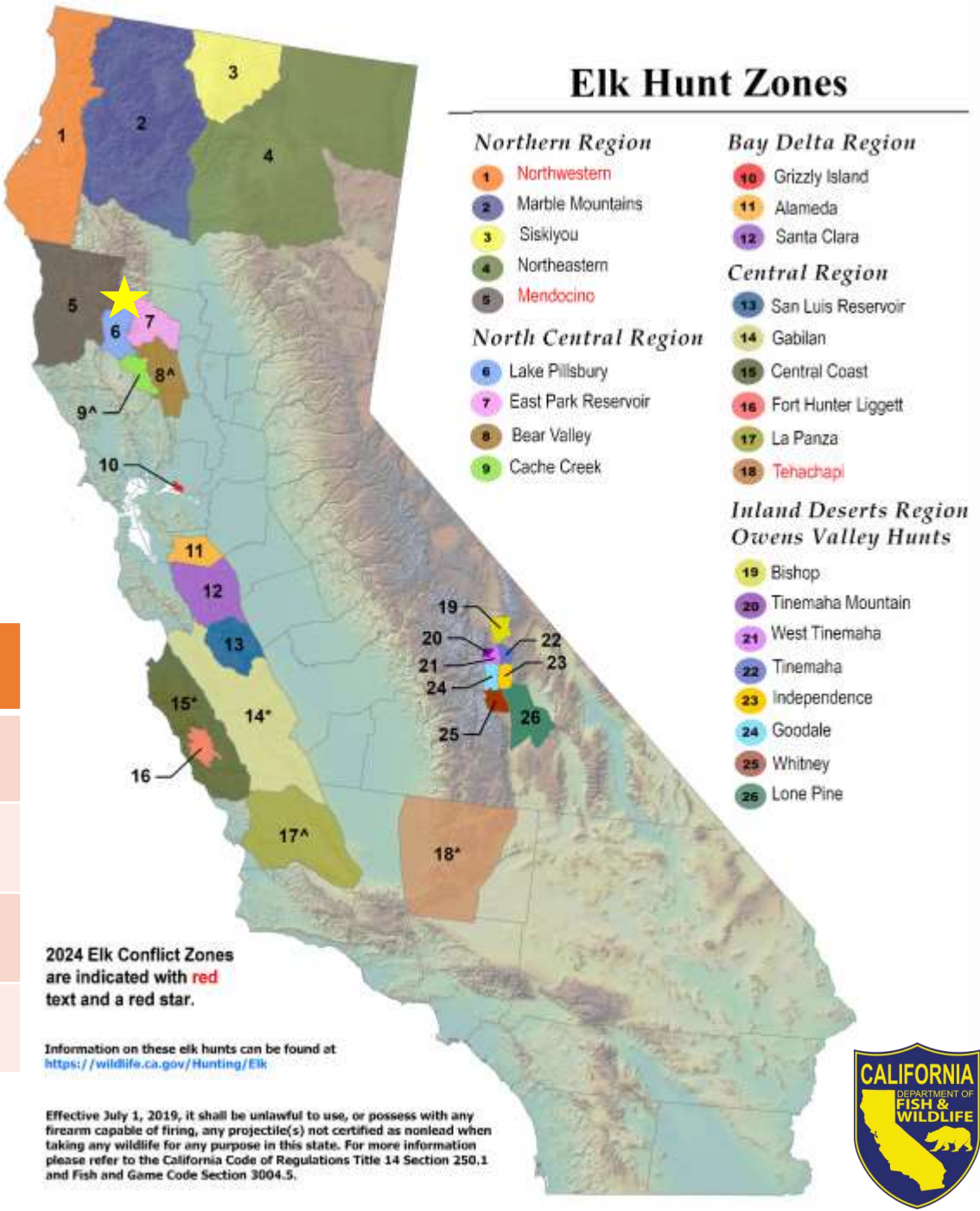
Photo credit: Dan Skalos



Lake Pillsbury Hunt Zone

- Scott Dam removal, potential significant loss of carrying capacity
- Consider increasing tags to 25% last minimum count, no more than 10% bulls
- Potential translocation source

Unit	Number
Population Objective	100 - 250
2024 Minimum Count	160 Within goal
Bull:Cow Ratio Objective	1:4 (25%)
2024 Bull:Cow Ratio	3:20 (15%) Below goal



Lake Pillsbury Hunt Zone

- Stagger seven-day hunt periods before and after bull hunt with no more than 4 tags issued per period

Tag Type	2024 Bull	2024 Cow	2025 Bull	2025 Cow
General	2	4	[2-4]	[4-12]
PLM	0	0	0	0
SHARE*	-	-	-	-
Total	2	4	2-4	4-12

**Net Change: 0-2 additional bull tags,
0-8 additional cow tags**

*No SHARE properties in Lake Pillsbury Hunt Zone



Bear Valley Hunt Zone

Unit	Number
Population Objective	150-450 Includes Cache Creek
2024 Minimum Count	400 215 in Bear Valley alone
Bull:Cow Ratio Objective	1:4 (25%)
2024 Bull:Cow Ratio	21:100 (21%)



Bear Valley Hunt Zone

- Propose additional SHARE properties
 - Unit almost entirely private
 - Allow landowner to offset cost of damage caused by elk

Tag Type	2024 Bull	2024 Cow	2025 Bull	2025 Cow
General	2	1	2	1
PLM	0	0	0	0
SHARE	2	1	2	[1-6]
Total	4	2	4	2-7

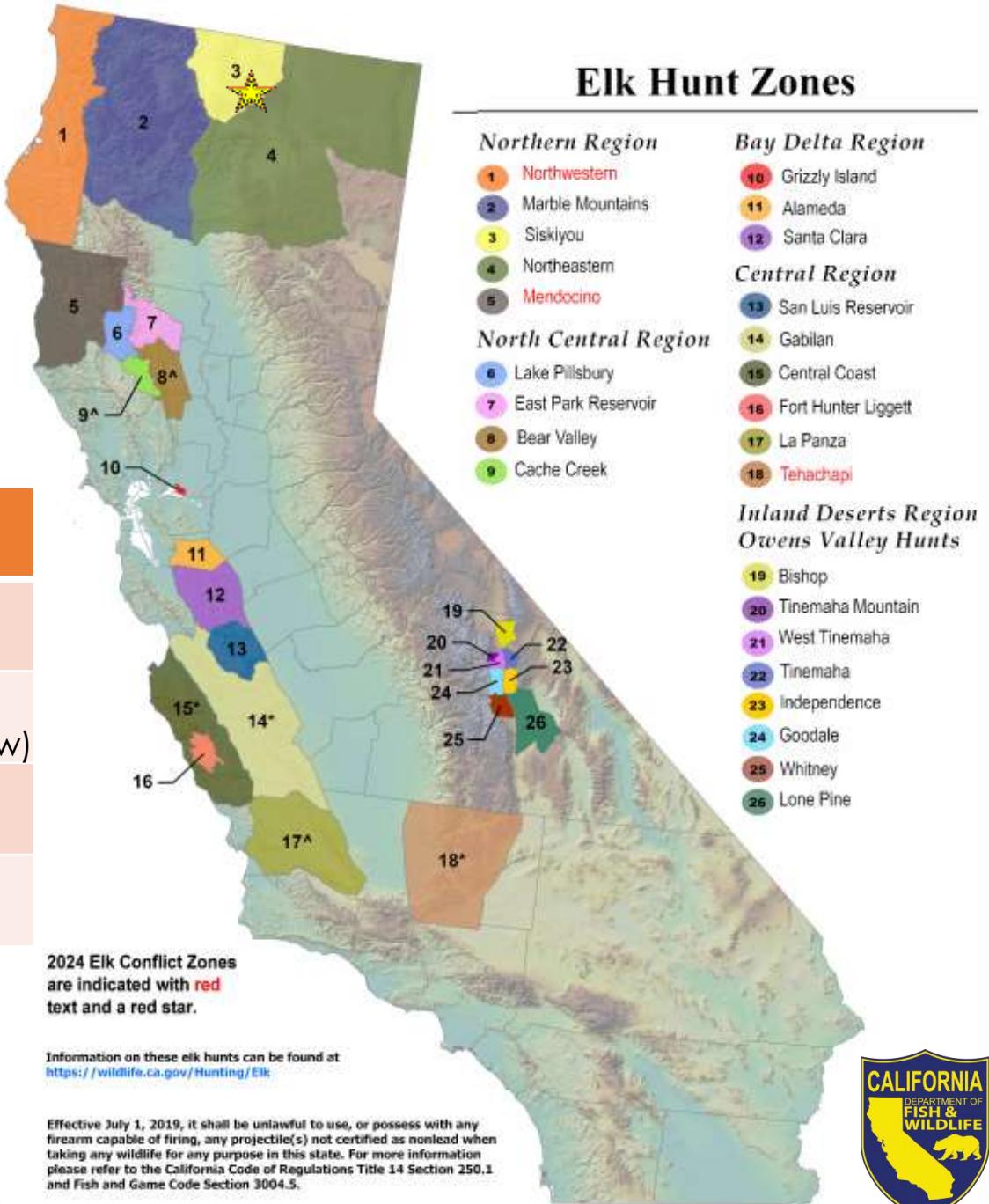
Net Change: 0-5 additional cow tags



Siskiyou Hunt Zone

- Previously considered as conflict zone
- County expressed desire to have general tags instead

Unit	Number
Population Objective	600-1000
2024 Minimum Count	506
	Road survey count (low)
Bull:Cow Ratio Objective	1:4 (25%)
2024 Bull:Cow Ratio	17:100 (17%)
	Below objective



Siskiyou Hunt Zone

- Proposes to add 0-10 **archery-only** bull tags
- Current Season: Wednesday preceding the second Saturday in September and continue for 12 consecutive days (Section 364(r)(1)(A)-(B))
- Proposed Season: 4th Wed Aug to 2nd Tues Sept
- Winter survey to complete census

Tag Type	2024 Bull	2024 Cow	2025 Bull	2025 Cow
General	20	30	20	30
Archery	0	0	[0-10]	0
PLM	4	2	4	2
SHARE	2	2	2	2
Total	26	34	26-36	34

Net Change: 0-10 additional bull tags



Central Coast Hunt Zone

- Populations increasing and causing conflict

Unit	Number
Population Objective	100-300
2024 Minimum Count	650 Above (2x) objective
Bull:Cow Ratio Objective	1:4 (25%)
2024 Bull:Cow Ratio	3:10 (30%) Above objective



Central Coast Hunt Zone

- Additional archery season opportunity proposed

Tag Type	2024 Bull	2024 Cow	2025 Bull	2025 Cow
General	10	10	10	10
Archery	0	0	[0-4]	[0-2]
PLM	30	25	28	25
SHARE*	-	-	-	-
Total	40	35	38-42	35-37

Net Change: additional 0-2 bull & 0-2 cow tags



*No SHARE properties in Central Coast Hunt Zone



La Panza Hunt Zone

- Populations increasing - limited public lands

Unit	Number
Population Objective	500-1200
2024 Minimum Count	890 Within objective
Bull:Cow Ratio Objective	1:4 (25%)
2024 Bull:Cow Ratio	31:100 (31%) Above objective



La Panza Hunt Zone

- Additional archery season opportunity proposed Sept 1 – Sept 30

Tag Type	2024 Bull	2024 Cow	2025 Bull	2025 Cow
General	12	12	12	12
Archery	0	0	[0-4]	[0-2]
PLM	27	21	27	21
SHARE	0	0	0	0
	39	33	39-43	33-35

Net Change: additional 0-4 bull & 0-2 cow tags



Northwestern and Mendocino Hunt Zones

- Conflict occurring outside existing hunting season
 - Adjust season timing on SHARE properties to account for conflict timing
 - Propose to have year-round season in conflict zones (NW and Mendo)
 - Spring hunts to target bulls as conflicts arise
 - Amend Title 14 Section 364.1 (a) required
- New SHARE properties for 2024:
 - 1 in Northwestern zone
 - 3 in Mendocino zone





PRONGHORN

Update

Pronghorn

- Prioritize annual population surveys in northeastern California due to population declines in northeastern California.
- Consider tag quota changes based on population estimates.





BLACK-TAILED AND MULE DEER

Regulatory Proposals

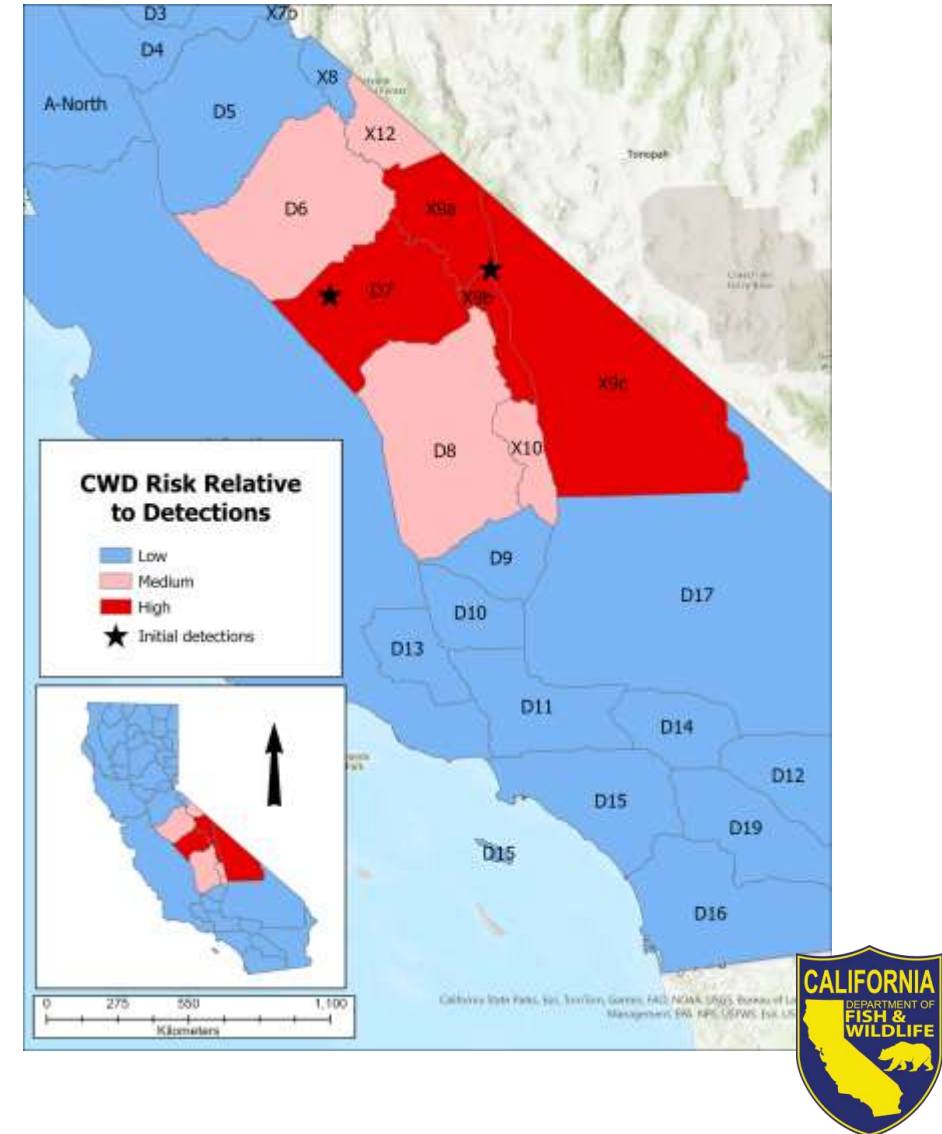
Deer

- Increase late season deer hunts
- Amend Section 708.14(j)(2) and 708.14(k)(2): big game drawing preference point reinstatement due to fire closures
- Regulation changes may occur as a response to chronic wasting disease (CWD)



Deer D7 Late Season Buck Hunt (Pilot)

- Hunting constituent base requests late season hunts where feasible (Petition 2021-017 - closed)
- CWD has been detected in D7
- Mature bucks most likely to be infected with CWD
- This type of hunt will help to determine prevalence of disease
- Current seasons (archery, then general) begin the third Saturday in August and extend into October.
 - 700 bucks per year harvested (reported 3-year average from 2021-2023)
- Current regulations allow up to 9,000 tags
- Consider a late season hunt
 - Propose 0-50 tags (current quota 9,000)
 - 9 Consecutive days starting 4th Saturday in November



Chronic Wasting Disease

- Before transitioning e-reg into “standard” regulation
 - Modify language/definition of chronic wasting disease management zones (CMZs) to allow for additional CMZs with new detections (“refer to website”)
 - Incorporate surveillance results to inform future regulations
 - Define mandatory testing needs
- Consider (depending on surveillance results)
 - New special hunts
 - Shifting hunting seasons later
 - Carcass handling requirements



Section 708.14 Big Game Drawing Preference Point Reinstatement

- Point reinstatement due to inaccessibility due to public land closures caused by wildfire

Section 708.14(j)(2): “Commencing with the 2022 hunting license year beginning July 1, 2022, a tag holder whose hunt zone was **inaccessible** for sixty-six percent (66%) or more of a hunt season (pursuant to sections 360 and 361 of these regulations) due to a public land closure caused by wildfire may return their unfilled tag with their written request for preference point reinstatement.”

- Concerns
 - “Inaccessible” is ambiguous and open to interpretation
 - How to address partial land closure
 - Administrative burden
- Options to Consider
 - No action
 - Sunsetting the regulation
 - Further clarifying “inaccessible” and total % land base
 - Hunters to formally request point reinstatement with supporting documents including forest closure orders and dates etc.





BLACK BEAR

Conservation and Management Plan Update

Black Bear Conservation and Management Plan

Start of
Public
Review:
4/19/2024

Public
Information
Meeting:
5/21/2024

End of
Public
Review:
6/14/2024

- No regulatory change proposals until conservation and management plan is finalized.
- Over 5,000 comments received, currently addressing them and meeting with stakeholders who submitted compiled responses.
- Future regulatory proposals will be informed by the new plan when finalized.





Photo by Dale Matson



BIGHORN SHEEP

Conservation and Management Plan Update and
Regulatory Proposals

Conservation and Management Plan for Bighorn

The draft Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) for Bighorn Sheep in California is available for Public Review until October 21st.

Please visit the [Bighorn Sheep webpage](#) to access the CMP and to provide comments.

The following proposed actions were presented to and supported by stakeholders during the

- CA Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation: Sheep Summit (April 2024)
- CA Wild Sheep Foundation and outfitters focus group (August 2024)
- Big Game Management Account Advisory Committee Meeting (August 2024)



Bighorn Sheep

Open Zone Tag

Section 362(b)(1):

- Clarify that the OZ tag can only hunt in zones that are issued a general tag
- Add Zone 10

Marble/Clipper/S. Bristol and Cady Fundraising Tags

Section 362(b)(2 & 3):

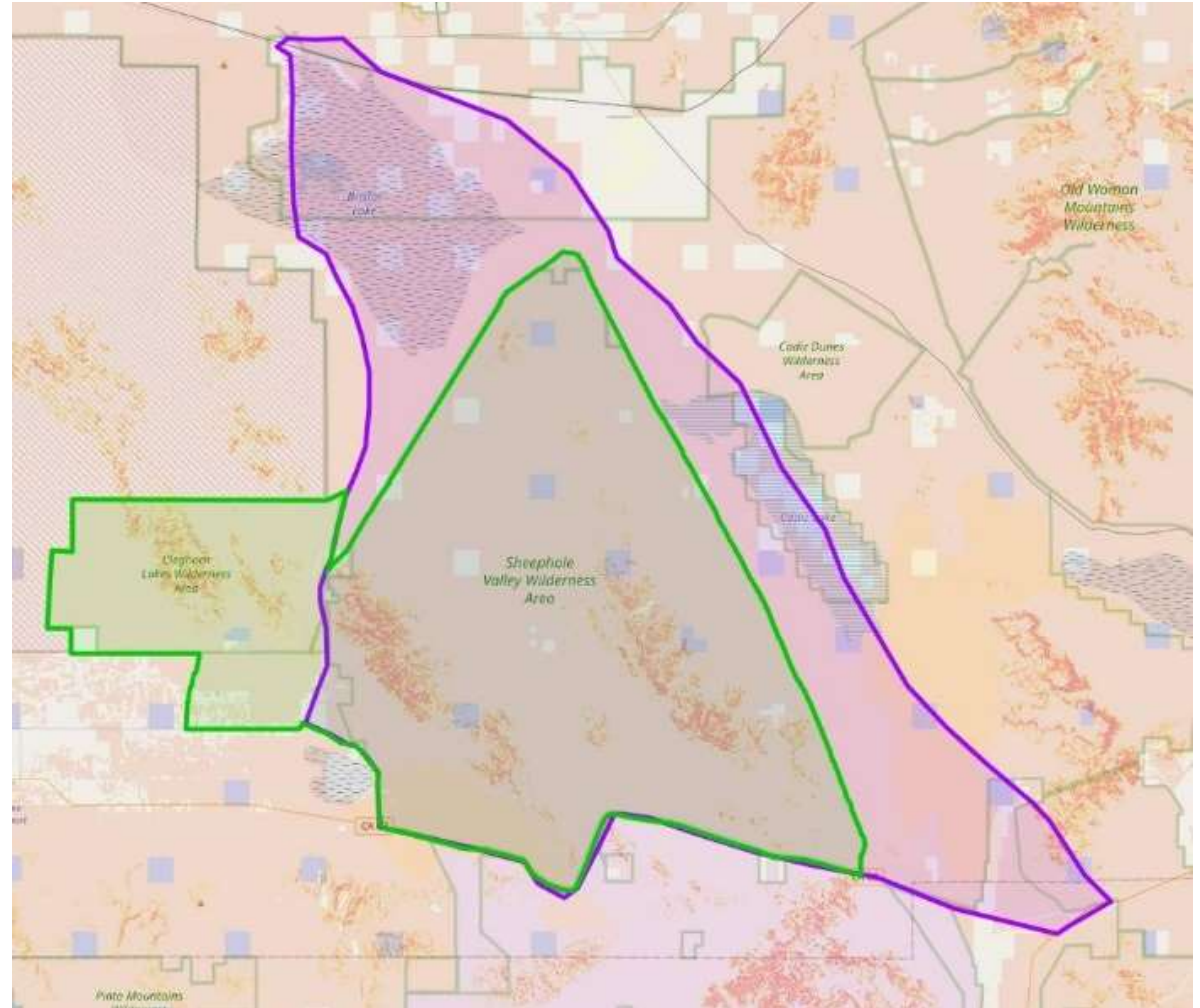
- Change to “Single Zone Tag” and adjust wording to allow CDFW to choose the zone each year, if needed.



Section 362 Nelson Bighorn Sheep

Sheep Hole (Zone 6): Boundary Adjustment *Section 362(6)(A)*

- Adjust the boundary (from purple to green) to better reflect habitat use of rams in this area.
- Adjustment is based on GPS data and clear boundary delineations (i.e. roads)
- Zone adjustment will likely increase hunter opportunity.



Section 362 Nelson Bighorn Sheep

White Mountains (Zone 7): Winter Season Addition Section 362(b)(4)(B)

- Add a winter season
- Increase tag quota range

Newberry/Rodman/Ord (Zone 10): Split Season Section 362(b)(4)(A)

- Split the winter season in half
- Increase the tag quota range



Photo Credit: Dale Matson

Section 362 Nelson Bighorn Sheep

Section 362(d) Bighorn tag quota adjustments based on population data

Nelson Bighorn Sheep Hunt Zones	24/25 Tag Allocation*	Tag Quota Ranges
Zone 1 – Marble/Clipper Mountains	1	0-5
Zone 2 – Kelso Peak/Old Dad Mountains	2	0-2*
Zone 3 – Clark/Kingston Mountain Ranges	3	0-4
Zone 4 – Orocopia Mountains	1	0-2
Zone 5 – San Gorgonio Wilderness	0	0-3
Zone 6 – Sheep Hole Mountains	1	0-2
Zone 7 – White Mountains	4	0-6*
Zone 8 – South Bristol Mountains	1	0-3
Zone 9 – Cady Mountains	2	0-4
Zone 10 – Newberry, Rodman, Ord Mountains	6	0-6*
Open Zone Fundraising Tag	1	0-1
Marble/Clipper/S. Bristol Fundraising Tag*	0	0-1
Cady Fundraising Tag*	1	0-1
Total:	23	0-42*



Photo Credit: Josh Schulgen



* Denotes changes are being proposed for 25/26