

For wildlife discussion Sat. Aug.. 13, 2022 by David H. McCord, Wildlife Dir.

Hi all,

Below is a survey the CWCP compiled to find how member organizations feel about the 10 big game licensing issues identified. The CPW is in the process of re-allocating game licenses (for next five years I think) and the survey results will help CWCP identify directions. As many of the CPW Commission members have not before gone through allocation, they are learning too – we want to be in a position to provide them what we favor.

Please look at the main headlines (the number items) and if your time permits, read down into the questions below each. I will seek your directions on these at our meeting Saturday.

Major issues in my opinion: (#1) resident vs non-resident ratios, (#3 and #4) over-the-counter licenses remain as is or change (many go to non-residents – important for CPW income), (#8) preference point banking – allow hunter to use only enough points needed to win a draw in place of spending all their points, could then keep points not needed.

Even if you may not hunt, please give the issues your consideration, our big game herds depend on the best management possible.

Best,
David McCord, Wildlife Director

Colorado Wildlife Conservation Project:
Preference Points and License Allocation Survey

In an effort to further understand the opinions of CWCP Member organizations and to identify issues of common interest, we are asking organization representatives take the time to fill out the below survey. Survey results are intended to be utilized in the formation of official CWCP engagement with the CPW Commission to influence the outcome of both the scope and consideration of changes to the current policies governing preference point draws and big game license allocation.

For each question below, please indicate the choice most closely aligned with your organizations view.

1. Resident vs Non-Resident Ratio

All western states issue big game tags to both residents and non-residents alike, however the allocation ratio of resident to non-resident distribution varies greatly from state to state.

Currently, Colorado has the most liberal policy allocation of non-resident tags state-wide, largely driven by over-the-counter elk tags. Most western states limit big-game allocation of limited draw tags to roughly 10% - 15%. Colorado has nonresident big game tag allocation caps of 20% and 35% for limited mule deer and elk tags. 20% of the elk and deer tags are given to nonresidents in the limited units that take 6 or more preference points to draw, all other limited units give “up to” 35% of tags to nonresidents.

Of importance to note, CPW’s wildlife funding is largely based hunting license revenues, (particularly non-resident big game licenses). A decrease in non-resident big game licenses may affect revenue and funding for wildlife programs or could result in increased cost to resident tags.

- Question: The current proportion of tags allocated to non-resident vs. resident hunters is:
 - Too high (we should allocate fewer non-resident licenses)
 - About right (the current ratio strikes the right balance)
 - Too low (we should allocate more out of state licenses)
 - Other (consider different allocation mechanisms)
 - I don’t have enough information to answer this question.
 - Other. Explanation: _____

2. Limited Draw Unit Designation

The limited draw non-resident allocation caps listed above, (35% for units requiring 5 points or under and 20% for units requiring 6 or more points to draw) have listed above are based off of CPW’s 2011 data on preference points required by

unit. The CPW Commission at that time voted to use that year as a baseline moving forward, thus restricting units from moving up or down in the allocation cap system based on new demand or declines in demand.

- Questions: Should tag allocation caps be adjusted to reflect the current preference point demand by hunt code?
 - No, keep the current allocation cap for 80/20 and 65/35 units.
 - Yes, adjust the current allocation caps for limited, high demand units to reflect based on current preference points required. (I understand that this may increase the non-resident allocation in some units and decrease it in others.)

C. Other. Explanation: _____

3. Over-the-Counter (OTC) to Limited Ratio

CPW tries to manage for a balance of maximum opportunity (OTC) and increased hunt quality, e.g., less crowding, more mature animals, etc. Currently, this primarily applies to elk licenses, as there are very few OTC opportunities for mule deer, pronghorn and other species. However, the number of hunters in the field during a given season may impact other species.

With OTC licenses, hunters can be assured of the opportunity to hunt every year. With limited draw licenses, hunters may draw every year, every other year or once every 25 years, depending on the unit. Reducing the number of OTC units would likely result in increased hunter pressure on the remaining OTC units, making biological management in these units more problematic.

Under current law, any units that become totally draw units would also result in the allocation of 20% of licenses in that unit to the Landowner Preference Program

- Question: The current proportion of limited to OTC licenses is:
 - Too high (we should have fewer restrictive units and more OTC units)
 - About right (current ratio strikes the right balance)
 - Too low (there are too many OTC units and too few limited/draw units)
 - Other (Please specify, ex. “We have crowded OTC units and ultra-limited units that take 25 years to draw, but too few units in between such as those that may take 5-10 years to draw.”)
 - Other. Explanation: _____

4. Overall OTC Tag Numbers

Some sporting organizations suggest too many licenses are issued overall, independent of other considerations.

- Question: Should we restructure how OTC licenses are allocated?
 - Yes. There are too many OTC hunters and we should consider caps and/or different allocation mechanisms. We have struck the wrong balance between opportunities to hunt and the quality of hunting. (For example, bear licenses and some elk licenses have been issued in the past as “OTC with a cap” licenses. Those licenses are sold as first-come, first-served.)
 - No. We have struck the right balance and/or this is the best way to generate revenues.
 - Other methods of allocating OTC licenses would just create different problems and so no change should occur.
 - Other. Explanation: _____

5. Preference point allocation system:

The current system (excluding sheep/goat/moose) prioritizes limited licenses based upon who has waited the longest and thus accumulated the most preference points. Surrounding western states have employed different draw rules for preference points by introducing various elements of randomness for some portion of the available tags in the unit. Colorado uses a few forms of this. For more exclusive species such as bighorn sheep, mountain goats and moose a weighted preference point system is used.

For elk, deer and pronghorn units requiring 10 or more resident preference points, up to 20 percent of available licenses are issued through the “Hybrid draw.” The hybrid draw randomly draws from any first-choice hunt code applicants with 5 or more preference points.

- Question: The current point allocation system (for big game species other than sheep/goat/moose) should be:
 - Generally maintained as-is with highest preference point holders drawing first
 - A portion of tags allotted in a unit go to highest preference point holders while some portion of tags are reserved for a lottery draw
 - All preference points should be eliminated and all tags should be issued by random draw
 - Other. Explanation: _____

6. Hybrid Draw/Point Creep

The Hybrid Draws allocates 20% deer, elk, and pronghorn tags from the total number of tags for units requiring 10 or more points to draw to allow a small number of hunters to draw high-demand units with fewer preference points.

In order to be eligible for the hybrid draw, hunters must possess at least 5 preference points and apply in that unit as a first-choice applicant. Unfortunately, the hybrid draw contributes to point creep (the effect of units requiring more and more points to draw a tag in a unit from year to year).

- Question: The hybrid draw license allocation system should be:
- Expanded (a higher percentage of hybrid tags should be allocated in limited units and/or should be utilized in additional limited-draw units)
 - Kept about the same (existing allocations should be maintained)
 - Restricted (a lower percentage of hybrid tags should be allocated and/or utilized in fewer units)
 - Eliminated (the hybrid draw system has been ineffective or is unfair)
 - Other. Explanation: _____

7. Transferable Licenses

Colorado issues vouchers, redeemable for big game tags, to qualifying landowners (dependent on a number of factors). These landowner vouchers are generally transferable and can be sold and used by hunters other than the landowner to whom they were issued. There are a number of arguments for and against this, and other states do it differently or not at all. The passage of Senate Bill 13-188, created a new Landowner Preference Program (LPP). It was created to give landowners a preference for hunting licenses to encourage private landowners to provide habitat that increases wildlife populations for the benefit of all hunters, discourage harboring animals on private lands during public hunting seasons, and relieve hunting pressure on public lands by increasing game hunting on private lands.

Eligible landowners, must apply and register deeded land with Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Registrations are audited and verified by CPW for compliance with eligibility requirements of this program[1]. Half of the LPP licenses for deer and elk can be used unit wide and half are for private land only.

- Question: Should we consider changes to the rules allowing the transfer of licenses?
 - Yes. Abolish them.
 - Yes. Modify them.
 - No. Leave them the way they are.
 - I don't have enough information to answer this question.
 - Other. Explanation: _____

8. Preference Point Banking

The CPW Commission is considering implementing “Point Banking.” Currently when a hunter draws their first choice in the limited draw they must expend ALL of their preference points, whether or not the unit required that amount. Under a preference point banking system, a hunter would be able to draw a first-choice hunt and expend ONLY the points required to hunt that unit while saving – or banking – their remaining points for a future draws. The objective of preference point banking is to reduce preference point creep. However, it has been acknowledged that preference point banking may increase point creep in units requiring fewer preference points while reducing the point requirement for high point units as hunters use accumulated points in other units.

- Question: Should CPW implement a points banking system:

- Yes, I would like to see a point banking system
- No, I would not like to see a point banking system.
- Other. Explanation: _____

9. Payment for Preference Points

Currently when a hunter applies for a moose, bighorn sheep, or goat license, they are given the option to acquire a preference point for \$50 in the occasion they are unsuccessful in the draw. This has helped the preference point creep for these species and the commission is considering expanding that standard to other big game species.

- Question 1: Should CPW require those who want a preference point for deer, elk and pronghorn pay a fee for the preference point?
 - Yes, I believe they should require the \$50 fee for a preference point for deer, elk and pronghorn.
 - No, I do not believe they should require the \$50 fee for a preference point for deer, elk and pronghorn.
 - Yes, I believe CPW should require a fee for deer, elk and pronghorn preference points, but it should be less than moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat.
- Question 2: Should CPW require those who want a preference point for moose, bighorn sheep, or goat licenses should pay a fee for the preference point?
 - I believe that the \$50 preference point fee for moose, bighorn sheep and goat is about right and should remain in effect.
 - I believe that the \$50 preference point fee for moose, bighorn sheep and goat is too expensive and restricts access to these licenses to only the wealthier.
 - I believe that CPW should increase the cost for preference points for moose, bighorn sheep.
 - Other. Explanation: _____

10. Landowner Tags

Currently CPW issues up to 20% of the licenses for species to landowners that own more than 160 acres and help to provide some habitat/feed for that particular species. This was originally set up to compensate those landowners instead of paying them for game damage. In some areas of the state, they have never paid game damage for some species and those landowners are still receiving 20% of those licenses. This is especially true in GMU's that are made up of primarily public lands.

- Question: Should CPW reduce the number of licenses to private landowners in GMU's that are primarily public land and where little to no game damage compensation has been paid out?
 - Yes, I believe they should reduce the landowner licenses in GMU's that are primarily public land and little to no game damage compensation has been paid out.
 - No, I do not believe they should not reduce the landowner licenses in GMU's that are primarily public land and little to no game damage compensation has been paid out.
 - I don't have enough information to answer this question.
 - Other. Explanation: _____

 Aug. 11, 2022 – from Gaspar P.

All - Please see the attached License Allocation Survey [above]. I have incorporated the comments we received from everyone into this final draft. Please designate someone from your organization to complete and submit the survey back to the Steering Committee. We will tabulate the results and distribute them back out to the group.

Best,

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