
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Dec. 22, 2016

Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural
Resource Operations

Wildlife Harvest Allocation Numbers 2017-21

What is the decision?

- Every five years the Province sets wildlife harvest allocations for key ‘Category A’ big game hunts (“Category A” animals are those whose licensed harvest is managed via splits between resident and non-resident opportunity) in every region for the next five year period.
- This exhaustive process involves determining population levels for each species, accounting for First Nations’ harvest and setting this aside, and then splitting the remainder of any available harvest between resident hunters and guides.
- In February 2015, the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations made a decision to establish an allocation framework with clearly set splits for each “Category A” hunt.
- This decision helped guide the conclusion of the 2012-16 allocation period, and inform decisions for the 2017-21 period. The decision included the following core principles:
 - Regional allocation splits to be in keeping with the principle of ‘resident priority’ whereby resident hunters continue to receive priority shares of the wildlife allocation, with a stable and predictable percentage.
 - A commitment to maintain vacant areas and areas not currently allocated to guides as unguided areas, available for First Nations and resident hunting only.
 - Clear splits for each allocated hunt resulting in less discretion in the hands of regional managers – and therefore more certainty for all user groups.
 - Targeted increased shares of allocation for guide outfitters to help ensure the guide outfitter industry remains economically viable.
 - No additional mitigation measures for guides beyond the increased harvest percentages as noted.
- The allocation process does not generally include General Open Season opportunities such as mule deer, whitetail deer, black bear, etc. which are unaffected. Bighorn Sheep in the Kootenay is a notable exception where guide outfitters are on quota and resident hunters are on General Open Season.

What are the specific allocations for each sector and are there any changes since the February 2015 announcement?

- There are no changes to the allocation policy decision made in February 2015.
- Consult the following chart for each projected allocation – note these numbers are for the full five year period. For an average allocation in any single year, divide by five.
- Allocation numbers are projected only, and can change based on changing circumstances (i.e. changing wildlife population size, harvest rates or First Nations’ agreements):

Region	Hunt	5-Year Projected allocation (2017-21)		
		Resident	Guides	Total
1 Vancouver Island	Bull Elk	588	104	692
1 Vancouver Island	Either Sex Elk	83	15	98
2 South Coast	Bull Elk	133	33	166
3 Thompson	Mountain Goat	116	63	179
3 Thompson	Moose	487	86	573
3 Thompson	Big Horn Sheep	46	20	66
4 Kootenays	Big Horn Sheep	104 (GOS)	70	174
4 Kootenays	Mountain Goat	430	231	661
4 Kootenays	Bull Moose	625	156	781
5 Cariboo	Bull Moose	2,793	931	3,724
5 Cariboo	Bull Caribou	56	19	75
5 Cariboo	Mountain Goat	42	23	65
6 Skeena	Thin Horn Sheep	38	25	63
6 Skeena	Bull Moose	3,162	1,054	4,216
6 Skeena	Mountain Goat	390	210	600
6 Skeena	Bull Caribou	20	7	27
7A Omineca	Bull Moose	7,728	2,290	10,018
7B Peace	Mountain Goat	106	57	163
7B Peace	Antlerless Elk	174	4	178
7B Peace	Either Sex Elk	367	103	470
7B Peace	Bison	656	144	800
8 Okanagan	Bull Moose	700	175	875
8 Okanagan	Big Horn Sheep	89	38	127
8 Okanagan	Mountain Goat	20	11	31

What is the relative impact of the minister's policy decision in 2015 in real numbers to resident hunters?

- The policy impact of the change is approximately 56 fewer animals per year out of a total resident allocation of 3,790 per year, or approximately 1.5% of all animals that would have been allocated to residents under the former policy regime.
- The most recent (2015) figure for all big game harvested in B.C. (both General Open Season and those species on allocation) is 52,134 animals, so only 7% of all big game harvest is on the allocation system.
- Grizzly Bear is the only species that is always an allocated hunt on province-wide basis.
- Mule deer, white-tail deer, and most Rocky Mountain elk are not allocated and are not impacted by this decision.

What is the relative impact of the minister's policy decision in 2015 in real numbers to non-resident (guided) hunters?

- The policy impact of the change is an increase of approximately 56 animals per year out of a total non-resident allocation of 1,164 per year, or approximately 5% of all animals that would have been allocated to resident under the former policy regime.

What are the other significant impacts to harvest opportunity?

- Animal population fluctuations and First Nations harvest impacts both residents and non-residents alike.
- Prior to February 2015, some guides had access to administrative measures that mitigated impact on their quotas. These mitigation measures allowed access to additional quota (either through unallocated territories or underutilized quota elsewhere). While the removal of these measures was announced in February 2015, full implementation was not put in place until 2017-21.

How are First Nations traditional hunting rights affected by the Harvest Allocation Policy?

- The First Nations hunt is not affected. Prior to setting allocations between resident and guided hunters, calculations are made to ensure that overharvesting will not occur. This calculation takes into account both naturally occurring mortality and First Nations harvesting.
- First Nations harvest is set aside to provide opportunities for First Nations communities to fulfill their food, social and ceremonial requirements for wildlife.

Why do we allow non-residents to hunt in B.C.?

- B.C. has benefited from non-resident hunters for over 100 years.
- Guide clients are one of the highest spending tourists per capita to visit B.C.

Were the results of implementing the 2015 harvest allocation decision as expected?

- For the most part, yes.
- Policy changes announced in February 2015 account for a shift of 280 animals in 2017-21, or roughly 56 per year from resident hunters to guide outfitters.
- This is comparable to the impact that was predicted in 2015, which was estimated at 60 animals per year.

When will decisions on Grizzly Bear allocations be communicated?

- Grizzly bear harvest calculations require hunt data from the 2016 fall hunting season. It is anticipated that information will be available and communicated early in 2017.

Why are moose numbers down in some parts of the Province?

- There are likely a number of factors at play, which is why the Province has commissioned a comprehensive five-year research study which is investigating recent moose population declines in B.C.'s Interior. The study engages 11 wildlife biologists, one wildlife veterinarian and several other staff over its five-year duration.
- In addition, the Province has launched a multi-level strategy to restore B.C.'s moose populations.
- The strategy is a response to the Strategy to Help Restore Moose Populations in British Columbia, which advises government to set priorities in key regions and enhance the integration of moose management with other land use activities
- As part of this strategy, the Province is investing \$1.2 million to help support moose populations. This is in addition to the \$750,000 B.C. is already spending on moose management in 2016/17.