

popular deer hunting lands within the Stanislaus National Forest during the 2014 deer seasons and expired November 18, 2014. The tag reduction was implemented in order to reduce hunting pressure and alleviate potential crowding of hunters in the remaining portion of the Stanislaus Deer Herd range within zone D-6. Today those national forest lands are again open to public use, therefore the Department recommended a return to the pre-closure tag quota of 10,000.

Pursuant to its April 9, 2015 meeting in Santa Rosa, the Fish and Game Commission adopted the final tag quotas for the A, B, C, and D zones identified in the table as the 2015 Final Tag Quota in the Updated Informative Digest.

VI. Summary of Primary Considerations Raised in Support of or Opposition to the Proposed Actions and Reasons for Rejecting Those Considerations:

Responses to public comments, oral or in writing, regarding all proposed 2015-2016 mammal hunting regulations received through April 9, 2015 are included as Attachment A.

VII. Location and Index of Rulemaking File:

A rulemaking file with attached file index is maintained at:

California Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, California 95814

VIII. Location of Department Files:

Department of Fish and Wildlife
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, California 95814

IX. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action:

(a) Alternatives to Regulatory Action:

There is no reasonable alternative to the proposed action.

(b) No Change Alternative:

The “No Change Alternative” was considered and found inadequate to attain the project objectives. Retaining the current number of tags for the zones listed may not be responsive to changes in the status of the herds. The deer herd management plans specify objective levels for the proportion of bucks in the herds. These ratios are maintained and managed in part by modifying the number of tags. The “No Change Alternative” would not allow management of the desired proportion of bucks stated in the approved deer herd management plans.

- (c) Consideration of Alternatives: In view of information currently possessed, no reasonable alternative considered would be more effective in carrying out the purposes for which the regulation is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the adopted regulation, or would be more cost effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.
- (d) Description of Reasonable Alternatives That Would Lessen Adverse Impact on Small Business: None

X. 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 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 action 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. The proposed action adjusts tag quotas for existing deer hunts. Given the number of tags available and the area over which they are distributed, these proposals are economically neutral to business.

- (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 anticipates benefits to the health and welfare of California residents and to the state's environment. Hunting provides opportunities for multi-generational family activities and promotes respect for California's environment by the future stewards of the State's resources and the action contributes to the sustainable management of natural resources.

The proposed action will not have significant impacts on jobs or business within California and does not provide benefits to worker safety.

(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 this proposed action.

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

None

(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

Updated Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Existing regulations provide for the number of license tags available for the A, B, C, and D Zones. This regulatory proposal changes the number of tags for all existing zones to a series of ranges presented in the table below. These ranges are necessary because the final number of tags cannot be determined until spring herd data are collected in March/April. Because severe winter conditions can have an adverse effect on herd recruitment and over-winter adult survival, final tag quotas may fall below the proposed range into the “Low Kill” alternative identified in the most recent Environmental Document Regarding Deer Hunting.

Deer: § 360(a) A, B, C, and D Zone Hunts Tag Allocations			
§	Zone	Current 2014	Proposed 2015 [Range]
(1)	A	65,000	30,000-65,000
(2)	B	35,000	35,000-65,000
(3)	C	8,150	5,000-15,000
(4)	D3-5	33,000	30,000-40,000
(5)	D-6	6,000	6,000-16,000
(6)	D-7	9,000	4,000-10,000
(7)	D-8	8,000	5,000-10,000
(8)	D-9	2,000	1,000-2,500
(9)	D-10	700	400-800
(10)	D-11	5,500	2,500-6,000
(11)	D-12	950	100-1,500
(12)	D-13	4,000	2,000-5,000
(13)	D-14	3,000	2,000-3,500
(14)	D-15	1,500	500-2,000
(15)	D-16	3,000	1,000-3,500
(16)	D-17	500	100-800
(17)	D-19	1,500	500-2,000

Benefits of the regulations

The deer herd management plans specify objective levels for the proportion of bucks in the herds. These ratios are maintained and managed in part by annually modifying the number of tags. The final values for the license tag numbers will be based upon findings from the annual harvest and herd composition counts.

Non-monetary benefits to the public

The Commission does not anticipate non-monetary benefits to the protection of public health and safety, worker safety, the prevention of discrimination, the promotion of fairness or social equity and the increase in openness and transparency in business and government.

Consistency with State or Federal Regulations

The Fish and Game Commission, pursuant to Fish and Game Code Sections 200, 202 and 203, has the sole authority to regulate deer hunting in California. Commission staff has searched the California Code of Regulations and has found the proposed changes pertaining to deer tag allocations are consistent with Sections 361, 701, 702, 708.5 and 708.6 of Title 14. Therefore the Commission has determined that the proposed amendments are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing State regulations.

Update

After completion of fall and spring deer herd surveys, and analysis of 2014 harvest information, population modeling was conducted to estimate population(s) and determine the appropriate level of allowable harvest. Results of this population modeling are contained in the “Data Supplement to The California Fish and Game Commission, Regarding: Recommended 2015 Deer Tag Allocations (Updated 2014 Deer Harvest and Population Estimates).” Based on these analyses, the Department recommended final tag quotas, except for zone D-6, equal to the prior 2014 season (no change).

The tag quota for zone D-6 was reduced significantly in 2014 from 10,000 to 6,000 tags (lower limit of proposed tag range) in direct response to the implementation of the Stanislaus National Forest Rim Fire Closure Order No. 2013-15. The closure restricted access to approximately 175,000 acres of popular deer hunting lands within the Stanislaus National Forest during the 2014 deer seasons and expired November 18, 2014. The tag reduction was implemented in order to reduce hunting pressure and alleviate potential crowding of hunters in the remaining portion of the Stanislaus Deer Herd range within zone D-6. Today

those national forest lands are again open to public use, therefore the Department recommended a return to the pre-closure tag quota of 10,000.

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Deer: § 360(a) A, B, C, and D Zone Hunts 2015 Final Tag Allocations			
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(7)	D-8	8,000	8,000
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(9)	D-10	700	700
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(11)	D-12	950	950
(12)	D-13	4,000	4,000
(13)	D-14	3,000	3,000
(14)	D-15	1,500	1,500
(15)	D-16	3,000	3,000
(16)	D-17	500	500
(17)	D-19	1,500	1,500