

## BACKGROUND 2022 LIMITED ENTRY HUNT REGULATION CHANGES

On May 19, 2022 amendments to the Limited Entry Hunting Regulation and Hunting Regulation were enacted. The changes reflect changes related to Limited Entry Hunting, for example, if a General Open Season was replaced with a Limited Entry Hunt, both the closure of the GOS and the implementation of the LEH are included below.

This summary does not include regulation changes currently under consideration through the biennial regulation cycle that are not related to Limited Entry Hunting, for example, changes to motor vehicle prohibitions, firearms restrictions, general open seasons, etc. are still pending and will be reflected in the updated Hunting and Trapping Synopsis once complete.

The changes to moose and caribou hunting regulations in the Peace region are highlighted directly below. The remaining regulation changes, listed by region, are summarized in the table that follows.

### Region 7B (Peace) Moose and Caribou Hunts

The B.C. government is making interim changes to hunting regulations to reduce the licensed harvest of moose and close caribou seasons in the Peace region with the goal of advancing reconciliation and improving wildlife stewardship partnerships with First Nations. For additional information on this change, please read the Information Bulletin.

This regulation change:

- Closes all caribou hunts in the Peace Region,
- Closes the Peace Moberly Tract and Moose Lake to moose hunting,
- Implements Compulsory Reporting for all moose harvested by licensed hunters in the Peace Region (other than a portion of M.U. 7-52 which is accessed by the Skeena Region and remains Compulsory Inspection).
- Implements spike-fork, tri-palm, or ten-point antler restrictions for all licensed moose hunting in the Peace region,
- Closes all licensed moose hunting during the rut (October 1-15), and
- Implements three different season structures for licensed moose hunting:
  1. Management Units 7-36, 7-42, 7-43, 7-50 to 7-54, and 7-57 (Liard and Northeast Rockies zones - Remote Management Units):
    - General Open Season from September 1 to September 30 and October 16 to October 31 (these seasons will be reviewed after one year).
  2. Management Units 7-19 to 7-22, 7-31, 7-33, 7-35, 7-46 to 7-49, and 7-55:
    - Limited Entry Hunting - September 1-15, September 16-30, October 16-24/27-31, and November 1-9/12-15.
    - General Open Season: October 25 and 26, November 10 and 11
  3. Management Units 7-32, 7-34, 7-44, 7-45, 7-56 and 7-58:
    - Limited Entry Hunting September 1-15, September 16-30, October 16-31, and November 1-15 (No General Open Season).

Maps of relevant zones will be included in the [LEH Synopsis](#), which will be posted soon.

## Additional Limited Entry Hunt Regulation Changes

Regulation Change	Rationale
<p><b>Region 1 Vancouver Island</b></p> <p>New bull elk LEH in the Waukwaas watershed (North Vancouver Island) and antlerless elk LEH in the Klanawa and Nitinat watersheds (Port Renfrew area)</p>	<p>Elk in these areas have been monitored annually for the past five years. In some cases, these surveys were conducted with participants from First Nations with aboriginal interests in the area.</p> <p>Inventory results show these populations have been stable to increasing and have exceeded the minimum threshold for initiating hunting opportunities (&gt;50 elk). These herds are currently at or above the target the population objective listed in the Management Plan for Roosevelt Elk in BC (2015).</p> <p>Opening LEH for elk in these areas will provide new, sustainable hunting opportunities for resident hunters.</p>
<p><b>Region 1 Vancouver Island</b></p> <p>New either sex elk archery only LEH near Nanaimo</p>	<p>Post-winter aerial classification surveys have been conducted in South Fork/ Haslam watershed in each of the previous five years. The number of elk observed and the population estimates in the area has increased in recent years. In 2021, the number of elk observed exceeded the minimum threshold for initiating hunting opportunities (&gt;50 elk), confirming reports from the agricultural sector, and aligning with the increasing number of complaints from landowners.</p> <p>There is significant private land in the proposed hunt zone, including agricultural lands, where conflicts with elk have been increasing, such as damage to crops and fencing. The use of firearms in this area is restricted, so the LEH is proposed to be archery only.</p> <p>Opening an LEH season for elk in this area will provide new, sustainable hunting opportunities for resident hunters and assist in reducing local elk conflicts.</p>
<p><b>Region 2 South Coast</b></p> <p>Amend and increase LEH opportunities for elk in the South Coast</p>	<p>Based on results from a series of winter aerial surveys, elk populations in the South Coast Region are estimated to be at least 50 animals within each elk population unit, indicating stable to increasing trends over time.</p> <p>It is proposed to increase wildlife-related recreation opportunities for elk in this region through increased hunting opportunities, improved harvest success rates, and splitting or shifting seasons to avoid hunter crowding.</p> <p>The proposed changes, which include season date changes, opening of new seasons, and amendments to range of authorizations, aim to provide new opportunities in a manner that prioritizes conservation while supporting Indigenous rights.</p> <p>The potential for this increased hunter opportunity is a result of relocation, recovery, and monitoring efforts funded in part by the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and in collaboration with local First Nations.</p>

<p><b>Region 3 Thompson</b></p> <p>Replace Fraser River mountain sheep GOS with LEH</p>	<p>The California bighorn sheep population occupying portions management unit (MU) 3-17 (adjacent to Lytton) has declined significantly over the past several years. The cause of this declining population trend is linked to a severe respiratory illness (<i>Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae</i>). This illness has contributed to several years of low lamb survival, thus limiting recruitment of individuals into this population. The long-term mean age of rams is also declining, indicating increased harvest pressure, and reduced older rams in the population. Immediate adjustments to hunter opportunities are warranted to address these conservation concerns.</p> <p>Surveys since the late 1990s indicate the Fraser sheep population has declined by approximately 70%. Recent monitoring through aerial surveys within MU 3-17 notes a continuing population decline in recent years. During 2019 aerial surveys, a total of 27 sheep were observed within Zone 3-17A, and of the 15 ewes observed, four had lambs present. A total of 45 sheep were observed within Zone 3-17B, and of the 27 ewes observed, 12 had lambs present.</p> <p>To address this concern, it is proposed to replace the current California bighorn sheep GOS with LEH. Bighorn sheep harvest management under a LEH season structure would enable hunter effort and harvests to be tightly controlled in accordance with established harvest objectives.</p>
<p><b>Region 4 Kootenay</b></p> <p>Close the Passmore mountain goat LEH</p>	<p>The Passmore mountain goat herd has declined from a population estimate of 50 in 2009, to approximately 20 in 2019. The reason for the apparent decline is unknown but is likely predator driven. This mountain goat population is isolated with the nearest herd approximately 25 km to the north.</p> <p>The BC Mountain Goat Management Plan recommends that mountain goat herds with fewer than 50 individuals not be hunted, and that isolated populations should be managed conservatively.</p> <p>Closing this mountain goat LEH will reduce the added mortality pressures of hunting on this herd to assist in population recovery.</p>
<p><b>Region 4 Kootenay</b></p> <p>Replace all Kootenay Region September 10 – October 25 GOS for full curl bighorn ram mountain sheep with LEH.</p>	<p>As of 2021, many of the low elevation and two high elevation wintering bighorn sheep herds have declined in the Kootenay Region, with many bordering on non-viable status. The cumulative effects of land use, predation, road kills, reductions in habitat quality, and focused hunting pressure are interacting as stressors on Kootenay bighorn sheep herds.</p> <p>All herds except for the Flathead (which winters primarily in Alberta) were inventoried in 2019 and 2021. Of the 12 population management units (PMU) identified in the Kootenay Region Bighorn Sheep Management Plan, nine PMUs contain subpopulations that are &lt; 75 bighorn sheep. The Bighorn Sheep Harvest Management Procedure recommends closing the season if there are &lt;75 bighorn sheep observed.</p> <p>Increasing quantity of mountain sheep hunters in the region, expanding road networks, new vehicle technology, technological improvements in hunting tools, and social media have increased the vulnerability of sheep to harvest across the region.</p>

	<p>With the current level of interest, hunter participation and harvest, greater regulation over hunting pressure and harvest in herds bordering on non-viable status is warranted.</p> <p>Illegal kills of mountain sheep in the region have also increased, from 3% of total harvest from 2002-2011 to 6% of total harvest from 2012-2020, although the true percentage may be higher due to non-reported illegal harvest.</p> <p>Aerial surveys have also shown limited escapement of mature rams from the current full curl hunting GOS. Winter surveys found mature and full curl rams comprised approximately 2% of observed sheep from 2019-21. These results suggest that a high proportion of the mature rams are likely being harvested in the current season.</p>
<p><b>Region 5 Cariboo</b></p> <p>Close the Taseko bighorn mountain sheep LEH</p>	<p>The Taseko bighorn mountain sheep population estimate has declined from 81 in 2018 to 47 in 2022. The provincial Bighorn Sheep Harvest Management Procedure states that populations with less than 75 observed sheep should not be hunted.</p> <p>Closing this mountain sheep LEH will reduce the added mortality pressures of hunting on this herd to assist in population recovery.</p>
<p><b>Region 6 Skeena</b></p> <p>Replace the south Skeena October 20-22 GOS and September 1-9/November 16-20 bow only GOS for bull moose with LEH.</p>	<p>Survey data from the Bulkley Valley Lakes District (2018), Tweedsmuir-Entiako (2019), Kispiox (2020) and Lower Skeena (2021) PMUs indicates decreases in total moose and/or bulls, and this has resulted in a decrease in the tentative annual allowable harvest (AAH) for the 2022-2026 allocation period. The current average AAH exceeds the tentative AAH in all PMUs except Bulkley Valley.</p> <p>The sustainability of licensed bull moose harvest is at risk if the regulatory regime remains status quo for the 2022 hunting season and onward.</p> <p>This regulation change would provide certainty in the number of licensed moose hunters and alleviate some of the concern expressed by First Nations regarding overharvest during a GOS.</p>
<p><b>Region 7A Omineca</b></p> <p>Extend private land antlerless elk LEH in the Vanderhoof/Fort St. James areas</p>	<p>Aerial surveys for other species in the Omineca Region have incidentally recorded large groups of elk (&gt;200) residing on private agricultural land, and landowners, and the BC Cattlemen’s Association, have indicated that elk densities have been increasing during winter periods.</p> <p>Elk damage farms and ranches through trampling and hay depredation losses, and LEH opportunities help mitigate this issue. While there are existing LEH seasons in this area, damage from elk is continues after the end of the current seasons.</p> <p>This proposal intends to extend the antlerless elk LEH late winter season by two weeks into late February in areas that receive the greatest amount of damage from overwintering elk in the Omineca.</p> <p>Extending the elk LEH season will enable farmers and ranchers who are still experiencing winter damage from elk an opportunity to mitigate this by allowing hunter harvest on their private lands. This will also provide additional resident hunter opportunity.</p>

<p><b>Region 7A Omineca</b></p> <p>Close all cow or calf (i.e. antlerless) moose hunting seasons (GOS and LEH) in the Parsnip Valley (Management Units 7-16 and 7-23).</p>	<p>Hunting of cow and calf moose in the Parsnip Valley is a complicated subject, as it is a part of a large-scale study aimed at the recovery of a critically endangered species (in this case the nearby Hart Ranges caribou herd) and is helping to inform our broader understanding of multi-prey and predator systems</p> <p>Concern with these hunts from First Nations and some members of the public has resulted in these hunts being reviewed, and initiated discussions on their closure.</p> <p>In 2020, wildlife managers began to reduce the abundance of wolves in the area, which resulted in an environment where moose populations have a high potential to increase. Stabilizing moose populations at lower densities through licensed harvest, concurrent with wolf management, has been employed to support caribou recovery in the short-term, while habitats are restored and enhanced.</p> <p>Closure of antlerless moose hunts in the Parsnip Valley incorporates Indigenous knowledge into wildlife management decisions and will inform future efforts on caribou recovery.</p> <p>Should increased moose abundance lead to rapid recolonization of wolves into the caribou recovery areas, re-introduction of antlerless moose hunting could be considered as part of future regulation cycle, following further consultation with First Nations.</p>
<p><b>Region 8 Okanagan</b></p> <p>Closure of Okanagan Mountain Park mountain sheep LEH</p>	<p>The past six surveys of the Okanagan Mountain Park mountain sheep suggest a continuously declining population; for the last three consecutive surveys the population has been below 75 sheep, and lamb recruitment numbers have been below the target of 30 lambs:100 ewes.</p> <p>With declining populations, low recruitment and a new and novel introduction of a severe respiratory illness (<i>Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae</i>) confirmed in 2020, the prognosis of this population rebounding quickly to minimum required numbers is highly unlikely.</p> <p>Closing this mountain sheep LEH will reduce the added mortality pressures of hunting on this herd to assist in population recovery.</p>