

GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Prairie Elk Hunting Season

Chapter 41:06:01, 41:06:59

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal Public Hearing Finalization	January 9-10, 2025 April 3, 2025 April 3-4, 2025	Pierre Pierre Pierre
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PROPOSED CHANGES

Duration: 2025 hunting season

2025 Season Dates:

Units	License Types	Season Dates
PRE-09A	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31*
PRE-11B	Any Elk	Sep 1 - Oct 15
PRE-11C	Any Elk	Oct 16 - Nov 30
PRE-11D	Antlerless Elk	Sep 1 - Oct 31
PRE-11E	Antlerless Elk	Nov 1 - Dec 31
PRE-15A	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31
PRE-27A	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31*
PRE-35A	Both	Sep 15 - Dec 31
PRE-35B	Both	Sep 15 - Dec 31
PRE-49A	Both	Sep 15 - Oct 31 AND Dec 1 - 31
PRE-WRA	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31

** Proposal is to change these season dates*

Licenses: Last year there were 126 resident “Any Elk” licenses and 210 “Antlerless Elk” licenses for the Prairie Elk seasons.

The Department’s recommendation for a specific number of licenses by tag types for 2025 hunting season is on the following action sheet.

Open Areas: See Figure 1.

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. No person may possess more than one (1) elk license of any type in a year.
2. No more than two persons may submit applications together.
3. Except for landowner/operator preference applicants, no person who receives a license in the first drawing for this season shall be eligible to apply for a Prairie elk license in first drawings for the next nine years.
4. One-half of the licenses allocated in each unit are available for landowner/operator preference application. Only one member of each qualifying landowner/operator household may apply every year.
5. Any elk that is harvested must be inspected by a Department representative within 24 hours after kill.

Proposed changes from last year:

1. Modify § 41:06:59:02 to expand PRE-WRA to include all counties west of the Missouri River not currently in a Prairie Elk or Black Hills Elk hunting unit.
2. Modify § 41:06:59:01 to expand PRE-27A season dates from Oct. 1 to Oct. 31 and Dec. 1 to Dec. 31 to Sep. 1 to Dec. 31.
3. Modify § 41:06:01:07.03 to include PRE-27A in Prairie Elk Hunting Season units eligible for a landowner-own-land resident only antlerless elk license.
4. *New* Modify § 41:06:59:01 to expand PRE-09A season dates from Sep. 15 to Oct. 31 and Dec. 1 to Dec. 31 to Sep. 1 to Dec. 31.
5. *New* Modify § 41:06:01:07.03 to include PRE-09A in Prairie Elk Hunting Season units eligible for a landowner-own-land resident only antlerless elk license.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Elk have expanded into new areas and there is hunting opportunity in new counties. On the prairie there are increasing depredation concerns and complaints from landowners, especially where there is agriculture such as corn, soybeans, and alfalfa. Expanding the PRE-WRA hunting unit will allow landowners in additional counties to harvest elk on their own property with landowner-own-land antlerless resident only elk licenses, in addition to more counties open to hunting using a limited draw PRE-WRA any elk or antlerless elk hunting license. The Department's recommendation is to increase license numbers to a level that allows management of elk at a very low density. Because most of the land in PRE-WRA is privately owned, landowners will ultimately determine if elk are harvested on their property, because they control hunter access. As such, they will have the choice to not harvest elk on their property or use hunters with PRE-WRA licenses or their landowner-own-land antlerless licenses to reduce the local population.

The Departments' recommendation will be to increase license numbers in PRE-WRA. This is expected to decrease antlerless harvest success rates in PRE-WRA, and elk will be managed at a lower population to minimize depredation concerns, as opposed to other prairie units where elk populations are managed at densities that also consider increased recreational opportunity and harvest success.

Elk in PRE-09A and PRE-27A are managed towards social tolerance of landowners and optimizing harvest success. There is a desire from landowners to make landowner-own-land antlerless resident only elk licenses available and allow elk hunting during September and November in PRE-09A and PRE-27A.

Figure 1. Map of 2024 Prairie elk season hunting units.

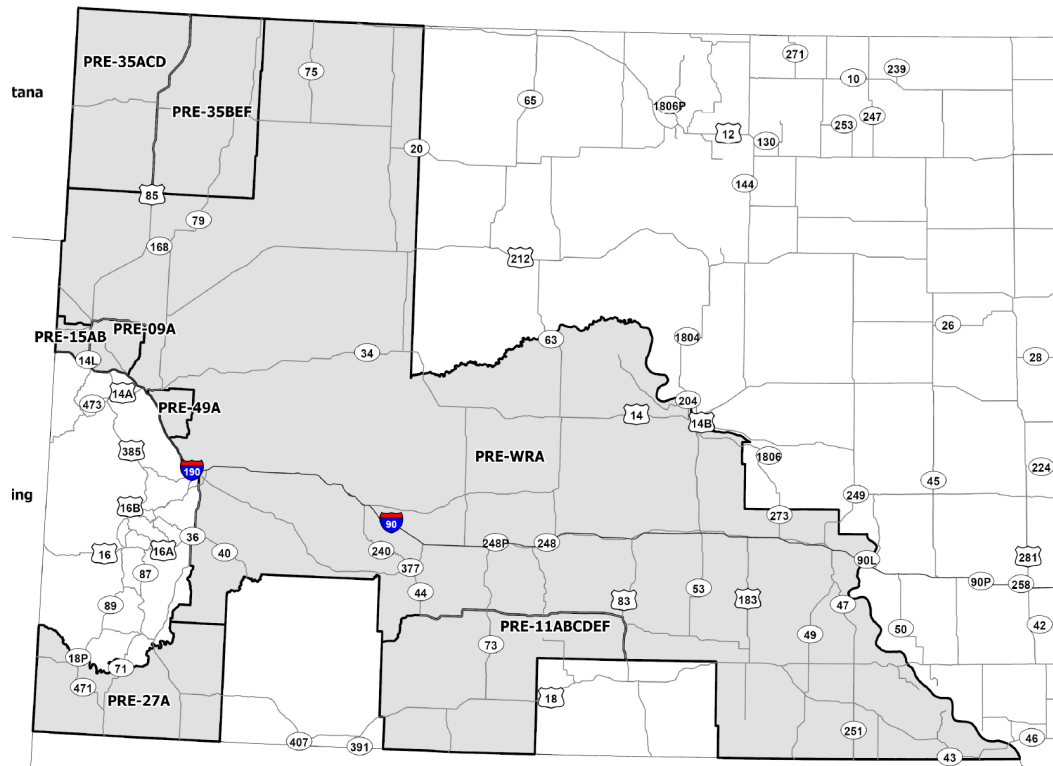


Figure 2. Map of proposed 2025 Prairie elk season hunting units.

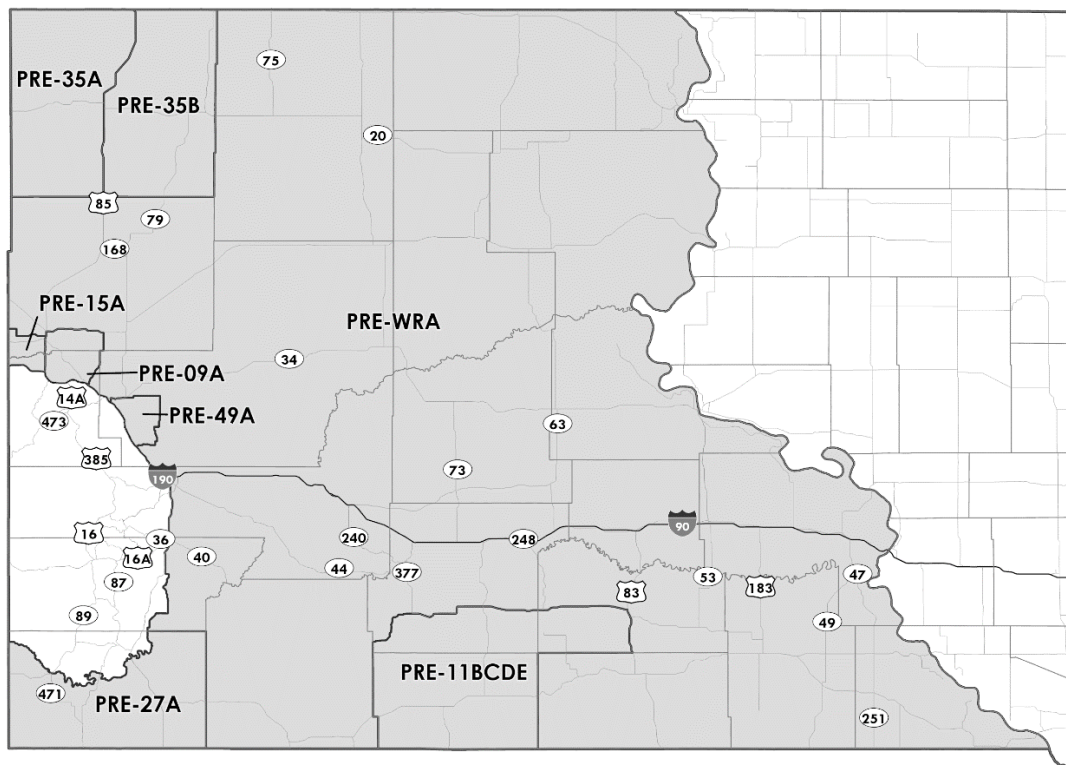


Table 1. Proposed changes to season dates.

Units	License Types	Season Dates
PRE-09A	Both	Sep 15 – Oct 31 AND Dec 1 – 31 Sep 1 - Dec 31
PRE-11B	Any Elk	Sep 1 - Oct 15
PRE-11C	Any Elk	Oct 16 - Nov 30
PRE-11D	Antlerless Elk	Sep 1 - Oct 31
PRE-11E	Antlerless Elk	Nov 1 - Dec 31
PRE-15A	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31
PRE-27A	Both	Oct 1 – 31 AND Dec 1 – 31 Sep 1 - Dec 31
PRE-35A	Both	Sep 15 - Dec - 31
PRE-35B	Both	Sep 15 - Dec - 31
PRE-49A	Both	Sep 15 - Oct 31 AND Dec 1 - 31
PRE-WRA	Both	Sep 1 - Dec - 31

Table 2. Prairie elk hunters, applicants, harvest success, and harvest by year.

Year	Licensed Hunters	Applicants	Harvest Success Rate	Bulls Harvested	Cows Harvested
2014	92	1,725	64%	33	25
2015	98	2,119	55%	29	25
2016	148	2,272	40%	32	27
2017	149	2,249	50%	41	34
2018	139	3,080	79%	59	51
2019	140	3,831	65%	41	50
2020	251	4,532	57%	56	87
2021	257	4,912	50%	57	71
2022	270	5,037	48%	74	55
2023	258	5,438	51%	78	53
2024	334	6,212	49%	91	73

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:59:01. Prairie elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses available -- Season dates. The prairie elk hunting season is open from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset each day of the season. No more than two hundred "any elk" licenses and no more than four hundred "antlerless elk" licenses may be issued for the prairie elk hunting season. The prairie elk hunting seasons are as follows:

- (1) Unit PRE-09A is open from September ~~fifteenth~~ first through ~~October thirty-first~~ and from ~~December first~~ through December thirty-first;
- (2) Unit PRE-11A is open from July fifteenth through August thirty-first;
- (3) Unit PRE-11B is open from September first through October fifteenth;
- (4) Unit PRE-11C is open from October sixteenth through November thirtieth;
- (5) Unit PRE-11D is open from September first through October thirty-first;
- (6) Unit PRE-11E is open from November first through December thirty-first;
- (7) Unit PRE-11F is open from January first through the last day of February;
- (8) Unit PRE-15A is open from September first through December thirty-first;
- (9) Unit PRE-15B is open from December first through January thirty-first;

- (10) Unit PRE-27A is open from ~~October~~ September first through ~~October thirty-first~~ and from ~~December first~~ through December thirty-first;
- (11) Unit PRE-35A is open from September fifteenth through December thirty-first;
- (12) Unit PRE-35B is open from September fifteenth through December thirty-first;
- (13) Unit PRE-35C is open from October first through November fifteenth;
- (14) Unit PRE-35D is open from November sixteenth through December thirty-first;
- (15) Unit PRE-35E is open from October first through November fifteenth;
- (16) Unit PRE-35F is open from November sixteenth through December thirty-first;
- (17) Unit PRE-49A is open from September fifteenth through October thirty-first and from December first through December thirty-first; and
- (18) Unit PRE-WRA is open from September first through December thirty-first.

41:06:59:02. Open units. The open units for the prairie elk hunting season are as follows:

- (1) Unit PRE-09A: those portions of Lawrence and Butte Counties within a line beginning at the intersection of U.S. Highways 85 and 212, then east on Highway 212 to Whitewood Valley Road, then south on Whitewood Valley Road to Interstate 90, then west on Interstate 90 to U.S. Highway 85, then north on U.S. Highway 85 to the point of beginning;
- (2) Unit PRE-11A: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (3) Unit PRE-11B: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (4) Unit PRE-11C: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (5) Unit PRE-11D: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (6) Unit PRE-11E: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (7) Unit PRE-11F: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (8) Unit PRE-15A: the portion of Butte County beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border, east on Sourdough Road to U.S. Highway 85, then south on U.S. Highway 85 to Interstate 90, then west on Interstate 90 to the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then north to the point of beginning;
- (9) Unit PRE-15B: the portion of Butte County beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border, east on Sourdough Road to U.S. Highway 85, then south on U.S. Highway 85 to Interstate 90, then west on Interstate 90 to the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then north to the point of beginning;
- (10) Unit PRE-27A: the portion of Fall River County not included in BHE-H3 or BHE-H4;
- (11) Units PRE-35A, PRE-35C, and PRE-35D: the portion of Harding County west of U.S. Highway 85;
- (12) Units PRE-35B, PRE-35E, and PRE-35F: the portion of Harding County east of U.S. Highway 85;
- (13) Unit PRE-49A: the portion of Meade County within a line beginning at the junction of Interstate 90 and Elk Creek Road, then east on Elk Creek Road to Ricard Road, then north on Ricard Road to Tilford Road, then east on Tilford Road to Middle Alkalai Road, then north on Middle Alkalai Road to

Alkalai Road, then west on Alkalai Road to SD Highway 34, then west on SD Highway 34 to Interstate 90, then south on Interstate 90 to the point of beginning; and

(14) Unit PRE-WRA: the portion of the state west of the Missouri River not associated with another prairie elk unit, Custer State Park, or any Black Hills elk unit described in 41:06:26., ~~excluding the Lower Brule Indian Reservation and Corson, Dewey, Oglala Lakota, Todd, and Ziebach Counties.~~

41:06:01:07.03. Landowner own land license types. For the West River, East River, and Black Hills firearm deer hunting seasons, a qualifying landowner or owner-operator may purchase one "any deer" license or one two-tag "any deer" and "any antlerless deer" license. For the antelope firearm hunting season, a qualifying landowner or owner-operator may purchase one "any antelope" license or one two-tag "any antelope" and "any doe-fawn antelope" license. For the prairie elk hunting season units PRE-09A, PRE-11D, PRE-11E, PRE-27A, PRE-35A, PRE-35B, and PRE-WRA, as described in chapter 41:06:59, a qualifying landowner or lessee, as described in subdivision 41:06:01:15(4), may purchase one "antlerless elk" license.

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, this will result in additional hunting opportunity.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? Additional hunting opportunity.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes, by providing additional hunting opportunity.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Prairie Elk Hunting Season Licenses Chapter 41:06:59

Commission Meeting Dates:	Public Hearing	April 3, 2025	Pierre
	Finalization	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre

COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Licenses: 146 resident “Any Elk” licenses and 280 “Antlerless Elk” licenses.

2024			
Prairie Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk	Atl Elk	
	21	23	
9A	8	10	
11A			
11B	16		
11C	16		
11D		30	
11E		10	
11F			
15A	8	5	
15B			
27A	30	30	
35A	10	30	
35B	8	40	
35C			
35D			
35E			
35F			
49A	10	15	
WRA	20	40	
TOTAL	126	210	336

2025			
Prairie Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk	Atl Elk	
	21	23	
9A	8	30	
11A			
11B	16		
11C	16		
11D		30	
11E		10	
11F			
15A	8	5	
15B			
27A	30	40	
35A	10	30	
35B	8	40	
35C			
35D			
35E			
35F			
49A	10	15	
WRA	30	80	
TOTAL	136	280	416

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Anecdotal reports and observations suggest the elk population on the prairie continues to grow. It is likely much of the growth and expansion has occurred in WRA unit, where Any Elk and Antlerless Elk licenses are recommended to be increased. Similarly, the population in 09A (mostly in Lawrence County) and 27A (mostly Fall River County) appears to be increasing, resulting in recommended increases in license numbers.

2024 Prairie Firearm Elk Harvest Projections

Last Revised: 18 Feb 2025

Unit/Type	Resident Licenses					Harvest Projections							Avg	Avg	Land Hunted Most					
	Appl. 1st					Bull	Cow	Total Elk		Elk Shot Not		Satisfctn	Days	Public	Own	Other				
	Choice *	Avail.	Sold	Resp.	Success	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Calves	Harvested	Cl (95%)	Recovered	Score	Hunted						
09A-21	176	8	8	63%	100%	8	0	0	0	8	+/-0	0	7.0	2.4	0	5	3			
11A-23	6	10	9	56%	20%	0	2	0	0	2	+/-2	0	5.5	2.5	0	0	7			
11B-21	467	16	16	75%	75%	12	0	0	0	12	+/-2	1	6.0	7.2	3	7	7			
11C-21	208	16	16	69%	64%	10	0	0	0	10	+/-3	0	5.3	5.0	0	7	9			
11D-23	58	30	30	63%	58%	0	13	2	3	17	+/-4	0	5.4	4.2	2	0	24			
11E-23	26	10	10	70%	29%	0	3	0	0	3	+/-2	0	4.4	2.4	0	0	7			
15A-21	123	8	8	50%	75%	4	2	0	0	6	+/-2	0	5.7	16.7	0	0	6			
15A-23	2	5	5	60%	33%	0	2	0	0	2	+/-2	0	4.0	4.0	0	0	2			
27A-21	834	30	30	57%	65%	18	2	0	0	19	+/-5	2	4.2	8.9	7	9	14			
27A-23	41	30	30	60%	50%	0	12	0	3	15	+/-4	0	5.0	4.5	8	0	18			
35A-21	1,038	10	10	60%	50%	5	0	0	0	5	+/-3	0	4.7	19.5	8	2	0			
35A-23	61	30	30	63%	16%	0	5	0	0	5	+/-3	0	3.3	10.1	17	0	9			
35B-21	1,579	8	8	50%	100%	8	0	0	0	8	+/-0	0	6.0	7.5	6	0	2			
35B-23	107	40	39	63%	46%	0	15	0	3	18	+/-5	2	4.4	6.1	28	0	10			
49A-21	138	10	10	60%	100%	10	0	0	0	10	+/-0	2	5.2	23.8	0	0	10			
49A-23	12	15	15	60%	11%	0	2	0	0	2	+/-2	0	3.6	13.4	0	0	8			
WRA-21	1,245	20	20	55%	73%	15	0	0	0	15	+/-4	0	5.3	15.1	4	5	11			
WRA-23	91	40	40	75%	20%	0	8	0	0	8	+/-3	0	3.9	7.6	4	4	27			
Totals	6,212	336	334	63.1%	49.1%	89	63	2	10	164	+/- 44	6	4.68	8.34	84	40	175			
The response rate for all units combined is:					63.1%													28%	13%	59%
Satisfaction scale of 1=very dissatisfied to 7=very satisfied.																				
* Number of 1st drawing applicants with that unit as 1st choice.																				

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____