

Kootenay Region Wildlife Regulations

Summary of Comments on Proposed Changes for 2010-11

(Received from Sept.2009 - Jan.2010)

Acknowledgements

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Response Overview

The public appears to be getting more comfortable with web based forms and questionnaires, as the number of responses jumped this year up to 339, almost double from last year (see specific details in Table in Appendix 1). The number of proposed regulation changes however, also went up from 8 to 19 (although only 18 in total were posted, 15 at first and 3 via addendum a month later). Individual comments ranged from detailed referenced articles to hunting stories, to outright profanity. In addition to these, we received one petition with 659 names, a well structured comprehensive letter with 149 names, and 16 organized club responses.

Associations and clubs represented included the United Bowhunters of BC, Traditional Bowhunters of BC, Fernie Rod and Gun, Revelstoke Rod and Gun, Nelson District Rod and Gun, Sparwood and District Fish and Wildlife Association, Golden District Rod and Gun, Okanagan Region BCWF, Shuswap Region Wildlife Committee (BCWF), Lake Windermere Rod and Gun, East Kootenay Hunters Association, East Kootenay Big Game Club, East Kootenay Trail Hounds Association, Castlegar and District Wildlife Association, Wildsight, and Southern Guide-Outfitters Association. The Club responses are summarized in Appendix 2.

Recommendations are being formulated to create a more effective and less time intensive review process for our hunting regulation consultation, including detailed tracking conducted by MOE administrative staff of the submitted forms, until we can develop an interactive web form. One dominant feature noted from the review comments is that people are very passionate and proud of BC's abundant wildlife. They also care very deeply about the individual freedom to be able to hunt, and even more deeply when their efforts are rewarded with meat in the freezer or a trophy prize.

Methodology for Response Summary to Proposed Hunt Regulation Changes 2010/11

'Yes' and 'Moderate' responses were added together for an overall positive response, 'Low' and 'No' were added together for an overall negative response. For example: Yes & Med [or positive] or Low & No [or negative] percentages were calculated for options that were selected by respondents within one regulation, these summing to 100% for that proposal.

Percentages were calculated for however many respondents elected to comment on any one proposed change. For example: if 68 (of the approximately 340) offered an opinion, that would calculate as 20% of total respondents venturing an opinion on that proposal. In the case of proposals with multiple options, averages were used.

Clubs and organizations comments were recorded separately in Appendix 2 and not incorporated into the Response Summary Table as the weight of the group's total membership would have skewed the public's response statistics (for example, not all members would have responded, the club's vote may not have represented all individuals perspectives or opinions). Club members were able to send in their comments as individuals if they so chose.

Regulation Overview

Regulation number: R41011-01 (62.7% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Change **mule deer** buck seasons to:

- 1 Sept 10-30 4 pt; Oct 1-31 any buck; Nov 1-15 4 pt region-wide, (26% positive/74% negative)
- 2 An antlerless harvest throughout the region via LEH and based on conservative population extrapolations by MU from October 1 to November 15, (23% positive/77% negative)
- 3 A late season archery season for any buck beginning either November 16 or December 1 and ending December 10, (29% positive/71% negative)
- 4 An any buck youth season from September 10 to 30, (27% positive/73% negative)
- 5 An LEH for antlerless deer for youth hunters from September 10 to 30, and (25% positive/75% negative)
- 6 A 1 mule deer bag limit in Region 4; and drop the aggregate deer bag limit. (30% positive/70% negative)

This set of possible changes struck many as the furthest thing from “simplification”. A frequently repeated comment was that mule deer populations were not healthy enough to warrant this new harvest, and that one harsh winter could by itself be very detrimental. Referring to the proposed changes being toward making a “successful hunt” more likely (especially for recruited youth), one comment was “deer hunting isn’t supposed to be ridiculously easy, that’s what rabbits and grouse were created for”.

Regulation number: R41011-02 (61.8% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Change **white-tailed deer** seasons to:

- 1 An antlerless GOS region-wide (along with other regions), from October 10 to November 30, (40% positive/60% negative)
- 2 A 2 white-tailed deer bag limit in Region 4, one buck and one doe, and drop the aggregate deer bag limit. (45% positive/55% negative)

Those opposed generally believe WT populations are not robust enough for a GOS on does; suggest an increase in LEH tags on does, followed by assessment of its effects.

Regulation number: R41011-03 (22.4% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Change the **lynx** hunting season from November 15 to February 15, and extend the closing date of the lynx trapping season from December 31 to February 15. (72% positive/28% negative)

This proposal had confusing language, including both hunting vs. trapping, as well as start vs. end dates, so had various interpretations of what was actually intended by the change. Some trappers asked to make the quota the same as bobcat, as the sets are quite similar and they often get unanticipated ‘by-catch’. We ended up with more questions than comments for this change. Of the positive respondents, it was seen as an opportunity for houndsmen.

Regulation number: R41011-04 (22.1% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Change the **Crawford Bay** shotgun only shooting area to a no shooting area. (92% positive/8% negative)

Received strong support for a no shooting area, but there still were concerns with bowhunting being allowed. Some, however, were against this change in principle, believing that this was a first step toward an expanded “No Hunting” area.

Regulation number: R41011-05 (34.5% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Add a bow season for **full curl sheep** from either

- 1) October 26 to November 4 (36% positive/64% negative), or
- 2) October 26 to October 31. (37% positive/63% negative)

Negative respondents said that sheep would generally or often be on their winter range by these dates, so it isn’t a very sporting or challenging hunt; moreover, it is stressful for the whole herd while trying to get ready for

winter. One wry comment: "Once sheep hit the winter range, they're essentially tame. The optics and ethics of this proposal are poor even for my desensitized moral compass."

Regulation number: R41011-06 (28.3% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Open an LEH season for **ewe bighorn sheep**. (27% positive/73% negative)

Of those responding, the overwhelming majority wanted the ewes transplanted elsewhere rather than hunted. Improving winter range habitat was also considered a better response to herd health pressures.

Regulation number: R41011-07 (13.0% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Close a portion of 4-32 to **goat** hunting. (93% positive/8% negative)

Of those who responded, strong support was shown!

Regulation number: R41011-08 (28.9% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Move from an LEH to a GOS system for **mountain goats** in some MUs where conservation risk is low. (59% positive/41% negative)

Positive respondents saw this as a good new hunting opportunity. However, in many areas the LEH odds have been nearly 1:1, so GOS may only serve to remove a source of harvest information.

Regulation number: R41011-09 (52.2% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Open a General Open Season for 6-point or better **bull elk** in West Kootenay MUs currently on LEH, from September 10 to October 20. (42% positive/58% negative)

Consideration of starting with a shorter season for 2010-11 (40% positive/60% negative)

A highly contentious proposal. A significant number stated that they have indeed been frustrated by the low odds with LEH, but believe that, if there are sufficient numbers to even consider a GOS, then simply increase the number of LEH tags (and go to a priority system that will get you a tag eventually). There was much concern about the anticipated influx of GOS hunters to the area, attendant public safety issues (especially with understaffed COS), and a possible decimation of this world-class resource.

Regulation number: R41011-10 (55.6% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Open a hunt for younger **bull elk (spike or 3-point)**

Option 1: Open a general 3-point bull elk season in Kootenay agriculture/winter range zones

(25% positive/75% negative)

(The addendum that came out October 16 then clarifies, "Open a general 3-point *or better* bull season in Kootenay agriculture/winter range zones *from September 1-19*").

Option 2: Open a general spike bull elk season throughout the Kootenay Region, from September 1 to 19

(20% positive/80% negative)

Option 3: Open a general 3-point bull elk season throughout the Kootenay Region, from October 10 to 20

(25% positive/75% negative)

The proposed season for spike elk was of concern to a lot of respondents. The majority of those commenting expressed concern that the younger bulls would not grow to a large trophy size. However, there were also a lot of respondents who just wanted to have a chance at a bull elk! There were also several objections to a Sept. 1 opening overlapping the bow season.

Regulation number: R41011-11 (39.2% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Option 1: Expand the youth/senior and bow-only general open season for antlerless elk to all agriculture/winter range zones (42% positive/58% negative)

Option 2: change the season dates to August 15 to September 9 for bow hunters (36% positive/64% negative)

Option 3: September 1 to 19 for youth/senior hunters (38% positive/62% negative)

Objections were raised about overlapping a youth/senior rifle season with bow hunting. Also, there were many comments about August 15 being much too early, with summer temperatures resulting in much meat spoilage and vacationers possibly still being in the bush.

Regulation number: R41011-12A (36.0% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Align Limited Entry Hunt seasons for antlerless elk from September 20 to January 30 in agriculture/winter range zones across the Kootenay Region. There would be 6 seasons: September 20 to 30, October 1 to 9, October 10 to 31, November 1 to 30, December 1 to 31, and January 1 to 31. This would substantially increase the length of the East Kootenay Trench and Elk Valley seasons; however hunts after October 10 could be restricted to private land only (37% positive/63% negative)

Some felt that this proposal has the potential for too much impact on migratory elk, “there is no crop depredation during the fall and winter anyway and a hunting season to cause animal harassment seems contradictory to the Wildlife Act”. One suggestion for increasing the hunter opportunity and reducing homesteader elk is a July-August hunt which would target only the non-migratory and reduce crop depredation during the growing season. Any antlerless hunt should be conducted during the regular hunting season, as later the “wrong” elk would be targeted.

Regulation number: R41011-12B (34.2% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Open limited entry hunts for antlerless elk outside of agriculture/winter range zones, from October 10 to 31.

Option 1: region-wide (41% positive/59% negative)

Option 2: select MUs (to be determined based on public feedback) (41% positive/59% negative)

Very few comments to go along with the “votes”.

Regulation number: R41011-13 (23.6% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Expand the agriculture/winter range zone in the Elk Valley and East Kootenay Trench (56% positive/44% negative)

In the Elk Valley (especially Grave Prairie AMA), there is a need for much better mapping and access to more areas for LEH. In the north, people felt there aren't enough ranchers to justify the change. Also, as with most of the agriculture/winter range proposals, there is frustration about ultimately having to deal with landowners; from the latter's perspective, extended seasons in turn mean more weeks of having strangers knocking on their doors.

Regulation number: R41011-14 (25.2% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Increase sub regional quotas for cougar (1) from 15 to 20 in the East Kootenay and (2) from 5 – 12 in caribou areas of the south Kootenay (each received 81% positive/19% negative)

This was generally favoured, with some saying to target the important Caribou areas more specifically. Many were in favour of the increased quota on cougar and were asking for more liberal quotas on wolves.

(The remaining proposals were put forth in an addendum at a later date; the total number of responses was very low, and likely not statistically useful).

Regulation number: R41011-15 (6% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Open a General Open Season for **antlerless elk** in Kootenay agriculture/winter range zones from September 10-19. (37% positive/63% negative)

Regulation number: R41011-16 (4% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Combine Management Units in Zone X for **antlerless elk** Limited Entry Hunts, to create a southern trench agriculture/winter range zone (MUs 4-02 to 4-05, and 4-20 to 4-22) and a northern trench agriculture/winter range zone (MU 4-26, and possibly 4-24, 4-26, 4-34 and 4-35 if zone is expanded). (75% positive/25% negative)

Regulation number: R41011-17 (7% of total respondents expressed some opinion)

Proposal: Open a General Open Season for **any bull elk** in Kootenay agriculture/winter range zones from September 1-9 this would replace other options for younger bull hunts proposed in Regulation number R41011-10 (3 pt or better, or spike bull seasons) (29% positive/71% negative)

RESPONSE SUMMARY TO PROPOSED HUNT REG CHANGES 2010/11										APPENDIX 1
Reg change		YES	MOD	Y&M%	LOW	NO	L&N%	Y&M%	L&N%	%res/reg
&options				/option			/option	total#	total#	of total
R41011-01	1	47	12	26	12	152	74	17.4	48.4	
	2	40	8	23	8	157	77	14.1	48.7	
	3	51	12	29	8	144	71	18.6	44.8	
	4	45	11	27	10	145	73	16.5	45.7	
	5	45	8	25	10	152	75	15.6	47.8	
	6	51	9	30	10	128	70	17.7	40.7	
Mule Deer										62.7
R41011-02	1	70	18	40	12	119	60	26.0	38.6	
	2	74	15	45	9	102	55	26.3	32.7	
Whitetail Deer										61.8
R41011-03		44	11	72	5	16	28	16.2	6.2	
Lynx season										22.4
R41011-04		66	3	92	0	6	8	20.4	1.8	
Crawford Bay										22.1
R41011-05	1	31	12	36	3	74	64	12.7	22.7	
	2	32	10	37	4	68	63	12.4	21.2	
Big Horn Sheep										34.5
R41011-06		21	5	27	3	67	73	7.7	20.6	
Ewe LEH										28.3
R41011-07		35	6	93	2	1	7	12.1	0.8	
Mt. Goat closure										13.0
R41011-08		53	5	59	9	31	41	17.1	11.8	
Mt. Goat GOS										28.9
R41011-09		64	12	42	5	102	58	23.0	31.6	
(short season to start?)		59	9	40	5	98	60	20.1	30.4	
6 pt Elk GOS										52.2
R41011-10	1	39	8	25	9	132	75	13.9	41.6	
	2	28	7	20	8	136	80	10.3	42.5	
	3	49	0	25	9	140	75	14.5	44.0	
Spike/3 pt Elk GOS										55.6
R41011-11	1	51	5	42	7	71	58	16.5	23.0	
	2	45	5	36	9	78	64	14.7	25.7	
	3	45	4	38	8	71	62	14.5	23.3	
Y/S/Bow GOS										39.2
R41011-12A		26	19	37	7	70	63	13.3	22.7	
Antlerless Elk ag/WR										36.0
R41011-12B	1	43	10	41	5	71	59	15.6	22.4	
	2	32	10	41	4	57	59	12.4	18.0	
Antlerless Elk LEH										34.2
R41011-13		40	5	56	6	29	44	13.3	10.3	
Expand zone A										23.6
R41011-14	1	65	6	81	4	13	19	20.9	5.0	
	2	63	4	81	3	13	19	19.8	4.7	
Cougar quota										25.2
R41011-15		7	0	37	2	10	63	2	4	
Antlerless Elk GOS										6
R41011-16		9	0	75	0	3	25	3	~1	
Merge zone X										4
R41011-17		6	1	29	0	17	71	2	5	
GOS any bull Elk										7
R41011-18		1	0	25	0	3	75	x	x	
Expand zone C										x

SUMMARY OF CLUB/ORGANIZATIONS COMMENTS TO PROPOSED HUNT REG CHANGES APPENDIX 2

As will be seen in the accompanying table, many clubs (perhaps appropriately) only responded to proposals pertinent to their area.

R41011-01: a resounding “no” to option #1 (4-pt, then any, then 4-pt); mostly thumbs-down on the antlerless LEH (exception: Bowhunters of BC); the most supported option was the any buck youth season (option #4)

R41011-02: support for the WT changes was from clubs in the southeast of the region and nowhere else, perhaps reflecting perceived relative abundance

R41011-03: general support for the changes to lynx season, with the notable exception of the EK Trail Hounds

R41011-04: not a lot of responses, but most of those were in favour

R41011-05: mixed responses

R41011-06: mixed responses

R41011-07: small number of responses, most of those positive

R41011-08: generally favoured, notable exceptions being Guides’ organization and Wildsight

R41011-09: the proposal most responded to; interestingly, a popular idea with groups from outside the Kootenays (Okanagan, Shuswap), and opposite responses from those groups closest to the action (Nelson, Castlegar); guides opposed

R41011-10: most groups emphatically opposed to all the options presented (a short-sighted approach)

R41011-11: many of the responses were unclear about which option they were favouring or opposing; if there was any trend, it was favouring option #3 (a later youth/senior hunt)

R41011-12A: no group in favour

R41011-12B: quite a few groups in favour of one or the other of these options

R41011-13: strong club support; not the guides

R41011-14: very strong support across the region’s clubs, but again not the guides

MATRIX OF CLUB RESPONSES TO PROPOSED CHANGES

CLUB ----> Regulation # and option	Fer r&g	Rev r&g	Nel r&g	Spa fwa	Gol r&g	Cas wa	Wn r&g	EK HA	Bow BC	EK TH	OK	Shu	Gui	Wld
01: MD. 1 (4pt,any,4pt)	N	N		N		N	N	N					N	
01: MD.2 (r'gion ant'less leh)	N	N				N		?	med				N	
01:MD.3 (late arch any buck)	Y	N				N		?					N	
01:MD.4 (youth any buck)	Y	Y		Y		N	N	?		N			N	
01:MD.5 (youth ant'less leh)	Y	N		Y		N	N	?					N	
01:MD.6 (bag limit 1,no agg)	Y	N				N		?					N	
02:WT.1 (r'gion ant'less gos)	Y	N		Y		N	N	Y	Med	N				
02:WT.2(1buck,1doe,no agg)	Y	N		Y		N	N	Y	N	N			Y,N,N	
03:Lynx season	Y			Y					Med	N			Y,Y	N
04:CrawBay (no shoot zone)	Y							Y	Y				N	
05:Sh'p.1(bow seas.to Nov4)	Y			N			Y	Med	Y	N			Y,N	
05:Sh'p.2(bow seas.toOct31)	Y			N			Y	Med	Y	N			N	
06: ewe leh	Y			N				Low	N				N,N	N
07:goat close part 4-32	Y								Y	Med			Y,N	Y?
08:goat LEH to GOS	Y	N	Y	Y			Lo w	Y	Y				N	N
09: W. Koot 6pt elk GOS	Y	N	Y	N		N	Y	N	Y		Y!	Y!	N,N	
10: 3pt.elk ag/wint.range	N!			?			Low	Y		N!			N!,N	
10: spike region wide Sept	N!			?			N	Y		N!			N!,N	
10:3pt.region wide Oct10-20	N!		Y	?			N	Y	Y	N!			N!,N	
11:ant'less elk.1 j/s,bow agz	Y		Y	?			N	Y	N				N	
11:ant'less elk.2bow Aug 15-			Y	?			N						N	
11:ant'less elk.3jr/sr Sept1-			Y	?			Y	Y	Y				N	
12A:ant'l'ss elk agz'nes 6lehs	N	N					N	Low	Low				N	
12B:ant'l'ss e.1leh Oct,r'gion	Y	N					N	Y	Y				N	
12B:ant'l'ss e.2leh Oct MU's		N	Y				N	Y					N	
13:exp ag/wint ElkV,trench	Y	Y	Y				N	Y	Y				N	
14: cougar quotas	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y!	Y	Y				N	
15:ant'l'ss elk gos agz Sept	N													
16:comb agz's ant'l'ss elk leh	Y				N									
17:gos any bull elk agZ Sept	N													

LEGEND FOR CLUBS CITED IN TABLE ABOVE

Fer r&g= Fernie Rod & Gun Club
Rev r&g= Revelstoke Rod & Gun Club
Nel r&g= Nelson Rod & Gun Club
Spa fwa+ Sparwood & District Fish & Wildlife Association
Gol R&G= Golden Rod & Gun Club
Cas wa= Castlegar & District Wildlife Association
Wn r&g= Lake Windermere District Rod & Gun Club
EKHA= East Kootenay Hunters' Association
Bow BC= United Bowhunters of BC, Traditional Bowhunters of BC
EKTH=East Kootenay Trail Hounds Association
OK= Okanagan Region BCWF
Shu= Shuswap Region BCWF
Gui= Southern Guides
Wld= Wildsight

Notes on entries in the above table: "med" means a medium or moderate, not strong or unequivocal, level of support for the proposal; similarly, "low" means not completely opposed, but not overly enthusiastic either. Multiple letters under the guides' column indicate that the guides did not speak with "one voice" in responding to the proposed changes.

RESPONSES PROFILE

Individual Responses with at least some "votes" (including late submissions) = 339

Additional submissions with either profanities, no votes, or both = 8

Total individual responses =347

Responses from within Kootenay Region	=282/347	= 81.3%
Responses from BC outside Kootenay Region	= 39/347	= 11.2%
Responses from outside BC	= 3/347	= 0.9%
Responses with no identifiable origin	= 23/347	= 6.6%

There were also 16 club responses, 2 petitions, and 1 letter to the Editor.