

RCW 77.12.150 Game seasons—Opening and closing—Special hunt.

(1) By emergency rule only, and in accordance with criteria established by the commission, the director may close or shorten a season for game animals, game birds, or game fish, and after a season has been closed or shortened, may reopen it and reestablish bag limits on game animals, game birds, or game fish during that season. The director shall advise the commission of the adoption of emergency rules. A copy of an emergency rule, certified as a true copy by the director or by a person authorized in writing by the director to make the certification, is admissible in court as prima facie evidence of the adoption and validity of the rule.

(2)(a) If the director finds that game animals have increased in numbers in an area of the state so that they are damaging public or private property or over-utilizing their habitat, the commission may establish a special hunting season and designate the time, area, and manner of taking and the number and sex of the animals that may be killed or possessed by a licensed hunter. The director shall include notice of the special season in the rules establishing open seasons.

(b) When the department receives six complaints concerning damage to commercial agricultural and horticultural crop production by wildlife from the owner or tenant of real property, or from several owners or tenants in a locale, the commission shall conduct a special hunt or special hunts or take remedial action to reduce the potential for the damage, and shall authorize either one or two permits per hunter. Each complaint must be confirmed by qualified department staff, or their designee.

(c) The director shall determine by random selection the identity of hunters who may hunt within the area of the special hunt and shall determine the conditions and requirements of the selection process. Within this process, the department must maintain a list of all persons holding valid wildlife hunting licenses, arranged by county of residence, who may hunt deer or elk that are causing damage to crops. The department must update the list annually and utilize the list when contacting persons to assist in controlling game damage to crops. The department must make all reasonable efforts to contact individuals residing within the county where the hunting of deer or elk will occur before contacting a person who is not a resident of that county. The department must randomize the names of people on the list in order to provide a fair distribution of the hunting opportunities. Hunters who participate in hunts under this section must report any kills to the department. The department must include a summary of the wildlife harvested in these hunts in the annual game management reports it makes available to the public. [2003 c 385 s 2; 1987 c 506 s 24; 1984 c 240 s 4; 1980 c 78 s 29; 1977 ex.s. c 58 s 1; 1975 1st ex.s. c 102 s 1; 1955 c 36 s 77.12.150. Prior: 1949 c 205 s 2; 1947 c 275 s 25; Rem. Supp. 1949 s 5992-35.]

Legislative findings and intent—1987 c 506: See note following RCW 77.04.020.

Effective date—Intent, construction—Savings—Severability—1980 c 78: See notes following RCW 77.04.010.

Special hunting season permits: RCW 77.32.370.