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ARIZONA

Arizona Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
“The voice for our wild public lands, waters and wildlife”
www.backcountryhunters.org

January 13, 2022

*The Arizona Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Arizona Game & Fish Proposed Guidelines for the 2023-2028 Hunt Seasons Comments*

Please consider the following comments on behalf of the Arizona Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (AZBHA) regarding the proposed Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Hunt Guidelines.

AZ BHA is a member-driven conservation organization focused on advancing positive change for our nation’s public land hunting and fishing heritage. The Department’s mission to conserve Arizona’s diverse wildlife resources and manage for safe, compatible outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future generations is critical for our hunting and fishing heritage to continue. AZBHA is extremely grateful for the Departments dedication to fulfilling this goal and to date we have been very supportive of the efforts made to ensure sound science-based management would dictate how the public’s wildlife is cared for.

We are writing today to re-inforce a few of the main principles of The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation as they relate to the departments proposed hunt guidelines.

1. **Wildlife is a public resource:** In the United States, wildlife is considered a public resource, independent of the land or water where wildlife may live. Government at various levels have a role in managing that resource on behalf of all citizens and to ensure the long-term sustainability of wildlife populations:
 - a. The proposed guidelines reflect this principle and support the Department’s mission.
2. **Allocation of wildlife by law:** Wildlife is a public resource managed by government. As a result, access to wildlife for hunting is through legal mechanisms such as set hunting seasons, bag limits, license requirements, etc.
 - a. The proposed guidelines reflect this principle and support the department’s mission.
3. **Science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy:** In order to manage wildlife as a shared resource fairly, objectively, and knowledgeably, decisions must be based on sound science such as annual wildlife population surveys and the work of professional wildlife biologists.
 - a. The proposed guidelines reflect this principle and support the department’s mission.



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- b. It is important to note that science-based management should remain the tool that is used to set wildlife regulation and policy. Decisions based on emotion or unfounded claims should not influence wildlife management in any way.

We understand that the Department also considers social acceptability and responsibilities in developing its management strategies. We believe that this is currently completely and appropriately accomplished by utilizing the North American Wildlife Conservation Model and fair-chase ethics. These long-standing methods of supplementing science with appropriate social considerations should not be abandoned in an effort to placate vocal groups/individuals who oppose hunting in general and seek to create a false impression of societal disapproval of hunting and its methods.

AZBHA may prepare a form letter for its members to easily utilize to show their support for science-based management and fair-chase based social responsibility. Please understand that if the Department receives the same message from numerous people, indicating that they are members of AZBHA, that these are each individual messages from different people

Thank you for your thorough consideration of our comments and ongoing efforts to conserve habitat and traditional hunting, angling, and public land opportunities in Arizona. If there is anything we can do to provide support in this process, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,
The Arizona Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
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