

Master Hunter
Hunting Season Comments

First of all, I want to say thank you to the 1975 currently enrolled Master Hunters (MH). All of the time you volunteer each year on a variety of projects across the state helps us tremendously and is greatly appreciated. It is beginning to feel more and more like the program is living up to its potential as a partnership and fulfilling the vision.

http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/masterhunter/advisory_groups/bylaws.html

Another key contribution provided by MH is to help the Department address property damage caused by game species. We have used a variety of season structures and permit hunts in the past to try to be most effective. For 2012 we are considering some additional refinement in how to best utilize your help with damage mitigation.

In the past, we have basically had two types of hunts those mainly designed to help mitigate damage and a few that were mainly incentives to join the MH program, although many hunts serve both functions. Since the program was re-organized in 2008 and a new policy <http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/policies.html#6000> developed by the Fish and Wildlife Commission, many of the incentive hunts have been phased out. This was due in part to concerns expressed by hunters that Master Hunters were taking away opportunity from general hunters.

There are a couple of remaining hunts that have been identified as not fitting our guidelines (attached) very well. These include a December either sex elk hunt and an antlerless white-tailed deer hunt in an area that stretches from north Spokane south to the Snake River. So we are recommending that these hunts be dropped or modified. If there are additional needs to kill elk or deer across this broad area, it will be provided to general hunters.

However, if there are damage complaints from landowners, we would like to develop a list of MH to call on. We will generate this ranked list with a random drawing through our special permit system. This concept of lists of MH available on short notice to come kill an elk or deer causing damage will be used across the state. We will need to work together on implementing this new concept to make it effective and successful.

The proposals for the 2012-14 Hunting Season Regulations are available for comment including the Master Hunter permit hunts and general seasons at <http://wdfw.wa.gov>. We would appreciate it if you would identify yourself as a Master Hunter and send your thoughts on the proposals for MH to Wildthing@dfw.wa.gov or to:

Wildlife Program
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501

Again, we greatly appreciate your help and commitment to working to improve the image of hunters, maintain the hunting heritage, and create better relationships with landowners. Please take a minute to comment on the MH hunt guidelines and the 2012-14 hunting season proposals.

Sincerely,

Dave Ware, Game Division Manager
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Attachment: Master Hunter Hunt Guidelines