

DRAFT WDFW Game Management Plan - Overview

The Game Management Plans (GMPs) are a high-level planning document that sets general direction for managing hunted game species and the issues related to game management. The GMPs are meant to be “guidance” for WDFW staff to do their work. Portions of the GMPs can be described as policy as they provide direction to the department (i.e., provide direction around priorities, identify strategies, and clarify population targets). They also inform the hunting season setting recommendations brought before the Commission for their adoption.

The Plans:

- The species included are based upon previous Legislative and Commission decisions regarding species classified as Game and/or Big Game (RCW 77.08.030 and WACs 220-400-020 and 220-400-030) unless a separate Commission action has given a special status designation to a game species (WAC 220-610-110).
- Assume that given the legal classification of those species, the department should develop management plans that:
 - ✓ Engage the public
 - Provide the public an opportunity to weigh-in through a formal process on high-level game management issues.
 - ✓ Improve scientific basis for decision making
 - Identify data gaps and future research and monitoring needs.
 - Identify existing and potential limiting factors affecting game populations.
 - Give broad direction on addressing known limiting factors.
 - Provide general direction on sustainable hunting management.
 - ✓ Provide a basis for work planning and funding.

The Plans Do Not:

- Establish rules or laws. Many of the actions recommended within the plans require additional process to achieve.
- Provide detailed methods for management.
- Provide specific hunting seasons and methods, which require formal rulemaking.

Current timeline for the existing GMP revision:

- In 2020, we received Commission approval to extend the SEPA timeline to end on June 30, 2023, so it aligned the GMP process and the 3-year hunting season setting process, (Supplemental EIS 14-075; Addendum 20-040).
- Initiated the 2015-23 plan revision process in the fall of 2021.
 - The original intent was to complete the process by December 2022.
- However, current, and future discussions may alter that timeline.

Next Steps:

- Bring the DFW Commission Wildlife Committee information to discuss how the Commission would like to be engaged in plan development in April.
- Bring the Wildlife committee options for paths forward to consider in May.
- Hopefully, finalize the path forward with a presentation to the entire Commission in June.
- In the meantime, staff will continue editing the plan for Commission and public review, which will be determined by the discussions we are currently having with the Commission, staff, and our constituents.