

Bowhunters of Wyoming (BOW) executive council members recently had an interactive conference call with top leadership from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD). It was well attended by the BOW and the department. Many important issues were brought to the table, including reinstatement of the Hunting and Fishing Expo, conflicting rifle and bow seasons (including archery exclusion areas), season dates for wolf to allow September archery hunting opportunity, inclusion of all pronghorn areas into the August 15th archery season opener, and Type 9 archery opportunity in selective areas of the state.

BOW asked about bringing the Hunting and Fishing Expo back, as it is a great opportunity for Wyoming's youth. The department has no immediate plans to restore the expo or similar opportunities. BOW was told if Wyoming sportsmen want these programs in the future, then we all need to continue to speak up and show support for reinstating these activities and making them a priority in the WGFD budget.

Conversation was also held regarding various areas around the state where archery and rifle seasons are concurrent. BOW has always worked to reduce this conflict as it is seen as a safety hazard to the archer. Department officials stated these seasons are being used as a management tool and have had the desired effect of reducing the herd numbers in most areas where they take place. They also stated that as objectives are met, they will reassess the seasons in an effort to reduce hazards. It was agreed that the idea of restricting rifle hunting to private land during concurrent seasons, as has been done in some areas of the state, is seen as helpful to the archer, but not ideal.

The Type 9 discussion was productive and indicated the department has an active interest in this issue. They have taken public comment regarding appropriately proposed areas and are working toward a solution that will appease all hunters. There was discussion on the negative public comment for late rut mule deer Type 9 opportunities. This is something BOW members have expressed concern with as well, given the decline of mule deer in the west. All were in concurrence with the department's decision to not pursue the rut seasons for mule deer. However, there is good public and BOW member feedback regarding the desire for more Type 9 elk areas in some strategic areas of the state, and BOW looks forward to continuing to work with the department on this front.

The meeting concluded with discussion regarding a state-wide August 15<sup>th</sup> archery pronghorn opener. BOW feels strongly about this opportunity for youth to archery hunt before school begins in the fall. Landowners have expressed concern with the August 15<sup>th</sup> date in the past, but the department has agreed to further review the idea with landowners and district officials. There were also talks about extending the wolf season in the trophy area to include an archery season. Department officials were receptive and agreed to look into the idea.

BOW is grateful for the continued opportunities to work with the WGFD regarding archery hunting and wildlife issues.