

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Environment is committed to reviewing the big game draw program every five years to ensure it remains a fair method to allocate a limited number of licences and to address stakeholder concerns. A review was completed in advance of the 2018 draw. This review was carried out in consultation with the Wildlife Advisory Committee, which identified growing concern from stakeholders with regard to the increasing number of hunters applying for the big game draw and corresponding decreasing odds for any one applicant in 'Super A' to be drawn.

SUMMARY OF NEW CHANGES TO THE BIG GAME DRAW

The following changes will be implemented:

- 1) adding a 'Legacy' pool as the highest priority pool (drawn prior to 'Super A' applicants);
 - includes all applicants who have applied 10 or more consecutive years in 'Super A' without having been successful (retroactive to 2006 and includes all zone 99 applications)
 - a hunter will be required to apply every year to maintain 'Legacy' pool status
 - If a 'Legacy' applicant does not submit an application, they will return to 'A' pool for the following year regardless of how many years they previously applied in 'Super A'
- 2) adding a 'D' pool as the lowest priority pool;
 - hunters drawn in the 2018 big game draw will move to 'D' pool for the 2019 draw
 - however, for the 2018 big game draw, new draw applicants will be placed in 'A' pool as in previous years
- 3) in the event there is no provincial quota available for a species, all previous applicants for that species will have their pool status frozen so that their status remains unchanged for the next year in which there is quota available;
- 4) allow applicants drawn for more than two species to decline additional awarded licences and maintain their pool status
 - hunters wishing to decline a licence will be required to notify the ministry by July 31, 2018.
 - hunters must keep awarded licences for at least two species (i.e. hunters drawn for three species may decline licence(s) for one species, hunters drawn for four species may decline awarded licence(s) for one or two species, and hunters drawn for five species may decline licence(s) for up to three species)
 - for the purposes of the big game draw, either-sex mule deer and antlerless mule deer are considered separate species

- declined licences will not be reallocated to other hunters due to significant administration requirements, significant challenges in determining the next application to be awarded the licence(s), and the short time period between the last draw results being generated, and the date of which draw licences are available for purchase

5) implement additional pools for the Canadian resident white-tailed deer draw

- will not be implemented in 2018
- 'family first' pool, which includes applicants who have immediate family members residing in Saskatchewan, will remain the top priority pool
- applicants without family sponsors will be assigned a priority pool status based on the number of years since they were last drawn, similar to the Saskatchewan resident draws

Additionally, the ministry will:

- 1) review big game draw application data to determine if, and the extent to which ineligible applicants are submitting applications; and
- 2) review the big game draw after five years to determine the effectiveness of these changes.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

1. What is the review process for determining changes to the draw?

The ministry is committed to reviewing the big game draw every five years to ensure the interests of stakeholders continue to be addressed.

During reviews, stakeholders are consulted through a Wildlife Advisory Committee made up of representatives of a wide range of hunting, conservation and landowner stakeholder groups. Draw information is shared with the committee, such as application trends, the number of applicants by pool status, etc. Concerns and recommendations are brought forward to the ministry through the committee. Options for potential changes are then discussed, with consideration for available ministry resources (i.e. time, staff and budget), ensuring the draw is not too complex to administer or difficult to communicate to hunters while maintaining a fair and equitable process.

It is important to note that there is no single big game draw system that every hunter will agree with. The ministry aims to conduct a draw that represents the values and interests of the majority of hunters and relies on committee members to represent their membership.

2. What issues were identified during the 2017-18 review?

Analysis of applicant trends indicates that the current priority pool structure is no longer effective. The number of applicants in the big game draw has increased significantly in the last five years, with a 73 per cent increase since 2012, and a 144 per cent increase since 2006. Very few applicants are drawn from 'A', 'B' or 'C' pools, and there are more applicants entering the 'Super A' pool each year than leaving the pool, resulting in declining chances of being drawn for each year an applicant is in 'Super A'.

Key concerns raised by stakeholders:

- There is accumulation of applicants in 'Super A' (i.e. more applicants entering 'Super A' than applicants leaving 'Super A'), resulting in decreasing chances for a hunter to be drawn with each year they are unsuccessful in 'Super A'. The expectation from hunters is that an applicant who has been in 'Super A' for several years should have priority over someone new to 'Super A'.
- New applicants reach the top priority pool within a relatively short time (currently start in A pool).
- It takes a relatively short time for drawn applicants to return to 'Super A', making it possible for a hunter to be drawn more than once during the same time period another hunter has not been drawn once.
- Some hunters who are drawn for multiple species are unable or do not wish to use all licences they are drawn for.
- There is concern that part of the reason for the significant increase in applications in recent years may be that ineligible applicants are submitting applications.

3. When and how are changes being made?

A phased approach is being used to implement the changes to allow adequate time for development and testing, as well as to make sure the changes can be communicated to hunters effectively.

The ministry is working with Aspira (formerly ACTIVE Network) to implement the recommended changes within the HAL system. Some changes will be made for the 2018 draw while other changes will be considered for 2019.

4. I have ideas of how the big game draw should work, how can I make sure my ideas are heard and considered?

The ministry relies on stakeholder group representatives within the Wildlife Advisory Committee to voice the concerns of their membership and provide recommendations. Hunters wishing to express their ideas and concerns are encouraged to contact or become involved with a represented stakeholder group (e.g. wildlife federations).

5. Why was the number of consecutive years in 'Super A' to reach 'Legacy' pool set at 10 years?

The 'Legacy' pool provides increased opportunity to be drawn over time. The number of years to reach 'Legacy' pool was set at 10 consecutive unsuccessful years in 'Super A' to:

- balance higher priority in the draw for long-time unsuccessful applicants while maintaining opportunity for success in the 'Super A' pool.
- ensure that an appropriate number of hunters reach the legacy pool to avoid the majority of hunters being drawn from 'Legacy' pool which is a similar situation to what is currently happening.

6. Why can't licences that won't be used by drawn hunters be reallocated to other hunters?

There are several challenges with reallocating licences declined by drawn hunters.

- It is expected between 250 and 300 hunters will be drawn for three or more species and that some of them will choose to hunt all species. Therefore, province-wide there is little impact to the management of the species.
- There are significant administration challenges with reallocating licences. The next hunter in line for a licence could be in the same position and may also wish to decline their licence.
- Reallocating licences would require all drawn applicants to confirm whether or not they want their awarded licence(s), and this could require multiple cycles of reallocation to reach the quota. There is only a short time period between results and licence being available to purchase. Therefore, this is not practical.

7. Where can I find information on how many hunters are applying for each zone?

Information on results from the previous year is available from the licensing website at saskatchewanlicences.active.com. Results include the number of applicants who applied and the number who were drawn from each priority pool for each hunt.

8. Where can I find information on how the big game draw works?

Visit the licensing website at saskatchewanlicences.active.com for detailed information about the draw, including an explanation of the draw process, detailed instructions of how to apply and updated information on available draw hunting opportunities.

9. Will the changes affect the process for applying for the draw?

The changes being implemented will not affect the application process. However, applicants who have been in 'Super A' for a long period of time are advised to check their pool status prior to applying to determine if they qualify for 'Legacy' pool. If an applicant who qualifies for

'Legacy' pool applies on the same application as someone with 'Super A' status, the application will be placed in 'Super A'.

10. How do I know if I am eligible for 'Legacy' pool?

Hunters who have previously applied for the big game draw can check their pool status through their HAL account by visiting the 'My Account' section. If in 'Super A', the number of consecutive years in 'Super A' will be displayed (for example, 'Super A' 5 years). Applicants who have been in 'Super A' for 10 or more consecutive years will be placed in the 'Legacy' pool for the draw, provided the application does not include any group members with a lower pool status.

11. Do applicants who have been in 'Super A' for a longer period of time have priority over applicants who have been in 'Super A' for a shorter period of time?

All hunters who are in 'Super A' are placed in the same priority pool for the draw. For example, a hunter who has been in 'Super A' for nine years can apply on the same application as someone who has been in 'Super A' for three years. If the application is unsuccessful the first applicant will advance to 'Legacy' pool status and the second will then have four consecutive years in 'Super A'.

12. I have further questions about the draw, who can I contact?

If you have further questions, contact the ministry at centre.inquiry@gov.sk.ca.