

Section 555 is amended to read:

§ 555. Cooperative Elk Hunting Areas.

To encourage protection and enhancement of elk habitat and provide eligible landowners an opportunity for limited elk hunting on their lands, the department may establish cooperative elk hunting areas and issue license tags to allow the take of elk as specified in Section 364, and subject to the following conditions:

(a) Definition and Scope. A cooperative elk hunting area is an area of private land located within the boundary of an area open to public elk hunting (as identified in Section 364). Minimum size of a cooperative elk hunting area shall be 5,000 acres, except that contiguous parcels of at least 640 acres in size may be combined to comprise a cooperative elk hunting area. Within an area open to public elk hunting, the number of cooperative elk hunting license tags issued shall not exceed 20 percent of the number of public license tags for the corresponding public hunt and shall be of the same designation (i.e., antlerless, spike bull, bull or either-sex) as the public license tags. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of cooperative elk hunting license tags available, the department will issue license tags by random drawing from the pool of qualified applicants.

(b) Application Process. Application forms are available from the department's headquarters and regional offices. A person (as defined by Fish and Game Code Section 67) owning at least 640 acres within a cooperative elk hunting area shall be eligible to apply for a cooperative elk hunting area permit. Applicants shall designate one individual eligible to receive one elk license tag by the date indicated under subsection (3) below. Such individuals shall be ~~California residents~~ at least 12 years of age and possess a valid California hunting license. A person may annually submit a cooperative elk hunting area application where they own sufficient habitat as described in subsection (a) above, for each public hunt area in which their property occurs.

(1) Applications shall be submitted to the department's regional office nearest the proposed cooperative elk hunting area. Department of Fish and Game regional offices are located as follows:

Northern California and North Coast Region, 601 Locust Street, Redding 96001 (530) 225-2300

Sacramento Valley and Central Sierra Region, 1701 Nimbus Road, Rancho Cordova 95670 (916) 358-2900

Central Coast Region, 7329 Silverado Trail, Box 47, Yountville 94599 (707) 944-5500

San Joaquin Valley and Southern Sierra Region, 1234 East Shaw Avenue, Fresno 93710 (559) 243-4005

South Coast Region, 4949 View Crest Avenue, San Diego 92123 (858) 467-4201

Eastern Sierra and Inland Deserts Region, 4775 Bird Farm Road, Chino Hills 91709 (909) 597-9823

(2) Completed applications must be received by the first business day following July 1. Only those applications that are filled out completely will be accepted. The Department will evaluate applications to determine if the specified parcels are of sufficient size within the boundary of a public elk hunt area, and contain important elk habitat. Rejected applications and those that are incomplete will be returned within 15 days of receipt by the department. If the number of accepted applications exceeds the license tags available, the department will determine successful applicants and a list of alternates by conducting a random drawing from the pool of qualified applicants as soon as possible after the application deadline.

(3) Successful applicants will be notified by the department as soon as possible after the application deadline. Applicants shall submit the name, address, and valid California hunting license number of designated elk license tag recipients and payment of elk license tag fees by check, money order, or credit card authorization in the amount specified by subsection ~~708(d)~~702(b)(1)(L)(M), to the department's regional office nearest the proposed cooperative elk hunting area, by the first business day following August 1.

(c) An elk license tag issued pursuant to the provisions of this section is valid only during the general elk season in which the cooperative elk hunting area occurs and shall only be used on land specified in the landowner's application. License tags are not transferable.

(d) All provisions of the Fish and Game Code and Title 14, CCR, relating to the take of birds and mammals shall be conditions of all license tags issued pursuant to this section.

(e) Any permit issued pursuant to Section 555 may be canceled or suspended at any time by the commission for cause after notice and opportunity to be heard, or without a hearing upon conviction of a violation of this regulation by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Note: Authority cited: Section ~~15702~~1575, Fish and Game Code.

Reference: Sections 67 and ~~1570-1572~~1575 Fish and Game Code.