

INTRODUCTION

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

SUMMARY RECENT CHANGES TO THE BIG GAME DRAW

In 2018, the following changes were implemented:

- 1) A Legacy pool was added 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 drawn (retroactive to 2006 and includes all zone 99 applications);
 - a hunter is required to apply every year to maintain Legacy pool status; and
 - if a Legacy applicant does not submit an application, that individual will return to A pool status for the following year regardless of how many years the individual had previously applied in Super A.

- 2) A D pool was added as the lowest priority pool:
 - Applicants successfully drawn move to D pool for the following year's draw; and
 - Beginning in 2019, new applicants for a species are placed in D pool rather than A pool.

- 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 their status remains unchanged for the next year in which there is quota available.

- 4) Applicants drawn for more than two species may 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;
 - 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);
 - either-sex mule deer and antlerless mule deer are considered separate species for the purposes of the big game draw; and
 - declined licences will not be reallocated to other hunters.

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Additionally, the ministry will:

- 1) Undertake a review of big game draw application data to determine if, and the extent to which, ineligible applicants are submitting applications;
- 2) Review the big game draw after five years to determine the effectiveness of these changes at meeting objectives; and
- 3) Implement additional pools for the Canadian resident white-tailed deer draw:
 - these pools will not be implemented in 2020;
 - the family first pool, which includes applicants who have immediate family members residing in Saskatchewan, will remain the top priority pool; and
 - 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.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

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

The Ministry of Environment 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 the Wildlife Advisory Committee, which is comprised of representatives of several hunting, conservation and landowner stakeholder groups. Draw information is shared with the committee, such as application trends and the number of applicants by pool. Concerns and recommendations are brought forward to the ministry through the committee. Options for potential changes are then discussed, with the goal of maintaining a fair and equitable process that represents the values and interests of the majority of hunters in Saskatchewan.

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

An analysis of application trends indicated that the current priority pool structure is no longer effective. The number of applicants in the big game draw increased significantly in the previous five years, with a 73 per cent increase since 2012 and a 144 per cent increase since 2006. Very few applicants are drawn from the A, B or C pools, and there are more

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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 an 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 for which they were drawn.
- 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 were implemented for the 2018 draw, while additional changes will be made for 2019. Other changes will be considered in future years.

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).

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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 the 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; and
- ensure that an appropriate number of hunters reach the Legacy pool to avoid the situation that is currently happening in Super A.

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, there is little impact to the management of the species across the province.
- 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 choose to decline the licence.
- Reallocating licences would require all drawn applicants to confirm whether or not they want their awarded licence(s), which could require multiple cycles of reallocation to reach the quota. There is only a short time between the draw taking place and licences being available to purchase, so reallocation would not be feasible.

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 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 to determine if they qualify for the Legacy pool. If an applicant who qualifies for the Legacy pool applies on the same application as someone with Super A status, the application will be placed in Super A.

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10. How do I know if I am eligible for the 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 you are 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 to answer my questions?

If you have further questions, you can contact the Ministry of Environment Inquiry Line at 1-800-567-4224 or centre.inquiry@gov.sk.ca.