

WAFAWA Survey Questions:

December 2020

1. Does your agency give landowners big game permits or vouchers that they can use or sell to compensate landowners or offset crop damage? If so, are the permits for antlerless animals, bucks/bulls, or both? Please explain the details of these permits or vouchers?

The NM Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) does not provide permits to landowners to compensate them for damage.

However, the NMDGF does have a program whereby landowners may receive authorizations allowing them to hunt elk on their property. The Elk Private Land Use System (EPLUS) program recognizes the contributions of landowners who provide a meaningful benefit to elk and are accepting of elk on their property.

Interested landowners must submit an application that is evaluated to determine if the property provides a meaningful benefit to elk based upon habitat characteristics and the quality of the habitat. Qualifying properties may receive antlerless, either-sex or mature bull authorizations. These authorizations may be given or sold to hunters. The hunter must convert the authorization into a license prior to hunting.

EPLUS Rule link... [EPLUS rule](#)

2. Are landowners allowed to remove big game animals depredating on private lands in an effort to protect their agricultural resources? If so, under what circumstances?

Yes, landowners may kill wildlife that pose an immediate threat to their property or crops. The landowner must report the kill to the NMDGF. The responding officer will investigate and remove the carcass if the meat is salvageable.

Depredation Rule link... [Depredation rule](#)

3. Does your agency call depredation hunts to target populations on private lands?

The NMDGF does have population management hunts to address localized concentrations of animals. Population management hunts are conducted on an as needed basis and can occur on both private and public land. While depredation concerns of landowners may be a consideration in whether to hold a population management hunt, it is not the deciding factor.

The enabling language lives in the individual species rules. Population management hunts are most commonly utilized for elk and deer.

Elk Rule link... [Elk rule](#)

Deer Rule link... [Deer rule](#)

4. Does your similar program that promotes hunting on private property?

The NMDGF does not have any programs that sale private land only licenses directly to the public. While both deer and pronghorn hunters may purchase a private land license over-the-counter, it is only valid if the hunter is able to locate a landowner willing to provide written permission for the hunter to hunt on their private deeded property. However, the EPLUS program (discussed above in question 1) allows landowners to receive elk authorizations valid for hunting elk on their property. Many landowners sell these authorizations to public hunters, friends or family.

5. What type of landowner incentive programs does your agency have that promotes wildlife and allows public hunters on private property (e.g., ranching for wildlife in CO or - programs where landowners financially benefit from big game)?

The Open Gate program is a leasing program. The NMDGF leases access to private property for the public to hunt and/or fish. The Open Gate program can also lease “right-of-way” access across private land to gain access to blocks of public land which otherwise may have limited or no public access.

Open Gate Rule link... [Open Gate rule](#)

6. Does your agency provide damage payments or fencing for big game on private lands? If so, how much per year is paid and how is it funded?

The NMDGF does not provide damage payments.

The NMDGF will provide wildlife resistant fencing materials to landowners with cultivated, irrigated property that is experiencing damage from wildlife. The NMDGF provides materials and the landowner provides the labor to install the fence. The program is funding from a special fee charged to big game hunters when they purchase their license. The annual budget for the program is \$500,000. Actual expenditures vary from year to year.

Depredation Rule link... [Depredation rule](#)

7. What mitigation measures does your agency employ to reduce big game damage (e.g., provide temporary fencing, hazing animals, agency removals of big game)?

The NMDGF uses a number of different techniques and mitigation measures to address wildlife complaints and/or damage. Techniques include providing information about relevant department programs, informational brochures, propane canons, reflective tape, fence materials, motion activated sprinklers, hazing, trapping, etc.

8. Does your agency have an urban deer program? If so, what does that entail?

The NM Department of Game and Fish does not have an urban deer program.

9. What other programs does your agency have in place to promote tolerance of big game on private lands?

While these are not formal programs, landowners may allow unlimited OTC hunting for both deer and pronghorn on their private deeded property. Most landowners charge an access fee to hunters. This provides a revenue stream and helps landowners to view these species as a valuable resource.

10. Does your agency respond to all wildlife conflict calls or is it limited to specific species or guilds of species?

The NMDGF will respond to all wildlife conflict calls regarding game animals and protected species.

11. What program(s) in your agency provide response to negative wildlife interaction (wildlife conflict) complaints and depredation. If the responsibility is split or shared between programs (i.e. Wildlife Program/Enforcement Program) or contracted or referred to another agency or private party, please describe how the work is assigned or shared. (e.g. by species, commercial agriculture versus residential, public safety versus property damage, etc.)

The NMDGF responds to wildlife conflict issues through the Depredation Program. The Depredation program is jointly implemented through the Law Enforcement and Wildlife Management programs.

Conservation officers are the initial responders to all wildlife complaints. All human safety matters requiring an immediate response are handle by the conservation officer. Many complaints are resolved by providing the reporting party with information regarding how to address the situation. Other complaints can be handled with supplies the conservation officer may have readily on hand (e.g., trapping a nuisance animal, provide chemical herbivory deterrents, etc.).

Wildlife complaints that go beyond the resources of the conservation officer will be passed to one of the Wildlife Management Division's Private Land Specialists. Private Land Specialists generally handle wildlife complaints involving the provision of fencing materials or initiating a population management hunt.

12. Please describe what funding sources support wildlife conflict response and depredation payments if applicable in your agency. Please include specifics regarding where the funding comes from for expenses such as staff and equipment, commercial crop loss compensation, livestock predation compensation, non-lethal deterrent programs, outreach and education, or any other services or materials provided in response to wildlife conflict issues.

Depredation program staff are funded through license fees. Fencing materials and the supplies for many other long-term solutions to wildlife complaints are funded through a special fee charged to big game hunters when they purchase their license.