Apply now to hunt elk in Minnesota

Hunters have until Friday, June 13 to apply for one of nine elk licenses offered this year by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Hunters interested in applying for a license can find maps of the two hunting zones and other pertinent information on the DNR website at www.mndnr.gov/hunting/elk. Elk licenses will be available in Kittson County’s central and northeast zones, while the Grygla area will be closed to enable that area’s elk population to rebuild to goal levels.

“The number of hunting licenses available reflects the goals of the state’s elk management plan,” said Leslie McInenly, DNR big game program leader. “That plan aims to balance the interest of hunters, landowners and others.”

The DNR has initiated a public process to revisit the elk management plan with plans to implement any revisions by 2016. Goals in the current plan were established for the period from 2009 to 2015.

As a result of lower elk numbers, fewer licenses will be offered and this year’s hunt will be restricted to two early seasons. The first season, which will be held in both zones, runs from Saturday, Sept. 13 to Sunday, Sept. 21 (Season A). Four bulls-only licenses will be available in Zone 20 and two bulls-only licenses will be available in Zone 30 during Season A. The second season (Season B) will be held only in Zone 20 and will run from Saturday, Sept. 27 to Sunday, Oct. 5. Three bulls-only licenses will be available during Season B.

McInenly said aerial surveys conducted this winter in the Grygla area (Zone 10) identified 20 elk, which is below the pre-calving goal range of 30 to 38 animals. This is the second year in a row that the herd has been below goal.

The aerial survey conducted in the Kittson County Central Zone (Zone 20) also indicated a population decline, with 37 elk observed this year. While the herd has declined in size, it is still above the established population goal of 20 to 30 animals.

Elk within the Kittson County Northeast Zone (Zone 30) spend a portion of the year in Manitoba, Canada. A short-term population goal of 150-200 elk has been collaboratively established for this international herd which consists of an estimated 100 elk.

Apply at any DNR license agent, the DNR License Center at 500 Lafayette Road in St. Paul, www.mndnr.gov/buylicense or by telephone at 888-665-4236. Hunters may apply individually or in parties of two. There is a non-refundable application fee of $4 per hunter. License cost is $287. One landowner license will be available during Season A in the Kittson County Central Elk Zone.