Wildlife Resources

BIG GAME

FIELD REGULATIONS GUIDEBOOK



2026

UTAH'S REGULATIONS FOR ALL BIG GAME HUNTING

Know the laws

This guidebook—along with the *2026 Utah Big Game Application Guidebook*—summarizes the rules and laws that regulate big game hunting in Utah. Although these books are convenient quick-reference documents for Utah big game regulations, they are not all-encompassing resources.

For an in-depth look at the state's big game hunting laws and rules, visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/rules***.

You can use the references in the guidebook—such as *Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-24* and *Utah Code § 23A-5-207*—to search the division's website for the detailed statute or rule that underpins the guidebook summary.

If you have questions about a particular rule, call or visit the nearest DWR office.

Who makes the rules?

The Utah Wildlife Board passes the rules and laws summarized in this guidebook.

There are seven board members, and each serves a six-year term. Appointed by the governor, board members are not DWR employees.

The division's director serves as the board's executive secretary but does not have a vote on wildlife policies.

Before board members make changes to wildlife rules, they listen to recommendations from division biologists. They also receive input from the public and various interest groups via the regional advisory council (RAC) process.

If you have feedback or suggestions for board members, you can find their contact information online at ***wildlife.utah.gov***.

Wildlife Board members

Bob Christensen
Ryan Foutz
Kent Johnson
Justin Oliver
Chris Robinson
Gary Nielson, *Chair*
Paula Richmond, *Vice Chair*
Riley Peck, *Division Director & Executive Secretary*

Contact us

Report wildlife crimes
Phone: 800-662-3337
Text: 847411
Online: ***wildlife.utah.gov/utip***

Division offices
Offices are open 8 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Salt Lake City
1594 W North Temple
Box 146301
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6301
801-538-4700

Central Region
1115 N Main Street
Springville, UT 84663
801-491-5678

Northeastern Region
318 N Vernal Avenue
Vernal, UT 84078
435-781-9453

Northern Region
515 E 5300 S
Ogden, UT 84405
801-476-2740

Southeastern Region
319 N Carbonville Road, Ste A
Price, UT 84501
435-613-3700

Southern Region
1470 N Airport Road
Cedar City, UT 84721
435-865-6100

Washington County Field Office
451 N SR-318
Hurricane, UT 84737
435-879-8694

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On the cover: A Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep stands on a grassy hillside.

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What's new?

Research antlerless hunts online: Starting May 29, 2026, you can find information about Utah's antlerless hunts, season dates and application requirements online. Refer to the *2026 Utah Antlerless Application Guidebook,* available at ***wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks*** and in the Utah Hunting and Fishing mobile app.

Apply for antlerless hunts with the NEW online draw system: The antlerless application period runs from June 9–23, 2026. To apply for antlerless permits, visit ***utahdraws.com*** (the new URL starting this year), or call the new draw hotline at 855-883-7297.

Apply for bonus or preference points: If you missed applying for big game bonus or preference points during the big game permit application period that closed on April 23, you have a second opportunity during the June 9–23 antlerless application period to apply for points.

Electronic tagging option: Hunters can now submit an e-tag through the Utah Hunting and Fishing app. It's the same as notching a paper tag, and fulfills mandatory harvest reporting requirements upon completion. Review important digital permit carry requirements on page 15 and e-tagging methods on page 39 before you go into the field. Learn more about this convenient new option at ***wildlife.utah.gov/e-tag***.

Targeted hunts to address chronic wasting disease: All hunters with a general-season any legal weapon permit on the Ogden unit are required to submit a CWD sample if they harvest a deer beginning this year. The CWD sample requirement for limited-entry any legal weapon buck deer hunters in the Castle Valley and the Moab Valley areas will continue in 2026. Hunters who obtain a permit for any of these mandatory CWD sampling hunts will receive a kit and instructions in the mail. Learn more about CWD and what we're doing to stop the spread of it in Utah at ***wildlife.utah.gov/cwd***.

Changes to West Cache elk unit: The Utah Wildlife Board approved modifications to the hunt boundary for the 2026-27 West Cache elk extended archery hunt, and extended the season to Jan. 31. (Previously, it ended on Dec. 15.) These changes will help address depredation issues in the areas that see property damage and safety concerns, which have been increasing in recent years. See the Utah Hunt Planner (*hunt.utah.gov*) for details.

Supporting Utah's mule deer: In 2025, the board approved a mule deer management plan that will be in effect through 2030. At the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, we are dedicated to supporting the success of our state's mule deer herds through monitoring and research, as well as adaptable management of habitat and predators. Learn more about what we're doing at *wildlife.utah.gov/deer,* the state's comprehensive mule deer dashboard.

Do even more with your Utah Hunting and Fishing mobile app: The app makes it easy to download, read, search and navigate this guidebook and others. You can also keep your hunting or combo license, and any DWR course completion certificates on the app. New this year, you can download to the app your big game hunting permit and submit an on-site e-tag for your harvest, which completes your mandatory harvest survey. Learn more about the app and download it at *wildlife.utah.gov/mobileapp.* **Note:** You must still carry your printed permit with you in the field if you intend to tag your harvested animal with a paper tag.

Digital permit or license required to access some WMAs: Last year, the Utah Legislature passed a law requiring anyone 18 years old or older to have a valid Utah hunting, fishing or combination license to access waterfowl and wildlife management areas in Utah's four largest counties (Davis, Salt Lake, Utah and Weber). Beginning July 1, 2026, either a license **or** a free digital access permit will be required to access WMAs in those counties. This requirement will be phased in at WMAs statewide over the next three years. This requirement applies to anyone accessing a WMA for shed hunting or other recreational purposes. WMAs are primarily funded by the sales of Utah hunting, fishing and combination licenses and by federal excise taxes paid on hunting and fishing equipment; typically, state taxes do not pay for them. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/wmas* for details.

Hunting outfitters and guides: Guides and outfitters in Utah are regulated by the DWR (instead of the Department of Professional Licensing) as approved by the Utah Legislature last year. In the 2026 session, the legislature removed several requirements for spotters, and amended some for outfitters and guides. If you are a guide or outfitter, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/guides* for updated application, registration and other operational requirements.

New deadline for refund applications: If you are eligible for a refund, you must submit all required forms and accompanying paperwork within **30 days** of the season ending in order to qualify for a full refund. (Previously, this deadline was 90 days.) See page 64 for details.

Find updated maps, boundaries and permit numbers: Use the Utah Hunt Planner to find permit numbers, maps, boundaries and information for your hunts this year. Visit *hunt.utah.gov* or see the information box on page 15.

Season date changes: Season dates change every year, so please check them carefully before you head out on your hunt. You can find season dates listed on your permit or at *hunt.utah.gov*.

Important reminders

Permit sales dates in July: Any permits remaining after the big game drawing—and all general-season elk permits—will go on sale during **different** days in July. For all of the permit sales dates, see page 17.

Mandatory harvest reporting: All big game, once-in-a-lifetime and antlerless hunts require hunters to submit a harvest report within 30 days of the end of the hunt season, whether you harvested an animal or not. For details about how to report, reporting requirements and late fees (now at $25), see page 24 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest*.

Late-season harvest reporting: Hunts ending Jan. 16 or later must have a harvest report submitted by Feb. 15, whether you harvested an animal or not. This change allows our biologists more time to consider harvest data before making recommendations for the following season. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest* for details.

Stop the spread of CWD: The DWR will continue surveillance for chronic wasting disease at various locations, which may change each year (see page 22). Learn more about what we're doing to stop the spread of CWD in Utah at *wildlife.utah.gov/cwd*.

Muzzleloader technology restrictions: Scopes stronger than 1x power are not allowed on muzzleloaders for all muzzleloader hunts. Only open sights, peep sights, a red dot, or scopes with 1x power or less are allowed on muzzleloaders during muzzleloader hunt seasons. (Scopes of any power are allowed on muzzleloaders during any-legal-weapon hunts.) No scopes of any kind are allowed on HAMSS or restricted weapons hunts. Carefully review regulations on pages 28-29 before you go into the field.

Weapons technology rules: Utah's allowable weapons technologies rules have changed in recent years, including prohibiting attached electronics (except for illuminated reticles) on most weapons. See page 26 for details.

Shed antler and horn gathering: Anyone gathering sheds between Jan. 1 and May 31 must complete a free, online antler gathering ethics course and carry proof of completion with them in the field. See page 42 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/shedantler* for details.

Trail camera and night-vision device regulations: Trail cameras are prohibited on public land from July 31 to Dec. 31, with some exceptions for research and monitoring by land management agencies. The sale or purchase of trail camera footage in the take—or attempted take—of big game, cougar or bear is prohibited. It is unlawful to possess night-vision devices while locating big game from July 31 to Dec. 31. See page 48 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/trailcams* for details.

Extended archery course: Hunters who obtained an "extended archery only" general-season deer permit or will be hunting the extended areas and seasons must complete the online ethics course at *wildlife.utah.gov/extendedarchery* before the extended season begins. See page 9 to learn more about extended archery hunts.

Multiseason deer hunting for youth: Youth who obtain a general-season any legal weapon or restricted rifle permit may also hunt the other seasons on that unit, but they must use the appropriate weapon type for each season. For details, see page 20.

Deer restricted weapons hunts on four units: As approved by the Utah Wildlife Board, general-season restricted weapons hunts will be on the Beaver, West; Boulder/Kaiparowits; and Cache units. There is a limited-entry restricted weapons hunt on the Thousand Lakes unit. See pages 31 and 45 for details about these hunts and specific requirements.

No baiting allowed: It is unlawful statewide to bait big game, take big game in a baited area or take big game that has been lured to or is traveling from a baited area. See page 35.

Ways to report poachers: Use the UTDWR law enforcement app or text 847411 to report poachers. For more about these and other reporting options, see page 36 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/utip*.

Utah's Trial Hunting Program: People who haven't hunted big game may be able to try it for the first time without taking Hunter Education. See page 13 for more information.

Hunter Mentoring Program: The Hunter Mentoring Program allows a youth to share a mentor's hunting permit. To learn more, see the *Hunter Mentoring Program* on page 21 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/mentoring*.

Hunting in Salt Lake County: Before you hunt deer or elk in Salt Lake County, learn about special restrictions. See page 34 for details.

Check for closures: There may be late-season road closures on federal and state lands. Before heading into the field, please check with the managing agency for the area you plan to hunt.

Options for military members: Active military personnel may be eligible to purchase a bonus or preference point if they were deployed during the 2026 big game application period. For details, see page 57 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/military*.

Stay informed: We will communicate changes that may affect you and your hunt via email and social media. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/stayconnected* to sign up for email updates and follow us on social media channels.

Credit card processing fee: In order to cover our increasing costs for systems and electronic payment processing, the DWR began charging a 2.2% processing fee on all credit card transactions as of July 1, 2024. (The Utah Legislature authorized a fee up to 3% to cover these costs.)

Discounted licenses for disabled veterans: The DWR offers discounted hunting and combination licenses to Utah veterans who were disabled in the line of duty. For details, see page 10.

Points forfeiture for purchase of remaining general buck deer permit: If you purchase a general-season buck deer permit that's available after the big game drawing in 2026, you will lose any preference points you've accrued for general-season buck deer. To learn more about purchasing these permits, see page 17.

National parks closed to hunting: All of Utah's national parks and monuments—except the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears national monuments—are closed to hunting. See page 34 for details.

Review application guidebook: If you have questions about the 2026 big game application period, hunt drawing or limited-entry season dates, please see the *2026 Utah Big Game Application Guidebook* at ***wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks***. That guidebook was posted in February and is a companion to this book.

Guidebook corrections: If errors are found in this guidebook after it is printed, the DWR will correct them in the online copy. Visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks*** or the DWR mobile app to view digital versions of all the DWR's guidebooks.

Protection from discrimination: This agency receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any facility, program, or activity, or if you need more information, please write to:

Office of Civil Rights
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Private lands: The DWR cannot guarantee access to any private land. You must obtain documented permission from the landowner or the landowner's authorized representative before hunting on private lands. For more information, please see *Trespassing* on page 35.

Division funding: The division is mostly funded by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and through federal aid made possible by an excise tax on the sale of firearms and other hunting- and fishing-related equipment.

AI content: Some illustrations in this guidebook were created using the assistance of artificial intelligence tools.



2026 season dates

General-season dates

Buck deer hunts	Weapon type	Season dates
General-season units	Archery	Aug. 15–Sept. 11
	Extended archery	See page 9
	Muzzleloader	Sept. 23–Oct. 1
	Restricted muzzleloader	Sept. 23–Oct. 1
	Early any legal weapon (rifle)	Oct. 7–11
	Any legal weapon (rifle)	Oct. 17–25
	Restricted rifle	Oct. 17–25

Bull elk hunts	Weapon type	Season dates
Any bull units	Archery*	Aug. 15–Sept. 16
	Extended archery	See page 9
	Early any legal weapon (rifle)	Oct. 3–9
	Late any legal weapon (rifle)	Oct. 10–16
	Muzzleloader	Oct. 28–Nov. 5
Spike units	Archery	Aug. 15–Sept. 4
	Extended archery	See page 9
	Any legal weapon (rifle)	Oct. 3–15
	Muzzleloader	Oct. 28–Nov. 5
Youth hunts	General-season youth elk permit	See page 39 for dates
	Draw-only youth any bull/hunter's choice elk	Sept. 12–22

**No general-season archery elk hunt on the Paunsaugunt unit.*

CWMU season dates

The Utah Wildlife Board has established timeframes for hunting on Cooperative Wildlife Management Units (CWMUs). Hunters should expect to hunt at least five days for bucks/bulls and three days for antlerless big game within these timeframes.

To learn more, see the article on page 66 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/cwmu*.

Extended archery season dates

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5

You do not need to apply for an additional permit to hunt during the extended archery seasons. As long as you obtain an archery buck deer or bull elk permit in 2026—and you complete the required extended archery ethics course—you may also hunt any of Utah's extended archery areas during the seasons listed below.

Limited-entry buck deer and bull elk archery hunters who don't harvest during the limited-entry season will also be allowed to hunt extended archery areas, but must still complete their harvest survey within 30 days of the end of the season printed on their permit.

Note: Handgun-archery-muzzleloader-shotgun-straight walled rifle-only (HAMSS) and antlerless permits are not valid on extended archery hunts.

Remember: Hunters who obtained an extended archery only general-season buck deer permit during the big game application (hunt number DB0008) may hunt deer on any of the extended archery areas during the extended archery deer season dates. This permit is only valid on the extended archery units; see page 44 for details.

Required course: The online archery ethics course is an annual requirement for archers hunting the extended areas and seasons, and for the extended archery only draw permit. Take the course at *wildlife.utah.gov/extendedarchery* before the extended season begins and carry proof of completion—printed or downloaded to your DWR app—with you in the field.

Important: Check the hunt number (not just the unit name) on your permit carefully and refer to the Utah Hunt Planner (*hunt.utah.gov*) to make sure your permit allows you to hunt in an extended archery unit within the allowed season dates.

Reminder: If you are hunting in an extended archery elk area during the extended archery elk season, you may harvest **any bull elk** or antlerless elk. (This applies even if the extended archery area overlaps a spike bull elk unit.)

Deer hunts (either sex)	Weapon type	Season dates
• Nine Mile, Green River Valley • Sanpete Valley • South Wasatch	Extended archery	Sept. 12–Oct. 15
• Box Elder, West Bear River • Herriman South Valley • Ogden • Uinta Basin • Utah Lake • Wasatch Front • West Cache	Extended archery	Sept. 12–Nov. 30

Elk hunts	Weapon type	Season dates
• Uinta Basin • Wasatch Front	Extended archery	Aug. 15–Dec. 15
• West Cache	Extended archery	Aug. 15–Jan. 31

Sportsman and statewide conservation permit season dates

For more information about sportsman permits, see the information box on page 15.

Species^	Hunt #	Season dates
Buck deer ‡	DB0007	**Archery:** Aug. 15–31, 2026 **Any legal weapon:** Sept. 1, 2026–Jan. 15, 2027
Bull elk*	EB1000	**Archery:** Aug. 15–31, 2026 **Any legal weapon:** Sept. 1, 2026–Jan. 15, 2027
Buck pronghorn ‡	PB1000	**Archery:** Aug. 15–31, 2026 **Any legal weapon:** Sept. 1–Nov. 15, 2026
Bull moose	MB1000	**Any legal weapon:** Sept. 1–Nov. 15, 2026
Bison ‡	BI1000	**Any legal weapon:** Aug. 1, 2026–Jan. 31, 2027
Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep*‡	RS0001	**Any legal weapon:** Sept. 1–Dec. 31, 2026
Desert bighorn sheep	DS1000	**Any legal weapon:** Sept. 1–Dec. 31, 2026
Mountain goat	GO1000	**Any legal weapon:** Sept. 1–Dec. 31, 2026
Black bear	BR1000	Season dates and open units are listed in the *Black Bear, Cougar & Furbearer Guidebook*
Bearded turkey (2-bird permit)	TK0001	**Any legal weapon:** April 1–May 31, 2026

^ You may only hunt on open hunting units for each respective species.

** You may not take an elk or Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep on the Box Elder, Pilot Mtn hunting unit.*

‡ Antelope Island is not an open unit for statewide permits.

Discounted licenses for disabled veterans

The division offers discounted hunting and combination licenses to Utah servicemembers who were disabled in the line of duty.

The discounted hunting license is $25.50, instead of the $40 full price. Likewise, the discounted combination license is $28.50, instead of the $44 full price. Either license is good for 365 days from the day you buy it. Discounted licenses are available online or from all division offices listed on page 2.

To purchase a discounted hunting or combination license, you must be a Utah resident and have a qualifying service-connected disability of at least 20 percent.

To apply for a license online, please visit *wildlife.utah.gov/accessibility/veteran* and complete the online form. If you need assistance, please call the nearest division office.

If you choose to visit a division office to purchase your license, simply bring the verification of service-connected disability documentation that the Department of Veterans Affairs issued to you.

You can find additional resources for hunters and anglers with disabilities at *wildlife.utah.gov/accessibility*.

License fees

For a complete list of Utah's license and permit fees, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/fees*.
A 2.2% transaction fee applies to all online and in-person credit/debit card transactions.

License type	Age	Resident	Nonresident
365-day hunting license	13 and under	$11	$44
	14–17	$16	$44
	18–64	$40	$144
	65+	$31	$144
365-day hunting license for disabled veterans *(see the box on page 10)*	n/a	$25.50	n/a
Multi-year hunting license (up to five years)	18-64	$39 / year	$143 / year
365-day combination* license	17 and under	$20	$58
	18–64	$44	$190
	65+	$35	$190
365-day combination* license for disabled veterans *(see the box on page 10)*	n/a	$28.50	n/a
Multi-year combination* license (up to five years)	18-64	$43 / year	$189 / year

** A combination license allows you to hunt or fish in Utah.*

Permit and application fees

For a complete list of Utah's license and permit fees, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/fees*.
A 2.2% transaction fee applies to all online and in-person credit/debit card transactions.

Permit	Resident	Nonresident
General deer	$46	$599
Youth general deer	$40	$499
General any bull and spike bull elk	$56	$849
Youth general elk	$50	$749
Multiseason spike bull elk	$200	$1,255
Private-lands-only antlerless elk	$56	$649
Control antlerless elk	$40	$236
Nine Mile bison	$460	$4,840
Application fee	$10	$21

Residency

Utah Code § 23A-1-101

Before you apply for a big game hunt, it's important to know whether you are a legal resident of the state of Utah. See the definition of *Resident* on page 78 to determine whether you are a resident or a nonresident.

Basic requirements

Are you planning to hunt big game in Utah this year? Before you apply for or obtain a permit, make sure you meet Utah's age, hunter education, license and permit requirements.

Are you old enough?

Utah Code § 23A-4-703

To hunt big game in Utah, you must be at least 12 years old.

If you are 11 years old, in order to apply for any hunt or point for which you are eligible—including antlerless, limited-entry and once-in-a-lifetime permits—you must also turn 12 by Dec. 31, 2026.

Remember: You cannot hunt until you are 12 years old.

If you're younger than 18, you can apply to participate in the Utah Hunter Mentoring Program. For details on the program, see the box on page 21 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/mentoring*.

If you're 12 years old or older, you can also participate in the Trial Hunting Program. For details, see the box on page 13.

Adults must accompany young hunters

Utah Code § 23A-4-708

While hunting big game, a person under 16 years old must be accompanied by their parent, legal guardian or other responsible person who is 21 years of age or older and who has been approved by the parent or guardian.

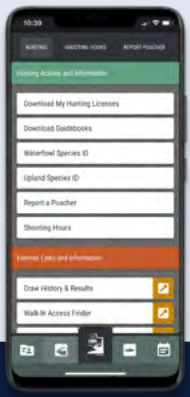
The division encourages adults to be familiar with hunter education guidelines or to complete the hunter education course before accompanying youth into the field.

While in the field, the youth and the adult must remain close enough for the adult to see and provide verbal assistance to the young hunter. Using electronic devices, such as walkie-talkies or cell phones, does not meet this requirement.

Do more with the Utah Hunting and Fishing mobile app

In the app you can download and save:

- Your hunting or combo license, and licenses for family members
- Utah's hunting and fishing guidebooks
- Any DWR course completion certificates
- Your Walk-in Access authorization number
- **New this year**, download your big game hunting permit and submit an on-site e-tag (which completes the mandatory harvest survey)



Learn more and download the app at **wildlife.utah.gov/mobileapp**.

Have you passed hunter education?

Utah Code § 23A-4-1001 & Utah Admin. Rule R657-23

If you were born after Dec. 31, 1965, you must provide proof that you've passed a hunter education course approved by the DWR before you can apply for or obtain a hunting license or a big game permit.

The only exception to this law is for individuals who are participating in the division's Trial Hunting Program. You can find details about the program in the information box below or by visiting ***wildlife.utah.gov/trial***.

Proof of hunter education

You can prove that you've completed hunter education by obtaining a hunter education card (called a "blue card" in Utah) or if you have a verified hunter education number on file with the DWR. A hunter education number is automatically assigned if you complete a hunter education program in Utah.

How to take hunter education

To get started, you should visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/huntereducation***. You'll see links to various traditional and online hunter education course options. Follow the instructions on the website to obtain a hunter education registration certificate (required) and to register for a course online.

If you need assistance, please contact your local DWR office or call 801-538-4727.

When you finish the course, your instructor will verify your course completion in the online hunter education system. At that point, you will be able to apply for or obtain permits in the division's hunt drawing, and your hunter education registration certificate will become your hunting license.

Approximately four to six weeks after you complete the course, you will receive your blue card by mail.

You should also keep the following in mind:

- Hunters who are age 15 and younger must be accompanied by an adult while hunting.
- All hunting regulations, including season dates and bag limits, will apply.
- Hunters who are planning to hunt out of state should allow enough time for their hunter education card to arrive in the mail.

Utah's Trial Hunting Program

Utah Admin. Rule R657-68

Have you ever wanted to bring your spouse, child or friend along on a hunt and give them a chance to try hunting?

Utah's Trial Hunting Program allows participants to try hunting for three years—while accompanied by a licensed hunter over the age of 21—before taking a Hunter Education course. (Youth must be at least 12 years old to hunt big game.)

The program applies to hunts for many different species, including all general-season big game hunts. (**Important:** Limited-entry and once-in-a-lifetime hunts are excluded from participation in this program.) To sign up for Utah's Trial Hunting Program or to learn more about it, visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/trialhunting***.

New to Utah?

If you become a Utah resident—and you've completed an approved hunter education course in another state, province or country—you must transfer your certification to the DWR before you can buy a resident hunting license or be eligible to purchase a resident hunting permit. You can provide proof that you've completed a nationally recognized hunter education course at any DWR office, or by submitting the online form at ***wildlife.utah.gov/huntereducation/transfer***.

Do you have a license?

Utah Code §§§ 23A-4-201, 23A-4-703 and 23A-5-309

You must have a current Utah hunting or combination (hunting and fishing) license before you can apply for or purchase any big game permits, bonus points or preference points. Licenses are available at ***wildlife.utah.gov*** and from license agents and DWR offices.

As long as your license was valid on the date you submitted your big game permit application, you don't have to purchase a new license for the actual hunt.

For example, assume that your license expires on June 22, 2026. If you applied for permits on Feb. 28, 2026, then you do not have to purchase a new license for your hunt in the fall.

Reminder: There are restrictions on fishing and hunting license purchasers for nonpayment of child support. For additional information, contact the Office of Recovery Services at 801-536-8500.

Please keep in mind that Utah hunting and combination licenses are valid for 365 days from the date of purchase. You also have the option of purchasing a multiyear license that's valid for up to five years.

For details about license, permit and application fees, see page 10 or visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/fees.***

Do you have a permit?

Utah Admin. Rule R657-62-18

To participate in any of Utah's big game or antlerless hunts, you need to obtain a hunting permit.

Most of the big game permits have already been issued through the big game drawing, but some will be available for over-the-counter purchase in July 2026. See page 17 for sales dates.

Many of Utah's antlerless permits will be issued through the antlerless drawing. You can apply for those permits from June 9-23, 2026. For more information about application deadlines and how to apply for antlerless permits, see page 16 or refer to the *2026 Utah Antlerless Application Guidebook*.

For details about license, permit and application fees, see page 10 or visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/fees***.

Carry your permit

If you are successful in obtaining a big game or antlerless permit, you must have it on your person while hunting. You cannot alter your license or permit, nor can you sell, transfer or loan either of them to another person.

New: Hunters can choose to either physically tag the animal using the tag attached to their printed permit **or** submit an e-tag through their Utah Hunting and Fishing app.

If you plan to electronically tag your harvested animal, make sure you download your permit:

- Before you go into the field, you must download your permit to the Utah Hunting and Fishing mobile app (you must have Wi-Fi or cellular service to download your permit).
- You must carry your downloaded digital permit with you while hunting. It is your responsibility to ensure your device has sufficient power to display the permit if a conservation officer asks to see it.
- **Remember:** If you choose to e-tag your animal, you must immediately do so in the app while in the field. See page 39 for details.

Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/e-tag* for more information about using the e-tag feature in the app, and carefully review the requirements for tagging your harvest on page 39.

Boundary descriptions available online

You'll find detailed maps and boundary descriptions online for all hunting units.

Visit the Utah Hunt Planner (*hunt.utah.gov*) to download and print your boundaries today.

You also have the option of using the Utah Hunting and Fishing app to view the boundaries of any permits you've drawn. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/mobileapp* to download the app.

Plan on sharing the mountain

As much as you'd like to have Utah's backcountry to yourself, you share it with campers, hikers, photographers and other hunters. Some of those hunters are after big game—just like you—while others are pursuing black bear, forest grouse and other species.

Everyone shares the landscape, so please be patient and considerate when encountering others on public land.

When to apply for a sportsman permit

Long season dates—and the ability to hunt almost every hunting unit in Utah—make sportsman permits the most sought-after permits offered to Utah's public hunters.

The application period for 2027 will begin in late October 2026. Only Utah residents can apply for sportsman permits.

For more information about these permits, and the few restrictions that apply, please visit *wildlife.utah.gov* in mid-October 2026.

Apply for an antlerless permit

Looking for Utah's antlerless field regulations? You'll find them in this guidebook (see page 59).

If you're looking for the information you need in order to apply for antlerless hunts, refer to the *2026 Utah Antlerless Application Guidebook*—available in the Utah Hunting and Fishing app or online at ***wildlife.utah.gov***—starting May 29, 2026. There, you'll find application dates, rules, hunt tables, maps, boundaries and other essential information.

If you are planning to apply for a 2026 antlerless permit, please be aware of the following dates and deadlines.

May 29: Review online antlerless hunt resources

New: The *2026 Utah Antlerless Application Guidebook* will be formatted similarly to our standard guidebooks (instead of being several webpages) and will available online at ***wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks*** and in the Utah Hunting and Fishing mobile app.

Beginning May 29, 2026, you can refer to the *2026 Utah Antlerless Application Guidebook* to review all of the application rules, hunt tables, season dates, maps, boundaries and other information you'll need in order to apply for an antlerless permit.

If you do not have access to the internet, please visit or call a DWR office.

June 9: Apply online for an antlerless permit

New: Apply for antlerless permits with the new online draw system at ***utahdraws.com*** (the new URL starting this year), or call the new draw hotline at 855-883-7297.

Starting June 9, 2026, you can visit ***utahdraws.com*** or call 855-883-7297 to apply for the following items:

- Antlerless hunting permits
- An antlerless moose permit or bonus point
- A ewe bighorn sheep permit or bonus point
- Antlerless preference points
- Big game bonus and preference points if you are eligible

June 23: Deadline for antlerless permit applications

You must apply online or by phone no later than June 23, 2026. There's an 11 p.m. MDT deadline for online and phone applications. To apply, visit the **new** online draw system at ***utahdraws.com*** or call 855-883-7297.

July 8: Antlerless drawing results available

You'll be notified of your drawing results by email on or before July 8, 2026. You can also learn your drawing results by visiting ***utahdraws.com***.

Definition of youth

For the purposes of big game hunting, a youth is someone who is 17 years old or younger on July 31 of any given year.

This year, you will be considered a youth if you are 17 years old or younger on July 31, 2026.

Purchase over-the-counter permits

Utah Admin. Rule R657-62-18

Any permits remaining after the big game drawing—and all general-season elk permits—are available on different days throughout July. There are also a few other options for permits sold over the counter which you can take advantage of.

Browse available permits

By the end of May, you can find a full list of available permits at *wildlife.utah.gov/remainingpermits*.

What to know about purchasing these over-the-counter permits

- Permits go on sale at 8 a.m. MDT
- You must have a valid hunting or combination license to purchase a permit
- Purchase permits online at *wildlife.utah.gov*, or in person at any DWR office or license agent
- Permits are sold on a first-come, first-served basis

Point loss reminder

- If you purchase a remaining permit from the hunt drawing, you will lose your bonus/preference points
  - This includes remaining general-season buck deer permits
  - This excludes youth archery deer permits

Waiting period reminder

- If you purchase a remaining permit from a draw, you will incur any relevant waiting period
  - This includes the lifetime waiting period for the Nine Mile Bison permit

OVER-THE-COUNTER SALES DATES

JULY 7

- General-season archery elk permits
- Youth general-season elk permits
- Remaining limited-entry big game permits (if available)
- Remaining general-season buck deer permits (if available)
- Youth archery general-season buck deer permits
- Bison permits for the Nine Mile unit

JULY 9

- General-season any bull elk permits
- General-season private-lands-only any bull elk permits (Uinta Basin)

JULY 16

- General-season spike bull elk permits
- Multiseason spike bull elk permits

JULY 28

- Remaining antlerless permits (if available)
- Antlerless elk control permits
- Private-lands-only antlerless elk permits

Obtain up to three elk permits

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-33

A hunter can obtain up to three elk permits in Utah each year.

- A maximum of one permit can be for a bull elk.
- A maximum of one antlerless elk permit can be obtained through the antlerless drawing.
- A maximum of two antlerless elk permits can be obtained over the counter. These might include antlerless elk-control permits, private-lands-only permits, mitigation and CWMU vouchers or any permits that remain available after the antlerless drawing.

For the purposes of obtaining multiple elk permits, an archery elk permit (hunter's choice) is considered a bull elk permit. Likewise, general-season archery permits are also considered bull elk permits. Antlerless elk-control or private-lands-only permits are considered antlerless permits.

General-season bull elk permits will be sold in July. See page 17 for the different sales dates, and then visit *wildlife.utah.gov* in early June to see exact purchase times and locations.

Any remaining antlerless elk permits—and both the private-lands-only and antlerless elk-control permits—will be available on July 28.

New: In late May 2026, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks* or the Utah Hunting and Fishing app to find all of the information you'll need to research Utah's antlerless hunts. Obtain antlerless permits online at *utahdraws.com* (the new URL starting this year), or call the new draw hotline at 855-883-7297.

Important: Antlerless elk permits may be used only during the season dates printed on your permit.

Remember: Harvest reporting is mandatory for all hunts.

Wildlife Resources

YOUR WILDLIFE CONNECTION

Follow us on **social media** or sign up for **our newsletter** to be among the first to know what's going on in Utah's wildlife world:

- Watch incredible videos
- Attend cool events
- Listen to our podcast
- Read the latest news
- Learn new skills
- Find the perfect wildlife job

WILDLIFE.UTAH.GOV/STAYCONNECTED



Is your ammo deadly to non-target species?

Learn more about Utah's lead-free wildlife program

Hunters are the frontline of conservation

Lead poisoning is the leading cause of death in California condors. It also has the potential to poison other scavengers such as bald and golden eagles. Help sustain these amazing species by switching to **lead-free ammunition** or packing out your gut piles and other remains that may contain lead ammunition residues (fragments, shot or intact bullets).

Learn more about condors and how you can help at *wildlife.utah.gov/condors*.



Lead-free wildlife

Since 2012, Utah hunters have been leading the way in conservation by obtaining DWR-issued coupons for lead-free ammunition, or by hauling out gut piles to keep lead away from scavenging wildlife.

Using lead-free ammo helps condors, eagles and other scavengers

California condors and other scavenging wildlife feed on shot animals. Lead-based bullets often fragment into hundreds of small pieces (usually not visible to the naked eye) as they pass through an animal. These fragments, left behind in gut piles or unrecovered animals, can sicken and kill condors and other scavenging wildlife, including eagles.

To prevent scavengers from consuming lead, the DWR has partnered with the North American Lead-free Partnership, the Peregrine Fund, the National Park Service, Tracy Aviary, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reduce lead in wildlife food chains. Together, we offer incentives to support hunters' choice to voluntarily use lead-free ammunition on the Zion hunt unit, where condors spend most of their time.

How to redeem your voucher

If you obtain a Zion unit big game permit for 2026, you will be eligible to obtain a **$50 voucher for lead-free ammunition**. We will email you details about how to obtain and redeem your free voucher. Watch for the email so you can get your lead-free ammunition as soon as possible. For more information, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/huntershelpingcondors*.

Youth deer and elk hunts

In 2026, there are many options for youth who want to hunt big game.

Hunting deer for multiple seasons

Twenty percent of Utah's general-season buck deer permits are allocated to youth in the big game drawing. For the purposes of big game hunting, you are a youth if you will be 17 years of age or younger on July 31, 2026.

Any legal weapon permits

If you are a youth who obtains a general-season any legal weapon or restricted rifle permit **(for either the early season or the late season)**, you may hunt during all general seasons for buck deer including archery, extended archery (course required), muzzleloader and any legal weapon seasons (including the early season only if your unit offers it). See the table below for full details on which seasons a youth may hunt with their any legal weapon permit.

Muzzleloader permits

If you obtain a general-season muzzleloader or restricted muzzleloader deer permit, you may hunt only during the general muzzleloader season. You must use muzzleloader equipment and hunt only the unit and season listed on your permit.

Archery permits

If you obtain a general-season archery deer permit, you may hunt only during the general archery deer season and the extended archery deer season. On July 7, additional youth-only archery deer permits will be available for purchase over the counter at all DWR offices and license agent locations, or online at *wildlife.utah.gov*.

Reminder: Youth who purchase these additional youth archery deer permits will not lose any preference points they've accrued for general-season buck deer.

What seasons can I hunt with my youth deer permit?

Archery permit

- Aug. 15–Sept. 11
- Extended archery areas (see page 9, archery only)
- You may hunt only your unit and season dates listed on your permit with archery equipment or the extended archery seasons

Muzzleloader permit

- Sept. 23–Oct. 1
- You may hunt only your unit and season dates listed on your permit with muzzleloader equipment

Early any legal weapon permit

- Aug. 15–Sept. 11 (archery only)
- Sept. 23–Oct. 1 (muzzleloader only)
- Oct. 7–11 (any legal weapon)
- Oct. 17–25 (any legal weapon)
- Extended archery areas (see page 9, archery only)

Late any legal weapon permit

- Aug. 15–Sept. 11 (archery only)
- Sept. 23–Oct. 1 (muzzleloader only)
- Oct. 7–11 (any legal weapon) **(and only if your unit offers this season)**
- Oct. 17–25 (any legal weapon)
- Extended archery areas (see page 9, archery only)

General-season youth elk permits (OTC)

In 2026, there will be an unlimited number of general-season youth elk permits available for youth who will be 17 years of age or younger on July 31, 2026. **Remember:** These permits will be valid during all general seasons on both any bull and spike units. Youth hunters must follow spike-only antler point regulations on spike units.

See the table below for full details about which seasons a youth can hunt with their general-season elk permit. These permits will be available for purchase on July 7 over the counter at all DWR offices and license agent locations, or online at *wildlife.utah.gov*.

Youth permit type	Season	Unit type	Season dates
General-season youth elk permit (over the counter) **Note:** Youths with this permit **may not** hunt the Sept. 12–22 hunt listed below.	Archery	Any bull*	Aug. 15–Sept. 16
	Archery	Spike only*	Aug. 15–Sept. 4
	Early any legal weapon	Any bull	Oct. 3–9
	Late any legal weapon	Any bull	Oct. 10–16
	Any legal weapon	Spike only	Oct. 3–15
	Any legal weapon	Uinta Basin private lands only	Aug. 1–Nov. 15
	Muzzleloader	Any bull and spike only	Oct. 28–Nov. 5
	Archery	Extended archery*	See page 8
Draw-only youth any bull / hunter's choice permit	Any legal weapon	Any bull*	Sept. 12–22

**Hunter's choice: Can take an antlerless elk.*

Hunter Mentoring Program

The Utah Hunter Mentoring Program allows any qualifying adult to share their hunting permits with youth hunters.

Permits that are eligible for sharing under the Hunter Mentoring Program include all big game permits as well as black bear, turkey, greater sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse permits. Only swan and sandhill crane permits may not be shared because they are subject to conflicting federal regulations.

To learn more about program eligibility and requirements and to download the application form, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/mentoring*.

Check for chronic wasting disease

Chronic wasting disease is a serious disease that attacks the nervous system and brain of infected deer, elk and moose. CWD is always fatal to the animal, and there is currently no cure for the disease.

The division has been monitoring CWD since 1998. In that time, 435 mule deer and 11 elk have tested positive for CWD in Utah.

Mandatory sampling units

To effectively monitor CWD in the state, hunters who harvest a buck deer in the following units are **required** to submit a CWD sample:

- Castle Valley (limited-entry any legal weapon)
- Moab Valley (limited-entry any legal weapon)
- **New:** Ogden (general-season any legal weapon)

CWD surveillance and check stations

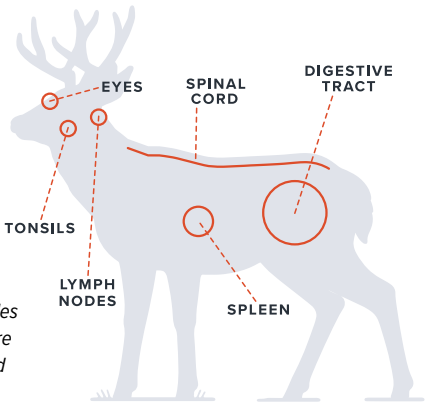
The division also conducts CWD surveillance during Utah's general-season any legal weapon deer hunts on a rotational basis. For 2026, the DWR will be conducting CWD surveillance in the following units:

- Beaver, East
- Beaver, West
- Book Cliffs
- Diamond Mtn
- East Canyon
- Fillmore
- Kamas
- Manti
- Morgan-South Rich
- Nebo
- Ogden
- Oquirrh/Tintic
- Panguitch Lake
- Paunsaugunt
- San Juan, Abajo Mtns
- San Juan, Elk Ridge
- Vernal/Bonanza
- Zion

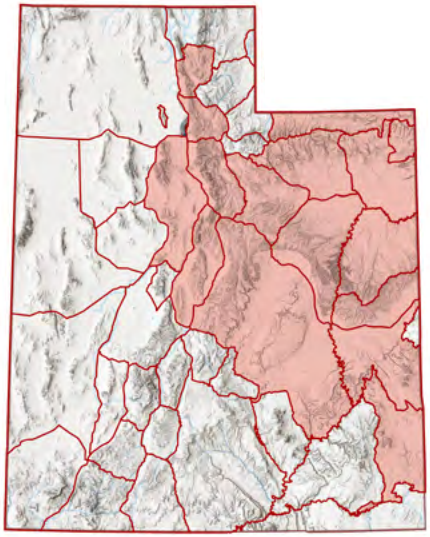
If you harvest a deer in one of the above units this fall, please take a few minutes to stop by a division check station or DWR office (by appointment) to submit a sample for a free CWD test. **Note:** The exact locations of the CWD check stations will be posted at *wildlife.utah.gov/cwd* closer to the 2026 hunting season.

At the check station or DWR office, we will assess the age of your deer, collect some biological information and take a small tissue sample to test for CWD.

If your hunt unit is not on the 2026 CWD surveillance list, you may voluntarily submit a sample from your harvested deer or elk for a nominal fee. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/cwd* for instructions on how to collect and submit a sample for testing.



Testing includes sending lymph nodes to a laboratory for analysis, so there are parts of the animal that should stay intact prior to testing.



Deer management units CWD-positive units

How to obtain your CWD test results

To view your CWD sample results, use your DWR Customer ID to log in at ***dwrapps.utah.gov/harvestreport***; select the "Analysis Results" tab and then click the "CWD Results" tab. (Please allow 4–6 weeks for sample processing.) The DWR will directly contact all hunters whose animals test positive for CWD.

To learn more about CWD—and the testing process and precautions you can take—please visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/cwd***.

CWD has been found in several areas in Utah and is monitored throughout the state annually, per our CWD management and monitoring plan.



Mandatory reporting

You are required to report your harvest for all big game and antlerless permits within 30 days after your hunting season ends, even if you did not harvest an animal.

Harvest surveys have been required for all limited-entry big game hunts in Utah for over two decades, for all antlerless hunts since 2023, and general-season buck deer and bull elk hunts since 2024. For more information about harvest reporting requirements, restrictions and fines visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest*.

Extended archery season reporting

If you are hunting the extended archery seasons for **general-season** buck deer or bull elk, you have up to 30 days after the extended archery hunt closes to report your harvest. This deadline exception does not apply to limited-entry archery hunts. See *Extended archery season dates* on pages 7–8 for areas, dates and other requirements.

Late-season harvest reporting deadline

Hunts ending Jan. 16 or later must have a harvest report submitted by Feb. 15, whether you harvested an animal or not. This change allows our biologists more time to consider harvest data before making recommendations for the following season. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest* for details.

How to submit a report

It only takes a few minutes to complete a harvest report. To report your harvest:

- Call any DWR regional office (page 2)
- Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest*
- **New:** Use the e-tagging option in your Utah Hunting and Fishing mobile app (for harvested animals only)

Submitting teeth or other biological samples from your animal—or having your animal checked by a DWR representative or CWMU operator—**does not** fulfill your harvest reporting requirement.

Reporting your hunt information is important. If you don't report your hunt information within 30 days of the end of the hunt, you won't be allowed to apply for big game and antlerless applications in 2027.

What if I don't complete my harvest survey by the dealine?

If you don't meet the reporting requirement, you won't be allowed to apply in the following year's big game or antlerless application, or for bonus or preference points. However, you can restore your eligibility to apply for a permit by submitting your harvest report and paying a $25 late fee.

For more information about harvest reporting requirements, restrictions and fines visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest*.

Harvest reporting drives decisions about Utah's hunts

Reporting your harvest helps the DWR maintain more comprehensive and quality harvest data year-to-year. Thank you for providing better insights into Utah's big game populations statewide.

Field regulations

Several rules have been established to regulate big game hunting in Utah. These rules exist to ensure big game animals are hunted ethically and to help keep you safe in the field. Please be familiar with the requirements for carrying and using firearms and archery tackle. You should also know the different types of hunting methods that may and may not be used and what you're required to do with any big game animal you take.

Hunting hours

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-6

You may take big game animals from 30 minutes before official sunrise until 30 minutes after official sunset.

Requirement to wear hunter orange

Utah Code § 23A-11-205

Anyone hunting big game must wear hunter orange on the exterior so that it can be seen, including one or more of the following items: a hat, shirt, jacket, coat, vest or sweater. At least one of these items in hunter orange must be visible while hunting any species of big game, unless you are involved in one of the following types of hunts:

- Participating in a once-in-a-lifetime, statewide conservation or statewide sportsman hunt
- Participating in an archery, muzzleloader or HAMSS hunt outside of an area where a general-season any legal weapon bull elk or general-season any legal weapon buck deer hunt is occurring
- Hunting on a Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit, unless hunter orange is otherwise required by the operator of the CWMU
- Participating in urban deer removal, as authorized by *Utah Admin. Rule R657-65*

Keep in mind: Hunter orange is not required during the general-season archery elk hunt that overlaps with the draw-only any bull/hunter's choice elk hunt. However, youth are still required to wear hunter orange during their draw-only elk hunt.

Checkpoints and officer contacts

Utah Code §§ 23A-5-207 and 77-23-104

To help the DWR fulfill its responsibility as trustee and custodian of Utah's wildlife, conservation officers and division biologists monitor the taking and possession of big game animals and the required permits, firearms and equipment used for hunting. You should expect to encounter conservation officers and biologists checking hunters in the field and at checkpoints.

If you're contacted by a conservation officer, you must provide the officer with the items they request, including any licenses and permits required for hunting, any devices used to participate in hunting and any game you've taken. These contacts allow the DWR to collect valuable information about Utah's big game animals.

Firearms and archery equipment

Prohibited weapons

Utah Code §§ 23A-5-309 and 23A-5-307, and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-7

You may only use firearms and archery tackle that are expressly permitted in this guidebook.

While hunting big game, you may not use:

- A firearm that's capable of being fired fully automatic
- Any light-enhancement device or aiming device that casts a visible beam of light
- A firearm equipped with a computerized targeting system that marks a target, calculates a firing solution and automatically discharges the firearm at a point calculated most likely to hit the acquired target
- A computer or other device to remotely control the aiming and discharge of a firearm or other weapon for hunting an animal.

Remember: No electronics may be attached, except for illuminated reticles.

These restrictions do not apply to hand-held laser range-finding devices or illuminated sight pins for archery equipment.

Rifles, airguns, shotguns and crossbows

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-8

You may use a rifle or shotgun to hunt big game, but your firearm and ammunition must meet the following requirements:

- Your rifle must fire centerfire cartridges and expanding bullets.
- Your shotgun must be 20 gauge or larger, and you may use only slug ammunition or buckshot that's 00 or larger in size.

You may only use an airgun or crossbow to take big game if you have an any legal weapon permit. You may **not** use an airgun or crossbow to take big game if you have an archery or muzzleloader permit. (See *Utah Admin. Rule R657-12-8* and *Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-11* for exceptions to this rule.)

If you use an airgun to hunt big game, that airgun must:

- Be pneumatically powered
- Be pressurized solely through a separate charging device
- Only fire a bolt or arrow

Are you allowed to possess a weapon?

Utah Code §§ 76-11-302 and 76-11-303

It is illegal under *Utah Code §§ 76-11-302* and *76-11-303* to possess or use a firearm, muzzleloader or any other dangerous weapon if you have been charged or convicted of certain offenses.

The purchase or possession of any hunting license, permit, tag or certificate of registration from the DWR does not authorize the holder to legally possess or use a firearm, muzzleloader or any other dangerous weapon while hunting if they are otherwise restricted from possessing these weapons under Utah Code.

To determine whether you are allowed to possess a weapon, please review the Utah Code sections listed above or contact the law enforcement agency that oversees your case.

Hunters with disabilities

Utah Admin. Rule R657-12

Utah provides special hunting accommodations for people with disabilities. These accommodations include the opportunity to hunt with a companion, use a crossbow, hunt from a vehicle, use a draw lock and use a scope on archery equipment.

Hunters with disabilities may also apply for an extension to their season if they have a 2026 big game hunting permit in their possession and they meet certain criteria.

To learn more about hunting accommodations for people with disabilities, please visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/accessibility*** or call any DWR office (page 2).

There are no length restrictions on arrows and bolts for airgun and crossbow hunting.

Your arrows or bolts must travel at least 400 feet per second at the muzzle. They must also have either a fixed broadhead that is at least 7/8-inch wide at the widest point or an expandable, mechanical broadhead that is at least 7/8-inch wide at the widest point when the broadhead is in the open position.

A crossbow used to hunt big game must have a minimum draw weight of 125 pounds and a positive mechanical safety mechanism.

A crossbow arrow or bolt used to hunt big game must have at least one of the following:

- Fixed broadheads that are at least 7/8-inch wide at the widest point
- Expandable, mechanical broadheads that are at least 7/8-inch wide at the widest point when the broadhead is in the open position

It is unlawful for any person to:

- Hunt big game with an airgun or crossbow during a big game archery hunt, except as provided in *R657-12-8* and *R657-5-11*.
- Carry a cocked crossbow containing an arrow or a bolt while in or on any motorized vehicle on a public highway or other public right-of-way, except as provided in *R657-12-4*.
- Hunt any protected wildlife with a crossbow bolt that has any chemical, explosive or electronic device attached.

A crossbow used to hunt big game during an any legal weapon hunt may have a fixed or variable magnifying scope.

Important: No electronics may be attached to a rifle, airgun or shotgun, except for illuminated reticles. No electronics may be attached to the crossbow or bolt, except for illuminated nocks and cameras. However, these cameras cannot aid in the take of wildlife.

Handguns

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-9

You may use a handgun to take big game animals, but the handgun must be a minimum of .24 caliber and must fire a centerfire cartridge with an expanding bullet.

If you're hunting elk, moose, bison, bighorn sheep or mountain goat, the handgun must develop at least 500 foot-pounds of energy at 100 yards.

Important: No electronics may be attached, except for illuminated reticles.

Reminder: If you have a handgun-archery-muzzleloader-shotgun-straight walled rifle-only permit to hunt deer or elk, there are other handgun regulations you must follow. For details, see page 30.

Muzzleloaders

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-10

Muzzleloaders may be used during any big game hunt, except the archery hunt.

Important: There are specific rules regarding scope magnification during all big game muzzleloader hunts—including general-season, limited-entry and management hunts:

- Scopes stronger than 1x power are prohibited.
- Only open sights, peep sights, a red dot or scopes with 1x power or less are allowed.
- Valid visual-impairment certificates of registration for scopes with magnification are permitted during muzzleloader hunts.
- Scopes of any power are still allowed during any-legal-weapon hunts.
- No scopes of any kind are allowed on HAMSS hunts and restricted weapons hunts. (See pages 29–31 for more information.)
- To hunt big game with a muzzleloader, your muzzleloader must meet all of the following requirements:
- Both powder and bullet can be loaded only from the muzzle.
- It may only have open sights, peep sights, a red dot or a 1x fixed-power scope during any muzzleloader hunt.
- Variable- or fixed-power magnifying scopes greater than 1x power may only be used during any-legal-weapon hunts (or, if a hunter has a visual-impairment COR).
- It can have only one barrel, and the barrel must be at least 18 inches long.
- It cannot be capable of firing more than once without being reloaded.
- The powder and bullet—or powder, sabot and bullet—cannot be bonded together as one unit for loading.
- It must be loaded with black powder or a black powder substitute. The black powder or substitute cannot contain smokeless powder, but may contain some nitrocellulose.
- To hunt big game, you must use a lead or expanding bullet or projectile that's at least 40 caliber in size.
- If you're hunting deer or pronghorn, your bullet must be 130 grains or heavier, or your sabot must be 170 grains or heavier.
- If you're hunting elk, moose, bison, bighorn sheep or mountain goat, you must use a 210-grain or heavier bullet, or a sabot bullet that's at least 240 grains.

Important: No electronics may be attached, except for illuminated reticles.

If you obtain a muzzleloader permit, you may use only the muzzleloader equipment authorized in this section to take the species listed on the permit.

You may not possess or be in control of a rifle or shotgun while in the field during the muzzleloader hunt. For the purposes of this section, "field" means a location where you are likely to find the species listed on your permit. (You are not considered to be in the field if you are in an established camping area or traveling in a fully enclosed automobile or truck.) This restriction does not apply to the following people:

- Hunters who are lawfully hunting upland game or waterfowl
- Hunters who are licensed to hunt big game species during archery or rifle hunts that coincide with the muzzleloader hunt
- Livestock owners who are protecting their livestock
- Individuals who are carrying a concealed weapon (You may not use your concealed firearm to hunt or take protected wildlife.)

Archery equipment

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-11

Archery equipment may be used during any big game hunt except the muzzleloader hunt.

To hunt big game with archery equipment, your equipment must meet all of the following requirements:

- Your bow must have a minimum pull of 30 pounds at the draw or the peak, whichever comes first.
- Your arrowheads must have two or more sharp-cutting edges that cannot pass through a 7/8 inch ring. If you're using expanding arrowheads, the arrowheads must have two or more sharp-cutting edges that cannot pass through a 7/8 inch ring when expanded.

There are no length restrictions on arrows and bolts for airgun and crossbow hunting.

You may not use any of the following equipment to take big game during the archery season:

- A crossbow or airgun (Please see *Utah Admin. Rule R657-12* and *Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-11* for exceptions to this rule.)
- Arrows with chemically treated or explosive arrowheads
- A mechanical device that holds the bow at any increment of draw (Please see *Utah Admin. Rule R657-12* and *Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-11* for exceptions to this rule.)
- A release aid that is not handheld or that supports the draw weight of the bow
- A bow with a magnifying-aiming device

Important: No electronics may be attached to the bow or arrow, except for illuminated nocks, sight pins and cameras. However, these cameras cannot aid in the take of wildlife.

Remember: If you carry arrows in or on a vehicle, the arrows must be in an arrow quiver or a closed case.

If you obtain an archery permit—for either an archery-only season or a once-in-a-lifetime hunt—you may use only the archery equipment authorized in this section to take the species listed on the permit.

HAMSS buck deer and bull elk hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-47 and R657-5-48

Handgun-archery-muzzleloader-shotgun-straight walled rifle-only hunts (HAMSS hunts) are limited-entry hunts with very specialized weapon requirements.

Remember: Electronic communication to receive real-time information on hunter or game location to aid in the stalking of a specific big game animal is prohibited on a HAMSS hunt. This rule does not apply to general electronic communications in the field, including calls or communications relating to public safety.

Important: On all HAMSS hunts, no weapon-mounted scopes or other optics are allowed. The complete weapon specifications for these hunts are listed in *Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-47*, available online.

You may only use the following weapons on a handgun-archery-muzzleloader-shotgun-straight walled rifle-only hunt:

Handgun

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-9 & R657-5-47

The handgun you use must be legal for buck deer and bull elk, with no attached scope. (See *Firearms and archery equipment* section beginning on page 26.)

Any currently legal handgun without a scope is allowed. No electronics may be attached, except for illuminated reticles.

The handgun must also:

- Have no more than a single barrel 15 inches or less in length, including the chamber
- Have a single rear handgrip without any form of any of the following:
  - A fixed, detachable or collapsible buttstock
  - An apparatus or extension behind the rear grip that's capable of being used to steady the handgun against the body while firing
  - A vertical foregrip

The handgun can be no more than 24 inches in overall length.

Archery equipment

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-11 and R657-5-47

The archery equipment you use must be legal for buck deer and bull elk. (See *Firearms and archery equipment* section beginning on page 26.)

No electronics may be attached to the bow or arrow, except for illuminated nocks and cameras. However, a camera cannot aid in the take of wildlife.

Muzzleloader

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-10 and R657-5-47

The muzzleloader you use must be legal for buck deer and bull elk, with no attached scope. (See *Firearms and archery equipment* section beginning on page 26.)

Utah's Walk-in Access Program

Utah Admin. Rule R657-56-13

The Walk-in Access Program provides hunters, anglers and trappers access to privately owned land, streams, rivers, ponds or reservoirs.

If you use Utah's Walk-in Access properties, remember to obtain your annual WIA authorization number.

The DWR issues authorization numbers to track the use of WIA properties throughout the year and to assess the program's value to the public.

To obtain your authorization number, visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/walkinaccess*** and select "Authorization numbers." Follow the instructions and obtain your number. You can also request a number by calling your local division office (see page 2).

Also, remember that WIA properties are private land and may have special restrictions on season dates, allowable activities, species and weapon types. Visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/walkinaccess*** for details.

Shotgun

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-8 and R657-5-47

The shotgun you use must be legal for buck deer and bulk elk, with no attached scope. (See *Firearms and archery equipment* section beginning on page 26.)

Semiautomatic shotguns are not allowed in a HAMSS hunt.

Straight-walled rifle

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-47

Any straight-walled cartridge with a minimum bullet diameter of .35 caliber and a minimum case length of at least 1.16 inches may be used.

No semiautomatic rifle, scope or other optics, or electronics are allowed.

No drones allowed

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-14

Utah's regulations prohibit the use of any type of aircraft, drone, or other airborne vehicle or device to locate, or attempt to observe or locate, any protected wildlife from July 31 through Jan. 31. This includes scouting and hunting.

Restricted weapons hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-48

As part of the mule deer management plan approved by the Wildlife Board, four mule deer units are part of a research study evaluating weapons technology restrictions. Restrictions will not apply to limited-entry late muzzleloader hunts, but do apply for those with Dedicated Hunter permits. (See exemptions for youth restricted rifle hunts on page 45.)

Important: Electronic communication to receive real-time information on hunter or game location to aid in the stalking of a specific big game animal is prohibited on a restricted weapons hunt.

In addition to all general requirements for big game hunting in Utah, restricted weapons hunts have very specialized equipment requirements.

Restricted archery equipment

- Must be a single-stringed longbow or recurve bow with no cables, pulleys or cams
- Has no sights
- Has a draw weight of 40 pounds or more

Restricted muzzleloader equipment

- The ignition system is limited to traditional flintlock, wheellock, matchlock, musket cap or percussion cap (all other ignition systems, including 209 primers, are prohibited)
- Contains only open sights or peep sights

Restricted rifle equipment

- Contains only open sights or peep sights
- Cannot be semiautomatic

Obtain permission to hunt private property

The DWR cannot guarantee access to private land, and the agency does not have the names of landowners who own property where hunts occur.

You must obtain documented permission from the landowner or the landowner's authorized representative before hunting or trapping on private lands. Ideally, you should have permission **before** you apply for or obtain a permit.

If you obtain documented permission in advance, you know you'll be able to use the permit if you draw it.

Download a landowner permission card at ***wildlife.utah.gov/permissioncard.html***.

Loaded firearms in a vehicle

Utah Code §§§§ 76-11-102, 53-5a-3, 76-11-204 and 53-5a-108

You may not carry a loaded firearm in or on a vehicle unless you meet all of the following conditions:

- You own the vehicle or have permission from the vehicle's owner
- The firearm is a handgun
- You are 18 years of age or older

A pistol, revolver, rifle or shotgun is considered to be loaded when there is an unexpended cartridge, shell or projectile in the firing position.

Pistols and revolvers are also considered to be loaded when an unexpended cartridge, shell or projectile is in a position whereby the manual operation of any mechanism once would cause the unexpended cartridge, shell or projectile to be fired.

A muzzleloading firearm is considered loaded when it is capped or primed and has a powder charge and ball or shot in the barrel or cylinders.

Areas where you cannot discharge a firearm

Utah Code § 76-11-208 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-12

You may not discharge a dangerous weapon or firearm under any of the following circumstances:

- From a vehicle
- From, upon or across any highway
- At power lines or signs
- At railroad equipment or facilities, including any sign or signal
- Within Utah state park camp or picnic sites, overlooks, golf courses, boat ramps or developed beaches
- Without written permission from the owner or property manager, within 600 feet of:
    - A house, dwelling or any other building
    - Any structure in which a domestic animal is kept or fed, including a barn, poultry yard, corral, feeding pen or stockyard

Carrying a dangerous weapon while under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Utah Code § 76-11-217

You may not carry a dangerous weapon or hunt big game while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Please see *Utah Code § 76-11-217* at ***wildlife.utah.gov/rules*** for more information.

Areas with special restrictions

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-12

The following areas have certain restrictions. Please be familiar with them before heading into the field.

Counties and local municipalities

Please check county and local municipality ordinances regarding firearm restrictions before hunting in these areas.

State waterfowl and wildlife management areas

In 2026, you may hunt big game during the archery season on the following waterfowl management areas: Bicknell Bottoms, Browns Park, Clear Lake, Desert Lake, Locomotive Springs and Redmond.

You may hunt big game during the archery, muzzleloader and any legal weapon seasons on the Stewart Lake Waterfowl Management Area.

Otherwise, all of Utah's other waterfowl management areas are closed to big game hunting.

WMA closures for sponsored pheasant hunts: Some wildlife management areas will be closed to the general public—including big game hunters—for organized youth and beginner pheasant hunts. Closures this year include:

- Oct. 31—Gordon Creek WMA (upper fields)
- Nov. 14—Annabella, Pahvant and Pine Canyon WMAs, and a portion of the Ogden Bay WMA

See ***wildlife.utah.gov/uplandgame/youth*** in late summer for more details.

State parks

Utah Code § 76-11-208 and Utah Admin. Rule R651-614-4

Hunting of wildlife is allowed within the boundaries of all state park areas, **except** those areas and hunts specifically closed by the Utah Division of State Parks *Utah Admin. Rule R651-614*. For more information, visit ***stateparks.utah.gov/resources/hunting-at-state-parks***.

State laws regarding the possession and discharge of dangerous weapons apply in state park areas open to hunting. For information about discharging a dangerous weapon or firearm in a state park, see the *Areas where you cannot discharge a firearm* section on the previous page or review *Utah Code § 76-11-208*.

National wildlife refuges

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has expanded general-season archery hunting opportunities for mule deer and pronghorn on the Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge. For details, visit the refuge website at ***fws.gov/refuge/fish-springs***.

Remember: All national wildlife refuges in Utah are closed to hunting **unless** they are declared open to hunting by the managing authority. Be sure to check refuge-specific hunting regulations before you head into the field.

National parks and monuments

All of Utah's national parks and monuments—except the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears national monuments—are closed to hunting.

Native American trust lands

To hunt on Native American trust lands, you must obtain a permit from the Native American tribe that owns the land. You must also observe all of the tribe's wildlife regulations while hunting on these trust lands.

Military installations

All of the military installations in Utah, including Camp Williams, are closed to hunting and trespassing unless you have authorized permission.

Salt Lake County

To view maps of the Salt Lake County areas listed below, visit ***hunt.utah.gov***. These areas have various restrictions, and you may **not** do any of the following:

- Hunt big game within one-half mile of Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon.
- Hunt in Emigration Township with a rifle or muzzleloader. This area is restricted to archery tackle only. Visit ***hunt.utah.gov*** to view a map of the archery-only area in Emigration Township.
- Hunt within the portion of Alta that is closed to hunting. Please contact the town of Alta for hunt boundaries and other information.
- Hunt buck deer or bull elk with a rifle or muzzleloader south of I-80 and east of I-15 (see map online at ***hunt.utah.gov***).

Also, before hunting in the Salt Lake County area, please check the Salt Lake County and local municipality ordinances regarding firearm and hunting restrictions.

CWMUs and limited-entry units

There are a few restrictions that apply to CWMUs and limited-entry hunting units:

- You may **not** hunt on a CWMU unless you obtain a permit to hunt a particular species on that CWMU.
- Archery hunters may not kill a cow elk on the Book Cliffs hunting unit.

Scott and Norma Matheson Wetlands Preserve

You may use only archery equipment, muzzleloaders or shotguns while hunting on the Scott and Norma Matheson Wetlands Preserve.

Green River—Jensen, Utah

Reminder: Muzzleloaders are not permitted, and shotgun shot size is restricted.

You may not discharge a firearm—except a shotgun firing shot size not to exceed T(.20)—from, upon or across the Green River near Jensen, Utah, from the bridge on US-40 upstream to the Dinosaur National Monument boundary.

Town of Alton

There is an exception for antlerless hunts in and around the town of Alton to help manage the growing number of deer that are within town limits. (Hunting bucks and bulls is still prohibited.)

Motorized vehicle access on wildlife management areas

Utah Admin. Rule R657-6-14

Motorized vehicle travel on state wildlife management areas is restricted to county roads, parking areas, and areas marked or posted open to motorized vehicle travel. Seasonal closures may occur.

Trespassing

Utah Code §§ 23A-5-317 and 23A-5-310

While taking wildlife or engaging in wildlife-related activities, you may not—without documented permission—enter or remain on privately owned land that is:

- Cultivated
- Properly posted
- Fenced or enclosed in a manner designed to exclude intruders

In addition, you may not:

- Enter or remain on private land when directed not to do so by the owner or a person acting for the owner
- Obstruct any entrance or exit to private property

"Cultivated land" is land that is readily identifiable as land whose soil is loosened or broken up for the raising of crops, land used for the raising of crops, or a pasture that is artificially irrigated.

"Permission" means documented authorization from the owner or person in charge to enter upon private land that is cultivated or properly posted. Permission must include all of the following details:

- The signature of the owner or person in charge
- The name of the person being given permission
- The appropriate dates
- A general description of the land

You can find an authorization form online at ***wildlife.utah.gov/permissioncard.html***.

"Properly posted" means that signs prohibiting trespass—or bright yellow, bright orange or fluorescent paint—are clearly displayed at all corners, on fishing streams crossing property lines, and on roads, gates and rights-of-way entering the land. Or, they are displayed in a manner that is visible to a person in the area.

You may not post private property you do not own or legally control or land that is open to the public as provided by *Utah Code § 23A-6-402*. In addition, it is unlawful to take protected wildlife or its parts while trespassing in violation of *Utah Code § 23A-5-317*.

You are guilty of a class B misdemeanor if you violate any provision described in this section. Your license, tag or permit privileges may also be suspended.

Prohibited hunting methods

Utah Code §§§§ 23A-5-309, 23A-11-203, 53-5a-3, 53-5a-108 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-13

Baiting

Utah law prohibits the baiting of big game for hunting purposes throughout the state. (See the full definitions of "bait" and "baited area" on page 76.)

Poaching-reported reward permits

Utah Admin. Rule R657-51

It pays to report big game poachers in Utah.

If you provide information that leads to the successful prosecution of another person for the wanton destruction (poaching) of any big game species, you may receive a permit to hunt the same species on the same area where the violation occurred.

This program applies to once-in-a-lifetime animals as well as limited-entry and general-season buck deer and bull elk.

To turn in a poacher, use any of the methods listed at ***wildlife.utah.gov/utip***:

- Text Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement officers at 847411
- Call our hotline: 800-662-3337
- Submit a tip through the UTDWR law enforcement app
- Submit an online report at ***wildlife.utah.gov/utip***

For details about this reward permit program, please visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/reward*** or see *Utah Admin. Rule R657-51* at ***wildlife.utah.gov/rules***.

Unless you have special permission from the DWR—in the form of a certificate of registration—it is unlawful to do any of the following:

- Bait big game for hunting purposes
- Take big game in a baited area
- Take big game that has been lured to or is traveling from a baited area

If you have questions about this law, please see our FAQ document at ***wildlife.utah.gov/biggame/baiting*** or contact your local DWR office (see page 2 for contact info).

Night-vision devices

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-7

Important: It is unlawful to possess any type of night-vision device while locating, taking or attempting to locate big game from July 31 to Dec. 31.

The rule applies to anything that enhances visible and non-visible light and includes the use of night-vision devices, thermal-imaging devices, infrared-imaged devices and other electronic devices that enhance the visible and non-visible light spectrum.

See page 76 for definitions, and visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/trailcams*** for more information.

Spotlighting

You may not use a spotlight, headlight or other artificial light to take or locate any protected wildlife (including big game) if you have any of the following weapons in your possession:

- Rifle
- Shotgun
- Archery equipment
- Airgun
- Crossbow
- Muzzleloader

The use of a spotlight or other artificial light in any area where protected wildlife are generally found is considered probable cause of attempting to locate protected wildlife.

The provisions of this section do not apply to the use of the headlights of a motor vehicle, illuminated sight pins on a bow or other artificial light in a usual manner where there is no attempt or intent to locate protected wildlife.

In addition, the above restrictions do not apply to concealed firearm carriers, provided the person is not using the concealed firearm to hunt or take wildlife.

Technology

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-7 through R657-5-11 & Utah Code § 23A-5-307

While hunting big game, you may not use:

- Projectiles for which the path can be altered or electronically tracked after they have been set in motion.
- Visual-enhancement technology, such as nanotechnology, except for basic devices used solely for magnification.
- Pattern-recognition technology in hunting, such as artificial intelligence.
- Live-feed aerial imaging.
- Electronically amplified calls or sounds for the taking of big game animals.

For HAMSS and restricted weapons hunts only: Electronic communication to receive real-time information on hunter or game locations that would aid in the stalking of a specific big game animal is prohibited. (This includes the use of two-way radios, cellphones, etc.) This rule does not apply to general electronic communications in the field, including calls or communications relating to public safety.

Trail cameras

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-7 & Utah Code § 23A-5-307

The Utah legislature and wildlife board have made several changes to the state's trail camera rules since 2022:

- Trail cameras are prohibited on public land from July 31 to Dec. 31.
- There are some exceptions for research and monitoring by land management agencies (and other approved applications).
- The sale or purchase of footage or data from any trail camera (or non-handheld device) that could be used to take, attempt to take—or aid in the take or attempted take—of big game, cougars or bears is prohibited. That includes images or video, location information, time and date of the footage, and any other data that could aid in the harvest or attempted take of big game, cougars or bears.
- A trail camera using internal data storage and not capable of transmitting data is permitted for use on private lands for the purposes of taking protected wildlife.

See the informational box on page 48 for details about restrictions and exceptions to this rule, and page 79 for definitions.

Visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/trailcams*** for more information about trail camera rule changes and frequently asked questions.

Use of vehicle or aircraft

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-14

You may not use an airplane, drone or any other airborne vehicle or device, or any motorized terrestrial or aquatic vehicle (except a vessel)—including snowmobiles and other recreational vehicles—to take protected wildlife, including big game.

Important: You are prohibited from using any type of aircraft, drone or other airborne vehicle or device—between July 31 and Jan. 31—to locate, or attempt to observe or locate, any protected wildlife.

Also, you may not take protected wildlife that are being chased, harmed, harassed, rallied, herded, flushed, pursued or moved by an aircraft or any other vehicle or transportation device.

The provisions of this section do not apply to the operation of an aircraft, drone or other airborne vehicle or device used for the purposes of transporting hunters, equipment or legally harvested wildlife, where there is no attempt or intent to locate protected wildlife.

Hunters who are transported by aircraft into an area may not hunt protected wildlife until the following day.

Important: On state and/or federally administered lands, rules and regulations for landing an airborne vehicle or device may apply. These regulations apply to private individuals and aircraft, as well as commercial aircraft providing contracted transportation services. Please check with the appropriate land management agency before landing any aircraft on federal or state lands.

Using collar data to aid in hunting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-7

You may not use any protected GPS location data or protected radio collar data to locate, track, take or retrieve—or attempt to locate, track, take or retrieve—big game animals or their parts.

Use of dogs

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-15

Dogs may not be used to take, chase, harm or harass big game. You may, however, use one blood-trailing dog—controlled by leash—to track wounded animals and aid in recovery. You may only use the tracking dog within 72 hours of shooting a big game animal and during lawful hunting hours.

Party hunting

Utah Code § 23A-4-201 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-15

You may not take a big game animal for another person. For example, you cannot kill a big game animal, and then tag the animal with a tag that belongs to one of your hunting companions. This practice is called “party hunting,” and it’s illegal.

The only exception to this rule is if a mentor shares a permit and tag with a minor as part of the Hunter Mentoring Program. For details on this program, please see the box on page 21.

Big game contests

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-16

You may not enter a contest or hold a contest that is based on big game or its parts and that offers cash or prizes totaling more than $500.

Digital access permit required for some WMAs

Anyone 18 years old or older must either have a **(new this year)** free digital access permit—obtainable by reviewing educational materials—or a valid Utah hunting, fishing or combination license to access waterfowl and wildlife management areas in Utah's four largest counties. This currently includes Davis, Salt Lake, Utah and Weber counties, based upon population. **If you gather shed antlers and horns, be aware of this requirement before entering a WMA in these counties.**

WMAs are primarily funded by the sales of Utah hunting, fishing and combination licenses and by federal excise taxes (which are paid on hunting and fishing equipment)—typically, state taxes do not pay for them. All license sales go toward conservation in Utah, so having a current license is a way to support wildlife conservation, land acquisition, management and habitat restoration at your favorite WMA and statewide.

Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/wmas* for details about which WMAs require a permit, exemptions and more.

Thank you for supporting Utah's fish and wildlife.

Tagging, transporting and exporting big game

Tagging requirements

Utah Code § 23A-4-709 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-17

After you've taken a big game animal, you must tag the animal before moving the carcass or leaving the site of the kill.

New: Hunters can choose to either physically tag the animal using the tag attached to their printed permit **or** submit an e-tag through their Utah Hunting and Fishing app.

To electronically tag a big game animal:

- Before you go into the field, you must download your permit to the Utah Hunting and Fishing mobile app (you must have Wi-Fi or cellular service to download your permit).
- **Important:** You must be directly next to your harvested animal and are ready to e-tag it before you begin the "submit e-tag" process.
- In your Utah Hunting and Fishing app, tap on your permit, tap the "submit e-tag" button and follow the prompts to complete the e-tagging process.
- You are required to submit the harvest location and photographs (including proof of sex) of your harvested animal.
- Completing the e-tagging process will fulfill your required harvest survey.
- After you complete and sumbit your e-tag, you will receive an electronic harvest code. You must keep this electronic harvest code in your possession.

To physically tag a big game animal:

- Completely detach the tag from your big game permit.
- Completely remove the three notches that indicate the date the animal was taken and the sex of the animal.
- Attach the tag to the animal so that the tag remains securely fastened and visible.

Remember: Whether you physically tag or e-tag your animal:

- You may not remove more than one notch indicating the date or sex, or tag more than one animal, using the same tag.
- You may not hunt or pursue big game after any of the notches have been removed from the tag or the tag has been detached from your permit.
- You may not continue to hunt on a permit that has been e-tagged, even if you still have an un-notched paper copy of your permit/tag.

New: A hunter is no longer required to have the physical tag remain with the largest portion of the meat until the animal is entirely consumed.

A butcher or owner/employee of a locker or storage plant may not receive the carcass of protected wildlife unless the animal is properly tagged or there is a valid donation slip.

Taxidermists must keep records of all received protected wildlife parts—including the date of receipt and documentation of the associated hunting license or permit—for at least three years.

Transporting big game within Utah

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-18

You must obey the following rules to transport big game in Utah:

- The head or sex organs of the animal you've taken must remain attached to the largest portion of its carcass, unless you e-tagged your animal.
- If you take an elk on a spike bull unit, the antlers must remain attached to the animal's skull plate, and you must transport the skull plate and antlers with the carcass.
- You must accompany the carcass of any big game animal you've harvested, and you must have a valid permit that corresponds to the tag that's attached to the carcass.

Anyone transporting a big game animal they did not take must have evidence that the animal was legally harvested. This may be accomplished by using at least one of the following methods:

- Obtain a shipping permit or a disposal receipt from the DWR.
- Obtain and carry written permission from the permit holder that includes the permit holder's full name, their contact information and their permit number.
- **New:** If the animal was electronically tagged, taking and sharing a screen shot of the e-tagged permit that clearly shows the electronic harvest code.

For more information, please see *Donating big game* on page 41.

Transporting big game out of Utah

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-19

You may transport big game or its parts out of Utah if you accompany the big game animal you harvested and you have a valid permit that corresponds to the tag on the animal. The tag must be attached to the largest portion of the carcass.

If you didn't harvest the animal, you must obtain a shipping permit from the DWR before taking the animal or its parts out of Utah. **New:** If the animal was electronically tagged, you must have in your possession a screen shot of the e-tagged permit that clearly shows the electronic harvest code.

Bringing big game into Utah

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-42

Reminder: It is unlawful to import dead elk, moose, mule deer or white-tailed deer—or their parts—from any state or province that has deer or elk diagnosed with chronic wasting disease, except the following portions of the carcass:

- Meat that is cut and wrapped, either commercially or privately
- Quarters or other portions of meat (no part of the spinal column or head may be attached to the meat)
- Meat that is boned out
- Hides with no heads attached
- Skulls with antlers attached
- Antlers with no meat or tissue attached
- Upper canine teeth (also known as buglers, whistlers or ivories)
- Finished taxidermy heads

You can learn which areas in North America have been diagnosed with chronic wasting disease by visiting ***wildlife.utah.gov/cwd*** or any DWR office.

If you're not a resident of Utah, you can transport harvested elk, mule deer and white-tailed deer from areas that have CWD. However, you may not leave any part of the harvested animal in Utah, and you may not stay more than 24 hours in the state. In addition, your deer or elk may not be processed in Utah.

Possession and use of big game

Donating big game

Utah Code § 23A-1-205

You may donate, or give, a big game animal or its parts to another person, as long as proper documentation of the donation is kept with the protected wildlife parts.

The documentation of the donation must include:

- The number and species of the wildlife or parts donated
- The date of donation
- The license or permit number of the donor
- An image or picture of the wildlife or wildlife parts donated

There is one exception to these rules. You may donate the hide of a big game animal to another person or organization at any location, and a donation slip is not required.

Waste of game

Utah Code § 23A-5-314 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-51

You may not waste any big game animal or permit it to be wasted or spoiled. (Waste means to abandon a big game animal or allow it to spoil or be used in a manner not normally associated with its beneficial use. For example, using the meat as fertilizer or for trapping bait is not considered a beneficial use of the meat.)

You must immediately kill any animal you wound and tag the animal.

Important: A hunter must physically check the area where they shot at an animal to see if the animal was killed or wounded before the hunter leaves the area. If you do harvest an animal, you must harvest the meat from the front quarters, above the knee; from the hind quarters, above the hocks; and along the backbone—between the neck and hind quarters—including the loins and tenderloins.

Purchasing or selling big game or its parts

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-20

You may not buy, sell or offer, or possess for sale, barter, exchange or trade, any big game animal or its parts. The only exceptions are the following:

- Antlers, heads and horns of legally taken big game may be bought or sold from Feb. 1 through July 31.
- Untanned hides of legally taken big game may be bought or sold from Aug. 1 through Jan. 31.
- Tanned hides of legally taken big game may be bought or sold any time of the year.
- Shed antlers and horns may be bought or sold any time of the year.
- Individuals may modify and resell antlers and horns if they were legally gathered or obtained.
- Protected wildlife that the DWR obtains may be sold or donated by the DWR or its agents (usually Utah State Surplus) any time of the year. Also, you may purchase or receive protected wildlife from the DWR any time of the year.
- Commercial antler buyers (an individual or entity that purchases antlers or shed horns for the purpose of reselling them for financial gain) must have a valid certificate of registration. Visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/shedantler*** for details.
- In very specific instances outlined by the Utah Legislature in code, byproducts from legally possessed game can be used by meat processors in dog food products. See *Utah Code § 23A-5-309* for details.

If you sell or buy antlers, heads, horns or untanned hides, you must keep a record that states all of the following information:

- The name and address of the person who harvested the animal
- The date you sold or bought the items
- The permit number of the person who harvested the animal

There is one exception to this rule: scouting programs and other charitable organizations do not need to keep a transaction record if they're using untanned hides.

Possession of antlers and horns

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-21

You may possess antlers or horns—or parts of antlers or horns—that were obtained:

- From lawfully harvested big game
- By lawfully meeting the requirements listed in the previous section (i.e., *Purchasing or selling big game or its parts*)
- From lawfully gathered antlers or horns shed by big game animals

There are no seasonal shed antler gathering closures for Utah residents or nonresidents. You may gather shed antlers or horns—or parts of shed antlers or horns—statewide, but there are a few requirements:

Finding a skull with antlers or horns attached

If you find a skull with the antlers or horns still attached, it's possible the animal was poached. **Do NOT pick up or move the skull, or disturb any footprints or other evidence.** Instead, we encourage you to take the following steps:

- Take photos of the skull from a couple of angles
- Pinpoint the location of the skull (preferably its GPS coordinates)
- Call or visit a DWR office to report your find

For a quicker response, use the Utah Deadhead Reporter app:

- Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/deadhead* for instructions on how to install the ArcGIS Survey123 app on your mobile device and set up required permissions
- Enter your DWR customer ID number to start the report
- Following the prompts, submit a GPS location of the skull, photos of the animal and surrounding scene, and other details for investigators

The division will send a conservation officer to investigate if the animal was poached. If it's clear that the animal died of natural causes, we may allow you to keep your find.

- **Ethics course required:** From Jan. 1 to May 31, you must have an antler-gathering certificate on your person—either a printed copy or downloaded to your Utah Hunting and Fishing app—while collecting shed antlers or horns. You can obtain this certificate free of charge by visiting *wildlife.utah.gov/shedantler* and completing an online education course. You do not need an antler-gathering certificate at any other time of the year.
- In the event that harsh winter conditions trigger emergency feeding of big game, the DWR Director will close shed hunting statewide in order to improve the chances of survival for deer and other big game animals. On private land, shed antlers may be moved if they are interfering with normal agricultural practices.
- **Important:** Do not trespass on closed areas or private lands to collect shed antlers or horns.

"Shed antlers" are antlers that a big game animal has dropped naturally as part of its annual life cycle. Shed antlers have a rounded base that's commonly called an antler button or burr.

A "shed horn" is the sheath from the horn of a pronghorn that the animal has dropped naturally as part of its annual life cycle. Pronghorn are the only big game animals that shed their horns.

Big game hunts

Utah offers several different big game hunts each year. Depending on the permit you obtain, you could hunt deer, elk, pronghorn, bison, bighorn sheep, moose or mountain goat. The following section describes the species you can hunt, the weapons you can use and the types of permits that are available.

Buck deer hunting

General-season buck deer hunts

Utah has four general-season buck deer hunts:

- Archery hunt
- Muzzleloader hunt
- Early any legal weapon (rifle) hunt
- Any legal weapon (rifle) hunt

See *hunt.utah.gov* for all hunt boundaries.



A "buck deer" is a deer with antlers that are longer than five inches (R657-5-2(2)(e)).

Remember: If you drew any general-season deer permit, you must also complete a mandatory harvest survey once your hunt ends, even if you did not harvest. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest* and complete the harvest survey questionnaire **within 30 days after the end of your hunt**.

General-season archery buck deer hunt

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-23

Utah's general-season archery buck deer hunt runs from Aug. 15–Sept. 11, 2026.

If you obtained a general-season archery buck deer permit, you may use archery equipment to take one buck deer within the hunting unit and season dates listed on your permit.

Extended archery only option: During the hunt drawing, hunters could apply for a new "extended archery only" general-season deer permit (DB0008), which allows successful applicants to hunt **only** the extended archery hunt areas during the extended season dates. Existing extended archery deer hunting opportunities remain unchanged.

Extended archery deer hunts

If you haven't taken a deer by the time your archery buck hunt ends, you can continue your archery hunt in the state's extended archery areas.

In the Nine Mile, Green River Valley; Sanpete Valley and South Wasatch extended archery areas, you may use archery equipment to take a deer of either sex (hunter's choice) from Sept. 12–Oct. 15, 2026.

In the Box Elder, West Bear River; Herriman South Valley; Ogden; Uinta Basin; Utah Lake; Wasatch Front and West Cache extended archery areas, you may use archery equipment to take a deer of either sex (hunter's choice) from Sept. 12–Nov. 30, 2026.

Before hunting any of the extended archery areas, you must complete the DWR's archery ethics course. For details, see page 9 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/extendedarchery*.

Important: Check the hunt number (not just the hunt unit name) on your permit carefully and refer to the Utah Hunt Planner (*hunt.utah.gov*) to make sure your permit allows you to hunt in an extended archery unit within the allowed season dates.

General-season muzzleloader buck deer hunt

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-25

Utah's general-season muzzleloader buck deer hunt runs from Sept. 23–Oct. 1, 2026.

If you obtained a general-season muzzleloader buck permit, you may use a muzzleloader to take one buck deer in the hunting unit listed on your permit.

Early general-season buck deer hunts

For 2026, the Utah Wildlife Board approved early general-season any legal weapon buck deer hunts on the following general-season buck deer units:

- Box Elder
- Chalk Creek
- East Canyon
- Fillmore
- Fishlake
- Kamas
- Morgan-South Rich
- Nine Mile
- North Slope
- Panguitch Lake
- Pine Valley
- Zion

These hunts will run from Oct. 7–11, 2026. The goal of these hunts is to reduce crowding and give hunters the opportunity to hunt deer and general-season elk at the same time.

General-season any legal weapon (rifle) buck deer hunt

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-24

The general-season any legal weapon (rifle) buck deer hunt runs from Oct. 17–25, 2026.

If you obtained a general-season any legal weapon buck permit, you may use any legal weapon to take one buck deer in the hunting unit listed on your permit. You may also choose to use a crossbow, an airgun, a draw lock or a muzzleloader.

General-season restricted weapons hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-48

As part of the mule deer management plan approved by the Wildlife Board, three general-season mule deer units are part of a research study evaluating weapons technology restrictions. These hunts have very specialized equipment requirements (see page 31 for details). Electronic communication to receive real-time information on hunter or game location to aid in the stalking of a specific big game animal is prohibited on a restricted weapon hunt.

Note: There are currently **no** general-season restricted archery deer hunts.

Restricted muzzleloader deer hunts

In the Beaver, West; Boulder/Kaiparowits and Cache restricted weapons hunts, you may use restricted muzzleloader equipment to take a buck deer from Sept. 23–Oct. 1, 2026.

Restricted rifle deer hunts

In the Beaver, West; Boulder/Kaiparowits and Cache restricted weapons hunts, you may use restricted rifle equipment to take a buck deer from Oct. 17–25, 2026.

Exemptions for young hunters: Youth with a restricted rifle permit may hunt all the applicable general-season hunts on their unit. Young hunters are still required to follow any additional weapons restrictions on that unit. (For example, restricted muzzleloader regulations would apply during the muzzleloader season.)

Premium limited-entry and limited-entry buck deer hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-26

Utah's premium limited-entry and limited-entry deer units are managed for older, bigger bucks.

A premium limited-entry buck deer permit allows you to hunt on one of the best limited-entry buck deer units in Utah—the Henry Mtns unit or the Paunsaugunt unit.

A limited-entry buck deer permit allows you to hunt on a high-quality unit that is managed for a higher buck-to-doe ratio than general-season units are managed for.

If you obtained a premium limited-entry or limited-entry buck deer permit, you may use the weapon listed on your permit to take one buck deer within the area and the season specified on your permit.

Remember: If you drew any buck deer permit, **you must also complete a mandatory harvest survey once your hunt ends, even if you did not harvest.** Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest* and complete the harvest survey questionnaire within 30 days after the end of your hunt.

Late-season muzzleloader deer hunts

For 2026, the Utah Wildlife Board approved late-season, limited-entry muzzleloader deer hunts on all general-season buck deer units.

These hunts will occur at the same time as the general muzzleloader elk hunt, running from Oct. 28–Nov. 5, 2026.

Important: If you are successful in obtaining a permit for one of these hunts, you will lose your bonus points and incur a waiting period of **five** years.

Multiseason hunts

Multiseason hunts allow the permit holder to hunt buck deer during all three seasons (archery, muzzleloader and any legal weapon) on select limited-entry or premium limited-entry units.

If you have obtained a permit for one of these hunts, you must use the appropriate weapon type for the season.

HAMSS buck deer hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-47

There are four handgun-archery-muzzleloader-shotgun-straight walled rifle-only (HAMSS) hunts for buck deer in 2026. These hunts are considered limited-entry hunts.

If you obtained a permit for one of these hunts, you may take one buck deer in the season and unit identified on your permit.

The 2026 HAMSS hunts will take place in the following units, running from Nov. 7–30:

- Book Cliffs, Floy Canyon
- East Canyon
- Kaiparowits HAMSS
- San Juan, Mancos Mesa

Note: HAMSS permits are not valid on extended archery hunts.

Limited-entry restricted weapons hunt

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-48

As part of the mule deer management plan approved by the Wildlife Board, the Thousand Lakes limited-entry mule deer unit is part of a research study evaluating weapons technology restrictions and hunter satisfaction. This hunt has very specialized equipment requirements (see page 31 for details). Electronic communication to receive real-time information on hunter or game location to aid in the stalking of a specific big game animal is prohibited on a restricted weapon hunt.

If you have a permit for the **Thousand Lakes limited-entry hunt**, you may use approved restricted weapons for the dates printed on your permit:

- Restricted archery, Aug. 15–Sept. 11
- Restricted muzzleloader, Sept. 23–Oct. 1
- Restricted rifle, Oct. 17–25

More opportunity for limited-entry archers

Limited-entry archery deer hunters who don't harvest during the limited-entry season will be allowed to hunt the extended archery areas after completing the online extended archery course. For details, see page 9 or visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/extendedarchery***.

Important: Even if you hunt the extended archery hunt, you must still complete your harvest survey **within 30 days** of the end of your limited-entry season printed on your permit.

Management and cactus buck deer hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-46

A "management buck" is a buck deer with 3 points or less on at least one antler, above and including the first fork, but not including the eye guard. The eye guard does not count as a point. A point is a projection that's longer than one inch, measured from its base to its tip, including damaged or broken antlers.

Obtaining and using a management buck deer permit

Management buck deer permits are distributed through the big game drawing process. A management buck deer permit allows you to take one management buck deer. You must use the weapon listed on your permit to hunt the unit and season specified on your permit.

Important: If you obtained a management buck deer permit, that is the **only** buck deer permit you may obtain for the 2026 season. You will lose your bonus points and incur a waiting period of **five** years.

Obtaining and using a cactus buck deer permit

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-47

A "cactus buck" is one that still has velvet covering at least 50 percent of his antlers during the season dates set by the Wildlife Board.

Cactus buck deer permits are distributed through the big game drawing process. If you drew a cactus buck permit, you may take one cactus buck deer during the season, in the area, and with the weapon type specified on the permit.

Remember: If you obtained a cactus buck deer permit, that is the **only** buck deer permit you may obtain for the 2026 season. You will lose your bonus points and incur a waiting period of **five** years.

CWMU buck deer hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-37

Cooperative Wildlife Management Units (CWMUs) are private lands that the landowners have opened to a limited number of public and private hunters. You may not hunt buck deer on a CWMU unless you obtain a buck deer permit for that CWMU.

To learn more about hunting buck deer on CWMUs, read the article on page 66 and visit *wildlife.utah.gov/cwmu.*

Obtaining other deer permits

If you obtained a buck deer permit of any kind, the only other deer permit you can obtain is an antlerless deer permit. Please see page 59 for more information on antlerless deer hunts.

Trail cameras and night-vision devices

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-7 and Utah Code § 23A-5-307

Since 2022, there have been several regulations updates regarding the use of trail cameras and night-vision devices.

Trail cameras

- All trail cameras are prohibited on public land from July 31 to Dec. 31 (with exceptions for approved research and monitoring).
- A trail camera using internal data storage—and not capable of transmitting live data—is permitted for use on private land for the purposes of legal hunting.
- The sale or purchase of footage or data from any trail camera (or non-handheld device) that could be used to take, attempt to take, or aid in the take or attempted take of big game, cougars or bears is prohibited. That includes images or video, location information, time and date of the footage, and any other data that could aid in the harvest or attempted take of big game, cougars or bears.

Night-vision devices

- It is unlawful to possess any type of night-vision device while locating, taking or attempting to locate big game from July 31 to Dec. 31.

For more information

Learn more about these and other prohibited hunting methods on page 35 of this guidebook. See page 76 for definitions.

Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/trailcams* for more information about these rules.

Bull elk hunting

General-season bull elk hunts

Utah has four general-season elk hunts:

- Archery hunt
- Any legal weapon hunt
- Muzzleloader hunt
- Multiseason hunt (spike only)

These hunts are held on two types of units: any bull elk units and spike bull elk units.

If you obtain a general-season any legal weapon or muzzleloader permit, you must hunt on the type of unit specified on your permit. For example, if you obtain an any bull elk permit, you may hunt only on any bull elk units. If you obtain a spike bull permit, you may hunt only on spike bull units.



A "bull elk" is an elk with antlers that are longer than five inches (R657-5-2(2)(g)).

Remember: If you obtain a multiseason spike elk permit, you may hunt during the archery, any legal weapon and muzzleloader seasons, but you must hunt on the type of unit specified on your permit and you must use the appropriate weapon type for the season.

Permits for the general-season elk hunts will be available on different days in July 2026. See page 17 for the exact sales dates and visit *wildlife.utah.gov/biggame* in early June to see purchase times and locations.

Remember: If you drew any general-season elk permit, you must also complete a mandatory harvest survey once your hunt ends, even if you did not harvest. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest* and complete the harvest survey questionnaire within 30 days after the end of your hunt.



Legal in a spike bull unit



NOT legal in a spike bull unit

A "spike bull" means a bull elk which has at least one antler beam with no branching above the ears. Branched means a projection on an antler longer than one inch, measured from its base to its tip (R657-5-2(2)(r)).

General-season archery elk hunt

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-28

Utah's general-season archery spike elk hunt runs from Aug. 15–Sept. 4, 2026. The general-season archery any bull elk hunt runs from Aug. 15–Sept. 16, 2026, except on the state's extended archery areas, where the season runs later into the year.

If you obtain a general-season archery elk permit, you may use archery equipment to take only one of the following animals:

- One elk of either sex on a general-season any bull elk unit
- An antlerless elk or a spike bull elk on a general-season spike bull elk unit
- Only a spike bull on the Book Cliffs unit
- One elk of either sex on the extended archery elk areas
- The Paunsaugunt spike bull elk unit is closed to general-season archery hunting

Extended archery elk hunts

If you haven't taken an elk by the time your archery hunt ends, you may continue hunting in the Uinta Basin and Wasatch Front extended archery elk areas during the extended archery elk season, which runs from Aug. 15–Dec. 15, 2026. **New:** The West Cache extended archery elk area's season dates are Aug. 15, 2026–Jan. 31, 2027.

To hunt any of the extended archery areas, you must complete the DWR's archery ethics course and carry your archery ethics course certificate of completion with you while you're hunting. For more information, see page 43 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/extendedarchery*.

General-season any legal weapon (rifle) bull elk hunt

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-29

The general-season any legal weapon bull elk hunt is divided into two groups of units—**any bull** and **spike only**—each with their own season dates:

- Any-bull units
  - **Early** general-season any legal weapon: Oct. 3–9, 2026
  - **Late** general-season any legal weapon: Oct. 10–16, 2026
- Spike-only units
  - General-season any legal weapon: Oct. 3–15, 2026

To hunt during the general-season elk hunt, you must obtain either a spike bull permit **or** an any bull permit. You may only purchase one general-season bull elk permit that is valid for one of the above season dates. You may also only hunt in the units valid for whichever type of general-season bull elk permit you choose to purchase (any bull **or** spike only).

Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/biggame* to see permit purchase times and locations.

If you obtain a general-season any legal weapon bull elk permit, you may use any legal weapon to take your bull elk.

You may use a crossbow, an airgun, a draw lock or a muzzleloader.

If you obtain a spike bull elk permit, you may take a spike bull elk on a general-season spike-bull elk unit. You may **not** hunt on the any-bull elk units. Please keep in mind that some limited-entry bull elk hunts overlap the general-season spike elk hunt.

If you obtain an any bull elk permit, you may take a bull elk of any size—including a spike bull—on a general-season any-bull elk unit. You may **not** hunt on spike-bull units.

See the general-season bull elk hunt reference map on page 70, and the boundary descriptions at ***hunt.utah.gov***, to learn where spike-bull units and any-bull elk units are located in the state.

General-season muzzleloader elk hunt

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-30

The general-season muzzleloader elk hunt runs from Oct. 28–Nov. 5, 2026 within the general-season elk units.

To hunt during the general season for muzzleloader elk, you must obtain either a muzzleloader spike bull elk permit or a muzzleloader any bull elk permit.

If you obtain a muzzleloader any bull elk permit, you may use a muzzleloader to take a bull elk of any size, including a spike bull, on a general-season any bull elk unit. You may **not** hunt on spike bull elk units.

If you obtain a muzzleloader spike bull elk permit, you may use a muzzleloader to take a spike bull elk on a general-season spike bull elk unit. You may **not** hunt on the any bull elk units.

Please see the general-season bull elk hunt reference map on page 60 and the boundary descriptions at ***hunt.utah.gov*** to learn where spike bull units and any bull elk units are located in the state.

Multiseason general spike bull elk hunt

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-29

The multiseason spike bull elk permit is capped at 4,500 permits issued for the 2026 hunting season.

Your hunting season dates and hunt areas vary by season, and are listed on your multi-season spike bull permit:

- **Archery season:** You may take an antlerless elk or spike bull elk on any spike unit Aug. 15–Sept. 4 (only spike bull elk can be taken on the Book Cliffs unit). You may take any bull elk on an any bull unit Aug. 15–Sept 16.
- **Any legal weapon season:** Oct. 3–15; you may use any legal weapon to take a spike bull elk on a general-season spike unit.
- **Muzzleloader season:** Oct. 28–Nov. 5; you may use muzzleloader equipment to take a spike bull elk on a general-season spike unit.

Extended archery elk hunts

If you haven't taken an elk by the time your multiseason hunt ends, you may continue hunting in the Uinta Basin and Wasatch Front extended archery elk areas during the extended archery elk season, which runs from Aug. 15–Dec. 15, 2026.

New: The West Cache extended archery elk area's season dates are Aug. 15, 2026–Jan. 31, 2027.

Note: Harvest surveys for this hunt must be completed by Feb. 15, 2027.

To hunt any of the extended archery areas, you must complete the DWR's archery ethics course and carry your archery ethics course certificate of completion with you while you're hunting. For more information, see page 9 or visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/extendedarchery***.

Remember: If you are hunting in an extended archery elk area during the extended archery elk season, you may harvest **any bull elk** or antlerless elk. (This applies even if the extended archery area overlaps a spike bull elk unit.)

General-season private-lands-only any bull elk permits (Uinta Basin)

This permit is valid only in the Uinta Basin (hunt season dates Aug. 1–Nov. 15, 2026) to address elk damage on private lands. You must obtain documented permission to hunt on private land. See the Hunt Planner (*hunt.utah.gov*) for details.

Obtaining bull elk permits

General-season any bull elk permits (including multiseason or spike bull elk) will be available on different days in July 2026. See page 17 for the exact sales dates and visit *wildlife.utah.gov/biggame* in early June to see purchase times and locations.

Bull elk hunt opportunities for youth

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-31

General-season youth elk

In 2026, there will be an unlimited number of general-season youth elk permits available for youth who will be 16 years of age or younger on July 31, 2026. Remember, you **cannot** hunt until you are at least 12 years old.

The youth general-season elk permits go on sale July 7, 2026. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/biggame* in early June to see permit purchase times and locations.

Remember: The unlimited youth general-season elk permit will be valid during all general-season dates on both any bull and spike units. This permit is **not** valid on limited-entry bull elk units.

The general-season permits referenced in this section are not for the draw-only youth any bull/hunter's choice elk hunt that runs from Sept. 12–22, 2026. Permits for that hunt were **only** available through the big game drawing.

Draw-only youth elk

If you drew a permit for the draw-only youth any bull/hunter's choice elk hunt—which runs from Sept. 12–22, 2026—you may use any legal weapon to take a bull elk or antlerless elk of any size on any general-season any bull elk unit in Utah.

Please remember that although you may take a spike bull elk during this hunt, you may **not** hunt on a spike bull elk unit with a draw-only youth any bull/hunters' choice elk permit.

You may obtain only one draw-only youth elk hunt permit in your lifetime.

Limited-entry bull elk hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-32

A limited-entry bull elk permit allows you to use the weapon listed on your permit to take one bull elk of any size within the area and season specified on your permit.

Multiseason hunts

There are multiseason hunts that allow the permit holder to hunt bull elk during all three seasons (archery, muzzleloader and any legal weapon) on select limited-entry units.

If you have obtained a permit for one of these hunts, you must use the appropriate weapon type for the season.

Note: These hunts exclude the limited-entry late-season archery elk hunts, Nov. 28–Dec. 13, 2026. See *hunt.utah.gov* to confirm allowable units.

Avoid harvesting collared wildlife

The DWR has placed radio and GPS collars on bighorn sheep, bison, deer, elk, moose, mountain goats and pronghorn in various areas across the state. The division is monitoring these animals for ongoing studies about migration and survival.

If possible, please avoid harvesting a collared animal. It is an expensive and time-consuming process to capture and collar replacement animals.

If you do harvest a collared animal, please remove the collar without cutting it, pull the front two incisors (for aging purposes) and contact your local DWR office for information on how to return the collar.

To learn more about collared wildlife studies and the Utah Wildlife Migration Initiative, visit *wildlifemigration.utah.gov*.

HAMSS bull elk hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-48

For 2026, the board approved handgun-archery-muzzleloader-shotgun- straight walled rifle-only (HAMSS) hunts on these five limited-entry elk units:

- Barney Top/Kaiparowits (Nov. 7–30)
- Cache, North (Nov. 7–30)
- East Canyon (Dec. 19–27)
- Southwest Desert, North (Nov. 7–30)
- West Desert, Deep Creek (Nov. 7–30)

Note: HAMSS permits are not valid on extended archery hunts.

More opportunity for limited-entry archers

Limited-entry archery elk hunters who don't harvest during the limited-entry season will be allowed to hunt the extended archery areas after completing the online extended archery course. For details, please see page 9 or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/extendedarchery*.

Don't forget: Even if you hunt the extended archery hunt, you must still complete your harvest survey **within 30 days** of the end of your limited-entry season printed on your permit.

CWMU bull elk hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-37

Cooperative Wildlife Management Units (CWMUs) are private lands that the landowners have opened to a limited number of public and private hunters. You may not hunt bull elk on a CWMU unless you obtain a bull elk permit for that CWMU.

To learn more about hunting bull elk on CWMUs, read the article on page 66 and visit *wildlife.utah.gov/cwmu*.

Obtaining other elk permits

If you obtained a bull elk permit of any kind, the only other elk permits you can obtain are antlerless elk permits. Please see page 59 for more information on antlerless elk hunts.

Buck pronghorn hunting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-34

To hunt buck pronghorn, you must possess a buck pronghorn permit.

You may apply for and hunt a doe and buck pronghorn in the same year.

If you obtained a buck pronghorn permit, you may use the weapon listed on your permit to take one buck pronghorn within the area and season specified on your permit.

You may use a crossbow, an airgun, a draw lock or a muzzleloader with a magnifying scope during the any legal weapon (rifle) hunt.

Note: Only archery equipment may be used during the buck pronghorn archery hunt. If you'd like to hunt from a blind, please contact the public agency that manages the land you'll be hunting on to learn about any regulations you must follow to construct a blind.



"Buck pronghorn" means a pronghorn with horns that are longer than five inches (R657-5-2(2)(f)).

Remember: If you drew a buck pronghorn permit, you must also complete a mandatory harvest survey once your hunt ends, even if you did not harvest. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest* and complete the harvest survey questionnaire within 30 days after the end of your hunt.

CWMU buck pronghorn hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-37

Cooperative Wildlife Management Units are private lands that the landowners have opened to a small number of public and private hunters. You may not hunt buck pronghorn on a CWMU unless you obtain a buck pronghorn permit for that CWMU.

To learn more about hunting buck pronghorn on CWMUs, read the article on page 66 and visit *wildlife.utah.gov/cwmu*.

Once-in-a-lifetime hunts

All of Utah's bison, bull moose, bighorn sheep and mountain goat permits are considered once-in-a-lifetime permits. That's because you can draw a permit for each of these species only once in your lifetime.

Mandatory harvest reporting: If you obtain a once-in-a-lifetime permit of any kind, you must complete the online harvest report within 30 days of the hunt season ending, even if you did not harvest an animal. Hunters are not required to check in their harvest at a DWR office. Important: Hunts ending Jan. 16 or later must have a harvest report submitted by Feb. 15. Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest* for more information.

Bison hunting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-38



To hunt bison, you must possess a bison permit. You may obtain a bison permit through the big game drawing only once in your lifetime. An exception to this once-in-a-lifetime bison rule is that you may purchase an over-the-counter permit for the Nine Mile unit (see page 34 for details).

If you obtained a hunter's choice bison permit, you may use the weapon type listed on your permit to take one bison of either sex within the area and the season listed on your permit.

If you obtained a cow bison permit, you may use the weapon type listed on your permit to take only a cow bison within the area and the season listed on your permit.

Note: You may obtain only one bison permit—of any kind—during the 2026 season.

Important: All bison hunters must review educational information about shot placement prior to the hunt. Details about this requirement will accompany your permit; see *wildlife.utah.gov/bisonhunting* for more information about shot placement.

Online orientation course

If you drew a **cow bison** permit, you must complete the online orientation course located at *wildlife.utah.gov/biggame*. You'll receive your permit after you successfully complete the course.

Antelope Island

If you drew an Antelope Island bison permit, the Utah Division of State Parks may require you to complete a course before you can hunt.

Before the hunt begins, Utah State Parks will notify you about the date, time and location of the course. You'll receive your permit after you successfully complete the course.

Because the Antelope Island hunt is administered by Utah State Parks, your hunt will include some extra park-related fees. For more information, please call 801-725-9263.

Nine Mile bison opportunity

Note: The Nile Mile unit is extraordinarily rugged and difficult to access. The odds of a successful bison hunt are fairly low.

See *hunt.utah.gov* for detailed boundary information.

Hunters who are willing to give up any future opportunities to apply for a bison permit in the big game drawing may purchase an over-the-counter bison hunting permit for this area. There is a mandatory online course before you can purchase a permit. The course explains the access issues in detail and is very direct in describing the challenges of the hunt. For additional details about this hunt and to take the course, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/biggame*.

Permits will be available for purchase starting July 7, 2026. You can buy the permits at *wildlife.utah.gov* and at license agent locations and DWR offices.

Important: If you purchase a permit for this hunt, you will forfeit any future opportunities to apply for a bison permit in the big game drawing. You can, however, continue to purchase this permit annually as long as the permit is offered.

Bull moose hunting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-37

To hunt bull moose, you must possess a bull moose permit. You may obtain a bull moose permit through the big game drawing only once in your lifetime.

Your bull moose permit allows you to use the weapon type listed on your permit to take one bull moose within the hunting unit and season specified on your permit.

You may apply for and hunt cow and bull moose in the same year.



A "bull moose" is a moose that has antlers that are longer than its ears (R657-5-2(2)(h)).

CWMU bull moose hunts

Utah Admin. Rule R657-37

Cooperative Wildlife Management Units are private lands that the landowners have opened to a limited number of public and private hunters. You may not hunt on a bull moose CWMU unless you obtain a bull moose permit for that CWMU.

To learn more about hunting bull moose on CWMUs, read the article on page 66 and visit *wildlife.utah.gov/cwmu*.



Ram desert bighorn and ram Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep hunting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-39

To hunt a ram desert bighorn sheep or a ram Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, you must possess a permit for the species you wish to hunt (i.e., a ram desert bighorn sheep permit to hunt desert bighorn sheep, or a ram Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep permit to hunt Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep).

Ram desert bighorn sheep hunts and ram Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep hunts are considered separate once-in-a-lifetime hunts. For example, if you obtain a ram desert bighorn sheep permit, and you've never obtained a ram Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep permit before, you can continue applying for a ram Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep permit.

A hunter may obtain a maximum of one ram Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep permit and one ram desert bighorn sheep permit in the same year, but both permits may not be obtained through the big game drawing.

A ram bighorn sheep permit allows you to use the weapon type listed on your permit to take one ram within the area and the season specified on your permit.



A "ram" is a male desert bighorn sheep or a male Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (R657-5-2(2)(q)).

You may apply for and hunt ewe and ram bighorn sheep in the same year.

Remember: Hunters are not required to obtain a plug for bighorn sheep horns.

Points options for active, deployed military personnel

If you are an active, deployed member of the military, you can purchase a bonus or preference point, even if you missed an application period while deployed. The DWR will also waive the required combination or hunting license fee when you make that point purchase. To qualify for these exemptions, a military member must:

- Be a resident of Utah
- Be deployed for 90 days or longer outside of Utah on federal orders from military command
- Not have previously received a bonus or preference point for the species and hunt type in the same year
- Otherwise be eligible to receive a bonus or preference point
- Pay a $10 application fee (plus a 2.2% transaction fee) per point received
- Submit an application for the exemption to the DWR no later than Dec. 31 of the qualifying year of being deployed

For additional information and the application form, visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/military***.

Mountain goat hunting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-40



To hunt a mountain goat, you must possess a mountain goat permit.

You may use the weapon listed on your permit to take one mountain goat within the area and the season specified on your permit. You may obtain a mountain goat permit through the big game drawing only once in your lifetime.

If you obtained a hunter's choice mountain goat permit, you may use the weapon type listed on your permit to take one goat of either sex within the area and the season listed on your permit.

Note: You may obtain only one mountain goat permit during the 2026 season.

Online orientation course

If you obtained a mountain goat permit, you must complete the online orientation course located at *wildlife.utah.gov/biggame*. You'll receive your permit after you successfully complete the course.

Possible habitat work in your hunt area

Throughout the year, the division works with other government agencies—including the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management—to complete thousands of acres of habitat-improvement work on Utah's public lands.

Those projects range from plant removal to prescribed burns and from helicopter reseeding to large-scale planting projects. They help restore habitat for mule deer, elk, sage-grouse and other species, providing them with the food and cover they need to thrive on the landscape.

Please be aware that projects occur across the state, year-round. This means that sometimes a project may occur in a portion of your hunt area, during the hunt.

If this is something you're concerned about, you may want to contact the appropriate land-management agency before you apply for a particular hunt area. They may be able to give you a tentative list of projects for the coming year.

See a list of past, current and proposed restoration projects at *watershed.utah.gov*.

Antlerless hunts

Utah offers antlerless hunts each year. These hunts help ensure that populations remain at sustainable, manageable levels, and they remove animals that pose depredation problems. Depending on the permit you obtain, you could hunt antlerless deer, elk or moose, doe pronghorn or ewe bighorn sheep. This section describes the species you can hunt, the weapons you can use and the types of permits that are available.

Antlerless deer hunting

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-27

To hunt antlerless deer, you must possess an antlerless deer permit. A person may obtain only one antlerless deer permit or one two-doe antlerless deer permit through the antlerless drawing.

An antlerless deer permit allows you to use the legal weapon listed on your permit to take one antlerless deer in the area and season specified on your permit.

A two-doe antlerless deer permit allows you to use the legal weapon listed on your permit to take two antlerless deer in the area and season specified on your permit.

If you have an any legal weapon (rifle) permit, you may use a crossbow, an airgun, a draw lock or a muzzleloader with a magnifying scope during the rifle hunt.



An "antlerless deer" is a deer without antlers or with antlers five inches or shorter (R657-5-2(2)(a)).

You may not hunt antlerless deer on a Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit unless you obtain an antlerless deer permit for that CWMU.

You may obtain only one antlerless deer permit for the 2026 antlerless season.

Mandatory harvest reporting

If you obtain an antlerless permit of any kind, you must complete the online harvest report within 30 days of the hunt season ending, even if you did not harvest an animal. **Important: Hunts ending Jan. 16 or later must have a harvest report submitted by Feb. 15.** Visit *wildlife.utah.gov/harvest* for details.

Additional opportunity

There is some flexibility if you are an antlerless deer permit holder who also possesses a permit to hunt any one of the following seasons:

- General-season buck deer (archery, muzzleloader, any legal weapon or Dedicated Hunter)
- General-season bull elk (archery, muzzleloader, any legal weapon or multiseason spike elk)
- Premium limited-entry buck deer (archery, muzzleloader, any legal weapon or multiseason)
- Limited-entry buck deer (archery, muzzleloader, any legal weapon or multiseason)
- Limited-entry bull elk (archery, muzzleloader, any legal weapon or multiseason)
- Antlerless elk

Antlerless application and season dates

To review the 2026 antlerless season dates—as well as information about antlerless hunting options, permit numbers, application dates, maps and hunt boundaries—see the *2026 Utah Antlerless Application Guidebook*, which can be found at ***wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks***.

New: The antlerless hunt application information will be formatted like our other digital guidebooks (instead of being several web pages). The *2026 Utah Antlerless Application Guidebook* will be available on the DWR website and in the Utah Hunting and Fishing app May 29.

Apply for hunts with the NEW online draw system: You can apply for antlerless permits June 9–23, 2026. Apply online at ***utahdraws.com*** or call 855-883-7297.

For more information on the antlerless application period, see page 16.

If your antlerless deer permit is for the same area as one of the permits previously listed—and you use the appropriate weapon type specified for your current hunting season—you may use your antlerless deer permit during the season listed on your other permit.

If you harvest a buck deer, bull elk or antlerless elk—and you have an unfilled antlerless deer permit—you may continue hunting antlerless deer during the buck deer, bull elk or antlerless elk season listed on your other permit. However, you may not use a permit for a buck deer or bull elk during the antlerless season, unless it's during the timeframe when the two seasons overlap.

Important: Antlerless elk permits may be used only during the season dates printed on your permit.

Antlerless elk hunting

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-33

To hunt antlerless elk, you must possess an antlerless elk permit. This permit allows you to use the legal weapon listed on your permit to take one antlerless elk in the area and season specified on your permit.

If you have an any legal weapon (rifle) permit, you may use a crossbow, an airgun, a draw lock or a muzzleloader with a magnifying scope during the rifle hunt.

You may not hunt antlerless elk on a Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit unless you obtain an antlerless elk permit for that CWMU.



An "antlerless elk" is an elk without antlers or with antlers five inches or shorter (R657-5-2(2)(b)).

Obtain three elk permits

You can obtain up to three elk permits in Utah each year.

- A maximum of one permit can be for a bull elk.
- A maximum of one antlerless elk permit can be obtained through the antlerless drawing.
- A maximum of two antlerless elk permits can be obtained over the counter.

For the purposes of obtaining multiple elk permits, an archery elk permit (hunter's choice) is considered a bull elk permit. Likewise, general-season archery permits are also considered bull elk permits. Antlerless elk-control or private-lands-only permits are considered antlerless permits.

You may apply for only one antlerless elk permit in the antlerless drawing.

If you do not obtain an antlerless elk permit in the drawing, you may be eligible to purchase up to two antlerless elk permits over the counter.

Over-the-counter antlerless elk permits include all of the following (see the *2026 Utah Antlerless Application Guidebook* for details about these permits):

- Antlerless elk-control permits
- Private-lands-only permits
- Mitigation vouchers
- CWMU vouchers
- Any general-season permits that remain available after the antlerless drawing

Please keep in mind that both antlerless elk-control and private-lands-only permits have special usage requirements. Do **not** purchase either of the permits until you understand and can meet those requirements.

The units where you can use these permits **may change every year**. See the map on page 74 to view all of the antlerless elk-control units.

Note: Antlerless elk-control permits must be used on an antlerless elk-control hunting unit and cannot be used on a CWMU.

Important: Antlerless elk permits may be used only during the season dates printed on your permit.

Doe pronghorn hunting

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-35

To hunt a doe pronghorn, you must possess a doe pronghorn permit. A person may obtain only one doe pronghorn permit or one two-doe pronghorn permit through the antlerless drawing.

A doe pronghorn permit allows you to use the legal weapon listed on your permit to take one doe pronghorn in the area and season specified on your permit.

A two-doe pronghorn permit allows you to use the legal weapon listed on your permit to take two doe pronghorn in the area and season specified on your permit.

If you have an any legal weapon (rifle) permit, you may use a crossbow, an airgun, a draw lock or a muzzleloader with a magnifying scope during the rifle hunt.



A "doe pronghorn" is a pronghorn without horns or with horns five inches or shorter (R657-5-2(2)(j)).

You may not hunt doe pronghorn on a Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit unless you obtain a doe pronghorn permit for that CWMU.

You may apply for and hunt doe and buck pronghorn in the same year.

Antlerless moose hunting

Utah Code § 23A-5-309 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-36

To hunt antlerless moose, you must first obtain an antlerless moose permit. This permit allows you to use any legal weapon to take one antlerless moose in the area and season specified on your permit.

You may apply for and hunt cow and bull moose in the same year.

You may not hunt antlerless moose on a Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit unless you obtain an antlerless moose permit for that CWMU.

Antlerless moose hunters are strongly encouraged **not** to harvest a cow moose with a calf present.



An "antlerless moose" is a moose without antlers or with antlers shorter than its ears (R657-5-2(2)(c)).

Ewe bighorn sheep hunting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-39.5

To hunt a sheep ewe, you must possess a permit for the species you wish to hunt (i.e., a ewe desert bighorn sheep permit to hunt female desert bighorn sheep, or a ewe Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep permit to hunt female Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep).

Visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks*** in late May to research antlerless hunting options and permit application information.

A ewe bighorn sheep permit allows you to use the weapon type listed on your permit to take one ewe within the area and the season specified on your permit.

You may apply for and hunt ewe and ram bighorn sheep in the same year.



A "ewe" is a female bighorn sheep or any bighorn sheep younger than one year of age (R657-5-2(2)(m)).

Shoot for skill

Safely practice your firearm and archery skills for upcoming hunts at our public shooting ranges.

Wildlife Resources

HUNTER EDUCATION • SHOOTING CLINICS • ARCHERY RANGES

LEE KAY
PUBLIC SHOOTING RANGE
6000 W. 2100 South • Salt Lake City
wildlife.utah.gov/leekay

CACHE VALLEY
PUBLIC SHOOTING RANGE
2851 W. 200 North • Logan
wildlife.utah.gov/cachevalley

Permit surrenders, refunds and exchanges

Utah Code § 23A-4-207 & Utah Admin. Rule R657-42-4

What happens if you obtain a permit and then realize you won't be able to use it? You have a few options, some of which have recently changed.

Surrendering a permit

If you need to surrender your permit—and your hunting season hasn't started—you should consider surrendering the permit as soon as possible. If you surrender early enough, you'll be able to keep your bonus points or preference points and avoid a waiting period. Learn more below or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/refund.*

Individuals

How permit surrender affects an individual's bonus and preference points

If you surrender a big game permit **at least 30 days** before the start of the season, you'll get all of your previously accrued bonus or preference points for that species/permit back, but you will not earn a point for the current year. **Important: If you surrender a big game permit less than 30 days before the season opens, you will lose all of your previously accrued bonus or preference points for that species/permit and you will not earn a point for the current year.**

As long as you surrender a big game permit before the season opens, any applicable waiting period(s) will be waived.

Groups

How permit surrender affects a group's bonus and preference points

If you obtain a permit through a group application—and then you decide to surrender it—you will not have your bonus or preference points reinstated unless your **entire** group meets the following conditions:

- All group members must surrender their permits
- Permit surrenders must occur at least 30 days before the start of the season

Note: Even if you meet the above conditions, you will not earn a point for the current year.

Important: If some of your group members surrender their permits **less than 30 days** from the season opener, **all** group members will lose **all** of their bonus or preference points.

Members of the group may not surrender their permits individually unless the surrender occurs because of:

- Activation in the military
- An injury/illness that will prevent the individual from hunting
- Death

How permit surrender affects waiting periods

If members of a group surrender their permits before the season begins, the waiting period will be waived. General-season permits are not subject to waiting periods.

Dedicated Hunters

If you're enrolled in the Dedicated Hunter Program, and you decide to surrender your permit, you must return it to the DWR before Aug. 15, 2026 (the day the general-season archery deer hunt opens).

Private landowner and CWMU permit holders

If you obtain a limited-entry landowner permit or a private CWMU permit, you can surrender it.

Limited-entry private landowner permits must be surrendered before the season the permit was issued for opens.

To surrender a private CWMU permit, there are two options. If possible, you should surrender your CWMU permit before the CWMU season opening dates listed on page 67. To surrender your permit after the CWMU season has started, but before you hunt, you and the CWMU operator must both sign an affidavit stating that you did not hunt with the permit. Both of the signatures must be notarized.

After the signatures are notarized, submit the affidavit and the unused permit to the division.

Obtaining a refund

The DWR rarely issues refunds for permits, licenses or certificates of registration, but there are some exceptions. To see if you're eligible for a refund, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/refunds*.

New: If you are eligible for a refund, you must submit all required forms and accompanying paperwork within **30 days** of the season ending in order to qualify for a full refund. (Previously, this deadline was 90 days.)



Exchanging a permit

You may exchange your general-season buck deer permit for one that's available in another unit, but it must be for the same species and sex. For example, you cannot exchange a buck deer permit for a bull elk permit.

You may also exchange your general-season bull elk permit for another available general-season bull elk permit. For example, you could exchange an any bull elk permit for a spike bull elk permit, if a spike bull permit was available.

You may also exchange a general-season bull elk permit to obtain an available bull elk permit for a different weapon type. For example, you could exchange a general-season any legal weapon bull elk permit for a general-season archery bull elk permit.

Any exchange must occur at a DWR office, before the season opening date on the permit you originally obtained.

You must also pay a $10 handling fee to exchange a permit.

Duplicate licenses

Utah Code § 23A-4-208 & Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-5

If your unexpired license or permit is destroyed, lost or stolen, you can obtain a duplicate from a DWR office or a license agent for $10 or half of the price of the original license or permit, whichever is less.

If you drew a license or permit, but you never received it, the DWR may waive the fee that you would normally have to pay to get a duplicate.

Keep in mind that you can also use the Utah Hunting and Fishing app to legally carry hunting or combination licenses on a phone or tablet for all the members of your family. To download the app, visit ***wildlife.utah.gov/mobileapp***.

Important: Any original license, permit, tag or certificate of registration becomes invalid when surrendered or forfeited, or when a duplicate or exchanged one is issued.

Cooperative Wildlife Management Units

Utah Admin. Rule R657-37

More than 60% of the rangelands that Utah's big game animals rely on in the winter are on private land. Utah's Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit program works with landowners to preserve these lands, improve the habitat and provide more access to public hunters.

How the program works

The CWMU program provides landowners with an economic incentive to keep their private range lands as wildlife habitat instead of developing them.

CWMUs comprise more than two million acres of land in Utah. They'll provide more than 4,800 big game and antlerless hunting permits in 2026. Approximately one-third of those permits are available to the general public through the state's big game drawing.

Hunting on CWMUs provides both public and private hunters with several advantages. Among those advantages are a better chance to take an animal and fewer hunters to compete with.

Obtaining a CWMU permit

If you're a Utah resident, there are two ways to obtain a CWMU permit: You can apply for one in the state's public drawing, or you can obtain a permit voucher from the landowner or operator of the CWMU you want to hunt.

If you're not a resident of Utah, you cannot apply for a CWMU permit in the public drawing. You can, however, obtain a permit voucher directly from the CWMU landowner or operator.

If you obtain a CWMU voucher, you can redeem it for a permit by visiting *wildlifelicense.utah.gov/hflo*.

If you obtain a CWMU permit, you may hunt only on the CWMU that's specified on your permit. You may take only one animal of the species and sex listed on the permit. You'll also incur a waiting period for the species you obtained a permit for. (Please see pages 24–25 in the *2026 Utah Big Game Application Guidebook* for more information about waiting periods.)

You may not obtain more than one bull moose, one buck deer, one buck pronghorn or one bull elk permit in a year. Additionally, you can obtain antlerless deer, antlerless elk and doe pronghorn permits. More information about antlerless permits is available on page 16.

Important: CWMU landowner association members and operators—and their spouses and dependent children—cannot apply for their own CWMU permits in the public drawing.

Note: Antlerless elk-control permits must be used on an antlerless elk-control hunting unit and **cannot** be used on a CWMU.

How to participate

If you draw a permit to hunt a CWMU, it is your responsibility to contact the CWMU operator to obtain the following:

- The dates you'll be allowed to hunt within the legal CWMU hunting season framework. Both you and the operator must schedule around each of your individual needs—please be realistic and patient.
- A map of the CWMU, including access points. The CWMU will provide public hunters access to the entire CWMU, except for areas that are closed to both public and private hunters. If you feel that you haven't received equal treatment, please contact your regional DWR office.
- A copy of the CWMU's rules. CWMUs are allowed to develop rules of conduct for their unit. Examples of these rules may include: no preseason scouting; checking into and out of the unit daily; limited vehicle access; no overnight camping; a marksmanship test; and limiting the number of hunting companions. If you fail to abide by these rules, you might be asked to leave the CWMU. You can also review these rules online at *wildlife.utah.gov/cwmu*.

Season dates

The Utah Wildlife Board has established timeframes for hunting on CWMUs. Within these timeframes, hunters should expect to hunt at least five days for bucks/bulls and three days for antlerless big game.

Please remember that Sunday does not count as part of the established hunting timeframe unless mutually agreed upon by both the hunter and the CWMU operator.

The CWMU operator may also allow you to hunt additional days within the listed timeframes.

Before you apply for a CWMU permit, contact the operator to obtain general information about hunt dates, permitted weapons and other rules. If you draw a permit, it is **your** responsibility to contact the CWMU operator to confirm your season dates.

Some deer and elk CWMUs have hunting seasons outside of these timeframes. For all CWMU hunt season dates, operator names and contact numbers, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/cwmu*.

Reporting your harvest

Important: If you obtain a CWMU permit of any kind, you must report information about your hunt within 30 days after it ends, even if you did not harvest an animal.

Please see page 24 for more information about this important requirement.

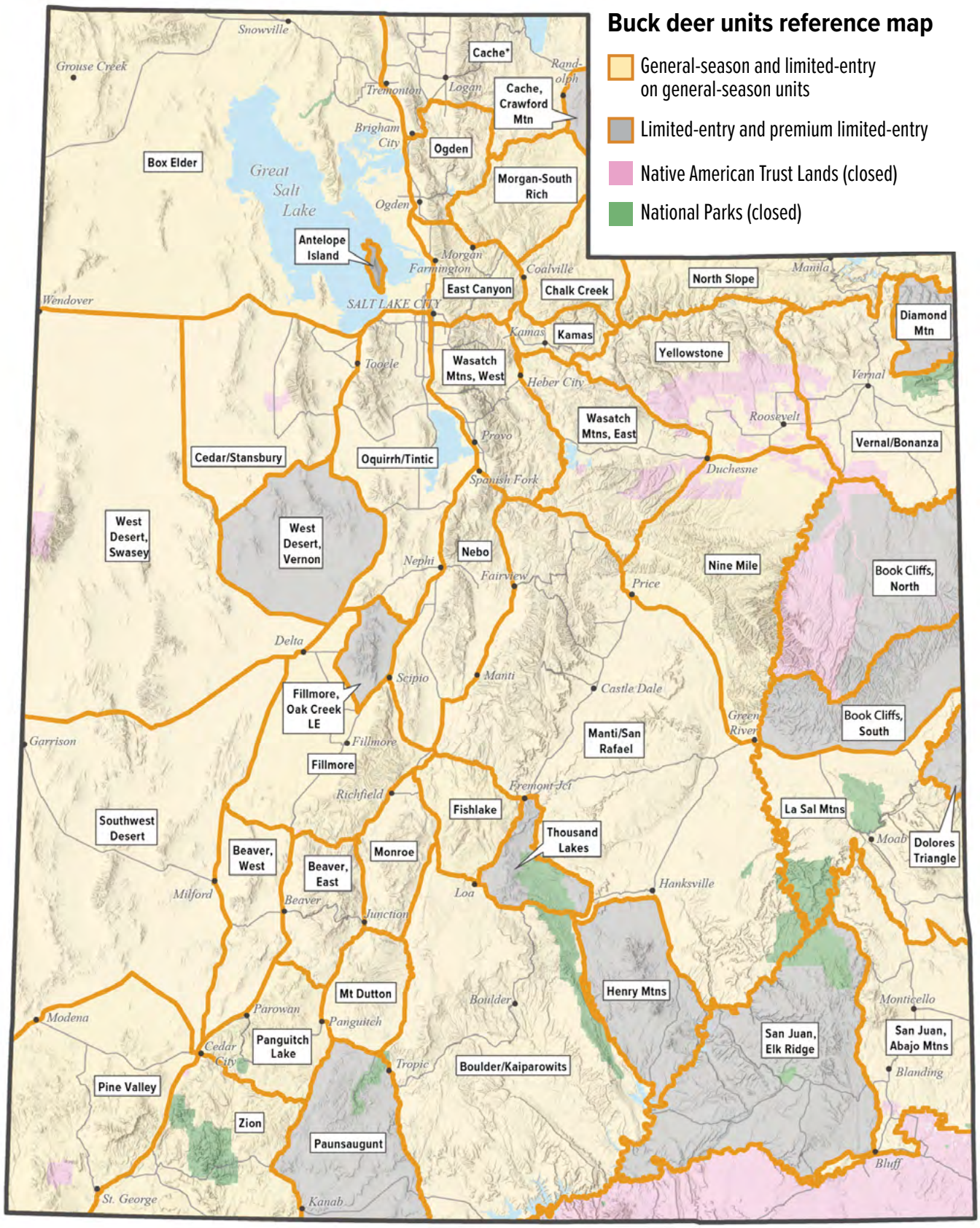
Complaint process

If you wish to lodge a complaint against a CWMU, you should contact the division immediately. Biologists and conservation officers can supply you with a complaint form, or you can make the complaint in person or over the telephone. You and the operator should make every effort to resolve your issues before they escalate to the DWR level.

If your problem cannot be resolved locally, it may be passed on to a CWMU Advisory Committee for review and possible action.

Learn more

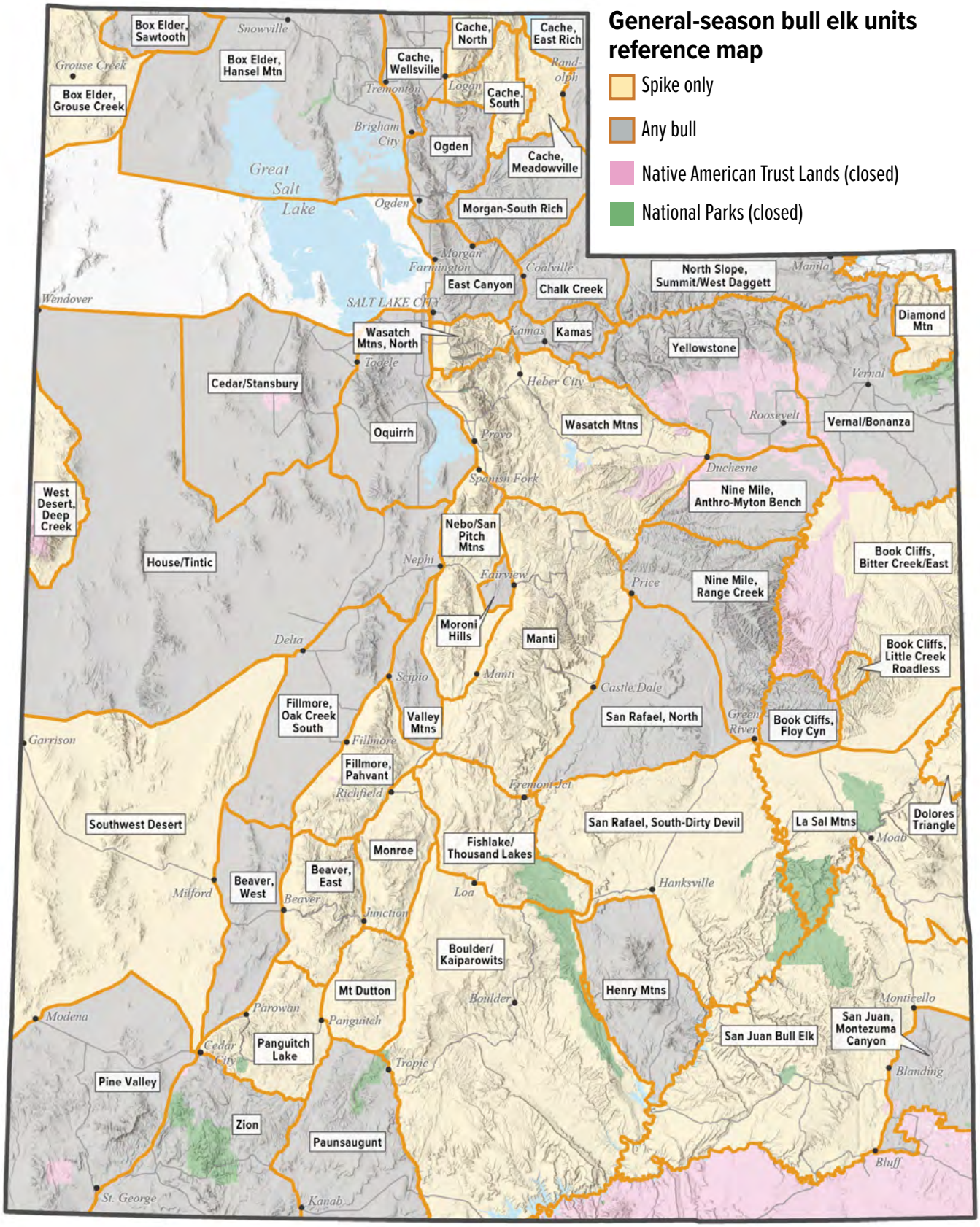
To learn more about the CWMU program or to view maps of CWMU properties, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/cwmu*.



***During the general season, the Cache unit also includes the Cache, Crawford Mtn unit.**

This map is for general reference only. Please visit *hunt.utah.gov* for detailed boundary descriptions.
All hunt units **exclude** elk CWMUs, Native American Trust Lands, National Parks and other areas closed to hunting.

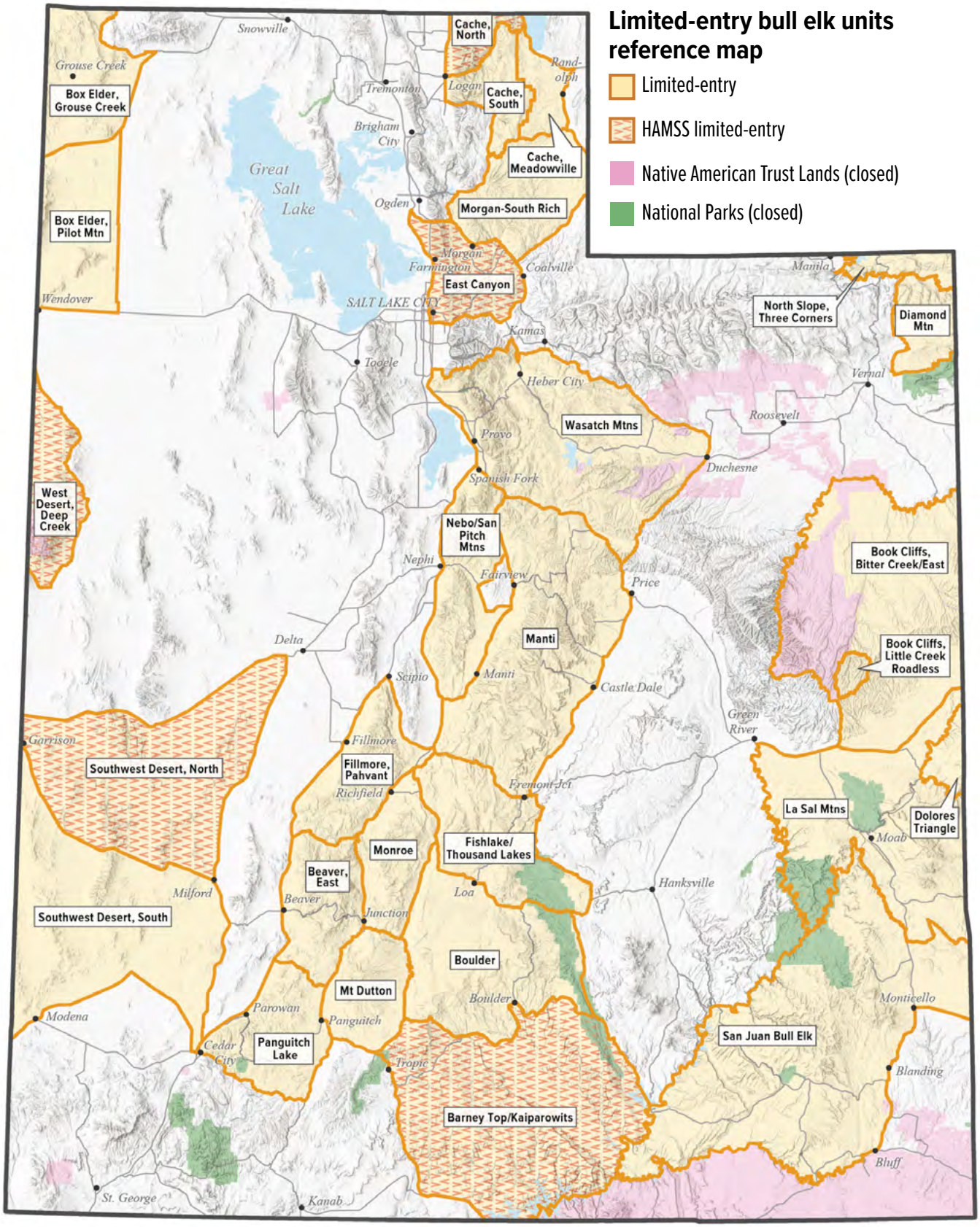
Visit *hunt.utah.gov* for detailed boundary descriptions.



***No general-season archery elk hunt on the Paunsaugunt unit.**

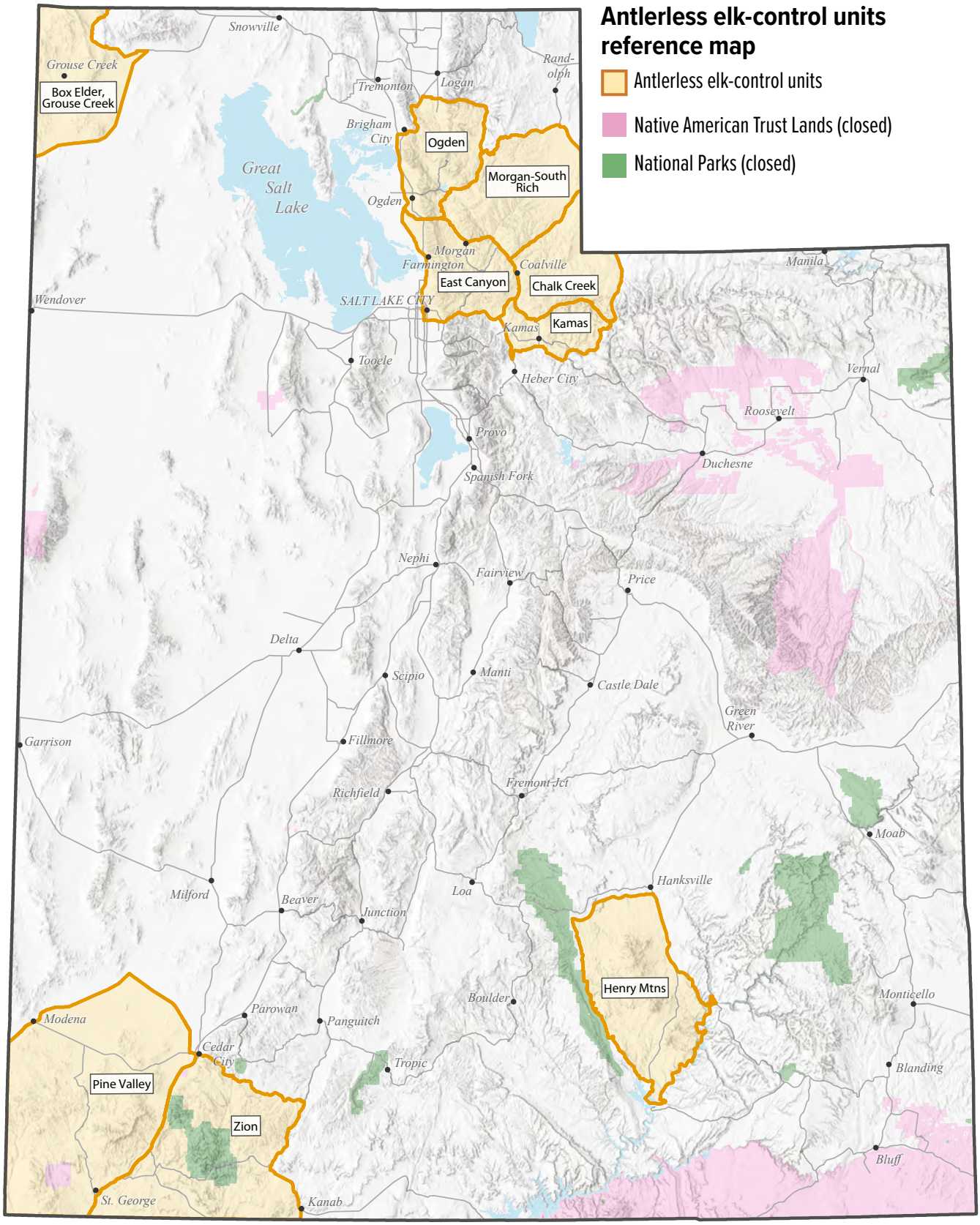
This map is for general reference only. Please visit *hunt.utah.gov* for detailed boundary descriptions.
All hunt units **exclude** elk CWMUs, Native American Trust Lands, National Parks and other areas closed to hunting.

Visit *hunt.utah.gov* for detailed boundary descriptions.



This map is for general reference only. Please visit ***hunt.utah.gov*** for detailed boundary descriptions.
All hunt units **exclude** elk CWMUs, Native American Trust Lands, National Parks and other areas closed to hunting.

Visit ***hunt.utah.gov*** for detailed boundary descriptions.



This map is for general reference only. Please visit ***hunt.utah.gov*** for detailed boundary descriptions.
All hunt units **exclude** elk CWMUs, Native American Trust Lands, National Parks and other areas closed to hunting.

Visit ***hunt.utah.gov*** for detailed boundary descriptions.

Definitions

Utah Code § 23A-1-101 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-2 & R657-37

The following definitions explain terms used in this guidebook. The *2026 Utah Big Game Application guidebook* (published in February) also contains definitions that focus on hunting, harvesting and possessing big game.

Any legal weapon means the weapons described under *Firearms and archery equipment* on page 26.

Arrow quiver means a portable arrow case that completely encases all edges of the broadheads.

Bait means intentionally placing food or nutrient substances to manipulate the behavior of wildlife for the purpose of taking or attempting to take big game. Bait does not include:

- the use of salt, mineral blocks or other commonly used types of livestock supplements placed in the field by agricultural producers for normal agricultural purposes; or
- standing crops, natural vegetation, harvested croplands or lands or areas where seeds or grains have been scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation or normal soil-stabilization practice.

Baited area means all land within a 50-yard radius of the site where bait is placed, including the site where bait is placed.

Big game means species of hoofed protected wildlife.

Buck deer means a deer with antlers longer than five inches.

Buck pronghorn means a pronghorn with horns longer than five inches.

Bull elk means an elk with antlers longer than five inches.

Bull moose means a moose with antlers longer than its ears.

Cactus buck means a buck deer with velvet covering at least 50 percent of the antlers during the season dates established by the Wildlife Board for a cactus buck deer hunt.

Carcass means the dead body of an animal or its parts.

Certificate of registration means a document issued under any rule or proclamation of the Wildlife Board granting authority to engage in activities not covered by a license, permit or tag.

CWMU means Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit.

Domicile means the place:

- where an individual has a fixed permanent home and principal establishment;
- to which the individual if absent, intends to return and has an actual plan, method, and means to return to the individual's domicile within six months;
- in which the individual and the individual's family voluntarily reside, not for a special or temporary purpose, but with the intention of making a permanent home; and
- is a place where the individual resides for the majority of the individual's time.

To create a new domicile an individual must:

- abandon the old domicile; and
- be able to prove that a new domicile has been established.

Draw lock means a mechanical device used to hold and support the draw weight of a conventional or compound bow at any increment of draw, until released by the archer using a trigger mechanism and safety attached to the device.

Drone means an autonomously controlled, aerial vehicle of any size or configuration that is capable of controlled flight without a human pilot aboard.

Electronic harvest code means a code or authorization number issued after a hunter or trapper electronically tags their harvested animal.

Electronic permit means an electronic document that grants authority to engage in specified activities.

Electronic tagging means an electronic means of identification used to document harvest of protected wildlife.

Ewe means a female bighorn sheep or any bighorn sheep younger than one year of age.

Handgun-archery-muzzleloader-shotgun-straight walled rifle-only hunt (HAMSS hunt) means a limited-entry hunt with very specialized weapon requirements. Before you apply for one of these hunts, see page 29 or review *R657-5-48* at *wildlife.utah.gov* to confirm whether the weapon you want to use is legal for the hunt.

Highway means the entire width between property lines of every way or place of any nature when any part of it is open to the use of the public as a matter of right for vehicular travel.

Hunter's choice means either sex may be taken.

Hunting means to take or pursue a reptile, amphibian, bird or mammal by any means.

Limited-entry hunt means any hunt that is identified as limited-entry and listed in the hunt table of this guidebook, and that does not include general or once-in-a-lifetime hunts.

Limited-entry permit means any permit obtained for a limited-entry hunt by any means, including multi-season premium limited-entry permits, premium limited-entry permits, multi-season limited-entry permits, limited-entry permits, cactus buck permits, management buck permits, handgun-archery-muzzleloader-shotgun-straight walled rifle-only permits, conservation permits, expo permits, sportsman permits, CWMU permits and limited-entry landowner permits.

Night-vision device means anything that enhances visible and non-visible light and includes the use of night-vision devices, thermal-imaging devices, infrared-imaged devices and other electronic devices that enhance the visible and non-visible light spectrum. Trail cameras are not a night-vision device.

Nonresident means a person who does not qualify as a resident.

Once-in-a-lifetime hunt means any hunt that is identified as once-in-a-lifetime and listed in the hunt table of this guidebook, and that does not include general or limited-entry hunts.

Once-in-a-lifetime permit means any permit obtained for a once-in-a-lifetime hunt by any means, including conservation permits, expo permits, sportsman permits, CWMU permits and limited-entry landowner permits.

Permit means a document, including a stamp, which grants authority to engage in specific activities under the Wildlife Resources Code or a rule or proclamation of the Wildlife Board.

Possession means actual or constructive possession.

Private lands means, for the purposes of this guidebook, any land owned in fee by an individual or legal entity, **excluding the following types of lands**: land owned by the state or federal government; land owned by a county or municipality; land owned by a Native American tribe; land enrolled in a Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit under *R657-37*; and land where public access for big game hunting has been secured.

Protected data means records classified as protected under the Government Records Access and Management Act, *Utah Code Ann. & 63G-2-305*.

Qualifying minor means a Utah resident who is under 18 at the time of application for the Mentor Program and who is otherwise eligible to lawfully hunt.

Ram means a male desert bighorn sheep or Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep older than one year of age.

Resident means a person who has a domicile (fixed permanent home and principal establishment) in Utah for six consecutive months immediately preceding the purchase of a license, or application of a license, permit, or tag, and does not claim residency for hunting,
fishing or trapping in any other state or country.

An individual retains Utah residency if he or she leaves Utah to serve in the armed forces of the United States, or for religious or educational purposes, and does not claim residency for hunting, fishing or trapping in any other state or country.

Members of the armed forces of the United States and dependents are residents as of the date the member reports for duty under assigned orders in Utah, if:

- The member is **not** on temporary duty in Utah and does **not** claim residency for hunting, fishing or trapping in any other state or country.
- The member presents a copy of his or her assignment orders to a DWR office to verify the member's qualification as a resident.

A nonresident attending an institution of higher learning in Utah as a full-time student may qualify as a resident if the student has been present in Utah for 60 consecutive days immediately preceding the purchase of the license or permit and does **not** claim residency for hunting, fishing or trapping in any other state or country.

A Utah resident license or permit is invalid if a resident license for hunting, fishing or trapping is purchased in any other state or country.

An individual **does not** qualify as a resident if he or she is an absentee landowner paying property tax on land in Utah.

Restricted archery equipment means archery equipment with the following restrictions:

- must be a single stringed long bow or recurve bow with no cables, pulleys or cams;
- has no sights; and
- has a draw weight of 40 pounds or more.

Restricted muzzleloader equipment means muzzleloader equipment with the following restrictions:

- all other ignition systems, including 209 primers, are prohibited
- contains only open sights or peep sights; and
- meets all requirements for muzzleloaders detailed in Subsections R657-5-10(1) and (2).

Restricted rifle equipment means a rifle with the following exceptions:

- contains only open sights or peeps sights; and
- cannot be semiautomatic.

Sell means to offer or possess for sale, barter, exchange or trade, or the act of selling, bartering, exchanging or trading.

Shed antlers means any portion of an antler that has been dropped naturally from a big game animal as part of the big game animal's annual life cycle, and has a rounded base commonly known as the antler button or burr attached which signifies a natural life cycle process.

Shed horns the sheath from a pronghorn that has been dropped naturally as part of the animal's annual life cycle, or a bighorn sheep, mountain goat or bison horn naturally detached from the horn core. Pronghorn are the only big game animals that shed their horns.

Spike bull means a bull elk which has at least one antler beam with no branching above the ears. Branched means a projection on an antler longer than one inch, measured from its base to its tip.

Spoiled means impairment of the flesh of wildlife which renders it unfit for human consumption.

Tag means a card, label or other identification device issued for attachment to the carcass of protected wildlife.

Take means to:

- hunt, pursue, harass, catch, capture, possess, gather, angle, seine, trap or kill any protected wildlife; or
- attempt any of the above actions.

Trail camera means a device that is not held or manually operated by a person and is used to capture images, video, or location data of wildlife using heat, or motion to trigger the device. Trail cameras are not a night-vision device.

Vessel means every type of watercraft, other than a seaplane on the water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water.

Waste means to abandon protected wildlife or to allow protected wildlife to spoil or to be used in a manner not normally associated with its beneficial use.

Wildlife document means a permit to hunt protected wildlife or DWR-issued authorization to share such a permit.

Youth means someone who is 17 years old or younger on July 31 of any given year.

DOUSE. STIR. CHECK. REPEAT.

Extinguish campfires. Prevent wildfires.

FIRE SENSE

We want to hear from you!

Wildlife Resources



1. Check the **DWR wildlife calendar** for upcoming meeting dates and agenda topics.
2. **Review proposals** on the division website or our YouTube channel.
3. **Attend a public meeting** in your region to share comments or **submit feedback online** during the public comment period.

The **Utah Wildlife Board** creates wildlife-related rules for the state. The board considers recommendations from **The Division of Wildlife Resources** and the five **Regional Advisory Councils**. Each **RAC** depends on **public feedback** for guidance on agenda items and their recommendations for the board.

Visit **wildlife.utah.gov/meetings/getting-involved** to learn more.



The Utah Wildlife Board meets throughout the year at the Eccles Wildlife Education Center at Farmington Bay.