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Longer Seasons and Special Youth-Only Hunting Days

DWR recommends upland game hunting changes for this fall

You might have more chances to hunt upland game in Utah this fall. The following are among changes biologists with the Division of Wildlife Resources are recommending for this fall's hunts:

- Two special hunting days for hunters who will be 15 years of age or younger on the day the hunts occur.
 - The first youth-only hunting day—for chukar and Hungarian partridge—would happen on Sept. 17. The youth hunt would happen one week before the general partridge seasons open on Sept. 24.
 - The second youth hunting day—for pheasant and quail—would happen on Oct. 15. The general pheasant and quail hunt opens on Nov. 5.
- Hunters of all ages would have more days to hunt most of Utah's upland game species. And the number of birds, rabbits and hares you could have in your possession would also increase.
- In another change, rules and permit numbers for the 2012 spring turkey hunt will be set in June this year.

Last year, wild turkey rules and permit numbers were set in August.

More information about the biologists' wild turkey and upland game recommendations is available at <http://go.usa.gov/bY5>.

More time to hunt

Justin Dolling, upland game and migratory game bird coordinator for the DWR, says biologists want to give Utah's hunters more time to hunt. And upland game are the perfect group of species to offer that opportunity.

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Whether it's hunted or not, Dolling says between 60 to 70 percent of an upland game population dies every year from natural causes. Most of the birds, rabbits and hares hunters take each year would have died from natural causes if hunters hadn't taken them.

Fortunately, upland game species also have a high reproductive rate. "Their reproductive rate is what keeps upland game populations going," Dolling says. "The reproductive rate among the 30 to 40 percent of the population that survives each year is usually enough to bring the population back to the point it was before the losses."

The high reproductive rate is also among the reasons Utah's upland game seasons can be lengthened. It's also a reason why two special youth-only hunting days can be added to the regular hunts.

Dolling says holding special youth days—before the birds have been hunted and when adults aren't allowed to hunt—is a great way to get young people interested and involved in hunting.

"Upland game hunting has been called the 'gateway hunt,'" Dolling says. "In addition to being an activity you can enjoy the rest of your life, hunting upland game often causes hunters to get excited about hunting in general."

And since most of Utah's pheasant hunting happens on private land, Dolling says the youth pheasant hunting day will give young hunters and their parents experience in approaching landowners about hunting their property.

"In the process," he says, "these young hunters will learn more about the vital role landowners play in conserving habitat for wildlife."

Learn more, share your ideas

After you've reviewed the ideas at <http://go.usa.gov/bY5>, you can let your Regional Advisory Council members know your thoughts by attending your upcoming RAC meeting or by sending an email to them.

RAC chairmen will share the input they receive with members of the Utah Wildlife Board. The board will meet in Salt Lake City on June 9 to approve rules and permit numbers for the 2011 – 2012 upland game hunting seasons.

They'll also approve rules and permit numbers for the 2012 turkey hunting season.

Dates, times and locations for the RAC meetings are as follows:

Southern Region

May 10
7 p.m.
Cedar Middle School
2215 W. Royal Hunte Dr.
Cedar City

Central Region

May 17
6:30 p.m.
Springville Civic Center
110 S. Main St.
Springville

Southeastern Region

May 11
6:30 p.m.
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main St.
Green River

Northern Region

May 18
6 p.m.
Brigham City Community Center
24 N. 300 W.
Brigham City
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Northeastern Region

May 12

6 p.m.

Bingham Entrepreneurship and Energy Research Center

320 N. 2000 W.

Vernal

Email

You can also provide your comments to your RAC via email. Email addresses for your RAC members are available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings.

The group each RAC member represents (sportsman, non-consumptive, etc.) is listed under each person's email address. You should direct your email to the people on the RAC who represent your interest.

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Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

Free Shooting

Beginning and experienced shooters are invited

Logan -- Have you ever wondered what it would be like to shoot a bow and arrow? How about a firearm, maybe even a muzzleloader?

And would you like to watch a group of expert shooters—dressed like cowboys from the Old West—demonstrate their shooting skills while moving through a course that includes stationary and pop-up targets?

If so, drop by the Cache Valley Public Shooting Range on May 13 or May 14. With the exception of the facility's shotgun range, all of its shooting ranges will be open for free that day. And, if you want to shoot on the shotgun range, you can for a reduced price.

If you don't have any equipment or don't know much about shooting, no problem. Free equipment and instruction will be provided that day.

The Cache Valley Public Shooting Range is at 2851 W. 200 N. in Logan. Free shooting will be offered from 3 - 8 p.m. on May 13 and from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. on May 14.

JaLynn Eggett, Cache Valley Public Shooting Range manager for the Division of Wildlife Resources, says beginning and advanced shooters are welcome.

"Equipment and instruction will be available for those who would like to try archery, muzzleloaders, shotguns, .22 rifles and handguns for the first time," Eggett says. "Plan on joining us for a fun day at the shooting range."

For more information, call the range at (435) 753-4600.

Watch professional shooters in action

The Cowboy Action Shooters and the Practical Pistol Shooters—two professional shooting groups that conduct meets at the range—will be at the range on May 13 and May 14.

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Both groups are skilled shooters that shoot at targets as the shooters move through a predetermined course. The Cowboy Action Shooters shoot pistols similar to those used by cowboys of the Old West. The Practical Pistol Shooters use modern pistols.

After the two groups of shooters are done, you can go through the course yourself using .22 pistols provided by the range.

Shoot some of the newest firearms

If you're an experienced shooter, you're also invited to come to the range and shoot for free. In addition to shooting your own firearm, you can also try some of the most current firearms available on the market today.

Representatives from various gun manufacturers will be on hand May 13 and May 14. For a small fee to cover the cost of the ammunition, you can shoot some of their latest offerings.

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Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

Springtime is a Great Time to Catch Walleye

Big eyes, sharp teeth and white, flakey flesh make walleye one of the most unique and best tasting fish in Utah.

And the month of May might be the best time of the year to catch them.

Walleye spawn in May. During the spawn, walleye typically gather near tributaries (waters that flow into or out of a body of water) and in spawning areas within the main body of water itself. Gathering in these areas makes it easier for anglers to find them.

Six waters—Utah Lake, Lake Powell and Willard Bay, Deer Creek, Yuba and Starvation reservoirs—are the best places in Utah to catch walleye.

You can learn which of those waters is producing the best fishing by reading the Division of Wildlife Resources' weekly fishing report. The report is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/hotspots.

Action can happen day or night

If you're willing to sacrifice some sleep, casting or trolling minnow-imitating lures during the dark of night is one of the best ways to catch walleye.

Just like a cat, walleye have eyes that reflect light. Their specialized eyes (from which the fish gets its name) allow walleye to see in low-light conditions and in turbid water. Feeding actively at night gives walleye an advantage over their prey. And it can also give you an advantage if you learn how to fool walleye by using lures that imitate minnows.

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If you don't want to sacrifice your sleep, you can also catch walleye during the day. Walleye are very territorial during their spring spawning period. They'll often defend their spawning area by striking at lures that anglers cast in front of them.

Once you've hooked a walleye, don't think the fight is over.

Walleye have long, sharp teeth that make it difficult to hold them by the mouth. They also have spines along their dorsal fin that are as sharp as needles. And walleye are slippery and difficult to hold. Getting one into your creel isn't easy.

So if it isn't easy to catch or handle a walleye, why would anyone want to fish for them? The answer is simple—just like halibut or cod, walleye have a white flesh that is mild and extremely delicious to eat. And they're a unique and fun fish to catch!

Best lures and baits

Casting a lure that imitates a minnow, and then retrieving (or trolling) your lure very slowly along the bottom of the water you're fishing, is the most effective way to catch walleye.

Be aware, though—unlike most fish, walleye often strike lures very lightly. When a walleye strikes your lure, you might think the lure has simply snagged some vegetation. In reality, you might have a walleye on the end of your line!

Casting dead minnows or worms, and then letting them sink to and remain on the bottom of the water you're fishing, can also be an effective way to catch walleye. Just watch the tip of your fishing rod carefully so you'll know if a walleye is taking your bait.

Two items

- Before you fish for walleye, please read the special walleye fishing regulations in the 2011 Utah Fishing Guidebook.

The free guidebook is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks. You can also get a copy at fishing and hunting license agent locations and DWR offices across Utah.

- Since most of Utah's best walleye waters are located within various Utah state parks, many anglers can save money by buying a Utah State Park entrance pass. The annual pass is \$75 for a family and \$35 for those 62 years of age or older.

You can learn more about the passes at www.stateparks.utah.gov.

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Contact: Scott Root, DWR Central Region Conservation Outreach Manager (801) 376-7076 or (801) 491-5678

Turkey Hunt Held Across Utah in May

Permits are available now

If you didn't draw a permit to hunt wild turkeys during Utah's limited-entry hunt, you can still hunt turkeys in the state this spring.

Utah's general statewide turkey hunt is about to begin.

Justin Dolling, upland game and migratory game bird coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources, says he and other DWR biologists are excited that all of Utah's turkey hunters can hunt this year.

"Our biologists have worked hard to get Utah's turkey population to the point that all of the state's turkey hunters can hunt," Dolling says. "It's rewarding to see how well turkeys are doing in Utah."

The general statewide hunt starts on April 29 for those who were 15 years of age or younger on Jan. 27.

(Jan. 27 is the day results of the 2011 limited-entry turkey drawing were posted.)

Adult hunters get to join the youngsters starting May 2.

Turkeys struggling in two counties

Despite how well the state's turkey population is doing, Dolling says the birds are struggling in two areas in the state.

San Juan County and the part of Grand County that's south of Interstate 70 received a lot of snow two winters ago (the winter of 2009 – 2010).

The heavy snowfall killed many of the turkeys in the area.

This past winter, DWR biologists brought 50 turkeys into the area from South Dakota and transplanted them. But Dolling says it will take time for turkey populations in the area to rebuild. "If you were planning to hunt in San Juan County or the southern part of Grand County this spring," he says, "I'd recommend finding another spot."

Details

This is the second year Utah has held a general statewide turkey hunt. The following are some details about the hunt:

- Permits are available at www.wildlife.utah.gov. Permits are also available at DWR offices and from more than 300 hunting license agents across Utah.

The permits aren't limited in number, so you won't have a problem getting one.

Permits will be available until the season ends on May 31.

Please remember that if you buy a permit at www.wildlife.utah.gov, it will take about five to 10 days for your permit to arrive in the mail. You must receive your permit before you can hunt.

- If you buy a general turkey permit, you can hunt anywhere in Utah that's open to turkey hunting.

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- Two general hunts will be held:
 - The first hunt is a special youth hunt. Hunters who were 15 years of age or younger on Jan. 27 can participate in the hunt. The youth hunt runs April 29 – May 1.

To participate in the youth hunt, young hunters must buy a general statewide hunting permit. Young hunters who drew a limited-entry permit can't participate in the youth hunt.

Youngsters who buy a permit for the youth hunt can also use the permit to hunt during Utah's general statewide hunt. That hunt opens May 2.

- The second hunt—the general statewide hunt—is open to anyone who buys a general turkey permit.

The general hunt runs May 2 – 31.

- You can buy a general turkey permit and still keep all of your limited-entry turkey bonus points. You won't lose any of your bonus points if you buy a general turkey permit.
- If you obtained a limited-entry turkey permit, you can't obtain a general turkey permit. (You can have only one turkey permit each year.)

For more information, call the nearest Division of Wildlife Resources office or the DWR's Salt Lake City office at (801) 538-4700.

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Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

Thirty Deer Hunting Units Proposed for 2012

A big change awaits Utah's deer hunters in 2012: Instead of hunting buck deer in five large regions, they'll hunt deer in smaller areas called units.

But just how many units will Utah have in 2012?

Biologists with the Division of Wildlife Resources are recommending 30.

Anis Aoude, big game coordinator for the DWR, says the DWR split the state into management units decades ago to help biologists gather biological data about the wildlife in each area. "We think boundaries similar to the ones our biologists are already using would also be good boundaries for the new hunt units," he says.

Maps that show the boundaries for each unit the DWR is recommending should be available at <http://go.usa.gov/bYq>.

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Learn more, share your ideas

After you've reviewed the boundaries at <http://go.usa.gov/bYq>, you can let your Regional Advisory Council members know your thoughts by attending your upcoming RAC meeting or by sending an email to them.

RAC chairmen will share the input they receive with members of the Utah Wildlife Board. The board will meet in Salt Lake City on June 9 to approve both the number of units and the boundaries.

Dates, times and locations for the RAC meetings are as follows:

Southern Region

May 10
7 p.m.
Cedar Middle School
2215 W. Royal Hunte Dr.
Cedar City

Central Region

May 17
6:30 p.m.
Springville Civic Center
110 S. Main St.
Springville

Southeastern Region

May 11
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May 18
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Brigham City Community Center
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Brigham City

Northeastern Region

May 12
6 p.m.
Bingham Entrepreneurship and Energy Research Center
320 N. 2000 W.
Vernal

Email

You can also provide your comments to your RAC via email. Email addresses for your RAC members are available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings.

The group each RAC member represents (sportsman, non-consumptive, etc.) is listed under each person's email address. You should direct your email to the people on the RAC who represent your interest.

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Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

Changes to Dedicated Hunter Program

Dedicated Hunters in Utah have given the state's wildlife more than \$6 million in volunteer hours and service in the past four years alone.

But the program that's provided that service will change in 2012. That's when deer hunters in Utah switch from hunting deer in five large regions to hunting on smaller areas called units.

Rhianna Christopher, volunteer program coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources, says the DWR has worked hard to keep the Dedicated Hunter program that hunters will join in 2012 as close as possible to the way the program is now.

"This is a valuable program," she says. "We want the program to work for hunters."

The following are the major changes the DWR is recommending for the Dedicated Hunter program starting in 2012:

- After lifetime license holders choose the unit they want to hunt, 15 percent of the remaining general-season deer hunting permits in each unit would be set aside for Dedicated Hunters.
- To join the Dedicated Hunter program in 2012, you'd have to do two things: Apply to join the program and draw a permit for the unit you'd like to hunt.
- If you draw a permit for the unit you'd like to hunt, your permit will be issued to you after you complete the Dedicated Hunter program requirements.

The unit you obtain a permit for is the unit you'd hunt during the three years you're in the program. During your three-year enrollment period, you would not be allowed to change or exchange your permit for a different unit.

- In addition to applying for the Dedicated Hunter program, you could also apply for a limited-entry buck deer and a regular general-season buck deer permit. But you would be issued only one of the three permits.

You would apply for all three permits during the 2012 big game application period.

- The Dedicated Hunter limited-entry permit draw would be eliminated in 2012.

More information about the changes the DWR is recommending is available in a chart Christopher has compiled. The chart is available at <http://go.usa.gov/TSL>.

More information about the current Dedicated Hunter program is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/dh.

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Learn more, share your ideas

After you've reviewed the ideas at <http://go.usa.gov/TSL> and at <http://go.usa.gov/bYq>, you can let your Regional Advisory Council members know your thoughts by attending your upcoming RAC meeting or by sending an email to them.

RAC chairmen will share the input they receive with members of the Utah Wildlife Board. The board will meet in Salt Lake City on June 9 to approve changes to the program.

Dates, times and locations for the RAC meetings are as follows:

Southern Region

May 10
7 p.m.
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