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Utah Wildlife News
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Utah Split into Smaller Deer Hunting Areas for 2012

Hunters will have more days to hunt in 2011

Salt Lake City -- In 2011, Utah's general buck deer hunt will run very much like it did in 2010. There is one big change, though—the rifle buck deer hunt will run for nine days.

While the changes for 2011 are relatively small, the changes for 2012 are huge.

Starting in 2012, general deer hunting will happen within smaller hunting areas called units. Currently, the general hunt happens within five larger regions.

Members of the Utah Wildlife Board approved the 2012 deer hunting changes by a 4-2 vote at their meeting on Dec. 2.

You can listen to an audio recording of the meeting at www.wildlife.utah.gov/dwr/board-minutes.html. The recording should be available by Dec. 3.

The changes the board approved for the 2011 season can be found in Utah's 2011 big game application book. The free book should be available at www.wildlife.utah.gov by the end of December.

A copy of the rules hunters must follow while they're in the field will be available in summer 2011.

2011 hunt

A nine-day rifle hunt for all hunters, regardless of their age, was the biggest change the board approved for Utah's 2011 general buck deer hunt.

In 2010, those over 18 years of age were allowed to hunt only five days on most of Utah's deer hunting areas.

The board reduced the length of the 2010 rifle hunt to try to reduce the number of bucks hunters took. Anis Aoude, big game coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources, thinks hunters will be happy that the rifle hunt has been lengthened to nine days.

"I appreciate what the board was trying to do," Aoude says, "but, unfortunately, reducing the length of a hunt isn't the best way to save bucks."

Aoude says reducing the length of a hunt forces hunters to make the most of the days they do have. "And they're more likely to take the first buck they see," he says.

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While the rifle hunt will run for nine days across most of Utah, four small areas in the state will have a slightly shorter season in 2011. The rifle hunt on the following units—Oquirrh-Stansbury, South Slope (Vernal), Monroe, and Plateau, Boulder/Kairparowits—will run for five days.

2012 hunt

The major deer hunting change the board approved happens in 2012. That's when Utah's five deer hunting regions will be eliminated. Once the regions are eliminated, the state will be split into smaller hunting areas.

The number of bucks biologists manage for will also change.

Currently, biologists manage the state's deer herds with a goal of finding an average of at least 15 bucks per 100 does across five regions after the hunting season is over in the fall.

Starting in 2012, biologists will manage smaller units with a goal of finding at least 18 bucks per 100 does on each unit after the hunt is over.

(The total number of hunting units will be determined sometime next year.)

Aoude says decreasing the number of hunters in the field is the most effective way to increase the number of bucks per 100 does.

DWR biologists will have to determine how many hunting permits will have to be cut so they find at least 18 bucks per 100 does on each unit after the hunting season is over in the fall. Aoude's current estimate is about 13,000.

Since fewer permits will be offered, the price for a general deer hunting permit may go up. But Aoude isn't sure yet exactly what the price will be.

The following will also change in 2012:

- General-season archery hunters will no longer be allowed to hunt across Utah. Instead, they'll have to hunt on the unit they obtained a permit for.

The board approved the archery hunting change by a 4-3 vote.

- There's a good chance the state's Dedicated Hunter program will change in 2012. Exactly what the program will look like in 2012 still needs to be determined, however.

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

Apply for a Turkey Hunting Permit

You can apply starting Dec. 9

Even though the snow has just started to fall in Utah, one group of Utahns—wild turkey hunters—are already preparing for next spring!

Applications to hunt turkeys during Utah's limited-entry hunt will be accepted starting Dec. 9. You can apply at www.wildlife.utah.gov.

Your application must be received no later than 11 p.m. on Dec. 28 to be entered in the draw for permits.

The limited-entry hunt will be held in April. The following permits are available for each of the Division of Wildlife Resources' five regions:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number of permits</u>
Northern	400
Central	500
Northeastern	250
Southeastern	250
Southern	1,100

General statewide hunt

If you don't draw a limited-entry permit, don't pack your gun away—you can still hunt turkeys this spring.

Permits for Utah's general statewide hunt go on sale Feb. 24.

The general statewide hunt will be held in May.

2011 turkey guidebook

More information about Utah's 2011 turkey hunting season is available in the 2011 Utah Turkey Guidebook. The free guidebook is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks and from DWR offices and hunting and fishing license agents across Utah.

Learn more about turkeys in Utah

You can learn more about turkeys in Utah by listening to an interview at the DWR's website.

The interview is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/dwr/multimedia/podcasts.html.

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Fishing and Hunting Licenses Make Great Christmas Gifts

Looking for that perfect gift for the angler or hunter on your Christmas list? If so, a Utah fishing or hunting license might be the answer. These licenses make great Christmas gifts. And they're easy to buy!

The easiest way to buy a fishing or hunting license is at the Division of Wildlife Resources' website (wildlife.utah.gov). The licenses are also available at DWR offices and from more than 350 fishing and hunting license agents across Utah.

Combination licenses—which allow the license holder to fish and hunt small game—are also available at the same locations and at the website.

They're good for 365 days

In addition to enjoying the outdoors in 2011, the person you give the license to will receive an added bonus—they won't have to wait until Jan. 1 to use it. Utah fishing and hunting licenses are 365-day licenses. That means they're good for 365 days from the day you buy them.

For example, if you buy the license on Dec. 12, 2010, the person you give it to can use it immediately. And they can continue using it until Dec. 11, 2011.

One note: hunting and combination licenses do not include a deer or elk permit and do not allow someone to hunt deer or elk.

Hunters can apply for a 2011 general buck deer permit in February. General elk permits will be available by mid summer on a first-come, first-served basis.

Order early

If you buy a license at the website (wildlife.utah.gov), you can have it mailed to you (so you can wrap it and give it as a gift). Or you can have the license mailed directly to the person you're buying it for.

It usually takes about five days for the license to arrive in the mail.

In addition to the three licenses, two-pole fishing permits, setline fishing permits and permits that allow people to chase cougars with dogs are also available.

Costs

Utah resident license and permit costs are as follows:

Combination license	\$30
Fishing license (14 - 64 years old)	\$26
Fishing license (65 years old and older)	\$21
Fishing license (12 and 13 years old)	\$5

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Two-pole permit	\$15
Setline permit	\$15
Hunting license (under 14 years of age)	\$11
Hunting license (14 years old and older)	\$26
Cougar pursuit permit	\$30

They're easy to buy

Judi Tutorow, wildlife licensing coordinator for the DWR, says buying a license for someone is easy. "About the only information you need to provide is the person's name, height, weight, eye color, hair color, date of birth, address and phone number," she says.

If you buy a hunting or combination license from a license agent or the DWR's website, you must also supply the person's "blue card" number. This number verifies that the person you're buying the license for has completed a DWR-approved hunter education course. The course is required for anyone born after Dec. 31, 1965 who wants to hunt in Utah.

If you buy a fishing or hunting license at a DWR office, you don't need the person's blue card number. "Using the computers at our offices, we can verify that the person you're buying the permit for has completed hunter education," Tutorow says.

She says license agents can't verify—via computer—that someone has completed hunter education.

"If you buy a hunting or combination license from a license agent," she says, "you'll have to give the agent the person's blue card number."

Two-pole and setline permits

Two-pole permits allow anglers—who must also possess a fishing license—to fish with two fishing poles at any water that's open to fishing in Utah.

Setline permits allow anglers to fish with one setline at Utah Lake; in the Bear River proper downstream from the Idaho state line, including Cutler Reservoir and the outlet canals; the Little Bear River below Valley View Highway (state Route 30); and the Malad River.

Just like with two-pole permits, anglers must also possess a fishing license to fish with a setline. Anglers may not use setlines that contain more than 15 hooks.

For more information about Utah fishing and hunting licenses, 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

See Hundreds of Wild Elk

Hyrum -- You can take a sleigh ride that gets you close to as many as 600 wild elk.

The rides are available four days a week at the Hardware Ranch Wildlife Management Area.

On Nov. 23, about 200 elk were at the WMA. Now that winter weather has arrived, more elk should be visiting the ranch soon.

Hardware Ranch is 17 miles east of Hyrum. Its winter elk viewing season begins Dec. 17. The WMA offers the following during its winter season:

Sleigh rides

Enjoy the sights and sounds of Utah's state mammal by taking a sleigh ride through a herd of up to 600 Rocky Mountain elk.

The sleigh rides last 20 to 30 minutes. They wind through the center of the elk herd and make occasional stops so you can get a perfect photograph.

During the rides, the sleigh drivers share the history of the ranch and explain why the elk behave like they do. They're also happy to answer questions you have.

The sleighs are pulled by a team of large-breed draft horses. If snow conditions get poor, the sleighs can be converted into wagons.

Visitor center

In addition to the sleigh rides, the Hardware Ranch WMA also operates a visitor center. The center has interactive wildlife displays and staff who can answer your questions.

When it's open

The WMA's winter season should run until Feb. 28. The sleighs are running and the visitor center is open during the following days and times:

Friday – noon to 5 p.m.

Saturday – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday – noon to 5 p.m.

The WMA will be closed on Dec. 25.

If you want to take a ride through the elk herd, you must buy a ticket at the visitor center before 4:30 p.m. The last sleigh ride leaves at 4:30 p.m.

The sleigh rides cost \$5 for those nine years of age and older, and \$3 for those four to eight years old. Children three years of age and younger can ride for free.

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How to get there

The Hardware Ranch WMA is located at mile marker 22 on state Route 101 in Blacksmith Fork Canyon. The ranch is about 115 miles north of Salt Lake City (about a two-hour drive). It's about 17 miles east of Hyrum and 22 miles southeast of Logan.

Good lodging, food and entertainment are readily available in Cache Valley, within 45 minutes of the ranch. The roads up Blacksmith Fork Canyon are usually plowed and sanded by noon each day.

For more information about the Hardware Ranch WMA, call (435) 753-6206 or visit hardwareranch.com on the Web.

Hardware Ranch is a wildlife management area owned and operated by the Division of Wildlife Resources. It provides important big game winter range for elk, deer and moose.

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Contact: Marni Lee, Hardware Ranch WMA Assistant Manager at marnilee@utah.gov or (435) 753-6206

More Chances to Hunt Bears

DWR presents ideas for 2011 hunts

By all indications, black bears in Utah are doing well. And that means hunters might have a few more chances to hunt bears in 2011.

The following are among the changes Division of Wildlife Resources biologists are recommending for Utah's 2011 bear hunts:

- A total of 419 hunting permits. That's 53 more than the 366 offered in 2010.

About 40 percent of those who draw a bear-hunting permit end up taking a bear.

The extra 53 permits should result in hunters taking about 180 bears in 2011.

In 2010, hunters took 158 bears.

- Forty one of the 419 permits would be premium-limited-entry permits.

If they didn't take a bear during the spring hunt, those who drew one of the 41 premium-limited-entry permits could hunt bears again during the fall hunt.

- Extending the spring hunting season for one week on three additional bear management units in the state.

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The South Slope, Yellowstone unit and the South Slope, Vernal, Diamond Mountain, Bonanza unit in northeastern Utah, and the Central Mountains, Manti-North unit in central Utah, are the three units biologists are considering.

Currently, six units in Utah have a hunting season that's one week longer than the rest of the units in the state. The extended season usually runs from early April through the first week in June.

- Allowing those who draw a fall spot-and-stalk permit for the Book Cliffs, Little Creek unit to hunt from August through November.

2010 was the first year a spot-and-stalk bear hunt was held on the unit. To avoid conflicts with big game hunters, bear hunters were not allowed to hunt on the unit in October. But very few deer hunters are allowed to hunt the unit, and the DWR is not aware of any conflicts that occurred between deer and bear hunters. For that reason, DWR biologists would like to give spot-and-stalk bear hunters a chance to hunt on the unit in October too.

(Spot-and-stalk hunters may not use hounds to track and tree bears, and they may not use bait to try to lure bears in.)

The Book Cliffs, Little Creek unit is in the roadless area in the Book Cliffs.

Bears are doing well

Three main factors help DWR biologists decide how many hunting permits they should recommend each year. Those factors include the average age of the bears hunters take, the percent of those bears that are females and the number of adult bears that are surviving from year to year.

Justin Dolling, game mammals coordinator for the DWR, says as long as targets relating to those factors aren't exceeded, biologists know the state's black bear population is doing well. "And those targets haven't been exceeded for several years," he says.

You can see all of the DWR's black bear recommendations at www.wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings.

Learn more, share your ideas

After you've reviewed the recommendations at www.wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings, you can let your Regional Advisory Council members know your thoughts by attending your upcoming RAC meeting or by sending an e-mail 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 Jan. 4 to approve bear hunting and pursuit rules for Utah's 2011 seasons.

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

Southern Region

Dec. 7
7 p.m.
Beaver High School
195 E. Center St.
Beaver

Central Region

Dec. 14
6:30 p.m.
Central Region Conference Center
1115 N. Main St.
Springville

Southeastern Region

Dec. 8
6:30 p.m.
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main St.
Green River

Northern Region

Dec. 15
6 p.m.
Brigham City Community Center
24 N. 300 W.
Brigham City

Northeastern Region

Dec. 9
6:30 p.m.
Bingham Entrepreneurship and Energy Research Center
320 N. Aggie Blvd. (2000 W.)
Vernal

E-mail

You can also provide your comments to your RAC via e-mail. E-mail 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 e-mail address. You should direct your e-mail to the people on the RAC who represent your interest.

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New Bear Plan Ready for Review

DWR seeks input about proposed plan

A plan that will guide how black bears are managed in Utah for the next 12 years is available for review.

You can read the proposed plan at www.wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings.

The following are among the plan's highlights:

- Currently, most bear hunters in Utah use hounds to track and tree bears.

While hunting with hounds would continue under the new plan, some areas of the state may become spot-and-stalk-only areas.

Hounds may not be used during spot-and-stalk hunts.

- To help biologists focus hunters on bears that are killing livestock and raiding campgrounds, the new plan would create harvest-objective areas.

Currently, all of Utah's bear hunting areas are limited-entry areas. Only those who draw a permit for a limited-entry area can hunt on it.

Under the new plan, some of the limited-entry areas would become harvest-objective areas. The number of hunters who can hunt on a harvest-objective area isn't limited, so switching an area to harvest objective would increase the number of people who can hunt the area. Letting more hunters hunt an area would increase the chance that a set number of bears were taken.

As soon as the set number of bears was taken (called the area's quota), the hunt on the area would end for the season.

- Bait could still be used by archery hunters to lure bears in close enough for a clean and effective shot.
- Currently, three factors are used to determine the health of Utah's bear population—the percentage of females taken by hunters, the average age of the bears taken and the number of adult bears that survive from year to year.

The new plan would eliminate these three factors. In their place, the key factors would be:

- The number of females and the number of adult males that hunters take.

(An adult male bear is a bear that's five years of age or older.)

(more)

Justin Dolling, game mammals coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources, says the number of females and adult males that hunters take gives important information about how a bear population is doing.

“The number of females is important because females give birth to and care for the cubs,” Dolling says. “But the number of adult males hunters take is the best early indicator we have about the health of a bear population.”

Dolling says hunters usually find adult males because adult males wander more than the other age groups. “You know a bear population is in decline if the number of adult males hunters take is going down and the number of females is going up,” he says.

- Results from two important bear studies would also be used in the new management system.

One study involves snagging hair from bears at sites across Utah and then using DNA tests to determine how often bears are visiting the research sites. This study is helping biologists determine the total number of bears in Utah and helping them measure the growth rate of the state’s population.

The second study involves visiting bear dens in the winter to see how many cubs are in the dens and to assess the health of the cubs and their mothers. This study is giving biologists important information about the number of bears that are being brought into Utah’s population each year.

A 10-member group called the Utah Black Bear Advisory Committee compiled the new plan. The committee’s members are listed at the start of the plan.

Learn more, share your ideas

After you’ve reviewed the plan at www.wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings, you can let your Regional Advisory Council members know your thoughts by attending your upcoming RAC meeting or by sending an e-mail 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 Jan. 4 to approve the plan.

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