

In this issue:

Changes at East Canyon
Utah's most popular hunt
Rifle hunting tips

Attention Hunters: You'll Need to Camp in a Different Spot

Construction affects camping area, adds acres to East Canyon WMA

Morgan -- If you visit the East Canyon Wildlife Management Area this fall, you'll need to camp in a different area.

But the camping change should be more than worth it—because of the change, the Kern River Gas Transmission Company has bought and donated 160 acres of land to the WMA.

Kern River is building a pipeline through the WMA as part of the Kern River Apex Expansion Project. If you're going to visit the East Canyon WMA this fall, please be aware of the following:

- The access point to the WMA is now located east of the road you've used in the past to access the WMA. A free map that shows the new access and camping area is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/pdf/eastcanyon.pdf.
- You can still hunt and camp at the WMA while the construction work takes place. Just be aware that you might see pipeline construction equipment near the area where you're camping.
- Almost all of the construction is happening on the lower southern portion of the WMA. The higher northern portion of the property is not affected by the construction.

160 additional acres

The Apex Expansion Project is a new 28-mile, 36-inch diameter natural gas pipeline that Kern River is building through the Wasatch Mountains in Morgan, Davis and Salt Lake counties. Changes in access and camping have been made on the WMA to keep the public and the pipeline construction crews safe.

As part of the company's environmental stewardship program for the project, Kern River, in cooperation with the Division of Wildlife Resources, has acquired 160 additional acres along the eastern boundary of the WMA. This land will be given to the state of Utah and will become part of the WMA.

For more information, call the DWR's Northern Region office at (801) 476-2740.

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Contact: Phil Douglass, Northern Region Conservation Outreach Manager (801) 510-1406 or (801) 476-2740

Rifle Deer Hunt Shorter This Fall

More than 70,000 hunters expected afield

You might see a few more young bucks when Utah's general rifle buck deer hunt starts Oct. 23.

But you'll also have fewer days to take one. Utah's most popular hunt will be shorter this year.

Anis Aoude, big game coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources, says if you're hunting in northern Utah—where the winter was mild this past winter—you could see more young bucks. If you're hunting in southwestern Utah, where deep snow covered the deer's winter range, you might see fewer young bucks.

Aoude says the number of mule deer in Utah is holding steady at just over 300,000 deer. The number of bucks wildlife biologists saw after last fall's hunting seasons averaged about 16 bucks per 100 does on the state's general-season units.

When you can hunt this fall depends on two things: your age and the area you choose to hunt:

- On most of the state's units, those over 18 years of age can hunt for five days, from Oct. 23 to Oct. 28. Those who are 18 years of age or younger can hunt for nine days, from Oct. 23 to Oct. 31.
- There are five units, however, where all hunters—regardless of their age—may hunt for only three days. The hunt on the following units in the following regions runs from Oct. 23 to Oct. 25:

Northern Region

Cache unit

Ogden unit

Central Region

Oquirrh-Stansbury unit

Northeastern Region

South Slope, Vernal unit

Southern Region

Monroe unit

(more)

page 3

The rifle hunt on the five units runs Oct. 23 – 25.

While approving rules for Utah's 2010 hunts, members of the Utah Wildlife Board decided to shorten the season on the units. They made their decision after learning about the number of bucks per 100 does on the five units.

Utah's statewide deer management plan says action must be taken to increase the number of bucks per 100 does on units that fall below an average of 15 bucks per 100 does for three straight years.

A map and boundary description for each of the five units is available at <http://go.usa.gov/xLQ>.

The following are deer hunting prospects for each of the DWR's five regions:

Northern Region

With the exception of the Cache and Ogden units, all of the general season units in northern Utah have at least 15 bucks per 100 does.

And some units have more.

Here's a look at the deer herds on many of the region's general season units:

Cache and Ogden units

Wildlife Biologist Darren DeBloois says the three-year average for the Cache and Ogden units is slightly below the objective of 15 bucks per 100 does.

Like much of the Northern Region, DeBloois says range conditions are good and the animals are scattered. He also says the past two winters have been mild, and few fawns have been lost.

"Hunters should see good numbers of two-point bucks on both of these units," he says.

Box Elder unit

Two good years with low winter losses, high fawn production and good range conditions should translate into a good hunt on the Box Elder unit.

Wildlife Biologist Kirk Enright says the unit's buck-to-doe ratio is 19 bucks per 100 does. "Habitat improvement projects we're doing with landowners and other agencies is creating better habitat and more deer," Enright says.

Uintas North Slope unit

Biologist David Rich says archery hunters had very limited success on the North Slope of the Uinta Mountains this fall. He says unseasonably warm temperatures have kept many of the deer at higher elevations.

"Rifle deer hunters will need to scout the area before opening day and expect to hunt remote areas away from heavily used roads and trails," Rich says. "The best advice I can give is to do your homework before the season begins."

(more)

page 4

Summit and East Canyon units

Biologist Scott McFarlane cautions you that most of the land on these units is private property. Written permission from landowners is required to hunt much of this area.

Phil Douglass, regional conservation outreach manager, shares two reminders:

- If the average buck-to-doe ratio on a unit stays below 15 bucks per 100 does for a three-year period, Utah's mule deer management plan requires that the hunting seasons on the unit be reduced in length until the buck-to-doe ratio improves.

As a result, the rifle hunt on the Cache and Ogden units will run for only three days this fall.

The hunt on the units runs from Oct. 23 to Oct. 25.

- To avoid attracting bears into your camp, store food where bears can't get to it and keep your camp clean. Additional tips are available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/dwr/learn-more/bear-safety.html.

Central Region

Where you decide to hunt in the Central Region will be important this fall. Some areas harbor good numbers of bucks. Other areas have less.

Overall, the number of bucks on the region's general season units is 15 bucks per 100 does. The area east of Interstate 15, from Spanish Fork Canyon north to Interstate 80 in Salt Lake City, has the best habitat and the highest buck-to-doe ratios.

Buck-to-doe ratios are lower outside of that area. For example, the buck-to-doe ratio on the South Manti unit is 5 to 6 bucks per 100 does. On the Oquirrh-Stansbury unit, the ratio is 7 to 8 bucks per 100 does.

West of I-15, in Tooele and Juab counties, Wildlife Biologist Tom Becker says the deer herds average about 10 to 11 bucks per 100 does. On a positive note, Becker says precipitation has helped the desert areas this year, and the habitat conditions are better than they were last year. The improved conditions should help more deer fawns make it through the upcoming winter.

Scott Root, regional conservation outreach manager, has three reminders:

- The rifle hunt on the Oquirrh-Stansbury unit will run for only three days this fall. The rifle hunt on the unit runs from Oct. 23 to Oct. 25.
- Please remember that you may not use a rifle or a muzzleloader to hunt deer or elk in Salt Lake County, south of Interstate 80 and east of Interstate 15. Much of Emigration Canyon is also an archery-only hunting area.

A map of the Emigration Canyon archery-only area is available at <http://go.usa.gov/xma>.

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- You can extend your hunt by hunting on the Wasatch Front Extended Archery Area. You may use archery equipment to take either a buck or a doe on the area from Aug. 21 to Nov. 30. From Dec. 1 to Dec. 15, only doe deer may be taken.

Before hunting on the Wasatch Front Extended Archery Area—or any of the state’s extended archery areas—you must complete the DWR’s Extended Archery Orientation Course. The free course is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/huntereducation.

After completing the course, you must carry your Extended Archery Orientation Course certificate with you while you’re hunting.

You must complete the course each year before hunting on Utah’s extended archery areas.

Northeastern Region

If you can adapt to the weather, you might see more young bucks in northeastern Utah this fall.

Ron Stewart, regional conservation outreach manager, says the weather has been good to deer this year. “The winter was relatively light in the Uinta Mountains,” he says. “Most of the herds on these units came through the winter without much winter loss.”

(Most of the region’s general-season units are located in the Uinta Mountains.)

Even though the general-season units didn’t receive a lot of snow, rain this spring and summer kept the vegetation on the mountains green through most of the summer. That vegetation is providing the deer with good forage. But it’s a mixed blessing for hunters.

“The spring and summer rainfall was a real bonus,” Stewart says. “The vegetation grew extremely well. Most of the units are providing deer with plenty of forage.”

However, the weather this fall has been dry—and so is the vegetation.

“If the weather stays dry,” Stewart says, “hunters will have a more difficult time approaching the deer; the crunching of dry leaves will give the hunters away.”

To compensate for the noisy conditions, Stewart encourages you to get out early—well before shooting hours—and to pick a good spot to stop and watch. “The more a hunter wanders around, the more sounds he’s going to make,” he says. “That noise increases the chance that deer in the area will hear you and run for cover in the thick brush and dark timber.”

Stewart reminds you that the hunting season in the region is shorter this year, especially on the South Slope, Vernal unit.

Across most of the region, the hunt for those over 18 years of age runs Oct. 23 - 28. Those 18 years of age or younger can hunt from Oct. 23 to Oct. 31.

On the South Slope, Vernal unit, however, all hunters—regardless of age—may hunt for only three days. The hunt on the South Slope, Vernal unit runs Oct. 23 - 25.

(more)

page 6

The total number of deer is still below objective on five of the region's six general-season units. But the number of deer on most of the units is up from last fall. The following is a snapshot of the deer herds, including the number of bucks per 100 does and the estimated number of deer:

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Bucks per 100 does</u>	<u>Total number of deer</u>
North Slope	18	Up, and near objective
South Slope, Yellowstone	14	Up, but below objective
South Slope, Vernal	12	Up, and at objective
Nine Mile, Anthro	34	Up, but well below objective
Currant Creek	12	Up, but well below objective
Avintaquin	19	Stable, but well below objective

Southeastern Region

You might see a few more bucks in southeastern Utah this fall. The overall number of deer is up from last year.

While that's good news, there's still plenty of room for growth—the overall number of deer on most of the region's general season units is between 55 and 60 percent of the number called for in management plans. "One exception is the Abajo unit," says Brent Stettler, regional conservation outreach manager. "The number of deer on the unit is above the unit's objective of 13,500 deer."

Another positive sign is the number of bucks per 100 does that biologists counted after last fall's hunting seasons. Stettler says the number of bucks on all of the region's general season units is above the minimum objective of 15 bucks per 100 does.

So what's the secret to taking a deer in the region this fall?

"Hunters may experience higher success rates by simply spending more time away from roads and other areas that experience high use by hunters," says Justin Shannon, the region's wildlife manager. "Hiking an extra mile may be more difficult. But it may also provide a more rewarding hunting experience."

Shannon also encourages you to do some pre-season scouting. Once you've selected a particular area, learn where the springs, seeps and creeks are. Get to know the game trails, the bedding areas and the escape routes the deer might take once the hunt starts.

Develop a hunting strategy that will account for changes in deer activity once hunters start moving through the woods.

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Southern Region

Southern Utah received something last winter that it rarely gets: lots of snow.

The snow that fell could result in fewer younger bucks in the region this fall. On the positive side, the moisture has also led to healthy mature deer with bigger antlers.

Another plus is the number of bucks per 100 does. The buck-to-doe average on the region's general season units is 20 bucks per 100 does. The Southern Region has more bucks per 100 does than any region in the state.

Buck-to-doe ratios on the general season units vary from a low of 11 bucks per 100 does on the Monroe unit to 30 bucks per 100 does on the Southwest Desert unit.

Biologists say additional precipitation this spring and summer has provided excellent forage and water for the deer. The deer should be spread across their transitional range when the hunt starts on Oct. 23.

The following is a look at the deer herds on region's general-season units:

Beaver and Fillmore units

Wildlife Biologist Blair Stringham says archery and muzzleloader hunters saw good numbers of bucks on both the Fillmore and Beaver units this fall. He reminds you that access is limited on the north end of the Tushar Mountains because of the Twitchell Canyon fire. The latest fire and road closure updates are available at www.utahfireinfo.gov.

Monroe and Plateau/Fishlake units

Wildlife Biologist Vance Mumford says this past winter was a long one on the Monroe and the Plateau, Fishlake units.

"The number of fawns that died this past winter was higher than normal," Mumford says. "That will affect the number of yearling bucks available during the hunt, especially since the number of fawns we started with was lower than normal before the winter even hit."

Mumford says there should be plenty of mature deer to hunt, though. "Those who hunt smart and scout areas for mature deer should have a good hunt," he says.

Mumford says lots of rain fell on the two units this past spring and summer. That has led to healthy deer and good antler growth. "I've seen some good mature buck groups on the Fish Lake unit," he says.

Mumford reminds you that the rifle hunt on the Monroe unit is shorter than it is on many units in the state.

The rifle hunt on the unit runs for only three days, from Oct. 23 to Oct. 25.

Plateau, Boulder unit

Wildlife Biologist Jim Lamb says this fall's archery and muzzleloader hunts on the Plateau, Boulder unit were among the toughest in recent memory. "I had two guides call me this week asking me where they could find a good buck," Lamb said earlier this month. "Usually, they are on the best deer around by this time of the season."

(more)

page 8

Panguitch Lake and Mount Dutton units

Wildlife Biologist Dustin Schaible says good precipitation and warm fall temperatures have kept deer in higher elevations, but some migratory movement has been observed on a few units. “The deer will probably be scattered across their transitional range during the rifle hunt,” he says.

Schaible says some hunters had a difficult time finding bucks during the archery and muzzleloader hunts. “But some really nice deer have been taken this year,” he says.

Because of the abundant summer rain, deer are currently spread across their range and are not as tied to watering areas.

“The fawns look excellent this year,” Schaible says. “In some areas, they’re nearly as big as the adults. That’s likely because we had good summer conditions.”

Pine Valley, Zion and Southwest Desert units

Wildlife Biologist Jason Nicholes says he counted more than 20 bucks per 100 does on each of the three units after last fall’s hunts. “Yearling bucks may be down slightly due to some light winter kill,” he says.

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Tips to Get Prepared for This Year’s Rifle Buck Deer Hunt

Utah’s most popular hunt—the general rifle buck deer hunt—begins Oct. 23. If you’re one of the lucky hunters who obtained a permit for the hunt, getting prepared now—by gathering materials and gaining knowledge—are the key to a safe and successful hunt. And while taking a deer is usually the highlight of any deer hunt, make sure you take advantage of all the experiences deer hunting offers.

“Don’t be so focused on taking a deer that you miss out on everything deer hunting has to offer,” says Gary Cook, hunter education coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources. “Camping with your family and friends and enjoying Utah’s wildlife and the beautiful state we live in are all things you can enjoy during your time afield.”

Cook provides the following tips for an enjoyable and safe hunt:

Personal preparation:

* be familiar with the area you’re going to hunt. If possible, scout the area before the hunt. “Knowing the area and the habits and patterns of the deer that live in the area is vital for success,” Cook says.

(more)

page 9

* put a survival kit together. The kit should include:

- 1) a small first aid kit;
- 2) three ways to make a fire (e.g. matches, a cigarette lighter, fire starters);
- 3) quick-energy snack foods;
- 4) a cord or rope;
- 5) a compass;
- 6) a flashlight;
- 7) an extra knife and;

8) a small pad of paper and a pencil (so if you become lost, you can leave information at your last location about yourself and the direction you're traveling).

Preparing your firearm:

* be as familiar as possible with your firearm—know how to load and unload it, and where the safety is and how to operate it.

* make sure the barrel of your firearm doesn't have any obstructions in it.

* make sure you have the correct ammunition for your firearm.

* sight-in your firearm before the hunt.

Firearm safety:

* controlling your firearm's muzzle is the most important part of firearm safety. Never let the muzzle of your firearm point at anything you do not intend to shoot. That includes not pointing the muzzle at yourself.

* never carry a loaded firearm in your vehicle.

* don't put your finger on the trigger until your firearm's sights are on the target.

* before shooting, make sure of your target and what's beyond it.

Vehicle preparation:

* make sure your vehicle is in good mechanical condition.

(more)

page 10

* make sure you have a shovel, an ax, tire chains, jumper cables and a tow chain in your vehicle.

* if you experience mechanical problems with your vehicle or become snowed in, stay with your vehicle—don't leave it.

Before leaving on your trip:

* let someone know where you're going and when you expect to return.

While in the field:

* never hunt alone.

* wear proper safety clothing: 400 square inches of hunter orange on your back, chest and head.

Field dressing your animal:

* use a sharp knife. A sharp knife does a better job of cutting than a dull knife does and is safer to use.

* cut away from you—never bring a knife blade towards you while cutting.

Your physical well-being:

* know your physical limitations, and don't exceed them.

* prepare yourself for weather changes by dressing in layers. Dressing in layers allows you to regulate your body temperature by adding or removing clothes as needed.

* drink plenty of water, no matter how cold it is. "You can become dehydrated, even in cold weather," Cook says.

* hypothermia (the loss of body temperature) can occur in temperatures as warm as 50 degrees.

Be aware of the signs of hypothermia. Some of the first signs are violent shivering, stumbling or becoming disoriented. "When you notice these signs, sit down immediately and build a fire," Cook says. "Get yourself warm and dry."

* frostbite. If you're hunting in cold weather, watch for signs that you're getting frostbite. White spots on your skin are the first sign. Check your face, feet and hands regularly. You'll notice the first signs of frostbite on your face sooner if you're hunting with a companion who can alert you.

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If you get lost:

* don't panic. Sit down and build a fire, even if it isn't cold. "A fire is soothing. Building a fire will help you relax and think clearly," Cook says.

After calming down, try to get your bearings and think your way out of the situation. If you think you know which direction you need to travel, get the pad of paper and pencil out of your survival kit and leave a note at your location. Indicate on the note who you are and the direction you're traveling. If you find other hunters, don't be embarrassed to ask them for directions and help.

If you don't know which direction you should travel, stay at your camp and build a shelter several hours before sundown, if possible. Build a smoky fire (this type of fire can be spotted from the air) or build three fires (a distress signal that can also be spotted from the air).

Remaining at your camp is usually a good option. "If you have to, you can live without food and water for several days," Cook says.

Alcohol and firearms don't mix!

* do not handle a firearm if you've been drinking alcohol.

* do not give alcohol to someone who's cold. Instead of warming the person, alcohol will actually make them colder.

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