What hunters should know for the 2024 Utah deer and elk hunts August 5, 2024 Utah DWR News

Deer hunts

The deer hunting this fall will vary, depending on which areas of the state people are hunting. The deer populations in Cache, Weber, Summit and Morgan counties are still recovering from the severe winter conditions and lower survival rates from the record-breaking winter in 2022–23. As a result, there are fewer deer available for hunters in those areas this fall.

However, other areas of Utah — including southern Utah — had favorable conditions the past three winters, which resulted in above-average deer survival rates and great habitat conditions this spring and summer. Hunters in those parts of the state are likely to encounter good numbers of younger bucks, as well as some older bucks in their hunting units.

"During our big game captures this last winter, we found that a majority of the deer throughout the state were healthy and in great condition with high body fat," Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Big Game Coordinator Dax Mangus said. "Our animals with GPS collars showed high survival rates in both northern and southern Utah. We are happy to see our deer populations continuing to recover after being hit hard by the severe winter in 2022–23, especially in the northern parts of the state. Deer populations in southern Utah are looking good currently, with their third consecutive year of good fawn production and high survival rates."

Elk hunts

The current statewide elk management plan includes an objective to have almost 80,000 elk across Utah. There are currently an estimated 80,600 elk in the state, so elk populations are slightly above objective statewide.



Anyone who wants to hunt elk in Utah this year should note that there are still some archery antlerless elk permits available as well as unlimited over-the-counter late-season any legal weapon any-bull permits.

In addition to these permits, there are many opportunities for youth to hunt elk. Utah offers unlimited general-season youth bull elk permits, which allow youth to hunt all of the general-season archery, general-season any weapon and general-season muzzleloader dates on both general spike-only and any bull units. (Youth hunters must follow spike-only antler regulations on spike units.) People interested in buying these permits can purchase them **online**, at **a DWR office** or from any **available license agent**.

"The ability for hunters to get in the field pursuing big game regularly is a high priority for hunters and the DWR," Mangus said. "This is especially important for our younger hunters, and we are excited about the multiple season dates and extensive unit locations offered to youth hunters with the general-season youth elk permit. We hope parents and families take advantage of the long, flexible season dates to work around busy schedules and get out in the field with their youth hunters to make lasting memories. Spending time in the great outdoors

pursuing elk with our youth and our families creates bonds and establishes treasured traditions that last for generations."

[After drop in recent years, Utah seeks new ways to improve mule deer population]

October 4, 2024 Utah, KSL

... since the state implemented its latest mule deer management plan in 2019.

Extreme drought conditions developed a year later and lingered into 2023, [playing a major role in the state's population tumble]. The 2022-23 winter and its record snowpack [didn't help the situation, either]. All of it exacerbated ongoing issues impacting deer, including predation ..,