COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE

2016 Big Game Hunting in Southwest Colorado

Contents:

- Hunting tips and outlook
- 2015 season harvest statistics
- Camping information
- Travel information
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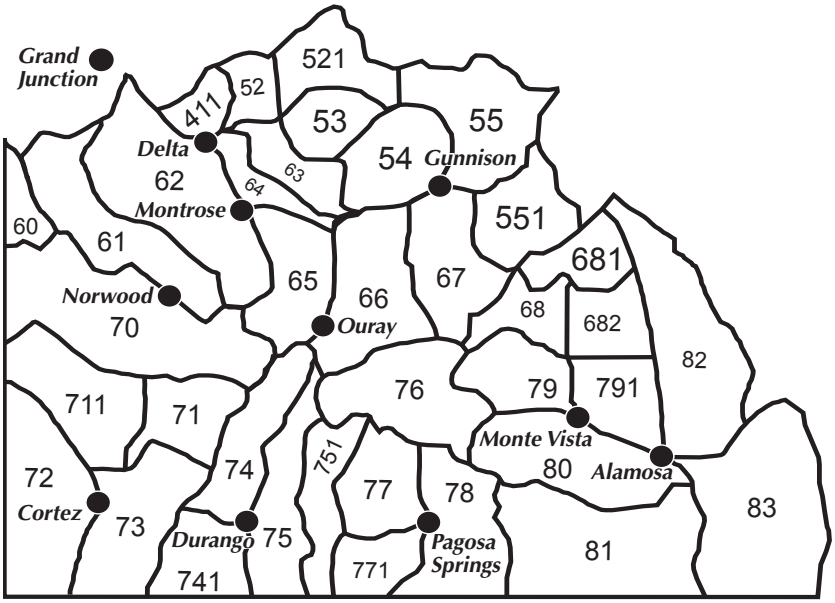


COLORADO PARKS & WILDLIFE
Southwest Region Service Center • 415 Turner Drive, Durango, CO 81303
(970) 375-6708 • CPW.STATE.CO.US

2016 Elk & Deer Season Information

Season Dates	Deer	Elk
Archery	Aug. 27 - Sept. 25	
Muzzle	Sept. 10 - 18	
1st Rifle		Oct. 15 - 19
2nd Rifle	Oct. 22 - 30	
3rd Rifle	Nov. 5 - Nov. 13	
4th Rifle	Nov. 16 - 20	

Over-the-counter licenses on sale July 26, 9 a.m.; leftover licenses Aug. 2 at CPW, license agents, phone 1-800-244-5613, on-line. Aug. 3.

License Fees***		Deer Buck/Doe	Elk Bull/ Either-sex	Elk Cow
Resident	Adult	$34	$49	$49
	Youth	$13.75	$13.75	$13.75
Non-Resident	Adult	$374	$629	$469
	Youth	$103.75	$103.75	$103.75

***Prices include $3 nonrefundable on-line application fee, 25 cent search/rescue fee, 75 cent wildlife education fund fee; does not include $10 habitat stamp fee. Non-residents now also receive a fishing license.

Keep Your Wheels Where They Belong™

For info and tips visit www.staythetrail.org

New for 2016 - cpw.state.co.us for details

REFUNDS: For a license refund and preference point reinstatement, tags must be turned in 30 days prior to the start of season for which the license is intended. A $15 processing fee will be charged.

HUNTER EDUCATION: CPW now allows a test-out option for hunter education for anyone 50 or older and for U.S. military personnel. A grade of 90 percent is required for the one-time, on-line test.

APPRENTICE LICENSE: A one-year waiver of hunter education requirements is now allowed for those who hunt with a mentor.

Colorado State Park camping opportunities

Four state parks in the Southwest Region offer outstanding camping facilities, including showers and electricity. Some also offer cabins and yurts. For information, call: Mancos State Park, 970-882-2213; Ridgway State Park, 970-626-5822; Crawford State Park, 970-921-5721; Navajo State Park, 970-882-2208. Or go to the web site at cpw.state.co.us. for information and to make reservations.

State Park offers exclusive hunting experience in GMU 711

For a unique hunting opportunity, anyone who draws a license for GMU 711 is eligible to enter for a chance to hunt at the 12,000-acre Lone Mesa State Park. Located northwest of Dolores, the park is undeveloped and currently only open to the public for big game hunting. The number of hunters is limited, from 12 to 25 depending on the season. The access fee is $100 or $200 for residents, and $200 or $300 for non-residents depending on the type of license. The park is located in prime big game habitat and the hunter success rate is high. For more information, go to the Lone Mesa State Park page on the CPW web site, cpw.state.co.us, or call 970-882-2213.

Know the Rules for off-highway vehicles (OHVs)

Inappropriate and illegal use of OHVs causes conflicts among hunters and can cause resource damage to public lands. Hunters must be aware of the laws and regulations governing OHV use.

All OHVs must be registered and permitted annually in Colorado. Permits cost $25.25. Non-residents using OHVs must obtain a Colorado permit. Permits and regulations can be found on-line at cpw.state.co.us., or call 1-303-791-1920 for information.

Federal “Travel Management Plans” are written to ensure protection of resources. If you are hunting on public land, contact the local U.S. Forest Service or BLM office to obtain current regulations. Phone numbers are on the inside back cover of this booklet.

Colorado wildlife officers, USFS officers, BLM rangers and other local law enforcement agencies are authorized to ticket OHV users who violate

rules. Those riding in unauthorized areas face fines and penalties of $100 from CPW, and $250 from federal agencies. Hunters, anglers or trappers using OHVs illegally will receive 10 penalty points against their hunting and fishing privileges. The fine for riding in federal wilderness areas is $500 and 15 penalty points. Please, observe these rules and guidelines:

- ***Rifles carried on OHVs must be in a case and unloaded completely.***
- Be considerate of other hunters. OHV noise disturbs big game animals.
- OHVs cannot be driven into designated wilderness or roadless areas.
- OHVs are generally prohibited from most streets in towns and on some county roads. Check local regulations.
- Explain these rules to young hunters and those unfamiliar with using these vehicles on public lands.

OHV game retrieval in GMU 711

An OHV may be driven off road for one mile to retrieve game in a section of GMU 711 as described on the USFS travel map. The hunter who killed the animal must be in the retrieval party. Vehicles must be no more than 50 inches wide. Two OHVs may be used, but they must travel together and can only make one trip in. If one OHV is used, two trips are allowed. Avoid passing over the same track twice. Avoid wet area, cross streams slowly, don't spin tires, avoid other hunters. To obtain a map, call the Dolores Public Lands office, 970-882-7296.

Beware of dead timber

Fire and beetles have killed timber in some areas of southwest Colorado. Trees can fall without warning. Exercise caution in areas of dead-standing timber, especially when it's windy and during heavy rain.

Hunting Q & A

Do I need a Hunter Education Card? Yes. Hunters born after 1948 must present a hunter education card when purchasing a license. License agents will accept cards issued by other states; they will not accept a previous year's license or photocopies of hunter education cards. For information on hunter education classes go to the CPW web site.

Where do I buy my Colorado hunting license? Licenses are available at CPW offices, at licensing agents, by telephone at 1-800-244-5613, and on-line. Most hunters are now buying their licenses through the Colorado Parks and Wildlife web site. This is the fastest, easiest and most accurate way to buy your license.

Can I hunt both deer and elk? Yes, and you no longer need to hunt them during the same season. See the 2016 Big Game Brochure or the web site for details.

Can I have more than one elk and deer license? Yes, but only in specific GMUs. See the web site or the Big Game Brochure for details.

Where can I hunt with an unlimited rifle license? Unlimited licenses are sold only for bull elk hunting during the second and third seasons. The licenses can be used in any GMU in Colorado, except those listed on page 36 of the Big Game brochure. Excluded Southwest Region units are: 61, 66, 67, 682, 76, 79, 791 and second season in 54.

What are "Private Land Only" licenses? These licenses, also called PLO licenses, require the holder to hunt in a specific GMU and are valid only on private land. You must obtain permission from a landowner. It is recommended that you secure permission from a landowner before purchasing the license. For more information, go to the CPW web site: cpw.state.co.us.

Hunting ethically

Hunting is an integral part of wildlife management in Colorado. Remember, you are not only participating in a recreational activity, you also play an important role in managing big-game herds. With your license comes a responsibility to hunt and conduct yourself in an ethical manner. Please, take a few moments to answer the following questions. It's up to you to remember the answers when you are out in the field:

- Are your hunting actions providing a "fair chase" scenario for the animal?
- Would you behave the same way if you were hunting with a wildlife officer or being videotaped for the news?
- Do you know exactly where you are hunting? Are you in the right GMU?
- Do you know the habits of the animal you are hunting?
- When you take aim at an animal do you know for certain that it is the right sex and species?
- Are you physically able to hunt in mountainous terrain and retrieve a harvested animal?
- Do you know how to properly field dress a big-game animal?
- Do you minimize the impacts of your camp on the landscape?
- Do you pack out all of your trash?
- Will you report rule violations–yours and others–to a Colorado wildlife officer?
- Have you read the Colorado Big Game Brochure to check for specific regulations for the GMU in which you are hunting?

Ethical behavior is critical to the future of hunting. Please, consider how your actions impact wildlife, fellow hunters and the general public.

If you make a mistake

Every year people make mistakes while hunting. Hunters occasionally: shoot the wrong animal, accidentally kill more than one animal, hunt in the wrong GMU, etc. Most of these errors can be prevented by carefully reading the Big Game Brochure, obtaining a good map of your hunting area and by being diligent in the field. Hunters who make errors can be penalized with fines, suspension points, felonies and misdemeanors, loss of meat, license suspension or confiscation of equipment. Penalties can be much more severe for those who purposefully attempt to hide mistakes from wildlife officers.

If you make a mistake while hunting, the best course of action is to report the incident to the closest CPW office immediately. Be prepared to explain to a wildlife officer what happened and why. While you still may be subject to penalties, they could be less severe if the officer determines that you are cooperative, the error was not intentional, or it was unavoidable given the circumstances. Follow the officer's orders on caring for the meat, leaving the animal at the scene or bringing it to an agreed upon location, etc. If you are unable to contact an officer immediately, field dress the animal on the spot and don't move it.

Know where you're hunting!

It is your responsibility to know exactly where you are hunting. If you harvest an animal in the wrong GMU you will be subject to penalties, and you will not be allowed to keep the animal. Location descriptions of each GMU can be found starting on page 61 of the Big Game Brochure.

Buy a high-quality topographic map, read the boundary description in the brochure carefully and outline the boundaries on your map. If you have questions, call the CPW office in the area where you are hunting.

In Colorado, landowners are not required to post or fence their land. It is your responsibility to know the location of private property. You must obtain permission to hunt on private land. If you hunt on private land without permission you may be charged with trespassing, be required to appear in court and fined.

Simple rules for hunting safely

Hunting accidents have declined significantly since the passage of two laws in 1970 that require hunter education for all hunters born on or after January 1, 1949, and require rifle hunters to wear at least 500-square-inches of fluorescent orange clothing above the waist—including a head covering visible from all directions. **"Camouflage" orange is not legal.** Hunters should review safety rules each time they go into the field.

Remember: **One moment of carelessness can mean a lifetime of consequences.**

Before the season, go to a shooting range to sight-in your rifle and practice. You'll get re-acquainted with your gun and you'll improve your chances of harvesting an animal.

Most accidents occur near vehicles. Load and unload your gun at least 100 feet from your car or truck.

No matter how long you've been hunting, always observe these basic safety rules:

- Treat every firearm as if it is loaded and keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times.
- Be sure of your target--what is in front of it and what is beyond it. Once you take a shot, you can't take it back. If you are in doubt, don't shoot.
- Keep the safety on and your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.
- Never place your hand over the muzzle of a gun.
- Don't hurry while loading or unloading.
- Talk about safety with youngsters and inexperienced hunters.
- Stop to rest when you are out of breath; fatigue often contributes to accidents.

Lead bullets and game meat

Concerns have been raised about potential health risks of exposure to lead from eating wild game harvested with lead bullets. Children under 6 and pregnant women should avoid this meat.

Because lead bullets fragment, the lead can scatter beyond the wound. Trim meat liberally when processing an animal. Discard damaged meat, meat that is discolored or bruised, and that shows dirt, hair or bone fragments. Lead is soft and can be spread when meat is ground.

Lead fragments can also sicken birds, such as eagles and hawks, that scavenge on gut piles.

More and more hunters are using copper bullets. They are accurate and deadly. Copper bullets cost a little more, but hunters can use lead bullets of similar weight at the range to sight-in their rifles and to practice.

A challenge for hunters: Bears

Black bear populations are healthy throughout the Southwest Region. Colorado Parks and Wildlife encourages hunters to try their hand at stalking the native ursines.

In late summer and into the fall, bears are gorging on berries and acorns in order to fatten up for winter hibernation. Bears are most likely to be

found in patches of scrub oak brush, and in moist areas where there are berry bushes.

Archers and muzzleloaders can purchase a license to hunt only bears. During the rifle seasons, however, bear hunters must also have a deer or elk license in the GMU where they're hunting. All licenses are sold over-the-counter. But there is a cap on these licenses so they are sold on a first come-first served basis

Those who harvest a bear must personally present the carcass for inspection and sealing at a CPW office within five working days of harvest. Carcasses must not be frozen. Agency staff will also remove a premolar tooth for research purposes.

Tips for hunting mule deer

A large mule deer buck can reach 400 pounds; however, most mule deer range from 200-300 pounds. It is estimated that Colorado is home to about 430,000 deer. During the 2015 seasons, for all manners of take, about 74,000 hunters harvested 34,000 mule deer for a 46 percent success rate.

In the mountains and foothills, mule deer don't spend much time in heavy timber. They are primarily browsers and prefer aspen and forest edges where there are plenty of low shrubs, small trees, oak brush and varied vegetation types.

Mule deer are most active at night and can often be found in meadow areas during low-light hours. During the day they'll bed down in protective cover.

In warm weather, look for deer along ridge lines where wind is consistent and helps to keep them cool.

During the low-light hours of evening and morning, hunt in openings at the edge of thick cover. If you see where they are feeding during times of low-light, it's likely they'll move into nearby timbered areas to rest for part of the day. Deer tend to move during the middle of the day toward the areas where they feed in the evening.

A slow stalk is recommended. Spend a lot of time scanning slowly with binoculars--a deer can appear at any time.

Pay attention to the wind direction. If the wind is blowing in the direction you are moving, a deer will likely pick up your scent. Deer avoid going to creeks in daylight so there is no advantage to hunting near moving water sources during the day.

One advantage mule deer give to hunters is their curiosity. When mule deer are spooked they'll often run a short distance then turn to determine if they are being pursued. That may give you one good chance for a shot.

A small amount of snow will get deer moving quickly out of high-altitude areas. Usually by late October, migrating herds will move to winter range areas even if there is no snow.

Hunters should aim at the vital organ area which presents a small target--about the size of a dinner plate--just behind and low on the front quarter. Hunters, no matter how good they are at the range, should never try to make a head shot. Many animals are injured and die slowly because of attempted head shots.

Tips for hunting elk

The popular hunting magazines often display colorful photographs of huge bull elk standing in open meadows presenting easy targets. The reality in the mountains of Colorado, however, is far different.

Stalking these animals is challenging and most hunters won't get easy shots. You're more likely to find elk on a steep hillside, in a dark ravine or in thick timber than out in the open.

The hunter success rate for all manners of take in Colorado during the 2015 seasons was 20 percent, and an estimated 45,000 elk were harvested. A total of 221,000 hunters stalked elk last season. It's estimated that there are about 276,000 elk in Colorado, the most of any state.

If weather is warm, elk stay spread out over vast areas at high elevations at and above timberline. In those conditions hunters need to work extra hard. When snow falls, elk start to move, bunch up, and look for food sources at lower elevations or on slopes where vegetation is exposed. Elk movement will start in earnest when a foot or more snow falls.

Hunters must get off their OHVs and hunt slowly and quietly far from any road. Elk are very smart, move quickly at any hint of danger and hide in rugged terrain. Compounding the challenge for hunters is the fact that elk typically gather in groups of 10 or more. If one is spooked they all move and they can run easily for a half-mile or more.

Elk are most active at night and are likely to be grazing in transition areas--meadows and openings next to heavy timber where different types of vegetation meet, and just above or below ridge lines. Hunters should watch these areas at first light and at dusk.

During the day, hunters need to move into the dark timber and not be hesitant to hunt in difficult areas. Hunters should move as quietly as possible for short distances and then scan the woods for 10 minutes or more before moving again. Even in dense forest it's a good idea to use binoculars so you can discern subtle movement or colors in the trees.

If you find the areas where animals graze at night it's likely that you'll find them in adjacent areas during the day.

When hunting in areas with roads, move far above or far below to find elk. In areas where there are two roads, locate the most difficult terrain in between.

Line up your shot carefully because elk are difficult to knock down.

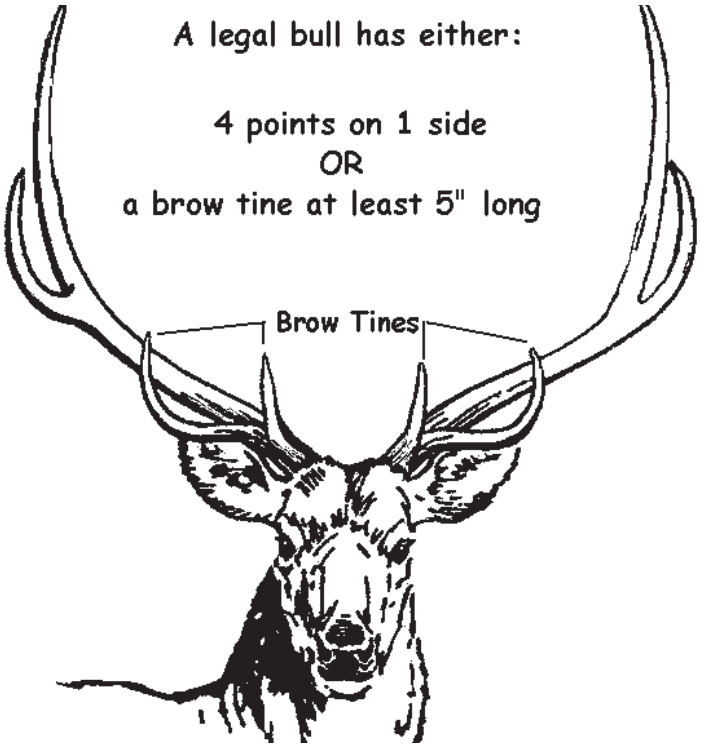
The best shots are delivered in the critical area of the lungs and heart just behind and below the front quarters.

Antler requirements

To allow bull elk and mule deer bucks to reach maturity, animals must grow to an acceptable size before they can be harvested. Size is determined by the antlers. Be sure to clearly identify the size of the antlers of a bull or a buck.

Mule deer bucks -- No antler point restrictions; but antlers must be at least 5 inches long.

Bull elk -- For all GMUs in the southwest region except 61 and 76: A legal bull must have antlers with at least 4 points on one side OR brow tines that are 5 inches or longer. In GMUs 61 and 76 a legal bull must have antlers that are at least 5 inches long. There are no point restrictions. If you are unsure while taking aim, do not shoot. Be aware that the spikes of young bulls are difficult to see. If you have an antlerless permit be sure the animal is indeed antlerless. Mistakes often occur in the low light hours at dawn and dusk.



Know your physical limits

Hunting in the mountains of Colorado is physically demanding. Even if you are in good shape you will still feel the effects of the altitude. Consider these tips as you head to the high country:

- To acclimate, plan to arrive at your hunting area a couple of days before hunting season begins.
- Drink lots of water. Dehydration can cause severe headaches, muscle cramps and loss of energy. Carry water purification tablets so that you can refill your bottles at creeks. Limit alcohol--it causes dehydration.
- If you experience severe headaches or difficulty breathing, move to lower altitude immediately. These symptoms could be signs of pulmonary edema or cerebral edema, both of which can be fatal.
- When hunting, move slowly and stop to rest often. Accidents are more likely to occur when you're tired. If you are feeling very tired and you are far from camp, unload your gun before continuing to walk.
- Discuss any health issues with your hunting partners.

Caring for your campsite

Camping can cause significant impacts on public lands. Minimize impacts with advanced planning. Please, follow these guidelines:

- When possible, use established camping areas. Occupy as small of an area as possible.
- Campsites must be at least 100 feet from streams, lakes or riparian areas. Avoid trampling grass and shrubs.
- Do not dig a trench around your tent site.
- Check for public land fire restrictions; keep fires small, put fires out every night; burn only paper trash items.
- Use a stove for cooking to reduce impacts.
- Collect all cooking grease and carry it out. Do not dump it on the ground.
- Collect deadfall for campfires. Do not cut down trees.
- When you leave camp for the day, store all food and garbage securely inside a vehicle. Food and garbage attracts animals, including bears.
- Strain dish water before throwing it out and put debris in the trash. Small bits of food accumulate significantly over time.
- Pack out human feces. Sanitary products are available in which waste can be deposited and then disposed of properly in town.
- If you must, dig a latrine. Dig a hole about three-feet deep; be sure that it is at least 100 feet from the nearest water source. Spread soil on top after each use. Restore area to natural condition when you break camp.
- Pack out all trash. Do not bury trash.
- Inspect your camp carefully after it is packed up. Leave your camp cleaner than how you found it.

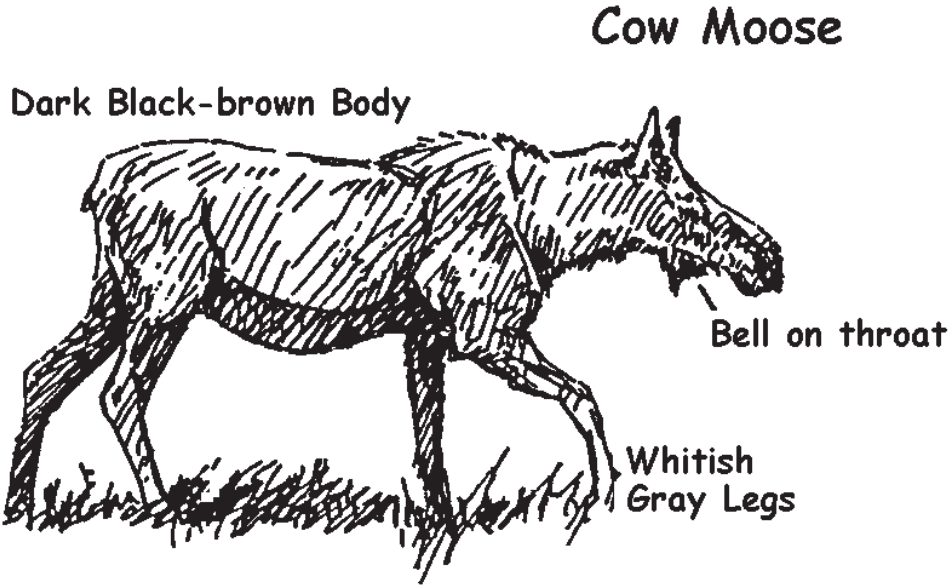
Safe hunting is no accident!

Don’t shoot a moose!

Moose are present throughout the Southwest Region. Moose favor wetlands -- but they can be found in any terrain where elk live.

Too often, hunters mistake moose--especially cows--for elk.

Please, be sure of your target. The fine for accidentally killing a moose is $1,370. If the animal is killed illegally and the carcass abandoned, the shooter can be charged with a Class 5 felony.



Hunter’s Checklist

Preparing for a hunting trip is a major effort. Be sure to leave information about where you’ll be hunting and camping, license plate numbers and cell phone numbers with folks at home.

Listed below are a few common items that hunters often forget as they get ready to go into the backcountry.

- First aid kit, sunscreen, toilet paper, water bottles.
- Hunting license, compass and maps.
- Flashlight, lantern, extra batteries.
- Rain gear, tire chains.
- Knife sharpener, bone saw, game bags.
- Blaze orange vest and cap. Extra camp-stove fuel, cleaning supplies, trash bags, shovel.
- List of family/friends with contact information.

Are you using horses?

If you plan to use horses on your hunting trip, please be aware of the following:

- You must have a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection issued by an accredited veterinarian 30 days prior to entry into Colorado. Include the physical address of where the horse is kept in your state and the location where the horse will be in Colorado.
- A negative equine infectious anemia test is required 12 months prior to entry. Date of the test, results, the lab and the accession number must be listed on the veterinary inspection form. For questions, contact the State Veterinarian's Office, 1-303-239-4161.
- Horses are required to have a brand inspection when transported over 75 miles totally within the boundaries of Colorado, and every time they leave the state. Contact the Brands Office at 1-303-869-9160.
- Hay, straw and mulch must be certified as "weed free." Only the following products are allowed on national forests in Colorado: cubed and pelletized hay, steamed grain, treated/steamed mulch from tree fibers. For information, call the Colorado Department of Agriculture at 1-303-239-4149; or for a list of regulations and vendors, see www.colorado.gov/ag.
- Don't tie horses to trees in camp. This causes tree damage and vegetation around the tree to be trampled.
- Highline or picket your stock. If you use a highline, please use tree-saver straps to avoid damaging trees.
- Move horses often to keep them from trampling vegetation or overgrazing an area.
- Keep stock 100 feet or more from lakes, streams, wetlands and trails.
- Restrictions on horse travel in wilderness areas are often greater than in other areas. Be sure to read notices at trailheads. Many wilderness areas carry maximum group size limits which regulate the number of livestock and people that are allowed to travel together.

Contact the U.S. Forest Service or BLM in the area where you are hunting for complete information.

Pack Animals

Some people use animals other than horses to pack in gear to hunt camps. **Please, do not use goats.** These animals can spread disease to Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Llamas, however, are acceptable.

Report Hunting Violations: 1-877-265-6648

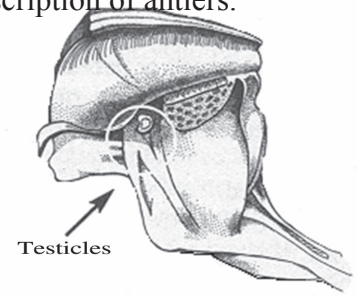
Evidence of sex

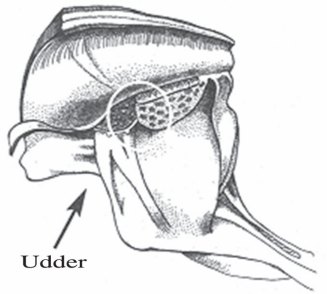
After harvest, evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to the carcass. You can use either the head or sex organs, but they **must** be naturally attached to the carcass.

Leaving the evidence attached to one-quarter of the carcass is acceptable--so long as all four quarters are being transported together.

The head or skull plate with both antlers naturally attached must accompany the carcass of a buck or bull while it is in camp or being transported--even when the testicles are used to meet proof of evidence of sex.

If you are working with a taxidermist to mount the head, obtain a written receipt from the taxidermist before transporting the carcass home or to a meat processor. The receipt must list the following: date delivered and description of antlers.





Bucks and Bulls

Attached head with antlers or attached testicle, scrotum or penis

Does and Cows

Attached head or udder

Tagging the carcass

Improperly attaching the carcass tag is a common violation and can result in a fine. Make sure that everyone in your hunting party knows how to properly attach the tag. You can be held liable for illegally transporting big game even if someone else made an error. Please, follow these guidelines:

- Sign your license as soon as you buy it or receive it in the mail.
- Immediately after harvesting the animal, detach the carcass tag from your license, sign it and punch the holes indicating sex, month and day of kill. Put the carcass tag in your pocket while taking the animal to camp or to your vehicle.
- When you arrive at camp or at your vehicle, immediately attach the carcass tag to the body of the animal. Do not attach to antlers. Attach the tag to the animal's leg or the hide.

- Place the tag where it can be easily inspected by a wildlife officer.
- If the carcass is cut up, keep all the pieces together for inspection.
- If you bone out the animal, be sure to leave sexual organs attached to a large piece of the meat.
- Retain the top portion of your license during all transport of the animal. If you are shipping the meat via commercial carrier, the meat must be accompanied by one of the following: the hunter's license, a photocopy of the license, or the carcass tag.

The "easy" way to field dress your animal

More often than not, harvested animals must be cared for in remote areas far from roads. That requires hunters to pack out meat and antlers. To help lighten the load for hunters, Colorado Parks and Wildlife has produced two helpful videos that provide instructions on how to field dress an animal and how to bone-out meat.

Go to the CPW web site, enter "hunt videos" in the search window to view "How to Field Dress a Big Game Animal."

Available on DVD is "Down to the Bone" which explains methods for deboning in the field. You'll learn a simple and legal method of removing the edible portions of meat. By removing the bones and other inedible portions of the animal, you can reduce the weight you carry out of the backcountry by more than 50 percent.

Order a copy of the DVD on line. Go to the CPW website click on the "Buy and Apply" link at the top of the home page and go to "Retail Products."

Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a neurological disease that can be found in some deer, elk and moose. CPW provides optional CWD testing for $25 through all area wildlife offices. CWD has been detected in one deer in GMU 65. If you harvest a deer in that unit, please contact CPW's Montrose office for additional testing information. To learn more about CWD and public health, go to http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/ResearchCWD.aspx., or call Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment at 1-303-692-2700.

PRECAUTIONS

• Do not shoot, handle or consume any animal that appears sick.
• Wear disposable rubber gloves when field dressing and processing animals.
• Bone out the meat from your animal.
• Minimize the handling of brain, spinal tissues, and viscera.
• Wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing is completed.
• Avoid consuming brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils, pancreas and lymph nodes of harvested animals. Normal field dressing, coupled with boning out a carcass, will remove most, if not all, of these body parts.
• Do not consume meat from animals known to be infected with CWD.
• Knives, saws and cutting table surfaces can be disinfected by soaking in a solution of 50 percent unscented household bleach and 50 percent water

for an hour. Afterward, rinse thoroughly and allow them to air dry.
• Submit harvested animals for testing at a CPW-CWD testing station.

Managing Colorado's big game herds

To manage the state's big game populations, CPW uses a "management by objectives" approach. Big game populations are managed to achieve population and sex-ratio objectives established for Data Analysis Units (DAUs). Each DAU represents a geographically distinct big game herd.

Game management units are subsets of DAUs. The GMU groupings in this booklet are based on DAUs. However, because big game herds travel wide areas throughout the year, the population of each GMU cannot be estimated.

The DAU planning process incorporates public input, habitat capabilities, and herd considerations into management objectives for each of Colorado's big game herds. The general public, hunters, federal and state land management agencies, landowners and agricultural interests are involved in determining DAU plan objectives through questionnaires, public meetings, and by giving input to the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission. License numbers and season recommendations result from this process.

Each DAU plan establishes post-hunt herd objectives for the size and structure of the population. The DAU objectives then are compared with modeled population estimates. Model inputs include:

- Harvest estimates determined by hunter surveys.
- Post-hunt sex and age ratios determined by aerial classifications.
- Estimated wounding loss, illegal kill and survival rates based on field observations and studies.

The information is entered into a specialized computer program which then estimates the population size. The final step in the process is to calculate harvest recommendations that will align population estimates with the herd objectives.

Using a Guide Service in Colorado

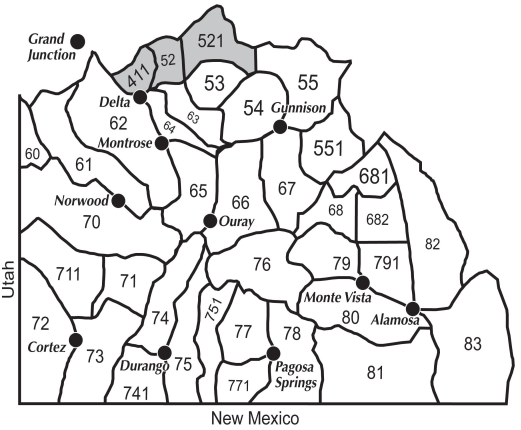
Here's what you need to know if you're thinking about using a guide service for your hunt. Outfitters in Colorado must be licensed by the state Department of Regulatory Agencies (http://www.dora.state.co.us), and by the U.S. Forest Service or BLM if they operate on federal land. Ask guides for licensing information and check their records through the state and federal agencies. Also, ask for references for at least three other past clients. Before paying any money, require a contract that stipulates: types of services, dates of service, cost of service, lodging/camping/transportation arrangements, ratio of clients to guides, cancellation policy, and other items you believe are necessary. Guides who provide so called "finders fees" for locating animals also must be licensed. Using an unlicensed outfitter is illegal.

The Colorado Outfitters' Association requires members to be licensed, bonded and to adhere to a code of ethics. For information, www.coloradooutfitters.org, or call 1-970-824-2468.

Southwest Colorado Hunting Outlook

South Grand Mesa

GMUs 411, 52, 521
Gunnison CPW: (970)641-7060
Maps: Grand Mesa and Gunnison National Forest



The Grand Mesa is heavily forested and offers a wide variety of terrain: from the spruce, fir and aspen forests up to 11,000 feet, to the pinon-juniper woodlands at about 4,800 feet. Weather can vary as widely as the terrain. Motorized access is good but roads can become muddy. Hunters should obtain maps to avoid trespassing or unintentionally crossing private land. Respect motorized closures on public lands. Lower elevations are mainly private, especially in GMUs 411 and 52.

MOOSE ARE PRESENT HERE – BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET!

Deer hunting

The deer population in these units is stable and license numbers are unchanged from 2015. Deer are found on high-elevation public land and private land during October. Some deer stay in lower elevation agricultural lands year-round. In late October, deer generally migrate to lower elevation as the weather cools and snow starts to accumulate. During the later seasons many deer will be on private land, so hunters should plan accordingly. Hunting in aspen and oak brush can be productive. Hunters should obtain land ownership maps of this area.

Estimated deer population: 9,520
3-year estimated sex ratio: 26 bucks per 100 does

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
411	Archery	0	0	0	0	10	0 / 47
411	Muzzle	0	0	0	0	7	0 / 31
411	2nd Rifle	27	0	0	27	53	51 / 60
411	3rd Rifle	30	0	0	30	46	65 / 64
52	Archery	17	0	0	17	49	35 / 31
52	Muzzle	21	0	0	21	28	75 / 56
52	2nd Rifle	144	0	0	144	236	61 / 56
52	3rd Rifle	81	0	0	81	121	67 / 71
52	4thRifle	8	0	0	8	9	89 / 79
521	Archery	21	0	0	21	71	30 / 28
521	Muzzle	8	0	0	8	18	44 / 35
521	2nd Rifle	88	0	0	88	179	49 / 49
521	3rd Rifle	31	0	0	31	48	65 / 69
521	4th Rifle	4	0	0	4	6	67 / 69

Elk Hunting

Elk in these GMUs are part of the greater Grand Mesa management area that includes GMUs 41, 42 and 421 to the north. The herd is stable, well distributed and hunting is rated as good. Most elk will be at higher elevations during the seasons – above 8,500 feet in thick timber and oak brush. Distribution changes in relation to weather and hunting pressure; so hunters should be prepared to adapt to conditions.

Elk will generally move into more remote areas in response to pressure. Successful hunters generally stay well away from motorized access areas, especially in GMU 521. These units are managed for hunting opportunity, so most bulls are young. Hunting pressure is lowest during the limited first season.

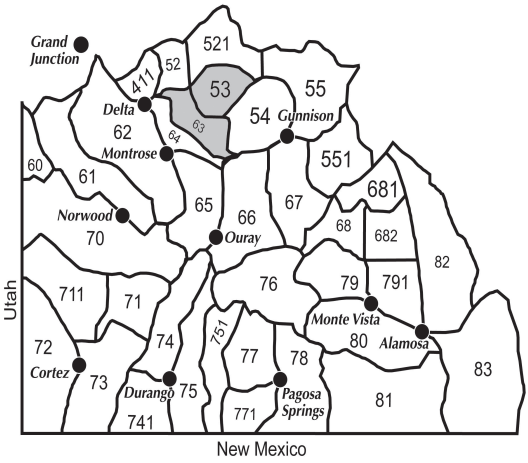
Estimated elk population (includes six GMUs): 18,000
3-year estimated sex ratio: 27 bulls per 100 cows

2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
411	Archery	21	6	0	27	169	16 / 9
411	Muzzle	0	0	0	0	29	0 / 0
411	1st Rifle	7	22	0	29	49	59 / 23
411	2nd Rifle	3	2	0	5	160	3 / 12
411	3rd Rifle	16	13	0	29	164	18 / 16
411	4th Rifle	0	3	2	5	55	9 / 12
52	Archery	16	14	0	30	413	7 / 10
52	Muzzle	7	15	0	22	117	19 / 13
52	1st Rifle	7	15	0	22	112	20 / 24
52	2nd Rifle	17	30	0	47	496	9 / 16
52	3rd Rifle	27	15	2	44	365	12 / 13
52	4th Rifle	0	6	0	6	60	10 / 7
52	Late	0	59	10	69	135	51 / 45
521	Archery	118	36	0	154	992	16 / 16
521	Muzzle	31	20	5	56	279	20 / 19
521	1st Rifle	110	108	12	230	555	41 / 31
521	2nd Rifle	71	141	7	219	1188	18 / 23
521	3rd Rifle	60	100	8	168	689	24 / 24
521	4th Rifle	0	51	22	73	201	36 / 29

Safe Hunting is No Accident!

Crawford-Fruitland Mesa



GMUs 53, 63
Gunnison CPW: (970)641-7060
Map: Gunnison National Forest

Winter weather is almost guaranteed during any season in this area which includes the high country of the West Elk Wilderness. Altitude ranges from 5,400 feet near Hotchkiss to more than 12,000 feet in the wilderness. The range in elevations and the topography create volatile weather at all times of year. These GMUs contain abundant public land: 90 percent of GMU 53, 60 percent of GMU 63. When snow falls, herds move quickly to lower elevations on the western ends of the units.

GMU 53 contains rough terrain and access is on rugged 4WD roads and foot/horse trails. Hunters should be prepared to hunt in difficult terrain. Packing an animal out in this area is challenging. Do not count on moving a vehicle close to the kill site. Access is easier for GMU 63; but be sure to study the map closely to avoid trespassing. West of Highway 92 most of the land is private. Motorized travel is limited to designated routes.

MOOSE ARE PRESENT HERE – BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET!

Deer Hunting

The deer herds in GMU's 53 and 63 are currently stable. License numbers are holding steady at about 800. Deer are well distributed. As the season progresses and hunting pressure increases, deer move to lower elevations to the west in GMU 63 where private land is abundant. Hunting can still be good on public lands throughout GMU 63 if the weather is mild. In GMU 53 try the Chain Mountains, Browning Ridge, Land's End Peak and Smith Fork Mountain.

Estimated deer population: 12,800

3-year estimated sex ratio: 35 bucks per 100 does

Need information?
Call a hunt planner at 1-303-291-7526

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
53	Archery	9	0	0	9	38	24 / 25
53	Muzzle	3	0	0	3	15	20 / 43
53	2nd rifle	76	0	0	76	119	64 / 66
53	3rd rifle	92	0	0	92	114	81 / 85
53	4th rifle	8	0	0	8	9	81 / 85
63	Archery	26	0	0	26	48	54 / 49
63	Muzzle	8	0	0	8	21	38 / 69
63	2nd rifle	80	0	0	80	118	68 / 68
63	3rd rifle	97	0	0	97	115	84 / 76
63	4th rifle	8	0	0	8	8	100 / 95

Elk Hunting

The elk population in these units is growing and there are a good number of bulls. To keep the herd stable, and the number of cow licenses allocated for these units is generous.

If there is no snow, elk will likely be scattered throughout the high elevation landscape. Hunters will be most successful by walking along transition areas up high. By November, animals will start to move lower; hunters should be aware of private land and National Park boundaries, particularly in GMU 63 west of Highway 92. Expect heavy pressure in the Black Mesa area of GMU 63.

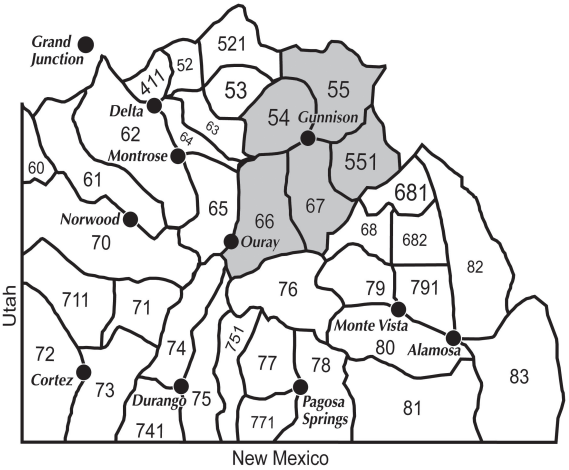
Estimated elk population: 3,500
3-year estimated sex ratio: 21 bulls per 100 cows

2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
53	Archery	70	34	0	104	715	15 / 15
53	Muzzle	17	18	2	37	144	26 / 22
53	1st Rifle	58	51	2	111	393	28 / 26
53	2nd Rifle	60	18	2	80	431	19 / 23
53	3rd Rifle	11	33	4	48	298	16 / 14
53	4th Rifle	2	16	0	18	74	24 / 25
53	Late	0	45	9	54	78	69 / 46
63	Archery	24	16	3	43	276	16 / 18
63	Muzzle	6	13	0	19	74	26 / 22
63	1st Rifle	10	34	2	46	130	35 / 33
63	2nd Rifle	13	11	3	27	273	10 / 17
63	3rd Rifle	3	15	4	22	268	8 / 16
63	4th Rifle	8	5	0	13	88	15 / 28
63	Late	0	14	0	14	31	45 / 44

Gunnison Basin

GMUs 54, 55, 551, 66 and 67
Gunnison CPW: (970)641-7060
Map: Gunnison National Forest



Public land in the area is abundant and varied–from sage brush hills to alpine tundra. Be prepared for cold and snowy weather during all seasons. Motorized travel is limited to designated routes; please consult the current Motor Vehicle Use Maps available from the USFS and BLM.

Deer populations throughout the Gunnison Basin are now slightly above objective. Elk populations are healthy and management plans are under review. New overall herd management plans for elk are being written for the entire basin.

MOOSE ARE PRESENT HERE – BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET!

Deer Hunting

The population is growing in most of these units, herds are over objective, and license numbers, including doe licenses, have been increased for the second year in a row. Buck-to-doe sex ratios are also well above objectives; consequently, future license allocations in these draw-only highly coveted units are likely to grow. Good numbers of mature bucks will be seen by hunters.

These units are managed for high buck-to-doe ratios. Success rates for those who draw a license are well above the statewide average. The herd is distributed throughout the vast basin, so excellent deer hunting opportunities are found in all five game management units. Hunt higher ground during the early seasons and monitor weather conditions. Deer generally start moving to lower elevations in mid-to-late October.

Estimated deer population: 13,900
3-year estimated sex ratio: 47 bucks per 100 does

Report Hunting Violations to:
Operation Game Thief
1-877-265-6648

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
54	Archery	7	0	0	7	37	19 / 23
54	Muzzle	16	0	0	16	39	41 / 34
54	2nd Rifle	138	0	0	138	253	55 / 52
54	3rd Rifle	44	0	0	44	57	77 / 69
54	4th Rifle	7	0	0	7	9	78 / 78
55	Archery	19	0	0	19	45	42 / 31
55	Muzzle	14	0	0	14	31	45 / 50
55	2nd Rifle	102	37	0	139	221	63 / 65
55	3rd Rifle	46	36	0	82	88	93 / 83
55	4th Rifle	8	0	0	8	9	89 / 89
551	Archery	1	0	0	1	17	6 / 37
551	Muzzle	4	0	0	4	12	33 / 47
551	2nd Rifle	67	17	2	86	132	65 / 69
551	3rd Rifle	23	19	0	42	57	74 / 78
551	4th Rifle	5	0	0	5	5	100 / 100
66	Archery	9	0	0	5	5	100 / 100
66	Muzzle	10	0	0	10	20	50 / 59
66	2nd Rifle	70	24	2	96	129	74 / 84
66	3rd Rifle	28	14	5	47	58	81 / 89
66	4th Rifle	8	0	0	8	8	100 / 100
67	Archery	9	0	0	9	29	31 / 30
67	Muzzle	7	0	0	7	22	32 / 45
67	2nd Rifle	70	43	4	117	160	73 / 78
67	3rd Rifle	24	25	0	49	62	79 / 81
67	4th Rifle	7	0	0	7	8	88 / 88

Elk Hunting

Elk populations are stable throughout the Gunnison Basin. In the northern units -- 54, 55 and 551 – big game managers continue to reduce the number of limited licenses available. The biggest cuts are in 54. Aggressive herd reduction during the 2012 and 2013 seasons was implemented to address agricultural damage issues. Consequently, there has been a noticeable decline in the population. CPW managers continue to assess objectives in these units and are developing management plans to rebuild the population.

The southern units – 66 and 67 – saw significant reductions in bull and cow licenses during the 2014 and 2015 seasons. For this year, licenses are the same as last year. The licenses in these units are totally limited and the area is managed to maintain a low-density of hunters.

The herd management plans in all units are under review and will be

revised during the next two years. Hunters and local residents will be asked to give input as planning progresses. In all of these units hunters are advised to be in good shape and to hunt well away from roads. Elk will move to difficult terrain when hunting pressure starts; so be prepared to hunt canyons or thick timber. If the weather is warm, hunt at higher elevations and in heavy timber.

Estimated elk population: 19,000

3-year estimated sex ration: 22 bulls per 100 cows

2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
54	Archery	32	9	0	41	362	11 / 14
54	Muzzle	0	7	0	7	82	9 / 11
54	Early	0	8	8	16	40	40 / 39
54	1st Rifle	64	27	0	91	452	20 / 22
54	2nd Rifle	57	50	0	107	527	20 / 20
54	3rd Rifle	102	14	2	118	827	14 / 15
54	4th Rifle	21	32	5	58	350	17 / 29
55	Archery	29	16	9	54	542	10 / 14
55	Muzzle	0	18	10	28	172	16 / 12
55	1st Rifle	91	46	2	139	520	27 / 21
55	2nd Rifle	95	45	8	148	1144	13 / 14
55	3rd Rifle	96	72	34	202	1019	20 / 15
55	4th Rifle	5	76	13	94	170	55 / 29
551	Archery	41	3	0	44	211	21 / 16
551	Muzzle	0	16	2	18	78	23 / 18
551	1st Rifle	12	11	0	23	166	14 / 21
551	2nd Rifle	29	18	5	52	646	8 / 10
551	3rd Rifle	18	51	0	69	616	11 / 13
551	4th Rifle	4	21	2	27	65	42 / 24
66	Archery	39	3	0	42	137	31 / 22
66	Muzzle	16	9	2	27	66	41 / 31
66	1st Rifle	100	36	0	136	378	36 / 31
66	2nd Rifle	37	35	0	72	368	20 / 26
66	3rd Rifle	48	69	2	119	298	40 / 34
66	4th Rifle	20	55	0	75	169	44 / 38
67	Archery	7	2	0	9	59	15 / 24
67	Muzzle	13	5	2	20	62	32 / 25
67	1st Rifle	58	22	4	84	350	24 / 24
67	2nd Rifle	30	15	5	50	361	14 / 18
67	3rd Rifle	16	38	6	60	289	21 / 26
67	4th Rifle	15	83	6	104	226	46 / 34

San Luis Valley Area

Monte Vista CPW: (719) 587-6900

Map: Rio Grande National Forest

GMUs - 76,79, 68, 681, 682, 791, 80, 81, 82, 83

The San Luis Valley is a vast 8,000-square-mile area that provides a wide variety of terrain at elevations that range from 7,500 feet to 14,000 feet. The rugged Sangre de Cristo Mountains define the valley's east side. The middle of the valley is flat farm land that is privately owned. The Rio Grande and the Conejos River provide long riparian areas that cut through high-elevation alpine forests to lower elevation cottonwood and willow stands. The west is bordered by the Rio Grande National Forest and the San Juan mountain range.

Throughout the area, access varies from moderate to very difficult. Hunting can be good for those willing to go into tough terrain. Hunting is also challenging because animals can move quickly to large areas of private land, and onto Great Sand Dunes National Park and the Baca National Wildlife Refuge where hunting is prohibited.

Deer hunting in the San Luis Valley has been improving recently due to the limit on buck licenses. Success rates are high for hunters who draw a buck tag. Due to overall low deer population, doe hunting is allowed only on private land in specific areas to address game damage issues.

GMU 68 buck licenses can also be used in GMU 681 and 682; GMU 79 buck licenses can also be used in GMU 791. Private Land Only doe tags are available for GMU 79 and 791, mainly for game damage issues.

Elk hunting is good but requires hunters to pursue animals in challenging terrain. Overall success rates for elk hunters in unlimited units in the San Luis Valley are generally lower than the statewide average.

Weather is a dominant factor for hunters. Snow will cause herds to move down quickly from high elevation. Success for elk hunters in the later seasons increases with winter weather. However, small amounts of snow can make travel difficult. Hunters are urged to check weather conditions as much as possible.

You must have permission to hunt on private land. Trespassing is a significant issue in the valley.

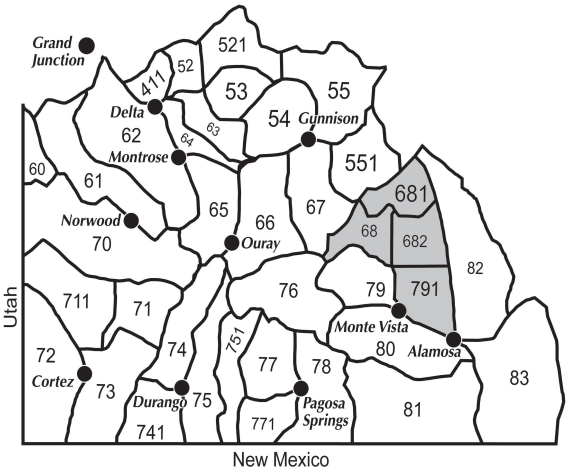
North Valley Floor Special Elk Units (GMUs 682, 791)

A special DAU north of Highway 160 was created in 2006 to address the growing elk population which could cause damage on high-value agricultural lands. The population objective in the DAU is 0 -- the only such designation in the state. Bulls are hunted May 15-Dec. 31. All licenses are distributed through private property landowner vouchers. Hunters must get permission from the landowner to hunt on private land. Contact the Monte Vista office for information, 719-587-6900.

Saguache

GMUs – 68, 681, 682, 791
Monte Vista CPW:
(719)587-6900
Map: Rio Grande Nat. Forest

The area is dominated by public lands and hunting access is excellent in most areas. Vegetation types range from heavy timber to vast areas of grass and low shrubs. Public lands dominate GMUs 68 and 681. These units hold good summer and winter habitat.



MOOSE ARE PRESENT HERE -- BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET!

Deer Hunting

The deer population is growing slowly, but because of the high elevation of the valley and lack of abundant winter range, the population will never grow substantially above the current level. But this herd is healthy and nearly at objective. The buck-to-doe ratio is high for this area, so older age-class quality bucks can be found.

Estimated deer population: 4,450
3-year estimated sex ratio: 29 bucks per 100 does

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
68	Archery	5	0	0	5	37	14 / 16
68	Muzzle	5	0	0	5	38	13 / 25
68	2nd Rifle	58	0	0	58	111	52 / 54
68	3rd Rifle	63	0	0	63	84	75 / 56
68	4th Rifle	3	0	0	3	7	43 / 36
681	Archery	3	0	0	3	31	10 / 21
681	Muzzle	17	0	0	17	44	39 / 44
681	2nd Rifle	35	0	0	35	58	60 / 71
681	3rd Rifle	59	0	0	59	73	81 / 67
681	4th Rifle	6	0	0	6	9	67 / 66
682	2nd Rifle	1	0	0	1	1	100 / 49
682	3rd Rifle	6	0	0	6	6	100 / 31
791	Archery	0	0	0	0	2	0 / 0
791	Muzzle	0	0	0	0	2	0 / 13
791	2nd Rifle	3	0	0	3	5	60 / 70

Elk Hunting

Population of elk in these units is well below objective. License numbers were cut slightly for 2015 as a management tool to help increase the population.

Hunter success rates are lower than most other parts of the state because it is challenging to find these animals. The ratio of bulls to cows is relatively high for an unlimited unit. Hunters willing to go into tough terrain can be rewarded.

Estimated elk population: 3,100
3-year estimated sex ratio: 22 bulls per 100 cows.

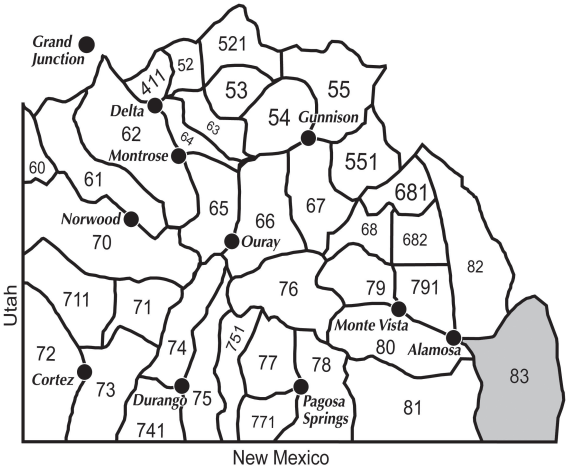
2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
68	Archery	20	0	0	20	328	6 / 9
68	Muzzle	5	5	0	10	134	7 / 9
68	Early	0	0	0	0	8	0 / 38
68	1st Rifle	37	0	0	37	217	17 / 16
68	2nd Rifle	22	6	0	28	587	5 / 6
68	3rd Rifle	34	28	0	62	593	10 / 6
68	4th Rifle	13	41	3	57	249	23 / 22
681	Archery	20	0	0	20	275	7 / 7
681	Muzzle	7	0	0	7	80	9 / 8
681	1st Rifle	23	0	0	23	127	18 / 15
681	2nd Rifle	13	8	4	25	421	6 / 7
681	3rd Rifle	11	10	0	21	370	6 / 5
681	4th Rifle	0	20	2	22	123	18 / 26
682	Archery	0	0	0	0	3	0 / 29
682	Early	0	40	4	44	79	56 / 62
791	Archery	0	0	0	0	7	0 / 20
791	Muzzle	0	0	0	0	1	0 / 0
791	Early	0	4	0	4	8	50 / 49

Safe Hunting is No Accident!

Costilla

GMU 83
Monte Vista CPW:
(719)587-6900
Map: Rio Grande
National Forest



This entire GMU unit is private land. Hunters must obtain permission from land owners, including in subdivisions where landowners may not be present. Trespassing is a major issue in this area.

The unit is dominated by the Trinchera Ranch. The ranch is enrolled in the Ranching for Wildlife program. Deer and elk hunting on the ranch are excellent. For information about hunting on the ranch, see page 14 of the 2016 Colorado Big Game Brochure or go to the web site and type "Ranching for Wildlife" into the search bar.

Deer Hunting

The herd is stable but slightly below the population objective. The buck-to-doe ratio is higher than most units in the southwest region

Estimated deer population: 1,572

3-year estimated sex ratio: 46 bucks per 100 does

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
83	Archery	3	0	0	3	5	60 / 77
83	Muzzle	7	0	0	7	8	88 / 91
83	2nd Rifle	27	0	0	27	27	100 / 87
83	3rd Rifle	25	0	0	25	29	86 / 93
83	4th Rifle	0	0	0	0	5	0 / 72

Report Hunting Violations to:
Operation Game Thief
1-877-265-6648

Elk Hunting

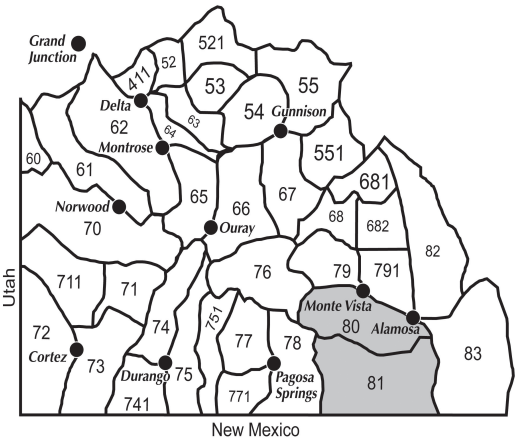
The population estimate for this herd in 16,000 and also includes GMUs 85, 851 and 140 on the east side of the Sangre de Cristo range. There is no population estimate for GMU 83 only, although the population appears to be trending down on the west side of the range. An either-sex tag for this Ranching for Wildlife area requires a minimum of 14 preference points.

2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
83	Archery	16	4	0	20	244	8 / 12
83	Muzzle	0	0	0	0	5	0 / 6
83	1st Rifle	25	5	0	30	62	48 / 36
83	2nd Rifle	44	4	0	48	280	17 / 17
83	3rd Rifle	77	47	4	128	496	26 / 20
83	4th Rifle	21	16	2	39	67	58 / 49

Lower Rio Grande

GMUs – 80, 81
Monte Vista CPW: (719)587-6900
Map: Rio Grande National Forest



This area has a large amount of public land, easy access via roads and, consequently, heavy hunting pressure. Elk and deer move to areas of rough terrain hidden from roads when the season starts. Hunters who want to get far away from vehicular traffic can go to the South San Juan Wilderness Area located in the southern portion of GMU 81. Hunting quality is good, especially in early seasons before winter weather pushes animals out.

No big game hunting is allowed on the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge.

Deer Hunting

The population is increasing and the buck-to-doe ratio is favorable. Those who are willing to pass up younger bucks should be able to find a more mature buck to harvest. Deer are found throughout both units. This unit is gaining popularity with deer hunters.

Estimated deer population: 4,830
3-year estimated sex ratio: 27 bucks per 100 does

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
80	Archery	30	0	0	30	99	30 / 22
80	Muzzle	25	0	0	25	80	31 / 31
80	2nd Rifle	49	0	0	49	141	35 / 48
80	3rd Rifle	100	0	0	100	156	64 / 58
80	4th Rifle	18	0	0	18	20	90 / 60
81	Archery	18	0	0	18	102	18 / 20
81	Muzzle	20	0	0	20	46	43 / 32
81	2nd Rifle	43	0	0	43	94	46 / 50
81	3rd Rifle	45	0	0	45	100	45 / 49
81	4th Rifle	12	0	0	12	18	67 / 48

Elk Hunting

This population continues to grow and is over objective by 4,000 animals. Big-game managers are now evaluating the management objective. Bull harvest has been strong in these units during the last few seasons, and the same is expected for this year. Cow harvest is low so this population is expected to continue growing for the foreseeable future. These units get significant hunting pressure, so elk can be difficult to find. Hunters who work hard to get away from roads and into thick timber and challenging terrain have the best chance of filling their tags.

Estimated elk population: 9,800

3-year estimated sex ratio: 14 bulls per 100 cows

2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

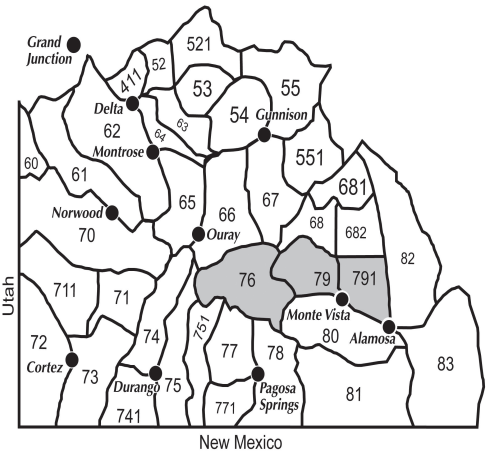
GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
80	Archery	105	16	4	125	1004	12 / 12
80	Muzzle	13	12	0	25	166	15 / 15
80	Early	0	11	0	11	14	79 / 33
80	1st Rifle	69	0	0	69	394	18 / 21
80	2nd Rifle	73	0	0	73	845	9 / 11
80	3rd Rifle	44	0	0	44	600	7 / 7
80	4th Rifle	11	42	6	59	226	26 / 19
81	Archery	134	69	14	217	1322	16 / 16
81	Muzzle	9	9	0	18	118	15 / 21
81	Early	0	9	0	9	25	36 / 35
81	1st Rifle	89	0	0	89	428	21 / 25
81	2nd Rifle	103	0	0	103	966	11 / 12
81	3rd Rifle	22	3	0	25	514	5 / 8
81	4th Rifle	5	19	2	26	166	16 / 11

Upper Rio Grande

GMUs – 76, 79, 791
Monte Vista CPW: (719)587-6900
Map: Rio Grande National Forest

GMU 76 has the highest percentage of public lands in the San Luis Valley. GMU 76 also has portions of wilderness areas for hunters who want to pack in. While GMU 79 contains some private land, there is plenty of public land in this unit.

The West Fork fire of 2013 continues to provide long-term habitat benefits for big game. Hunters in the West Fork fire burn area should beware of falling trees and flash-flood conditions.



Deer Hunting

The deer population is below objective but the buck-to-doe ratio is high and it is possible to find mature bucks. GMU 79 has important winter range and holds deer and elk in the late seasons, depending on the snow accumulations.

GMU 76 is primarily summer range for deer, very few animals winter there. Mature bucks can be found in these units.

Estimated deer population: 1,680

3-year estimated sex ratio: 33 bucks per 100 does

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
76	Archery	3	0	0	3	13	23 / 26
76	Muzzle	9	0	0	9	12	75 / 60
76	2nd Rifle	12	0	0	12	15	80 / 59
76	3rd Rifle	3	0	0	3	18	17 / 48
79	Archery	2	0	0	2	5	40 / 20
79	Muzzle	4	0	0	4	14	29 / 34
79	2nd Rifle	42	0	0	42	66	64 / 58
79	3rd Rifle	62	0	0	62	80	78 / 66
79	4th Rifle	7	0	0	7	8	88 / 80

Elk Hunting

Habitat is excellent and the elk population is growing steadily. Population is still at the high end of the objective range. The West Fork

fire of 2013 continues to provide long-term habitat benefits for this population. GMU 79 is primarily winter range for elk and success is highly dependent on snow pushing animals into the area.

These units are totally limited for elk hunting. GMU 79, however, can be hunted with a general elk license during archery season. GMU 76 offers great bull hunting for those willing to wait to draw a license. The unit, however, doesn't produce trophy-quality animals that are found in other limited units in Colorado.

Estimated elk population: 4,700

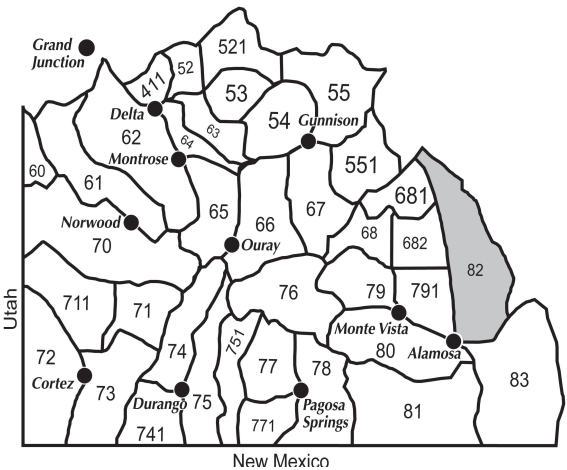
3-year estimated sex ratio: 17 bulls per 100 cows

2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
76	Archery	55	0	0	55	139	40 / 38
76	Muzzle	39	8	0	47	75	63 / 46
76	Early	12	0	0	12	17	71 / 80
76	1st Rifle	95	0	0	95	177	54 / 46
76	2nd Rifle	20	35	2	57	220	26 / 28
76	3rd Rifle	14	30	12	56	180	31 / 30
76	4th Rifle	0	52	5	57	149	38 / 33
79	Archery	7	0	0	7	147	5 / 5
79	Muzzle	0	0	0	0	31	0 / 8
79	Early	0	7	0	7	17	41 / 37
79	1st Rifle	12	0	0	12	171	7 / 7
79	2nd Rifle	3	8	0	11	158	7 / 7
79	3rd Rifle	5	0	0	5	136	4 / 7
79	4th Rifle	0	5	0	5	81	6 / 13

Sand Dunes

GMU 82
Monte Vista CPW
(719)587-6900
Map: Rio Grande N.F.



Hunting is prohibited in Great Sand Dunes National Park and the Baca National Wildlife Refuge which are located within this unit. National forest and national park preserve, where hunting is allowed, abuts the park and refuge so when hunting pressure starts deer and elk move down quickly to the safe havens. There is also private land with residential development

in the northern half of the unit. So, be sure to know what's behind your target.

Hunters are allowed to pass through the national park to hunting areas, but some restrictions apply. Call the National Park Service at 1-719-378-6399, or go to the web site, www.nps.gov/grsa for information.

Much of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range is U.S. Forest Service wilderness. This range is extremely rugged and road access is limited. It is accessible mainly by foot or horseback. Hunters should be in good shape if they plan to hunt here.

Deer Hunting

The population is stable and offers a high buck-to-doe ratio. Hunter success is good for those who draw a license. A limited number of licenses are issued for this area.

Estimated deer population: 1,820
3-year estimated sex ratio: 34 bucks to 100 does

2015 Deer Hunting Statistics

% Success

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	2015 / 5 yr.
82	Archery	3	0	0	3	37	8 / 16
82	Muzzle	17	0	0	17	46	37 / 39
82	Early	6	0	0	6	12	50 / 67
82	2nd Rifle	77	0	0	77	116	66 / 58
82	3rd Rifle	57	0	0	57	88	65 / 61
82	4th Rifle	4	0	0	4	4	100 / 88

Elk Hunting

Even though there are concentrations of elk in portions of this area, once the seasons start the animals move to where hunting is prohibited – federal wildlife refuges and the national park. When hunting in this area be sure to know the federal boundary locations. Access is good in the northern portion of GMU 82, but hunting can be poor because animals quickly move south when hunters arrive.

Estimated elk population: 3,900
3-year sex ratio average: 37 bulls to 100 cows

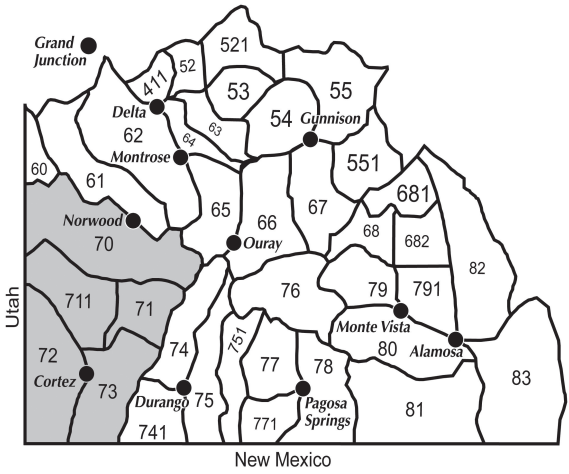
2015 Elk Hunting Statistics

% Success

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Harvest	Hunters	2015 / 5 yr.
82	Archery	27	13	0	40	507	8 / 9
82	Muzzle	0	3	0	3	25	12 / 12
82	Early	28	2	0	30	32	94 / 83
82	1st Rifle	29	30	3	62	276	22 / 18
82	2nd Rifle	84	14	0	98	499	20 / 13
82	3rd Rifle	42	18	4	64	520	12 / 11
82	4th Rifle	14	14	0	28	90	31 / 20

Dolores – Dry Creek

GMUs 70, 71, 711, 72, 73
Montrose CPW (970)252-6000,
Durango CPW: (970)247-0855
Maps: GMUs 70, 71, 711, 72, 73 – San Juan National Forest; GMU 70 - Uncompahgre National Forest



This area covers a 2,800-square-mile landscape from the west side of the Uncompahgre Plateau to the Utah state line and south to the New Mexico border. Habitat throughout these GMUs is favorable for big game. With altitudes from 5,000 feet to more than 12,000 feet, the vegetation ranges from desert shrubs to alpine tundra. Weather can change quickly, so be prepared for all conditions. There is good vehicle access in these areas; consequently, hunting pressure can be heavy on areas of easily accessible public lands. An exception is the Lizard Head Wilderness Area, GMU 71, which is accessible by foot and horseback only. Most of unit 72 and the western sections of 70 and 711 is desert terrain and not productive for elk.

Be aware of private land in the northern sections of GMUs 71 and 711, and in the southern section of GMU 70. The southern half of units 72 and 73 is tribal land. Hunting by non-tribal members is prohibited. Hunting is also prohibited at Mesa Verde National Park.

MOOSE ARE PRESENT HERE -- BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET!

Deer Hunting

The deer population in all of the GMUs has stabilized after several years of decline. In the northern units, the buck-to-do ratio is high so more buck licenses were allotted for 2015. But in the southern units, the ratio is dropping so licenses were reduced slightly.

In the early seasons, deer are evenly distributed, mostly above 8,000 feet. Deer begin migrating to lower elevations, generally from east to west, in mid-October. Snow will cause them to move to lower elevations earlier. Deer concentrate on winter ranges in Dry Creek Basin, Disappointment Valley and along the rim of the Dolores River canyon. GMU 70 in Dry Creek Basin is recommended in the third and fourth seasons.

Estimated deer population: 17,250 (includes all five GMUs)
3-year average sex ratio: 29 bucks per 100 does (GMUs 70, 71, 711)
3-year average sex ratio: 25 bucks per 100 does (GMUs 72 and 73)

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
70	Archery	28	0	0	0	28	28 / 27
70	Muzzle	26	0	0	26	67	39 / 34
70	2nd Rifle	316	10	2	328	490	67 / 62
70	3rd Rifle	319	8	0	327	524	62 / 65
70	4th Rifle	28	0	0	28	35	80 / 67
71	Archery	6	0	0	6	87	7 / 25
71	Muzzle	6	0	0	6	38	16 / 27
71	2nd Rifle	79	0	0	79	185	43 / 35
71	3rd Rifle	66	0	0	66	202	33 / 35
71	4th Rifle	10	0	0	10	16	63 / 39
711	Archery	14	0	0	14	42	33 / 22
711	Muzzle	13	0	0	13	31	42 / 33
711	2nd Rifle	88	0	0	88	158	56 / 52
711	3rd Rifle	198	0	0	198	282	70 / 55
711	4th Rifle	14	0	0	14	24	58 / 52
72	Archery	14	0	0	14	52	27 / 29
72	Muzzle	14	0	0	14	32	44 / 42
72	2nd Rifle	142	0	0	142	182	78 / 65
72	3rd Rifle	94	0	0	94	178	53 / 58
72	4th Rifle	17	0	0	17	33	52 / 60
73	Archery	39	0	0	39	67	58 / 46
73	Muzzle	15	0	0	15	46	33 / 43
73	2nd Rifle	61	0	0	61	114	54 / 54
73	3rd Rifle	128	0	0	128	213	60 / 59
73	4th Rifle	12	0	0	12	21	57 / 52

Elk Hunting

The elk population is holding steady and herds are at objective levels. Animals are distributed widely throughout the eastern portion of these units. Generally, GMU 71 is better early in the season, but will hold elk on south-facing slopes during the later seasons. GMU 711 becomes better as the season progresses. Elk will move quickly into thick aspen, evergreens and rugged terrain with hunting pressure. Hunt the edges of timbered areas slowly at first light and at sundown when elk are most active. There are many young bulls in this unit so be careful not to shoot a spike. Hunt away from roads and OHV trails for the best chance of success.

Estimated elk population: 19,280
3-year average sex ratio: 16 bulls per 100 cows

2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

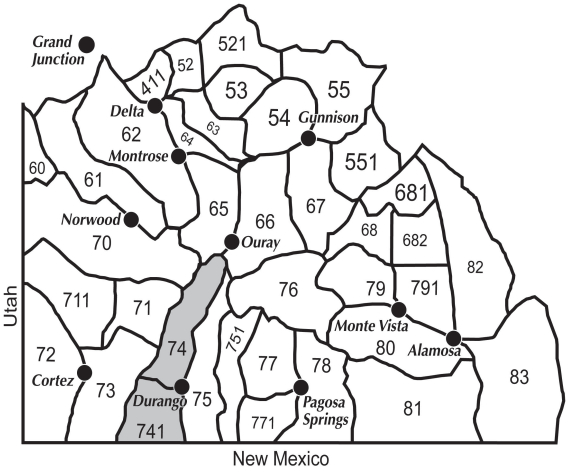
GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
70	Archery	52	23	10	85	722	12 / 19
70	Muzzle	0	19	3	22	108	20 / 21
70	1st Rifle	150	89	13	252	531	47/ 46
70	2nd Rifle	135	166	12	313	1031	30 / 29
70	3rd Rifle	158	168	21	347	1209	29 / 27
70	4th Rifle	18	140	11	169	325	52 / 37
70	Late	0	133	2	135	177	76 / 64
71	Archery	95	56	6	157	1027	15 / 16
71	Muzzle	0	12	3	15	111	14 / 16
71	Early	0	0	0	0	0	0 / 0
71	1st Rifle	90	81	8	179	568	32 / 27
71	2nd Rifle	99	35	4	138	833	17 / 17
71	3rd Rifle	57	29	2	88	577	15 / 15
71	4th Rifle	2	27	3	32	65	49 / 21
711	Archery	26	6	4	36	340	11 / 12
711	Muzzle	0	3	6	9	29	31 / 21
711	Early	0	27	5	32	67	48 / 38
711	1st Rifle	44	38	5	87	246	35 / 29
711	2nd Rifle	60	5	0	65	477	14 / 15
711	3rd Rifle	79	51	14	144	808	18 / 15
711	4th Rifle	12	102	10	124	225	55 / 41
72	Archery	9	0	0	9	129	7 / 13
72	Muzzle	0	0	0	0	6	0 / 0
72	Early	0	9	0	9	38	24 / 27
72	1st Rifle	7	0	0	7	82	9 / 25
72	2nd Rifle	9	4	0	13	129	10 / 13
72	3rd Rifle	14	4	3	21	169	12 / 12
72	4th Rifle	0	0	0	0	27	0 / 21
73	Archery	33	4	0	37	273	14 / 14
73	Muzzle	0	9	0	9	27	33 / 27
73	Early	0	8	0	8	36	22 / 30
73	1st Rifle	33	14	0	47	82	57 / 28
73	2nd Rifle	31	3	0	34	257	13 / 13
73	3rd Rifle	10	9	2	21	234	9 / 12
73	4th Rifle	0	17	0	17	30	57 / 45

See a wildlife crime? Call Operation Game Thief

1-877-265-6648

Hermosa

GMUs 74, 741
Durango CPW: (970)247-0855
Map: San Juan National Forest



Elevations range from about 6,000 feet near the New Mexico border to well over 12,000 feet near Silverton. An abundance of vegetation provides good summer range, but winter range on the south is declining because of development. Public land is abundant in GMU 74 with much of it quite remote. Expect hunting pressure where road access is good.

Most of the land in GMU 741 is private or part of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. Only members of the tribe can hunt on the reservation.

No hunting is allowed around Nighthorse Reservoir which is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation. Hunting is allowed on the 3,000 acres owned by CPW in the adjacent Bodo State Wildlife Area.

MOOSE ARE PRESENT HERE – BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET!

Deer Hunting

This population is holding steady, and the buck-to-doe ratio is high, so it is possible to find quality bucks. In October, deer move from summer range at high elevations in the north to southern winter range.

In the early seasons deer hunting can be good near timberline. As deer begin to move to winter range they can be more difficult to find. Look for timbered areas with a good mix of open meadows or undergrowth. Deer will head to winter range, usually 8,500 feet and below, during the third rifle season in a typical year. The lower portions of Junction Creek and areas further south can provide good deer hunting in the later seasons.

Estimated deer population: 4,770
3-year average sex ratio: 34 bucks per 100 does

Safe Hunting is No Accident!

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
74	Archery	31	0	0	31	102	30 / 31
74	Muzzle	30	0	0	30	92	33 / 39
74	Early	9	0	0	9	13	69 / 76
74	2nd Rifle	74	0	0	74	185	40 / 31
74	3rd Rifle	17	0	0	17	99	17 / 30
74	4th Rifle	15	0	0	15	38	39 / 33
741	Archery	11	3	0	14	53	26 / 35
741	Muzzle	17	3	0	20	36	56 / 49
741	2nd Rifle	88	49	0	137	201	68 / 63
741	3rd Rifle	100	42	3	145	254	57 / 64
741	4th Rifle	22	29	6	57	101	56 / 70

Elk Hunting

The elk herd is at the low end of the population objective and calf recruitment is well below average. CPW is working to increase the population and has reduced cow harvest in this unit over the past several years. Most elk in GMU 74 are at higher elevation areas until snow accumulation pushes them down. Hunters willing to go into rugged terrain could be rewarded. Consider hunting near Engineer Mountain, in the Hermosa Creek drainage west of the Purgatory ski resort and up Junction Creek just northwest of Durango. Finding bulls is tough. They have survived by knowing how to avoid hunters. Concentrate on rugged terrain away from other hunters. Weather often dictates the success rate in this area.

Estimated elk population: 4,900

3-year estimated sex ratio: 18 bulls per 100 cows

2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

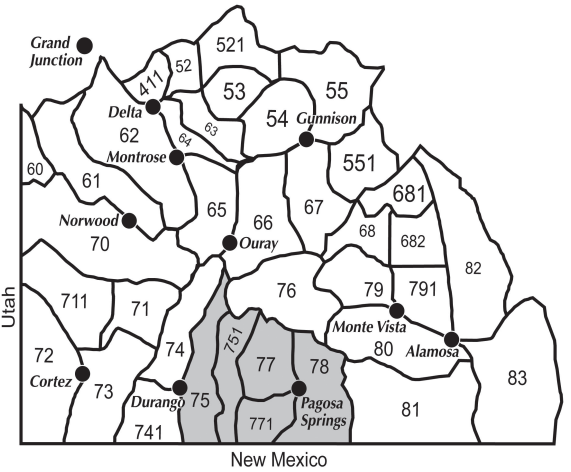
GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
74	Archery	79	17	4	100	779	13 / 13
74	Muzzle	0	5	2	7	23	30 / 16
74	Early	0	23	20	43	109	39 / 31
74	1st Rifle	42	10	0	52	271	19 / 25
74	2nd Rifle	89	7	1	97	488	20 / 17
74	3rd Rifle	63	6	0	69	336	21 / 16
74	4th Rifle	6	7	0	13	75	17 / 14
741	Archery	20	6	0	26	109	24 / 17
741	Early	0	53	6	59	265	22 / 23
741	1st Rifle	11	0	1	12	49	24 / 24
741	2nd Rifle	25	2	0	27	80	34 / 23
741	3rd Rifle	10	2	0	12	95	13 / 12
741	4th Rifle	3	0	0	3	10	30 / 11

San Juan Basin

GMUs 75, 77, 78, 751, 771

Durango CPW: (970)247-0855

Map: San Juan National Forest



Public land and road access is good at mid to high elevations in these units which lie between Durango and Wolf Creek Pass. Elevations range from about 6,500 feet to more than 12,000 feet. Weather can change quickly and be severe.

If the weather is warm, animals will be scattered widely in the vast alpine terrain. Hunters should concentrate their efforts away from roads. Two wilderness areas – the Weminuche on the north, and the South San Juan in the southeast corner – offer good back-country hunting opportunities. If you're hunting the backcountry during earlier seasons, get a harvested animal out and into a cooler quickly. Temperatures in early seasons are often in the 70s and meat will start to spoil within a day. South of U.S. Highway 160 much of the land is privately owned or part of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. To access pockets of public land within the Southern Ute boundaries you MUST obtain a crossing permit ($25) from the tribe. Call (970)563-0125 for information. Hunting is not allowed on tribal lands.

MOOSE ARE PRESENT HERE – BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET!

Deer Hunting

After a few years of cutting licenses the population is growing and license numbers are being increased. Deer and hunting will be excellent in these units and buck-to-do ratio is high. The areas with the best deer hunting on public lands are: the HD Mountains, the Piedra River, Florida River and Los Pinos drainages, and lands southeast of Pagosa Springs. A large percentage of the deer in these units initiate north-to-south migration in mid-October. After the first week of November deer are typically on winter range. Much of the winter range occupied by this herd is on private land or tribal property.

Estimated deer population: 24,150
3-year estimated sex ratio: 34 bucks per 100 does

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
75	Archery	17	12	0	29	90	32 / 26
75	Muzzle	51	2	0	53	97	55 / 42
75	2nd Rifle	115	5	2	122	230	53 / 52
75	3rd Rifle	146	5	0	151	213	71 / 62
75	4th Rifle	53	4	4	61	86	71 / 65
751	Archery	12	1	0	13	57	23 / 22
751	Muzzle	19	2	0	21	47	45 / 38
751	2nd Rifle	69	0	0	69	170	41 / 40
751	3rd Rifle	69	0	0	69	170	49 / 41
751	4th Rifle	35	1	0	36	47	77 / 63
77	Archery	25	7	0	32	100	32 / 30
77	Muzzle	27	3	0	30	95	32 / 32
77	2nd Rifle	268	4	0	272	445	61 / 45
77	3rd Rifle	185	2	0	187	278	67 / 47
77	4th Rifle	47	0	0	47	69	68 / 65
771	Archery	0	0	0	0	4	0 / 22
771	Muzzle	8	0	0	8	11	73 / 38
771	2nd Rifle	67	0	0	67	109	61 / 46
771	3rd Rifle	72	0	0	72	135	53 / 53
771	4th Rifle	35	0	0	35	49	71 / 70
78	Archery	27	7	0	34	107	32 / 35
78	Muzzle	35	5	0	40	98	41 / 38
78	2nd Rifle	135	0	0	135	260	52 / 51
78	3rd Rifle	66	0	0	66	111	59 / 41
78	4th Rifle	15	0	0	15	28	54 / 61

Elk Hunting

Even though cow licenses have been reduced in the last few years, this herd is not growing. Wildlife managers are working on management strategies to increase the population. Hunters must be prepared to walk into remote and heavily-forested areas to find animals. Do not expect to see elk from roads or areas open to OHV use. In the early seasons stick to north facing slopes in the spruce/fir and aspen forests. Elk will move lower when snow accumulation is significant. In late seasons, ponderosa pine forests and oak brush are usually productive.

The wilderness area boundary north of Pagosa Springs often holds elk when snow pushes them down. Areas south of Pagosa Springs and east of Highway 84 can provide good hunting as snow begins to accumulate. Access is provided by the Mill Creek Road (FS Rd 302), Rio Blanco Road (FS Rd 657) and Buckles Lake Road (FS Rd 663). Hunters who don't mind working in rough country can be successful in the hills on either side of the Piedra River north of Highway 160. The Missionary Ridge Road (FS Rd 682) and Beaver Meadows Road (FS

Rd 135) provide access into good elk country in GMUs 75 and 751 as does the Mosca Road (FS Rd 631) and FS Road 634 in GMU 77.

Estimated elk population: 18,612
3-year estimated sex ratio: 14 bulls per 100 cows

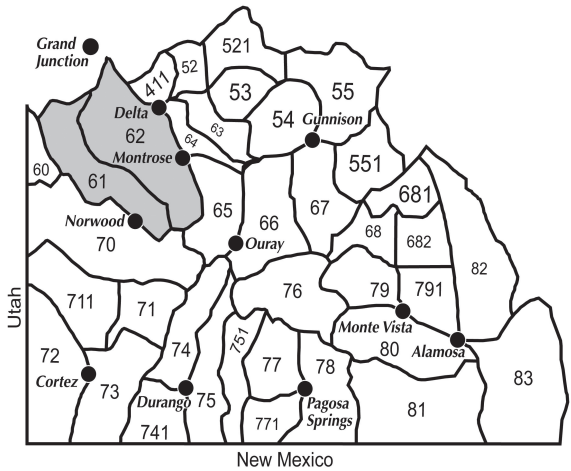
2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
75	Archery	42	10	4	56	508	11 / 10
75	Muzzle	0	2	0	2	39	5 / 10
75	Early	0	61	0	61	185	33 / 40
75	1st Rifle	44	5	0	49	354	14 / 22
75	2nd Rifle	26	9	5	40	356	11 / 18
75	3rd Rifle	44	47	0	91	438	21 / 17
75	4th Rifle	10	25	2	37	118	31 / 25
751	Archery	32	0	0	32	358	9 / 12
751	Muzzle	0	0	0	0	20	0 / 2
751	1st Rifle	22	25	0	47	231	20 / 23
751	2nd Rifle	31	13	0	44	312	14 / 14
751	3rd Rifle	60	27	0	87	346	25 / 20
751	4th Rifle	11	16	3	30	79	38 / 25
751	Late	0	38	9	47	79	59 / 45
77	Archery	55	23	0	78	635	12 / 13
77	Muzzle	0	0	2	2	22	9 / 10
77	Early	0	13	2	15	21	71 / 36
77	1st Rifle	95	50	4	149	456	33 / 30
77	2nd Rifle	86	6	0	92	968	10 / 16
77	3rd Rifle	118	11	1	130	779	17 / 14
77	4th Rifle	19	8	0	27	83	33 / 26
771	Archery	13	0	0	13	123	11 / 12
771	Muzzle	0	0	0	0	2	0 / 0
771	1st Rifle	10	24	0	34	85	40 / 31
771	2nd Rifle	23	3	0	26	172	15 / 15
771	3rd Rifle	28	3	0	31	229	14 / 12
771	4th Rifle	3	1	0	4	15	27 / 15
78	Archery	118	29	6	153	976	16 / 16
78	Muzzle	0	2	0	2	29	7 / 12
78	Early	0	0	0	0	8	0 / 38
78	1st Rifle	38	38	0	76	205	37 / 33
78	2nd Rifle	108	15	0	123	866	14 / 16
78	3rd Rifle	90	9	0	99	617	16 / 15
78	4th Rifle	3	10	1	14	38	37 / 27

Uncompahgre Plateau

GMUs 61,62
Map: Uncompahgre National Forest
Montrose CPW: (970)252-6000

The plateau encompasses 2,300 square miles of terrain that includes large, relatively flat mesas bisected by deep, rugged canyons. The elevation ranges from 4,600 feet to 10,300 feet. Be prepared for sudden weather changes. Numerous roads provide easy access to the plateau, but many canyons are accessible only by foot or horseback. Bow hunters and muzzleloaders should concentrate on U.S. Forest Service lands along the top of the plateau. The highest success rate for bull hunters occurs in GMU 62 during first season, but expect hunting pressure there. Animals usually move to lower elevation private lands as hunting pressure increases. GMU 61 is managed as a quality elk unit and licenses are totally limited.



Deer Hunting

After a significant population decline from about 2007 to 2012, the deer population in these units has stabilized and appears to be growing moderately, but is far below objective. Mild winters during the past few years have helped to promote strong doe and fawn survival, 85 percent and 87 percent respectively in 2014. Good moisture during the past couple of summers and last spring also helped to reduce the effects of prolonged drought.

To help bolster the population, license allocation remains very conservative at 1,390, the same as last year. The reduction in harvest appears to be helping to maintain buck-to-doe ratios. The opportunity to see mature bucks is good throughout the plateau. During the early season deer are concentrated in the aspen and oak brush. As fall progresses, deer will move lower into the pinon and juniper winter range.

Estimated deer population: 19,300
3-Year estimate sex ratio: 30 bucks per 100 does

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

% Success

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	2015 / 5 yr.
61	Archery	9	0	0	9	40	23 / 38
61	Muzzle	4	0	0	4	11	36 / 39
61	2nd Rifle	58	0	0	58	96	60 / 50
61	3rd Rifle	64	0	0	64	91	70 / 64
62	Archery	37	0	0	37	173	21 / 26
62	Muzzle	9	0	0	9	27	33 / 40
62	2nd Rifle	206	32	2	240	411	58 / 55
62	3rd Rifle	211	24	0	235	351	67 / 70

Elk Hunting

The elk population is declining to objective and licenses have been reduced for these units. Elk are widely distributed, but hunting pressure during the early seasons appears to be forcing animals from GMU 62, an over-the-counter unit, to GMU 61, a limited unit. Elk move into canyons and private property with hunting pressure. To minimize crowding, some licenses in GMU 61 have been shifted to later seasons. It's still recommended that hunters start at high elevation, especially in the early seasons. But those who venture into the tough canyon terrain could be rewarded. Be sure to stay on public lands in the canyon areas. Hunters should also move well away from roads to improve chances of success. If your tag is for GMU 62 be sure that you are hunting on the northeast side of the Divide Road.

Estimated elk population: 8,800

3-year estimated sex ratio: 19 bulls per 100 cows

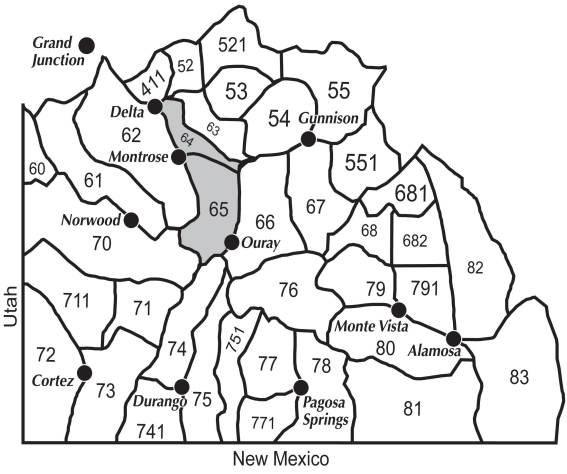
2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

% Success

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	2015 / 5 yr.
61	Archery	42	0	0	42	91	46 / 44
61	Muzzle	31	14	1	46	96	48 / 53
61	1st Rifle	62	15	4	81	159	51 / 53
61	2nd Rifle	57	78	12	147	319	46 / 47
61	3rd Rifle	28	98	16	142	267	53 / 48
61	4th Rifle	14	156	19	189	297	64 / 52
61	Late	0	86	7	93	102	91 / 65
62	Archery	162	77	0	239	1639	15 / 14
62	Muzzle	18	5	0	23	191	12 / 15
62	1st Rifle	74	33	5	112	433	26 / 27
62	2nd Rifle	195	57	4	256	1692	15 / 15
62	3rd Rifle	84	48	0	132	1170	11 / 15
62	4th Rifle	10	62	6	78	199	39 / 27
62	Late	0	37	0	37	46	80 / 42

Cimarron River Drainage

GMUs 64, 65
Montrose CPW: (970)252-6000
Maps: GMU 64, Uncompahgre National Forest
Map: GMU 65, Gunnison National Forest



These units include some of the most diverse terrain in Colorado, from 4,700 feet in the dry desert lands near Delta to 14,309-foot Uncompahgre Peak. Warm weather at the low elevations will cause meat to spoil very quickly, so be prepared to pack out fast. Weather is variable and unpredictable at the higher elevations.

Most of GMU 64 is private land or part of Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park where hunting is prohibited. Parts of GMU 65 are easily accessible by road, so hunting pressure near roads is significant. Hunters must be willing to walk well away from roads if they expect to be successful. The Uncompahgre and Mount Sneffels wilderness areas at the south end of GMU 65 offer challenging terrain, but hunters will to go there could be rewarded.

MOOSE ARE PRESENT HERE - BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET

Deer Hunting

After declines following tough winters during 2008 and 2009, the deer population is growing again. Consequently, license numbers have been increased again for this year. No antlerless licenses were issued in the draw, however. The buck-to-doe ratio is showing noticeable improvement. Abundant spring moisture is aiding forage production

For the best bucks, hunt at high elevations early. Go lower as the season progresses. Deer move lower and to private land as hunting pressure increases. During the second season, deer favor aspen/oak brush/ serviceberry areas; they move lower to pinon/juniper during the third season. Access is relatively easy in the lower terrain; but rewards can be great for hunters willing to go into higher and more challenging terrain.

Estimated deer population: 8,500
3-year estimate sex ratio: 33 bucks per 100 does

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
64	Archery	4	0	0	4	16	25 / 20
64	Muzzle	2	0	0	2	7	29 / 43
64	2nd Rifle	69	0	0	69	146	47 / 57
64	3rd Rifle	73	0	0	73	147	50 / 59
64	4th Rifle	2	0	0	2	4	50 / 53
65	Archery	28	0	0	28	67	42 / 36
65	Muzzle	4	0	0	4	13	31 / 51
65	2nd Rifle	86	0	0	86	165	52 / 48
65	3rd Rifle	110	0	0	110	173	64 / 60
65	4th Rifle	4	0	0	4	7	57 / 81

Elk Hunting

The population is slightly above objective, growing and the hunting prospects are good. Antlerless licenses were increased by 10 percent for muzzleloader and rifle seasons. Because of the extent of wilderness area in these units, elk find plenty of lush meadows for summer grazing. The elk will stay high until hunting pressure or weather force them down. If you hunt public land, be aware that they are bordered by numerous private ranches – especially near Ridgway and Dallas Divide. Elk will move to private land quickly, so know your location. Try the Cimarron and Billy Creek state wildlife areas in later seasons or after snow has pushed the elk down.

Estimated elk population: 6,000

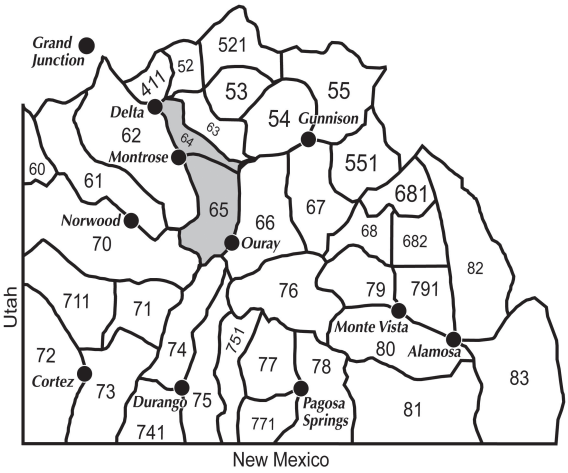
3-year estimated sex ratio: 17 bulls per 100 cows

2015 Elk Hunting Statistics

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
64	Archery	10	3	0	13	141	9 / 14
64	Muzzle	11	3	0	14	52	27 / 17
64	1st Rifle	50	35	0	85	255	33 / 35
64	2nd Rifle	37	14	3	54	255	21 / 22
64	3rd Rifle	27	13	2	42	240	18 / 18
64	4th Rifle	8	45	16	69	117	59 / 36
65	Archery	59	32	4	95	760	13 / 13
65	Muzzle	16	5	0	21	133	16 / 16
65	Early	0	132	0	132	307	43 / 45
65	1st Rifle	82	56	3	141	382	37 / 38
65	2nd Rifle	119	11	3	133	625	21 / 23
65	3rd Rifle	74	25	4	103	448	23 / 22
65	4th Rifle	16	31	0	47	104	45 / 33

Paradox

Montrose CPW:(970)252-6000
GMU 60 Maps: Manti-La Sal National Forest, Delta-Nucla BLM.



This unit along the Utah line is primarily winter range. Elevations range from 4,500 feet along the Dolores River to 8,600 feet near the Utah line. The GMU is primarily BLM land. The majority of the Big game migrates in from Utah; harvest success depends on the weather. Because of migration patterns, population estimates for this GMU are not possible. Chronic wasting disease has been found in deer and elk in Utah.

Deer Hunting

Success depends on the weather in Utah. Harvest is generally better for mule deer in the later seasons around the Paradox and Sinbad valleys.

2015 Deer Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
60	Archery	10	0	0	10	35	29 / 32
60	Muzzle	1	0	0	1	4	25 / 34
60	2nd Rifle	24	0	0	24	59	41 / 45
60	3rd Rifle	26	4	0	30	64	47 / 52
60	4th Rifle	3	0	0	3	4	75 / 41

Elk Hunting

The elk population is healthy, but success is dependent on the weather in Utah. Harvest success is better in the later seasons and away from roads, with animals being found near Carpenter Ridge, Buckeye Reservoir, and John Brown Canyon.

2015 Elk Harvest Statistics

GMU	Season	Bulls	Cows	Fawns	Harvest	Hunters	% Success 2015 / 5 yr.
60	Archery	13	0	0	13	73	18 / 20
60	Muzzle	5	0	0	5	11	45 / 16
60	Early	0	14	0	14	41	34 / 34
60	1st Rifle	11	0	0	11	36	31 / 22
60	2nd Rifle	14	0	0	14	72	19 / 22
60	3rd Rifle	12	3	0	15	107	14 / 14
60	4th Rifle	10	2	2	14	38	37 / 34

Understanding Colorado's Preference Point System

When applying for a limited license, a preference point is awarded when an individual is unsuccessful in drawing their first-choice hunt code. Preference points provide a mathematical advantage when applied to future drawings.

Some things to remember:

• Preference points are awarded by species, not hunt code. A point can be used to apply for any type of license available for that species.

• A preference point is awarded only for an unsuccessful application for a first-choice hunt code.

• Always apply for the unit that is your first choice if your goal is to accumulate points for use toward a future quality hunt. Points needed can change significantly from year to year.

• For bear, elk, deer and pronghorn, you will accumulate preference points until you are successful in drawing a first-choice license. If you draw your first choice, your preference points drop to zero. There is no "banking" of preference points.

• If you do not apply or hold a license at least once within 10 consecutive years for a bear, elk, deer or pronghorn, your preference points for that species will be lost.

• For bighorn sheep, moose and mountain goat, an applicant can accumulate a maximum of three points. Future applications are pooled with other three-point applicants. If you are unsuccessful in the pooled drawing, a "mathematically weighted" point is awarded to increase the probability of drawing a future license. You must apply at least once in a consecutive 10-year period to keep your points.

• Nonresident allocations are determined by the average number of preference points a Colorado resident needs to draw a specific license during a 3-year period. For hunt codes that require six or more points for a Colorado resident to draw an elk or deer license, up to 20 percent of licenses may go to nonresidents. For elk and deer hunt codes that require fewer than six points for a Colorado resident to draw, up to 35 percent may go to nonresidents.

• A Colorado Habitat Stamp is required to buy or apply for a license. The Habitat Stamp may be purchased online, by phone or at any Parks and Wildlife Service Center or license agent.

How long will it take to draw a license?

Statistics from previous years may be used to estimate the approximate time required to draw a license. For example: If a unit allowed 20 licenses with 60 applicants, zero preference points required, 40 were unsuccessful. These 40 are awarded a preference point. Assuming that the quota for this unit remained the same for the next season, and 40 apply, 20 will draw a license using their preference point and 20 will be awarded a second point. An applicant with no points could expect to draw a license in three years.

Preference-point requirements can be found at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife website: cpw.state.co.us/Hunting/BigGame/Statistics.

Travel Planning Resources

Colorado Parks and Wildlife

CPW.STATE.CO.US

Durango Service Center	GMUs 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 711, 771, 741, 751,	(970) 247-0855
Montrose Service Center	GMUs 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 70	(970) 252-6000
Gunnison Service Center	GMUs 52, 53, 54, 55, 63, 66, 67, 411, 521, 551	(970) 641-7060
Monte Vista Service Center	GMUs 68, 681, 682, 76, 79, 791, 80, 81, 82, 83	(719) 587-6900

U.S. Forest Service Directory

www.fs.fed.us

*RD=Ranger District

GRAND MESA-UNCOMPAHGRE-GUNNISON National Forests	**Delta**	**(970) 874-6600** *www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug*
Grand Valley RD	Grand Junction	(970) 242-8211
Gunnison RD	Gunnison	(970) 641-0471
Norwood RD	Norwood	(970) 327-4261
Ouray RD	Montrose	(970) 240-5300
Paonia RD	Paonia	(970) 527-4131
SAN JUAN National Forest	**Durango**	**(970) 247-4874** *www.fs.fed.us/r2/sanjuan*
Pagosa RD	Pagosa Springs	(970) 264-1500
RIO GRANDE National Forest	**Monte Vista**	**(719)852-5941**

Bureau of Land Management Directory

www.co.blm.gov

*FO=Field Office

Southwest Center	Montrose	(970) 240-5300
Del Norte FO	Del Norte	(719) 657-3321
Tres Rios FO	Dolores	(970) 882-7296
Gunnison FO	Gunnison	(970) 641-0471
La Jara FO	La Jara	(719) 274-8971
Pagosa FO	Pagosa Springs	(970) 264-2268
Saguache FO	Saguache	(719) 655-2547

Questions, suggestions about this book?

Contact: joe.lewandowski@state.co.us. or 970-375-6708

COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE
Southwest Region Service Center
415 Turner Drive
Durango, CO 81303

First Class Mail