

BIG GAME REGULATIONS

LAWFUL ARMS & AMMUNITION:

Deer and Bear: Regular Seasons - 1) Manually operated (pump, lever, bolt actions, single-shot) centerfire rifles, shotguns and handguns (revolvers or single-shots) with all lead bullet or ball, or bullet designed to expand on impact; 2) muzzleloading long guns of any type, 44 caliber or larger, or a muzzleloading handgun 50 caliber or larger; and 3) long, recurve, compound bows (minimum draw weight of 35 pounds) or crossbows with broadheads of cutting edge design. The use of buckshot is not legal, except in the Southeast Special Regulations Area.

Elk: 1) Manually operated centerfire rifles and handguns at least 27 caliber using all lead projectiles or bullets of at least 130 grains designed to expand on impact; 2) shotguns at least 12-gauge; 3) muzzleloading firearms (including handguns) at least 50 caliber propelling a single projectile weighing at least 210 grains; 4) bow with a minimum draw weight of 45 pounds; 5) any arrow with a legal broadhead (see broadhead stipulations below), and crossbows.

Bear - Archery Season: Long, recurve and compound bows (minimum draw weight of 35 pounds), and crossbows, and broadheads of cutting edge design.

Deer - Archery Seasons: Long, recurve and compound bows (minimum draw weight of 35 pounds), and crossbows, and broadheads of cutting edge design. The bolt must be equipped with a broadhead not more than three inches long and at least 7/8 inches wide, with at least two cutting edges on the same plane throughout the length of the cutting surface. **Magnifying scopes and sights such as red dot on crossbows can be used.** Persons hunting deer in the archery seasons may not possess a firearm, except those individuals who have a License to Carry Firearms permit, and then only those firearms authorized by the permit (most sporting arms are not authorized). Muzzleloading firearms can also be carried by bowhunters during any muzzleloading season, providing the hunter has an archery license and a muzzleloader license and meets the fluorescent orange requirements of the muzzleloader season.

Bow & Arrow Equipment Definitions:

Arrow - A projectile shot from a bow with an overall length exceeding the brace height of the bow with fletching designed only for guidance at the aft end and a broadhead mounted on the fore-end. No electronic tracking device shall be part of or attached to the arrow. No device, material or system capable of causing damage or injury to the animal in excess of that inflicted by the cutting edges of the broadhead shall be part of or attached to any arrow. A projectile for a crossbow is known as a bolt.

Bow - A device for launching an arrow, which derives its propulsive energy solely from the bending and recovery of two limbs. The energy used to propel the arrow may not be derived from another source. These limitations shall not exclude the mechanical leverage advantage provided by eccentric wheels or cams so long as the energy stored in the bend limbs of the bow is the sole result of a single, continuous and direct pulling effort by the shooter. The bowstring must be drawn, held and released as a direct and conscious action by the shooter. Release shall be accomplished by either relaxing the tension of the fingers or triggering the release action of a manually operated release aid.

Broadhead - Shall have an outside diameter or width of at least 7/8 of an inch with at least two cutting edges located on the same plane throughout the length of the cutting surface. Broadheads shall not exceed three inches in length measured from the tip of the broadhead to the point that fits against the arrow shaft.

Crossbow - Must have a draw weight not less than 125 pounds.

Muzzleloader Seasons: October Antlerless Deer Season - Any single-barrel muzzleloading long gun with flintlock, in-line or percussion ignition 44 caliber or larger, or 50 caliber or larger handgun. Scope sights permitted. **Late Flintlock Season** - Flintlock ignition, single-barrel long guns manufactured prior to 1800, or a similar reproduction of an original muzzleloading single-barrel long gun 44 caliber or larger, or 50 caliber or larger handgun, using a single projectile. It is unlawful to use telescopic sights. Late season flintlock hunters are permitted to take an antlered deer or an antlerless

deer anywhere in the state with their unused antlered deer tag.

Fall Turkey Season: 1) Manually operated rifles and handguns, including rimfires; 2) manually operated and semi-automatic shotguns limited to no more than three shells in the chamber and magazine combined; 3) muzzle-loading shotguns, rifles and handguns; and 4) long, recurve, compound bows (minimum draw weight of 35 pounds) or crossbows with broadheads of cutting edge design. Single projectile ammunition or shotshell pellets no larger than No. 4 lead, No. 2 steel or No. 4 of any other composition or alloy of nontoxic shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. During any fall season in WMU 2B, as well as in Special Regulations Area county, Allegheny, only shotguns and long, recurve, compound bows or crossbows with broadheads of cutting edge design are permitted.

Spring Gobbler Season: 1) Manually operated and semi-automatic shotguns limited to no more than three rounds in the chamber and magazine combined; 2) muzzleloading shotguns of all types and gauges; and 3) long, recurve, compound bows (minimum draw weight of 35 pounds) or crossbows with broadheads of cutting edge design. Shotgun fine shot pellets only, no larger than No. 4 lead, No. 2 steel or No. 4 of any other composition or alloy of nontoxic shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Rifle/shotgun combinations may be used if ammunition is confined to shotgun shells. Carrying or using single projectile ammunition, rifles, handguns, dogs, electronic callers, drives and live decoys is unlawful. Hunting by calling only. Hunting hours are one-half before sunrise until noon from the opening day through the third Saturday (including the Youth Spring Turkey Hunt), and then from one-half hour after sunset for the remainder of the season. Hunters are asked to be out of the woods by 1 p.m. when closing hours are noon.

RESTRICTIONS:

Hunting Parties: It is unlawful to hunt deer, elk or bears in a party of more than 25 persons.

Bear Season: It is unlawful to 1) kill a bear in a den; 2) use a radio to locate a bear to which a radio transmitter has been attached.

Organized Drives: It is unlawful to drive or herd elk. For deer and bear an unlicensed person who has never held a hunting license in Pennsylvania or any other state may participate in a drive for a properly licensed hunter providing the following requirements are met: The person remains in sight and close to a hunter at least 18 years of age; the unlicensed person does not possess any firearm, bow or other hunting device; the person complies with requirements for wearing fluorescent orange; and the person is listed, if mandated, on a hunting roster as a member of the hunting party. The ratio of licensed hunters to non-licensed hunters must not exceed 1:1.

Dogs: It is unlawful to use dogs to hunt elk, bears, deer or spring turkey.

Permanent Camp Rosters: If five or more persons hunt together from a permanent camp and cooperate to drive deer or bears, they must maintain a roster in duplicate. A copy must be carried by the drive leader and the other posted at the headquarters for 30 days following close of season. Roster must include license year, name of camp or party, location, township, county, name of each member, all required hunting license numbers, date of arrival and departure, firearm caliber, game harvested, including sex, date, weight and number of points if applicable.

Treestands: It is unlawful while hunting or preparing to hunt to 1) damage any tree on public or private property by constructing a treestand or using a portable treestand or device to climb a tree; 2) use or occupy a treestand which, when constructed, damages a tree. This does not apply to landowners constructing stands on their own property, or persons who have received written permission from a landowner to build or use a treestand; 3) treestands on public land can be placed out not more than two weeks before and must be removed two weeks after any deer season. In addition, keep in mind that one's treestand does not make that area exclusive to the owner; other hunters can hunt in that area.

Shooting at Random: During the open seasons for deer and bears, it is unlawful to shoot at any target other than legal game. Target shooting is lawful only when done: 1) on property owned by the shooter or by a guest of the property owner; 2) within 200 yards of a camp or headquarters where the shooter is either quartered or an invited guest; 3) at an established shooting range. The target must be protected by a natural or artificial barrier so that the bullet or arrow cannot travel more than 15 yards beyond it.

Blinds: Blinds can be used for big game (see turkey section for specifics for blinds while turkey hunting), however, a minimum of 100 square inches of fluorescent orange material (orange alert band will suffice) must be displayed within 15 feet of the blind and visible in a 360-degree arc during the firearms deer, bear and elk seasons. This is in addition to wearing orange while in the blind.

TAGGING — TRANSPORTING — REPORTING

Tagging Big Game:

Hunters (including Mentored Youth Hunters who harvest a deer or a turkey) who harvest a deer, bear, elk or turkey must follow instructions printed on tags supplied with licenses. Big game must be tagged immediately after harvest and before carcass is moved. Tag must be attached to the ear of a deer or bear, or the body of an elk and remain attached until the animal is processed for consumption or prepared for mounting. When multiple harvests of deer per day are authorized, only one deer at a time may be taken. Before attempting to take an additional deer, the first deer shall be lawfully tagged (**This doesn't apply in the Special Regulations Areas**). Turkey tags must be attached to the bird's leg.

Tagging requirements for persons authorized to hunt without a license are identical, except that a handmade tag must be used listing the hunter's name, address, game harvested and date, time, WMU, county and township where it was taken.

Once you have used your tag it is unlawful to possess it in the field. Also, remember to remove your old hunting license from your possession while in the field. If you keep your old licenses with you while hunting you may accidentally use a tag from a previous year to tag your deer, bear or turkey and, unknowingly, violate the law.

Transporting Big Game:

Deer, bear, elk and turkey under transport, including those taken outside of Pennsylvania, must have an appropriate tag completed and attached. Unmarked parts of a big game carcass taken in Pennsylvania may be transported. Upon request of any Commission law enforcement officer, the name and address of the person who killed the animal must be furnished, along with other information necessary to properly establish legal possession.

Reporting Big Game:

Each hunter who harvests a deer or turkey must within 10 days (**5 days for turkeys or deer taken by mentored youth hunters,**

or persons required to make a homemade tag) report it to the Game Commission at Harrisburg, using a postage-paid report card supplied in this Digest, online at www.pgc.state.pa.us or over the phone. The report cards are self-explanatory, but be sure to read thoroughly before filling out. Use one report card per animal harvested. For second license turkey and DMAP antlerless deer, where reporting is required regardless of harvest success, be sure to check the "no harvest" box if no game is harvested. Hunters can also report their big game harvests online at the agency's website: www.pgc.state.pa.us and following instructions given there. Hunters and trappers can also report their deer, turkey, bobcat and fisher harvests over the telephone through the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system by calling 1-855-PAHUNT1 (1-855-724-8681). Sportsmen will need to have their license and their copy of the carcass tags attached to harvested animals available to complete the call; along with the data captured for particular animals, such as number of points or beard length. Sportsmen should record the confirmation number supplied by the IVR system for each animal reported. Harvests submitted through the IVR system will be available for review on the Game Commission's Internet harvest reporting site; go to www.pgc.state.pa.us and follow the link labeled "Report Your harvest." Within 24 hours, each person who harvests a bear or elk must take the animal, along with hunting license and bear or elk license, to a Game Commission check station for examination. Bear check stations are maintained at Commission offices and at other locations listed elsewhere in this Digest. The elk check station is located in Quehanna in Clearfield County.

Subsequent Kill if Big Game Unfit for Consumption:

Any person who legally kills any big game animal and discovers that the flesh was unfit for human consumption at the time of killing shall, within 12 hours following the discovery, deliver the entire carcass, less entrails, but including the head and hide, to any Commission officer who, being satisfied that the game was unfit for human consumption at the time killed, shall issue a written authorization to the person to kill a second animal or bird of the same species during the unexpired portion of the season for that species.

DOG TRAINING REGULATIONS

Dogs are not permitted to hunt big game, except for turkeys during the fall. All State Game Lands are closed to all dog training activities from the Monday prior to the start of the youth pheasant season until the close of the youth pheasant season. On Wild Pheasant Recovery Areas dog training is prohibited from the first Sunday in February through July 31 each year.

- There is no closed season for training dogs.
- A hunting or furtaker license is not required for dog training.
- Dogs may not be trained on private land on Sunday without the landowner's permission.
- A person may not carry a rifle, shotgun or bow and arrows while training dogs.
- Dogs are not permitted to injure or kill wildlife. Owners are liable for any wildlife killed or injured by dogs. **When training dogs, hunters need to be aware of and avoid areas, especially wetlands, where birds are nesting.**
- All hunters are urged to respect dog owners and their sport. Dogs can be attracted by electronic calling devices, as well as turkey calls. Be sure of your target. While the law requires dogs to be under the control of their owner or handler at all times, dogs often are not within sight of their handler while tracking game. Dogs cannot read no trespassing signs and do not heed fences. If you see a hunting dog running or barking, even though you may not see the handler, he or she is probably not far behind. It is unlawful for dogs to chase or pursue big game, however, **the PGC recommends that dogs not be shot unless they are actually in the act of attacking a big game animal and there is no other option.** If you see a dog or dogs chasing any deer, bear, elk or turkey, please contact the Game Commission and report the violation. Hunting dog owners have significant amounts of time and money invested in their dogs, and they consider their dogs hunting partners and friends. Please do not shoot hunting dogs just because you do not immediately see their handler.
- There are appropriate penalties in the Game and Wildlife Code to deter owners from permitting their dogs to chase big game. **If you shoot a dog that is not attacking a big game animal you could be subject to prosecution under the Crimes Code as a misdemeanor offense with penalties of up to \$5,000 and two years imprisonment, as well as civil liability for the restitution of the dog.** Any person who destroys a dog (licensed or unlicensed) attacking a big game animal must report the incident to the dog's owner or a Game Commission officer within 48 hours, as required by law.
- Electronic devices may be used for locating dogs while training or hunting, including such devices as e-collars, radio-telemetry dog tracking systems and beeper collars.

In addition to the regulations, dogs should be handled in a safe and humane manner, with adequate consideration to temperature and ventilation in transportation cages and compartments.