

Management Buck – Orientation



Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

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Why a management buck deer hunt?

The goal of the management buck deer hunt is to remove excess bucks from the Paunsaugunt and Henry Mountains limited-entry units, which currently have high buck-to-doe ratios. At the same time, there's an effort to protect the larger antlered bucks on these units. The harvest of mature bucks with three or fewer points will accomplish both goals. It will help the Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) reduce buck-to-doe ratios while preserving trophy-class animals. Having lower buck-to-doe ratios is important because it results in the birth of more fawns and contributes to the long-term health and strength of the herds. This hunt will also provide more opportunities for sportsmen on two of Utah's best hunting units.

What is the legal definition of a management buck?

A management buck is a buck deer with 3 points or fewer on at least one antler. Points are counted above the first fork and don't include the eye guard, which isn't considered a point. A point is a projection that's longer than one inch, measured from its base to its tip, including damaged or broken antlers. A broken point will count if it is one inch or longer.

Why is an orientation course needed?

The DWR is trying to help hunters harvest only mature management bucks so that younger bucks are not removed from the population before they realize their full antler-growth potential. Younger, one- and two-year-old bucks sometimes only have 2-3 points, but they have the potential for more antler points as they mature. On the other hand, bucks that are three years and older — and have 3 points or less — are unlikely to have additional points in the future since they have already realized their growth potential.

Remember, it is mandatory to have your buck inspected after harvest.

After harvesting your buck deer, you must bring its head and antlers to a Division office for inspection no later than 72 hours after the date of kill. **This inspection process DOES NOT fulfill the mandatory harvest reporting requirement.**

Help is available — on the Paunsaugunt Unit only — for those who want it.

Harvesting older bucks is critical to the success of this management approach. Since determining the age of mule deer is difficult and often takes years of experience, several local guides and sportsmen have volunteered their time and expertise to Paunsaugunt Unit hunters. They can help you determine the age of the deer and are willing to assist in any way possible.

The services of the volunteers listed below are available completely free of charge.

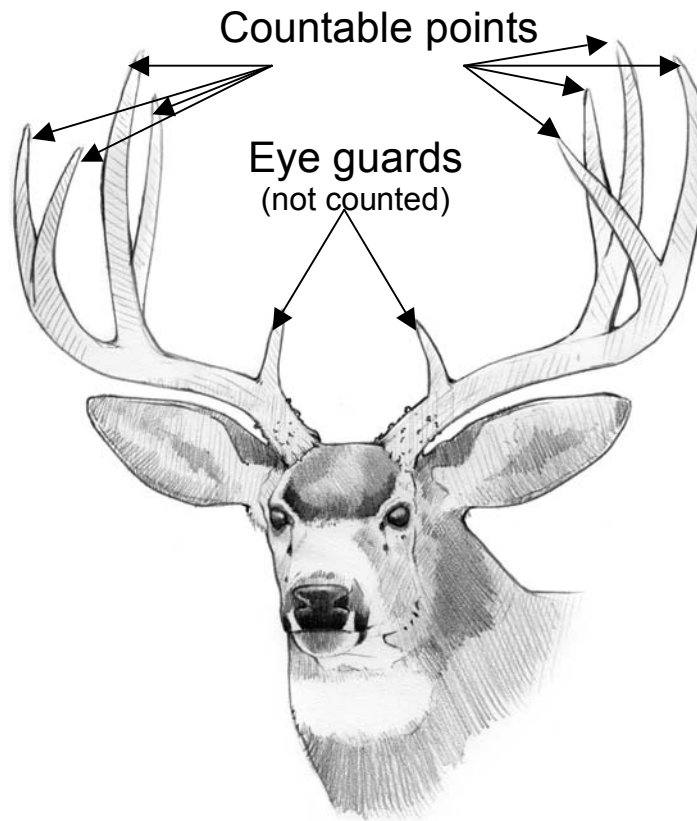
Please feel free to use one of the volunteers as a resource to help make your hunt, and this management effort, a success.

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Definitions

Antler point: A projection that is longer than one inch, measured from its base to its tip, including damaged or broken antlers.

Eye guards: Points on a buck's antlers that are immediately above the bases and before the first fork in the antlers.



The information you need to judge an animal's age accurately is difficult to portray. This orientation course places bucks into three classes: **illegal**, **young legal** and **mature legal**. We would like you to harvest a **mature legal** buck.

Illegal bucks: It is illegal to harvest bucks that look like these.



Legal two-year-old bucks: We prefer you do not harvest this type of buck.



Legal yearling bucks: We prefer you do not harvest this type of buck.



Legal mature bucks: This is the type of buck we would like you to harvest.



Examples of **illegal, young legal and mature legal bucks**:

An **illegal** buck is one that has at least 4 points (1 inch or longer) on both antlers, not counting the eye guards.



Not counting the eye guards, this buck clearly has at least 4 points on both antlers. That makes this buck **illegal** to harvest with a management buck permit.

A **young legal** buck has 3 points or less on at least one antler, not counting the eye guards. Young bucks often have narrow antlers that are less than 20 inches wide. You can judge antler width by comparing them to the width of the buck's outstretched ears. A buck's ears are between 23 and 25 inches when outstretched. It is likely a young buck if its antlers are well within the area of its ears. Another characteristic you can use to determine the age of a buck deer is the circumference of the antlers. If the antler is the same size or smaller than the eye, it is likely a young buck. To judge antler circumference, compare the size of the base of the antler, just above the burr, to the size of buck's eye.



This buck is **legal** because he only has 3 points on both antlers, however, he is **young**. His antlers are about 20 inches wide, and the base circumference is smaller than his eye.

A **mature legal** buck has 3 points or less on at least one antler but also has antlers that are wider than 20 inches. Older bucks often have thick antlers with a base circumference that exceeds the size of their eye.



This legal and mature buck deer is the type we would like you to harvest. Notice how his antlers go outside his outstretched ears and that the circumference of his antler exceeds that of his eye.

