



SPENCER J. COX  
Governor

DEIDRE M. HENDERSON  
Lieutenant Governor

# State of Utah

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

JOEL FERRY  
Executive Director

### Division of Wildlife Resources

J. SHIRLEY  
Division Director

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Utah Wildlife Board / Regional Advisory Councils

FROM: Dax Mangus, Big Game Coordinator

DATE: April 3, 2023

**SUBJECT: Overview of 2023 antlerless big game permit recommendations**

The attached tables summarize the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' recommended permit allocations for the 2023 antlerless hunts. We've made these recommendations after evaluating 2022 harvest information and conducting post-hunt assessments of herd composition.

The number of permits we're proposing for 2023 will help us achieve or maintain the objectives detailed in Utah's big game management plans for harvest size, animal quality and hunting opportunity. For specific information about how individual big game species are managed, please refer to <https://wildlife.utah.gov/> and use the search field to find the statewide management plan for the species of interest.

Below is a summary of the **2023 antlerless hunt recommendations**:

- 1) In 2022, Utah's deer population increased 10% to approximately 335,000 deer as we added 29,270 animals. This increase was primarily due to favorable weather conditions, habitat-improvement efforts, predator management and late summer/early fall monsoon rains in the fall of 2021. Record-setting precipitation in the winter of 2022/2023 will result in decreased winter survival for deer in some parts of northern Utah. At the same time, many parts of central and southern Utah are poised to see high adult and fawn survival, as well as local deer population growth in the coming year.
- 2) For 2023, we recommend 105 fewer antlerless deer permits, decreasing from 635 permits to 530 permits. We recommend eliminating several doe deer hunts on the East Canyon unit, the Chalk Creek unit and the Southwest Desert unit. We are recommending two new antlerless archery deer hunts focused on reducing deer numbers in the towns of Fillmore and Vernal. The antlerless deer hunts we are recommending are designed to reduce depredation on private lands, tackle urban deer issues, address chronic wasting disease (CWD) hotspots and help slow the decline of range conditions.

- 3) Statewide, elk populations declined slightly in 2022. Antlerless permits are still needed to keep elk populations within their management objectives. The statewide elk-population objective is 78,990 elk, and the current statewide estimate is 82,960 elk. We recommend 19,857 antlerless elk permits for the public-drawing and private-lands-only hunts in 2023, as compared to 17,108 permits in 2022, an increase of 2,749 permits.
- 4) For the 2023 public drawing, we recommend adding six antlerless elk hunts and discontinuing six hunts — please see the hunt tables for details.
- 5) We recommend antlerless elk-control permits on the following seven units:

Chalk Creek	Ogden
East Canyon	Pine Valley
Henry Mtns	Zion
Morgan-South Rich	

- 6) We recommend private-lands-only permits on 27 units throughout the state to increase harvest and hunting pressure on private lands. We recommend season dates from Aug. 1, 2023–Jan. 31, 2024. Hunters may use any legal weapon during these hunts. Private-lands-only hunts have minimized depredation challenges in many parts of the state. Hunting units include:

Beaver, East	North Slope, West Daggett
Box Elder, Hansel Mtn	Ogden
Cache	Panguitch Lake
Central Mtns, Manti	Paunsaugunt
Central Mtns, Nebo	San Juan
Chalk Creek	South Slope, Bonanza/Vernal
East Canyon	South Slope, Diamond Mtn
Fillmore, Pahvant	South Slope, Yellowstone
Kamas	Wasatch Mtns, Avintaquin-White River
La Sal, La Sal Mtns	Wasatch Mtns, Currant Creek
Morgan-South Rich	Wasatch Mtns, West
Mt Dutton	West Desert, Tintic Valley
Nine Mile, Anthro-Myton Bench	Zion
Nine Mile, Range Creek	

- 7) We recommend 123 fewer doe pronghorn permits in 2023, decreasing from 278 permits to 155 permits. We recommend eliminating some doe pronghorn hunts on the Cache/Morgan-South Rich/Ogden unit, the San Rafael unit and the Southwest Desert unit. The Cache, Rich pronghorn herd is currently experiencing winter loss, and some pronghorn populations in the southern part of the state are still recovering from the impacts of long-term drought.
- 8) We recommend eliminating 9 antlerless moose permits.
- 9) We recommend continuing the Rocky Mountain ewe bighorn sheep hunt on the Box Elder, Newfoundland Mtns unit, with a total of 5 permits.

Please see the antlerless hunt recommendations in the hunt tables for a detailed breakdown of recommended hunts and permit numbers.