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Washington
Department of
**FISH &
WILDLIFE**

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Simcoe Special Permit Success – Photo Courtesy of Ken Morris

District 9 Hunting Prospects

Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties

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DISTRICT 9 GENERAL OVERVIEW

District 9 is in the southwest/central part of Washington and is the only district in the state that spans the Cascade Crest. Game management units (GMUs) in District 9 include 554 (Yale), 564 (Battle Ground), 568 (Washougal), 560 (Lewis River), 572 (Siouxon), 574 (Wind River), 578 (West Klickitat), 388 (Grayback), and 382 (East Klickitat). Hunters can choose from a variety of habitats, as well as areas covered by westside or eastside season dates and permit regulations.

The Cascade Mountain Range dominates the geography of District 9, dividing the district into westside and eastside zones. Topography varies from near sea level along the Columbia River and its lower tributaries to alpine habitats associated with Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams in the Cascade Range.

Dominant westside river drainages include the Lewis, Washougal, and Wind Rivers. Major eastside watersheds include the White Salmon and Klickitat Rivers. Rock Creek in eastern Klickitat County is the primary watershed in ponderosa pine/oak and shrubsteppe portions of the district. The Columbia River bounds the southern border of the district.

District 9 features some of the most diverse habitats of the state and includes westside coniferous forests dominated by Douglas fir and western hemlock. These forests give way to Oregon white oak and ponderosa pine as you travel east of the Cascade Mountains. In eastern Klickitat County, pine and oak habitat transition into shrubsteppe dominated by grassland and sagebrush.

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lands make up the majority of the westside forestland. These lands are open to public access. Weyerhaeuser owns blocks of land in GMU 568 (Washougal) and scattered lands throughout GMU 578 (West Klickitat). Hunters must have permits or leases to access most of this land and can find more information about recreation on Weyerhaeuser property [here](#). Weyerhaeuser does allow free public access **only** on their lands enrolled in the WDFW Private Lands Access Program. To locate those lands, visit the [Private Lands Hunting Access webpage](#).

Eastside forest and shrubsteppe/grassland habitat is primarily privately owned with limited public access. Large tracts of private timberland in GMUs 574 and 578, which typically allow some degree of public hunting access opportunities, are held or managed by the following companies: Manulife Forest Management (formerly Hancock), Green Diamond Resource Company/TCT Columbia Holdings (lands formerly owned by SDS), The Conservation Fund/Lupine Columbia Holdings (lands formerly owned by SDS), and American Forest Management. These lands are popular for deer, elk, bear, and turkey hunting but generally are not open to motorized vehicles. Most of these timber companies maintain recreational access

hotlines where hunters can find out if the land is closed before hunting. Hunters can find a list of recreational access websites and hotlines maintained by private industrial timber companies at the end of this document and a list of timberlands enrolled in WDFW's hunting access programs can be found on [WDFW's Private Lands webpage](#). Due to high fire danger, as of 7/28/23 all lands owned or managed by the following parties in Klickitat, Skamania, Yakima counties are closed to public access until further notice: American Forest Management, Broughton Lumber Company, Columbia Land Trust, DGS Timber, Green Diamond Resource Company, Kreps Ranch, Kreps Family LLC, Lupine Forest, Manulife Forest Management, Twin Creeks Timber (TCT Holdings), and Western Pacific Timber LLC. The [WDFW Hunt Planner webpage](#) has useful layers like GMU and elk/deer area boundaries, roads, Wildlife Areas, and different base maps (aerial photos, topography).

For hunters interested in using e-bikes, note that they are typically considered motorized vehicles allowed only on roads and trails open to other motorized use (local regulations may vary). Hunters should check with each landowner, public or private, to ensure they are allowed. Please see the [WDFW](#) and [DNR](#) E-bike policy planning webpages for more information.

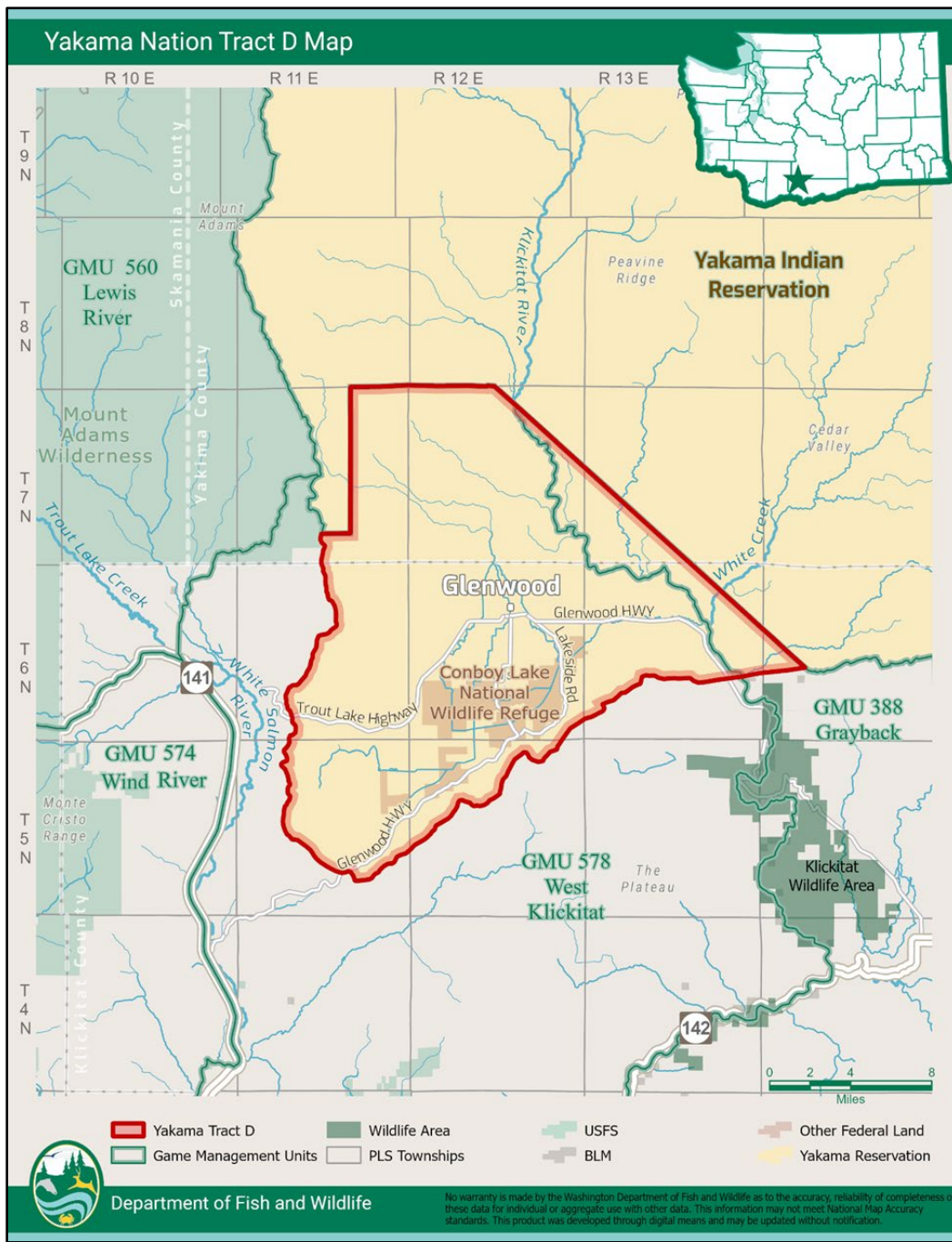
Visitors to WDFW- and DNR-managed lands with a parking placard for people with disabilities can use Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes on all non-motorized natural surface trails and closed roads where bicycles are allowed until June 30, 2023, or until new legislation is enacted.

GMU OVERVIEWS

382: Almost all private land except for the [Simcoe Mountains Unit](#) of the Klickitat Wildlife Area, which has some parcels of BLM land adjacent to it. The Simcoe Mountains Unit is Deer Area 5382, therefore deer hunting in the unit is by special permit only. There are several private hunt clubs that cater to deer and upland bird hunters. This GMU is mostly shrubsteppe, dryland agriculture, and you'll find oak-ponderosa forests in the northwestern quarter as well as in the major drainages. Deer are the most popular game species here, although chukar and partridge can also be found throughout.

388: Mostly private land except for the [Soda Springs Unit](#) and other small units of the Klickitat Wildlife Area. As of 9/1/23 all Western Pacific Timber lands in Klickitat County are **no longer** open to any hunting access of any kind. There are a few [other smaller Private Lands Program hunting options](#) in this GMU as well as [several pheasant release sites](#). This GMU is a mix of shrubsteppe, dryland agriculture and oak-ponderosa forests with heavier timbered areas in the northwest corner. The units of the Klickitat Wildlife Area provide good opportunities for deer and turkey hunting. There are a few scattered elk in the northwest part of the GMU and you will need an eastern elk tag to hunt elk here. The northwest finger of this GMU is now within the boundary of the Yakama Nation as part of the area known as "Tract D" (see map below). As

with all landownerships and jurisdictions, hunting is a privilege, and we remind you to please be respectful of landowners' posted access requirements. While there are no changes to the 2023-24 state hunting regulations within Tract D, please be extra cognizant that public or private land within Tract D is also within the Yakama Nation reservation. We are committed to working with Yakama Nation on long-term management of wildlife within the Tract D area and other geographic areas where we cooperatively manage wildlife with Yakama Nation.



578: Most of this GMU is private land except for some blocks of DNR land and small parcels of the Klickitat Wildlife Area. The northern portion of this GMU is now within the boundary of the Yakama Nation as part of the area known as “Tract D” (see map above). As with all landownerships and jurisdictions, hunting is a privilege, and we remind you to please be respectful of landowners’ posted access requirements. While there are no changes to the 2023-24 state hunting regulations within Tract D, please be extra cognizant that public or private land within Tract D is also within the Yakama Nation reservation. We are committed to working with Yakama Nation on long-term management of wildlife within the Tract D area and other geographic areas where we cooperatively manage wildlife with Yakama Nation. There are several industrial forest landowners within this GMU, and many allow free public walk-in access (see section at the end of this document). Most of the GMU is forestland with a mix of oak-pine-conifer forests. This GMU has good success rates for deer and turkey, provides opportunity for elk in the northern and western parts of the GMU, and offers bear or cougar hunting opportunity.

574: This GMU is mostly public land with the majority of lands within the [Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area](#) and the [Gifford Pinchot National Forest](#) along with a large block of DNR land in the western quarter of the GMU. There are a couple of private industrial forest landowners in the southwestern part of the GMU that allow free walk-in hunting access (see section at the end of this document). Mixed conifer forests dominate this GMU, which has good road access on public lands. Deer and elk will be more abundant and accessible in the areas where there are clearcuts or recent forest thinning. Forest grouse can be found throughout the GMU and turkeys can be found in the lower elevation, southern, and eastern portions of the GMU.

572: This GMU is nearly all within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. In 2020 the Big Hollow Fire burned a significant portion of GMU 572. Hazardous conditions and closures may still be present. For the latest information on closures, please check with the [Gifford Pinchot National Forest](#) before scouting or hunting and read more about the fire [here](#). The northwest corner of this GMU is DNR and [PacifiCorp](#) offers free walk-in hunting access on some of its lands along the reservoirs along the northern part of this GMU. Mixed conifer forests dominate this GMU, which has good road access on public lands. Deer and elk will be more abundant and accessible in the areas where there are clear-cuts or recent forest thinning. Forest grouse can be found throughout the GMU.

560: This is GMU is quite large and most of the land is within the [Gifford Pinchot National Forest](#). [PacifiCorp](#) offers free walk-in hunting access along the reservoirs in the southern part of this GMU. Mixed conifer forests dominate this GMU, which has good road access on the national forest lands. Deer and elk will be more abundant and accessible in the areas where

there are meadows or recent forest thinning or fires. This GMU offers bear or cougar hunting opportunity. Forest grouse can also be found throughout the GMU.

554: This GMU is small and most of it falls within Clark County which has firearms restrictions (see page 90 of the Big Game pamphlet). There is some DNR land as well as free walk-in access on some of [PacifiCorp](#)'s lands. Deer and elk will be more abundant and accessible in the areas where there are clearcuts or recent forest thinning.

568: The Washougal GMU has a mix of private land, DNR, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and private industrial forest lands. The [Yacolt Burn State Forest](#) is a popular and accessible spot for residents of Clark County. Walking or biking behind locked gates can be a good option to get away from other hunters. Mixed conifer forests dominate this GMU, which has good road access on public lands. This is a good GMU for black-tailed deer and offers bear or cougar hunting opportunity. Forest grouse can also be found throughout the GMU.

564: This GMU is an urban/suburban area that is firearms restricted and mostly private land. The three [Shillapoo Wildlife Area Units](#) do provide good public access for waterfowl and upland game bird hunting as well as limited black-tailed deer hunting. There is a pheasant release site at the Wildlife Area. [Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge](#) offers waterfowl hunting via a pre-season lottery reservation system.

ELK



WDFW manages elk in District 9 as part of the Mount St. Helens (MSH) Herd, described in the [Mount Saint Helens Elk Herd Plan](#) on the WDFW website. You can find more information on elk management in District 9 in the [Game Harvest Statistics](#) and [Game Status and Trend Reports](#).

Elk hunting within District 9 is managed under a variety of seasons, so check regulations closely before going afield. Hunters should be aware that GMUs 388 (Grayback) and 382 (East Klickitat) require Eastern Washington elk tags, while the remainder of District 9 is within the Western Washington elk tag area. Additionally, GMU 564 (Battle Ground) and 554 (Yale) are Firearm Restriction GMUs.

GMU 560 (Lewis River) offers the most opportunity for elk hunting in District 9 in terms of size. Most of this area is public land within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. [PacifiCorp](#) also offers non-motorized access to their lands on the north side of Swift Reservoir. Early-season snow levels can affect hunter access and success during the modern firearm season. GMUs 574 (Wind River), 572 (Siouxon), and 578 (West Klickitat) are also good elk units. GMUs 574 and 572 are primarily public U.S. Forest Service and WA State DNR lands, while GMU 578 is primarily private land with some Washington state DNR land so be sure to have good maps to identify ownership in this area.

GMUs 388 and 382 in Klickitat County have very few elk and are generally considered better for deer hunting. GMU 564 in Clark County only has elk in the northern and eastern portions of the GMU. This area has a mix of public and private lands, and it's important to research ownership before planning your hunt in this area.

Some areas may be closed to both motorized and non-motorized access. Even in familiar areas, we recommend extra scouting because elk distribution may have changed, and normal hunting lands may be closed due to fire danger.

ELK POPULATION INFORMATION

Elk populations in the GMUs comprising the Mount St Helens (MSH) elk herd area are down from historic high levels during the mid-2000s. This population reduction was implemented per the objectives of the [Mount Saint Helens Elk Herd Plan](#). Liberal antlerless elk hunting opportunity, combined with several years of late-winter and spring storms, reduced the elk population in these GMUs. The winter of 2016-17 was unusually severe, with early snowfall and persistent cold, wet conditions throughout the winter. Severe winters have a larger impact when animals are in relatively poor condition entering the winter. Elk within the MSH herd typically lack large fat reserves to help with long, hard winters.

Reflecting on these challenging conditions, the 2017 spring survey of elk in the monitored portions of the MSH herd showed a 30-35% reduction from 2016 numbers. The winters of 2017-18 and 2018-19 were mild, however elk hoof disease continues to impact survival and reproduction in this herd. Survey efforts conducted during the springs of 2018-2019 and 2022 indicate that the MSH elk herd has stabilized at this lower population level (surveys were not conducted in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions and in 2022 due to budget restrictions). These indicators point toward an elk population that is below objective and well below historic highs. Therefore, hunters should expect a generally less productive elk hunting season during the 2023 hunt. WDFW has reduced antlerless hunting opportunity accordingly.



Elk in the oaks in GMU 574.

ELK HOOF DISEASE (TAHD)

Since 2008, reports of elk with deformed, broken, or missing hooves have increased dramatically in southwest Washington, with sporadic observations in other areas west of the Cascade Range, including within the MSH elk herd area. While elk are susceptible to many conditions which result in limping or hoof deformities, the prevalence and severity of this affliction suggested something altogether different. WDFW diagnostic research (2009-2014), in conjunction with a panel of scientific advisors, found that these hoof abnormalities were strongly associated with treponeme bacteria, known to cause a hoof disease of cattle, sheep, and goats called digital dermatitis. Although digital dermatitis has affected the livestock industry for decades, treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD) is the first known instance of digital dermatitis in a wild ungulate. Disease prevalence is highest in Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and western Lewis counties, but is also found in all three counties of District 9.

All of District 9 falls within the MSH elk herd range. TAHD is most prevalent among elk in the southwestern part of Washington, however the disease was detected outside Trout Lake (GMU 578) in 2018 and has since been confirmed throughout Klickitat and Skamania counties.

While many questions remain about the disease, several aspects of TAHD in elk are clear:

- **Vulnerability:** The disease appears to be highly infectious among elk, but there is no evidence that it affects humans. TAHD can affect any hoof in any elk, young or old, male or female.
- **Hooves only:** Tests show the disease is limited to animals' hooves and does not affect their meat or organs. If the meat looks normal and if hunters harvest, process and cook it practicing good hygiene, it is probably safe to eat.
- **No treatment:** There is no vaccine to prevent the disease, nor are there any proven options for treating it in the field. Similar diseases in livestock are treated by cleaning and bandaging their hooves and giving them foot baths, but that is not a realistic option for free-ranging elk.

In 2021, WDFW implemented an incentive-based pilot [program](#) to encourage westside (400, 500, 600 series GMUs) hunters to harvest limping elk, potentially reducing prevalence of the disease over time. The objective of this program is to increase the proportion of limping elk in the total harvest, rather than increase elk harvest overall. General season or permit hunters can choose to participate in the program by submitting elk hooves at one of the many collection sites in western Washington. Hunters that submit hooves with signs of TAHD (for example, abnormal hooves) will be automatically entered into a drawing for a special incentive permit for the following license year. Multiple bull permits in western Washington with season dates of Sep. 1 – Dec. 31 will be awarded. Additionally, all participants will receive a custom, waterproof license holder.

So, what can hunters do to help?

- **Harvest a limping elk from any 400, 500, 600 series GMUs**
- **Turn in your elk hooves along with complete registration forms at one of several collection sites in western Washington**
- **Report elk:** Hunters can help WDFW track TAHD by reporting observations of both affected and unaffected elk on the department's online reporting form.
- **Clean shoes and tires:** Anyone who hikes or drives off-road in a known affected area can help minimize the risk of spreading the disease to new areas by removing all mud from their shoes and tires before leaving the area.

WDFW is working with scientists, veterinarians, outdoor organizations, tribal governments and others to better understand and manage TAHD. For more information about TAHD, see WDFW's website at https://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_disease/ and [Washington](#)

[State University's website](#). Additional information on TAHD and this incentive program can also be found on page 65 of the Big Game Hunting Pamphlet.



Example of elk hooves deformed by TAHD.

DEER



Deer in GMU 382 – Photo courtesy of Bob Harvey

Deer populations are generally stable in lower-elevation units such as Washougal (568) and Battle Ground (564). Deer harvest in West Klickitat (578), Grayback (388), and East Klickitat (382) was slightly lower in 2022 than in 2020-2021, although hunter effort was much lower in 2022. Deer populations are generally low in the Cascade Mountain GMUs, including Lewis River (560), Wind River (574), and Siouxon (572). The extreme winter of 2016-17 hurt deer populations throughout District 9 but recent harvest statistics indicate some recovery. December 2022 aerial surveys in GMUs 388 and 382 indicate a slight decrease in the population and March 2023 driving route surveys in 388 showed a low fawn:doe indicating that fawns born in 2022 had low survival. The decline in the population was likely due to a summer 2022 outbreak of [AHD](#) and slightly harsher than normal winter conditions. To facilitate recovery of the deer population in GMUs 578, 388, and 382, nearly all antlerless permits have been removed. As the population recovers those permits will be slowly added back.

Deer harvest and success is remarkably consistent within District 9, where hunters are expected to harvest approximately 2,000 bucks during the 2023 general season, representing a success rate of 20-25 percent. You can find historical information on deer harvest trends in District 9 on the WDFW website under [Game Harvest Statistics](#) and [Game Status and Trend Reports](#).

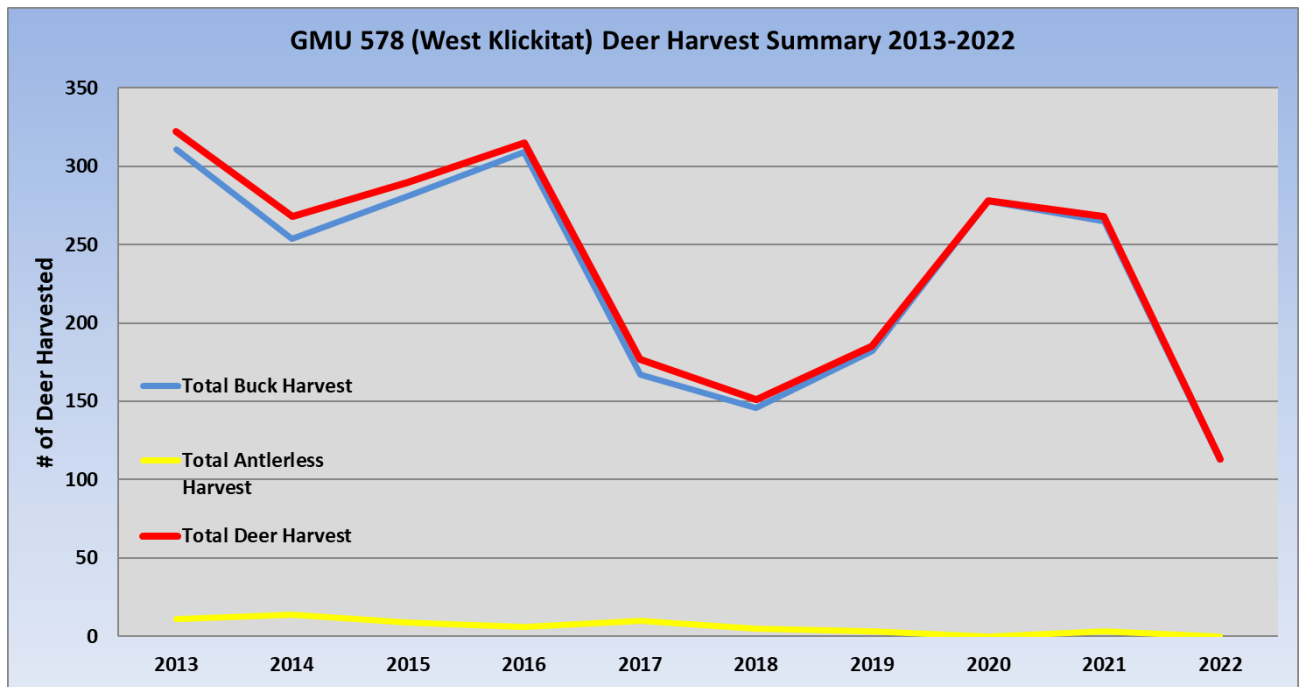
Successful hunting for black-tailed deer is primarily a function of the effort that hunters put into the hunt. Black-tailed deer thrive in heavily vegetated habitats and are often very nocturnal. Successful black-tailed deer hunters must be in position early in the morning and carefully hunt near sources of food and secure cover.

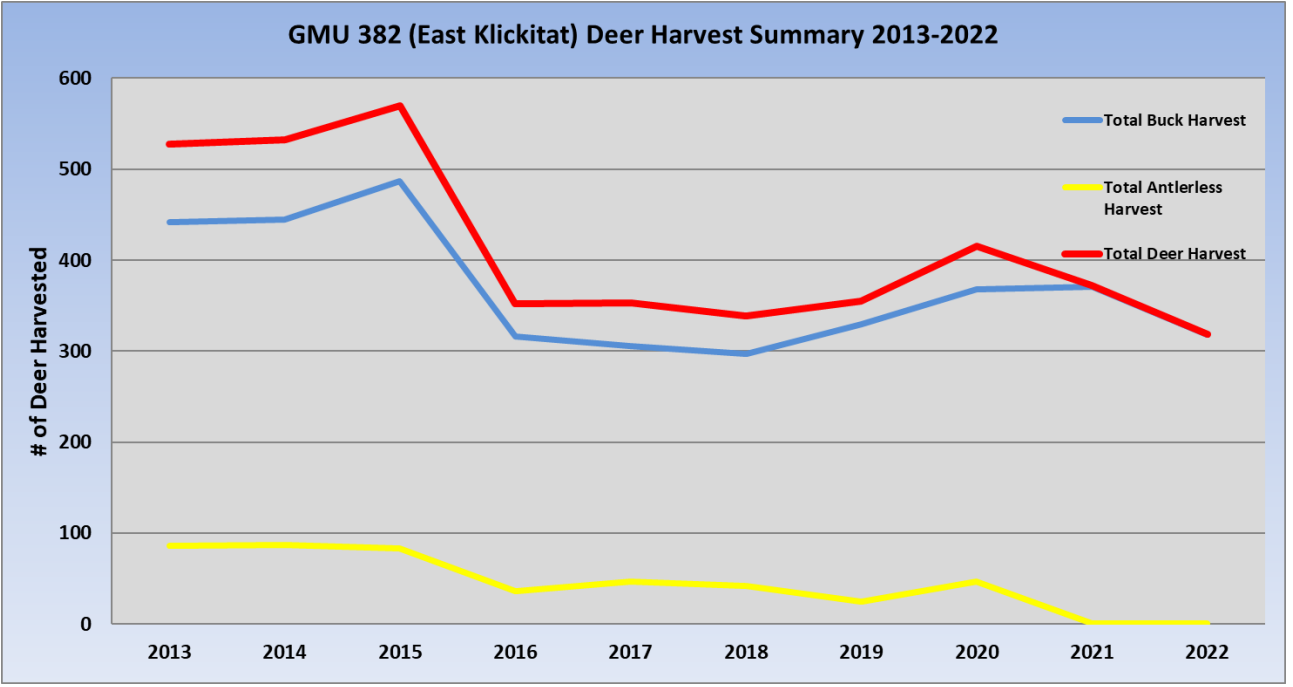
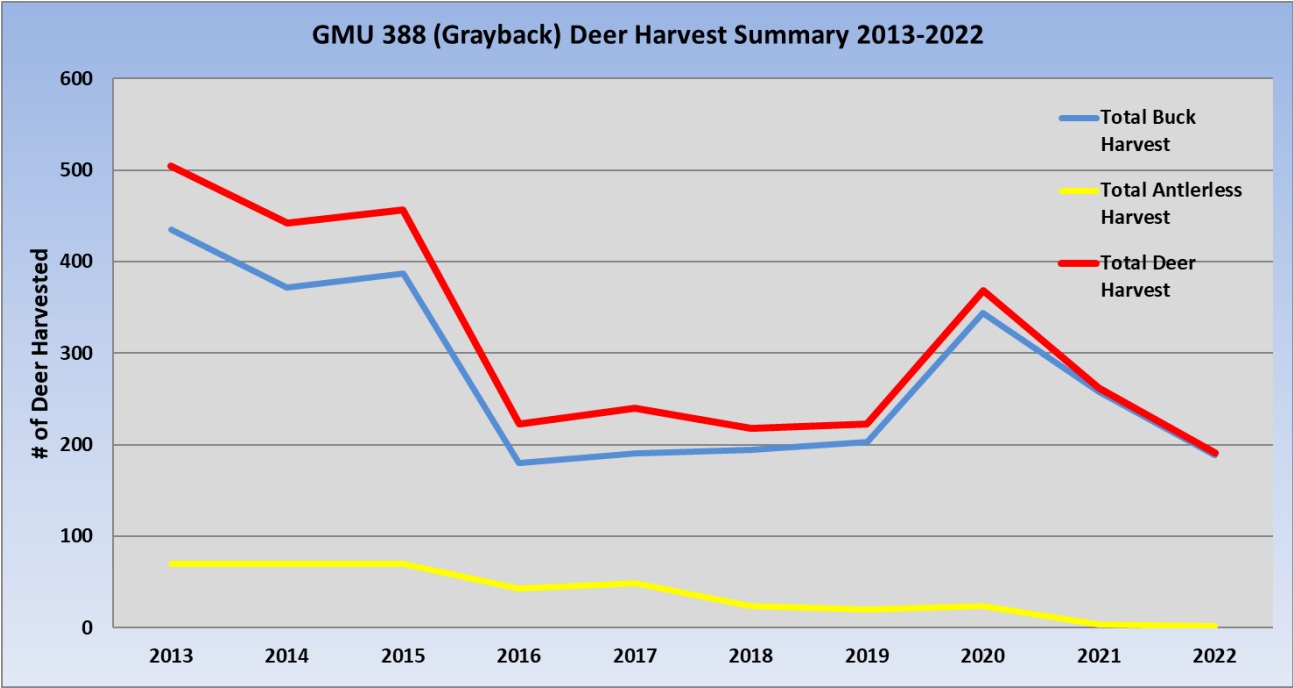
Bucks travel more during the rut, covering large amounts of territory searching for does in estrus. This makes bucks more vulnerable, as they spend less time hiding and you can sometimes find them in open habitats such as clear-cuts and meadows. Not surprisingly, approximately one-third of the annual buck harvest in Region 5 occurs during the four-day late buck hunt held each November.

Within District 9, GMUs 554 (Yale), 560 (Lewis River), 564 (Battle Ground), 568 (Washougal), and 572 (Siouxon) offer an attractive general season hunting opportunity. Hunters should note, however, the firearm restrictions in GMUs 554 and 564 (see page 90 of the [2023 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations Pamphlet](#)).

Those interested in trophy-hunting opportunities for deer might consider any of the Klickitat County units. GMU 578 (West Klickitat), GMU 388 (Grayback), and GMU 382 (East Klickitat) are all managed under a 3-point or greater antler restriction. Collectively, the Klickitat GMUs support an annual harvest of around 1,000 three-point or greater bucks. Hunters are advised to carefully review the regulations before going afield, as the rules differ in each unit and none of the Klickitat GMUs allow general season late buck rifle hunting. GMU 382 is mainly private land and deer hunting is by permit only on the Simcoe Mountains Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area (Deer Area 5382). The main units of the Klickitat Wildlife Area are located in GMU 388 and provide good deer hunting opportunities. GMU 578 has some blocks of DNR land as well as private industrial forestlands that are open to non-motorized access.

Some areas may be closed to both motorized and non-motorized access. Hunters are advised to do extra scouting even in familiar areas because deer distribution may have changed, and normal hunting lands may be closed for fire danger.





BEAR



Bear in GMU 574 – Photo courtesy of JP Sullivan

District 9 makes up part of both the South Cascades and East Cascades black bear hunt zones for the fall bear hunting season. In 2023, both the South Cascades zone (which includes GMUs 574, 572, 568, 564, and 560) and the East Cascades zone (which includes GMUs 578, 388, and 382) are open from Aug. 1-Nov. 15. The bag limit is now two black bears per license year statewide. In 2022, hunters harvested 254 bears in the South Cascades (8 percent success rate) and 389 in the East Cascades zone (10 percent success rate), which are above the harvest rates for 2021. The 2022 success rates are just below the 2022 statewide average of 12 percent. Currently, no spring black bear hunts are available in District 9.

All successful bear hunters are **required** to submit the premolar tooth in a tooth envelope by Dec. 1, 2023. See page 68 of the [2023 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations Pamphlet](#) for details.

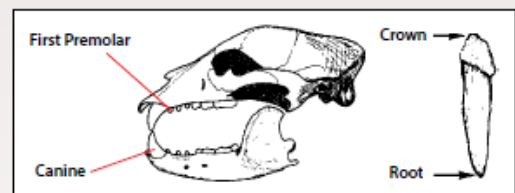
MANDATORY Submission of Bear Teeth Statewide

All successful black bear hunters statewide **MUST** submit a black bear premolar tooth per WAC 220-415-090. Pre-paid and self-addressed tooth envelopes can be obtained at all WDFW offices (see page 6). The premolar tooth is located behind the canine tooth of the upper jaw.

Successful hunters are required to submit a tooth from their bear to the Department. Please submit within 5 days of harvest or by December 1, 2022.

WDFW uses teeth to get an accurate age of kills, hunters wanting to check the age of their harvested bear can visit the following website: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/requirements/harvest-reporting/tooth-lookup>

Teeth are aged by an external laboratory and turnaround time for age results can be up to 6 months after the close of the fall big game hunting season.



COUGAR



Cougars are difficult to hunt, and deer and elk hunters typically harvest them when the opportunity presents itself. The early cougar hunting season runs from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31. In 2012, a season harvest guideline system was initiated, which closes hunt areas after Jan. 1 if the harvest guidelines have been met or exceeded. The late hunting season is from Jan. 1 to April 30 or when the harvest guideline is reached, whichever comes first. For more information on these guidelines and to check if the area you are interested in hunting is closed, see the [cougar webpage](#). All successful cougar hunters must report their harvest to the hotline (866-364-4868, press 3 after the recording) within 72 hours, and all cougar pelts must be sealed by WDFW within five days of harvest (skull and hide unfrozen with proof of sex attached to the pelt). Contact a [WDFW office](#) to make an appointment to have a cougar pelt sealed.

WATERFOWL



Goose Hunting in Clark County – Photo courtesy of Brad Cady

GOOSE HUNTING

Most goose hunting opportunities within District 9 occur in Clark County, which is a part of Goose Management Area 2 - Inland. Hunters are reminded of the complex goose hunting regulations designed to protect wintering populations of the dusky Canada goose. New hunters and those whose hunting authorization were invalidated for Area 2 (Coast or Inland) during the previous year need to pass an exam with a minimum of 80 percent to receive authorization for the current year. Please visit our [Goose Identification](#) page for more information.

Very little goose hunting is available in Skamania County. Goose hunting in Klickitat County is limited and primarily associated with private lands where landowner permission is required. Please note that the daily bag limit remains 23 geese per day, which includes up to three Canada geese of any subspecies (except dusky geese), up to 10 white geese (Snow and Ross's

geese), and up to 10 Pacific white-fronted geese. Check the [2023-24 Game Bird and Small Game Hunting Regulations](#) for more specific information on season length and bag limits.

A successful season in Clark County relies on sufficient precipitation in the fall and early winter to fill the wetlands, and cold weather in the northern portions of the migratory route to push the geese south. Check hunting reports from northwestern Washington and Coastal British Columbia, monitor weather forecasts, and scout your hunting areas ahead of time to ensure geese have arrived and are congregating in areas that allow hunting.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR AREA 2 GOOSE HUNTING

Goose hunting in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties is subject to the additional restrictions of Goose Management Area 2 - Inland. These restrictions are in place to protect the dusky subspecies of the Canada goose. We encourage goose hunters to review the different subspecies of Canada geese in southwest Washington before each hunting season.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission has approved the following regulations for the 2023-24 southwest Washington goose season in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the states of Oregon and Alaska:

- The season for dusky Canada geese is **closed**. If a hunter takes a dusky Canada goose or does not comply with a field check, that hunter's authorization will be invalidated, and the hunter will not be able to hunt geese in Goose Management Area 2 for the rest of the season.
- Goose Management Area 2 is split between the Coast (Pacific County and a portion of Grays Harbor County west of Highway 101) and Inland (Clark, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties, and a portion of Grays Harbor County east of Highway 101).
- In Goose Management Area 2 (Coast or Inland), legal goose hunting hours begin 30 minutes after the start of official waterfowl hunting hours to 30 minutes before the end of official waterfowl hunting hours.
- Starting in 2019, goose hunters planning to hunt in Goose Management Area 2 (Coast or Inland) began receiving a harvest record card when purchasing their licenses. Immediately after taking a goose, you must fill out your harvest card in ink. You are required to report the information on your harvest card to WDFW by using the [online reporting system](#) or by mailing the cards to: WDFW, Wildlife Program – Waterfowl Section, PO Box 43141, Olympia WA 98504. The reporting deadline is March 20, 2024. Reports need to be postmarked by the reporting deadlines even if you did not harvest any birds. Please note that you must comply with these reporting requirements, or you

will be required to pay a \$10 administrative fee before obtaining a harvest record card the next year.

- The goose hunting season will be open every day from Sept. 2-10 as well as Oct. 14-29, and on selected dates (Saturdays, Sundays, and Wednesdays) from Nov. 22, 2023-Jan. 14, 2024, and Feb 10-March 6, 2024.

Hunters are advised to review the revised goose identification [training program](#) before hunting this season and check the [2023-24 Game Bird and Small Game Hunting Regulations](#) for more information. Wildlife managers are relying on southwest goose hunters to make this season format successful, so goose hunting can remain open in permit zones.

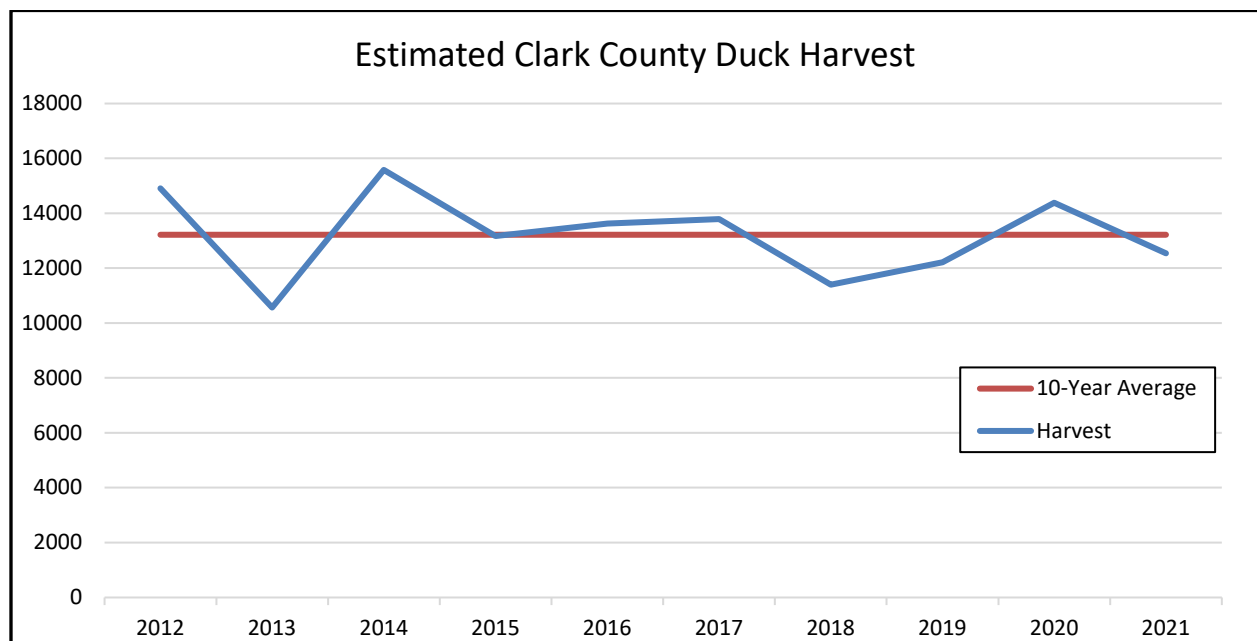
Most public goose hunting in Clark County is in the Vancouver lowlands and Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. Hunter access to Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is by [reservation only](#). As of the writing of this document, the 2022 goose harvest estimates were not yet available to the public. Once the data are finalized, they will be available [here](#), under the heading “Small Game.”

DUCK HUNTING



Photo courtesy of Sam Gibbons

The Fish and Wildlife Commission has approved a liberal duck hunting season of 108 days, which includes two youth hunt days (one in eastern Washington and one in western Washington), a one-day hunt for youth, veterans and active military members, and a 105-day general season. The daily bag limit is seven ducks. Like Canada goose hunting, most public access for duck hunting in Clark County is limited to the Vancouver lowlands and Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. The daily bag and possession limits of ducks (as well as coots, snipe, and pigeon) have not changed in recent seasons, however starting in 2022 Harlequin ducks were closed to harvest statewide. The annual estimated harvest of ducks in Clark County has been relatively stable over the last ten years, averaging 13,218 ducks taken each season. As with goose season, a successful duck hunt in Clark County will require a good amount of rainfall in the fall and winter. Be sure to scout the area you plan to hunt or call the local refuge/wildlife area manager for a water-level report before heading into the field. As of the writing of this document, the 2022 duck harvest numbers were not available to the public. Once the data are finalized, they will be available [here](#), under the heading “Small Game.”



Estimated duck harvest in Clark County from 2012-2021

You can find more information on North American waterfowl populations and places to duck hunt in Clark County using the following links:

<https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-birds>

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/ridgefield/visit-us/activities/hunting>

<https://wdfw.wa.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-areas/shillapoo-wildlife-area>

TURKEY



Turkeys along the Klickitat River – Photo Courtesy of WDFW

Wild turkey populations in Klickitat County continue to be very healthy and hunting conditions for fall 2023 should be typical for this area. The 2023 fall season in District 9 is open to general season hunting, which means no special permit is required. Fall hunt dates are Sept. 1 to Dec. 31, and the bag limit is one turkey (either sex). This is the third year of a four-month-long general season, which is an exciting new opportunity! Please refer to page 36 in the [2023 Game Bird and Small Game Hunting Regulations](#) for more information.

In fall 2022, 221 turkeys were harvested in the District 9 fall general season (includes GMUs 382, 388, 568-578) with a success rate of 35 percent. While this success rate was relatively consistent with previous fall seasons (2021: 23%, 2020: 38%, 2019: 40%), the number of turkeys harvested was significantly higher (2021: 164, 2020: 155, 2019: 150).

The spring turkey season in Klickitat County has historically resulted in a much higher harvest when compared to fall season with a 10-year average of 500 birds. The 2022 spring season estimated harvest was 594 turkeys, lower than the 729 taken in 2021, but still well above average. Both 2021 and 2022 spring seasons saw a considerably higher number of hunters and hunt days compared to 2019 and 2020. Spring success rates have ranged between 24 and 40 percent since 2012.

The majority of quality turkey hunting areas in Klickitat County are below 1,500 feet. Popular hunting areas are generally associated with the White Salmon and Klickitat River drainages. East of the Klickitat River, you can find turkeys on the Klickitat Wildlife Area and in the Simcoe Mountains to the north and west of Goldendale. Most of the land in and around the Simcoe Mountains is owned by private timber companies. Please refer to the “Private Industrial Forestlands” section below for details on hunting access and be sure to have good maps that correctly identify ownership if you are planning to hunt in these areas. Please note that a

sizeable amount of private timberland in Klickitat County that was previously open to walk-in hunting has been sold to other industrial timber companies as well as to small, private landowners. Just because you have hunted for turkey in an area in the past does not mean it is still open to public hunting. Please do your research before heading into the field and check your mapping apps or the [Klickitat County GIS website](#) for ownership information.

Some landowners in western Klickitat County complain of turkey damage on their property and may be willing to provide access to turkey hunters that ask for permission and practice good hunter ethics.



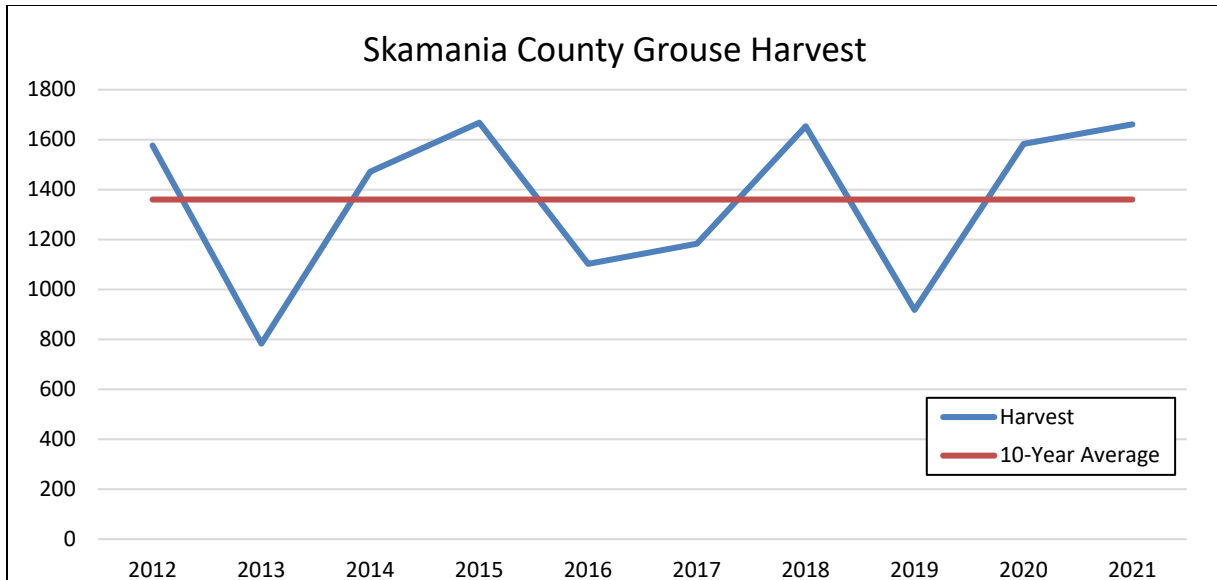
Successful Spring Turkey Season– Photo Courtesy of Chris Wilson

Outside of Klickitat County, there is less opportunity for turkey hunting within the district. In Skamania County, turkey populations are located primarily in the eastern part of the county between the Wind River and Underwood and below 1,000 feet in elevation, although flocks of turkeys have been reported as far west as Beacon Rock. Clark County offers little to no turkey hunting opportunity.

FOREST GROUSE



Grouse season in Washington runs from Sept. 15 – Jan 15. The change to Sept. 15 was made in 2021 to protect brood hens with chicks. Skamania County, which is predominately public land, provides hunters with the most opportunity in the district. In District 9, the majority of quality grouse habitat is on USFS lands in Skamania County and certain areas of the Simcoe Mountains west of Highway 97 in Klickitat County.



Estimated forest grouse harvest Skamania County from 2012-2021

Most grouse harvest in District 9 is associated with general deer and elk hunting seasons, when birds are hunted opportunistically. Prospective hunters should focus hunting efforts on brushy riparian zones, overgrown abandoned logging roads and forest service roads for the best chance at success, especially for ruffed grouse. Hunters interested in forest grouse will improve their chances by scouting areas before their hunt. As of the writing of this document, the 2022 grouse harvest estimates were not available to the public. Once the data are finalized, they will be available [here](#), under the heading “Small Game.”

In 2019, District 9 began collecting the wings and tails of hunter-harvested forest grouse intending to collect more data to help track population trends of each species. Grouse hunters can help by depositing one wing and the tail of harvested grouse into wing collection barrels that are located around the district. Paper collection bags and instructions are available at each barrel location. Please use one bag for each bird and do not deposit wings in a plastic bag. The barrel locations for each district can be found [here](#). Barrel locations are subject to change before or during the grouse season, so please check the website frequently.



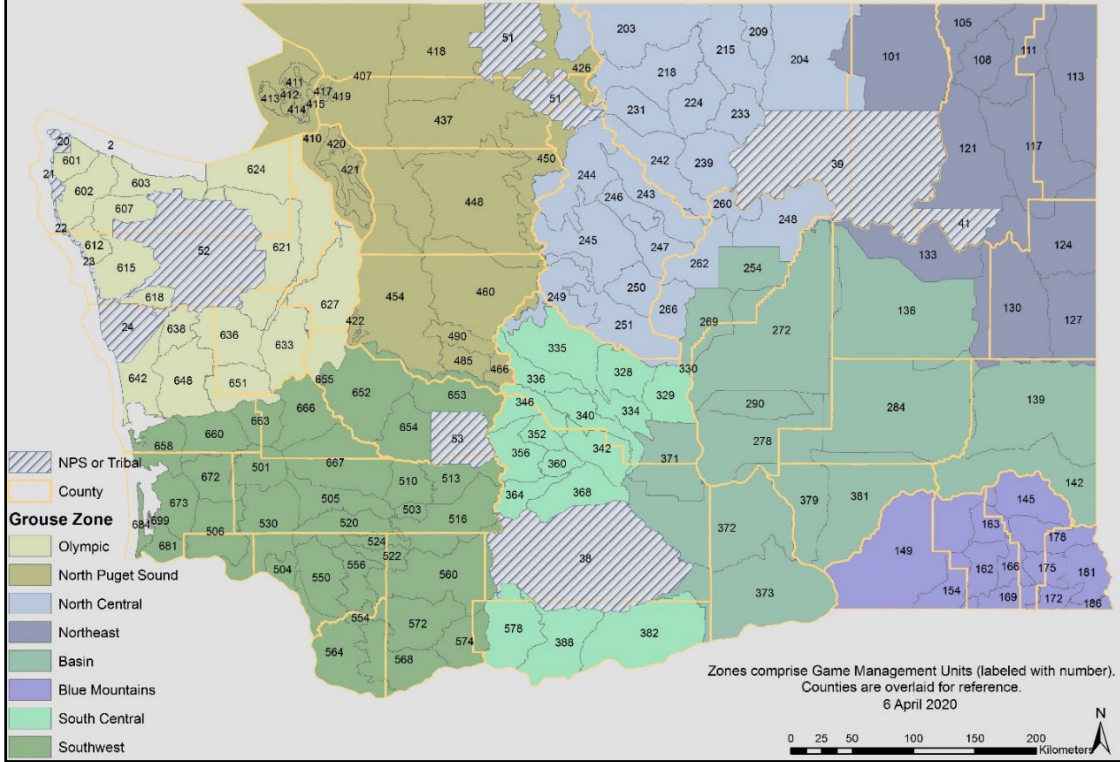
Skamania County Wing Collection Barrel - WDFW

District 9 falls within both the Southwest (Clark and Skamania Counties) and South Central (Klickitat County) Forest Grouse Management Zones. In 2021, 78 percent of the wings submitted from the Southwest zone were ruffed grouse, and 22 percent were blue grouse (dusky or sooty). As of the writing of this document, the results from the 2022 grouse wing collection effort were not available.

Zone	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Basin	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Blue Mountains	0	3	0	0	37	0	40
North Central	349	458	367	330	332	184	2020
North Puget Sound	0	0	0	41	170	126	337
Northeast	148	190	145	140	176	188	987
Olympic	32	169	100	173	143	151	768
South Central	90	180	150	125	7	34	586
Southwest	3	0	234	260	222	188	907
Unknown	0	2	57	45	10	17	131
Total	622	1002	1053	1116	1097	888	5778

Number of forest grouse wings collected in each Forest Grouse Management Zone, 2016-2021

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Forest Grouse Monitoring Zones



DOVE



Dove hunting is open statewide annually from Sept. 1 to Oct. 30. In District 9, most dove harvest occurs within Clark and Klickitat Counties. In Clark County, dove hunting opportunity exists on WDFW lands in the Vancouver lowlands, including the Shillapoo Wildlife Area. Over the past ten years, dove hunters took a yearly average of 364 birds in Clark County, but as displayed by the table below, estimated harvest varies widely depending on participation in any given year.

Year	Harvest	Number of Hunters	Number of Hunter Days
2012	302	25	68
2013	259	28	126
2014	8	30	38
2015	549	92	357
2016	395	78	353
2017	291	61	321
2018	819	103	878
2019	206	46	149
2020	722	139	538
2021	86	49	142

Estimated dove harvest and participation in Clark County from 2012-2021

Most of the hunting opportunity in Klickitat County is associated with private hunt clubs in the eastern part of the county. The majority of Klickitat County is privately owned, so please be sure to secure permission from private landowners before you hunt on private land. Dove harvest in Klickitat County averages 219 birds over the last ten years and still varies widely despite relatively stable participation.

Year	Harvest	Number of Hunters	Number of Hunter Days
2012	303	25	76
2013	412	59	143
2014	73	15	37
2015	24	16	24
2016	492	35	91
2017	0	0	0
2018	265	20	35
2019	23	11	34
2020	601	8	40
2021	0	0	0

Estimated dove harvest and participation in Klickitat County from 2012-2021

As of the writing of this document, the 2022 dove harvest estimates were not available to the public. Once the data are finalized, they will be available [here](#), under the heading “Small Game.”

As a reminder, the above statistics refer to mourning doves only, which have a daily bag limit of 15 and possession limit of 45 for the hunting season. Eurasian collared doves are an invasive species and can be hunted year-round with a valid hunting license. These doves are often found in urban and human-occupied areas, so be sure to abide by any local firearm restrictions. Eurasian collared doves are larger than mourning doves, have a distinctive black “collar” on the back of their neck and have a square-tipped tail (mourning doves have a pointed tail).

PHEASANT



Pheasant hunting in Clark County – Photo courtesy of Brad Cady

District 9 has very little, if any wild production of pheasants, especially compared to other areas of eastern Washington. Essentially, all hunting opportunities are associated with pen-raised birds that are released at specific locations in Klickitat County (Eastern Washington Pheasant Release Sites) and Clark County (Western Washington Pheasant Release Sites). In Clark County, an average 3,366 pheasants are harvested each season with most pheasant hunting being associated with the Vancouver Lake and Shillapoo release areas. In Klickitat County, most pheasant hunting occurs on three release sites near Goldendale or the surrounding private properties (with landowner permission). Only an average of 214 birds are harvested each year in Klickitat County, where there is less overall acreage available to public hunting and fewer pheasants released. Please read more about our [Western Washington Pheasant Release Program](#) (for Clark and Skamania counties) and [Eastern Washington Pheasant Release Program](#) (for Klickitat County) on our website, which includes maps of the release sites. As of the writing

of this document, the 2022 pheasant harvest estimates were not available to the public. Once the data are finalized, they will be available [here](#), under the heading “Small Game.”

You can find details about each of the pheasant hunting sites below.

CLARK COUNTY PHEASANT RELEASE SITES

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

The Vancouver Lake and Shillapoo release sites are on WDFW-managed land and comprise approximately 1,450 acres. To reach both the Vancouver Lake and Shillapoo release sites, take the Fourth Plain Blvd. exit (exit #1D) off I-5. Go west on Fourth Plain Blvd. For the Vancouver Lake release site, head north on Fruit Valley Road, then west on La Frombois Road to the site. For the Shillapoo release site, stay on Lower River Road to the site. Keep in mind that these areas are extremely popular on Saturdays, with typically more than 100 vehicles at the Shillapoo release sites.

KLICKITAT COUNTY PHEASANT RELEASE SITES

WDFW releases approximately 350 pheasants at three sites in Klickitat County each year. One site is located on department-owned land and two are on privately-owned lands enrolled in the WDFW Private Lands Access Program “Feel Free to Hunt”. Please respect the land; hunting on private lands is a privilege. All sites are day-use only, and no overnight camping is allowed. These sites are relatively undeveloped, with primitive road access. In early fall, there is usually a high fire risk so please take necessary precautions. Roads may become slippery and very muddy after fall rains and snow. Be cautious when choosing parking spots next to roads to avoid getting stuck. Driving off-road or on private land is not allowed, regardless of the season. The use of non-toxic shot is required within designated release areas.

Goldendale Hatchery Pheasant Release Site

WDFW manages this 240-acre site. It is bounded by Hill Road on the west side and Fish Hatchery Road on the north side.

From Goldendale, drive west on Highway 142 approximately four miles to the intersection with Hill Road. Drive about a half-mile north on Hill Road, across the bridge over Spring Creek, then turn east on a dirt road onto WDFW property. This road goes into the center of the property.

A parcel of private land adjacent to the Goldendale Hatchery release site is currently enrolled in the WDFW Private Lands Access Program as a “Hunt by Reservation” property called Fish Hatchery Road. To hunt on the land, you must make a reservation online. Please consult the

[WDFW Private Lands page](#) to make your reservation, access property details and maps, and see information on temporary closures of these sites.

Note: The hatchery facilities are located along the east boundary of the parcel. Please stay away from the immediate vicinity of the buildings to protect workers and infrastructure.

Gun Club Property (Private Lands Access Program) – Feel Free to Hunt

This 480-acre site is privately-owned. It is bounded by Rogers Road on the north and Fenton Lane to the east. This property boasts high quality wildlife habitat and cover with a combination of open grasslands, shrub cover, trees and a small lowland area that seasonally hold water.

From the intersection with Broadway Street in Goldendale, drive east on the Bickleton Highway 5.6 miles to the intersection with Purvine Road. Turn right (south) on Purvine Road and drive 0.9 miles to the T intersection with Rogers Road. Go either left or right on Rogers Road and look for wire gates accessing the property. There are two gates. Both are marked with the WDFW Access Program signage. Park along Rogers Road, outside the fence, and walk in. CAUTION- Purvine Road may be impassable when wet. For the best access, go east another mile on the Bickleton Highway, and turn right (south) on Fenton Lane. Follow Fenton Lane south one mile to its intersection with Rogers Road. Turn right (west) onto Rogers Road and drive about 0.1 miles west to a gate and parking area.

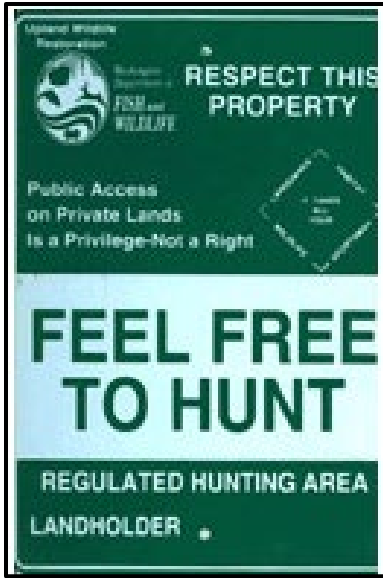
You may hunt this property without a reservation or registering. Please consult the [WDFW Private Lands page](#) for property details and maps, and temporary closures of these sites.

Finn Ridge Road Property (Private Lands Access Program) – Feel Free to Hunt

This 160-acre site is privately-owned. It is bounded by the Finn Ridge Road along the south property line and Ahola Road to the west. This property consists of gently rolling, open grassland with no shrub cover.

From Centerville, drive two miles west on the Centerville Highway to a 90-degree bend in the highway to the south. Turn right (north) on Erickson Road. Drive 1 mile to the intersection with the Finn Ridge Road. Turn left (west) onto Finn Ridge Road and follow it about 1.5 miles to the first sign marking the corner of the site, on the right. It is marked with green and white WDFW Feel Free to Hunt signs.

You may hunt this property without a reservation or registering. Please consult the [WDFW Private Lands page](#) for property details and maps, and temporary closures of these sites.



Example of Access Program signage, WDFW



Pheasant release in Klickitat County

QUAIL, GRAY PARTRIDGE, AND CHUKAR



Chukar and California Quail – Photo Courtesy of Tom Kogut

In District 9, upland game birds are almost exclusively hunted within Klickitat County, with quail being the most successfully hunted of the three species by far. An estimated average of 767 quail are taken in Klickitat County each season, compared to approximately 200 chukar and 77 gray partridge. Most access for upland bird hunting is restricted to private lands and hunt clubs in eastern Klickitat County. Hunters interested in hunting this area should seek access permission in advance of the season. Most hunt clubs have waiting lists for new members, and access is difficult without membership for those lands. As of the writing of this document, the 2022 upland game bird harvest estimates were not available to the public. Once the data are finalized, they will be available [here](#) under the heading “Small Game.”

PUBLIC LAND RESOURCES

DNR-PACIFIC CASCADES OFFICE (CLARK AND SKAMANIA COUNTIES)

601 Bond Road
PO Box 280
Castle Rock, WA 98611-0280
Phone: 360-577-2025
pacific-cascade.region@dnr.wa.gov

DNR-SOUTHEAST REGION OFFICE (Klickitat County)

713 Bowers Road
Ellensburg, WA 98926-9301
Phone: 509-925-8510
southeast.region@dnr.wa.gov
[Link to purchase DNR quad maps](#)

GIFFORD PINCHOT NATIONAL FOREST

Cowlitz Valley Ranger District

360-497-1100
10024 US Hwy 12
PO Box 670
Randle, WA 98377

Mt. Adams Ranger District

509-395-3400
2455 Hwy 141
Trout Lake, WA 98650

Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument & District

360-449-7800
42218 N.E. Yale Bridge Rd.
Amboy, WA 98601

Forest Headquarters

360-891-5000
987 McClellan Road
Vancouver, WA 98661

[Forest Alerts and Closures](#)
[Mapping Resources](#)

PRIVATE LANDS ACCESS RESOURCES

WDFW PRIVATE LANDS ACCESS PROGRAM

Public hunting opportunities for different game species are available through the Private Lands Access Program free of charge. The website will list the properties available by county, GMU or type of access allowed such as:

- [Feel Free to Hunt](#)
- [Register to Hunt](#)
- [Hunt by Written Permission](#)
- [Hunt by Reservation](#)

Each property will designate what species can be hunted. Read each property description carefully and find property maps at: https://privatelands.wdfw.wa.gov/private_land/

**** Every year NEW properties are added or may be removed, frequently check the website for property updates. ****

For Private Lands Access program information within Region 5 contact:

Monique (Ferris) Gray

(360) 696-6211 ext. 6721

Monique.ferris@dfw.wa.gov



Dillacort Canyon Access Program Property in Klickitat County, photo by Monique Ferris, WDFW

PRIVATE INDUSTRIAL FORESTLANDS

****NOTES:** Private industrial forestlands are often closed to all recreation from mid-late summer through early fall because of fire danger. Be sure to check on the status of these lands before scouting or hunting. Also, private timberland is often bought-and-sold between timber companies, so be sure to have updated ownership maps. Due to high fire danger, as of 7/28/23 all lands owned or managed by the following parties in Klickitat, Skamania, Yakima counties are closed to public access until further notice: American Forest Management, Broughton Lumber Company, Columbia Land Trust, DGS Timber, Green Diamond Resource Company, Kreps Ranch, Kreps Family LLC, Lupine Forest, Manulife Forest Management, Twin Creeks Timber (TCT Holdings), and Western Pacific Timber LLC.

BROUGHTON LUMBER COMPANY (AMERICAN FOREST MANAGEMENT)

- Generally, allows non-motorized access. Please abide by any signs posted at access points.
- See the AFM website for hunting access maps and more information:
<https://www.americanforestmanagement.com/licensable-tracts/columbia-gorge-district>
- Mainly GMUs 578 and 388.

DGS TIMBER LLC (AMERICAN FOREST MANAGEMENT)

- Generally, allows non-motorized access. Please abide by any signs posted at access points.
- See the AFM website for hunting access maps and more information:
<https://www.americanforestmanagement.com/licensable-tracts/columbia-gorge-district>
- Mainly GMUs 578 and 388.

MANULIFE (FORMERLY HANCOCK FOREST MANAGEMENT - HFM)

- Generally, allows non-motorized access. Please abide by any signs posted at access points.
- Access hotline (509) 364-3331
- Mainly GMUs 578 and 388.

PACIFICORP

- Own over 15,000 acres within the Lewis River basin that are managed for fish and wildlife and are generally open to non-motorized access.

- See their website for hunting access maps and more information:
<https://www.pacificorp.com/community/recreation/washington/lewis-river-hunting-access.html>
- Mainly GMUs 554 and 560

RAYONIER

- Hunting access by permit
- [Rayonier Hunting | Recreation Licenses | Hunting & Recreation Licenses](#)
- 855-729-4868
- GMUs 572 and 560

THE CONSERVATION FUND/LUPINE FOREST/LUPINE COLUMBIA HOLDINGS LLC (FORMERLY STEVENSON LAND COMPANY)

- Some lands remain open to non-motorized access.
- Mainly GMU 578

GREEN DIAMOND RESOURCE COMPANY/TCT COLUMBIA HOLDINGS (FORMERLY STEVENSON LAND COMPANY OR BROUGHTON LUMBER)

- Many of the parcels owned/managed by Green Diamond (59,000+ acres) are enrolled in the WDFW Private Lands Access Program (Feel Free to Hunt and Hunt by Reservation). Please visit the Private Lands webpage for more details and contact information. [Private Lands Hunting Access | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)
- Generally open to walk-in access on some parcels, please abide by any posted signs. More information at <https://www.greendiamond.com/>
- Mainly GMUs 574 and 578
- Hunters should be aware that certain blocks of lands are now closed to access.

WEYERHAEUSER

- Recreational access hotline 866-636-6531 or online:
<https://recreation.weyerhaeuser.com/>
for details and maps.
 - Yacolt (Columbia River East)
 - Access is by permit only and permits can be purchased at the website above. Please see the website for details, including maps.
 - GMU 568

- Klickitat County
 - Access is by Recreational Lease only. Please see the website for details, including maps.
 - GMU 578

WESTERN PACIFIC TIMBER

- As of 9/1/23 all Western Pacific Timber lands in Klickitat County are **no longer** open to any hunting access of any kind.