2024 District 1 Hunting Prospects

Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Orielle counties

Washington Department of FISH & WILDLIFE

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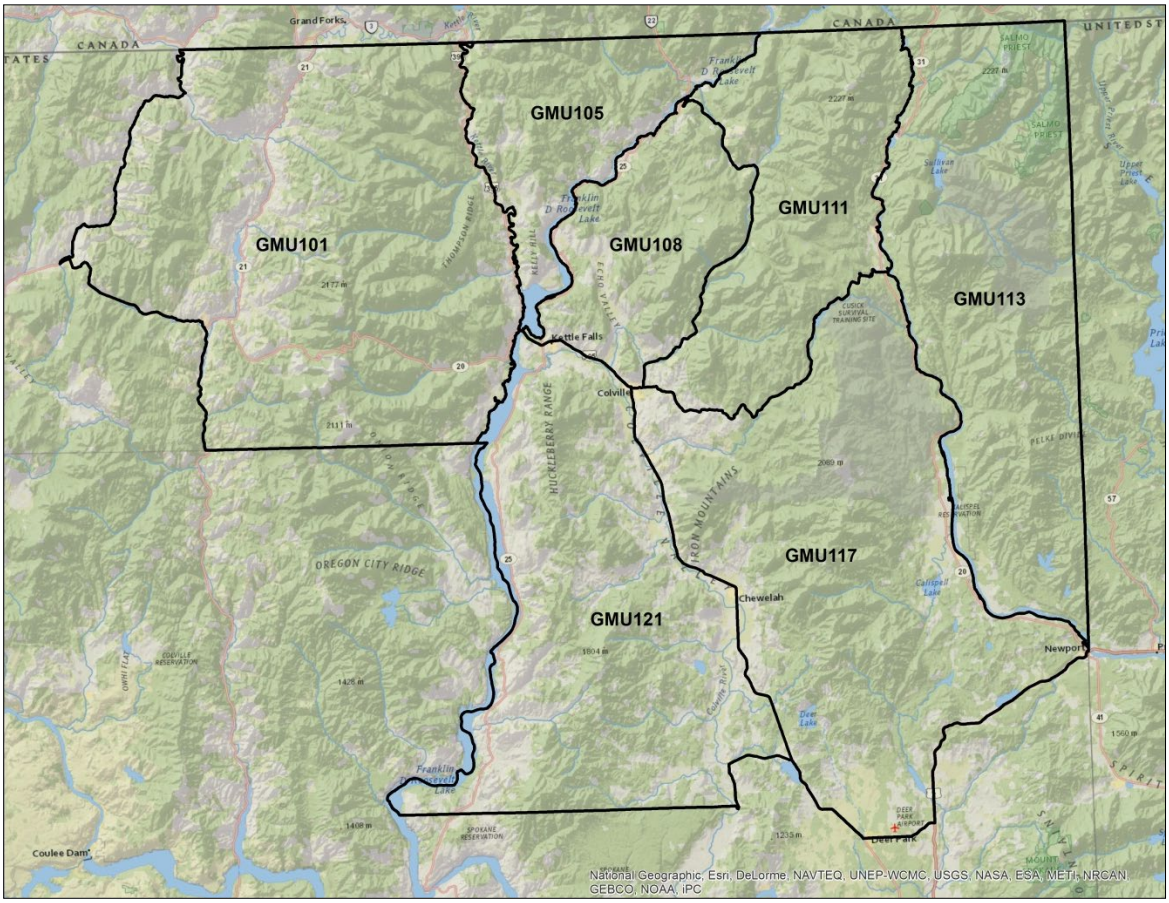
District 1 general overview

District 1 is in the northeastern corner of Washington and includes Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Ferry counties (Figure 1). District 1 is comprised of seven game management units (GMUs): 101 (Sherman), 105 (Kelly Hill), 108 (Douglas), 111 (Aladdin), 113 (Selkirk), 117 (49 Degrees North), and 121 (Huckleberry) (Figure 2). The topography is dominated by four prominent mountain ranges that run north and south: the Selkirk, Calispell, Huckleberry, and Kettle Mountain ranges. There are broad valleys between these ranges drained by the Pend Oreille, Colville, Columbia, and Kettle rivers, all within the upper Columbia River watershed.

Figure 1. District 1 in northeastern Washington includes Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Ferry counties.

Figure 2. Game Management Units (GMUs) within District 1.



Elevations vary from about 1,290 feet at the normal pool level of Lake Roosevelt (Reservoir) to 7,309 feet on Gypsy Peak in the north Selkirk Range. Coniferous forest is extensive within District 1, covering about two thirds, or 68%, of the district's landscape. Agricultural land, range land, and water features cover most of the balance.

Over one third (37%) of the land mass in District 1 is public land. It is mostly national forest, but Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) lands are also present. Additional public lands include Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and a few other government agencies. Most of the public lands outside of Indian reservations are open to public hunting. There are large timber company lands open to public hunting, although not necessarily open to private motorized vehicles. Private lands are typically only open to hunting by first gaining written permission from the landowner or manager.

District 1 is well-known for its white-tailed deer, moose, forest grouse, and turkey hunting opportunities. Quality hunting opportunities also exist for other game species, including mule deer, black bear, and cougar.

Table 1 presents estimates of harvest and days per kill for most game species in District 1 during the 2023 general hunting season, and how those estimates compare to the 2022 season and the five-year

average. For more specific information on harvest trends or permit statistics, please refer to the appropriate section in this document or go to the harvest statistics section of the WDFW webpage.

Table 1. Harvest for the most popular game species found in District 1 during the 2022 and 2023 general hunting seasons.

Species	Harvest: 5-yr average	Harvest: 2022	Harvest: 2023	% change (5yr)	% change (2022)
Elk	261	269	288	+10%	+7%
Deer (both species)	3683	3161	3292	-11%	+4%
Black bear	276	281	257	-7%	-9%
Cougar	44	47	39	-11%	-17%
Turkey	3523	3352	3542	+5%	+6%
Forest grouse	7917	6384	6894	-13%	+8%

Also included are the five-year average and a comparison of 2022 and 2023 estimates and the five-year average.

Elk

WDFW recently confirmed a case of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in north Spokane County in GMU 124. While that detection was not in District 1, it was geographically close. CWD is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) that infects members of the Cervidae 'deer' family and is fatal in infected elk, deer, moose, and caribou. TSEs are caused by malformed proteins called prions. There is currently no cure for CWD and it can severely impact cervid populations if it becomes widespread. CWD can only be confirmed through testing of lymph nodes or brain tissue. Testing will be more important than ever to prevent the spread of the disease to other areas of eastern Washington and across the region and state. Information on how to have your harvested animal tested, and other steps WDFW is taking to prevent the spread of CWD, is at wdfw.wa.gov/cwd.

General information, management goals, and population status

All elk that occur in District 1 are Rocky Mountain elk. There are ten identified elk herds in Washington, and elk in District 1 are part of the Selkirk Elk Herd. The quality of elk hunting opportunities in District 1

Antlerless Elk. Photo by WDFW.

varies from poor to fair depending on the GMU, but in general, opportunities are marginal and harvest success is low. Elk are widely scattered in small groups throughout the densely forested region of northeastern Washington. Consequently, elk in northeastern Washington are difficult to both survey and harvest. Population data are limited, but recent research and harvest data indicate elk numbers are increasing. The best elk hunting opportunities occur in GMUs associated with the Pend Oreille sub-herd area, which includes GMUs 121 (Huckleberry), 117 (49 Degrees North), and 111 (Aladdin). Elk hunter numbers in the Colville District have increased over the last several years with hunter participation and harvest well dispersed across the Colville District through all three hunting methods. However, hunting elk successfully within District 1 is no small challenge.

The management objective for elk in the Colville District is being met with a sustained annual harvest of a viable and productive elk population with desirable population characteristics. The prime bull (six points or more) percentage in the 2023 bull harvest (all weapon types) was 19%.

Currently, WDFW does not make formal estimates or indices of population size to monitor elk populations in District 1. Due to the thick forest cover and harvest levels that are relatively low compared with other regions of Washington, devoting substantial resources to surveying bull to cow ratios has not been a high priority. Instead, trends in harvest, hunter success, and catch per unit effort (CPUE) or its inverse, days per kill, are used as surrogates to a formal index or estimate. WDFW recognizes the limitations of using harvest data to monitor trends in population size and hopes to gain the resources necessary to begin monitoring populations using formal sampling designs in the future.

Increasing hunter harvest, documented expansion of elk distribution, increased damage complaints from members of the agricultural industry and anecdotal information indicate that elk populations are at least stable and likely increasing in northeastern Washington. For more detailed information related to the status of Washington's elk herds, hunters should read through the most recent version of the Game Status and Trend Report and/or the Selkirk Elk Herd Plan.

Which GMU should elk hunters hunt?

Probably the most frequent question from hunters is, "What GMU should I hunt?" This is not easy to answer because it often depends on access to private land, the hunting method, and the type of hunting experience desired. For example, not all GMUs are open to late archery hunters.

Many, if not most, hunters are looking for a quality opportunity to harvest a mature bull. Although large mature bulls do exist in District 1, they are not very abundant, and hunters are usually advised to apply for special permit opportunities within District 3 (Blue Mountains) if they are searching for the best opportunity to harvest a large mature bull elk on public land in Region 1.

The ideal GMU for most hunters would have high densities of elk, low hunter densities, high hunter success rates, and be mostly, if not entirely, comprised of public land that's open to hunting. Unfortunately, this scenario does not exist in any GMU that is open during the general elk modern firearm, archery, or muzzleloader seasons in District 1. Instead, because of general season opportunities, the GMUs with the highest elk densities tend to have the highest hunter densities as well. For many hunters, high hunter densities are not enough to persuade them not to hunt in a GMU where they see lots of elk. Other hunters prefer to hunt in areas with moderate to low numbers of elk if that means there are also fewer hunters.

Table 2 provides a quick and general assessment of how District 1 GMUs compare with regard to harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success during general modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader seasons. The values presented are the three-year averages for each statistic. Total harvest and hunter numbers were further summarized by the number of elk harvested and hunters per square mile. This approach was taken because comparing total harvest or hunter numbers is not always a fair comparison, as GMUs vary in size.

Each GMU was ranked for elk harvested/mile^2 (bulls and cows), hunters/mile^2, and hunter success rates for the general season only. The three ranking values were then summed to produce a final rank sum

(lower rank sums are better). The modern firearm comparisons are the most straightforward because bag limits and seasons are the same in each GMU.

For archery seasons, consider that antlerless elk may be harvested in all GMUs in the early season, but only five GMUs are open for any bull during late archery seasons. These differences are important when comparing total harvest or hunter numbers among GMUs.

Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c provide rank sum analysis for comparison of total harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success rates among GMUs during general modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader seasons. Data presented are based on a three-year running average. As a generalization, the lower the rank sum, the better the overall elk hunting opportunity is within a GMU.

Table 2a. Modern Firearm

GMU	Size (mi^2)	Total Harvest	Harvest per mi^2	Harvest Rank	Total Hunters	Hunters per mi^2	Hunter Density Rank	Hunter Success	Hunter Success Rank	Rank Sum
101	1,103	5	0.0	6	138	0.13	1	3.9%	6	13
105	296	7	0.02	5	131	0.44	2	5.7%	3	10
108	289	14	0.05	2	180	0.62	3	7.7%	2	7
111	455	8	0.02	5	247	0.54	4	3.4%	7	16
113	736	20	0.03	4	516	0.70	5	4.1%	5	14
117	954	38	0.04	3	719	0.75	7	5.3%	4	14
121	796	54	0.07	1	572	0.72	6	9.7%	1	8

Table 2b. Archery

GMU	Size (mi^2)	Total Harvest	Harvest per mi^2	Harvest Rank	Total Hunters	Hunters per mi^2	Hunter Density Rank	Hunter Success	Hunter Success Rank	Rank Sum
101	1,103	5	0.00	4	100	0.09	1	5.1%	7	12
105	296	6	0.02	2	56	0.19	2	11.7%	1	5
108	289	6	0.02	2	55	0.19	2	10.0%	3	7
111	455	6	0.01	3	92	0.20	3	5.9%	5	11
113	736	11	0.01	3	207	0.28	5	5.2%	6	14
117	954	20	0.02	2	303	0.32	6	6.5%	4	12
121	796	23	0.03	1	210	0.26	4	10.8%	2	7

GMUs bolded in the archery section are open during early and late archery seasons. All GMUs allow for antlerless harvest in the early archery season.

Table 2c. Muzzleloader

GMU	Size (mi^2)	Total Harvest	Harvest per mi^2	Harvest Rank	Total Hunters	Hunters per mi^2	Hunter Density Rank	Hunter Success	Hunter Success Rank	Rank Sum
101	1,103	4	0.00	3	40	0.04	1	9.1%	4	8
105	296	3	0.01	2	23	0.08	2	12.0%	2	6
108	289	3	0.01	2	26	0.09	3	10.0%	3	8
111	455	3	0.01	2	43	0.10	4	6.0%	6	12
113	736	8	0.01	2	126	0.17	6	6.7%	5	12
117	954	7	0.01	2	171	0.18	7	4.3%	7	16
121	796	20	0.02	1	120	0.15	5	16.3%	1	7

What to expect during the 2024 season

Elk populations typically do not fluctuate dramatically from year to year, but periodic severe winters can trigger substantial die-offs. The 2023-24 winter was generally mild, and no die-offs were detected. The 2023 harvest was the highest since at least 2008 (comparable data only available since 2008). We expect harvest in 2024 to be about the same or a little higher than it was in 2023. Populations available for harvest are expected to be at least similar in size compared to the 2022 and 2023 seasons. However, the total hunter harvest of elk in District 1 is still low compared to other WDFW districts, hovering around 200-300 animals per year since 2008.

How to find elk

When hunting elk in District 1, hunters should research areas and spend plenty of time scouting before the season opener as it is often difficult to predict elk location, especially after hunting pressure increases. If hunters are seeking permission to hunt on private property, talk to the landowner well before the start of the season. Elk within District 1 are scattered in small groups throughout the district, but some drainages hold more elk than others. Many, if not most, hunters spend great amounts of their time focusing on forest clear-cuts, which makes a lot of sense because elk often forage in clear-cuts and are highly visible when they do. However, there are many elk (especially bulls) that do not frequent clear-cuts during daylight hours. Instead, they spend most of their time during the day in closed canopy forests, swamps, or young forest. Moreover, those highly visible elk often attract many hunters to open clear-cuts, and these areas can get crowded in a hurry.

From a landscape perspective, some generalities can be made that will help increase the odds of locating elk. When going to a new area, hunters will benefit by covering as much ground as possible and making note of areas where they see sign along roads and log “landings.” Log landings from past timber harvest operations are an especially good place to look for sign because they are often not graveled, which makes it easier to see fresh tracks. This scouting approach will give hunters a good idea of what areas hold elk and where to focus their more intensive scouting efforts.

After those areas with abundant elk sign have been identified, hunters should focus in on higher elevation stands that provide cover and are adjacent to open hillsides and/or clear-cuts. During early seasons when it is warm, these areas often include creek bottoms, river bottoms, or any place that is near water. Once the season progresses and temperatures cool, typically by late October, elk are not as attracted to water and the challenge of finding them becomes more difficult. Hunting pressure also has an effect and will force elk to use areas that provide thicker cover or are less accessible to hunters because of topographical features.

Later in the season, it is a good idea to consult a topographic map and find "benches" located in steep terrain and thick cover. Elk often use these areas to bed down during the day. Any snow cover generally enhances the ability to find elk tracks. Hunting right after a fresh snow usually presents a particularly good advantage in tracking down an individual or group of elk. Lastly, provided that non-motorized access is allowed, hunters should not let a locked gate in an otherwise open area keep them from going in on foot, horseback, or bicycle to search for elk. More often than not, these areas hold elk that have not received as much hunting pressure, which can make them less skittish and easier to hunt. A popular approach to hunting these areas is to use mountain bikes or fat-tire bikes, which is not extremely difficult given the network of maintained gravel roads that frequently occur on timber company lands.

Elk Areas

There is one elk area in District 1, Fruitland (Elk Area 1021). The Fruitland elk area is new in 2024 and is to address localized damage caused by elk. The area is on private land and hunters are encouraged to secure access before applying and, if drawn, contact landowners within the elk area well before the hunt begins. If hunters need help finding access, they can contact the Region 1 office at 509-892-1001 and WDFW staff may be able to assist.

Deer

General information, management goals, and population status

WDFW recently confirmed a case of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in north Spokane County in GMU 124. While that detection was not in District 1, it was geographically close. CWD is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) that infects members of the Cervidae 'deer' family and is fatal in infected deer. TSEs are caused by malformed proteins called prions. There is currently no cure for CWD and it can severely impact cervid populations if it becomes widespread. CWD can only be confirmed through testing of lymph nodes or brain tissue. Testing will be more important than ever to prevent the spread of the disease to other areas of eastern Washington and across the region and state. Information on how to have your harvested animal tested, and other steps WDFW is taking to prevent the spread of CWD, is at wdfw.wa.gov/cwd.

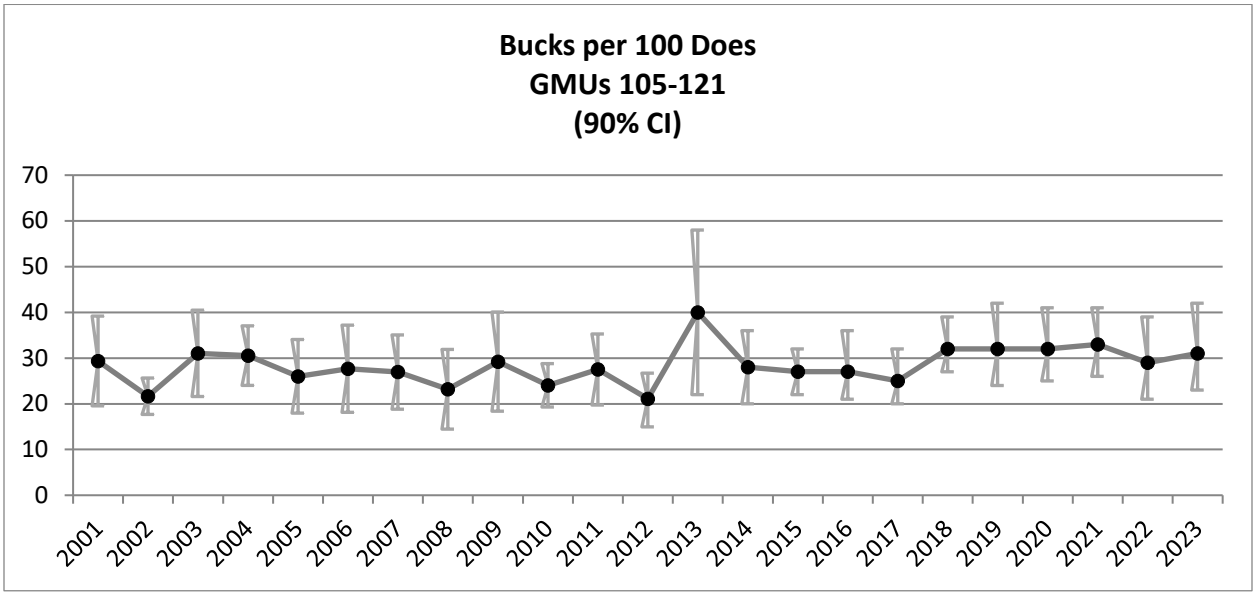
In northeastern Washington, white-tailed deer are the most abundant deer species. Mule deer are locally common, especially in the higher elevations and throughout Ferry County, but their overall

numbers are low compared to white-tailed deer on a district scale. Deer hunting opportunities in District 1 vary from fair to excellent, depending on the GMU. The best opportunities to harvest a mule deer in District 1 generally occur in GMUs 101 (Sherman) and 121 (Huckleberry). All GMUs within the district offer good opportunities to harvest a white-tailed deer. The white-tailed deer harvest management objective is to provide antlered and antlerless hunting opportunity for all hunting methods whenever feasible. Management goals for mule deer are to provide conservative hunting opportunity and allow population levels to increase by managing antlerless hunting opportunity.

Surveys for deer in District 1 are conducted before the modern firearm hunting season. Pre-season ratios come from roadside surveys conducted during August (for buck to doe ratio) and September (for fawn to doe ratio). These ground-based surveys provide an estimate of buck ratios prior to the modern firearm hunting season (Figure 3). Pre-season surveys for the past three years yielded stable buck to doe and fawn to doe ratios. However, these surveys tend to occur in more privately owned and agriculturally dominated areas where visibility of deer from a road is good.

There are quality bucks in the more heavily forested areas within District 1, but they are not as visible and therefore not represented in the survey sample.

Figure 3. Pre-season white-tailed deer ratios and 90% confidence intervals from ground surveys within District 1 from 2001 - 2023.



Recent disease outbreaks in 2015 and 2021 were hard on the white-tailed deer population in District 1 and decreased harvest was a reflection of the lower deer population. According to harvest data, mule deer populations appear to be stable or slightly decreasing. For more detailed information related to the status of deer in Washington, hunters should read through the most recent version of the Game Status and Trend Report, which is available for download on the Department's website. For more information, hunters could also look at the White-tailed Deer Management Plan and the Mule Deer Management Plan.

Which GMU should deer hunters hunt?

One of the most frequently asked questions from hunters is, “What GMU should I hunt?” This is not easy to answer because it depends on the hunting method and target hunting experience. Some hunters are looking for a quality opportunity to harvest a mature buck, while others just want to harvest any legal deer in an area with few hunters.

The ideal GMU for most hunters would be entirely or mostly comprised of public land, have high deer densities, low hunter densities, and high hunter success rates. Unfortunately, this scenario does not exist in any GMU that is open during the general modern firearm, archery, or muzzleloader seasons in District 1. Instead, because of general season opportunities, the GMUs with the highest deer densities tend to have the highest hunter densities as well. For many hunters, high hunter densities are not enough to persuade them not to hunt in a GMU where they see lots of deer. Other hunters prefer to hunt in areas with moderate to low numbers of deer if that means there are also relatively few hunters.

The information in Table 3 provides a general assessment of how GMUs compare with regard to harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success during general modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader deer seasons. The values presented are the three-year averages for each statistic. Mule deer and white-tailed deer are combined for this table, but it is a reasonable assumption that in GMUs other than GMU 101, the vast majority of the deer harvested are white-tailed deer. Total harvest and hunter numbers were further summarized by the number of deer harvested and hunters per square mile. This approach was taken because comparing total harvest or hunter numbers is not always a fair comparison, as GMUs vary in size.

Each GMU was ranked for deer harvested/mile^2, hunters/mile^2, and hunter success rates. The three ranking values were then summed to produce a final rank sum. Comparisons are straightforward because bag limits and seasons are the same for most GMUs.

When choosing a species to hunt or a GMU to hunt in, differences that should be considered are:

1. Mule deer have a 3-point minimum harvest restriction during all general seasons.
2. The late archery season in GMU 101 runs longer than other GMUs.
3. There is no late modern firearm season in GMU 101.
4. There is no late archery season in GMUs 111 or 113.
5. There is a late muzzleloader season in GMU 113.

Tables 3a, 3b, and 3c provide rank sum analysis for comparison of total harvest, hunter numbers, and hunter success rates among GMUs during general modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader deer seasons. Data presented are based on a three-year average. As a generalization, the lower the rank sum, the better the overall deer hunting opportunity is within a GMU.

Table 3a. Modern Firearm

GMU	Size (mi^2)	Total Harvest	Harvest per mi^2	Harvest Rank	Total Hunters	Hunters per mi^2	Hunter Density Rank	Hunter Success	Hunter Success Rank	Rank Sum
101	1,103	386	0.35	6	2332	2.11	2	16.5%	6	14
105	296	191	0.65	3	675	2.28	3	28.4%	1	7
108	289	234	0.81	2	972	3.36	6	24.1%	3	11
111	455	223	0.49	5	1103	2.42	4	20.1%	4	13
113	736	195	0.27	7	1247	1.69	1	15.6%	7	15
117	954	498	0.52	4	2833	2.97	5	17.6%	5	14
121	796	962	1.21	1	3618	4.55	7	26.6%	2	10

Table 3b. Archery

GMU	Size (mi^2)	Total Harvest	Harvest per mi^2	Harvest Rank	Total Hunters	Hunters per mi^2	Hunter Density Rank	Hunter Success	Hunter Success Rank	Rank Sum
101	1,103	132	0.12	1	605	0.55	7	21.75	1	9
105	296	10	0.03	5	61	0.21	3	17.0%	4	12
108	289	13	0.04	4	72	0.25	4	18.1%	2	10
111	455	5	0.01	6	52	0.12	2	9.0%	7	15
113	736	7	0.01	6	70	0.10	1	10.4%	6	13
117	954	56	0.06	3	332	0.35	5	16.7%	5	13
121	796	56	0.07	2	314	0.39	6	17.9%	3	11

Table 3c. Muzzleloader

GMU	Size (mi^2)	Total Harvest	Harvest per mi^2	Harvest Rank	Total Hunters	Hunters per mi^2	Hunter Density Rank	Hunter Success	Hunter Success Rank	Rank Sum
101	1,103	43	0.04	1	186	0.17	6	23.0%	2	9
105	296	4	0.01	3	13	0.04	1	34.7%	1	5
108	289	1	0.00	4	25	0.09	4	4.9%	7	15
111	455	5	0.01	3	26	0.06	2	20.5%	4	9
113	736	30	0.04	1	242	0.33	7	12.7%	5	13
117	954	8	0.01	3	74	0.08	3	11.2%	6	12
121	796	19	0.02	2	85	0.11	5	22.7%	3	10

What to expect during the 2024 season

Harvest declined in District 1 in 2022 and remained low in 2023, an expected trend given the large-scale epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD)/Bluetongue outbreak throughout eastern Washington in 2021. Some GMUs seemed to be hit harder than others, including GMUs 121 and 117 being the hardest hit by the outbreak. However, the 2023/24 winter was mild and over-winter survival was likely high. Therefore, if no large-scale disease outbreaks occur prior to the hunting seasons in 2024, we expect to see a moderate increase to harvest this season.

In 2024, hunters of any user group or weapon type will *not* be able to harvest a doe. This regulation change was enacted in 2019 to protect the reproductive component of the population.

District 1 runs check stations on weekends during the modern firearm season. Check stations allow biologists to collect important biological information that informs management decisions. This may include removing teeth to determine the age structure of a population, detailed information about the size of bucks being harvested, and tissue samples to test for diseases like chronic wasting disease (CWD). Aside from collecting biological information, check stations allow biologists an opportunity to interact with the hunting community, answer questions, and receive immediate feedback on how the season is going.

During the 2024 hunting season, additional check stations will be run throughout District 1 for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) surveillance. We are interested in sampling deer harvested throughout District 1. If you pass a check station, we encourage you to stop. If you're late getting out of the field, your deer can still be sampled for CWD. Go to wdfw.wa.gov/cwd for all the ways to have deer tested for CWD. Only the head, with 2-3 inches of neck, needs to be retained for testing.

WDFW recently confirmed a case of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in north Spokane County in GMU 124. While that detection was not in District 1, it was geographically close. CWD is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) that infects members of the Cervidae 'deer' family and is fatal in infected deer. TSEs are caused by malformed proteins called prions. There is currently no cure for CWD and it can severely impact cervid populations if it becomes widespread. CWD can only be confirmed through testing of lymph nodes or brain tissue. Testing will be more important than ever to prevent the spread of the disease to other areas of eastern Washington and across the region and state. Information on how to have your harvested animal tested, and other steps WDFW is taking to prevent the spread of CWD, is at wdfw.wa.gov/cwd.

If you harvest or salvage a deer, elk, or moose in GMUs 124, 127, or 130, you are required to submit to WDFW the whole head with at least three inches of neck attached, or extracted lymph nodes, within three days of harvesting or receiving a salvage permit.

Current check station locations for the 2024 season are:

- Colville - check website for exact location
- Hwy 2 Weigh Station, Chattaroy

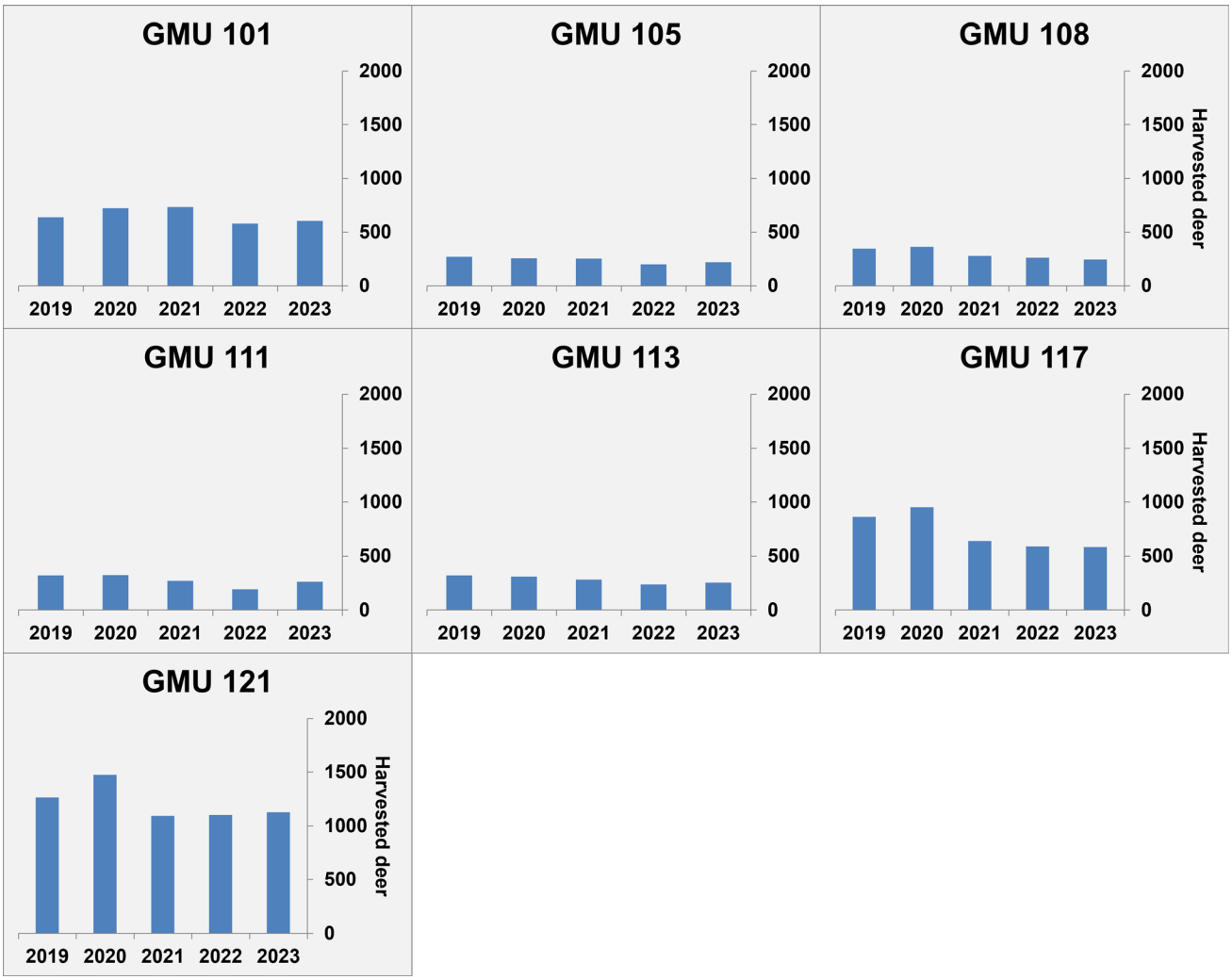
- Hwy 395 Weigh Station, Deer Park

Check for the most up to date check station locations. In addition, there is a self-service kiosk at the Colville District Office at 755 S. Main Street in Colville.

To encourage hunters to have their harvested animals tested for CWD, WDFW is teaming up with the Washington Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA), for a special drawing for multi-season deer tags. BHA helped pay for 100 multi-season deer tags. Hunters who provide CWD samples from WDFW's Eastern Region 1 will be entered in a random drawing for those tags.

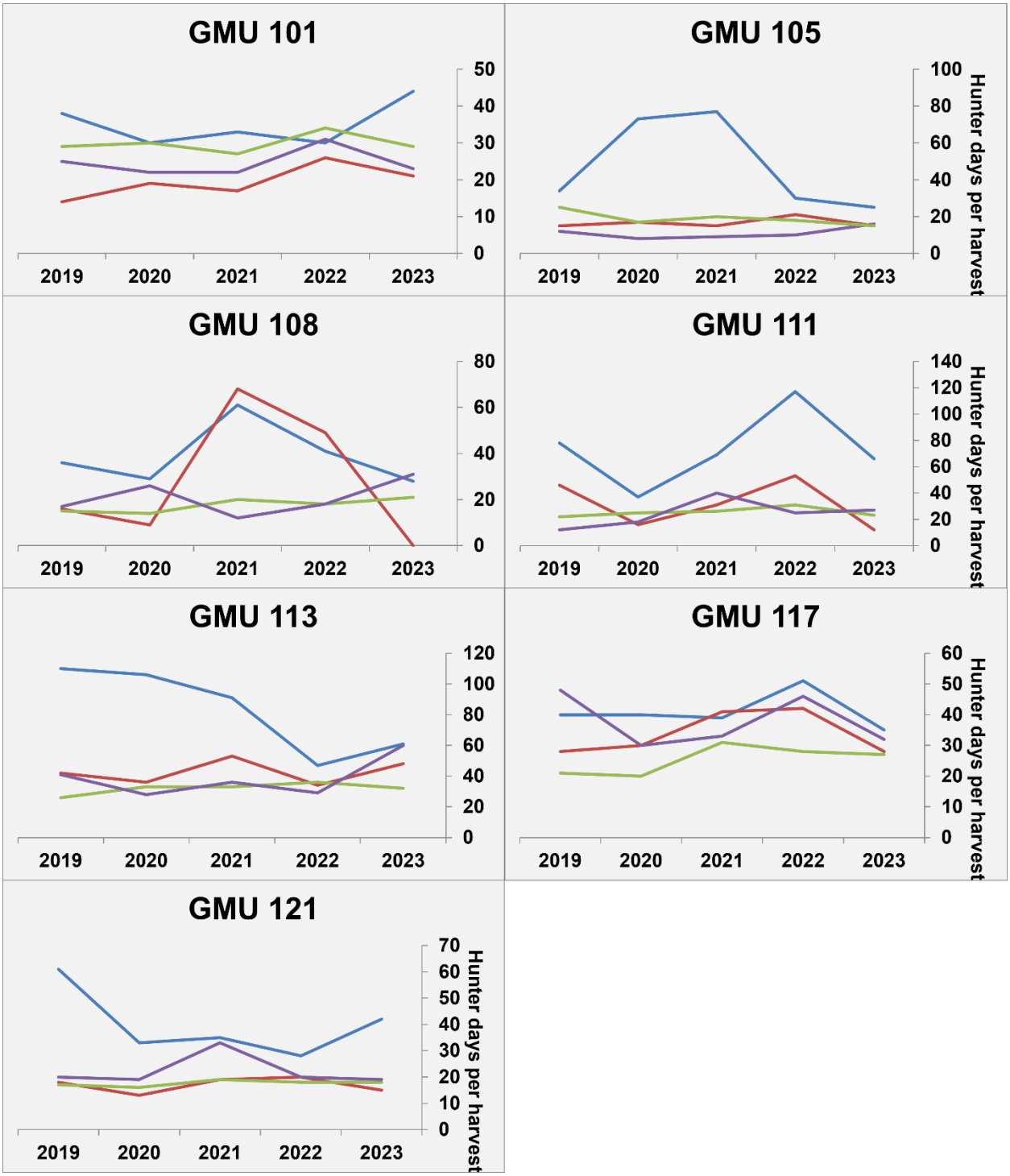
A good predictor of future harvest during general seasons is recent trends in harvest and catch per unit effort (CPUE) or its inverse, days per kill. Figures 4 and 5 provide trend data for each of these statistics by GMU and are intended to provide hunters with the best information possible to make an informed decision on where to hunt in District 1. Harvest was predictably low in 2021 and 2022 following a large-scale disease (bluetongue and EHD) outbreak in 2021.

Figure 4. Trends in the estimated number of bucks harvested during the general season (all weapons combined) in each GMU from 2019-2023.



Harvest totals do not include tribal harvest or special permit harvest.

Figure 5. Trend in days per kill for archery (blue), muzzleloader (purple), multiple weapon (green), and modern firearm (red) during the general season for deer in each GMU from 2019 -2023 within District 1.



How to find and hunt white-tailed deer

As is the case with most game species, the key to harvesting a white-tailed deer in District 1 is scouting. White-tailed deer occur throughout the district and in nearly every present habitat type. White-tailed deer densities are highest on private lands in the valleys and foothill benches bordering the valleys, especially in the farm-forest mosaic within GMUs 105, 108, 117, and 121. GMUs 101, 111, and 113 also have white-tailed deer, but with more localized distributions, again with the highest densities typically on private lands.

The majority of hunting is done in or adjacent to agricultural fields or recent forest timber harvest areas. When deer are present, they are much more visible than in adjacent habitats. However, deer typically use these more open areas at night, dawn, and dusk, especially once they have been disturbed by human presence. Therefore, it is advantageous for hunters to seek out areas a short to moderate distance away from these openings, which provide cover where deer are spending more time. If a hunter is seeing large amounts of deer signs in an area, odds are those deer are not far away.

The traditional approaches to hunting white-tailed deer generally include several methods. The first is still hunting, where the hunter is moving, but very slowly through a patch of habitat, stopping frequently to scan or glass the vegetative cover ahead with binoculars. The hunter looks for parts of a deer, like legs, an antler, or a portion of the body or head, as opposed to the whole deer, which is usually not visible through the vegetation. Stand hunting is another technique. This method involves the hunter patiently waiting in a tree stand, on a stump, against a tree trunk, on a ridge rock, etc. in high deer use areas (highly traveled trails, habitat edges, bottlenecks, funnels, etc.) until deer show up. A third deer hunting approach is conducting drives. This technique involves at least two hunters, but larger groups maximize its effectiveness. The hunters divide into “drivers” and “blockers.” The blockers position themselves in an organized spacing, often downwind of a patch of deer bedding habitat (thick woods, forested swamp, or heavy brush field). The drivers then slowly hike through the habitat patch, alerting the deer and hopefully pushing them to the blockers. Sometimes it’s a good idea to post one blocker at the front of the habitat patch behind the drivers in the event that any deer double back to evade them. Although each of these approaches is highly effective, there is another technique that is not as well-known or used as much. This includes rattling and grunting to simulate two bucks fighting over a doe. This technique is more common with mid-western and eastern white-tailed deer hunters, but can be effective here as well, especially in the days leading up to the rut (deer breeding season) in mid-November. A quick internet search on this topic will yield plenty of evidence to illustrate its effectiveness when conditions are right. More information on deer hunting can be found in the Department’s Basics of Deer Hunting resource.

How to find and hunt mule deer

Mule deer occur in District 1, but in much lower abundance than white-tailed deer, especially east of the Columbia River. Although mule deer occur within every District 1 GMU, the highest density is in GMU 101. As is the case with most game species, the key to harvesting a mule deer in District 1 is scouting. The classical western method of hunting mule deer is sometimes called spot and stalk. The hunter uses

good optics, binoculars, and spotting scopes to scan from ridge tops and other vantage points to find the mule deer, pick out suitable bucks, and stalk them to within shooting distance. Ordinarily, the stalk entails a strategic hike and cautious sneak action. Much of District 1 does not offer the open country required for this method of hunting, but where it does, it can be effective. More information on deer hunting can be found in the Department's Basics of Deer Hunting resource.

Several female mule deer stand in an open grassy field. Photo by WDFW.

Deer areas

There is one deer area in District 1, Parker Lake (Deer Area 1031). This deer area is described in the Area Descriptions section of the Big Game Pamphlet. Hunting is by special permit only within the Parker Lake area.

Notable changes

All legal harvest is buck only for all user groups. This change was enacted in 2019 to conserve the reproductive portion of the population.

Information about EHD/bluetongue and deer

During the late summer of 2015 and 2021, agency staff members documented a large-scale bluetongue and EHD outbreak in District 1. In certain areas, WDFW received many reports of large numbers of dead deer. The bluetongue outbreak in both years was brought about by the severe drought in northeast Washington. It's still too early to predict if bluetongue or EHD will make an appearance, the potential for

an outbreak is always possible. Hunters may consider reviewing the Department's bluetongue and EHD resources for further information.

Black bear

General information, management goals, and population status

The goals for black bear management in Washington are to: 1) preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage black bear and their habitats to ensure healthy, productive populations; 2) minimize threats to public safety from black bears, while at the same time maintaining a sustainable and viable bear population; 3) manage black bear for a variety of recreational, educational, and aesthetic purposes, including hunting, scientific study, cultural and ceremonial uses by Native Americans, wildlife viewing, and photography; and 4) manage populations statewide for a sustained yield. For management purposes, the state is divided into nine black bear management units (BBMUs). Harvest levels vary between BBMU depending on local population dynamics and environmental conditions.

District 1 consists of GMUs in part of the Northeastern BBMU. The current black bear hunting season guidelines for the Northeastern BBMU are designed to maintain black bear populations at a level which would not increase impacts to big game herds. The metrics currently used to direct black bear harvest include the proportion of harvested bears that were female, the median age of harvested females, and the median age of harvested males.

WDFW does not conduct annual surveys to monitor trends in black bear population size. Trends in harvest data are used instead as population surrogates or indices. However, in 2019, biologists conducted a survey to estimate black bear density in GMU 117. Density was found to be 31 bears/100km^2. When compared to other areas in Washington with estimates derived using the same methodology, a density of 31 bears/100km^2 is on the higher end of the range. Currently, black bear populations are believed to be stable in District 1.

Black bears occur throughout District 1, but population densities vary among GMUs. The best opportunities to harvest a bear likely occur in GMUs 101 (Sherman) and 117 (49 Degrees North), mainly on account of abundant public land that is open to hunting.

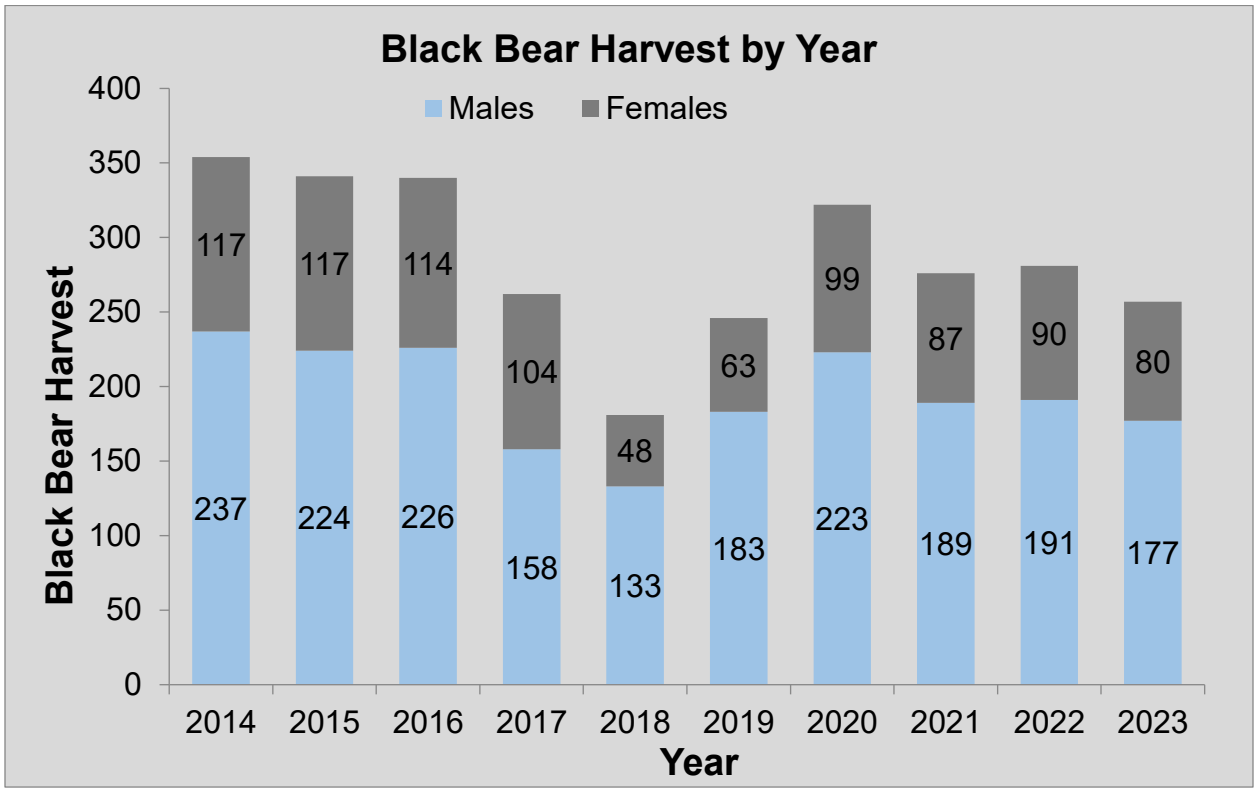
What to expect during the 2024 season

Although some hunters specifically target black bears, most bears are harvested opportunistically during general deer and elk seasons. Consequently, annual harvest and hunter success can vary quite a bit from one year to the next. Since 2004, hunter success in District 1 GMUs has varied from 4% to 18%. The success rate is likely higher for hunters who specifically hunt black bears versus those who buy a bear tag just in case they see one while deer or elk hunting.

Overall, annual black bear harvest during the general bear season in District 1 showed a stable trend from 2014 to 2016 before declining sharply in 2017 and 2018 (Figure 6). Harvest has remained relatively stable since 2020.

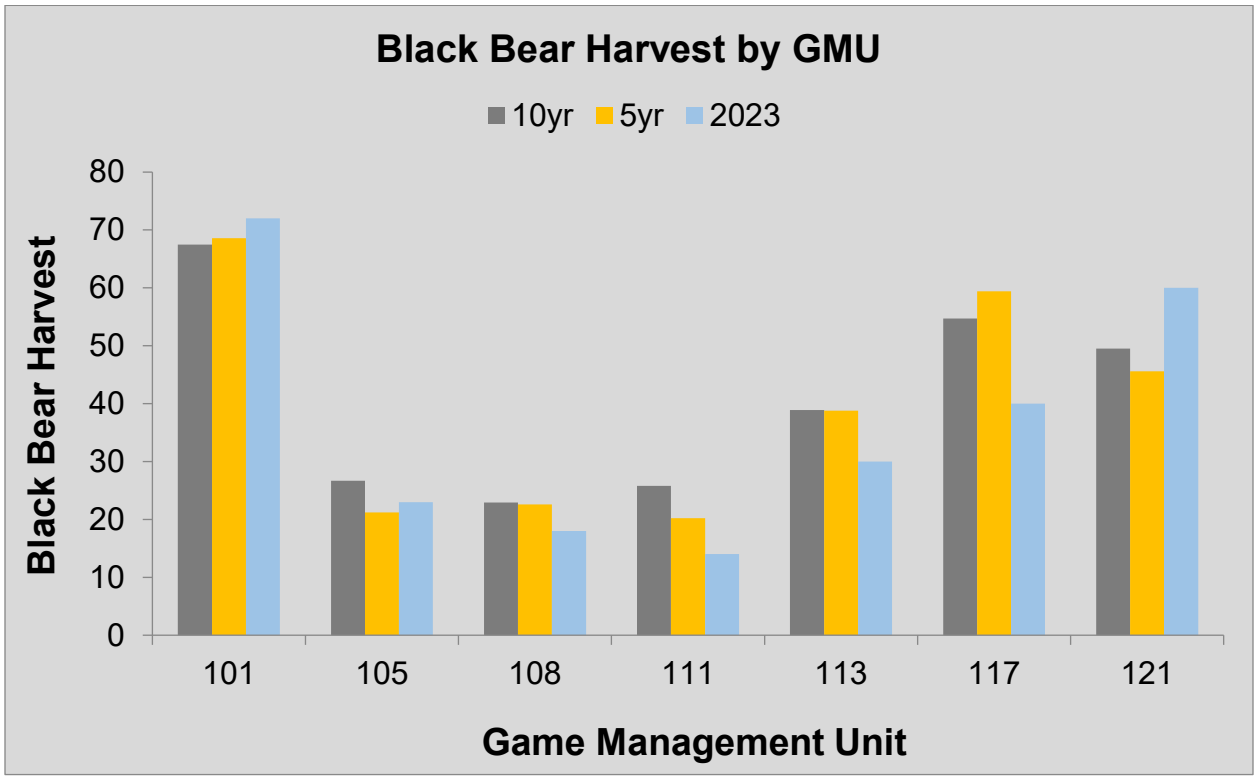
At the GMU level, most black bears will likely be harvested in GMUs 101 (Sherman), 117 (49 Degrees North), and 121 (Huckleberry). Harvest numbers, during the 2023 season and compared to long-term (ten year) and short-term (five year) averages, show a stable harvest in most GMUs within District 1 (Figure 7). Following the 2019 regulation change (August 1 opener and two bear bag limit), harvest throughout District 1 increased and has now stabilized.

Figure 6. Trends in the number of male and female black bears harvested during the general bear season in District 1 (GMUs 101-121), 2014–2023.



Harvest estimates do not include bears harvested during spring permit seasons or bears removed because they were causing damage to private property.

Figure 7. The number of black bears harvested in each GMU during the 2023 general bear season in District 1.



Also included are the 10-year (2014-2023) and 5-year (2019-2023) average for the total number of bears harvested in each GMU.

How to locate and harvest a black bear

Scouting is an extremely important factor that hunters should consider when specifically hunting for black bears in District 1. Although black bears are fairly common and occur in some areas at high densities, they are seen infrequently because of the thick evergreen conifer forest and other vegetation that dominates the landscape.

Black bears can occur in a variety of habitat types, so it can be difficult to narrow down where to search for them. In the early fall, hunters should focus their efforts at higher elevations and in open terrain (e.g., open hillsides). Huckleberries ripen throughout the summer, but in the early fall prior to heavy frost, the most berries remaining are typically at higher elevations. A large huckleberry patch yielding lots of fruit would be a good place to hunt.

Bears can also be located in recent timber harvests that contain a large number of berry-producing shrubs, including huckleberries, serviceberries, snowberries, soapberries, and thimbleberries. During the fall, hunters need to find openings with these characteristics and hike through them to see if there are any signs of bear. If they do find fresh signs, odds are there is a bear frequenting the area. If hunters are patient and sit for extended periods of time watching these areas, they stand a reasonable chance of harvesting a bear. Patience is the key.

Important considerations

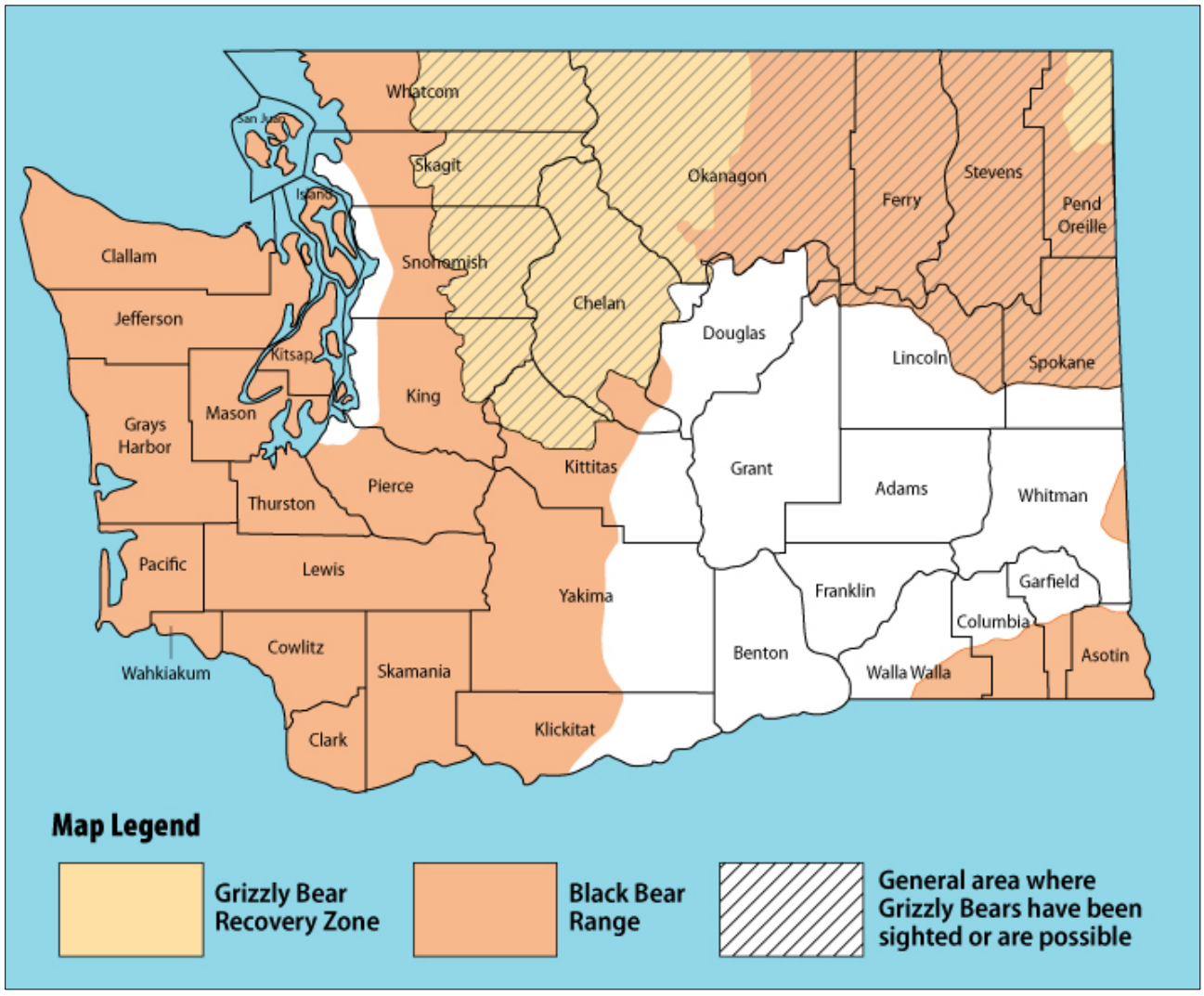
Black bear hunters in GMUs 101 through 117 are required to complete WDFW's online bear identification test each year and carry proof that they have passed. Prepare for and take the test at Bear Identification Program.

There are consistent sightings and known resident grizzly bears in District 1. Grizzly bears are a federally threatened and state-listed endangered species. Killing one, either unintentionally or intentionally, can bring costly fines and penalties, and set back recovery efforts for grizzly bears. Just like with other similar looking game species such as wolves/coyotes, mule deer/white-tailed deer, bobcat/lynx, and other animal groups, Washington hunters are responsible for being able to tell the difference between black bears and grizzly bears. This knowledge and skill are critical in areas where the ranges of these two bear species overlap (Figure 8). In addition, hunters in District 1 are strongly encouraged to carry bear spray while hunting. Hunters should know how to use bear spray before heading into the field. Learn about using bear spray.

Bear hunters are urged not to shoot sows with cubs. Sows may be accompanied by cubs in the fall that tend to lag behind when traveling, so please observe and be patient before shooting.

WDFW requires the submission of a tooth from successful black bear hunters. Hunters are encouraged to submit teeth by December 1 of the current hunt year. Biologists use this information to better monitor black bears, make management decisions, and evaluate the impacts of harvest on the population. In addition, black bear hunters that submit a tooth can find out the age of their harvested bear by entering their Wild ID into WDFW's tooth age lookup tool. Just be aware that it takes about six months after the close of all bear seasons to receive the ages back from the lab, so there is a delay in this information being available. Hunters can pick up a tooth envelope at WDFW regional and district offices and some sporting goods stores. If available, a biologist can pull the tooth for you if the skull is not frozen. Refer to this instructional video about pulling a tooth.

Figure 8. Black bear range and grizzly bear sighting areas in Washington.



Notable changes

District 1 black bear hunters (GMUs 101 – 117) are required to complete WDFW's online bear identification test each year and carry proof that they have passed. Bear identification information can be found on the Bear Identification Program website. Fall black bear season dates have been extended and bag limits have increased in eastern Washington, hunters now have the opportunity to start hunting Aug. 1 throughout the state and the bag limit has increased to two bears. Hunters must purchase a second bear tag to harvest a second bear. As of this writing, there will be no spring bear permits available for the 2024 season.

Cougar

General information, management goals, and population status

A cougar is caught walking by on a trail camera set out for monitoring wildlife. Photo by University of Montana.

Cougars occur throughout District 1, but local densities can vary among GMUs. Cougars in District 1 are managed with the primary objective of maintaining a stable cougar population.

Beginning in 2012, WDFW changed cougar harvest management throughout Washington. The biggest change was shifting away from using season length or permit seasons to manage the number of cougar harvested, and instead using a standard liberal season coupled with harvest guidelines. The intent was to have a longer season, without any hunting implement restrictions, and only close cougar seasons in specific areas if harvest reached or exceeded a harvest guideline.

Beginning in 2024, WDFW cougar seasons are shifting away from the harvest guideline and implementing a harvest cap (Table 4). The cap for each Hunt Area is set at the intrinsic growth rate of 13%. Previously, only hunting mortalities counted towards the harvest guideline. With this new system, all human-caused mortalities, including hunter harvest, depredation removals, and landowner removals, will count towards the cap. If a Hunt Area reaches its cap before the hunting season opens on

September 1, the Hunt Area cap extends to 20%. Once the assigned cap is reached for each Hunt Area, the Hunt Area will close to cougar harvest. All known human-caused mortalities will be counted towards the cap from April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025 and the general season cougar hunting season begins on Sept. 1.

Cougar hunters are required to have their harvest inspected and sealed by Department staff. Part of this process includes removing a tooth. The age of the cougar is estimated at a specialized lab and the hunter can find the results using the WDFW tooth age lookup tool.

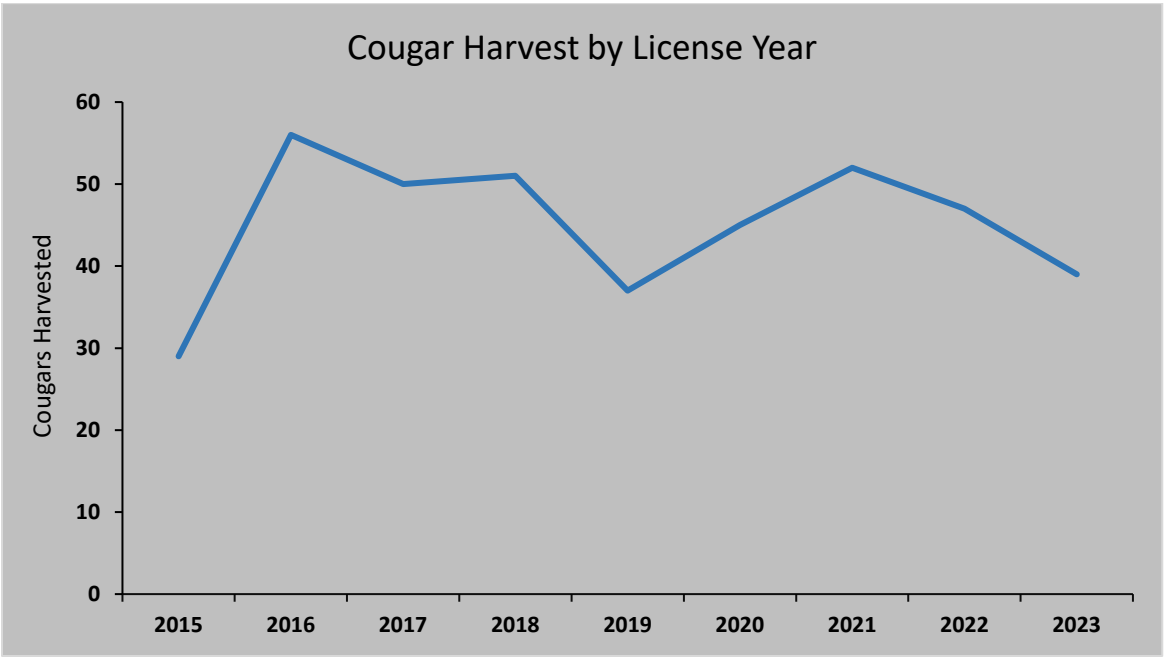
Table 4. Harvest guidelines and 2023-24 adult only cougar harvest for the six cougar hunt areas located in District 1.

Hunt Area (GMU)	13% Harvest Cap	20% Harvest Cap	2023-24 Hunter Harvest
101	8	13	7
105	2	3	2
108, 111	6	8	9
113	5	8	4
117	7	11	6
121	6	8	8

What to expect during the 2024 season

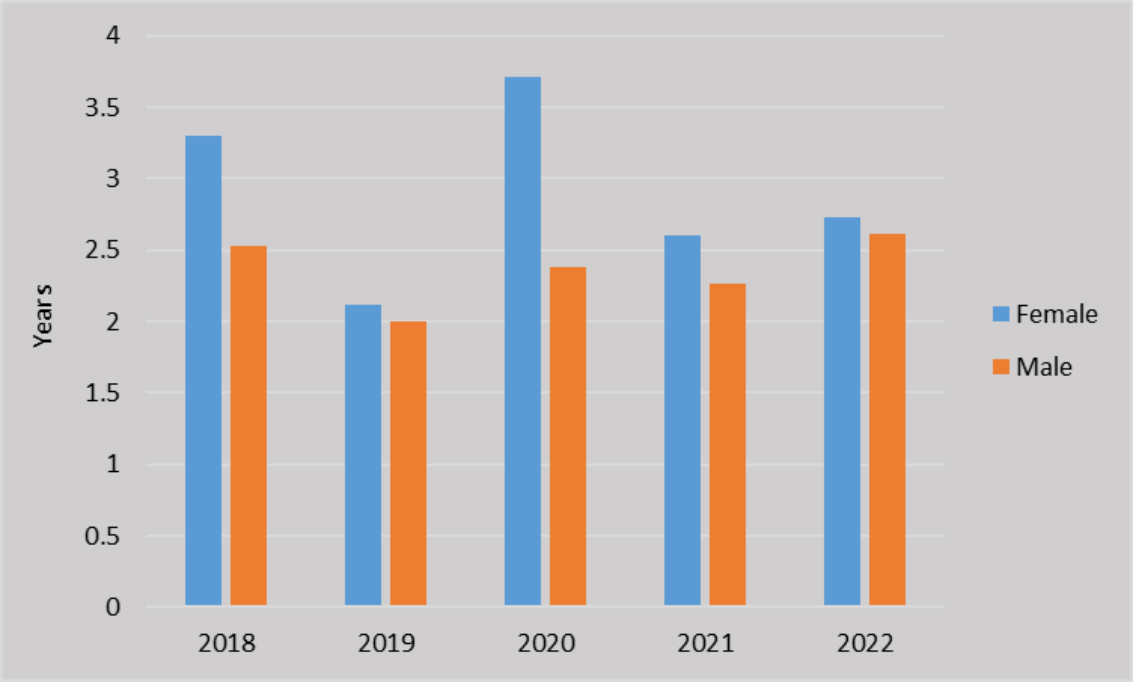
The total number of cougars harvested in District 1 in 2023 was slightly lower than in 2022 (Figure 9). Beginning in 2020, only adult harvest (two years +) counted towards the harvest guideline. The average age at harvest is variable for both males and females (Figure 10). In 2022, the latest complete tooth dataset, the average age for all general season harvest was 2.4 years. Since this is the first season of the new hunt structure, it is hard to predict what hunter harvest will be for cougars. However, the average age of hunter harvested cougars is expected to be similar to prior years.

Figure 9. General season cougar harvest in District 1, 2015-2023.



All harvest is displayed, but beginning in 2020, only adult harvest counted towards the harvest guideline.

Figure 10. Average age of female (orange bars) and male (blue bars) cougar harvested during the general season in District 1, 2018-2022.



Ages for all 2023 harvested cougars were not available at the time of publication of this document.

Notable changes

The cougar hunting season structure has changed beginning for the 2024 season. Below is an excerpt from the hunting pamphlet that explains the new structure and the steps a hunter must take before hunting cougars. After harvest, hunters should call the closest WDFW regional office to where they live or where they are hunting to schedule an appointment with a biologist to extract a tooth and seal the hide. **The skull and hide must not be frozen when presented for inspection and sealing.**

- **Hunting season: Sept. 1-March 31 or when the cap is reached, whichever occurs first.**
- All hunters must call the Cougar Hotline at 1-866-364-4868 (press 2 after greeting) or visit WDFW's website at wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/big-game/cougar prior to hunting to check if Cougar Hunt Areas are open or closed.
- All successful hunters must: (1) Report their harvest within 72 hours to the cougar hotline at 1-866-364-4868 (press 3 after greeting) and state name, WILD ID, date of kill, sex of kill, and GMU of kill; (2) present the unfrozen hide and skull for mandatory sealing and sample collection by WDFW within 5 days of the kill (please leave proof of sex attached).
- All hunters purchasing a cougar tag must report their hunt activity (successful or unsuccessful) via the WILD system by March 31, 2025. **Note –Agency inspection/sealing must be within 5 days of making the kill, the hotline reporting is not associated with sealing.**

Forest grouse

Species and general habitat characteristics

There are three species of grouse that occur in District 1: ruffed grouse, dusky (blue) grouse, and spruce grouse. Ruffed grouse are the most abundant and occur at lower elevations and valley bottoms. Spruce grouse are usually located in high elevation forest comprised of lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, and/or Engelmann spruce. In District 1, these habitats are prevalent within the Kettle and Selkirk mountain ranges. Dusky grouse can be found in habitats that occur at elevations between ruffed and spruce grouse habitat, but overlap does occur.

Population status

Trends in harvest data are generally used as surrogates for estimating a population or indices of population size. Total harvest numbers tend to vary with hunter numbers, so catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE), or birds harvested per hunter day, is the best indicator of population trends. In District 1, forest grouse populations appear to have declined since 2009. Harvest increased slightly for the 2023 season (Figure 11).

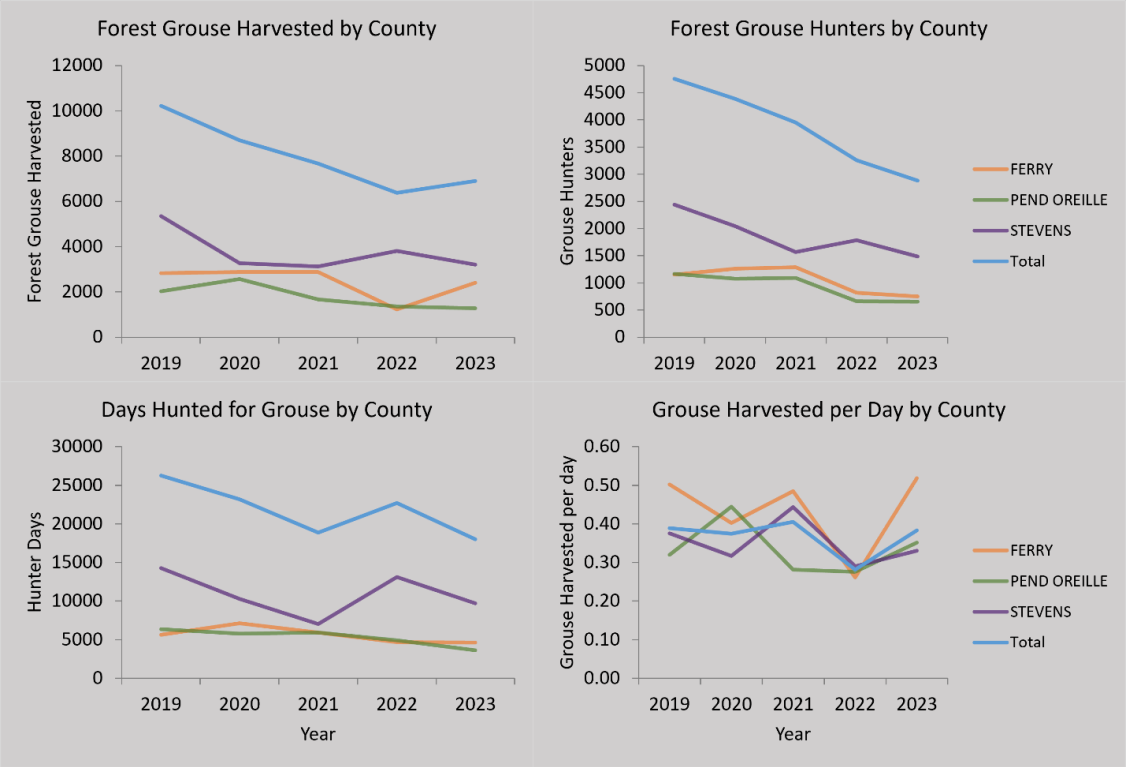
Harvest trends and 2024 prospects

The total number of forest grouse harvested in District 1 has generally declined from 2014-2022, with a small increase in 2023. WDFW also changed the way it collects small game harvest information in 2022, so it may be a few years before truly comparable data is available. We anticipate 2024 harvest to be similar to average years, but perhaps on the lower end. District 1 experienced a wet spring/early summer in 2024 and this can sometimes negatively impact chick survival. The season start date moved to September 15 to protect brood hens and chicks and hens should be more dispersed on the landscape leading to fewer encounters with several grouse at once. The average number bagged amongst hunters is typically between 0.4 and 0.6 forest grouse per hunting day.

Hunting techniques and where to hunt

In general, the most effective way to hunt forest grouse in District 1 is by walking little used forest roads and shooting them as they flush or after they roost in a nearby tree. Forest grouse tend to occur in higher densities along roads that do not receive much motor vehicle traffic. Consequently, hunters should target roads behind locked gates and roads that have been decommissioned by the respective landowner. Some forest grouse hunters use trained bird dogs, a team system that can be extremely effective. To learn more about how to hunt each of Washington's grouse species, see WDFW's upland bird hunting webpage.

Figure 11. Trends in total harvest, hunter numbers, hunter days, and forest grouse harvested per hunter day during forest grouse seasons in Ferry County (orange), Stevens County (purple), Pend Oreille County (green) and throughout District 1 (blue), 2019–2023.



Notable changes

Season start date is September 15

Bag and possession limits are as follows:

- Bag limit: four grouse with no more than three of any one species.
- Possession limit: 12 grouse with no more than nine of any one species.

WDFW will have wing and tail collection barrels distributed throughout District 1 in 2024. **If you drive by a barrel, please follow the instructions at the barrel and deposit one wing and tail from each forest grouse harvested using the paper bags provided**. This information helps biologists determine the distribution of species, age, and sex in the harvest.

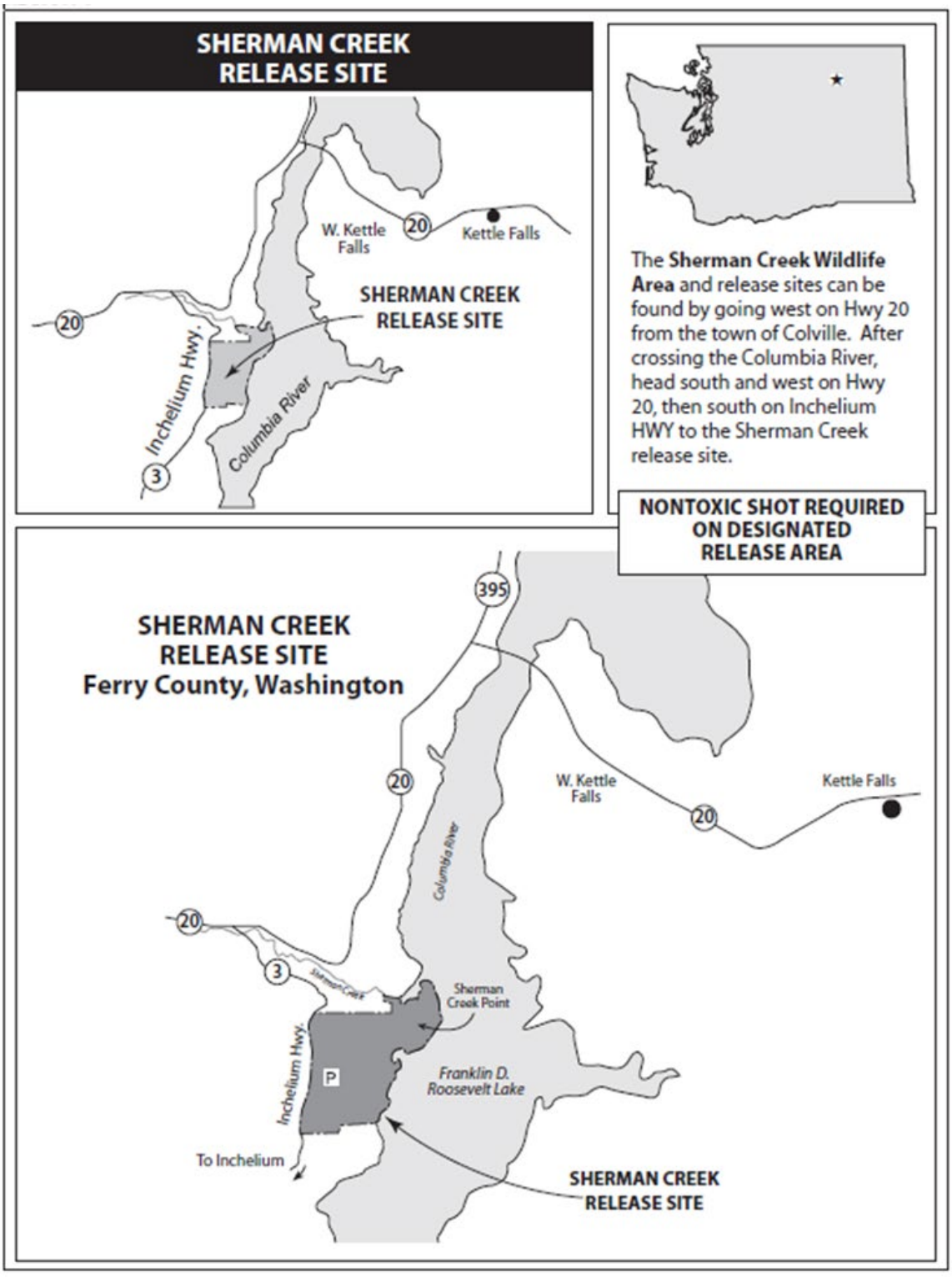
Pheasants

A hunter poses in a grassy field with his bird dog and pheasant harvest. Photo by Mark Divins.

There is only a small, range-limited population of wild ring-necked pheasants in District 1. The population occurs almost entirely on private lands within the Colville Valley. Consequently, most pheasant hunting opportunity within District 1 is associated with the Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement and Release Program. The primary intent of this program is to provide an upland bird hunting opportunity and encourage participation from young and older-aged hunters. Each year, thousands of captive-reared ring-necked pheasants are released at 33 sites, and one of those sites (Sherman Creek Wildlife Area) occurs within District 1. The Sherman Creek Release Site is located in Ferry County south of the headquarters to Sherman Creek Wildlife Area between the Inchelium Highway and Lake Roosevelt (Figure 12).

To protect other wildlife species, including waterfowl and raptors, nontoxic shot is now required for all upland bird, dove, and band-tailed pigeon hunting on all pheasant release sites statewide. At these release sites, hunters may use only approved nontoxic shot (either in shotshells or as loose shot for muzzle loading). Possession of lead shot is also regulated on some wildlife areas. See the Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons pamphlet for more information. Visit the Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement and Release Program website to learn more about pheasant releases.

Figure 12. Map of the Sherman Creek Pheasant Release Site in Ferry County.



Wild turkeys

A hunter poses with his wild turkey harvest. Photo by Ben Turnock.

The turkeys found in District 1 are Merriam's wild turkeys. Merriam's turkeys flourished in the district after being introduced in 1961, but then slowly declined. Since a large transplant from South Dakota in 1988-89, this population has steadily expanded in both range and abundance. In most GMUs within the district, fall harvest has increased, while spring harvest has remained relatively stable (Figure 13). The recent increase in fall harvest could be from an increase in the population but is more likely the result of a longer season and more liberal bag limit that began in 2018. Harvest in spring 2023 was a bit higher than 2022. Harvest in fall 2024 and spring 2025 should be similar to harvest during the 2023 season.

How to find and hunt turkeys in the spring

Increasing daylight between late winter and early spring triggers the beginning of breeding season, although unusually prolonged cold, wet, or warm weather may delay or advance it. Gobbling and strutting start well before mating, when turkeys are still on their winter range in late March or early April. There are normally two peaks of gobbling. The first occurs when males call and females are not yet

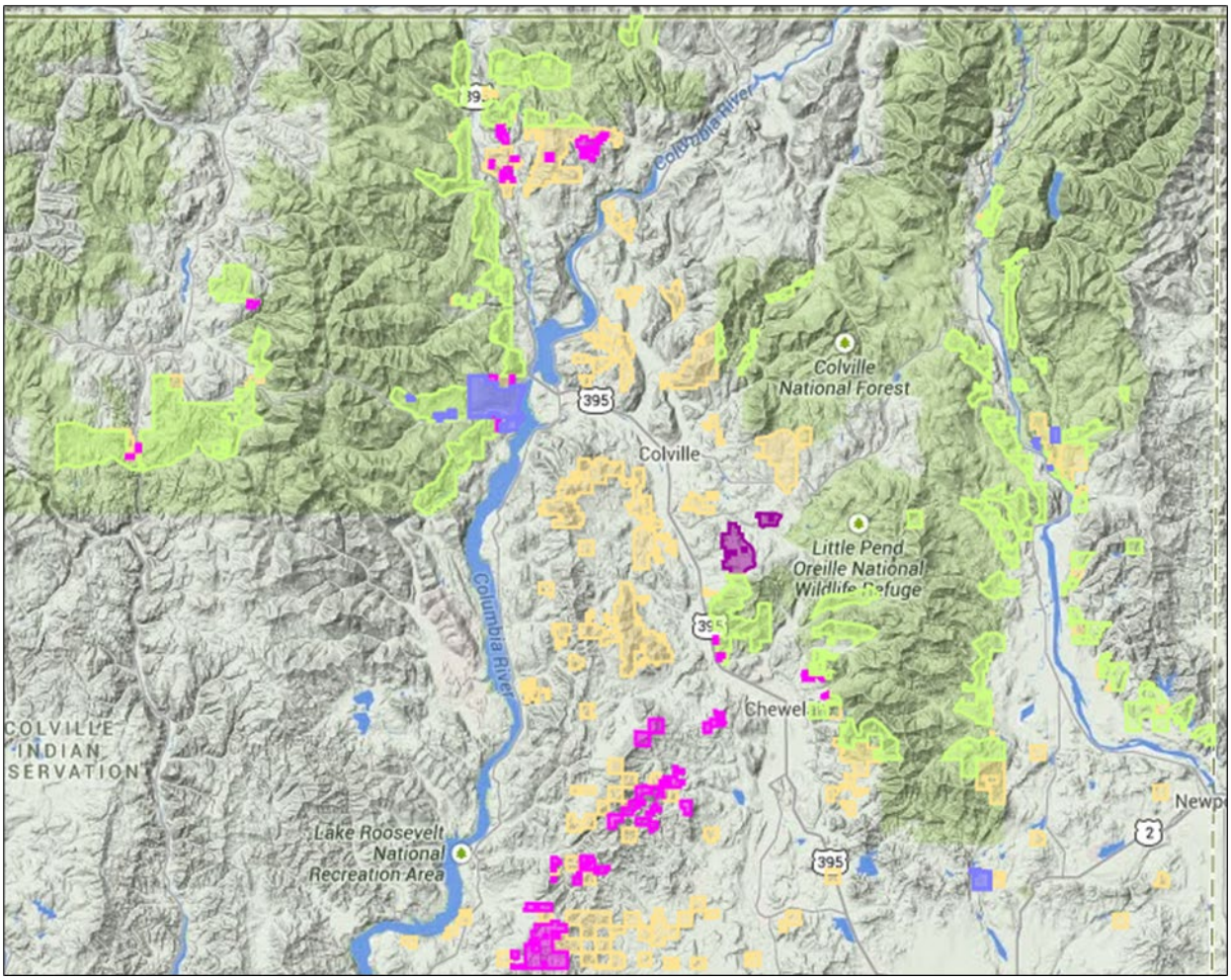
nesting, and the second occurs a few weeks later, when most hens are incubating eggs. Finding these gobbling toms and moving close enough to call them in without bumping (flushing) them is the challenge and excitement to traditional spring turkey hunting. Hunters may consider referring to our Basics of Turkey Hunting in Washington resource.

How to find and hunt turkeys in the fall

During fall and winter, wild turkey priorities are food and roosting areas. In the fall, food remains critical for growth of poults (juvenile turkeys) and for adults adding fat reserves. Forest edges that offer seeds, nuts, and fruits, as well as some green vegetation, are used the most. At this time of year, turkeys are at their highest population and widest distribution within northeastern Washington, including District 1. As autumn wears on and snowfall comes, the turkeys gradually constrict their range to lower elevations. Where agriculture predominates, a mosaic of short grass fields or cropland and forest is generally the best place to find turkeys.

Figure 13. Fall (orange), spring (green), and total (blue) estimated turkey harvest for each GMU in District 1, 2019-2023.

Figure 14. Map depicting public lands good for turkey hunting.



This map is produced by Map Metrics.

Waterfowl

Two hunters show off their duck harvests by a river in the winter. Photo by Trent Roussin.

Common species

A wide variety of ducks occur in District 1. Common dabbling ducks include mallard, gadwall, American wigeon, green-wing teal, and northern shoveler. Diving ducks are also present, including bufflehead, scaup, ring-necked ducks, redheads, goldeneyes, and mergansers. Nesting wood ducks can be located in the Pend Oreille, Colville, and Kettle River valleys, and can provide a unique hunting opportunity early in the season. Mallards are the most abundant duck species in Washington and constitute the majority of ducks harvested statewide (typically ≥ 50%). They are a commonly harvested duck in District 1 as well.

Canada geese are the only wild goose commonly found within District 1. They are abundant in the Pend Oreille, Colville, and Kettle River valleys, especially in the widest valley bottom areas where there is extensive farmland cultivation.

Best hunting areas

Pend Oreille River

The upper Pend Oreille River, from Newport downstream to Usk, offers the best general waterfowl hunting opportunity within northeastern Washington. Outside of the east shoreline, alongside the Kalispell Indian Reservation, most of the river itself is open for hunting, along with several islands. In most instances a boat is required, either to serve as a hunting blind or for access to islands and sandbars open to hunting. There are also Pend Oreille Public Utility District lands, as well as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refuge land (the Cusick Unit) open to public hunting. These parcels are located near the mouths of Tacoma and Trimble creeks, into the Pend Oreille River.

Dabbling ducks: Moderate numbers during migration, mostly gadwall, wigeon, teal, mallards, and some pintails.

Diving ducks: Moderate numbers with the highest densities during peak migration periods.

Geese: Canada geese occur in the greatest abundance in this part of District 1.

Lake Roosevelt

Lake Roosevelt up to the 1310 feet elevation contour is mostly federally owned and managed by the National Park Service. Much of the lake shore also borders the Colville and Spokane Indian Reservations, however, and in these areas the tribes manage the shoreline. As such, where you can legally hunt is somewhat complicated. Hunters should call the National Park Service in Kettle Falls at 509-738-6266 for clarification before hunting.

Dabbling Ducks: Low to moderate numbers during migration, mostly wigeon, and mallards.

Diving Ducks: Relatively few, but higher densities during peak migration periods.

Geese: Canada geese have a scattered distribution in this hundred-mile-long reservoir and can occur in high numbers during peak migration.

Colville and Kettle Valleys

Almost all the valley bottoms are private lands, so obtaining written permission for hunting access is essential. Ducks are most common where there are slow, meandering streams, sloughs, and/or farm ponds. Geese are most common in the agricultural areas.

A ruddy duck swimming in a lake. Photo by WDFW.

Dabbling Ducks: Low to moderate numbers during migration, mostly mallards.

Diving Ducks: Relatively few, but higher densities during peak migration periods, especially on the Colville River.

Geese: Canada geese are evenly distributed in the Colville Valley. When heavy snowfall covers fields late in the season, they tend to migrate south to warmer, snow-free areas.

Hunting techniques

Duck hunting methods are largely dependent on location. When hunting inland waters associated with ponds and rivers or feeding areas, traditional decoy setups work best. Birds are most active during early morning and late afternoon as they move from resting areas to feeding areas. See Let's Go Waterfowl Hunting for more information.

The techniques employed to harvest geese are standard. Find agricultural areas where geese are feeding and set up decoy spreads well before daylight where geese are expected to concentrate. In District 1, agricultural areas where feeding geese congregate generally include hay fields and winter wheat (or other cereal grain crop) fields. Because of this, most goose hunting opportunities occur on private property and require hunters to gain permission before hunting. Figure 15 shows harvest data through the 2023 season. Final harvest statistics can be found on the WDFW website.

Figure 15. Trends in the number of ducks harvested, duck hunters, duck hunter days, and ducks harvested per hunter day in Ferry County (orange), Stevens County (purple), Pend Oreille County (green), and throughout District 1 (blue), 2019 – 2023.

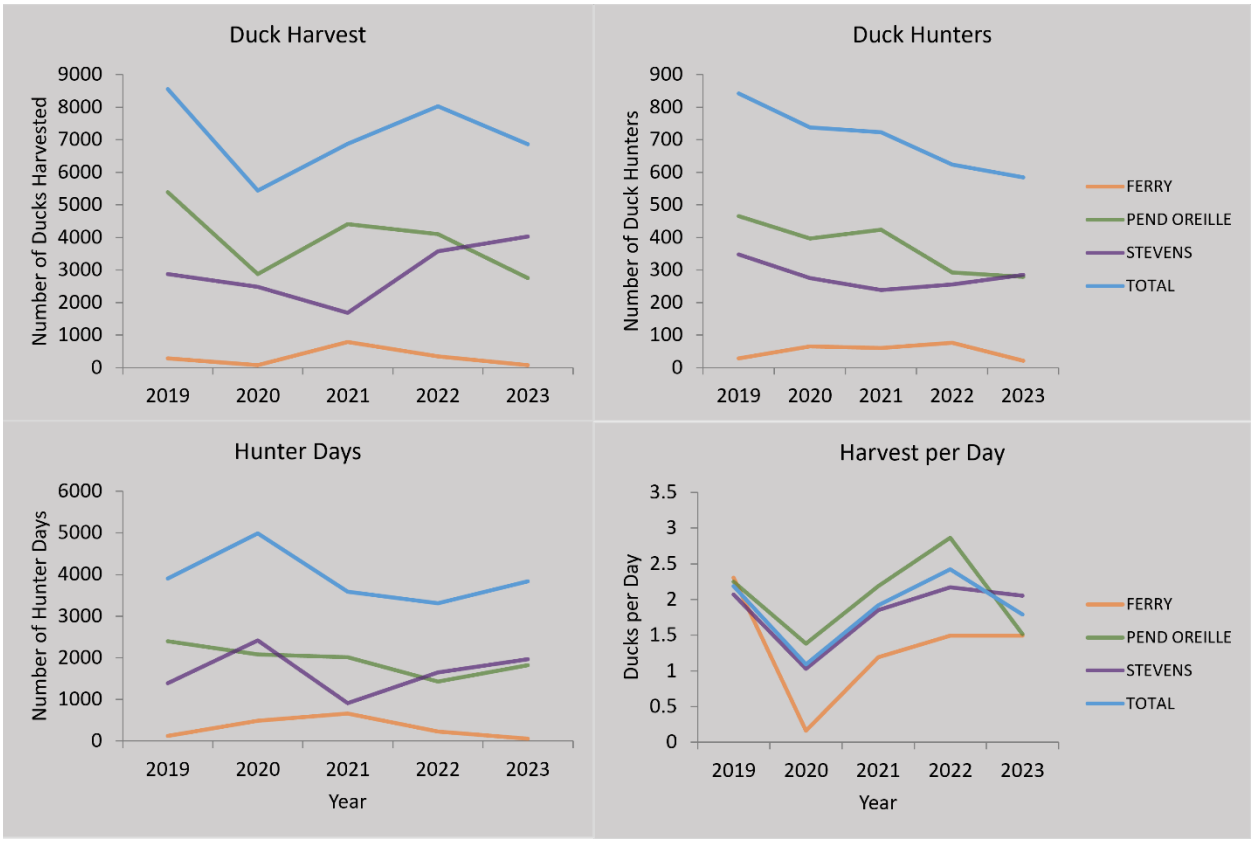
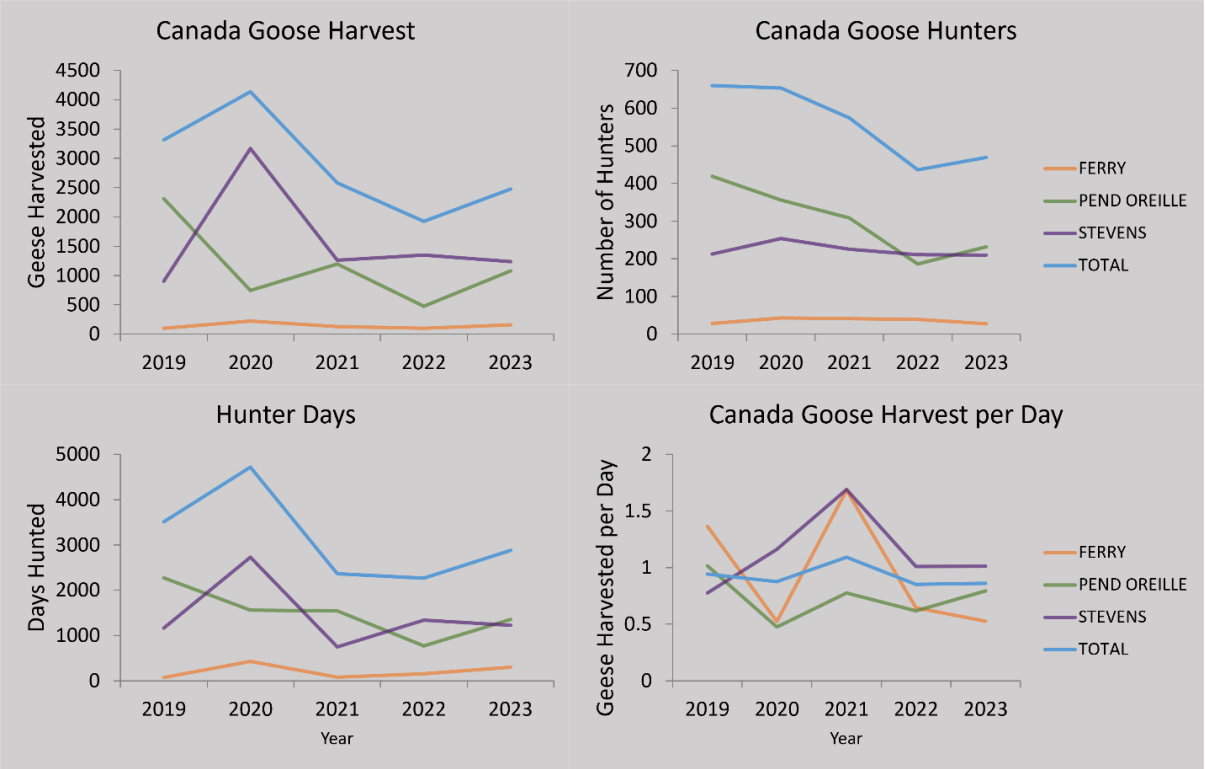


Figure 16. Trends in the number of geese harvested, goose hunters, hunter days, and geese harvested per hunter day in Ferry County (orange), Stevens County (purple), Pend Oreille County (green), and throughout District 1 (blue), 2019 – 2023.



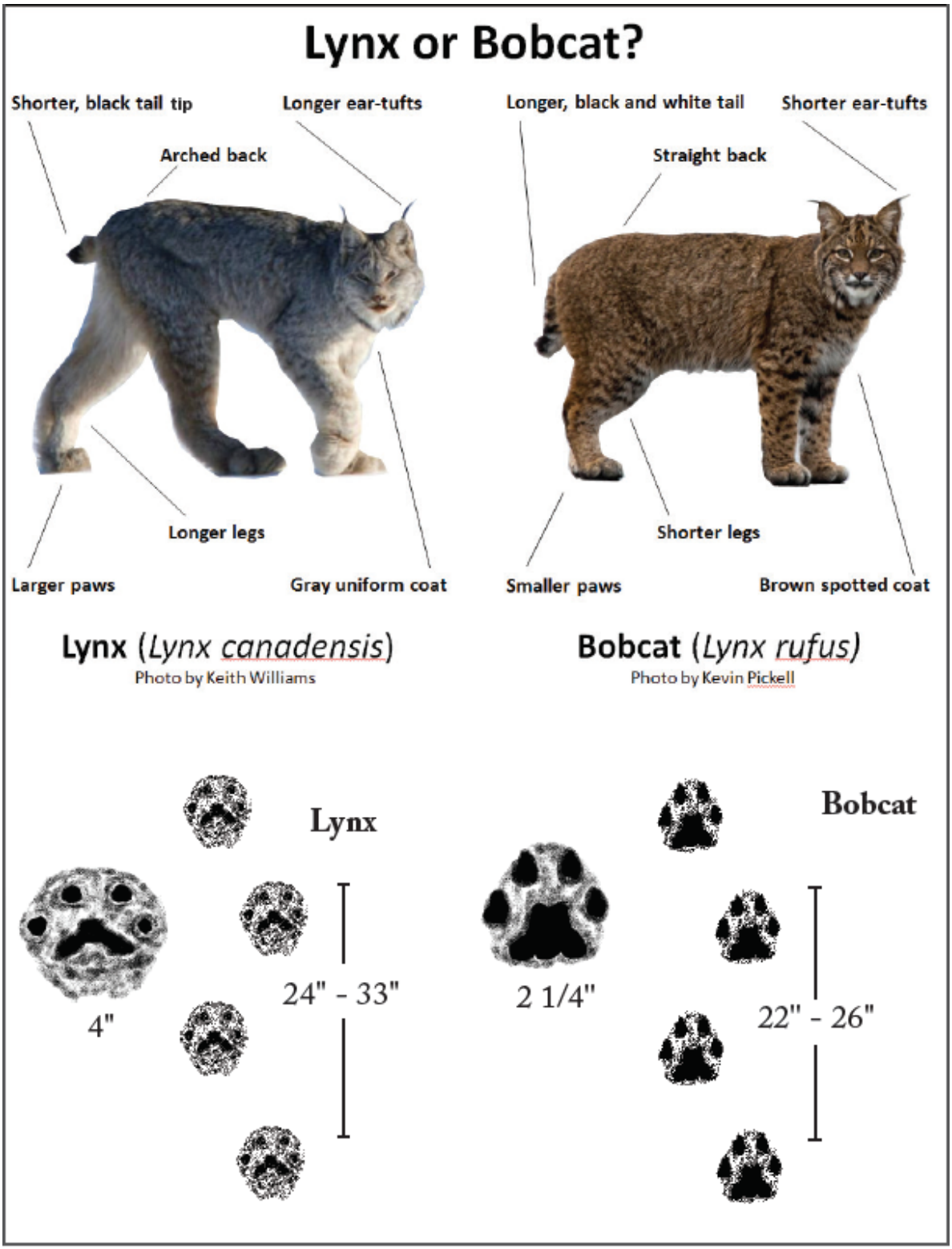
Other small game species

Other small game species that occur in District 1 but are not covered in detail include California (valley) quail, gray partridge, snowshoe hare, bobcat, and coyote. Additional migratory game birds include mourning dove, Wilson's (common) snipe, and American coot.

While hunting bobcat and coyotes, hunters are reminded to correctly ID their target. Both wolves and lynx are present in District 1 and are illegal to harvest. Below are some pictures to assist in correct species identification.

Figure 17. Comparison of gray wolf and coyote.

Figure 18. Comparison of lynx and bobcat.



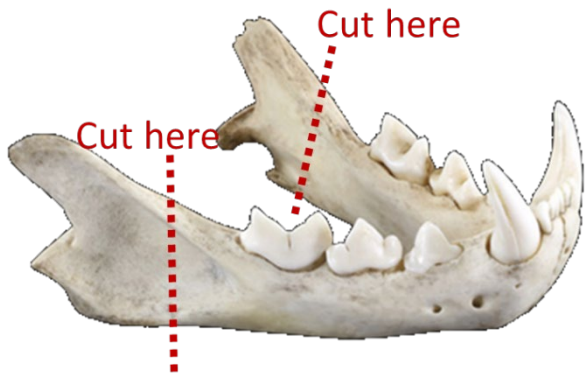
Notable changes

Hunters or trappers harvesting a bobcat must now provide a complete lower jaw (both sides), cleaned and dried, before a pelt can be sealed. WDFW uses the jaw to determine the age of the harvested bobcat.

Before bringing in the lower jaw, remove as much flesh as possible and allow it to dry in the open air, in a cardboard box or paper bag, or store in a plastic bag with salt or borax to prevent decay.

When removing the jaw, please attempt to remove the entire lower jaw from the bobcat. If you cannot get the entire jaw, then the jaw may be cut at the designated locations upon removal (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Lower jaw cut locations.



You must label both the pelt and the jaw so it is clear which pelt belongs to which jaw. You can use any form of waterproof tagging to identify the jaw to the correct pelt. One example is to use sales tags (example at left) and write a matching label on the pelt and the jaw. Alternatives could be to use different colored string, zip ties, ribbon, tape, or flagging to identify the matching pair.

We will also ask for a tissue sample at the point of sealing. This is not required, but sharing a sample can help WDFW identify the accuracy of hunter and trapper sex ID by genetically identifying the sex of the individual bobcats. If we can confirm hunter and trapper accuracy, we may be able to avoid requiring that evidence of sex be left on the pelt at the time of sealing in future rulemaking. The size of the sample should be 1 mm thick x 5 mm square and should not impact the condition of the pelt. We can even take a sample from the jaw bone that you submit if there is enough meat to collect a sample. The tissue sample can be either dried or wet, as long as it is not rotten.

Moose – Special Permit Only

WDFW recently confirmed a case of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in north Spokane County in GMU 124. While that detection was not in District 1, it was geographically close. CWD is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) that infects members of the Cervidae 'deer' family and is fatal in infected moose, elk, deer, and caribou. TSEs are caused by malformed proteins called prions. There is currently no cure for CWD and it can severely impact cervid populations if it becomes widespread. CWD

can only be confirmed through testing of lymph nodes or brain tissue. Testing will be more important than ever to prevent the spread of the disease to other areas of eastern Washington and across the region and state. Information on how to have your harvested animal tested, and other steps WDFW is taking to prevent the spread of CWD, is at wdfw.wa.gov/cwd.

The moose in northeast Washington are Shiras moose which is the smallest of the four subspecies of moose in North America. Shiras moose are named after George Shiras III, an ardent conservationist, explorer, and U.S. Congressman in the early 1900s. This subspecies is native to the northern Rocky Mountains and apparently migrated on its own accord into eastern Pend Oreille County in the 1950s. The first official state documentation of moose in Washington occurred in 1954. In the decades since, moose have dramatically increased both in numbers and distribution, and are now common throughout much of northeast Washington.

Moose may only be hunted by limited special permits that are available by a lottery drawing every year. Permit hunters should take note that while moose are fairly common, they are by nature a solitary animal, and occur only individually or in small groups scattered over wide areas. They tend to select habitats based on forest successional stage and local climatic conditions. Moose can be found at any elevation in northeast Washington but are most likely found in the 3,000 to 5,000-foot elevation band. In the fall they seek deciduous browse, primarily willow, serviceberry, *ceanothus*, and other shrubs in logged over areas or burns approximately 15 years old or older. Moose are drawn to north slopes or east flowing drainages, which are cool and moist. Late fall and early winter snowfall do not seem to deter moose in any way.

Moose rut from mid-September to early October, and some hunters have been effective with calls. Hunters using calls should stay on stand for at least one hour or longer, as bulls come to the call from long distances. Early in the season, moose are widespread, and snow is generally not present for tracking. Nevertheless, road and hiking access is good in October. Usually by some time in November snow is common and locating moose tracks, as well as seeing these dark animals against a white background of snow, becomes much easier. However, by late November there is frequently deep enough snow to be concerned about having only limited road access into high elevation moose range. Inland Empire Paper Company and other private timber companies may close their roads to motor vehicle traffic depending on weather conditions.

Forest Service Ranger Stations located at Newport and Colville are good sources of information on moose, weather, camping, and forest road conditions or restrictions. The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also sells maps and has a regional office located in Colville.

Kettle Range – GMU 101, GMU 105, GMU 204

Moose continue to expand their range in the Kettle Range moose unit, but currently the most productive locations for hunting are in two general areas. The first is within GMU 101 and includes the South Fork Sherman Creek drainage, the upper Barnaby Creek drainage, and the east slope of the Kettle Crest under Snow Peak, Sherman Peak, Barnaby Buttes, and White Mountain. There also tends to be a

lot of moose sign on the west side of White Mountain up Hall Creek Road, but the dense timber makes sighting them difficult. The second area is in GMU 105 near the Canadian border in the vicinity of Churchill Mountain and Lead Pencil Mountain. The creek drainages may be most productive, including Sheep Creek, Crown Creek, and Flat Creek. The Little Boulder Creek drainage west of the Kettle River in Ferry County seems to be an area moose have recently expanded into as well.

Selkirk – GMU 113

Good areas to hunt in the western portion of the Selkirk Mountains Unit include Skookum Lakes to South Baldy, along with the LeClerc Creek, Harvey Creek, upper Sullivan Creek, and Slumber Creek drainages. On the east side of the unit, the West Branch Priest River, Flat Creek, Goose Creek, Kalispell Creek, South Fork Granite Creek, Cache Creek, Willow Creek, and Gold Creek drainages can be productive.

Douglas – GMU 108

Moose are frequently seen in the vicinity of Harrier Creek, VanStone Mine, and Rogers Mountain. Moose have also been commonly found in the headwaters area to Onion Creek.

Aladdin - GMU 111

Moose are more frequently seen in the south and central portion of GMU 111, but some hunters have had luck in the northern portion of the GMU as well. Some specific areas that generally harbor moose in GMU 111 include Big Meadow Lake, Seldom Seen Mountain, Bon Ayre Ridge, North and South Forks Mill Creek, Amazon Creek, and Clark Creek.

49 Degrees North – GMU 117

The 49 Degrees North GMU is divided by a mountain range into east and west drainages. The areas near the crest of the divide or the drainages on the east side have the most moose activity. In the southern portion, good areas would be Boyer, Nelson, and Chewelah mountains, along with the Calispell, Tenmile, and Gletty creek drainages. In the north portion of GMU 117, Winchester, Small, Ruby, and Flodell creek drainages, along with Tacoma, Dirty Shirt, Little Calispell, Calispell, Goddards, and Olson mountain peaks, tend to hold significant numbers of moose. There are many recent and older harvest units in 117, which allow ample opportunity to glass hillsides from a ridgeline or road.

Parker Lake – GMU 117 – No permits in 2024 due to extensive logging operation

The Parker Lake Hunting Closure area is approximately 21,000 acres, and is very similar to the surrounding forest, with a blend of timber harvest, mature stand forests, and reproduction/burn units. From approximately September through May, the U.S. Air Force (USAF) Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape Training (SERE) School is present in either the Tacoma, Cusick, or Ruby Creek watersheds.

Training typically occurs 24 hours a day from Saturday through Thursday of each week, except for an approximate three-week period during the Christmas and New Year's holidays. To aid hunters in their planning and to assist in establishing a pattern of avoidance, deer or moose special permit holders will receive a map of the SERE School area of operation from the USAF Training Area Manager. Moose are found throughout the Parker Lake Closure, but seasonal timing will dictate elevations, population densities, and hunting opportunities. There are quite a few small ponds and swampy areas where moose can be found. Northern slopes and eastern drainages between 3,000 feet and the crest of Timber Mountain should provide ample opportunities. The SERE School conducts little activity above 3,500 feet in elevation.

Huckleberry – GMU 121

Good areas to hunt in the Huckleberry Range are the mountains extending north and south of the Springdale - Hunters Pass off the Springdale - Hunters Highway. The east side of the pass has the majority of moose habitat, especially the headwaters of the forks of Chimokane Creek and Deer Creek. Moose sightings are also common east of the Fruitland area with access to the mountains through the Fruitland Valley or up the "O-Ra-Pak-En" Creek drainage.

Harvest trends

Moose hunting in Washington is regulated through a permit system. Hunters are required to return their hunt report to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Permit availability, and therefore moose hunting opportunity, has increased in Washington in the last ten years. For more information about harvest trends, search for the most recent status and trend report.

In a snowfield, a cow moose and her calf traverse through the deep snow. Photo by WDFW.

Important information

Hunters with permits to harvest antlerless moose are requested to refrain from taking cows with calves in their immediate vicinity. Some moose cows in Washington do not produce calves in all years or may have already lost them by hunting season. WDFW requests that hunters with antlerless moose permits avoid harvesting cows with calves.

All successful moose hunters are required to submit a tooth within 60 days of harvest in the envelope provided with your informational packet. Tooth samples allow WDFW to get an overview of the age structure of the moose population and make better management decisions based on this information. Extra tooth envelopes are available at most WDFW Regional offices. To find out the age of your harvested moose, refer to WDFW's tooth age lookup tool.

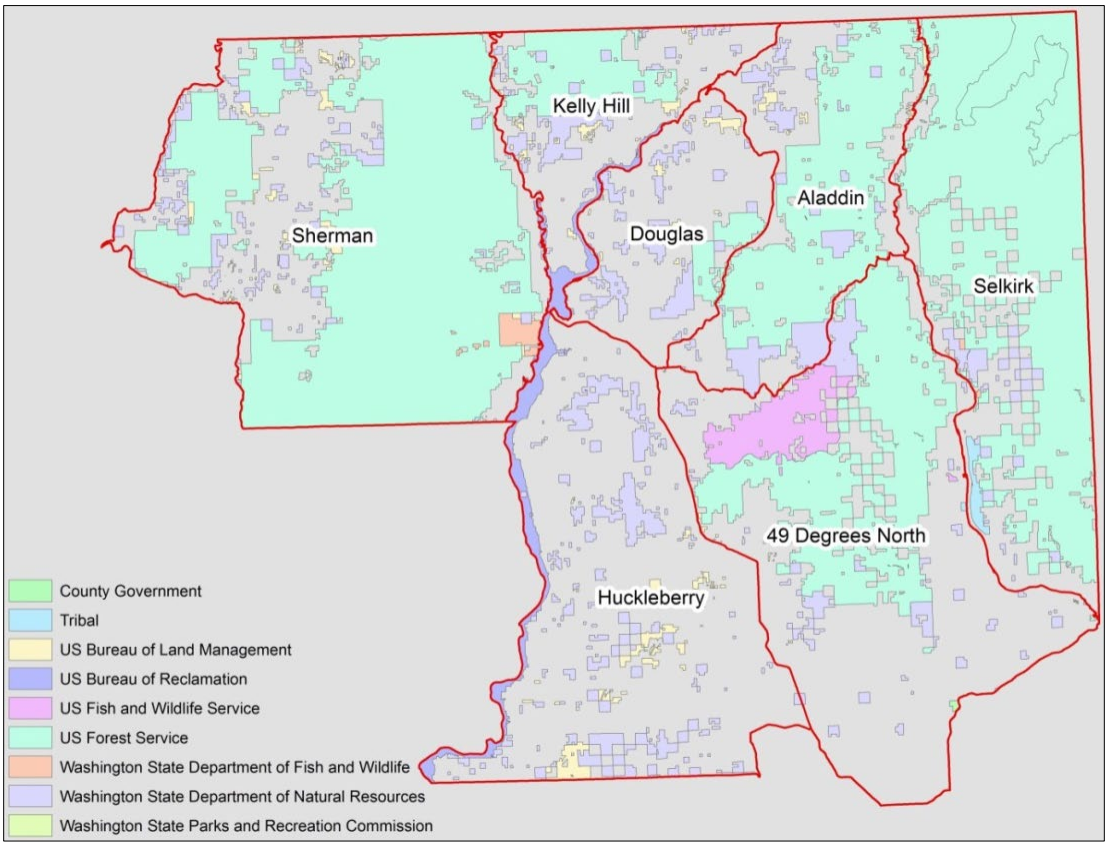
Major public lands and GMU access

Over one third (approximately 37%) of the land mass in District 1 is public, consisting of mostly national forest, but also state DNR and WDFW, federal BLM, USFWS, and a few other government agencies. Most of these lands outside of Indian reservations are open to public hunting. The public lands tend to be at higher elevations, with steep terrain, a shorter growing season, no row crop agriculture, and in general a lower density of game animals, especially deer and turkey. GMUs with the most public land include 101 (Sherman), 111 (Aladdin), 113 (Selkirk), and 117 (49 Degrees North). If you plan to hunt on DNR land,

you will need to purchase and display on your vehicle a Discover Pass. For hunting on WDFW wildlife areas, you will need to display a WDFW Vehicle Access Pass (free with hunting or fishing license purchase) or a Discover Pass.

For more information related to the location of WDFW wildlife areas, see Figure 19 and see WDFW's hunting access website. For more information on resources available to locate public lands, please see the Online Tools and Maps section.

Figure 20. Map depicting the location of public lands within each GMU comprising District 1.



GMU access

Sherman – GMU 101

The majority of GMU 101 is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. All of the Kettle Range has good but somewhat limited road access for automobiles. In GMU 101, there are roads leading up to the Kettle Crest from both the east and the west, but only three that cross over, including two paved and maintained roads, Sherman Pass and Boulder Pass, and one unpaved road, Little Boulder. During the late hunt, some access may be limited in the higher elevations if there is snow. A four-wheeled drive vehicle is recommended in the late season if there is a possibility of snow. A Colville National Forest map is also recommended.

Kelly Hill – GMU 105

Much of the northern portion of GMU 105 is owned by the U.S. Forest Service. Largely in the southern portion of the GMU, there are lands owned by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), industrial timber companies (mainly Manulife, formerly Hancock Forest Management), and other private lands. The eastern portion of the GMU also has some private timber company ownership. Road access is good throughout the unit. A Colville National Forest map is recommended.

Douglas – GMU 108

The majority of GMU 108 is private, but there are a few sizeable blocks of Colville National Forest and DNR land. Road access is good in this GMU. A Colville National Forest and/or Department of Natural Resources map is recommended.

Aladdin – GMU 111

Access is best either from Colville north on the Aladdin Road, from Highway 20 between Colville and Tiger (south of Ione), or west of Highway 31 between Ione and Metaline. GMU 111 has good driving access south of Smackout Pass, and the majority of land throughout this GMU is owned by the U.S. Forest Service (Colville National Forest) with a lesser amount owned by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR). In the northern portion of the GMU, there are fewer roads with more opportunities for walk in, bike, and/or horse access, as well as cross-country travel. Throughout the GMU, there are closed or decommissioned roads to get off of the main road system by foot or other non-motorized method. A Colville National Forest map is recommended.

Selkirk – GMU 113

The northern half of GMU 113 is mostly within the Colville or Idaho Panhandle National Forest, but many of the roads are gated or retired, which limits vehicle access. The southern half of GMU 113 is a mix of private timber company, private property, national forest, and Washington DNR. Most timber company gates are locked year-round, as well as some national forest roads. If hunting the eastern portion of GMU 113, it may be easier to access the area through Idaho. The higher elevations in GMU 113 may likely have some snow during the late hunt. A four-wheeled drive vehicle is recommended if there is a possibility of snow. A Colville National Forest map is also recommended.

49 Degrees North – GMU 117

49 Degrees North is a mix of private property, Colville National Forest, the Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge, and private industrial timber company land. Road access on national forest land is fairly good, but most access on industrial timber company land is restricted to non-motorized. In some of the southern portion of GMU 117, all motorized access is restricted within the Buck Creek Road Closure Area, which includes Boyer Mountain and Nelson Peak. The Colville National Forest travel map is recommended. The Washington DNR map is also recommended, especially for the southern portion of the unit.

Huckleberry – GMU 121

The majority of GMU 121 is in private ownership, but there are scattered sections or small blocks of Washington DNR and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. Manulife owns much of the private forest land in this area. Washington DNR maps are recommended.

Private industrial forestlands

General information

Much hunting opportunity, especially for big game and forest grouse, occurs on private industrial forest lands. Timber companies that own large tracts of land and are the most well-known include Manulife , Stimson, and Inland Empire Paper. Hunters should be aware that there are a number of other smaller timber companies that have operations in District 1 but are not mentioned here.

WDFW recognizes that some of the best hunting opportunities occur on private industrial forest lands. WDFW works cooperatively with private timber companies to maintain reasonable public access during established hunting seasons. Private industrial forestlands have typically been open for public access, but hunters should always remember that access granted to private property is a privilege. Hunters should also refrain from calling timber companies to ask hunting-related questions. Foresters are very busy, and hunters should be referring these types of questions to their local WDFW wildlife biologists.

Recently, there has been an increasing trend of timber companies restricting public access and shifting towards a permit system to limit the number of hunters who hunt on their lands. One of the primary reasons for access restrictions and loss of access is disrespect of the landowner's rules. WDFW reminds all wild land recreationists to treat this privilege with respect and follow basic access rules.

Electronic bikes (e-bikes) are a popular new mode of transportation for hunters. Please be aware that while they are not considered motor vehicles and allowed on most public land, some timber companies do not allow e-bikes behind locked gates. These include Stimson and Molpus, but there may be others that do not allow them. Check first before riding behind a locked gate.

FIRE CLOSURE INFORMATION: Confirm that land is open before going out to scout or hunt. **Obey all posted signs.** Signs and access restrictions will be removed when fire danger has abated.

Basic access rules

Specific rules related to hunter access on private industrial forest lands vary by timber company. WDFW encourages hunters to make sure they are aware of the rules in areas they plan to hunt. Most timber companies provide these rules on their website or will provide them to hunters who call to inquire about access. However, hunters are encouraged to follow these basic rules if they find themselves in an area they are not familiar with and are in doubt about specific landowner rules. The following are intended to be a general guideline of the basic access rules that are commonplace on many private

industrial forest lands. Timber companies may have more or less restrictive rules in place and ultimately, it is the hunter's responsibility to be familiar with those rules.

- Respect the landowner and other users.
- Obey all posted signs.
- Drive slow with headlights turned on when driving on roads opened to public access.
- Avoid areas of active logging.
- No camping (unless allowed), campfires (unless allowed), littering, ORVs, off road driving, target shooting, or forest product removals. Exceptions: mushrooms and berries for personal use.
- An open gate does not mean the road is open to public motorized access.
- Gate closures apply to all motorized vehicles, including motorcycles and quads. This includes vehicles with electric motors.
- Help prevent forest fires.

Heads up for archery and muzzleloader hunters

Private timber companies have traditionally opened their lands to modern firearm hunters during established seasons. Archery and muzzleloader hunters should be aware they may not have full access, and access levels during their respective seasons varies by year and by landowner. Most often, access is influenced by industrial fire classifications issued by the Washington DNR. Hence, timber lands may be closed during archery and muzzleloader seasons, which typically begin earlier in the autumn when there is a greater risk of forest fire. Hunters are urged to respect landowners by adhering to any access restrictions they have in place.

Contact information for major timber companies

Some landowners have hotlines and/or websites where hunters can find information about public access. **It is important to remember, however, that these companies do not have personnel dedicated to answering hunter questions.** Therefore, hunters are encouraged to call the WDFW Region 1 office in Spokane (509-892-1001) if there are questions related to public access on private industrial forest lands.

- Inland Empire Paper
- Manulife Investment Management - Fire closure information ONLY
- Stimson Lumber

Private Lands Access Program

Since 1948, WDFW has worked with private landowners across the state to provide public access through a negotiated agreement. Landowners participating in a WDFW cooperative agreement retain liability protection provided under RCW 4.24.210. Landowners receive technical services, materials for posting (signs and posts), and, in some cases, monetary compensation. In addition, lands under agreement are well known by WDFW Enforcement.

There are several private landowners in District 1 who are enrolled in WDFW's Private Lands Access Program. Specific information, including property locations, can be found on WDFW's Hunter Access website. Below is a summary, by GMU, of cooperators and acres currently enrolled in the Private Lands Access Program. The Feel Free to Hunt Program acres listed are those lands in the Cooperative Road Management Program with private timber companies. Region 1 also maintains a landowner access list for certain species and GMUs. You can receive landowner information from this list by calling the Eastern Regional Office at 509-892-1001.

Tables 7a and 7b show cooperators and acres currently enrolled in the private lands hunting access program within District 1.

Table 7a. Hunting Only by Written Permission

Game Management Unit	Cooperators	Acres
101 (Sherman)	5	907
105 (Kelly Hill)	0	0
108 (Douglas)	0	0
111 (Aladdin)	1	102
113 (Selkirk)	0	0
117 (49 Degrees North)	4	1,813
121 (Huckleberry)	9	3,922

Table 7b. Feel Free to Hunt

Game Management Unit	Cooperators	Acres
101 (Sherman)	12	30,259
105 (Kelly Hill)	8	28,533
108 (Douglas)	13	42,474
111 (Aladdin)	15	23,970
113 (Selkirk)	11	105,722
117 (49 Degrees North)	17	155,894
121 (Huckleberry)	15	111,729

Online tools and maps

Most GMUs in District 1 are a checkerboard of ownerships and sometimes it can be extremely difficult to determine who owns the land where a hunter wishes to hunt. However, there are several online tools and resources many hunters do not know about but provide valuable information that helps solve the

landowner puzzle. The following is a list and general description of tools and resources that are available to the general public.

Department of Natural Resources Public Lands Quadrangle (PLQ) maps

A good source for identifying the specific location of public lands is DNR PLQ maps, which can be purchased for less than $10 on DNR's website.

Online parcel databases

Technology has come a long way and has made it much easier for the general public to identify tax parcel boundaries and the associated landowner. However, because this technology has not been readily available in the past, many hunters are not aware that it exists. Information for parcels in these areas can be used as a resource.

- Stevens County tax parcels
- Ferry County tax parcels
- Pend Oreille tax parcels *You will need the address of the property to use this search tool.

WDFW's online mapping tools

WDFW's Hunting Webmap has been revamped and provides hunters with a great interactive tool for locating tracts of public and private land hunting opportunities within each GMU.

Colville area maps

There are a variety of maps showing trails, camping locations, public lands, and popular landmarks available for download on the Colville Chamber of Commerce website.

Other online resources

- Ferry County hunting page
- Colville Chamber of Commerce
- Ferry County Chamber of Commerce
- North Pend Oreille Chamber of Commerce
- Little Pend Oreille National Wildlife Refuge
- Colville National Forest
- LC Sportsmaps, Inc, and OnX

Common wildlife diseases

Wild animals can have a variety of diseases and parasites, many of which pose little to no risk to humans. Below is a list of diseases and parasites commonly encountered by hunters, either in the field hunting or while processing an animal for consumption. More information can be found by following the link for each listed disease or parasite. Please note, this is just a few of the most common diseases or parasites encountered by hunters. If you observe dead or sick/injured wildlife while out hunting, please report your observations on the Wildlife Health page of the WDFW website.

Chronic Wasting Disease

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) recently confirmed a case of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in north Spokane County in game management unit (GMU) 124. While that detection was not in District 1, it was geographically close. CWD is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) that infects members of the Cervidae 'deer' family and is fatal in infected deer. TSEs are caused by malformed proteins called prions. There is currently no cure for CWD and it can severely impact cervid populations if it becomes widespread. CWD can only be confirmed through testing of lymph nodes or brain tissue. Testing will be more important than ever to prevent the spread of the disease to other areas of eastern Washington and across the region and state. Information on how to have your harvested animal tested, and other steps WDFW is taking to prevent the spread of CWD, is at wdfw.wa.gov/cwd.

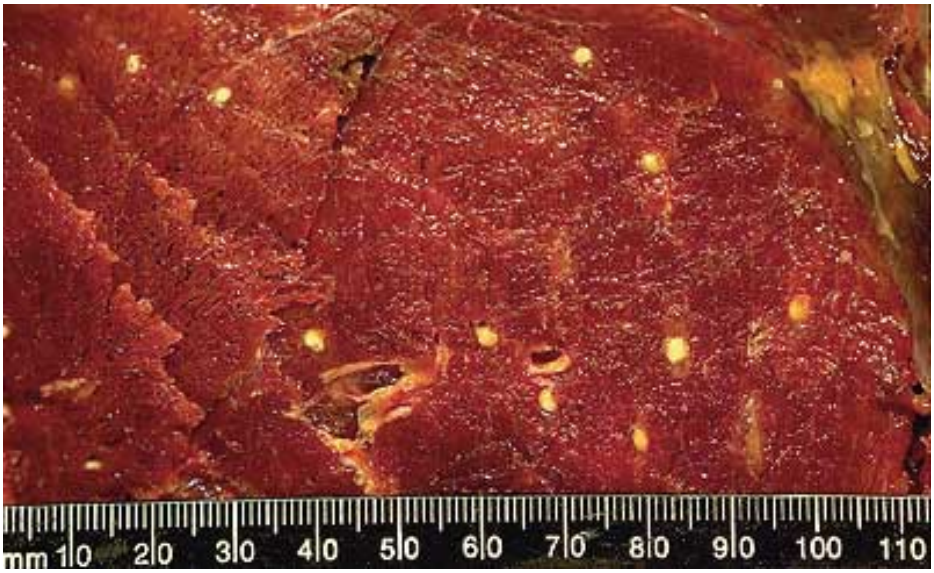
Papillomas or warts

Deer with Papillomas. Photo by Matt Harbin.

Safety - The viruses that cause papillomas in wildlife are not contagious to humans. Pets and livestock are not susceptible to the viruses that cause papillomas in wildlife. However, they can become infected with papilloma viruses that affect their own species. Papillomas are limited to the skin and can easily be trimmed away. The meat from animals with papillomas is suitable for consumption.

Papillomas are most frequently observed on deer, elk, and moose.

Tapeworm cysts



Tapeworm Cysts. Photo by Alaska Fish and Game.

Safety – Humans cannot become infected with *Taenia krabbei*. Meat from infected animals is suitable for human consumption and cooking the meat will kill the parasite. Dogs can be infected with tapeworms if fed the uncooked meat, so it is recommended not feeding raw infected parts to dogs.

Tapeworm cysts are commonly observed in moose, deer, and elk.

Liver flukes

Liver flukes. Photo by Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Safety – Humans cannot become infected with *F. magna.* However, the appearance of the liver may be off-putting and undesirable to eat.

Liver flukes are most common in deer and some elk.

Abscesses

Abscesses. Photo by Alaska Fish and Game.

Safety – Be careful not to cut into an abscess as the pus can be spread and contaminate other parts of the carcass. The portions of the meat with abscesses should not be eaten. Unaffected portions of the carcass are suitable for consumption.

Abscesses can occur anywhere inside or on the body and can occur in any hunted species.

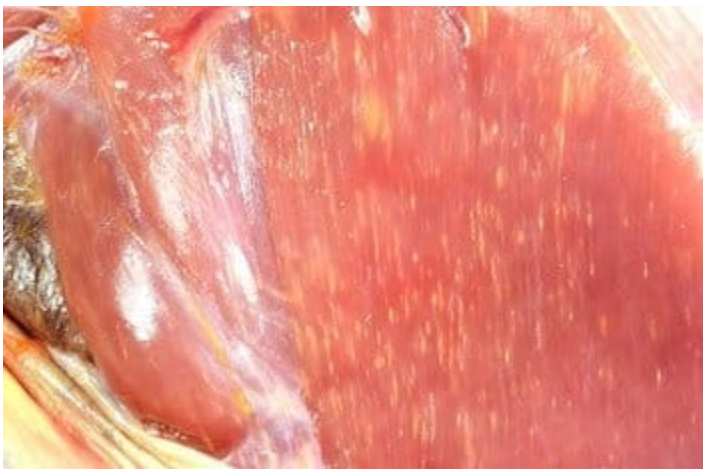
Pharyngeal bots or nasal bots

Pharyngeal bots. Photo by Indian Department of Natural Resources.

Safety – Nasal bots do not pose a risk to humans. Meat from infected animals is safe to eat.

Most common in deer.

Sarcocystis (“rice breast”)



Sarcocystis, or rice breast, is a parasite found mostly in waterfowl appearing like grains of rice in harvested meat. Photo by Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Safety – Humans cannot be infected by the cysts of *Sarcocystis* spp. Cooking will kill the parasite. It is recommended not feeding infected meat to dogs.

Sarcocystis is most common in waterfowl but can occur in elk and deer.