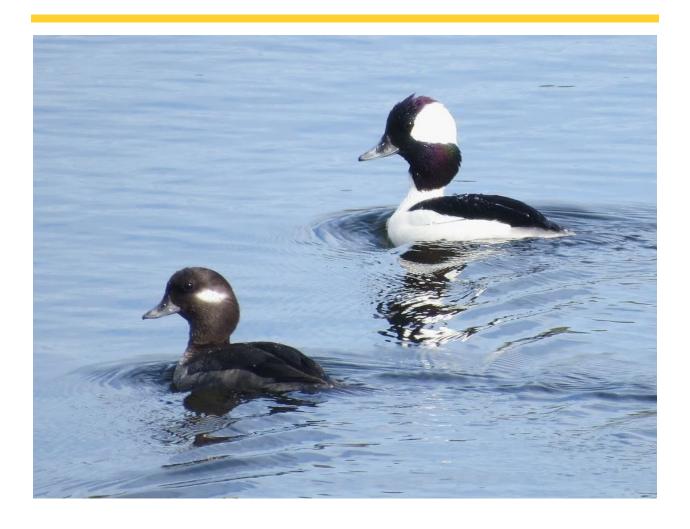
2024 District 4 Hunting Prospects

Benton and Franklin counties





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Jason Fidorra, District Wildlife Biologist

Cover photo by Jason Fidorra.

Request this information in an alternative format or language at wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requests-accommodation, 833-885-1012, TTY (711), or CivilRightsTeam@dfw.wa.gov.

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District 4 general overview

District 4 is in the Columbia Basin in the south central area of Washington (Figure 1). The district is comprised of Benton and Franklin counties and is part of WDFW's South Central Region 3. The following game management units (GMUs) are included in District 4: GMU 372 (Rattlesnake Hills), GMU 373 (Horse Heaven), GMU 379 (Ringold), and GMU 381 (Kahlotus).

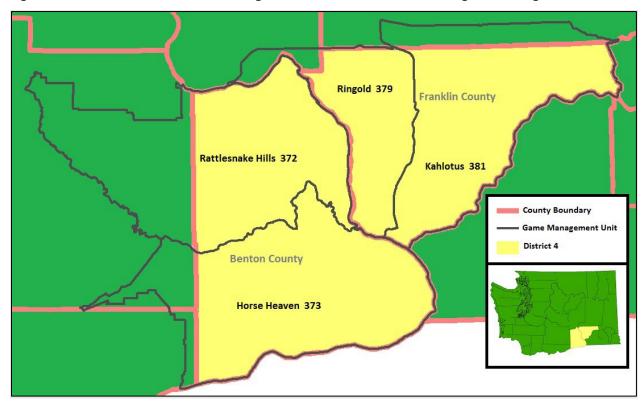


Figure 1. Location of District 4 in Washington and associated counties and game management units.

Several of Washington's major rivers are in in District 4. The Hanford Reach of the Columbia River runs between Benton and Franklin counties. This 50-mile stretch is one of the most scenic segments of the Columbia River in Washington. The Snake and Palouse rivers delineate the eastern boundary of Franklin County. In District 4, you'll find the confluence of the Yakima, Snake, and Walla Walla rivers with the mainstem of the Columbia River near Tri-Cities (Pasco, Kennewick, and Richland). Large populations of waterfowl congregate throughout the district for breeding, migrating, and wintering, even though this is the driest part of Washington with only six to nine inches of precipitation annually. While this district is a mostly treeless landscape, riparian and shrubsteppe vegetation provides habitat and cover for game birds, and the breaks along the Snake and Palouse rivers are favored by wintering mule deer. The Rattlesnake Hills elk population is centered on the access-restricted Hanford Site and Hanford Reach National Monument, though lucky hunters may find small groups scattered across the district.

Upland habitats are part of the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion, historically dominated by native shrubsteppe. Intensive irrigated agriculture—supporting many crops, orchards, and vineyards— is a major land use in the Yakima River Valley, southern Benton County, and western Franklin County. Dryland wheat is dominant in central Benton County and eastern Franklin County. Many thousands of acres of this wheat country have been enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement Program (SAFE), providing cover for mule deer and other wildlife that have lost much of their natural shrubsteppe habitat. Fires are currently the largest threat to the remaining habitat and are frequently human caused. Invasive cheatgrass has created a flammable carpet throughout the shrubsteppe, often facilitating large and fast-moving fires. Sagebrush takes decades to return post-fire, so please be careful and fire-wise.

In Benton County, large east-west trending ridges, including the Horse Heaven Hills and Rattlesnake Hills, add to the topographic diversity of the district. The eastern Franklin County landscape includes the rolling hills of the Palouse Prairie and the southernmost extent of the channeled scablands. Western Franklin County contains several small lakes and depression wetlands that provide additional wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

Hunting access in District 4 is more limited than in some other parts of the state, as much of the district is in private ownership or on federal properties closed to hunting. However, quality opportunities do exist, and WDFW is always trying to expand hunting access. Information and related links to several public sites listed in each game section can be found in the Major Public Lands section. Information on where to hunt including WDFW-managed Wildlife Areas, public land maps, and access to private land through one of WDFW's access programs is available in the Where to Hunt section on the WDFW website.

Overall, the landscape of District 4 provides a diversity of habitats favored by waterfowl, upland birds (including chukar, partridge, pheasant, quail, and dove), and big game (including deer and elk). Welcome to District 4 and happy hunting!

Elk

There are good opportunities for elk hunting in District 4 on lands surrounding the Hanford Reach National Monument in Rattlesnake Hills GMU 372, which contains Blackrock Elk Area 3722 and Corral Canyon Elk Area 3721. There are also parts of the Ringold 379 and Kahlotus 381 GMUs where small groups of around 100 elk reside. Surveys on the Hanford Monument in January 2024 yielded a total herd estimate of 2,497 elk (Figure 2). This herd is referred to as the Rattlesnake Hills sub-herd of the Yakima Elk Herd. It is well above the management objective of 350 individuals, but harvest remains challenging as the herd knows to seek refuge on closed federal Hanford lands during daylight hours in hunting season.

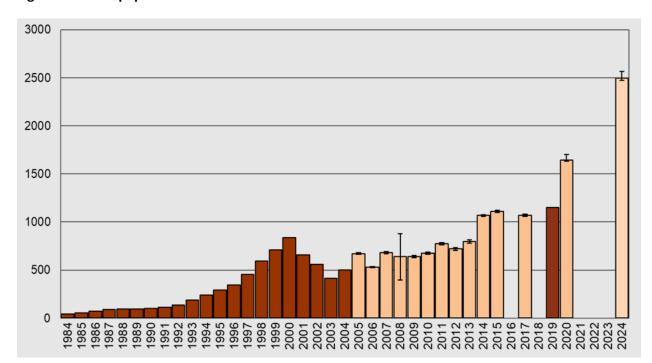


Figure 2. Winter population estimates of Hanford elk herd over time.

Rattlesnake Hills elk winter population estimate over time including data from direct minimum counts (dark brown), and estimates from sightability surveys (light brown).

While most of the land around the Hanford Monument is private, hunters can pursue elk in Benton County on WDFW's Thornton and Rattlesnake Slope Units of the Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area during modern firearm season. If looking at private land, know that there is high demand for access in this area, so coordinate well ahead of time to improve success. One way to gain access to private lands here is through the Blackrock Ranches and Silver Dollar special permit hunts. These offer a chance to hunt Hanford elk on private land. If selected, permit holders are typically issued a one-day hunt coordinated by the landowner. There are permits for youth and hunters with disabilities, plus quality elk and antlerless elk permits open to any hunter. Refer to the current hunting regulations for more information.

Increasingly, some elk hunters have had success in the Ringold 379 GMU where there are both early and late archery and muzzleloader seasons for elk, in addition to modern rifle seasons. The numbers of elk here are small, but the Windmill Ranch and Bailie Units (open only Wednesdays, weekends, and holidays) of the Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area might be your best bet. Each of these hunting areas has two designated parking areas where hunters are required to park and register, and each allows a maximum of eight vehicles per lot. Occasionally the Ringold Unit of the Hanford Reach Monument (shotgun, muzzleloader, and archery only, refer to USFWS Regulations), and rarely the Juniper Dune Wilderness, have elk during hunting seasons. In Kahlotus 381 GMU, small groups roam between Kahlotus and the Palouse River, but they are rarely encountered off private land.

During general hunting seasons, 200-350 hunters report that they pursue elk in District 4. Of which 30-60 are usually successful (Figure 3). You can access online <u>Harvest Reports</u> for any species, weapon, or hunt over past years. Harvest success usually depends upon private land access, forage conditions on the Hanford Site, and the availability of forage crops outside of the restricted area. Hunters are usually more successful early in the season.

For more details on game populations in the Columbia Basin and statewide, refer to WDFW's annual Status and Trends reports.

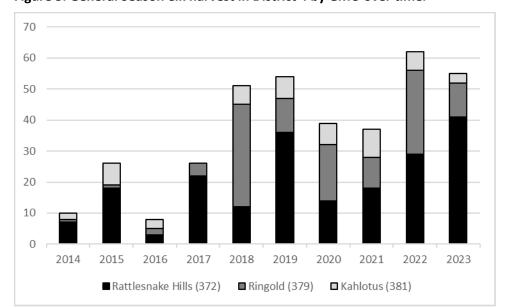


Figure 3. General Season elk harvest in District 4 by GMU over time.

Elk hoof disease (Treponeme bacteria)

Elk Hoof Disease is currently not known to occur in elk from District 4. The disease is concentrated in southwest Washington, but it occurs occasionally in other herds around the state. WDFW diagnostic research, in conjunction with a panel of scientific advisors, found that the reported 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. 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 follow good harvest processes, cooking practices, and good hygiene, the meat 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.

How hunters can help:

Report elk: Hunters can help WDFW track TAHD by reporting observations of both affected and unaffected elk on the department's online reporting form (link below). If you harvest an elk with abnormal looking hooves in eastern Washington (for example, overgrown or broken hoof claws or skin lesions), please report that harvest to your local WDFW regional office.

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. There's more information about <u>TAHD and the online reporting</u> tool.

Deer

District 4 primarily offers mule deer hunting opportunities. White-tailed deer are relatively uncommon in the district, making up less than one percent of deer on surveys, but WDFW offers white-tail seasons to allow hunters to legally harvest them if encountered. In 2023, the hunter success rate during the general seasons for deer across all weapons in the district was 27%, with a five-year average of 26% success. Statewide, average general season deer hunter success was 25% (all species).

Eastern Franklin County (Kahlotus – GMU 381) is an important wintering area for mule deer that migrate to the relatively mild winter conditions near the Snake River. A small resident population does exist, but most mule deer migrate in from more northern GMUs starting in October. During mild winters, some of these deer may remain further north or delay moving into the district. The late general muzzleloader season in Franklin County (GMUs 379 and 381) usually provides a good opportunity to find mule deer in November. The season allows the harvest of bucks three-point or better.

In addition to GMU specific special permit hunts, hunters should look for "Washtucna" permit hunts in the pamphlet that include GMU 381-Kahlotus along with three adjacent GMUs (Figure 4). These replaced most of the Kahlotus hunts offered prior to 2018. Washtucna permits include late muzzleloader antlerless, modern antlerless, plus youth, disabled, and senior permits.

Post-hunt surveys in December 2023 yielded an estimated 14 bucks to 100 does in GMU 381 (Figure 5), which is below the management goal of 15-19 bucks per 100 does for the Columbia Plateau population. This includes non-legal bucks (spike and 2 point). High hunter success and low buck escapement in the open country where this population lives can contribute to challenges locating legal bucks. Fawn

numbers were at a surprising 91 fawns per 100 does (Figure 5). The ten-year average has been 70 fawns per 100 does. Population estimates for the broader Benge sub-herd which contains part of GMU 381 appear consistent over time. For more details on deer populations in the Columbia Basin and statewide, refer to WDFW's annual Status and Trends reports.

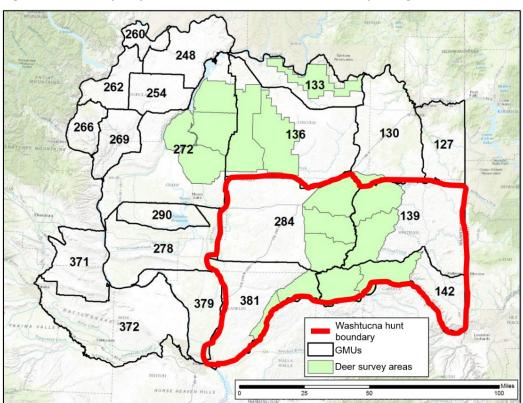
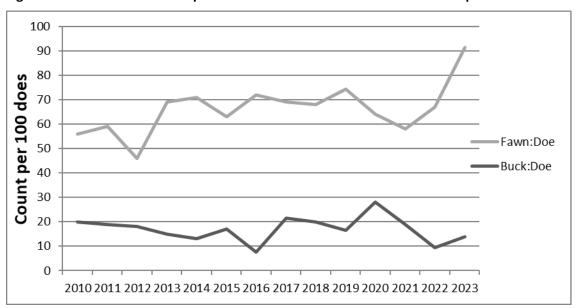


Figure 4. Boundary map of the Washtucna Hunt area encompassing four GMUs.





In western Franklin County (Ringold – GMU 379), units of the Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area and the Ringold Unit of the Hanford Reach National Monument (refer to <u>weapon restrictions</u>) provide public hunting opportunities for deer. Like Kahlotus, there is a late Muzzleloader season and early archery and muzzleloader seasons, plus the modern season.

In northern Benton County (Rattlesnake Hills - GMU 372), spend some time scouting for deer in the Thornton and Rattlesnake units of the Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area. There are also some Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) parcels available. Be sure to know who's land you are on, and do not trespass on private property, including when navigating property corners and retrieving game.

In southern Benton County (Horse Heaven Hills - GMU 373), there are deer on BLM lands in the Horse Heaven Hills, scattered tracts of DNR, and private property within WDFW access programs. Part of GMU 372, Deer Area 3372 - Sunnyside (Benton and Yakima counties) provides an early muzzleloader opportunity along the Yakima River from Prosser to Union Gap.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) <u>Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)</u> Deer Areas 3071 (Whitcomb) and 3072 (Paterson) provide 80 special permits to harvest deer on the NWR, including archery and muzzleloader hunts. Permits are available through the state permit draw in the <u>Hunting Regulations</u>.

There are many properties where hunters can gain access to deer through one of WDFW's private land access programs. Preseason scouting is advisable to learn where to hunt and obtain permission from private landowners where needed. Updated access information and locations are provided in WDFW's Hunt Planner Web map (select your species, then go to the Layer List > WDFW Places > and check Private lands hunt opportunities) and the Private Lands website. Access Program properties frequently change from year to year and sometimes within a season. Please double-check that lands previously available for hunting are still open to the public.

Harvest reports for past general seasons and permit hunts for any GMU on <u>WDFW's website</u>. For more details on game populations in the Columbia Basin and statewide, refer to WDFW's annual <u>Status and Trends reports</u>.



A buck harvested in Franklin County in GMU 381. Photo by John Hone.

Upland bird

Benton and Franklin counties offer upland bird opportunities for quail, dove, pheasant, and even a few chukar and partridge (also known as huns) if you are lucky (Figure 6). Habitat and weather are the key components influencing the survival and reproductive success of birds. Increasingly, fires and agricultural efficiencies have reduced cover and forage for upland birds in the Columbia Basin and District 4. Be sure to review the WDFW <u>Game Bird Regulations</u> for seasons and regulations. For more details on game populations statewide, refer to WDFW's annual <u>Status and Trends reports</u>.

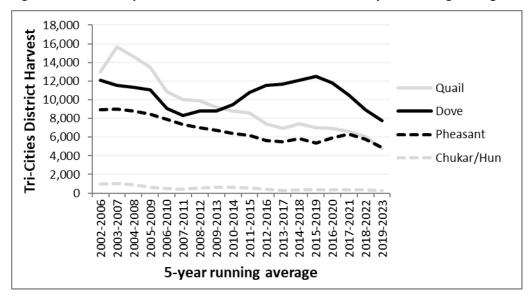


Figure 6. District 4 upland bird harvest trends based on five-year running averages.

Pheasant

Ring-necked pheasant hunters and harvest vary annually (Figure 7). Pheasant hunters should focus efforts in dense weedy and grassy upland areas adjacent to wetlands, and irrigation waterways and around irrigated farmland. Some of the best pheasant habitat in the district is in north Franklin County on and surrounding WDFW's Windmill Ranch Unit (nontoxic shot), Mesa Lake Unit, and the Bailie Memorial Youth Ranch. Each of these hunting areas has two designated parking areas where hunters are required to park and register, and each allows a maximum of eight vehicles per lot. Other areas with good pheasant habitat include USFWS' Hanford Reach National Monument's East Wahluke Unit, Ringold GMU 379, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) Habitat Management Units along the Snake River, and Umatilla NWR along the Columbia River, near the town of Paterson. For more details on game populations statewide, refer to WDFW's annual Status and Trends reports.

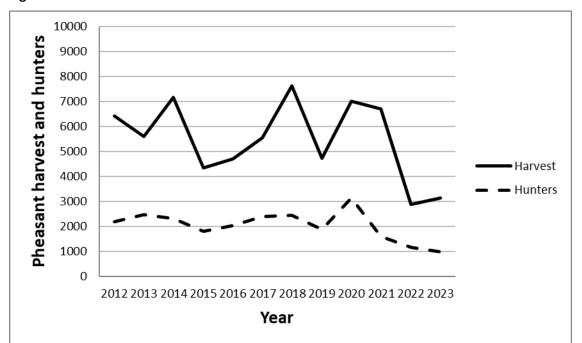


Figure 7. Pheasant harvest and hunters in District 4.

Pursuing birds released as part of WDFW's <u>Pheasant Enhancement Program</u> is a great way to work dogs and gain experience for new hunters. WDFW releases pheasants at three locations in District 4: the Hope Valley Unit of the WDFW Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area, and the Big Flat and Lost Island Habitat Management Units (HMUs) held by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) (Figure 8). Releases at the Toothaker HMU in Benton County were discontinued due to fire and low bird retention onsite. Pheasant release site maps can be found in the program link above or on WDFW's <u>Hunt Planner Web map</u> (select the Layer > WDFW Places > Pheasant Release Sites). Army Corps HMUs contact information is available on the <u>Army Corps' website</u>.

To protect other wildlife species including waterfowl and raptors, nontoxic shot is required for all upland bird and dove hunting on all pheasant release sites statewide. If you hunt any of these release sites, you may use only approved nontoxic shot (either in shotshells or as loose shot for muzzleloading). Use of lead shot is regulated on some wildlife areas. Refer to the Washington Game Bird and Small Game Hunting Regulations for more information.

District 4 Pheasant Release Sites To Othello 261 **Hope Valley** Columbia River Starbuck C Lost Island **Big Flat** Dayton Richland O Pasco Kennewick Walla Walla WASHINGTON OREGON

Figure 8. Location of District 4 pheasant release sites.

Quail

California quail are present in the district, though there has been a decreasing trend in harvest numbers over the past decade (Figure 9). The best quail habitat in District 4 is similar to those listed for pheasant. Also, anywhere along water bodies where riparian and herbaceous vegetation intersects provide quail habitat. An ideal setting is where Russian olives or willows are adjacent to black greasewood or sagebrush. For more details on game populations statewide, refer to WDFW's annual Status and Trends reports.

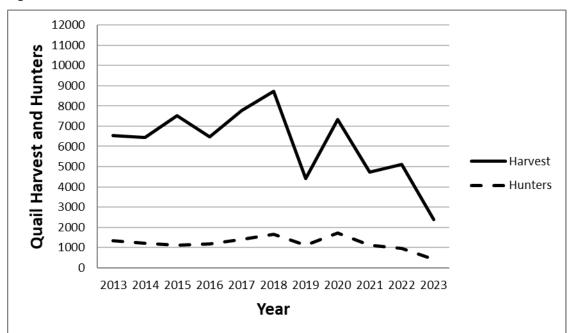


Figure 9. Quail harvest and hunters in District 4.

To protect other wildlife species including waterfowl and raptors, nontoxic shot is required for all upland bird and dove hunting on all pheasant release sites statewide. If you hunt any of these release sites, you may use only approved nontoxic shot (either in shotshells or as loose shot for muzzleloading). Use of lead shot is regulated on some wildlife areas. Refer to the Washington Game Bird and Small Game Hunting Regulations for more information.

Dove

Mourning dove harvest in District 4 has been decreasing over the past few years (Figure 10). There should be an opportunity for hunters to find doves moving through the area and in local patches where production has been successful. Weather patterns play a critical role in determining how many doves are present during the season opener. Focus your hunting efforts in or near wheat or corn stubble fields in the irrigated Yakima and Columbia Basins. The best combination of habitat includes a stubble field near water and large isolated trees or power lines where doves perch and attract other doves.

Dove hunters are also encouraged to harvest Eurasian collared doves, an introduced exotic species that has spread across North America. They are larger than mourning doves with a square tail and thin black half-collar on the back of their necks. This species is most abundant in rural and suburban areas near mature trees. Numbers have been increasing across Washington since first establishing in the state in the 1990s. There is no limit and collared doves can be hunted year-round in Washington with a big or small game hunting license. For more details on game populations statewide, see WDFW's annual Status and Trends reports.

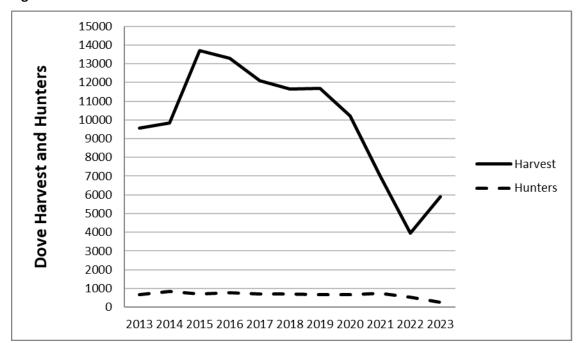


Figure 10. Dove harvest and hunters in District 4.

Waterfowl

There are many places to hunt ducks and geese in the district. The Snake, Columbia, and Yakima rivers plus associated water bodies will hold tens of thousands of ducks once the cold weather sets in. See details and map in the Public Lands Section of this document below for river hunting. Access can be gained at the USFWS McNary and Umatilla NWRs, the Hanford Reach National Monument, USACE properties, or one of the many WDFW managed Water Access Sites on the Hunt Planner Web map (select Layer > WDFW Places > Water Access Sites).

Small ponds and lakes can be found on WDFW's Windmill Ranch Unit, Mesa Lake Unit, and Bailie Memorial Youth Ranch. Continued management of the <u>Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area</u> units will result in more habitat for waterfowl and opportunities for hunters in the coming years. Several Sunnyside Snake River WLA Units in Franklin County are managed especially for waterfowl hunting. Scooteney Reservoir, managed by the Bureau of Reclamation, can also provide good hunting.

For an excellent introduction to waterfowl hunting, see <u>Let's Go Waterfowl Hunting</u> on the WDFW website and be sure to check the <u>WDFW Migratory Bird Regulations</u> for seasons and rules. For more details on game populations statewide, see WDFW's annual <u>Status and Trends reports</u>.

Duck harvest in District 4 has been relatively high since 2014, while the goose harvest has largely remained stable (Figure 11). New reporting methods make comparisons of the past two years to prior seasons somewhat difficult, so the apparent rise in harvest in recent years may not be accurate. After the season opener, hunter success will likely taper off as the local ducks become less naïve and restrict

their daytime movements to local reserves and sanctuaries. At that point, hunters will likely have to wait for the migrants to arrive in the mid-to-late season. Weather patterns will determine when they arrive and where they will congregate. Freezing temps can eliminate opportunity from inland waterbodies and push ducks to the rivers or further south out of state.

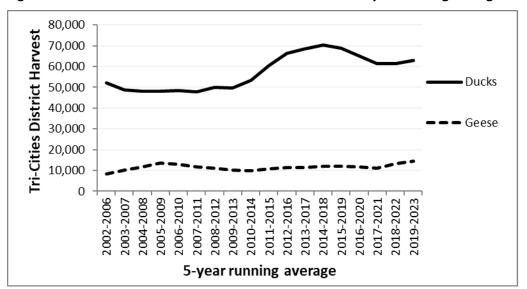


Figure 11. District 4 waterfowl harvest trends based on five-year running averages.

Resident Canada geese nest on river islands in the district as well as cliffs and man-made structures. In addition, thousands of migratory Canada geese arrive sometime in October or November. They can be pursued in the farm fields near the Snake and Columbia rivers. Most of the land is private property, so hunters will need to secure permission before hunting.

Statewide goose regulations have separate daily limits for snow and white-fronted geese in addition to Canada and Cackling (dark) geese. Whereas white-fronted geese and most snow geese usually pass through the district before and after the main goose season (Figure 12), an increasing number of snow geese have been present in the district during goose season, but peak in February/March. In response to this, WDFW set up an extended white goose season. The dates in District 4 (Goose Area 4) were expanded in 2020 for Snow, Ross's, and "Blue" Geese from mid-Feb to early March (refer to season summary for dates). Snow geese are found in large flocks on farmland near the Snake or Columbia rivers, especially near Plymouth and McNary NWR, but are occasionally mixed in with large flocks of dark geese at any location.

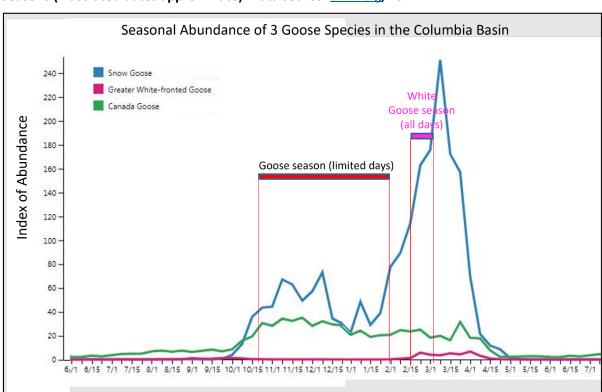


Figure 12. Seasonal abundance of three goose species in the Columbia Basin relative to hunting seasons (illustrated dates approximate). Data source: eBird.org, 2024.

In the winters of 2017 and 2018, outbreaks of avian cholera occurred at the end of the hunting season in the Tri-Cities area, killing thousands of waterfowl. Botulism outbreaks (summer) and avian influenza (spring) are additional wildlife diseases impacting birds in our area. Fast response can contain outbreaks and hunters are encouraged to report groups of more than five sick or dead birds to WDFW using the link at the WDFW wildlife diseases webpage.

Major public lands

Hunting access in Benton and Franklin counties is more limited than in some parts of the state as much of the district is private property or federal land closed to hunting. However, quality opportunities on both public and private land exist, and WDFW is continually working to expand hunting access.

WDFW Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area

This wildlife area (Figure 13) comprises WDFW-managed land in the district and most parcels are open to hunting with specific restrictions at some units. Most of the units are managed specifically for wildlife, and enhanced hunting opportunities are possible through crop, habitat, and wetland management. For more information and maps please visit the WDFW website.

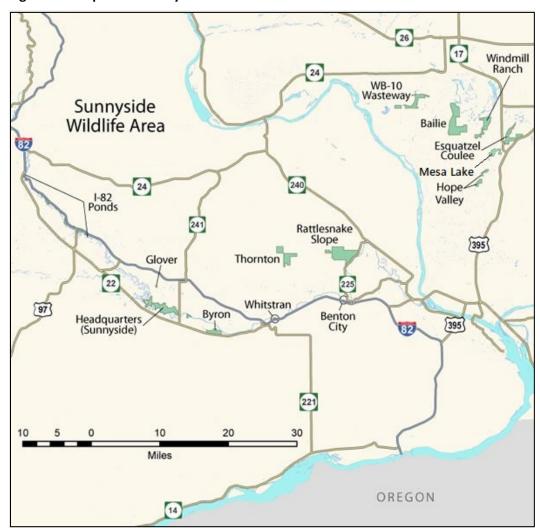


Figure 13. Map of the Sunnyside Wildlife Area units.

Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex

The USFWS allows hunting on several units of this refuge complex, including portions of the Hanford Reach National Monument, the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge, and areas within the McNary National Wildlife Refuge. Hunting lottery information, regulations, and maps can be found on <u>USFWS's website</u>.

The Columbia and Snake Rivers

All islands, except privately owned islands, the Benton County shoreline below the high-water mark, Central Hanford Department of Energy property, and any peninsula originating on the Benton County shoreline between Vernita Bridge on Highway 24 downstream to the Richland city limits are designated as closed areas to hunting wild animals and wild birds. The only exception is waterfowl hunting, which is open below the high-water mark between the old Hanford townsite power line crossing (wooden towers) and the Richland city limits. These details are printed in the <u>Big Game Regulations</u>. Several other closures and reserves impact river hunting in the district (Figure 14).

Other Public Lands

Each agency/landowner can enact their own weapon and area restrictions related to hunting. Obey all posted signs and contact the land manager with questions.

The DNR manages land that is open to hunting unless otherwise posted. Benton and Franklin counties have a large amount of DNR acreage, often leased for agriculture. While leased land is still open to hunting, hunters should always be aware that adjacent landowners are often managing DNR land as part of their business operations, and hunters should be respectful of property boundaries, which may not be signed. Consult a public lands map or Hunt Planner Web map for or more information (Public lands layer is the default base map).

BLM allows hunting on most of their land and highlights <u>several BLM properties for hunting</u> across WA, including the Juniper Dunes and Horse Heaven Hills.

The USACE and the Bureau of Reclamation allow hunting on most of their land, but each agency/landowner can enact their own weapon and area restrictions. Several USACE HMUs along the rivers are only open for shotgun and archery hunters. Refer to HMU maps and regulations.

In Washington, it is NOT LEGAL to cross private or closed land without permission to access public lands. Therefore, access to some parcels of public land may not be available.

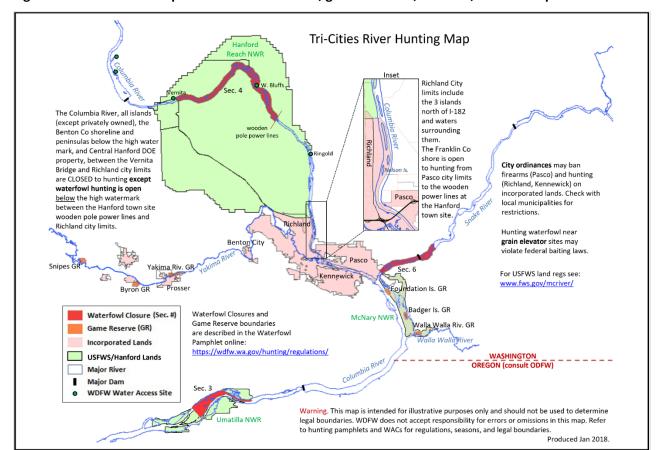


Figure 14. Generalized map of Tri-cities area rivers, game reserves, closures, and municipalities.

Private lands

WDFW provides and maintains a Private Lands Access program that allows the public to hunt on land owned by cooperating private landowners. In most cases, these landowners receive no financial compensation for their enrollment in the program, and hunters should always respect their property and follow all rules. By being a responsible guest on these private lands, hunters can help ensure they remain open for years to come and will continue to enhance WDFW's mission to expand private lands access. Access properties frequently change year to year and sometimes even within a season. Double-check that lands previously available for hunting are still open to the public and in the same access program before you venture out.

Information about private lands access sites, including site-specific regulations, locations, season availability, and contact information, can be found on WDFW's <u>Hunting Access of Private Lands webpage</u> and at the WDFW <u>Hunt Planner Web map</u> (select the Layer icon > WDFW Places > Private Land Hunting <u>Opportunities</u>). For questions, contact McKaden Manderbach, the WDFW Private Lands Biologist for Region 3: 509-778-2630.

There are four main private land programs. Although each provides public, walk-in only access to private land, they function differently.

Hunt by Reservation

The Hunt by Reservation program requires hunters to <u>register online</u>. In Benton and Franklin counties, multiple opportunities are available for both big game and bird hunting. **Opportunities are only listed online once they are available for reservation**, which is usually a few weeks prior to the season. <u>Hunt by Reservation Properties</u>. Hunters are required to print out and carry their reservation permit.

Feel Free to Hunt

Feel Free to Hunt allows hunters walk-in access during specified hunting seasons without any prior approval. Most District 4 Feel Free to Hunt properties provide access for mule deer hunting, with some potential for upland bird hunting as well. <u>Feel Free to Hunt Properties</u>.

Register to Hunt

Register to Hunt requires hunters to sign in at registration kiosks and carry their registration stub with them while hunting. No prior coordination is needed. District 4's Register to Hunt sites primarily provide waterfowl and upland bird hunting opportunities. Register to Hunt Properties.

Hunt by Written Permission

Hunters are required to contact the landowner for access to Hunt by Written Permission sites. Landowners then issue permits at their discretion and hunters are expected to carry this permit while they hunt. Landowner contact information can only be found on the yellow signs marking the site. WDFW does not give out contact info online or by phone. You should try to contact the landowner weeks or months in advance of your season to increase your chance of gaining access. Hunt by Written Permission properties provide opportunities for both big game and bird hunting in District 4. Hunt by Written Permission Properties.

Figure 15. Private Lands Access Program signs.



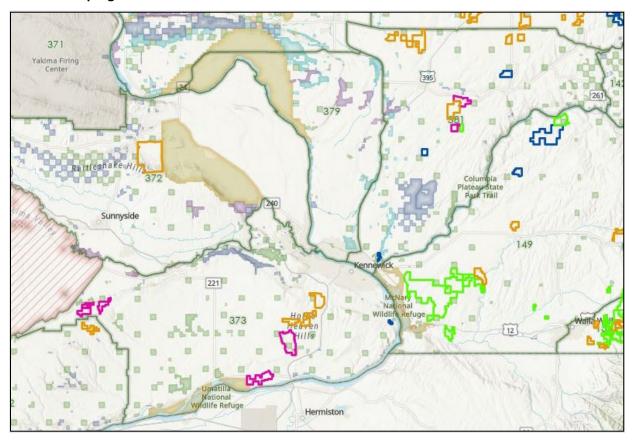
Online tools and maps

Harvest reports for past general seasons and permits for any GMU and Permit Hunt for all game species are online at WDFW Hunting Game Harvest.

More details on game populations in the Columbia Basin and statewide can be found in WDFW's annual Status and Trends reports.

WDFW has released a Hunt Planner Web Map to search for game seasons and private land access around the state: WDFW Hunting Map. A good starting point for hunters looking for a place to hunt is the Web Map that provides hunters with information about public and private lands access points, GMU boundaries, hunting seasons, pheasant release sites, water access points, landscape features such as roads and topography, public lands, and much more (Figure 15).

Figure 16. Depiction of private lands access and public lands layers in District 4 from WDFW's Regulations Web Map. Pink, Green, Orange, and Blue bordered parcels are lands in the various public lands access programs.



Note: Figure for illustrative purposes only. Check the online map for up-to-date access and parcel information.