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To prepare for the Colorado 2024-25 hunting season, familiarize yourself with essential guidelines and regulations to ensure a safe and successful hunt. Key information includes: Seasonal Dates & Hunting Areas - Familiarize yourself with the specific dates and locations of each hunting area. Bag Limits - Adhere to established limits for various game species. Regulations & Requirements - Understand licensing procedures, permitted methods of take, and other critical requirements. Visit the official Colorado Parks & Wildlife website for detailed regulations. The Colorado Parks & Wildlife Department encourages outdoor enthusiasts to respect shared public spaces by showing courtesy towards users engaged in recreation activities. Plan your hunt using available resources such as the Big Game Hunting Brochure, Colorado Hunting Atlas, or the free mobile app, Colorado Trail Explorer. Additionally, Colorado's North American Model of Wildlife Conservation emphasizes the importance of hunting and fishing fees in funding conservation efforts while protecting wildlife from exploitation and habitat destruction. ### Hunters play a crucial role in controlling the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Colorado by submitting deer and cervid samples for analysis. This helps wildlife managers like CPW Big Game Manager Andy Holland assess the disease's prevalence and distribution, allowing them to evaluate management strategies' effectiveness. "The hunting community is our best CWD management tool," Holland said. To avoid confusion between coyotes and gray wolves, which can appear similar from a distance, CPW has created a handout highlighting their differences. Gray wolves are protected by federal law and state regulations in Colorado, and penalties for killing them can be severe, including fines up to \$100,000. Nonhunters can prepare for hunting season by familiarizing themselves with hunting dates and safety tips. Public lands in Colorado offer various recreational opportunities, but nonhunters should recognize hunters' presence and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety. The 2025 hunting seasons in Colorado are set to begin a new five-year structure, with key dates, licensing requirements, and wildlife zones outlined in this guide. Elk, deer, turkey, pronghorn, and bear species have specific season dates and regulations, making it essential for hunters to plan carefully to make the most of their wilderness excursions. Colorado's vast public lands offer unparalleled hunting opportunities, with over 23 million acres available to pursue trophy elk, mule deer, or small game. The state's diverse landscapes provide a unique experience for hunters, but it's crucial to be aware of regulations and take necessary precautions to ensure a safe and successful hunt. For elk archery hunting in specific areas, over-the-counter licenses will no longer be available as of the next season. However, Colorado still offers plenty of opportunities for big game hunting. The state's draw system provides limited licenses to many hunting units, while others offer over-the-counter licenses that hunters can purchase without going through a draw. For those interested in deer hunting, Colorado is a prime destination with both mule deer and white-tailed deer populations thriving. The eastern plains are home to white-tailed deer, whereas the western mountains host trophy mule deer. Archery season for deer runs from September 2-30, 2025, with either-sex and buck-only licenses available. Colorado's diverse wildlife also includes pronghorn, known for their speed and keen eyesight, which can be hunted across the eastern plains and western valleys. The archery season for pronghorn is August 15-September 20, 2025, while muzzleloader and rifle seasons are September 21-29 and October 4-12, 2025, respectively. The state's black bear populations are healthy, offering multiple seasonal opportunities throughout the year. Archery season runs from September 2-30, 2025, with muzzleloader season following from September 13-21, 2025. In addition to big game hunting, Colorado offers exceptional turkey hunting in both spring and fall seasons. Regular season for spring turkey is April 12-May 31, 2025, while over-the-counter licenses are available for certain units. Fall turkey season runs from September 1-October 31, 2025, with late season (private land only) occurring from December 15-January 15, 2025. The state also provides opportunities to hunt various furbearers, including badger, fox, raccoon, skunk, and weasel, with generous seasons running from November 1, 2024 February 28, 2025. Some species, such as beaver and bobcat, have different season dates. Lastly, Colorado's diverse habitats support abundant small game populations, including cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, and rock squirrel. Hunters can look forward to exploring these opportunities during the designated seasons. Given article text here Hunting seasons and rules change yearly. In Colorado, different species of birds have varying time frames for hunting. Some bird species can be hunted year-round, while others only have specific periods during which they are legal to hunt. The state divides its territory into several zones for better wildlife management. Hunters must follow these guidelines: \* Early Canada Goose season lasts from September 1-9.\* Regular season starts on October 30 and ends in February 11.\* Light goose seasons occur from February 12 to April 30.\*\*Zones in Colorado\*\*There are several zones with different hunting periods:\* Northeast Zone: Oct 14-Nov 26 and Dec 11-Jan 31\* Southeast Zone: Oct 28-Jan 31\* Mountain/Foothills Zone: Oct 5-Dec 1 and Dec 25-Jan 31\* Western Zone: Oct 5-22 and Nov 6-Jan 31\* Eastern Zone: Oct 5-Jan 17\*\*Additional Information\*\*The Colorado Hunting Atlas provides detailed information about:\* Game Management Units (GMUs)\* Public lands\* Seasonal habitat ranges for big game species\* Road access information\* Walk-in access propertiesA qualifying license is needed before applying for the limited licenses through the big game draw in Colorado. The options include small game, spring turkey, combination hunting/fishing licenses. Colorado offers some of North America's best hunting opportunities, with diverse experiences for hunters of all skill levels. It's essential to check the latest regulations from Colorado Parks & Wildlife, secure your license early, and research the game management units before heading afield. The success of your trip depends on thorough preparation, understanding the landscape, and respecting wildlife conservation principles. Remember that hunting regulations can change, and specific units may have special restrictions or season variations. Always verify the most current information before your hunt and consider using digital mapping apps to enhance your field experience. A limited license is a set number allotted to each game management unit, helping you decide where you'd like to hunt. You can apply for the big game draw(s) to get one of these licenses or purchase a remaining limited license when they go on sale after the draws are over. Hunters can submit one application per species and include up to four hunt choices to maximize their opportunity. Preference points help hunters succeed in future primary draws by adding points for each applicant who qualifies but does not draw their first-choice limited license. Types of limited licenses include public-land, private-land-only, Ranching for Wildlife (RFW), Bighorn Sheep Access Program (BSAP), season choice and leftover limited licenses. The main attraction for hunters is the primary draw, where they can apply using a specific preference-point hunt code to get a preference point as their first choice. It's worth noting that preference points are only available on the primary draw application. A helpful tip is to apply for a preference point by entering the "preference point only" hunt code in the "first choice hunt code" on the application, even if you can't hunt this year but plan to in the future. More details can be found on pages 3 and 9 of the Big Game Brochure. Leftover limited licenses are the remaining licenses available after the primary and secondary draws. Purchasing one of these licenses won't use any preference points. Leftover licenses, including reissued big game licenses, will go on sale August 5th, 2025. Reissued licenses are those that were returned for a refund or preference points, as well as unpaid licenses, and are listed on the leftover list. The Reissue Preview List is updated weekly, with all hunt codes released around 11 a.m. MT on Wednesdays, starting the week after leftover licenses go on sale. No new hunt codes are added to the list after 1 p.m. MT each Wednesday. Over-the-counter licenses, on the other hand, are not limited in quantity but are restricted to certain units, seasons, and manners of take. Although considered "unlimited licenses," they are still subject to purchase limits for each individual. OTC licenses can be purchased online, by phone, or at sales agents around the state, and do not require a qualifying license or preference points. They offer flexibility to discover new units, scout different habitats, and potentially combine hunts with other species. Some licenses for elk, white-tailed deer, pronghorn, and bear are available without entering the draw and are not restricted in quantity. The Landowner Preference Program (LPP) encourages private landowners to provide habitat for wildlife populations and relieve hunting pressure on public lands by allocating vouchers to qualified landowners. These vouchers can be transferred to hunters, who then purchase a license to hunt, but are not available for purchase from CPW. Landowner vouchers can only be transferred once and must be directly given to the hunter by the landowner or designated manager. If someone other than the landowner transfers the voucher, it becomes invalid. Vouchers cannot be sold for others or used by people who don't have a valid license issued with them. Group leaders must apply first on applications with hunt codes so members' choices can be validated. Group members choose "I am hunting in a group" with the leader's CID, except if the leader has no CID, they set one up online or call CPW. Everyone in a group uses the same person as their leader to draw licenses together. Group applications must have the same species, hunt code, and restrictions for each choice, but can be different sexes. Only submit group apps if hunters won't go hunting without everyone getting a license; individual apps are needed otherwise. Group members' choices must match exactly, including first-, second-, third- and fourth-choice hunt codes in the same order. If the leader changes their application and hunt codes, it overrides all group member's choices - they should inform others. Application errors disqualify the entire group, so choose wisely. Common mistakes include wrong hunter education info or residency details. Licenses are awarded based on preference points, with group apps having priority. Each app gets a six-digit number, and groups are assigned one based on their lowest app number. If a group is picked in the draw and has enough licenses, everyone gets a license; otherwise, no one does. Each participant earns a point. Permits are distributed based on contact details stored in individual profiles. Following the Draw, group members remain separate entities and their individual actions do not impact one another. Youths won't receive youth preference if they join as part of a collective. Only single applicants can participate in Hybrid Draws, with group submissions rejected. The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department issues special big game licenses to non-profit organizations dedicated to preserving wildlife. These licenses fund projects enhancing habitats, conducting research, managing populations, and educating the public on conservation efforts. Details about available hunting opportunities, including when, where, and how many will be allocated via different methods of harvesting, can be found in this section.

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