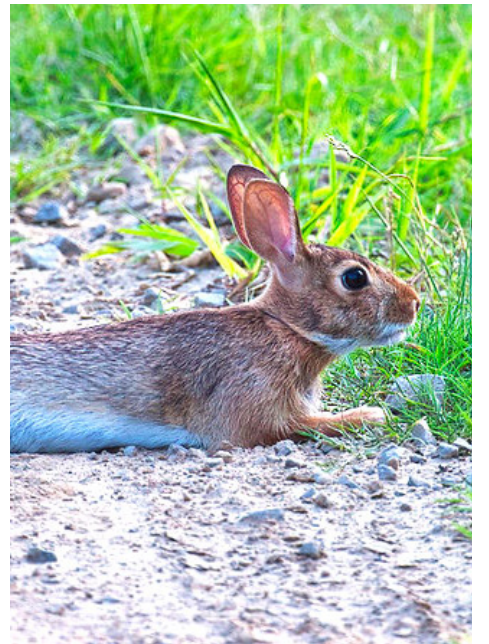
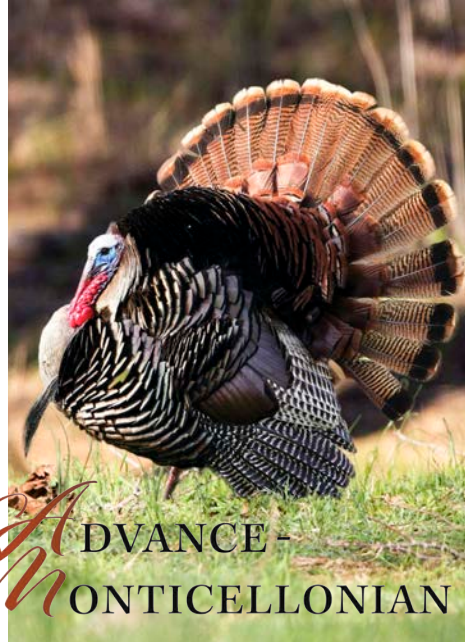


# HUNTING GUIDE



**2024 Complete Guide to  
Hunting in Southeast Arkansas**

## 2024-25 hunting, trapping season dates for Southeast Arkansas summary

*Some wildlife management areas and national wildlife refuges require hunters to draw a permit before hunting.*

*Permit applications are available at agfc.com or your local regional office.*

### DEER

**EARLY BUCK ARCHERY** – Sept. 7-9.

**ARCHERY** – Statewide, Sept. 28-Feb. 28.

**ALTERNATIVE FIREARMS** – Deer zones 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11: Oct. 19-27 and Dec. 14-16.

Deer zones 4A, 5A, 14, 15: Oct. 19-27 and Dec. 21-23.

Deer zones 9, 12, 13, 16, 16A, 17: Oct. 19-27.

Deer zones 4 and 5: closed

**MODERN GUN** – Deer zones 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11: Nov. 9-Dec. 1.

Deer zones 4, 5: Nov. 9-17.

Deer zones 4A, 5A, 14, 15: Nov. 9-Dec. 8.

Deer zones 9, 12, 13: Nov. 9-Dec. 15.

Deer zones 16, 16A, 17: Nov. 9-Dec. 25.

**SPECIAL YOUTH HUNT** – Nov. 2-3 and Jan. 4-5 (statewide except WMAs closed during modern gun deer season).

**CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY HUNT** – Dec. 26-28 (statewide

except WMAs closed during modern gun deer season).

**WMA DEER HUNT PERMIT APPLICATION PERIOD** – June 1-30.

### ELK

**PUBLIC LAND (PERMIT REQUIRED) – Zones 1, 2, 3, 4:** Oct. 7-11 and Oct. 28-Nov. 1.

**PUBLIC LAND YOUTH HUNTS** – Oct. 5-6 and Oct. 26-27.

**PRIVATE LAND** – Boone, Carroll, Madison, Newton and Searcy counties: Oct. 7-11 and Oct. 28-Nov. 1.

**PRIVATE LAND YOUTH HUNTS** – Oct. 5-6 and Oct. 26-27.

**STATEWIDE** – Elk found outside of Boone, Carroll, Madison, Newton and Searcy counties may be taken during deer season with weapon legal for that season.

**PUBLIC LAND ELK HUNT PERMIT APPLICATION PERIOD** – May 1-June 1.

### BEAR

**ARCHERY** – Bear zones 1, 2: Sept. 18-Nov. 30. (Zone 1 closes earlier if quota is reached).

**ALTERNATIVE FIREARMS** – Bear zones 1, 2: Oct. 19-27. (Zone 1 closes earlier if quota is reached).

**MODERN GUN** – Bear zones

1, 2: Nov. 9-30. (Zone 1 closes earlier if quota is reached).

**Bear zones: 3, 4:** Dec. 9-15. (closes earlier if quota is reached).  
Bear Zone 5: Dec. 21-27 (closes earlier if quota is reached)

**Bear zone: 5A:** Nov. 18-Dec. 3. (closes earlier if quota is reached).

**Bear zones 6, 7:** closed.

**SPECIAL YOUTH MODERN GUN HUNT** – Bear zones 1, 2: Nov. 2-3.

**Bear zones 3, 4, 5, 5A, 6, 7:** closed.

### TURKEY

**REGULAR TURKEY SEASON** – Turkey zone 1– April 21-29.

Turkey zone 2– April 21-May 11.

**YOUTH HUNT** – Turkey zones 1, 2: April 12-13.

**WMA TURKEY HUNT PERMIT APPLICATION PERIOD** – Jan. 15-Feb. 15.

### FURBEARERS

#### Hunting

**BEAVER AND NUTRIA** – sunrise Sept. 1-sunset March 31 (day hunting only).

**BOBCAT** – sunrise Sept. 1-sunset Feb. 28 and during turkey season (day hunting only).

**COYOTE, OPOSSUM, RACCOON AND STRIPED SKUNK** – year-round (sunrise to sunset for

coyote only).

**GRAY FOX, MINK, MUSKRAT AND RED FOX** – sunrise Sept. 1-sunset Feb. 28 (day hunting only).

**RIVER OTTER** – sunrise Nov. 11-sunset Feb. 28 (day hunting only).

#### Trapping

**COYOTE** – sunrise Aug. 1-sunset March 31.

**BEAVER AND NUTRIA** – sunrise Nov. 9-sunset March 31.

**FURBEARERS OTHER THAN BEAVER, COYOTE AND NUTRIA** – sunrise Nov. 9-sunset Feb. 28.

### ALLIGATOR

**ZONES 1, 2, 3** – Sept. 20-23 and Sept. 27-30 (night hunting only; permit required).

### SQUIRREL

**STATEWIDE** – May 15-Feb. 28

### RABBIT

**STATEWIDE** – Sept. 1-Feb. 28

### QUAIL

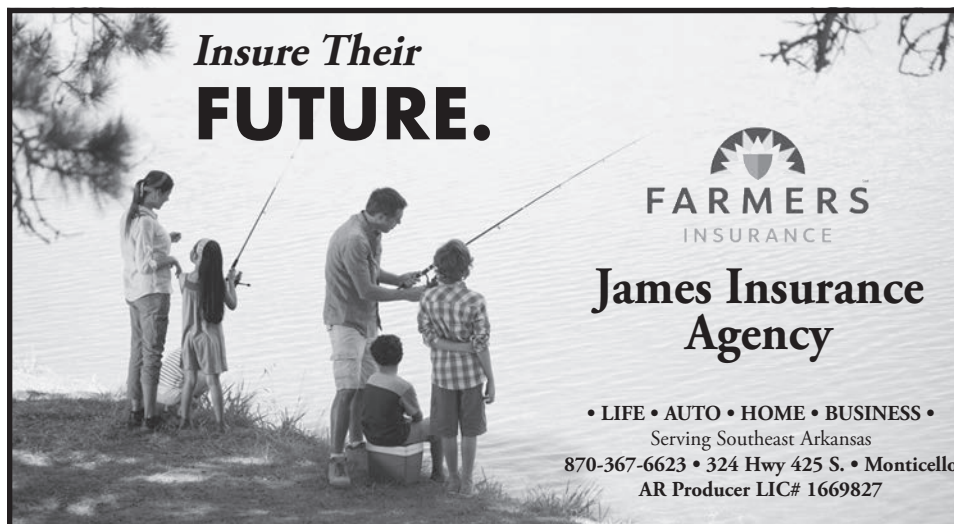
**STATEWIDE** – Nov. 1-Feb. 2.

### BULLFROG

June 1-Dec. 31.

### CROW

**STATEWIDE** – Sept. 1-Feb. 17 (Thursday-Monday only).

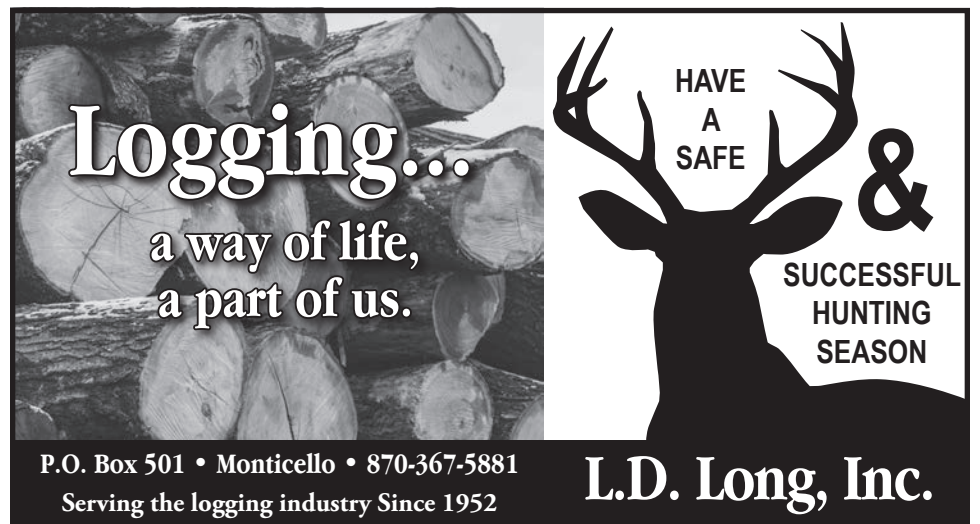


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# 2024-25 migratory bird season dates summary

***If you shoot a banded migratory bird, please visit [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov).***

*Migratory bird hunters in Arkansas 16 or older are required to carry proof of Arkansas Harvest Information Program (HIP) registration when hunting ducks, geese, doves, coots, woodcock, snipe, rails or gallinules. HIP registration is available only at Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Offices and online at [www.agfc.com/license](http://www.agfc.com/license).*

*Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise until sunset, except during early teal season, which begins at sunrise.*

*During duck season, WMAs close to waterfowl hunting at noon. Waterfowl hunters must leave waterfowl hunting areas by 1 p.m. except on George H. Dunklin Jr. Bayou Meto and Dave Donaldson Black*

*River WMAs where hunters must leave by noon. Waterfowl rest areas are closed to all access Nov. 1-Feb. 15.*

*Duck daily bag limit – six. Limit may include no more than four mallards (no more than two of which may be hens), one scaup, three wood ducks, one pintail, two red-heads, two canvasbacks, two black ducks and one mottled duck. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.*

*Coot daily bag limit – 15. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.*

*Merganser daily bag limit – five. No more than two may be hooded mergansers. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.*

**SPECIAL YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNT:**

**Feb. 8-9, 2025**

On these days, youths 15 and younger may hunt ducks, geese, coots and mergansers. Youths who have completed a hunter education course must be accompanied by a mentor who is 18 or older. Youths who have not completed a hunter education course must be accompanied by a mentor who is 21 or older. Mentors may not hunt ducks, geese, coots or mergansers, but may call waterfowl. Shooting hours and bag limits are the same as regular waterfowl season. Hunting is allowed on WMAs from one half-hour before sunrise until sunset.

**VETERAN AND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY WATERFOWL HUNT:**

**Feb. 9, 2025**

On this day, veteran and active duty military may hunt ducks,

geese, coots and mergansers. Mentors may accompany these hunters to call waterfowl but may not hunt. Shooting hours and bag limits are the same as regular waterfowl season.

Hunting is allowed on WMAs from one half-hour before sunrise until sunset.

**DUCK, COOT AND MERGANSER**

**Nov. 23-Dec. 2, 2024, Dec. 10-23, 2024 and Dec. 27, 2024-Jan. 31, 2025**

**SNOW, BLUE AND ROSS'S GOOSE**

**Oct. 26-Nov. 3, 2024, Nov. 23-Dec. 2, 2024, Dec. 10-23, 2024 and Dec. 27, 2024-Jan. 31, 2025**

**Bag Limit – 20**

**Light Goose Conservation Order**

See **BIRDS** Page 4

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# BIRDS

Continued from Page 3

**Feb. 1-7, 2025 and Feb. 10-April 25, 2025**

**Bag Limit** – None

## WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE

**Oct. 26-Nov. 3, 2024, Nov. 23-Dec. 2, 2024, Dec. 10-23, 2024 and Dec. 27, 2024-Jan. 31, 2025**

**Daily Limit** – 2

**Possession Limit** – 6

## CANADA GOOSE

**Sept. 1-Oct. 15, 2024**

**Daily Limit** - 5

**Possession Limit** - 15  
**Nov. 23-Dec. 2, 2024, Dec. 10-23, 2024 and Dec. 27, 2024-Jan. 31, 2025**

**Daily Limit** – 2

**Possession Limit** – 6

## MOURNING DOVE, WHITE-WINGED AND EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES

**Sept. 7-Oct. 27, 2024, and Dec. 8, 2024-Jan. 15, 2025**

**Mourning and white-winged**

**dove daily limit** – 15

**Mourning and white-winged**

**dove possession limit** – 45

**Eurasian collared-doves** –  
No daily bag or possession limit

## VIRGINIA RAIL AND SORA

**Sept. 14-Nov. 22, 2024**

**Daily Limit** – 25

**Possession Limit** – 75 (combined)

## SPECIAL EARLY TEAL

**Sept. 15-30, 2024**

**Daily Limit** – 6 (blue-winged, green-winged and cinnamon teal combined)

**Possession Limit** – 18

## WILSON'S SNIPE

**Nov. 1, 2024-Feb. 15, 2025**

**Daily Limit** – 8

**Possession Limit** – 24

## COMMON AND PURPLE GALLINULE

**Sept. 1-Nov. 9, 2024**

**Daily Limit** – 15 (combined)

**Possession Limit** – 45

## WOODCOCK

**Nov. 2-Dec. 16, 2024**

**Daily Limit** – 3

**Possession Limit** – 9

# Top 10 rules of hunting-firearm safety

This fall, many of us will take to the field in pursuit of various game species in and beyond the local area.

Regardless of location, it is critical that the utmost caution is exercised at all times when handling a firearm. Hunting injuries and wounds are often a result of carelessness, ignorance, or disregard of safety rules and laws.

1. Treat every gun as if it's loaded.

Every time a gun is handled, check to make sure the gun is empty of shells or cartridges. Always assume the gun has the ability to load itself.

2. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.

No one should ever see the muzzle end of your gun. An experienced hunter is always aware of the safe direction to point the gun's muzzle and would not hunt with anyone who doesn't do likewise.

3. Be sure of your target and beyond.

A safe hunter would never take aim at a sound, movement or flash of color. A safe shot is taken at a positively identified target

against a clear, safe background.

4. Never point a gun at anything you don't want to shoot.

Avoid all horseplay with a firearm.

5. Unload guns when not in use.

Have the actions open to ensure a gun is not loaded. Guns should be carried in cases to the shooting area.

6. Store guns and ammunition separately.

Store in a place where the guns are out of reach from children or careless adults.

7. Be sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions.

Only carry ammunition for the gun you are carrying and the game you are hunting.

8. Never climb a fence or tree, cross a log or stream, or jump a ditch with a loaded gun.

9. Never shoot a bullet at a flat, hard surface or water.

When target practicing, be sure your backstop is adequate.

10. Never consume alcoholic beverages or drugs when handling a firearm.

Alcohol or drugs should not be used be-



fore or during the hunt, or when cleaning a gun. Always be fully alert and in control.

These safety rules have continually protected hunters and their companions year

after year. They need to stay foremost in the mind of every hunter. Ignoring these rules may lead to a hunting incident that will be forever regretted.

Wishing all local hunters a safe and successful season!



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# Alternative firearms season opens new options for AR hunters

**SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE**

Among the dozens of regulations changes passed at the May 16 Arkansas Game and Fish Commission meeting in El Dorado, one stood head and shoulders above the rest in creating the most chatter among the state's deer hunting community. Arkansas hunters will now be able to use non-semiautomatic firearms that shoot straight-wall metallic cartridges of .30 caliber or larger during Arkansas's muzzleloader season. The same firearms also will be legal during modern gun season in Deer Zones 4 and 5, which traditionally only allowed muzzleloaders and shotguns firing slugs.

Although similar regulations have been in place in other states, it's always good to run through a refresher of the regulation to help people stay legal in case they want to dust off an old firearm that has been a safe queen for the last decade or are interested in purchasing a new gun and ammunition to take advantage of the new opportunity. More than one sporting goods store has already contacted the AGFC asking which rifles and cartridges they should order in preparation for the new alternative firearms season opener (set for Oct. 19).

## Scrap the Scattergun

The first thing to note about the new reg-

ulation is that shotguns firing slugs, while legal during modern gun season, will not be allowed during the alternative weapons season. All cartridges used during the alternative weapons season must be metallic cartridges.

Hunters in Zones 4 and 5 will still be able to use shotguns like before, but during the new alternative firearms season, they won't be allowed. Zones 4 and 5 still will not have an open alternative firearms season, so the difference shouldn't cause any issues with a hunter from these zones bringing the wrong gun to the hunt.

A few questions have already come in through the AGFC's phone lines asking if a shotgun modified with a rifled barrel and converted to be essentially a "slug gun" will be allowed during the alternative firearms season. The straightforward answer is "no." The hunt is not intended to allow slug guns, and the shotgun shell holding the slug does not fit the definition of a metallic cartridge.

## Straight Talk

A flood of questions have come in during the last few weeks about what cartridges are considered straight wall.

"Is a .30-30 allowed? What about .35 Whelen?"

These rounds may be allowed in other states, but for Arkansas's alternative firearms

season or modern gun season in Zones 4 and 5, they're straight out.

"If you look at the profile of the cartridge's case, both of those rounds have a shoulder where the brass is necked down to accommodate a bullet diameter that's smaller than the base of the case," Lt. Col. Jake Dunn of the AGFC's Enforcement Division said. "Any shoulder in the brass case will disqualify it as an option for any straight-wall requirement in Arkansas. Indentations in some straight-wall cartridge cases near the base where the primer is found (called extractor grooves) are legal, however."

## Deer Hunting

### No Auto

A surge of straight-wall semiautos have hit the market since traditional "shotgun only" states adopted straight-wall rifles as legal during their deer seasons. These are good firearms to hunt deer with during Arkansas's modern gun season in most of the state, but they will not be allowed during the new alternative firearms season, nor will they be allowed in Deer Zones 4 and 5 during those modern gun hunts.

"There are some AR-style platforms that are actually bolt-actions, and we've heard about some drop-in conversion kits available that change some automatic rifles to bolt-ac-

tions," Dunn said. "Those would be legal according to the code."

### Ol' Betsy

If your hunting budget won't fit a new firearm into this season's purchases, don't sweat it. You can still dance with the one you've been bringing the last few seasons. Muzzleloaders meeting Arkansas's traditional regulations may still be used during the hunt. Many hunters have invested a lot of time, energy and money into working up their perfect black-powder load for deer, and many modern muzzleloaders are fully capable of ethically taking whitetails within 150 yards with a well-placed shot. Considering most deer harvested in Arkansas are well within 100 yards of the hunter, the old smokepole is still big medicine for any deer walking the woods of The Natural State.

Front-stuffers must have barrels 19 inches or longer and must be .40 caliber or larger. Scopes and other magnifying sights may also be used.

### Handclap

A few questions also have trickled in regarding the use of handguns that fit the definition of straight-wall cartridges. Non-semiautomatic handguns (including revolvers and single-shots) chambered for straight-wall cartridges of at least .30 caliber will be legal

See **ALTERNATIVE** Page 6

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# ALTERNATIVE

Continued from Page 5

during the alternative firearms hunting season. Hunters opting for handguns should note that all cartridge-firing handguns must have a barrel at least 4 inches long to be legal for deer hunting. Muzzleloading handguns with barrels at least 9 inches may also be used as long as they shoot conical bullets of .45 caliber or larger or round balls of .530 caliber or larger.

Just as with any firearm, hunters should

use good judgment in cartridge selection. A few underpowered cartridges may technically fit the definition to be a legal handgun during the alternative hunt as well as the modern gun hunt, but they may not provide a fast, ethical harvest. Larger, magnum cartridges, such as .357 Magnum, .44 Remington Magnum and ethical shot distances within 50 yards are highly recommended. Handgun hunters also should make sure the bullets in those cartridges are soft points or hollow points instead of full-metal jacket ammunition (which is illegal).

## Advance-Monticellonian will publish your game pictures

This is a reminder to readers that the Advance-Monticellonian will be more than happy to publish any and all game pictures received during hunting and/or fishing seasons—at no charge.

Contributors are simply asked to follow these simple steps:

- If possible, the photo should be emailed to [editor@monticellonews.net](mailto:editor@monticellonews.net). Make sure the email program does not downsize the file to make it send quicker. The original file size of the photo must be received; otherwise, the photo will be unfit for printing.

- The information needed to publish a photograph are the hunter/fisherman's name, age, hometown and school attended (if hunter/fisherman is a youth); where hunt took place or where fish was caught; who was with the hunter/fisherman; and parents' names (if picture is of a youth).

- The type of weapon or tackle that was used by the hunter or fisherman is needed.

Send all submissions to [editor@monticellonews.net](mailto:editor@monticellonews.net) or bring the pictures by the Advance-Monticellonian office, 314 North Main Street. Should the pictures be dropped off, please include a sheet with all the information needed—in legible form, please. The picture will be scanned and returned.

If contributors wish, they may follow up email submissions with a call to the Advance at 870-367-5325. Photographs without all the above information can not be published.

# DEER BRAN SPECIALTIES (DBS) is having a BIG Buck Bonanza (BBB) this season!



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## DEER BRAN SPECIALTIES

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## AIM FOR GUN SAFETY DURING HUNTING SEASON



1. Become familiar with your firearm. Know how to carry it, load it, unload it, and know what to expect when you pull the trigger.
2. Always assume every gun is loaded and always point the muzzle in a safe direction. Never point your gun at or toward another person.
3. Never put your finger on the trigger unless you intend to shoot.
4. Your firearm has a safety. Keep it in the 'On' position until you intend to shoot.
5. Be sure of your target and what is behind it before pulling the trigger.



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# Don't get wasted

## SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE

During deer season, there are all kinds of obstacles to look out for. Gun safety and making sure that your license is current are two. A third is Chronic Wasting Disease.

What is CWD? Chronic Wasting Disease is a contagious, fatal neurological disease that affects members of the deer and elk family. This disease is caused by a misshapen protein, called a prion, that accumulates in the tissues of infected animals. These animals experience a long incubation period (often 12 months) during which they show no outward signs of disease, but are able to shed the CWD prion and infect other deer and elk. When clinical signs of disease start, infected animals may become thin, demonstrate unusual posture or behaviors, and eventually lose awareness of their surroundings. This clinical phase is typically short with a uniformly fatal outcome. Because of the slow disease process, mortality

from CWD is less noticeable on landscape than other diseases. Sudden or group mortality events don't occur. The increase in individual mortality builds up to increase the population's mortality rate as more animals become infected.

In addition to be shed by infected animals, CWD prions also can be deposited from the carcasses and tissues of infected animals. CWD prions are highly stable and remain in the environment for years.

The most effective management tool for CWD is to prevent its spread. Avoiding the introduction of infected deer, either live or dead, as well as other potentially infectious materials prevents disease introduction through human activities. Reducing population densities and harvesting young bucks from CWD affected areas can help slow the natural spread of the disease through dispersal. Targeted removal of deer from areas immediately surrounding known positive

cases is another effective tool to manage disease transmission and slow spread. Activities that artificially congregate deer and elk can increase disease transmission and hinder other management efforts.

To prevent the spread of CWD, here are a few steps that you can take.

Properly dispose of carcass parts. Limit the movement of carcass parts and dispose of them in a landfill or near where the animal was harvested.

Don't feed deer. Avoid feeding deer, which can congregate them and increase the risk of spreading CWD.

Use synthetic scent products. Avoid using deer urine lure products, which can contain CWD-causing prions that can remain in the environment for years.

Report suspected cases. If you suspect an animal disease, contact your veterinarian.

Follow carcass transportation regulations. Out-of-state deer hunters should follow the carcass transportation regulations for both their home state and the state where they are hunting.

Where protective gear. When field dressing or butchering a deer or elk, wear latex or



rubber gloves or eye protection.

Clean tools. After field dressing or processing carcasses, wash hands and clean knives and other instruments with a 50:50 solution of bleach and water.

# Arkansas turkey harvest continues slow climb

## SPECIAL TO THE ADVANCE

According to the latest harvest statistics compiled through the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission licensing system, Arkansas hunters harvested 9,335 turkeys during the 2024 annual turkey season, a few hundred birds more than last year. This is the third year in a row of an upward harvest trend.

David Moscicki is the AGFC's turkey program coordinator who is taking the reins after Jeremy Wood, who did an excellent job of emphasizing habitat and observational research before pursuing additional opportunities in conservation. Moscicki says the stable harvest results are encouraging, but expected. According to brood survey data from two years ago, weather and habitat conditions combined to give Arkansas turkeys a good hatch.

"Those are the birds we're hunting now," Moscicki said. "Everybody's looking for those 10,000 and 12,000 annual harvest numbers, but that doesn't come overnight. I think we're in good shape."

Moscicki says he's heard many reports to give him some hope for next year as well.

"We're still cleaning up some of the data from last year's brood surveys, but we received a lot of reports of Jakes (immature gobblers) and Jennies (immature hens) on the ground this year, so that's promising for next season."

Moscicki says youth hunters did harvest a few more juvenile birds this year than last, with 470 Jakes harvested throughout the



season, compared to 250 last year.

"That is a significant increase percent-wise, but the total number of Jakes harvested is still very low compared to the overall harvest, so that's a bright spot," Moscicki said.

The AGFC, partners like the U.S. Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy, and private landowners have put a lot of great habitat on the ground during the last decade through the use of prescribed fire, but Moscicki says expectations for increased populations should be tempered with a touch of caution.

"Turkey populations are extremely dependent on weather and other factors outside of land manager's control," Moscicki

said. "Hatches can fluctuate from year to year, and we still have a lot of work to do in managing habitat and increasing the right mix of habitat types on the landscape. So far the weather seems to be pretty good throughout the state for some good hatch conditions, but we really won't know until we've compiled the data from our annual brood survey, and that's really where the public can do the most good to help us."

As turkey hens emerge from their nests with this year's poults in tow, hunters, wildlife watchers and anyone who enjoys time outdoors can help the AGFC by participating in the Annual Wild Turkey and Quail Population Survey. Participants record sightings of hens with and without poults and how many poults they observe. In ad-

dition to helping biologists gauge the hatch, participating in the survey can guide future habitat work on public and private land.

Moscicki says any hunters who still need to turn in their data from the AGFC's Annual Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey also are encouraged to get that information to him as soon as possible.

"Both of these surveys give us key information that will guide our efforts to continue providing the habitat necessary to support Arkansas's turkey population," Moscicki said.

Turkey and quail sightings can both be entered into the AGFC's Annual Wild Turkey and Quail Population Survey, which is available via website at [www.agfc.com/turkeysurveys](http://www.agfc.com/turkeysurveys)

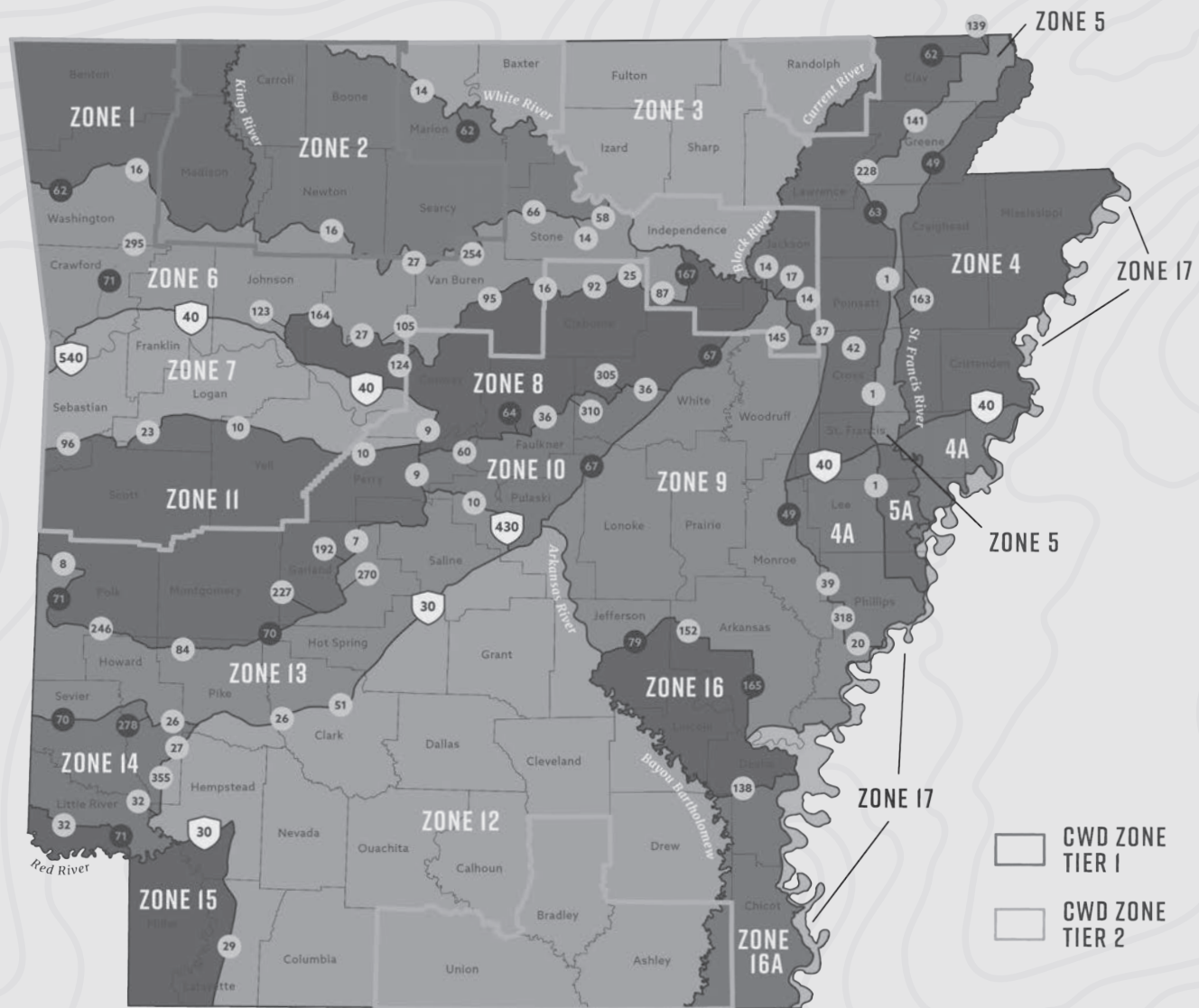
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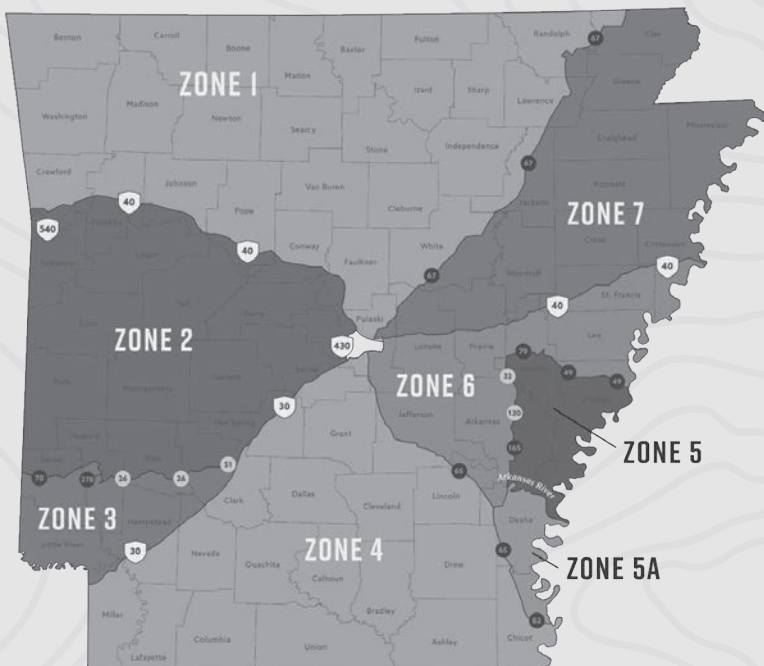


# 2024-25 DEER ZONES

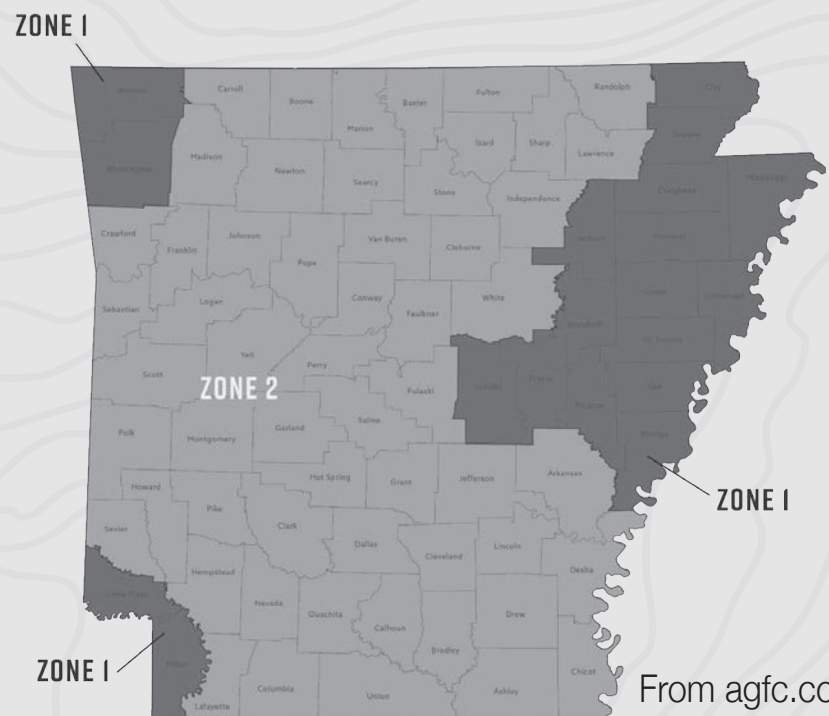


Special chronic wasting disease regulations are in effect for the outlined counties. See the *Arkansas Hunting Guidebook* for more information.

# 2024 BEAR ZONES



# 2025 TURKEY ZONES



From agfc.com

# How to prepare for a child's first hunting trip

Millions of individuals across the globe are avid hunters. The passion many of those people have for hunting began on their first childhood hunting trip, and countless hunters fondly recall this milestone moment in their lives.

If there's a first time for everything, parents know that kids' initial forays into any activity comes with ups and downs. Hunting is no exception to that trend, but parents can consider these measures as they prepare their youngsters to go hunting for the first time.

- Emphasize the importance of safety. Safety is of the utmost importance on any hunting trip. Kids should be aware of all safety protocols pertaining to their guns

and the hunting grounds. Hunter's education courses can teach kids about hunting safety, but parents can quiz youngsters in the days leading up to the trip to reinforce safety protocols.

- Explain how hunting trips typically unfold. Giving kids an idea of how a hunting trip may unfold is another good idea. Explain the timing of the trip and why it's beginning when it is. Kids without such knowledge may be less enthusiastic about early morning hunting excursions if they don't understand why they need to get out of bed early on a day off. But they might be more excited if they recognize they're more likely to see wildlife and enjoy a successful trip if they're willing to sacrifice

sleeping in.

- Bring some extra activities for kids to do. Screens are a no-no, as they could deter wildlife. But hunting requires patience, which is not exactly a virtue many youngsters possess. So bring some books along or encourage kids to keep a diary of their first trip, describing it in detail so they have something to look back on as they get older.

- Purchase comfortable hunting attire. Kids will likely be wearing new attire on their first trip, so parents should have them try the clothing on prior to the trip. When shopping for hunting clothing, make sure it meets all safety standards and is functional for hunters, but don't

overlook comfort. Hunting involves a lot of waiting, and the trip will be more enjoyable for everyone if kids are comfortable throughout the slow periods.

- Recognize the day could be emotional. A child's first hunting trip can be an emotional roller coaster, as kids may feel excited, bored, nervous, sad, and even guilty at any point during the day. Parents must allow kids to express any of these emotions during the day and emphasize that it's alright to express their emotions.

A child's first hunting trip is a milestone moment. Parents can take steps leading up to the trip to ensure their children are ready for what's to come.

## Simple safety protocols that can protect hunters

Hunting is big business in North America. In 2017, more than 15 million people hunted in the United States. The National Shooting Sports Foundation reports that sportsmen and women contribute nearly \$9.4 million to the economy every day.

Millions of hunters take to forests and

fields every year. Seasoned hunters and novices alike can benefit from revisiting some safety procedures before their first outing this season.

### Weather

Weather should be a consideration whenever people spend a significant

amount of time outdoors. Hunters typically leave before dawn and arrive home after dusk. Hypothermia is a very real risk for hunters who may be out in snow or wet conditions. It's possible to get hypothermia by overdressing as well. Sweating and then being exposed to dropping tempera-

tures puts people at risk for hypothermia. Hunters should dress in layers with moisture-wicking materials and a water-repellant outer layer. In addition, check the weather forecast before heading out as a last second precautionary measure.

See **SAFETY** Page 11

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# SAFETY

Continued from Page 10

## Firearm safety

Firearm safety is a critical component of safe hunting. Hunters use rifles, shotguns and other firearms. Each gun is different, so hunters need to familiarize themselves with new firearms before using them. The following are some additional firearm safety tips, courtesy of State Farm Insurance and Southern Land Exchange.

- Always treat a firearm as if it is loaded.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Only point at what you plan to shoot.

• Clearly identify your target and what is beyond it.

• Fire within the zone-of-fire, which is the 45-degree area directly in front of each hunter.

- Firearm chambers should be emptied when guns are not in use.
- Use appropriate ammunition.
- Never modify or alter the gun.
- Never cross a fence, jump a ditch or climb a tree with a loaded gun.
- Never rely on a gun's safety.

### Additional safety tips

Hunters should always let others know where they will be when leaving in the morning. If something should happen, people back home can alert authorities

if something goes awry. Always check equipment and maintain it properly. Equipment should include gear colored in hunter's orange. That extends to dogs if they are accompanying hunters on a trip. This makes hunters more visible to other hunters. Also, carry a first aid kit, a charged mobile phone or a satellite phone to maintain contact with others in case of emergencies.

These are just some of the safety protocols that should be followed when hunting. Non-hunters should exercise caution during hunting seasons, particularly when entering forests and areas that hunters frequent.



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