



A ZONE

2017 General Deer Hunting Information (Includes Additional Hunts G-8, G-9, G-11, G-21, M-7, MA-1, MA-3, J-1, J-10, A-24, A-25, A-32 and A-33)

GENERAL INFORMATION

This information sheet has been prepared to assist deer hunters applying for, or planning to hunt in the A Zone. The following information should be useful to hunters for archery and general seasons as well as any “additional hunts” within this geographic area. The A Zone is a vast area encompassing the coastal mountain ranges and western Sacramento/San Joaquin Valleys from just north of Los Angeles to areas north of Ukiah. Due to the expansive area, management responsibility and oversight of the A Zone falls with five different California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regions. For more specific information or additional questions regarding hunting in the A Zone contact one of the regional offices listed below. The regional contact information and their counties of responsibility within the A Zone are as follows:

- **Northern Region Office (Region 1), 601 Locust Street, Redding, CA 96001 (530-225-2300)** encompassing Mendocino County;
- **North Central Region Office (Region 2), 1701 Nimbus Road, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670 (916-358-2900)** encompassing Colusa, Glenn, Lake, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Sutter, and Yolo counties;
- **Bay Delta Region Office (Region 3), 7329 Silverado Trail, Napa, CA 94558 (707-944-5500)** encompassing Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Sacramento, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Solano, Sonoma, and Yolo counties;
- **Central Region Office (Region 4), 1234 E. Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA 93710 (559-243-4005 X 151)** encompassing Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Stanislaus, and Tulare counties; and
- **South Coast Region Office (Region 5), 3883 Ruffin Road, San Diego, CA 92123 (858-467-4201)** encompassing Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

REGULATIONS

Laws and regulations are designed to conserve wildlife and to provide for an equitable distribution of game mammals. All hunters should read and be familiar with the current hunting regulations available online at: www.fgc.ca.gov/regulations/current/mammalregs.aspx. Remember, if you are hunting on private property you must obtain, and have in your possession written permission to hunt on private property. Hunter trespass laws are strictly enforced.

NONLEAD RESTRICTIONS

Following reports that the ingestion of lead projectiles and fragments associated with hunting may be contributing to high lead levels documented in wild condors, the Legislature passed the Ridley-Tree Condor Preservation Act into law (Fish and Game Code, Section 3004.5). Effective July 1, 2008, the Fish and Game Commission (FGC) adopted regulations (Sections 353 and 475, Title 14, CCR) which prohibit the use and possession of any lead projectiles/ammunition in firearms while taking, or attempting to take (hunting) any big game mammal (including deer), or non-game bird or mammal in most of the deer A Zone-South Unit 110 and all of deer zones D-7, D-8, D-9, D-10, D-11 and D-13.

Only FGC/Department certified projectiles/ammunition may be used or possessed when taking, or attempting to take big game mammals. Simply put, when hunting big game in these areas you may only use certified non-lead projectiles/ammunition in firearms (includes centerfire rifles, pistols and revolvers; shotguns and muzzle-loading rifles) legal for big game. In addition, while hunting big game in these areas hunters may not possess any lead projectiles/ammunition and a firearm capable of firing that lead projectile or ammunition.

In April 2015, the Fish and Game Commission adopted CDFW's proposed regulations, which will implement the non-lead requirement in the following three phases:

NONLEAD AMMUNITION IMPLEMENTATION



- **Phase 1** – Effective July 1, 2015, non-lead ammunition will be required when taking Nelson bighorn sheep and all wildlife on CDFW lands.
- **Phase 2** – Effective July 1, 2016, non-lead shot will be required when taking upland game birds with a shotgun, except for dove, quail, snipe, and any game birds taken on licensed game bird clubs. In addition, non-lead shot will be required when using a shotgun to take resident small game mammals, furbearing mammals, nongame mammals, nongame birds, and any wildlife for depredation purposes.
- **Phase 3** – Effective July 1, 2019, non-lead ammunition will be required when taking any wildlife with a firearm anywhere in California.

Existing restrictions on the use of lead ammunition in the California condor range remain in effect while implementation proceeds.

For more information including a list of certified non-lead projectiles/ammunition that may be used in firearms for the taking of deer or other big game mammals; a map detailing the non-lead area; and links to other related topics go to the following web address: www.wildlife.ca.gov/Hunting/Nonlead-Ammunition

DEER HARVEST REPORTING

USED AND UNUSED TAGS MUST BE REPORTED

Accurate harvest information is a crucial element in developing population estimates, tag quotas, assessment of current hunt programs, and in the development of new opportunities. Regulations require all deer hunters to submit a harvest report card (online or by mail) to CDFW. Any deer hunter who does not submit a harvest report for each deer tag issued will be required to pay a non-reporting fee upon application for the next hunt season.

Successful hunters are reminded to immediately fill out both portions of the tag and permanently mark the date of kill; record the appropriate "Unit Number" where the deer was killed; attach the tag to the antlers, or ear, if antlerless; have the tag validated and countersigned; and return the completed report card portion.

WHEN TO REPORT

Successful deer hunters must report the take of a deer within 30 days of harvest or by January 31 – whichever date is first. Unsuccessful deer hunters (including hunters that received a tag but did not hunt) must report that they were unsuccessful or did not hunt by January 31.

HOW TO SUBMIT A REPORT

- Online – Both successful and unsuccessful hunters are encouraged to submit their harvest reports online. Hunters will be able to report their hunt results online via CDFW's Online License Service at www.wildlife.ca.gov/tagreporting. Hunters logging into the system will be able to view all of their tags requiring reports. Reporting through the Online License Service is easy, fast and convenient. When you report online, you receive instant confirmation that your harvest report card has been received and accepted. You must record the confirmation number in the space provided on the harvest report card and retain the harvest report card until March 1 of that year. Tags reported online must be surrendered to CDFW upon demand.
- By Mail – Any deer tag holder who does not submit a harvest report for their deer tag online, must return the report card portion to CDFW to the following address: CDFW – Wildlife Branch, PO Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94299-0002.

ADDITIONAL DEER HUNTS

There are several additional deer hunts scheduled in the A Zone: G-8 (Fort Hunter Liggett Antlerless Deer Hunt); Hunt G-11 (Vandenberg Either-Sex Deer Hunt); Hunt G-21 (Ventana Wilderness Buck Hunt); Hunt M-7 (Ventura Muzzleloading Rifle Either-Sex Deer Hunt); Hunt MA-1 (San Luis Obispo Muzzleloading Rifle/Archery Either-Sex Deer Hunt); Hunt MA-3 (Santa Barbara Muzzleloading Rifle/Archery Buck Hunt); Hunt J-1 (Lake Sonoma Apprentice Either-Sex Deer Hunt); Hunt J-10 (Fort Hunter Liggett Apprentice Either-Sex Deer Hunt); Hunt A-24 (Monterey Archery Either-Sex Deer Hunt); Hunt A-25 (Lake Sonoma Archery Either-Sex Deer Hunt); Hunt A-32 (Ventura/Los Angeles Late Season Archery Either-Sex Deer Hunt); and Hunt A-33 (Fort Hunter Liggett Late Season Archery Either-Sex Deer Hunt). For general maps detailing the individual hunt area boundaries, see: www.wildlife.ca.gov/Hunting/Deer#54774-zones--hunts.

OBTAINING DEER TAGS

Beginning in late 2010, CDFW began implementation of the new Automated License Data System (ALDS). Under this computer data system, all licenses, stamps and tags are applied for, and issued through online Point-of-Sale terminals (IPOS) located at various CDFW license offices, over 1,400 license agents statewide or online at www.wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing. Under ALDS much less paperwork is required to apply for, and receive tags. In addition, licenses, tags and entry into the Big Game Drawing can all be accomplished with one trip to a license agent. Once your personal information is entered and stored in the database, the database controls and tracks what you have applied for, or been issued, as well as preference points. For more specific information on ALDS, application procedures and zone/hunt information, check out the current Big Game Hunting Digest available at most CDFW offices and license agents or online at: www.wildlife.ca.gov/Publications/Hunting-Digest.

For deer tag distribution purposes, zones and hunts are classified based upon the date in which the zone or hunt tag quota is filled in the prior year. The three tag categories include:

- 1) "**Premium**" zone/hunt tags are only issued through the Big Game Drawing using a First-Deer Tag Drawing Application, except that junior hunters may use their Second-Deer Tag Drawing Application to apply for Apprentice (J) Hunts. Hunters will lose all accumulated deer preference points if drawn for their first choice in the Big Game Drawing.;
- 2) "**Restricted**" zone/hunt tags are available upon application with a First-Deer Tag, or a Second-Deer Tag after August 1.; and
- 3) "**Unrestricted**" zone/hunt tags are available at any time using either a First- or Second-Deer Tag.

For the A Zone and associated hunts within the zone, the tag categories are as follows:

- 1) **Premium** Deer Hunts – **G-8, G-9, G-21, M-7, MA-1, MA-3, J-1, J-10, A-24, A-25, A-33**
- 2) **Restricted** Deer Hunts – None
- 3) **Unrestricted** Deer Hunts – **A Zone, Archery Only (AO) and A32**

Note: Additional Hunt G-11 tags are distributed to military, Department of Defense employees and personnel authorized by the Installation Commander. Prior approval from the Base is required to secure a tag.

The deer hunting regulations specific to the A Zone (archery and general season) and any additional hunts are listed at the end of this sheet. To hunt deer in the A Zone, hunters must possess an A Zone deer tag which is valid during the archery or general season using the appropriate method of take. Additionally, Archery Only Tags (AO Tags) are valid during the A Zone archery or general season using archery equipment only.

Typically, tags for additional deer hunts are in high demand and distributed through CDFW's Big Game Drawing held in June. To receive tags for many of these hunts, hunters must plan ahead and apply before the midnight **June 2, 2017 deadline**. Information regarding application procedures and restrictions, ALDS, zone and hunt seasons, prior year drawing and hunt statistics are contained in the 2017 Big Game Hunting Digest available at most CDFW offices, license agents and online at: www.wildlife.ca.gov/Publications/Hunting-Digest

HARVEST INFORMATION

Information on deer harvest for this area is available in tables contained on the Department's Deer Harvest Data page available on-line www.wildlife.ca.gov/Hunting/Deer#5477272-harvest-statistics. For the purpose of applying for hunts in a specific area, tables containing harvest success, antler class information, and Big Game Drawing statistics are the most useful in selecting a zone or hunt in which to apply. The harvest tables found on this web page may also contain more recent harvest analyses than information contained in the Big Game Hunting Digest due to the early production deadline dates for the publication.

LAND OWNERSHIP/PUBLIC LAND OPPORTUNITIES

The A Zone is expansive and contains a mixture of both public and private lands. Remember you must obtain and have in your possession written permission to hunt on private property. Hunter trespass laws are strictly enforced. Most public land opportunity occurs on lands in the Mendocino (northern A Zone) and Los Padres (southern A Zone) National Forests (USFS), scattered parcels of BLM land, Department Wildlife Areas and numerous other local and federally controlled lands that may be open to hunting. However, due to the number of individual landholdings and expansiveness of the A Zone, there are too many to list. For information regarding USFS or BLM lands contact the following:

USFS Offices:

Los Padres National Forest, 6755 Hollister Ave., Suite 150, Goleta, CA 93117 (805-968-6640)
Mendocino National Forest, 825 N.Humboldt Avenue, Willows, California 95988 (530-934-3316)

BLM Offices:

Bakersfield Field Office, 3801 Pegasus Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93308 (661-391-6000)
Hollister Field Office, 20 Hamilton Court, Hollister, CA 95023 (831-630-5000)
Ukiah Field Office, 2550 North State Street, Ukiah, CA 95482 (707-468-4000)

Wilderness lands have been established within several portions of the Los Padres National Forest including: the Matillja (Ventura Co.); Dick Smith and San Rafael (Santa Barbara Co.); Machesna Mountains, Garcia, and Santa Lucia (San Luis Obispo Co.); and Ventana (Monterey Co.) Wilderness Areas are accessible by hiking and by pack stock. Public use of the wilderness is regulated by permit. Wilderness Permits may be obtained by contacting the Los Padres National Forest. No wilderness areas have been established in the A Zone portion of the Mendocino National Forest.

Additional deer hunting opportunity is provided on opening weekend of the rifle season on the Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Area in western Merced County. Single day permits are issued by drawing and can be applied for through CDFW's Los Banos Complex office. For additional information please contact the CDFW Los Banos Complex office directly at (209) 826-0463.

In the A Zone and other zones throughout California, additional deer hunting opportunities may exist on private property licensed through the Department's Private Lands Management Program (PLM). For more information on the PLM and to obtain a list of participating ranches, go to the following link:

www.wildlife.ca.gov/Hunting/PLM

MAPS

For general maps detailing individual zone or additional deer hunt boundaries, go to the following Department web page: www.wildlife.ca.gov/Hunting/Deer#54774-zones--hunts.

The most comprehensive maps of the area are the Los Padres and Mendocino National Forest maps. USFS maps are available locally at most USFS offices; by contacting the USFS Pacific Southwest Regional Office at: 1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592 (707-562-8737); ordered by phone (406-329-3024), fax (406-329-3030), or mail at USDA Forest Service, National Forest Store, P.O. Box 8268, Missoula, MT 59807; or on-line at <http://www.nationalforestmapstore.com>.

BLM surface management maps may also be useful. These maps can be purchased at local BLM district offices; the BLM at 2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-1623, Sacramento, CA 95825 (916-978-4400); or order on-line at: www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/info/iac/maps_pubroom.html.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps are very helpful, especially for topographic features that are not displayed on USFS or BLM maps. USGS maps may be available from many sporting goods, backpacking or engineering stores; by contacting the USGS directly at: Rocky Mountain Mapping Center, Branch of Information Services, Box 25286, Denver, CO 80225 (888-ASK-USGS); or on-line at: [store.usgs.gov/b2c_usgs/b2c/start/\(xcm=r3standardpitrex_prd\)/.do](http://store.usgs.gov/b2c_usgs/b2c/start/(xcm=r3standardpitrex_prd)/.do).

ACCESS/MAJOR ROADS

In the northern portions of the A Zone the major access routes into and through the zone include: Interstates 5 and 80 and Highways 1, 101, 20, 128 and 16. In the south, major access is provided by Interstate 5 and Highways 1, 101, 33, 58, 154, 138, 41, 46 and 25.

WEATHER CONDITIONS/TRAVEL TIPS

The weather in this zone can be highly variable, so BE PREPARED. The weather is usually quite hot and dry during archery and early general season, but early storms are not uncommon. The chance of snowfall during season is low except in the higher elevations in the north, however heavy rains can make many roads very difficult, if not impossible, to travel. You should be prepared with appropriate clothing and equipment for a variety of weather conditions.

The A Zone covers an extremely large geographic area. The terrain can be very steep and rugged and vegetation can be extremely dense. As you should do in all remote areas, hunters are urged to bring a shovel, a good spare tire, extra water, etc. Use care with any off-road vehicle and check with the BLM or USFS for rules and regulations regarding vehicle and travel restrictions in the area. Horses can be useful in some portions of the A Zone. However, remember that it may be necessary to carry supplemental horse feed into the back country. Contact the local USFS and BLM office for more information regarding forage conditions for livestock.

CAMPING

There are several USFS campgrounds within the hunt zone and these are shown on USFS maps. Informal camping is allowed on USFS and BLM lands, but campfire permits are required. Permits may be obtained from any USFS, BLM or California Department of Forestry (CDF) office. During fire season, special regulations may apply and it is best to contact the local USFS, BLM or CDF office for the latest information.

Please, DO NOT camp or hunt for prolonged periods near water sources important to wildlife and livestock. Remaining for over 30 minutes and within 200 yards of an artificial water source including guzzlers or horizontal wells on public lands within California is a Fish and Game violation (Title 14, Section 730). You can pack water, wildlife can't.

The Federal Government, through the USFS, also requires a Forest Adventure Pass if you intend to park your vehicle and use the USFS public lands in the southern portion of the Los Padres National Forest for any purpose. For more information, contact the Los Padres National Forest.

HERD CONDITIONS AND HABITATS

The overall deer population in the A Zone is considered stable. Population trends in some areas are increasing while others are decreasing. Check with the local CDFW office for specific information regarding the area you plan to hunt. As with most deer herds in California and other western states, the long-term population trend has been on a steady decline since the 1960's and 1970's. These long-term declines have been due to land management practices that have precluded fire, resulting in changes toward more mature and less diverse habitats, and reduced quality and quantity of deer habitats. Short-term fluctuations in deer populations are usually attributed to weather events that affect forage production.

The subspecies of deer that inhabit the A Zone primarily include the Columbian black-tailed deer in the northern and central portions of the zone, and the California mule deer in the southern portion. Deer in the A Zone are generally considered resident deer. That is, their movement is up and down the slopes, they do not make long seasonal migrations. The deer in this area generally move to higher elevations in late spring and will remain there until the first heavy fall storms force them down below the snow line. This

downward movement often occurs during the hunting season, so hunters should be prepared to move to lower areas later in the season after stormy weather. In areas where deer do not encounter snow, they generally remain local throughout the year.

The vegetation is highly varied throughout the A Zone ranging from coastal scrub along the coast areas, mixed chaparral and oak-hardwood forests in the south through mixed chaparral, oak-grassland and dense conifer forests in the north. Generally speaking, deer populations in this area respond favorably to vegetation disturbances that enhance brush species (wildfire and timber harvesting). Riparian areas (areas along watercourses), recently burned areas or clear cuts that have re-sprouted with brush are good areas to hunt. Areas where oaks are producing acorns may also attract deer. Typically, lower densities of deer are observed in the more densely forested areas or in older, more decadent brushlands.

HUNTING TIPS AND WHERE TO LOOK FOR DEER

Successful hunters often spend a considerable amount of time scouting pre-season, locating individual or groups of deer, recently used deer trails, and feeding and bedding areas. You may not see many deer from the roads in this area and generally the more successful hunters do more hiking to locate deer. Binoculars and spotting scopes can be very helpful for locating and identifying deer at greater distances. In general, attempt to hunt areas that are away from other activities such as concentrations of hunters, vehicles, and livestock.

In the A Zone portion of Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Merced, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, Stanislaus, Tulare and Ventura counties deer habitat is limited or access extremely restricted, consequently deer populations and harvest are low.

In the A Zone portion of Alameda, Marin, San Benito, Santa Clara, Sonoma, and Yolo counties, a significant amount of deer habitat exists, however access to public land is limited, and the bulk of the deer harvest occurs on private land.

In the A Zone portion of the following counties a more significant proportion of the deer harvest occurs on public, as well as private land. Historically, some of the more popular and productive deer hunting areas on public land are as follows (includes CDFW region to contact for more information):

- **Colusa County** (North Central Region): areas in the vicinity of Bear and Cache Creeks, Fouts Spring, Goat Mountain, Letts Lake, Stonyford, Walker Ridge and Wilson Valley.
- **Lake County** (North Central Region): areas in the vicinity of Boggs Forest, Borax Lake, Cache Creek, Cow Mountain, Deer Valley, Elk Mountain, French Ridge, Goat Mountain, High Glade, Highland Springs, Indian Valley, Mary Ann Ridge, Pine Mountain, Rice Creek and Lake Pillsbury, Walker Ridge and Wilson Valley.
- **Mendocino County** (North Region): A significant proportion is private land, however public access is allowed on Cow Mountain and the Jackson State Forest.
- **Monterey County** (Central Region): areas in the vicinity of Dutra Flat, Indian Camp, Big Sur and Gorda, Marble Peak, Plasket Ridge and Williams Hill. In addition, a significant number of deer are harvested on Fort Hunter Liggett and Camp Roberts Military Reservations.
- **Napa County** (Bay Delta Region): areas in the vicinity of Adams Creek, Blue Ridge, Knoxville, public lands around Lake Berryessa, Rector Reservoir and Schwartz Canyon.
- **San Luis Obispo County** (Central Region): areas in the vicinity of American Canyon, Black Mountain, Branch Mountain, Caliente Mountain, Cerro Alto, Crocker Springs, Cuesta Grade, Hale Peak, La Panza, Lopez Canyon, Mt. Lowe, Quail Springs, Queen Bee, Ragged Point, Rock Front, Ruda Canyon Shaw Ridge and Snell Peak. In addition, a significant number of deer are

harvested on Camp Roberts Military Reservation.

- **Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties** (South Coast Region): areas in the vicinity of Aliso Canyon, Blue Canyon, Camuesa Peak, Colson Canyon, Dry Canyon, Figueroa Mountain, Little Pine Mountain, Little Pine Spring, McPherson Peak, Miranda Pines, Monte Arido Trail, Painted Rock, Potrero Seco, Santa Barbara Canyon, Santa Cruz Peak, Sierra Madre Mountains and Three Sisters. In addition, a significant number of deer are harvested on Vandenburg Air Force Base (limited to military and DOD personnel).

For additional information about deer hunting in California, see CDFW's publication "Guide to Hunting Deer in California" at the following web site, under "Related Information":

www.wildlife.ca.gov/Hunting/Deer

**** **GOOD LUCK!** ****