ZONE D-17

2026 General Deer Hunting Information

(No Additional Hunts Scheduled)

GENERAL INFORMATION

This information sheet has been prepared to assist deer hunters applying for, or planning to hunt in, Zone D-17 located in portions of Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties. The following information should be useful to hunters for archery and general seasons as well as any “additional hunts” within this geographic area. For more specific information or additional questions regarding this area, contact the following California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) office(s):

- **Inland Deserts Region Office (Region 6), 3602 Inland Empire Boulevard, Suite C-220, Ontario, CA 91764 (909-484-0167)** encompassing Imperial, Inyo, Mono, Riverside and San Bernardino 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. 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.

NON-LEAD RESTRICTIONS

As of July 1, 2019, all hunters must use nonlead ammunition when taking any wildlife in California, except when hunting with a pellet rifle for approved species.

- CCR T14 250.1(d)(3) Effective July 1, 2019, it shall be unlawful to use, or possess with any firearm capable of firing, any projectile(s) not certified as nonlead when taking any wildlife for any purpose in this state.
- CCR T14 475(f) The take or attempted take of any nongame bird or nongame mammal with a firearm shall be in accordance with the use of nonlead projectiles and ammunition pursuant to Section 250.1 of these regulations.

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, and links to other related topics, visit CDFW's Nonlead Ammunition in California web page.

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. Hunters logging into the system will be able to view all 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, P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94299-0002.

ADDITIONAL DEER HUNTS

There are no additional deer hunts scheduled in Zone D-17.

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 Internet Point-of-Sale terminals (IPOS) located at various CDFW license offices, over 1,400 license agents statewide or online at CDFW's

Licenses and Permits page. 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 online at CDFW's California Hunting Digest page.

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 Zone D-17 and associated hunts within the zone, the tag categories are as follows:

1) **Premium** Deer Hunts – **D-17.**

2) **Restricted** Deer Hunts – None.

3) **Unrestricted** Deer Hunts – **Archery Only (AO).**

The deer hunting regulations specific to Zone D-17 (archery and general season) and any additional hunts are listed at the end of this sheet. To hunt deer in Zone D-17, hunters must possess a Zone D-17 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 Zone D-17 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, 2026 deadline**. Information regarding application procedures and restrictions, ALDS, zone and hunt seasons, prior year drawing and hunt statistics are contained in the 2026 Big Game Hunting Digest available online at CDFW's California Hunting Digest page.

HARVEST INFORMATION

Information on deer harvest for this area is available in tables contained on the Department's Deer Harvest Data page. 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

Zone D-17 is primarily public land except for a few, small private property in-holdings within the Mojave National Preserve. Deer are known to occur only in that portion of Zone D-17 situated within eastern San Bernardino County. Almost the entire area where deer can be found in Zone D-17 was designated by Congress, in 1994, as the Mojave National Preserve, administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The northern portions of the Clark Mountains and the Kingston Range are administered by the U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM). For information regarding these lands contact the

following:

NPS Offices:

National Park Service (NPS), Mojave National Preserve, 2701 Barstow Road, Barstow, CA 92311 (760-252-6100).

BLM Offices:

Barstow Field Office, 2601 Barstow Road, Barstow, CA 92311 (760-252-6000).

Needles Field Office, 1303 S. Hwy 95, Needles, CA 92363 (760-326-7000).

In Zone D-17 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, visit CDFW's PLM web page.

MAPS

For general maps detailing individual zone or additional deer hunt boundaries, visit CDFW's Deer Hunting web page.

The Automobile Club of Southern California (AAA) map for San Bernardino County provides a good, large-scale overview of roads open within wilderness boundaries. In addition, both NPS and BLM maps are available. NPS maps can be obtained by contacting the Mojave National Preserve visitor center located in Baker (760-733-4040). BLM surface management 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 online at BLM's California Maps web page.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps are very helpful, especially for topographic features that are not displayed on USFS or BLM maps. Some specific 7.5-minute quadrangle maps for the zone include: Midhills, Cima Dome, Clark Mountain, Joshua, Ivanpah, Cima, Pinto Valley, Hayden, Columbia Mountain, and Woods

Mountain. 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 online at the USGS Store website.

ACCESS/MAJOR ROADS

Primary approach to Zone D-17 hunt areas is via Interstate Highways 15 and 40 from Barstow. Secondary access roads leading from those highways are Kelbaker, Cima, Nipton to Ivanpah, Essex, Goffs to Landfair, Excelsior Mine and Yates Well roads. Many County, NPS, BLM and other dirt roads, including Black Mountain, Wildhorse Canyon, Cedar Canyon, and Green Wells roads, provide final access to hunting areas. With passage of the 1994 Desert Protection Act, some existing roads were and are closed to accommodate wilderness area designation as demanded by the new law. Although some access availability is hampered by the act, admittance generally remains fair to good at most locations. Hunters need to be aware of safety closure areas surrounding two NPS campgrounds.

WEATHER CONDITIONS/TRAVEL TIPS

The weather in this region is highly variable, so BE PREPARED. Warm days and cool nights are typical during the Zone D-17 hunt season. However, hot days are always a possibility and wind conditions can change quickly. Hunters are advised to dress in layered clothing and always be prepared for possible desert showers.

Zone D-17 encompasses a large geographic area, and hunters are advised to assure gasoline tanks are full before entering the backcountry. Terrain can be sandy and flat to steep and rocky. As is the case for all remote area travel, hunters should take along a shovel, serviceable spare tire, and lots of extra food and water. Within the Zone D-17 hunting areas, four-wheel-drive vehicles are not required; however, some areas have sand and steep roads in which case four-wheel-drive is needed. Be sure to use extra caution when driving off-road and check with NPS or BLM regarding vehicle travel

restrictions that may be in place. Note that only street-legal licensed vehicles are allowed within the Mojave National Preserve; green-sticker vehicles are not permitted. While horses can improve hunter access to some Zone D-17 locations, it must be remembered that water is in short supply throughout the desert. Check with NPS and BLM for information regarding area livestock forage conditions.

CAMPING

There are two designated NPS campgrounds within Zone D-17, a primitive site at Mid Hills that provides water and pit toilets and a slightly more improved facility at Hole-In-The-Wall. Mid Hills is located at a higher elevation, within pinyon and juniper treed areas; Hole-In-The-Wall is located in the lower desert area. Camping outside designated camping areas is permitted in BLM and NPS areas, as long as the site has been previously used as a camping area. Firewood is scarce throughout the Zone D-17 desert, and firewood collecting is prohibited within the Mojave National Preserve. Hunters must supply campfire material.

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 on public lands within California, or any wildlife watering place such as waterholes, springs, seeps, and man-made watering devices within the California Desert Conservation Area on BLM land, is a Fish and Game violation (Title 14, Section 730). You can pack water, wildlife can’t.

HERD CONDITIONS AND HABITATS

The deer population in Zone D-17 is considered stable. Short-term fluctuations are usually attributed to weather events that affect forage production and the availability of water.

The subspecies of deer inhabiting Zone D-17 includes a of mixture Rocky Mountain mule deer, California mule deer, and Southern mule deer that were translocated into the

Providence Mountains area from 1945 through 1948. Today, deer in Zone D-17 can be found throughout mountainous areas from 4,000 to 8,000 feet elevation but are not typically concentrated in any location. Deer in Zone D-17 are considered resident deer. That is, their movement is up and down the slopes, they do not make long seasonal migrations.

Deer forage and vegetation preferences vary, and deer can be found from desert wash to pinyon and juniper tree habitats. However, the distribution of deer in Zone D-17 is usually associated near bitterbrush.

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/or 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/or livestock. Deer in this desert environment occur in scattered populations at extremely low densities which are generally associated with permanent water sources. Deer populations may disperse somewhat following periods of significant rainfall that have resulted in flushes of vegetation.

Hunters should scout within the 4,000-8,000-foot elevation range near the top of the Clark and Kingston Mountains. Successful Zone D-17 hunters harvest from 30 to 50 bucks during a typical hunt season. The following areas have historically provided most of the deer kill in Zone D-17 (in descending order of reported deer-take): Mid Hills, New York Mountains, Providence Mountains, Clark Mountains, Mescal, Cima Dome, Castle, Kingston Range, and Granite Mountains.

For additional information about deer hunting in California, see CDFW's publication

"Guide to Hunting Deer in California" under “Related Information”.

2026 ZONE AND ADDITIONAL HUNT SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

For more information, see the current Mammal Hunting Regulations.

§360. Deer.

Except as otherwise provided in Title 14, deer may be taken only as follows:

- (a) A, B, C, and D Zone Hunts.
    - (16) Zone D-17.
        - (A) Area: Those portions of Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties within a line beginning at Highway 395 and the Kern-Inyo county line; east along the Kern-Inyo county line to the San Bernardino-Inyo county line; east along the San Bernardino-Inyo county line to Highway 127; north along Highway 127 to the California-Nevada state line; south along the California-Nevada state line to the California-Arizona state line; south along the California-Arizona state line to Interstate 40; Interstate 40 north to Needles; Highway 95 south to Highway 62; west on Highway 62 to Highway 247; northwest on Highway 247 to Highway 18; west on Highway 18 to Bear Valley Cutoff Road; west on Bear Valley Cutoff Road to Interstate 15; north on Interstate 15 to Highway 18; west on Highways 18 and 138 to Highway 14; north on Highways 14 and 395 to the point of beginning.
        - (B) Season: The season in Zone D-17 shall open on the second Saturday in October and extend for 23 consecutive days.

- (C) Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (See subsection 351(a)) or better per tag.
- (D) Number of Tags: 500.

§361. Archery Deer Hunts.

- (a) Archery Hunting with General Deer Zone Tags.
  Deer may be taken during the archery season only with archery equipment specified in Section 354 as follows:
  - (4) D Zones.
    - (E) Zones D-14, D-16, D-17, and D-19.
      - 1. Area: As described in subsection 360(a)(13)(A), (15)(A), (16)(A) and (17)(A), respectively.
      - 2. Season: The archery season in zones D-14, D-16, D-17, and D-19 shall open on the first Saturday in September and extend for 23 consecutive days.
      - 3. Bag and Possession Limit: One buck, forked horn (see subsection 351(a)) or better per tag.
- (c) Archery Hunting with Archery Only Tags.
  Deer may be taken only with archery equipment specified in Section 354, during the archery seasons and general seasons as follows:
  - (1) Number of Archery Only Tags Permitted. A person may obtain an archery only tag using a one-deer tag application and a second archery only tag using a second deer tag application.
  - (2) Zones in Which Archery Only Tags are Valid. An archery only tag is valid for hunt G-10, and during the archery season and general season in all zones except C-1 through C-4 and X-1 through X-12.

- (3) Areas: As described in subsections 360(a) and (c).
- (4) Seasons: The archery season and general seasons are provided in subsection 361(a) above and in subsections 360(a) and (c).
- (5) Bag and Possession Limit: All bag and possession limits per zone are the same as those described in subsections 360(a) and (c).

- (d) Hunting Area Limitations. Archers not in possession of an archery only tag may hunt only in the zone, zones, or areas for which they have a general tag or an area-specific archery tag. (Refer to subsection 361(c)(2) for zones in which archery only tags are valid).
- (e) Crossbow Prohibition. Except as provided in subsection 354(j), crossbows may not be used during any archery season or during the general season when using an archery only tag.

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