CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
Wildlife Branch
1010 Riverside Parkway, West Sacramento, CA 95605

J-1 Lake Sonoma Apprentice Either-Sex Deer Hunt

That portion of Sonoma County within the boundaries of the Lake Sonoma Area, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer (COE) property described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of Hot Springs Road and the COE boundary; east and south along the boundary line to the intersection with Brush Creek; west along the north bank of Brush Creek (shoreline) to the Dry Creek arm of Lake Sonoma; south along the shoreline of the Dry Creek arm to Smittle Creek; north along the COE property line to Dry Creek; east along the COE boundary across Cherry Creek, Skunk Creek, and Yorty Creek to the point of beginning. The area contains approximately 5,000 acres.

This either-sex deer hunt shall be open from **November 7 – November 8, 2026**.

The law allowing youths up to 18 years old to purchase a Junior Hunting License has sunset. Per Fish & Game Code Section 3031, a resident or nonresident now must be under 16 years of age on July 1, 2026 in order to be eligible for a 2026-27 Junior Hunting License.

Tag holders shall attend an orientation meeting on **Friday, November 6, 2026 at 4:30 pm** at the Lake Sonoma Visitor Center located at 3333 Skaggs Springs Rd, Geyserville, CA 95441.

Tags are valid only for the area and class of deer designated on the tag. Antlerless deer are defined as female deer, fawns of either-sex other than spotted fawns, and male deer with an unbranched antler on one or both sides which is not

more than three inches in length. Either-sex deer are defined as antlerless deer as described above, or legal bucks that have two or more points in the upper two-thirds of either antler. Spike bucks may not be taken (Section 204(d), Fish and Game Code).

Immediately after killing the deer, the tag shall be attached to an ear of the antlerless deer or to an antler of the antlered deer.

Only deer may be hunted on the area during this hunt period, however, during some years and at the discretion of the COE, wild pig may also be taken. Participants will be notified ahead of the hunt period whether wild pigs may also be taken. Only non-lead ammunition is allowed on state wildlife areas (see below for further information).

Car-top boats (no other boats allowed) may be launched at the Yorty Creek ramp and used to access the hunt area. Boats on trailers may be launched at the Lake Sonoma public boat launch on Rockpile Road.

Contact the Lake Sonoma Visitor's Center for camping reservations. Campers in the boat camps must make camping arrangements with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (707) 433-4533.

There will be other uses occurring at Lake Sonoma during the hunt, so please be careful and courteous at all times. The Hunt Area is open year-round for other uses and can be scouted at any time.

If you have any questions, **please call or email Ms. Stacy Martinelli at (707) 576-2868, Stacy.Martinelli@wildlife.ca.gov**. Thank you for your cooperation and have a good hunt.

Most accidents associated with big game hunting involve a loaded gun in the vehicle. Remember what you learned in your hunter safety classes, be careful, and enjoy yourself.

NONLEAD 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Nonlead Ammunition in California web page.