

# ZONE X-9c and Area-Specific Archery Hunt A-18

## 2025 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 X-9c located in portions of Inyo and Mono counties. The following information should be useful to hunters for archery season (A-18; Zone X-9c Archery Hunt), Zone X-9c general season, and 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 (Region 6), Bishop Field Office** (760-872-1171).

## 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 X-9c.

## 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 X-9c and associated hunts within the zone, the tag categories are as follows:

- 1) **Premium** Deer Hunts – **X-9c**.
- 2) **Restricted** Deer Hunts – None.
- 3) **Unrestricted** Deer Hunts – **A-18**.

**General Season Tags (Zone X-9c):** The deer hunting regulations specific to Zone X-9c and any additional hunts are listed at the end of this sheet. To hunt deer during the general season in Zone X-9c, a hunter must possess a Zone X-9c tag. This tag is valid

in Zone X-9c, but only during the prescribed general season. Zone X-9c tags may not be used to hunt deer during the Hunt A-18 archery season, even with archery equipment.

**Archery Season Tags (Hunt A-18):** To hunt deer during the archery season in Zone X-9c, hunters must possess an Area-Specific Archery Hunt A-18 tag. This tag is only valid during the Hunt A-18 archery season and may not be used to hunt deer during the general zone season, even with archery equipment. Additionally, Archery Only Tags (AO Tags) are not valid in any X zone or archery hunt within an X zone.

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, 2025 deadline**. Information regarding application procedures and restrictions, ALDS, zone and hunt seasons, prior year drawing and hunt statistics are contained in the 2025 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

The majority of Zone X-9c is public land administered by the Inyo National Forest (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In addition, there is land owned by

the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and private land. For information regarding these lands contact the following:

**USFS Offices:**

Inyo National Forest, 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 200, Bishop, CA 93514 (760-873-2400).

**BLM Offices:**

Bishop Field Office, 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 100, Bishop, CA 93514 (760-872-5000).

Ridgecrest Field Office, 300 S. Richmond Road, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 (760-384-5400).

In Zone X-9c 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 most comprehensive map of the area is the Inyo National Forest map. 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); or 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 online at the [National Forest Map Store website](#).

BLM surface management maps may also be useful. The Last Chance Range, Saline Valley, and Darwin Hills BLM maps are good sources. 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 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 portion of the zone surrounding Highways 395, 6, and 168 include Mazourka Peak, Tinemaha Reservoir, Uhlmeyer Spring, Westgard Pass, White Mountain Peak, and Boundary Peak. USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle maps for the Piper Mountains Wilderness Area include Chocolate Mountain, Deep Springs Lake, Joshua Flats, and Sylvania Canyon; and for the Inyo Mountains Wilderness Area, some USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle maps include Bee Springs Canyon, Cerro Gordo, and Dolomite. 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](#).

Another map that may be of value is the American Automobile Association (AAA) map of Bishop, CA and Death Valley National Park.

## ACCESS/MAJOR ROADS

U.S. Highway 395 is the primary route of access through Zone X-9c. This major north-south highway parallels the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada between the town of Olancha, situated at the southwest corner of the zone, and the city of Bishop, located in the zone's northwest corner. Beginning just north of Bishop, Highway 6 provides access to the northwest portion of the zone, which includes the west slope of the White Mountains. Hunters can use Highway 6 to access numerous drainages that flow west from the White Mountains, including Silver Canyon, east of Laws. Other major highways within the zone that can be accessed from Highway 395 include Highways 168, 178, and 190. Highway 168 (Westgard Pass Road), which intersects Highway 395 at Big Pine, provides access into upper elevations of the White Mountains by way of the Bristlecone Pine Forest National Scenic Byway. The Westgard Pass Road also links with Highway 266 (Highway 3A), which provides access to the extreme northeastern portion of the zone, including the eastern flank of the White Mountains. Using Highway 168, hunters can access USFS land in the Papoose Flat and Squaw Flat areas of the

Inyo Mountains. Highway 168 also provides access to the Sylvania Mountains and Piper Mountains Wilderness Areas. The southern end of the Inyo Mountains Wilderness Area, located 5 miles east of Lone Pine, can be accessed by San Lucas Canyon, while the northern end can be accessed by Mazourka Canyon Road.

## WEATHER CONDITIONS/TRAVEL TIPS

The weather in this region is highly variable, so BE PREPARED. Mild days and cold nights with temperatures well below freezing are common at higher elevations of the zone, while warm days and cool nights are typical at the lower elevations. Hunters should also expect cold, snowy conditions at higher elevations of the zone, particularly within the White Mountains. Thunder showers are common. You should be prepared with appropriate clothing and equipment for a variety of weather conditions.

Zone X-9c encompasses a large geographic area with topography ranging from flat in the lower elevation valleys to extremely steep and rocky in the higher mountain ranges. The White Mountain portion of the zone is extremely remote and rugged and subject to severe weather conditions. Most services are located within the various towns scattered along the base of the Sierra Nevada escarpment, including Olancho, Lone Pine, Independence, Bishop, and Benton. Hunters are advised to have full gasoline tanks when entering the field and to carry snow chains, shovel, serviceable spare tire, and extra food and water. Four-wheel-drive vehicles should be used when traveling on unimproved roads within the zone. Be sure to use extra caution when driving off-road and check with USFS or BLM regarding any vehicle travel restrictions that may be in place.

## CAMPING

Inyo County has a wide variety of camping opportunities on USFS, BLM, and county lands. For campground information contact the USFS (Inyo National Forest, White Mountain Ranger Station, 798 North Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514; 760-873-2500); BLM (Bishop Office, 760-872-5000; or Ridgecrest Office, 760-384-5400); or for Inyo



County campgrounds the County Department of Parks and Recreation, County Services Building, 785 N. Main Street, Suite G, Bishop, CA 93514 (760-873-5577). Overnight camping is not allowed on Los Angeles Department of Water and Power lands.

For areas where dispersed camping is allowed, you need to obtain a California Campfire Permit for the use of any open flame (including gas stoves, lanterns, wood fires, charcoal fires, or smoking). These permits can be obtained at no cost from any Inyo National Forest Ranger Station and BLM office. Open flame of any kind may be restricted during times of high fire danger; check with the local Forest Service office for current restrictions.

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 X-9c is considered to be slightly declining. 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. Short-term fluctuations in deer populations are usually attributed to weather events that affect forage production and the availability of water.

The subspecies of deer inhabiting Zone X-9c is the Inyo mule deer. The deer herd found within the boundaries of Zone X-9c is the Inyo-White Mountains Deer Herd. Deer in Zone X-9c are migratory, spending summers at higher elevations (7,500-12,000 feet) in the Inyo and White Mountains and winters at lower elevations (4,500-7,500 feet). Deer migration between these summer and winter ranges occurs twice annually, once during spring and then again in the fall. Migrations generally follow traditional routes oriented along major topographic features, such as drainages or the bases of mountain

ranges. Fall migration back to the winter range is generally patterned by snowstorms and freezing temperatures at the higher elevations. This migration generally begins in late October and follows the same traditional routes used by deer in the spring. During heavy fall snowstorms, deer will migrate together from the summer range, often making the trip to the winter range in just a few days. As the snowline lowers and the days become progressively shorter, deer concentrate on the winter range for the breeding season, which begins in mid-November.

No major deer migration route has been delineated in either the Inyo or White Mountains. Both the winter range and the summer range cover vast expanses of area making it likely that there are numerous migration routes, each used by a small number of animals. During winter on the White Mountains, snow is too deep and temperatures too low to serve as deer winter range. To a lesser extent, this is also the case in the Inyo Mountains. Temperatures and snow conditions at low elevations are more favorable to wintering deer. However, these deer may migrate down much lower than would be required by weather conditions alone. This movement is most pronounced in the early spring, and presumably it is to take advantage of succulent forage in the desert scrub plant community.

Summer use for the most part occurs at high elevations in both the Inyo and White Mountains. Limited field surveys indicate that most deer summer at high elevations in the White Mountains, either on the open expanses on the top or at the heads of drainages. Summer use also occurs at lower elevations in both ranges, particularly along drainages with year-round streams or springs. The Owens River provides year-round habitat for a small number of deer as well.

Deer in Zone X-9c occupy an ecologically diverse zone composed of numerous plant communities ranging from desert scrub at the lowest elevations (4,500 feet) near Coso Junction to alpine at the highest elevations (14,000 feet) in the White Mountains. The desert scrub community occurs from approximately 4,500 to 6,500 feet. Common species associated with this plant community include shadscale, big sagebrush, black sage, Mormon tea, rabbitbrush, winterfat, Indigo bush, and buckwheat. The pinyon

woodland community occurs from approximately 6,500 to 9,500 feet. Pinyon pine is the dominant tree in this area, although Utah juniper can be an important co-dominant species. Big sagebrush is the dominant shrub in the pinyon woodland community. Other common species include desert bitterbrush, antelope bitterbrush, Mormon tea, rabbitbrush, and mountain mahogany. Common herbaceous species are June grass, Indian rice grass, and squirreltail grass. The upper elevation area of this plant community is dominated by treeless, sagebrush-dominated vegetation.

Subalpine forest occurs from 9,500 feet to 11,500 feet in elevation. The bristlecone and limber pine are the dominant tree species in this plant community. Common shrubs include sagebrush, mountain mahogany, fernbush, and creambush. The alpine tundra plant community occurs from 11,500 to 14,246 feet (White Mountain peak). Vegetation is extremely sparse at these elevations and mainly consists of low growing perennial shrubs and annuals.

## 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 occur throughout the entire zone during the general hunting season; however, most deer activity is concentrated around water sources because habitat conditions are typically dry.

In the White Mountain portion of the zone, most deer are taken near the top of the southern half of the range where access is good. These areas include Cottonwood

Basin, Crooked Creek, Wyman Canyon, and Westgard Pass. Hunters have also been successful in Pellisier Flats and Chiatovich Flats in the northeastern portion of the zone.

In the Inyo Mountains, hunter kill information indicates that the Waucoba Mountain and Gilbert Pass areas have the greatest concentration of deer. The Inyo and Piper Mountain Wilderness areas provide a remote, high country, rugged hunt for those who seek solitude. If hunters prefer a more accessible hunting location, the Owens River, from Laws extending south to Lone Pine, provides some excellent hunting opportunities as well.

For additional information about deer hunting in California, see [CDFW's publication "Guide to Hunting Deer in California"](#) under "Related Information".

## 2025 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:

- (b) X-Zone Hunts.
  - (15) Zone X-9c.
    - (A) Area: In those portions of Inyo and Mono counties within a line beginning at Highway 395 and the Kern-Inyo county line; north along Highway 395 to Highway 6; north on Highway 6 to the California-Nevada state line; southeast along the California-Nevada state line to Highway 127; south along Highway 127 to the Inyo-San Bernardino county line; west along the Inyo-San Bernardino

county line to the Kern-Inyo county line; west along the Kern-Inyo county line to the point of beginning.

- (B) Season: The season in Zone X-9c shall open on the third 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: 325.

### **§361. Archery Deer Hunts.**

- (b) Archery Hunting with Area-specific Archery Tags.  
Deer may be taken only with archery equipment specified in Section 354, only during the archery seasons as follows:
  - (16) A-18 (Zone X-9c Archery Hunt).
    - (A) Area: As described in subsection 360(b)(15)(A).
    - (B) Season: The archery season for hunt A-18 (Zone X-9c Archery Hunt) shall open on the third Saturday in August 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: 350.
- (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! \*\*\*\***