

Utah Wildlife News
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See Lots of Deer

DWR provides winter viewing tips

Winter is a great time to see mule deer—and lots of them. Herds that number more than 100 deer are often seen near major roads in Utah. While it's exciting to see deer in the winter, please remember that winter is also the toughest time of the year for deer.

The best time to see deer

During the day, deer spend most of their time relaxing near trees that keep them hidden from view. But as the sun starts to set in the early evening, the deer leave the cover of the trees and move onto the open flats where their food is found.

Driven by hunger, the deer usually approach the unprotected areas timidly. Finally, a few brave individuals move in to feed, followed by the entire herd.

The food that's available to deer in the winter doesn't have much nutrition in it. Combine the limited nutritional value with the fact that deer can't store much fat on their bodies, and you can see why it's important that deer are allowed to feed relaxed and undisturbed in the winter.

Viewing tips

The Division of Wildlife Resources encourages you to get out this winter and see Utah's mule deer. By following the guidelines below, you can help ensure your viewing experience is a good one for both you and the deer:

- Stay in your vehicle. Deer are used to seeing cars and trucks, and they don't tend to be alarmed much by their presence. If you get out of your vehicle and move around, you'll frighten the deer. That will cause them to burn precious energy reserves as they run away from you.
- Never allow dogs to run free around deer. Many dogs will be tempted to chase the deer. And that will cause the deer to waste important energy reserves running away from your dog.

If you're going to view deer, you should probably leave your dog at home.

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- Bring a spotting scope, binoculars or a good telephoto lens for your camera. The more powerful your optics, the better.
- If you move to secondary or frontage roads, you can often get closer to deer without alarming them.
- Deer tend to move a lot when they eat. With a little observation, you can often determine the direction in which they're moving. If you select a position that's in the direction the deer are moving, the deer might move closer to you. If you're taking photos just before sunset—which is the time of day that provides the best light—you can come away with some spectacular photographs.

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Contact: Lynn Chamberlain, DWR Southern Region Conservation Outreach Manager (435) 680-0059 or (435) 865-6100

Help Decide How Wildlife is Managed in Utah

Spots will soon be open on Utah's five Regional Advisory Councils

Your chance is here to have a say in how wildlife is managed in Utah. Several positions will soon be open on Utah's five wildlife Regional Advisory Councils.

What the RACs do

Each RAC holds about 10 meetings a year to listen to proposals from the Division of Wildlife Resources about hunting, fishing and wildlife management in Utah. The RACs also take input from the public about the proposals.

After voting on which proposals each RAC prefers, the chairperson for that RAC presents its recommendations to the Utah Wildlife Board. Members of the board consider the input. Then the board makes the final decision regarding wildlife management in Utah.

The RAC meetings usually last from three to five hours. The meetings are held in the evenings, usually on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday night.

Applying to serve

RAC members represent one of six interests: hunters, anglers and trappers; people who don't hunt or fish; ranchers and farmers; locally-elected public officials; federal land managing agencies; and the public-at-large.

To fill one of the upcoming vacancies, you must live in the region of the state you wish to represent. Also, no later than March 30, the following must happen:

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- If you want to represent the public at large, you must contact a group in your community and ask them to nominate you. Examples of groups that have nominated people in the past include political groups, small town councils, animal sanctuary committees and recreational groups.

The group that nominates you must submit their nomination by March 30.

- If you want to fill one of the other five positions on the RAC, you must contact the proper conservation group or organization in your region and ask that they nominate you to fill the vacancy you'd like to fill.

For example, if you want to fill a sportsmen vacancy, you must contact a Utah sportsmen group and ask them to nominate you for the vacancy.

Nominating groups and organizations must submit their nominations by March 30.

To learn about wildlife or conservation groups in your area, contact the nearest DWR office.

How to get a form

You can download a RAC nomination form at <http://go.usa.gov/YuQ>. Nomination forms are also available at any DWR office.

For more information, contact the nearest DWR office or Staci Coons, the DWR's Wildlife Board/RAC coordinator, at (801) 538-4718 or via e-mail at stacicoons@utah.gov.

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Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

Get a Turkey Hunting Permit

General season permits on sale starting Feb. 24

If you didn't obtain a limited-entry permit to hunt wild turkeys in Utah this spring, don't put your shotgun away yet. Permits to hunt during Utah's general statewide turkey hunt go on sale Feb. 24.

Justin Dolling, upland game and migratory game bird coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources, says he and other DWR biologists are excited that all of Utah's turkey hunters can hunt this year.

"Our biologists have worked hard to get Utah's turkey population to the point that all of the state's turkey hunters can hunt," Dolling says. "It's rewarding to see how well turkeys are doing in Utah."

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Questions

Because the general hunt is fairly new, Judi Tutorow, wildlife licensing coordinator for the DWR, says the agency has received lots of questions from hunters. She provides the following information:

- You don't have to get a permit on Feb. 24. The DWR won't run out of permits because the number of general turkey permits the agency can offer isn't limited.

Permits will be available until the season ends on May 31.

- If you buy a general turkey permit, you can hunt anywhere in Utah that's open to turkey hunting.
- Starting Feb. 24, you can buy a permit at www.wildlife.utah.gov. Permits will also be available at DWR offices and from more than 300 hunting license agents across Utah.
- You can buy a general turkey permit and still keep all of your limited-entry turkey bonus points. You won't lose any of your bonus points if you buy a general turkey permit.
- If you obtained a limited-entry turkey permit, you can't obtain a general turkey permit. (You can have only one turkey permit each year.)
- Two general hunts will be held:

- The first hunt is a special youth hunt. Hunters who were 15 years of age or younger on Jan. 27 can participate in the hunt. The youth hunt runs April 29 – May 1.

(Jan. 27 was the day results of the 2011 limited-entry turkey draw were posted.)

To participate in the youth hunt, young hunters must buy a general statewide hunting permit. Young hunters who drew a limited-entry permit can't participate in the youth hunt.

Youngsters who buy a permit for the youth hunt can also use the permit to hunt during Utah's general statewide hunt. That hunt opens May 2.

- The second hunt—the general statewide hunt—is open to anyone who buys a general turkey permit.

The general hunt runs May 2 – 31.

For more information, call the nearest Division of Wildlife Resources office or the DWR's Salt Lake City office at (801) 538-4700.

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Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

Watch the Sky Turn White

See as many as 20,000 snow geese

Delta -- It's a sight you have to see to believe: thousands of pure white snow and Ross' geese lifting off Gunnison Bend Reservoir amid honks and the beating of wings.

You can see this spectacle yourself on Feb. 25, 26 and 27 at the annual Utah Snow Goose Festival. The festival will be held at and near Gunnison Bend Reservoir, just west of Delta. Admission is free.

As many as 20,000 snow geese have been at the reservoir during past festivals. Except for the black tips on their wings, snow geese are pure white.

"We'll provide spotting scopes so you can get a close look at the geese," says Bob Walters, Watchable Wildlife coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources. "We'll also be available to answer any questions you have."

In addition to seeing the geese, you can learn more about wildlife at free seminars offered by the DWR. The seminars will be held on Friday, Feb. 25.

The best times to see the geese

The areas where you'll see the geese vary according to the time of the day.

Walters says if you arrive early in the morning, you can watch the geese feeding in fields that surround the reservoir. Then, at about 10:30 a.m., the geese take off and fly back to the reservoir. "That's an exciting time to see and hear the geese," he says.

After landing on the reservoir, the geese usually spend the next few hours there. "Then, anywhere from 4 to 6 p.m., they take off again and fly back to the fields," Walters says. "It's thrilling to be there when the geese do this."

DWR biologists will watch which fields the geese fly to. If you arrive after the geese have left the reservoir, the biologists will direct you to the fields where the geese are feeding.

Viewing tips

- Use binoculars or a spotting scope to view the geese. If you get too close to the geese, you could scare them away.
- If you pull off the road to view the geese, pull as far off the road as you can. And watch for cars.
- The weather could be cold and wet. Bring the proper clothes so you can stay warm and dry.

For more information about the 2011 Snow Goose Festival, call the Delta Area Chamber of Commerce at (435) 864-4316.

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