

District 2

Spokane, Lincoln, & Whitman Counties

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District 2 is located in the eastern part of Washington bordering Idaho. Counties included in District 2 are Lincoln, Whitman, and Spokane. Game Management Units (GMUs) in District 2 include 124 (Mount Spokane), 127 (Mica Peak), 130 (Cheney), 133 (Roosevelt), 136 (Harrington), 139 (Steptoe), & 142 (Almota). Hunters can choose from a variety of habitats ranging from mixed conifer forest to shrub-steppe to agricultural lands.

The geography of District 2 includes the edge of the Rocky Mountain Range in the east, the Columbia Basin in the west and the Channeled Scablands and Palouse in between. This diverse geography supports a wide range of habitats that include mixed coniferous forests dominated by Douglas fir and larch, dry Ponderosa pine forests, some aspen groves, scabland, sagebrush steppe, and grasslands. Topography varies from ~500ft above sea level along the Snake River in the south to 5883 foot Mt. Spokane in the north. Dominant river drainages include the Spokane, Palouse, Columbia, & Snake Rivers.

The majority of the district is privately owned, however WDFW and BLM own ~60,000 acres in the center of Lincoln County; there are a several timber companies that allow hunting in Spokane County; and throughout the district there are private landowners enrolled in WDFW hunt access programs (see “Private Lands Program” below and visit the [WDFW Private Lands Access web site](#)). Riverside State Park and Mt Spokane State Park, along with many county parks in Spokane County are open to public access, but NOT to hunting. [Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge](#) (TNWR) has a limited entry youth waterfowl hunt (details available through TNWR) and allows elk hunting by permit only (permits allotted via WDFW special permit draw in June).

Pheasant: Crow counts were slightly lower this year, but spring weather was good and should lead to good production. It appears that good numbers of pheasants made it through the winter and lots of roosters and hens have been seen earlier this spring in District 2. Since most of the land in this district is private, hunters will need to spend some time “knocking on doors” to get access to the better sites (see “Private Lands Program” below).

We have enrolled many new cooperators in our hunter access program this year in southeast Washington; the locations are mapped on the [GoHunt](#) website.

We will also be releasing game farm produced roosters once again this fall at the traditional release sites, which are also mapped on the [GoHunt](#) website and the [Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program publication](#). For more information see the 2012 Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: [Pheasant - Statewide and by County](#)

Quail: Prospects look good relative to last year, with decent spring weather for broods and the population. Good brood numbers were seen in south Whitman County. Access can be a problem, especially with most of the good quail habitat occurring in and around towns. For more information see the 2012 Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: [Quail - Statewide and by County](#).

Gray Partridge: Like quail, prospects look good with decent spring weather and good brood numbers have been seen in Whitman and Lincoln counties. Again, access can be difficult with most birds seen in and adjacent to agricultural fields.

Chukar: There are very few chukar in District 2, they are predominantly found along the breaks of the Snake River. Like quail and partridge, chukar populations should be doing well with mild spring weather. Terrain is steep and rocky with limited public access from above.

For more information on gray partridge and chukar see the 2012 Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: [Chukar - Statewide and by County](#).

Forest Grouse: Numbers appear to be down in District 2, but it's still possible to shoot one opportunistically in the forested portions of the district. For more information see the 2012 Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: [Forest Grouse - Statewide and by County](#).

Wild Turkeys: Observations and reports indicate that the turkey population is doing very well in GMUs 124-133 and expanding into GMUs 136-142. Again the district is predominantly private land and you will need to secure access. But rumor has it that access should be relatively easy to acquire in GMU 124 for the fall seasons. .

Waterfowl: Local surveys indicate a poorer brood production this year than last. Precipitation this spring appears to have come too late to enhance local production; however, given the limited number of local nesting ducks, the waterfowl hunting opportunity in this district is mostly dependent upon the number of migrants coming from Canada and Alaska and how long waters remain ice free. Continental counts this year were down relative to last year's banner year, but are still up 33% from the long term average. For general Waterfowl info see <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/waterfowl/index.html> and [Waterfowl Hunting Areas In Region One](#).

Dove: Hunting prospects for the mourning dove should be similar to last year. However, District 2 is not a major dove area, with doves occurring at low population densities relative to the Columbia Basin and similar regions. As often as not, cool temperatures just prior to or during the dove season push many doves further south out of the District. It important to note that eastside hunters have an additional dove opportunity – the Eurasian collared Dove. This dove is an exotic dove that has just invaded most of eastern Washington and can be hunted with a license all year round. For more information see the 2012 Statewide Small Game Harvest Statistics: [Dove - Statewide and by County](#).

White-tailed Deer: High fawn production in 2012 and the mild winter should combine to produce good survival into this year and good fawn numbers. Herds appear to have fully recovered from hard winters of 2008 and 2009. Numbers of mature buck may still be slightly

lower than the 2008 high, but the persistent hunter should have ample opportunity to harvest a legal buck. There is a 3pt minimum regulation in GMUs 127-142 and the late season in these GMUs is by permit only (Palouse Hunt 750 permits offered).

Mule Deer: Overall mule deer numbers appear to be stable to increasing in GMUs 130 -142. The bulk of 139 & 142 is private land and buck hunters will have to put in the time to get access, doe hunters should have an easier time given the agricultural nature of these GMUs. We have enrolled many new cooperators in our hunter access program this year in southeast Washington; see the "Private Lands Program" section below and note that the locations are mapped on the [GoHunt](#) website. All GMUs have a 3pt minimum and there are no late seasons.

For more information, visit:

District 2 - 2012 Game Harvest Statistics:

- [Deer General Harvest](#)
- [Deer Special Permits Harvest](#)

Elk: There are fewer elk in District 2 relative to District 3. Hunting prospects should be similar to last year, with high success for those who can secure access to private lands. GMU 124 offers some public access on private timber companies' lands with the largest being Inland Empire Paper. Most of our elk herds are found on private land in GMUs 127 & 130, with the majority found on or around Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR).

Turnbull offers only permitted elk hunts (62 cow tags and 1 bull tag) to address habitat damage. For those who missed the permit application deadline, the Turnbull permit hunts should be offered again next year. There have been an increasing number of elk seen in Whitman County (GMU 139 & 142) offering new opportunity if permission is gained from private landowners. Some of these appear to be elk that move back and forth between Idaho and Washington, so timing and access to private lands will be the key to successful elk hunting in these GMUs.

Private Lands Program

Since 1948, WDFW has worked with private landowners across the state to provide public access through a negotiated agreement. Landowners participating in a WDFW cooperative agreement retain liability protection provided under RCW 4.24.210. Landowners receive technical services, materials for posting (signs and posts), and in some cases monetary compensation. In addition, lands under agreement are well known by WDFW enforcement staff.

Currently, the private lands access program includes four basic access agreement types: Feel Free to Hunt (FFTH), Register to Hunt, Hunting Only by Written Permission, and Permit Only Area. More information on where these enrolled lands occur can be found at WDFW's [GoHunt](#) site and at the [WDFW Private Lands Access web site](#).

Whitman and Spokane Counties

Most of the "Hunt by Reservation" hunts are new this year and are scattered throughout the county. WDFW has worked to offer new access properties along the Snake River in GMU 142 along with clusters of properties in the Riparia and the Steptoe canyon area.

There is a mix of FFTH and Reservation in these areas. Total accessible acreage in District 2 is 53,743 acres – 3,200 in Spokane County, 44,278 in Lincoln County, and 91,456 in Whitman County. A summary of these areas are:

- Whitman County
 - Feel Free to Hunt Program- 12,897 acres
 - Register to Hunt - 320 acres
 - Hunt Only By Written Permission - 26,673 acres
 - Hunt by Reservation (Federal Funds) - 31,538 acres (mostly in St John area)
 - Hunt by Reservation (State Funds) - 20,028 acres (scattered around county)
- Lincoln County
 - Hunt Only By Written Permission – 41,000 acres
 - Feel Free to Hunt Program – 3,278 acres
- Spokane County
 - Landowner Hunting Permit Program (LHP) - the Columbia Plateau Wildlife Management Association (CPWMA) - 3,200 acres; access is only available through WDFW Special Permitting and CPWMA Raffle Permit Hunts (see [WDFW Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations Pamphlet](#)).