

2018

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Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**



Cover photo submitted by Frank Gordon

TABLE OF CONTENTS

District 10 Hunting Prospects

Lewis, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties

DISTRICT 10 GENERAL OVERVIEW	2
ELK	3
Significant Changes for 2018.....	3
Elk Population Information.....	4
Treponeme-associated Hoof Disease of Elk	6
DEER.....	8
Significant Changes for 2018.....	9
BEAR	10
COUGAR	11
MOUNTAIN GOAT	12
PHEASANT	14
FOREST GROUSE	14
WATERFOWL.....	16
Duck Hunting.....	16
Goose Hunting	17
PUBLIC LAND RESOURCES	20
PRIVATE INDUSTRIAL FORESTLANDS	21

DISTRICT 10 GENERAL OVERVIEW

District 10 is located in southwestern Washington and includes Lewis, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties. Game management units (GMUs) in this district include 501 (Lincoln), 503 (Randle), 504 (Stella), 505 (Mossyrock), 506 (Willapa Hills), 510 (Stormking), 513 (South Rainier), 516 (Packwood), 520 (Winston), 522 (Loo-Wit), 524 (Margaret), 530 (Ryderwood), 550 (Coweeman), and 556 (Toutle). The topography of this wide area ranges from tidally influenced Columbia River shorelines in Wahkiakum County to Cascade peaks in Lewis County.

A high percentage of this district is in private ownership, which presents a variety of access options and challenges. The recent trend is for timber companies to limit public access to their land or sell access permits for hunting seasons to a limited number of participants.

Understanding the recreational access policies of individual timber companies is an important step in planning your hunt. Recreational access information is typically available on timber company websites or by calling access hotlines. A list of recreational access websites and hotlines maintained by private industrial timber companies is included at the end of this document. It is always a good idea to obtain a map from the landowner where you wish to hunt.

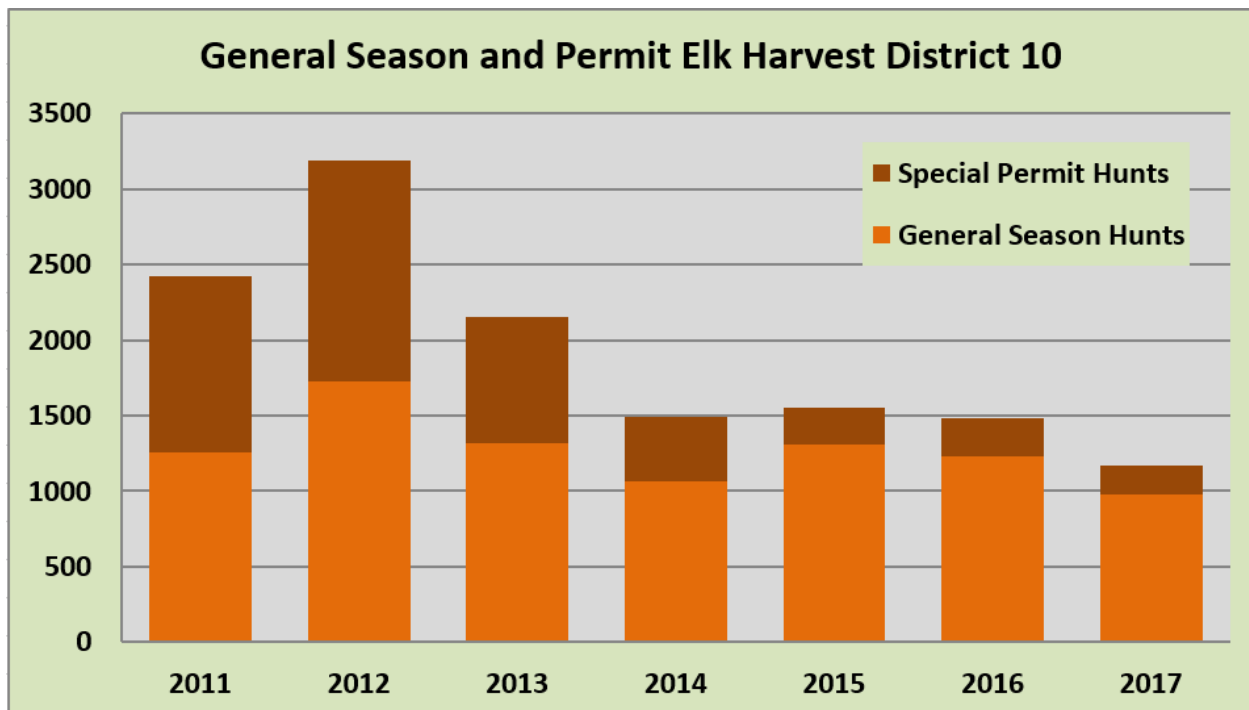
Weyerhaeuser owns a significant amount of land in District 10. Major changes to hunting access implemented in 2015 include a requirement that hunters purchase an access permit to hunt on Weyerhaeuser land, including the St. Helens Tree Farm (GMUs 550, 520, 524, and 556). As of this writing, motorized access permits are being sold for between \$200 and \$350, while non-motorized access permits are between \$75 and \$100. Information about permits for recreational access to Weyerhaeuser land, including maps, are [on this website](#) or can be obtained from Weyerhaeuser via their website at: https://wyrecreationnw.com/contact_us.

Other industrial timber company lands are generally open to public hunting without an access fee, but vehicle access may be limited. Other major industrial forest landowners in District 10 include Hancock Forest Management, Port Blakely, Sierra Pacific, Green Diamond (permit fee access), and Pope Resources/Olympic Resource Management. Access to these lands may be restricted in August, September, and – in some cases – October due to high fire danger. More information about hunting opportunities on private land can be found on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) [Private Lands webpage](#), on page 96 of the [Big Game pamphlet](#), or at the [GoHunt mapping](#) site.

Public land in the district includes WDFW's [Cowlitz](#) and [Mount St. Helens](#) wildlife areas, the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in eastern Lewis and Cowlitz counties, and state land managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) scattered throughout all three counties. These state and federal lands are open to public access. Contact the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Cowlitz Valley Ranger District at 360-497-1100 or visit the agency's [website](#). Information about DNR-managed lands can be obtained by contacting the Castle Rock DNR office at 360-577-2025 or visiting the [Department's website](#).

ELK

District 10 has historically been among the leaders in statewide harvest of elk. The highest general season harvests in 2017 occurred in GMUs 520 (Winston), 506 (Willapa Hills), 530 (Ryderwood), and 550 (Coweeman). There are also many permit hunts in District 10, which are offered to manage the elk population, address agricultural damage caused by elk, and provide recreational opportunity. Additionally, two GMUs – 522 (Loo-Wit) and 556 (Toutle) – are permit-only for both cow and bull elk. In 2017, a total of 981 elk were harvested during the general season in addition to 192 elk harvested by permit in District 10. Elk found west of Interstate 5 are considered to be of the Roosevelt sub-species, while those in the Cascade Mountain Range are of mixed origin. Specifically, Cascade elk are a genetic combination of native Roosevelt elk and introduced Rocky Mountain elk.



SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOR 2018

Changes Related to General Season Elk Hunts

Three changes to general season elk hunting are in place for the 2018 hunting season, listed below:

- In GMU 506 (Willapa Hills), 3-point or larger bulls are now legal in the late archery season.
- In GMU 530 (Ryderwood), 3-point or larger bulls are now legal in the late archery season.

- In GMU 520 (Winston), late archery season is now closed.

Changes Related to Special Permit Elk Hunts

Two changes related to special permit elk hunts are in play for those fortunate enough to draw these limited opportunity hunts. These are itemized below:

- There are now September bull elk hunts offered in the Quality Bull special permit category within three of the elk areas that occupy the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. Norway Pass (Elk Area 5066), Upper Smith Creek (Elk Area 5064) and Mt. Whittier (Elk Area 5065) now offer various hunts for modern firearm, archery, and muzzleloader hunters.
- The boundary of the Mudflow (Elk Area 5099) has been expanded to the east. The elk area now includes several square miles of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. Those who have drawn these special hunting permits are encouraged to review the boundaries of the Mudflow Elk Area.

ELK POPULATION INFORMATION

Elk populations in the game management units comprising the Mount St. Helens elk herd area are down from historic highs reached during the mid-2000s. This population reduction was implemented per the objectives of the [St. Helens Elk Herd Plan](#). Liberal antlerless elk hunting opportunity, combined with some years of late winter and spring storms, have reduced the elk population in these GMUs. Most recently, the winter of 2016-17 was unusually severe, with early snowfall and persistent cold wet conditions throughout the winter. These conditions are hard on elk. Severe winters are made worse when animals are in relatively poor condition entering the winter. Elk within the St. Helens herd typically lack large fat reserves to help with long, hard winters.

Reflecting these challenging conditions, the 2017 spring survey of elk in the monitored portions of the St. Helens herd showed a decrease in the population of elk. More specifically, elk populations were down 30-35 percent from 2016 numbers. The winter of 2017-18 was mild. Correspondingly, survey efforts conducted during the spring of 2018 showed an increase of approximately 5 percent. These indicators point toward an elk population that is still below objectives but recovering. Therefore, hunters should expect a generally less productive elk hunting season during the 2018 hunt. Antlerless hunting opportunity has been reduced accordingly.

Elk population surveys in GMUs 506 (Willapa Hills) and 530 (Ryderwood) are conducted on an every-other-year basis and were completed in the spring of 2018. Surveys conducted in 2014, 2016, and 2018 indicate a stable or slightly increasing elk population in GMU 506 and a slightly decreasing population in GMU 530. Severe winter conditions rarely cause population level

impacts to Willapa elk populations and hunting opportunities and success rates should be similar to recent years.

The general bull elk season is always challenging, but the District 10 elk population produces a harvest of nearly 1,000 bull elk annually, and those hunters who put in the effort and remain focused may be rewarded with success.



Photo by Sam Kolb (WDFW)

Hunting strategies during fire restrictions

Early hunting season access for archery hunters is often complicated by hot weather and fire access closures. If that occurs, hunters should consider going west to GMUs 506 or 530 (Willapa Hills and Ryderwood), where blocks of state (DNR) forestlands are available. Another good choice during times of fire danger is GMUs 513 (South Rainier) and 516 (Packwood), which are comprised mostly of national forest lands. These public lands usually stay open during times of high fire danger, but be sure to check with land managers before heading to the field.

Elk scouting strategies

Using the [GoHunt mapping](#) online tool to look at aerial photos to identify recent clearcuts and drainages is a good start for identifying areas to hunt. Preseason scouting on the commercial tree farms is usually done by bike or on foot, as most areas will not be open to motorized access at that time. Motorized access and camping are available on state DNR lands unless there is high fire danger. Prospective elk hunters should keep in mind that the animals often prefer cooler, wetter areas during times of warmer weather, and are more often active during dawn and dusk.

Additional resources for those interested in District 10 elk

[Annual harvest reports](#) and harvest statistics for deer and elk based on hunter reporting can be found on the WDFW website. For more information regarding elk management in the Mount St. Helens, Willapa Hills, and South Rainier elk herd areas, review the Elk Status and Trend Reports located on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01875/>.



Photo by Eric Holman (WDFW)

TREPONEME-ASSOCIATED HOOF DISEASE OF ELK

Since 2008, reports of elk with deformed, broken, or missing hooves have increased dramatically in southwest Washington, with sporadic observations in other areas west of the Cascade Range.

While elk have long suffered from “hoof rot,” a relatively common livestock disease, the rapid spread and severity of this new affliction was something completely different.

Scientific tests commissioned by WDFW in 2013 found that these abnormalities were strongly associated with treponeme bacteria, known to cause digital dermatitis in cattle, sheep and goats. Although this disease has plagued the dairy industry for decades, the treponeme bacteria had never been documented in elk or any other wildlife species until 2013.

Since then, WDFW has continued to work with scientists, veterinarians, outdoor organizations and others to develop management strategies for elk infected by treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD).

Several aspects of TAHD in elk are clear:

- **Vulnerability:** The disease appears to be highly infectious among elk, but there is no evidence that it affects humans. TAHD can affect any hoof in any elk, young or old, male or female.
- **Hooves only:** Tests show the disease is limited to animals’ hooves, and does not affect their meat or organs. If the meat looks normal and if hunters harvest, process and cook it practicing good hygiene, it is probably safe to eat.
- **No treatment:** Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent the disease, nor are there any proven options for treating it in the field. Similar diseases in livestock are treated by cleaning and bandaging their hooves and giving them foot baths, but that is not a realistic option for free-ranging elk.

Counties with confirmed cases of TAHD

As of July 2018, WDFW had confirmed cases of elk afflicted with TAHD in Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Thurston, Mason, King, Skamania, Klickitat and Wahkiakum counties. The April 2018 discovery of TAHD in the Trout Lake Valley in western Klickitat County was the first documented east of the Cascades in Washington. Since 2015, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has also confirmed TAHD in elk populations in both western and eastern Oregon.

How hunters can help

- **Leave hooves:** Scientists believe that treponeme bacteria are associated with moist soil and spread to new areas on the hooves of infected elk. For that reason, WDFW requires hunters to remove the hooves of any elk taken in affected areas and leave them onsite. During the 2018-19 hunting season, this rule applies to GMUs 407, 418, 437, 454, 501-578, 633, 636 and 642-699.

- **Report elk:** Hunters can help WDFW track TAHD by reporting observations of both affected and unaffected elk on the department’s [online reporting form](#).
- **Clean shoes and tires:** Anyone who hikes or drives off-road in a known affected area can help minimize the risk of spreading the disease to new areas by removing all mud from their shoes and tires before leaving the area.

WDFW is currently studying the effects of the disease on Washington elk populations and has partnered with Washington State University to monitor and research the disease. For more information on TAHD please see pages 66-68 of the [Big Game Hunting pamphlet](#) and the [WDFW hoof disease webpage](#).

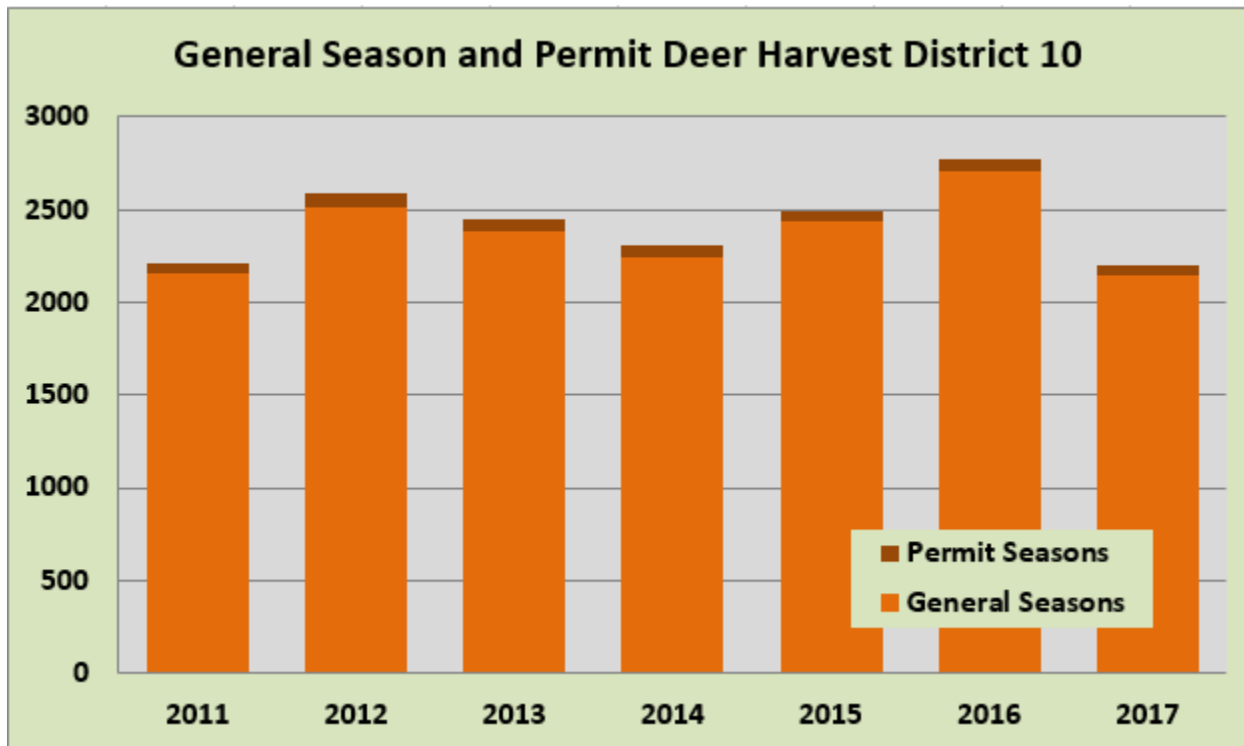


Photo by Eric Holman (WDFW)

DEER

Several GMUs in District 10 are among the best in the state for black-tailed deer harvest. The highest 2017 general season buck harvests within District 10 occurred in GMUs 530 (Ryderwood), 550 (Coweeman), 520 (Winston), and 505 (Mossyrock). The majority of the harvest occurs during general seasons for each user group, with a small portion of the harvest occurring during special permit seasons (see figure below). For more information on deer in

District 10, see the annual Game Status and Trend Report on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01875/>.



Black-tailed deer populations are stable in District 10. The annual harvest of more than 2,000 bucks has been typical for many years. The severe winter of 2016-17 caused some deer mortality and therefore led to a decline in harvest in the 2017 season. The winter of 2017-18 was mild and deer hunting opportunity should be good in 2018.

Hunting for black-tailed deer is often best near the end of the general season, when conditions improve for stalking and moving through the woods in heavily vegetated western Washington. The best opportunity often occurs during the late buck hunt, when favorable stalking and weather conditions combine with the breeding season or rut. The 2018 late buck season runs November 15-18. Black-tailed deer generally favor dense vegetation and have small home ranges. The most successful hunters study the area carefully and move very slowly, constantly searching for deer.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOR 2018

Changes related to general season deer hunts

One change to general season deer hunting is in place for the 2018 hunting season, listed below:

- In GMU 530 (Ryderwood), “any deer” is now legal in the early archery season.



Photo by Marc Nelson

BEAR

District 10 makes up part of both the South Cascades and Coastal black bear hunt zones for the fall bear hunting season. In the Coastal hunt zone, the season runs from Aug. 1 to Nov. 15. In the South Cascades hunt zone, the season starts on Aug. 15 and runs through Nov. 15. Harvest numbers and hunter success for 2017 in the South Cascades and Coastal zones were 125 (4.1 percent success) and 241 (7.6 percent success), respectively. For more information on the management of black bears in Washington, including the Coastal and South Cascades management zones, see page 238 of the annual [Status and Trend report](#).

Successful bear hunters must submit a premolar tooth. See page 70 of the [Big Game pamphlet](#) for details.

Hunting for black bears is challenging, but also can be rewarding. Hunters should try a variety of methods, including targeting areas of favored foods like huckleberries, blackberries, cascara trees, etc. Other methods include glassing clear cuts or alpine areas at dawn and dusk, as well as predator calling.



Photo by Nicholle Stephens (WDFW)

COUGAR

In 2017-2018, hunters harvested eight cougars in the GMUs that make up District 10. Cougar hunting in this region is managed under a harvest guideline designed to harvest 12-16 percent of the population (excluding kittens) annually. The season consists of an early (Sept 1-Dec 31) and late (Jan 1-Apr 30) hunt period. The harvest guideline may be achieved during the early hunt period, and prospective hunters should visit the WDFW [website](#) to assure that the season in their prospective area remains open.

Most cougar hunting in western Washington occurs as an additional opportunity concurrent with deer and elk hunting. Hunters who want to harvest cougars should focus on areas with concentrations of deer and elk. Fresh snow greatly facilitates tracking and hunters may want to try predator calling.



Photo from Biologists Stephens, George, and Holman (WDFW)

MOUNTAIN GOAT

The southern Washington Cascade Mountains support a robust population of mountain goats. Areas with goat populations span the boundaries of WDFW districts. Specifically, the Goat Rocks population lies in both Districts 8 and 10, while the Mount St. Helens population lies in Districts 9 and 10.

Goat populations in the Goat Rocks area have remained stable at approximately 300 goats over several years. Hunter success in this unit is usually 100 percent. New for the 2018 hunting season, the Goat Rocks area has been divided into two hunt areas. Two tags were available for the western portion of the mountain goat area, while three tags were offered in the eastern section. Hunters who have been selected for these hunts need to review the boundaries of the hunt areas before going afield.

For the first time in many decades, mountain goat permits are available for the Mount St. Helens population. Goats have re-colonized the area following the 1980 eruption and the population is

now approximately 250 goats. For the purpose of hunting management, two hunt areas have been delineated and one tag has been awarded in each area.

Successful draw applicants for all hunt areas will receive a letter with additional details regarding hunt areas, mandatory checking requirements, mandatory goat identification training, biological sample collection, and more.



Photo provided by Kristina Luttrell

PHEASANT

Pheasants are released for hunting at three locations in District 10. These are located on the Kosmos Unit of the Cowlitz Wildlife Area (Lewis County), DNR property in the Woodland Bottoms (Cowlitz County), and DNR property on Lincoln Creek (Lewis County). For more information about the pheasant release program and directions to release sites in western Washington, visit the WDFW [website](#).

Youth hunters and those over 65 years of age should be sure to check the regulations closely for opportunities to hunt earlier in the season than other user groups.



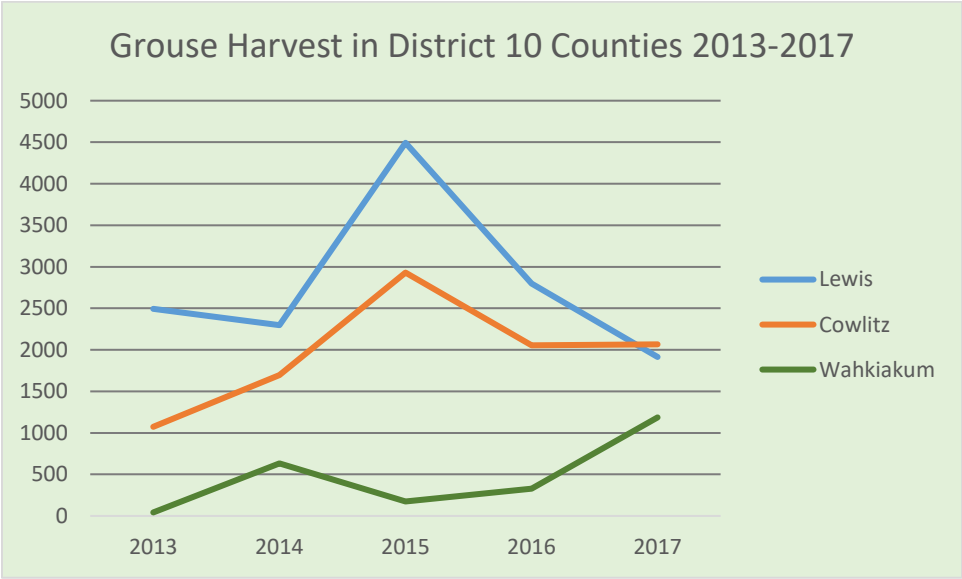
Photo by Tara Meyer, WDFW

FOREST GROUSE

District 10 supports substantial forest grouse populations and is one of the top producing areas for hunters in western Washington. Spring conditions for chick survival were good this year, which should translate into good grouse hunting this fall. Hunting riparian areas with mixed forest species and walking closed or abandoned roads are good strategies for grouse hunting.



Photo by Michael Schroeder (WDFW)



WATERFOWL

Duck and goose hunting is expected to be good this fall after the rains in November and December encourage birds to come south into the area. Habitat conditions for breeding waterfowl were not as good as last year, but populations in 2016 and 2017 were substantially higher than long-term averages. See the following sources for information on North American waterfowl populations (2018 information should be published in August):

<http://flyways.us/>

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/surveys-and-data/reports-and-publications/population-status.php>

DUCK HUNTING

As of this writing, the results from surveys to monitor duck populations in 2018 were not yet available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

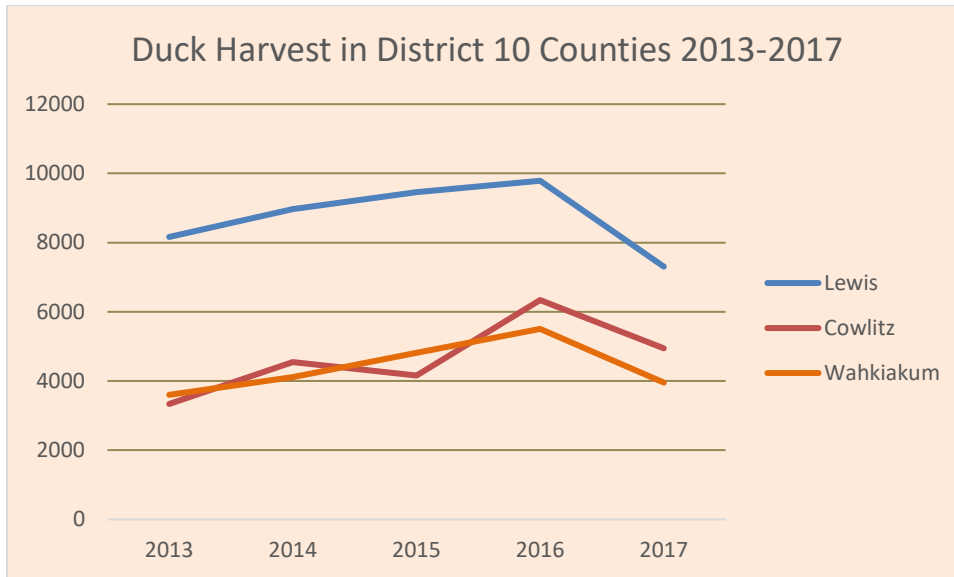
Hunters are reminded to consult the [Migratory Waterfowl Rules](#) pamphlet for details on hunting regulations. Prospective hunters should take special note of the late September season open only to youth hunters. Check the regulations closely for the details on this mentored hunting opportunity for early season ducks.



Scaup on the Columbia River in Wahkiakum County. Photo by Nicholle Stephens (WDFW).

Hunting early in the season is often best along the Columbia River and other large, permanent bodies of water. The Columbia River up to the Bonneville Dam is tidally influenced, so it is a good idea to be aware of outgoing tide conditions to avoid having your boat get stuck. Later in the season, high water might disperse birds, and hunters may have more success by targeting

flooded farmlands. More information about how to hunt waterfowl can be found on the department's [waterfowl webpage](#). Prospective hunters should be aware that success often depends on the severity of fall/winter weather, with wet, blustery conditions generally producing better duck hunting in southwest Washington.



GOOSE HUNTING

Hunters are reminded of the complex goose hunting regulations in Goose Management Area 2 designed to protect wintering populations of the dusky Canada goose. New hunters and those whose hunting authorization for Goose Management Area 2 was invalidated the previous year need to pass an exam with a minimum of 80 percent to receive their current year hunting authorization.

Significant changes to Area 2 (formerly Area 2A) goose hunting

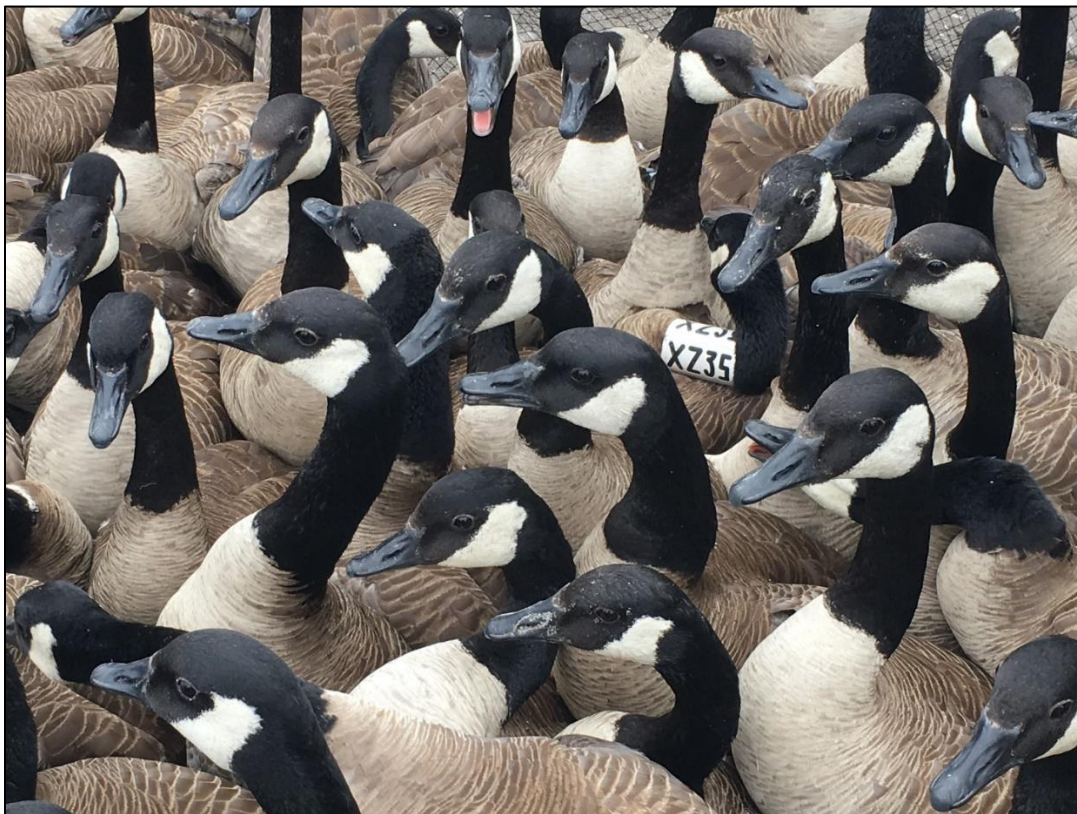
Goose hunting in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties are subject to the additional restrictions of Goose Management Area 2, which are in place to protect the dusky subspecies of the Canada goose. Goose hunters are encouraged to review the different subspecies of Canada geese in southwest Washington, where the ability to identify those birds is critical for a productive and enjoyable season.

For the 2018-19 southwest Washington goose season, the Fish and Wildlife Commission, in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the states of Oregon and Alaska, approved the following changes:

- The season for dusky Canada geese is **closed** and hunters will be cited for taking a dusky Canada goose.

- Area 2 boundaries have been split into two sections, inland and coast, and they have slightly different season dates.
- Hunting hours for geese were extended to 30 minutes after the start of official hunting hours to 30 minutes before the end of official hunting hours
- Hunters are now required to record harvest on a harvest card that will be printed out when they purchase their license.
- General season ending dates were extended to March and the late season select private lands hunt was discontinued. All hunters can now participate in the late February-March season, but only on private lands. No hunting is allowed on National Wildlife Refuges and WDFW wildlife areas.
- The goose hunting season will be open every day from Sept. 1-9, as well as from Oct. 13-28, 2018.

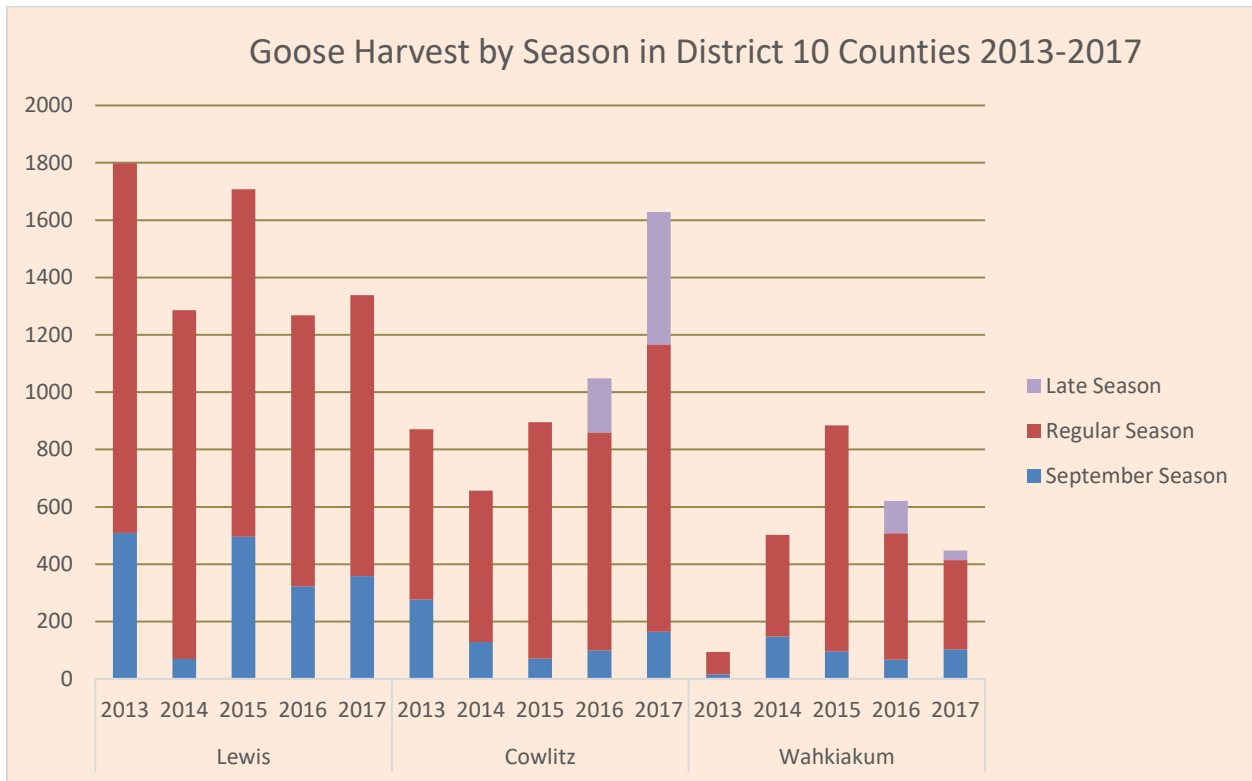
Please review the revised [goose identification training program](#) prior to hunting this season, and see the [2018-19 WDFW Migratory Waterfowl & Upland Game Seasons pamphlet](#) for more information. Wildlife managers are relying on southwest goose hunters to make this new season format successful so goose hunting will remain open in permit zones.



Canada geese during a banding effort in southwest Washington – Photo by Brian Davern

While dusky Canada geese remain of concern, several other subspecies are abundant and support large annual harvests.

Goose hunters are also encouraged to take advantage of the early goose season, which takes place in September. See the waterfowl hunting pamphlet for details on this enjoyable goose hunt for western Canada geese.



PUBLIC LAND RESOURCES

DNR-Pacific Cascades Office (SW WA)

601 Bond Road
PO Box 280
Castle Rock, WA 98611-0280
Phone: 360-577-2025
pacific-cascade.region@dnr.wa.gov

Link to purchase DNR quadrangle maps:

<https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/buy-maps-aerial-photos-or-survey-data>

Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Headquarters

10600 N.E. 51st Circle
Vancouver, WA 98682
(360) 891-5000
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/giffordpinchot/>

Cowlitz Valley Ranger District

10024 US Hwy 12
PO Box 670
Randle, WA 98377
(360) 497-1100

Mt. Adams Ranger District

2455 Hwy 141
Trout Lake, WA 98650
(509) 395-3402

Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument

42218 N.E. Yale Bridge Road
Amboy, WA 98601
(360) 449-7800

PRIVATE INDUSTRIAL FORESTLANDS

Green Diamond

- Recreation permits must be purchased for motorized and non-motorized access
<https://greendiamond.com/recreation/rec-program/>

Hancock Forest Management (HFM)

HFM Cathlamet Tree Farm

- Open for non-motorized recreation access
- Access hotline 360-795-3653

Pope Resources/Olympic Resource Management

- Generally open to walk-in access
- <http://www.orm.com/Timberlands/PublicUse.aspx>

Port Blakely

- Generally open to walk-in access
- <https://www.portblakely.com/pb-tree-farms/public-access-policy/policy>

Sierra Pacific

- Generally open to walk-in, day-use access with select areas open for motorized access
- Access hotline 360-623-1299

Weyerhaeuser

- Recreational access hotline-866-636-6531, recreation webpage:
<https://wyrecreationnw.com/permits>
- Includes St. Helens Tree Farm, Yacolt (Columbia River East), Vail, Pe Ell, Columbia Timberlands
 - Access is by permit only and permits can be purchased on the website above. Please see website for details including maps.
 - Permit required for recreational access year round
 - Motored and non-motorized permits available
 - Permits go on sale in May or June and may sell out quickly