

Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission**Proclamation 23-02****Statewide Big Game Hunting Seasons and Bag Limit
(Exclusive of Wildlife Management Areas and Refuges)**

Pursuant to the authority granted by Tennessee Code Annotated 70-4-107 and 70-5-108, the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission hereby proclaims the statewide big game seasons and bag limits, effective August 1, 2023.

SECTION I. WHITE-TAILED DEER**A. White-tailed Deer Hunting Units**

For the purpose of these hunting regulations, the State of Tennessee is hereby divided into six (6) deer units, as follows:

- Unit A. Bradley, Carter, Hamilton, Hawkins, Johnson, Knox, Loudon, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Rhea, Roane, and Sullivan Counties.
- Unit B. Anderson, Bledsoe, Campbell, Claiborne, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Grundy, Hancock, Jackson, Morgan, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Scott, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Warren, and White Counties.
- Unit C. Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Jefferson, Unicoi, Union, and Washington Counties.
- Unit D. Blount, Monroe, Polk, and Sevier Counties.
- Unit L. Bedford, Benton, Cannon, Carroll, Cheatham, Coffee, Davidson, Decatur, Dickson, Dyer, Franklin, Giles, Hardin, Henry, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Lake, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marshall, Maury, Montgomery, Moore, Obion, Perry, Robertson, Rutherford, Smith, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Wayne, Weakley, Williamson, and Wilson Counties.
- Unit CWD. Chester, Crockett, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeman, Haywood, Henderson, Lauderdale, Madison, McNairy, Shelby, and Tipton Counties, and Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge.

B. General Regulations

1. Antlered deer are defined as male or female deer with antlers that are a minimum of three inches (3") in length.
2. Antlerless deer are defined as male or female deer with no antlers or with antlers less than three inches (3") in length.
3. Archery equipment is legal during muzzleloader and gun seasons, muzzleloader equipment is legal during gun season.
4. Youths six (6) to sixteen (16) years of age may participate in the Young Sportsman seasons. Young sportsmen must be accompanied by a non-hunting adult, twenty-one (21) years of age or older, who must remain in a position to take immediate control of the hunting device and who must also comply with fluorescent orange regulations, as specified for legal hunters. Multiple youths may be accompanied by a single qualifying adult.
5. Archery season is closed during the October Young Sportsman season.

6. A Type 94 permit (WMA Non-Quota Big Game Permit) is required for all hunters 13 years of age and older to hunt big game on wildlife management areas during statewide big game seasons and during non-quota hunts except for sportsman license holders, lifetime sportsman license holders, and hunters who possess a Type 167 permit.

C. White-tailed Deer Bag Limits and Season Dates

1. Statewide - Antlered Deer Bag Limit

The statewide bag limit for antlered deer in Tennessee is two (2). No more than one (1) antlered deer may be taken per day. The statewide bag limit of two (2) antlered deer may be exceeded only if deer are taken on a Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency or National Wildlife Refuge managed hunt and the antlered deer are noted as "bonus deer" in the Wildlife Management Areas, Public Hunting Areas, and Refuges Hunting Seasons, Limits and Miscellaneous Regulations Proclamation or the Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits on Select National Wildlife Refuges and Other Federal Areas Proclamation. Deer taken on Ft. Campbell are bonus deer.

Earn-A-Buck Program

If a hunter:

- a. Takes one (1) antlerless deer within Unit CWD; and
- b. Submits the antlerless deer for chronic wasting disease (CWD) sampling at an approved sampling location, then the hunter may take an additional antlered deer within Unit CWD. There is no limit on the number of additional antlered deer a hunter may earn through the Earn-A-Buck Program. Any antlered deer earned through the Earn-A-Buck Program must be taken before the close of the deer season in which they are earned. No antlered deer earned through the Earn-A-Buck Program will carry over from one license year to the next.

Replacement Buck Program:

If a hunter:

- a. Takes an antlered deer; and
- b. The hunter submits the deer to the TWRA for CWD testing or submits the hunter's own sample to a lab accredited by the National Animal Health Laboratory Network for CWD testing and the validated result has been submitted to the TWRA; and
- c. The test results indicate that CWD was detected in the antlered deer, then the hunter may take an additional antlered deer within Unit CWD or in the county in which the CWD-positive antlered deer was taken. The hunter must not take a replacement antlered deer until notified by the TWRA that the antlered deer may be taken. There is no limit on the number of additional antlered deer that a hunter may take through the Replacement Buck Program. Antlered deer eligible to be taken through the Replacement Buck Program will be valid during the season earned or the following year's hunting season only.

2. Antlerless Bag Limit

There is no statewide antlerless bag limit. Antlerless bag limits differ between units. Antlerless bag limits are reflected for each unit in Section 3 below.

3. Statewide – Deer Seasons and Bag Limits

a. Units A, B, C, and D

Season Type	Season Dates	Equipment	Antlered Bag Limit	Antlerless Bag Limits			
			Statewide	Unit A	Unit B	Unit C	Unit D
Early Archery- Private land only	Fourth Friday of August through the following Sunday	Archery	2 ^a	0			
Young Sportsman	Last Saturday in October and the following day	Gun Muzzleloader Archery		2	2	2	2
	First weekend after the close of Gun season						
Archery	4 th Saturday in September to the day before the opening day of Muzzleloader Season <u>except</u> closed during October Young Sportsman Hunt	Archery		4	4	4	4
Muzzleloader	3 rd Saturday before Thanksgiving to the day before the opening day of Gun Season	Muzzleloader Archery		2	2	1	1
Gun	1 st Saturday before Thanksgiving through the first full weekend in January	Gun Muzzleloader Archery		2	1	1 (First 16 Days Only)	1 (First 7 Days Only)

^a The statewide bag limit of two (2) antlered deer may be exceeded within Units A, B, C, or D if taken under the Replacement Buck Program.

b. Unit L

Season Type	Season Dates	Equipment	Antlered Bag Limit	Antlerless Bag Limits
			Statewide	Unit L
Early Archery- Private land only	Fourth Friday of August through the following Sunday	Archery	2 ^a	0
Young Sportsman	Last Saturday in October and the following day	Gun Muzzleloader Archery		3/Day (No Season Limit)
	First weekend after the close of Gun season			
Archery	4 th Saturday in September to the day before the opening day of Muzzleloader Season <u>except</u> closed during October Young Sportsman Hunt	Archery		
Muzzleloader	3 rd Saturday before Thanksgiving to the day before the opening day of Gun Season	Muzzleloader Archery		
Gun	1 st Saturday before Thanksgiving through the first full weekend in January	Gun Muzzleloader Archery		
Unit L Private Land Antlerless Season	Monday following the first full weekend in January through the following Friday	Gun Muzzleloader Archery	0	

^a The statewide bag limit of two (2) antlered deer may be exceeded within Unit L if taken under the Replacement Buck Program.

c. Unit CWD

Season Type	Season Dates	Equipment	Antlered Bag Limit	Antlerless Bag Limits
			Statewide	Unit CWD
August ^a	Fourth Friday of August through the following Sunday	Gun Muzzleloader Archery	3 ^b	0
Early Young Sportsman	Last Saturday in October and the following day	Gun Muzzleloader Archery		3/Day (No Season Limit)
	First weekend after the close of Gun season			
Late Young Sportsman	Second full weekend in January			
Archery	4 th Saturday in September to the day before the early young sportsman season	Archery		
Gun	Day after the early young sportsman season through January 31 <u>except</u> closed for the January Young Sportsman Hunt	Gun Muzzleloader Archery		

^a Private lands and the following public lands may be hunted during the August season:

1. Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park and State Natural Area;
2. Eagle Lake Refuge;
3. Bompreszi Unit of the Eagle Lake Refuge;
4. Wolf River Wildlife Management Area Unit 1;
5. Wolf River Unit 2;
6. Piperton Wetland;
7. Chickasaw State Forest Wildlife Management Area;
8. Gray's Creek Wildlife Management Area;
9. Oak Dain Wetland;

10. Big Hill Pond State Park
11. Tull Bottom Wildlife Management Area;
12. South Fork Refuge;
13. Spring Creek Wildlife Management Area;
14. Colonel Forest V Durand Wildlife Management Area;
15. Fort Ridge Wildlife Management Area; and
16. Lower Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge
17. John Tully Wildlife Management Area;
18. Horns Bluff Refuge;
19. Maness Swamp Refuge (the portion lying within Gibson County);
20. Parker Branch Wildlife Management Area; and
21. Perry Switch Wildlife Management Area.

- ^b The Unit CWD bag limit of three (3) antlered deer may be exceeded within Unit CWD if:
1. Taken under the Earn-A-Buck Program; or
 2. Taken under the Replacement Buck Program.

SECTION II. BLACK BEAR

A. Black Bear Bag Limits and Season Dates

Five (5) Bear hunt zones (BHZ) are hereby designated as follows:

BHZ1: Carter, Cocke (North of I-40), Greene, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington Counties.

BHZ2: Blount, Cocke (South of I-40), Jefferson (East of Hwy 411), Sevier Counties.

BHZ3: McMinn (East of Hwy 411), Monroe, Polk Counties.

BHZ4: Anderson (West of I-75 and North of Old Lake City Hwy and North of Dutch Valley Road, Campbell (North of Hwy 63, West of I-75) Claiborne (West of Hwy 25E and North of Hwy 63), Cumberland, Fentress, Morgan, Overton (East of Hwy 111), Pickett, Putman (East of Hwy 111), Scott, Van Buren (East of Hwy 111), and White East of Hwy 111) Counties.

Transitional: Anderson (East of I-75 and South of Old Lake City Hwy. and South of Dutch Valley Rd.), Bradley, Campbell (S. of Hwys 63 and E of I-75), Claiborne (East of Hwy. 25E and South of Hwy 63), Hamblen, Hamilton, Hancock, Hawkins, Grainger, Grundy, Jefferson (W. of Hwy 411), Knox, Loudon, McMinn (W of Hwy 411), Marion, Sequatchie, Union Counties.

The following areas within the Transitional Zone are closed to bear hunting: Cumberland Gap National Historic Park. Proclaimed Bear Reserves are closed to bear hunting unless otherwise indicated.

Bear Hunt Zone (BHZ)					
Season/Method		BHZ 1	BHZ 2	BHZ 3	BHZ4* and Transitional
Gun/Muzzleloader/ Archery (Dogs Allowed)	Segment 1	Hunt 1: 3 consecutive days beginning the first Saturday in October Hunt 2: 2 consecutive days beginning the second Saturday in October	Hunt 1: 4 consecutive days beginning the second Saturday following the fourth Saturday in September Hunt 2: 3 consecutive days beginning the Friday after Hunt 1 concludes	Hunt 1: 2 consecutive days beginning the Saturday Following the 4 th Saturday of September Hunt 2: 7 consecutive days beginning the 2 nd Saturday following the 4 th Saturday of September	Closed
	Segment 2	8 consecutive days beginning the 1 st Monday after the 3 rd Saturday before Thanksgiving	5 consecutive days beginning the 1 st Monday after the last Saturday in October		Closed
	Segment 3	17 consecutive days beginning the 1 st Monday after Thanksgiving	25 consecutive days beginning the 1 st Monday after Thanksgiving	14 consecutive days beginning the 1 st Monday after Thanksgiving	Closed
	Segment 4	Closed	Closed	4 consecutive days beginning the last Thursday in December	Closed
Archery (No Dogs Allowed)	28 consecutive days beginning the 4 th Saturday in September				
Gun/Muzzleloader/ Archery (No Dogs Allowed)	4 consecutive days beginning the 1 st Saturday before Thanksgiving				Closed
Young Sportsman** G/M/A (No Dogs Allowed)	2 consecutive days beginning the last Saturday in October				Closed

* The following areas within BHZ4 are closed to bear hunting: Big South Fork River and Recreation Area, Scott State Forest, and Obed National Scenic River Corridor.

** Youths 6-16 years of age may participate. Young sportsmen must be accompanied by a non-hunting adult, 21 years of age or older, who must remain in a position to take immediate control of the hunting device and who must also comply with fluorescent orange regulations, as specified for legal hunters. Multiple youths may be accompanied by a single qualifying adult.

B. Restricted Black Bear Management Hunt:

1. Area Open - Private property located within the proclaimed boundaries of the Kettlefoot and Laurel Fork Bear Reserves.
2. Bag Limits and Season Dates

Date	Methods			Bag Limit
		Kettlefoot	Laurel Fork	
7 consecutive days, beginning on the third Saturday of September	Archery, Muzzleloader, Gun			1 ^a Bear Either Sex
7 consecutive days, beginning on the third Saturday of September	Dogs Allowed			1 ^a Bear Either Sex

^a Does not count toward statewide Bag Limit

C. Bear Dog Training Season:

No bears may be taken. No weapons may be possessed.

The following zones are open for a bear dog training season during daylight hours only.

BHZ 1 and 2	37 consecutive days ending the last Sunday in September.
BHZ 3	10 consecutive days beginning the Wednesday after Labor Day
BHZ 4 and Transitional	Closed

D. Special Bear Hunting Regulations:

1. Unless special hunt regulations apply, the bag limit for any person participating in the statewide hunt, or Bear Party-Dog Hunts or both shall not exceed one (1) bear per license year.
2. Cubs or female bears with cub(s) at side may not be taken at any time. A cub is defined as any bear weighing less than seventy-five (75) pounds.

SECTION III. ELK HUNTING SEASON

A. Elk Permits

1. Elk harvest is regulated by a quota permit system. Regulations pertaining to elk quota permits may be found at Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 1660-01-08-.05(6).
2. Elk General Season quota permits are valid for designated Elk Hunt Zones (EHZ) on North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area (WMA) as set forth below and on private lands in Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Scott, and Morgan counties.

B. Areas open for Elk Hunting

1. Public Land - Elk hunting on public land is only permitted on the North Cumberland WMA and only in Elk Hunting Zones (EHZ) designated open by the TWRA.

Ten (10) EHZs are designated on the North Cumberland WMA as described below.

EHZ 1: Chestnut Ridge and Fork Mountain

That portion of the North Cumberland WMA west of I-75 and east of the Southern railroad tracks. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

EHZ 2: Adkins and Turley Mountain

That portion west of the Southern Railroad tracks, east of Red Ash Rd. to Wheeler Gap, northeast of Adkins Mountain Road to Jenny Gap, east of Straight Fork Rd. to State Highway 63, east of Hwy 63 to the Southern Railroad tracks. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

EHZ 3: Horse Gap and Wolf Ridge

That portion of North Cumberland WMA south of Adkins Mountain Rd. to Huckaby Knob, west of the trail on Brushy Mountain Ridge to Montgomery Fork Creek, north of Montgomery Fork Creek (downstream) to the North Cumberland WMA boundary line and east of the North Cumberland WMA boundary line to Jenny Gap. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

EHZ 4: Anderson and Massengale Mountain

That portion on the North Cumberland WMA south of Montgomery Fork Creek to Little Bruce Ridge, west of Little Bruce Ridge to Short Haul Rd. to Grave Gap, north of Massengale Mountain road to Poor Mountain Road, north of Poor Mountain Rd. to Norma Rd., east of Norma Rd. to Montgomery Fork Creek. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

EHZ 5: Cross Mountain and Red Ash

That portion on the North Cumberland WMA South of Red Ash Rd. to Wheeler Gap, west of Adkins Mountain Rd. to Huckaby Knob, east of the trail on the Brushy Mountain Ridge to Montgomery Fork Creek, east of Little Bruce Ridge to Short Haul Rd., east of Massengale Rd. to Ash Log Gap, north of boundary back to Southern Railroad, west of Southern Railroad to Red Ash Church. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

EHZ 6: Braden Mountain

That portion of the North Cumberland WMA, north of State Hwy 63, west of State Hwy 297, and east of the Rock House community. EHZ 6 also includes the Mon Petit / Atlas Petroleum property which joins the North Cumberland Boundary on the north. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

EHZ 7: Rock Creek

That portion of the North Cumberland WMA, Ed Carter Unit, south of the Tennessee and Kentucky State Line, north of the Cumberland Trail State Park of US Hwy 25W, and west of Rock Creek Ridge Road to Straight Creek Road to Mountain Road to Hwy 132. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

EHZ 8: Cooper Ridge

That portion of the North Cumberland WMA, Ed Carter Unit, east of Hwy 90 to Rock Creek Ridge Road to Straight Creek Road to Mountain Road to Hwy 132, and south of Valley Creek Road. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

EHZ 9: Valley Creek

That portion of the North Cumberland WMA, Ed Carter Unit, south of the Tennessee and Kentucky State Line, east of Hwy 90, north of Valley Creek Road and west of Hwy 132. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

EHZ 10: Sundquist

The North Cumberland WA Sundquist unit, excluding a 500-yard buffer on each side of Elk Tower Road from 25W to the Hatfield Knob Elk Viewing Tower parking lot. All safety zones designated by the TWRA and private property excluded.

2. Private Land - Elk hunting on private land is only permitted in counties designated open by the TWRA and only with landowner permission. Five (5) counties are designated open including: Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Scott, and Morgan Counties.
3. Elk Season Dates, Quota, and Bag Limits.

A. Elk General Season Quota Permit Hunt

Archery-only Season	Gun/Muzzleloader/ Archery Season^a	Young Sportsman^b Gun/Muzzleloader/ Archery Season	Hunt Area^c	Bag Limit
Last Saturday of September through the following Friday (7-day season)	First Saturday of October through the following Friday (7-day season)	Second Saturday of October through the following Friday (7-day season)	EHZs and Counties designated open by the TWRA	1 antlered elk per permit

^a The season for the permit issued to non-profit wildlife conservation organization begins the first Saturday of October through the following Friday in EHZ 1 and Counties designated open by the TWRA.

^b Resident youths 13-16 may apply for a quota permit. Young sportsmen must be accompanied by a non-hunting adult, 21 years of age or older, who must remain in a position to take immediate control of the hunting device and who must also comply with fluorescent orange regulations, as specified for legal hunters. Multiple youths may be accompanied by a single qualifying adult.

° EHZs are located on North Cumberland WMA only; all other public land is CLOSED to elk hunting. Hunting on private lands within the following counties is allowed with landowner permission: Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Scott, and Morgan Counties.

B. Incidental Take of Elk

A legal deer hunter may harvest an elk (either sex) incidental to deer hunting on all private and public lands open to deer hunting except for public and private lands located in Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Scott, and Morgan counties and except for Big South Fork River and Recreation Area, Scott State Forest, and Obed National Scenic River Corridor. Only one elk per year may be harvested incidental to legal deer hunting.

4. Special Regulations

- a. A Young Sportsman quota permit holder may hunt any EHZ designated open by the TWRA and private lands in designated open counties.
- b. All elk harvested on private and public land (except elk taken incidental to legal deer hunting) must be checked-in at the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area Office on the day of harvest. Elk harvested via incidental take must be reported to the TWRA on the day of the harvest to allow physical checking by TWRA personnel.
- c. The harvest location must be adequately marked so that TWRA employees can identify the harvest site which can be accomplished by either providing GPS coordinates or accompanying a TWRA employee to the harvest site.
- d. Use or possession of electronic radio tracking equipment is prohibited.
- e. Bugling or calling of elk is prohibited within the EHZs during all elk hunts except by permitted hunters and their assistants.

SECTION IV. GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR SPRING AND FALL TURKEY HARVEST

A. Miscellaneous

1. The use of any type of food to feed or attract wild turkeys on WMAs is prohibited. Calling or attempting to call wild turkeys using any call to mimic the sounds made by a wild turkey is prohibited from March 1st to the opening day of the spring turkey hunts on all WMAs. Shooting or stalking turkeys from a boat in Shelby, Dyer, Tipton, Lauderdale, Haywood or Obion counties is prohibited.
2. A licensed turkey hunter, who has filled his/her bag limit or does not possess a valid permit for a quota hunt, may accompany another turkey hunter (except on Oak Ridge WMA) and assist him/her in calling, but may not have a gun or bow in his possession.
3. Legal shooting hours for turkey are thirty (30) minutes before sunrise to sunset.

B. Spring Turkey

1. Season Dates

- a. Statewide: Opens the Saturday closest to April 15th and closes 43 days thereafter (a Sunday).
- b. Young Sportsman Hunt (6-16 years of age): Statewide: The Saturday and Sunday before opening day of the statewide Spring Turkey Season. Youths must be accompanied by a non-hunting adult 21 years of age or older, who must remain in a position to take immediate control of the hunting device, who is not required to have a

license. Multiple youths may be accompanied by a single qualifying adult.

2. Bag and Possession Limits

- a. Statewide: one (1) bearded turkey per day, not to exceed two (2) per season.
- b. Young Sportsman hunt: one (1) bearded turkey per day (counts toward statewide 2 per season limit)
- c. The season bag limit for all hunters may include no more than one (1) turkey that does not meet the definition of an adult turkey as defined below.

An adult turkey is defined as any male or female turkey that meets at least one of the following criteria:

- i. Tail feathers of the same length (central tail feathers are not longer than the rest)
- ii. A beard that is a minimum of six inches (6") in length
- iii. At least one (1) spur that is a minimum of one-half inch (1/2") in length
- iv. White barring on primary wing feathers extends the full length of the feathers.

C. Fall (Turkey/Shotgun/Archery)

- 1. Open for the 14 days preceding the October Young Sportsman Deer Hunt.
- 2. The following counties are closed to fall turkey hunting: Bledsoe, Bradley, Crockett, Dyer, Giles, Haywood, Lake, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Lincoln, Loudon, McMinn, Monroe, Polk, Shelby, Tipton, Unicoi, and Wayne. All other counties are open with a fall season bag limit of one (1) bearded turkey per county.
- 3. In counties open to fall turkey hunting, turkeys may also be harvested with archery equipment during the archery-only deer season and count toward the fall county bag limit.

SECTION V. SPECIAL REGULATIONS.

- A. During deer check-in and on WMA hunts where there are special antler regulations, a legal antler point is a projection at least one inch long, measured from the tip of the point to the nearest edge of the beam, following the mid-line of the projection.
- B. Deer defined as "bonus" animals in the proclamations regarding hunting seasons on WMAs and NWRs do not count toward statewide, seasonal, or daily bag limits.

SECTION VI. REPEAL OF PRIOR PROCLAMATIONS

This proclamation repeals Proclamation No. 22-02.

Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission

Thomas Woods
Chairman

I certify that this is an accurate and complete copy of a proclamation lawfully promulgated and adopted by the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission on the 21st day of April, 2023.

 [Signature]
Secretary
Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 5 day of May, 2023.
Elizabeth Uldrich
Notary Public

My commission expires: September 7, 2026

Proclamation No. 23-02 received and recorded this 5th day of May, 2023; to be effective the 1st day of August, 2023.

Tre Hargett
Tre Hargett, Secretary of State

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Secretary of State
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