

Cabeza Prieta

National Wildlife Refuge
Arizona Game Management Units
46A and 46B
Hunting Regulations 2023–2024



Welcome

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1939 as a “Game Range” to preserve desert bighorn sheep. The purpose of the 860,010-acre refuge was expanded in 1990 to include protection of 803,418 acres of wilderness resource. Today the refuge also helps manage the endangered Sonoran pronghorn, a subspecies of American antelope unique to the Sonoran Desert.

Accessibility

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. For more information, please contact the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eo/public-civil-rights>.

Safety

Due to previous military use, hunters may encounter unexploded ordinance on the refuge; do not approach or disturb ordinance or munitions debris of any kind. Hunters may encounter activity associated with the illegal trafficking of drugs and humans across the U.S.-Mexico border. All hunters should plan for the refuge’s harsh, remote desert landscape, which lacks any permanent source of water or facilities.

Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands must comply with all provisions of State and local law. Target shooting or the discharge of a weapon is prohibited except for the active, legal take of wildlife.

Leave No Trace

All visitors are required to follow Leave No Trace ethics. Dispose of waste properly, leave what you find, minimize campfire impacts, respect wildlife, and be considerate of other visitors.

Vehicles

We allow licensed motor vehicles, including street-legal motorcycles and OHVs, only on public use roads as shown on the map. Motorcycles and OHVs must be fitted with a mast displaying an 80-square-inch orange flag that extends a minimum of 8 feet above the ground. All public use roads are primitive and unpaved. Non-OHV vehicles must be high clearance and four-wheel drive to use El Camino del Diablo and Christmas Pass Road. Two-wheel drive vehicles with high clearance may use Charlie Bell Road.

Camping

Visitors are encouraged to camp at the three established primitive campgrounds (Papago Well, Tule Well, and Christmas Pass), but dispersed camping is allowed outside of these campgrounds. Vehicles must stay within 50 feet of the centerline of the public access roads. No camping within ¼ mile of any wildlife water. Camping is limited to 14 days in a 28-day period unless otherwise allowed through a special use permit. We allow contained charcoal fires and propane stoves at any campsite on the refuge. Wood fires are limited to established fire rings or grates at designated campgrounds, and visitors must bring their own wood. However, backcountry hikers may use dead and down wood for campfires when traveling on foot or horseback. Due to environmental conditions, fire restrictions may be in place; therefore please check for fire restrictions prior to the use of fire, especially during summer months.

Hunting Regulations

Following these hunting regulations will provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. We allow hunting in accordance with Federal regulations governing public use on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Hunting will be in accordance with applicable State of Arizona regulations subject to the conditions stated below.

Access

Hunters must obtain a visitor access permit from bmgr.recaccess.com which includes watching a safety video and accepting a Hold Harmless Agreement. When entering the refuge, hunters should complete a Self-Clearing Visitor Registration Form (FWS Form 3-2405) available on the refuge website and at boundary kiosks located at all refuge entrances. Follow instructions on the form regarding submission.

WHEN: Hunters may access the refuge at any time, but hunting is restricted to daylight hours, defined as from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

WHERE: Most of the refuge is open to hunting with the exception of ½-mile no hunting zones around the Sonoran pronghorn captive breeding pen, U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Boundary Camp and Camp Grip, and established campgrounds. We restrict hunting on 3,593 acres in the Las Playas area to bighorn sheep only.

Bighorn Sheep Hunting

All bighorn sheep hunters are required to obtain a Special Use Permit (FWS Form 3-1383-G). Contact the refuge for more information.

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge

1611 North Second Avenue
Ajo, AZ 85321

520-387-6483

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

1-800-344-WILD

July 2023



Hunt Type	Season Dates	Legal Wildlife	Tag/Stamp Required and Other Regulations
Desert Bighorn Sheep Units 46A East & West	Dec. 1–31, 2023	Any one ram	Permit-tag and refuge SUP
Desert Bighorn Sheep Units 46B East & West	Nov. 17–Dec. 7, 2023 Dec. 8–31, 2023	Any one ram	Permit-tag and refuge SUP
Mule Deer	Nov. 10–19, 2023	Any antlered deer	Permit-tag
Mountain Lion	Aug. 25, 2023–May 31, 2024	Any lion except kittens or females accompanied by spotted kittens	Over-the-counter nonpermit-tag
Gambel's Quail	Oct. 13, 2023–Feb. 11, 2024	Any	N/A
Mourning Dove - Late Season Dove Hunt only	Nov. 17, 2023–Dec. 31, 2023	Any	Arizona Migratory Bird Stamp
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Sept. 1, 2023–Aug. 31, 2024	Any	N/A
Rabbit and Coyote	Jul. 1, 2023–Jun. 30, 2024	Any	N/A
Bobcat and Fox	Aug. 1, 2023–Mar. 31, 2024	Any	N/A

Stock Animals

We allow the use of stock animals with a Special Use Permit (FWS Form 3-1383-G) and various restrictions. Contact the refuge for more information.

Hunting Guide Service

Hunting guide service requires a Special Use Permit (FWS Form 3-1383 C).

Harvest Reporting

All hunters must complete the Hunter Harvest Information section of the Self-Clearing Visitor Registration Form (FWS Form 3-2405) and place it in the designated box at each boundary kiosk when leaving the refuge. If not traveling past a boundary kiosk upon departure, please return to the refuge in person or via mail or email.

State regulations prescribe methods of take, bag limits, and license requirements. Season dates vary annually; consult Arizona Game and Fish Department

(AZGFD) regulations for exact dates. AZGFD permit-tags or nonpermit-tags (see AZGFD regulations) are required for big game species.

Endangered Sonoran Pronghorn

The refuge is home to the endangered Sonoran pronghorn, a subspecies of American antelope unique to the Sonoran Desert. Please report sightings to the refuge and avoid disturbing pronghorn to help us in our recovery efforts. If you encounter a pronghorn on foot, attempt to avoid the pronghorn by quietly walking around it, backing up if necessary to stay at least 150 yards away from or out of sight of the pronghorn. If while driving you see a pronghorn standing still, reduce speed to 10 mph or slower until at least ¼-mile past the pronghorn. If while driving you see a pronghorn running, stop the vehicle and wait to proceed until the pronghorn is out of sight. It is illegal to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, or kill Sonoran pronghorn or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

Prohibited Activities

- Collecting or disturbing plants, wildlife, rocks, or artifacts such as arrowheads and pottery shards
- Use of electronic or photographic trail monitoring devices, including game cameras
- Leaving any item on the refuge, including marking or flagging any plant or other refuge feature with reflectors, paint, or other substance
- Vehicle travel off of public use roads
- Wheeled carts in designated wilderness
- Use of dogs for hunting, except for the pointing and retrieval of birds
- Hunting of migratory birds during the early season dove hunt
- Night hunting
- Falconry
- Trapping



