

Cougar

Licenses, applications, harvest reporting and general information: **1-888-248-6866**

General Information

- While in The Field You Must Have All of the Following (page 9)
- All Cougar Harvests Must Be Tagged (pages 31–32)
- License Requirements and Fees (see pages 8–14)
- Legal Sporting Arms for Cougar Hunting (see page 30)
- Hunting on Military Reservations (see page 44)
- Cougar Licenses must be purchased at least two calendar days before hunting.

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Licenses

An OTC Cougar License may be purchased at license vendors, NMDGF offices, online: www.wildlife.state.nm.us or by telephone: 1-888-248-6866. Before purchasing an Over-the-Counter (OTC) Cougar License, hunters must purchase or possess a Game-hunting License or Game-hunting & Fishing License. If planning to hunt within 14 days of online or telephone purchase, hunters may be required to obtain tags at a license vendor or NMDGF office. Tags include instructions for proper tagging. **Cougar Licenses must be purchased at least two calendar days before hunting.**

Bag Limit: The bag limit is two cougars.

Cougar license holders who have successfully harvested two cougars may request authorization from NMDGF to take an additional 2 cougars in the same license year. Tags may be used in Cougar Management Zones that have not met the established harvest limits during at least two of the three previous seasons. Before requesting additional authorizations, licensed hunters must meet all reporting and tagging requirements for two cougars already taken.

No hunter may take any spotted kitten(s) or any female accompanied by a spotted kitten(s). New Mexico law does not require cougar meat to be taken from the field.

Mandatory Cougar Identification Course

NMDGF requires all cougar hunters to successfully complete a cougar identification course. The Cougar ID number is issued upon successful completion of the course through your NMDGF online account.

Cougar Seasons

Statewide Cougar Season: April 1, 2019–March 31, 2020.

Harvest Limits for All Zones

New Mexico is divided into 19 Cougar Management Zones, enabling NMDGF to better manage regional cougar populations. Each zone has two harvest limits: 1, the total number of cougars that may be harvested (total limit); and 2, the number of female cougars that may be harvested (female limit). Harvest limits for each Cougar Management Zone are listed in the table on page 122.

Cougar Management Zones will close and hunting will cease when harvests reach 90% of the total limit or 90% of the female sublimit, whichever occurs first.

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Zone Closures

Before hunting, hunters must verify the zone is open by checking online or by telephone: www.wildlife.state.nm.us/hunting/information-by-animal/big-game/cougar or 1-877-950-5466.

Baiting: It is illegal to hunt cougars over bait in New Mexico.

Use of Traps and Foot Snares: Hunters with a valid cougar license **and a valid trapper license** may use traps or foot snares to harvest cougars on state trust land or private deeded land with written permission from the landowner. Neck snares are not permitted. Restrictions for cougar take using traps or foot snares shall follow the regulations on methods, trap specification, trap inspection, and wildlife removal as defined on pages 124–127. Legal trapping and foot snaring dates for cougar are Nov. 1–March 31.

Foot snares are prohibited in GMU 27 and those portions of GMU 26 (San Luis Mountains) designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as critical habitat for jaguars. Jaguar critical habitat area in GMU 26 can be viewed at: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> by clicking the **online mapper** link and entering 'San Luis Mountains' in the **Find address or place** search menu.

Tagging of Cougar Hides

Harvested cougars must be both carcass tagged and pelt tagged. The carcass tag must be properly notched and attached immediately after the animal is harvested. The hunter must present the carcass tag, skull, and hide for pelt tagging to any District Conservation Officer or NMDGF office within five days of killing the cougar or before transporting the hide outside New Mexico, whichever occurs first. **Hunters who appoint a designee to transport the harvested cougar for pelt tagging are required to contact a conservation officer prior to pelt tagging.** Hunters are required to present to any NMDGF office the **unfrozen skull** of any cougar killed with the mouth fixed open for removal of a premolar tooth. The pelt tag must remain attached to the hide until the hide is processed. Improperly tagged hides will be seized by NMDGF.

Proof of Sex

The testicles, penis and/or baculum of a male, or the vulva of a female, must remain naturally attached to the hide and be visible to the NMDGF's tagging official. NMDGF will only pelt tag a harvested cougar if proof of sex is attached to the hide and readily visible to the tagging official. Cougar hides presented to the NMDGF for tagging without proof of sex attached will be seized.

Livestock Damage

Landowners, lessees and/or their regular employees may without a license kill any cougar that has killed domestic livestock or presents an immediate threat to human life or property. Any person taking such action **must report the incident to NMDGF within 24 hours.** Pelts, claws and other parts of depredating animals taken under this provision are the property of the State of New Mexico and must be delivered to NMDGF.

Use of Dogs

Dog use is **not allowed** on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) or to pursue cougars during September bow seasons. Dog use is **allowed** to hunt cougars elsewhere during hunts for any legal sporting arm. When dogs are used to hunt cougars, the licensed hunter who harvests the cougar must be present continuously from the time any dog is released.

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Use of Dogs—continued.

Dogs may only be released during legal hunting hours. There is no "pursuit" or "training" season outside the regular open season.

Closed Areas: Sugarite Canyon State Park; Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River Area, including Taos Valley Overlook; Subunit 6B (Valles Caldera National Preserve). **Wildlife Management Areas:**

Cougar hunting by licensed deer and/or elk hunters who also possess a valid cougar license is allowed in the E.S. Barker, Colin Neblett, Humphries, Marquez, Sargent and Urraca WMAs, and the Valle Vidal. All other Wildlife Management Areas are closed. Licensed deer and elk hunters may hunt cougar in open WMAs provided they: 1, Possess a valid deer or elk license for the WMA; 2, Possess a cougar license with tags; 3, Use the sporting arm type specified for their deer or elk hunt; 4, Hunt only during the dates of their deer or elk hunt; and 5, The harvest limit in the Cougar Zone has not been met. Dogs are not allowed. **Restricted**

Areas: Only bows and crossbows may be used to hunt cougars in the Sandia Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest in Units 8 and 14. Zone E—Unit 10 and Zone G,H,I—Units 13, 18, 19, 20: These units are subject to closure by the Forest Service and/or the military during operations. **Florida Mountains**

Hunt Area—Unit 25: Cougar hunting is closed in the Florida Mountains Hunt Area during any ibex season, except by licensed ibex hunters (only for allowed sporting arm type and season dates as specified on the ibex license). **Electronic calls:** Electronic calls may be used for cougar.

Cougar Management Zones

Cougar Management Zone locations in New Mexico are designated in the map on page 123.

Zones and Season Limits

Zone	Open Units	Total Limit	Female Limit
A	2, 7	42	13
B	5, 50, 51	28	8
C	43, 45, 46, 48, 49, 53	85	43
D	41, 42, 47, 59	23	12
E	9, 10	50	15
F	6	46	23
G	13, 17	73	37
H	18–20	37	16
I	36–38	24	7
J	15, 16, 21, 25	89	27
K	22–24	66	33
L	26, 27	19	10
M	31–33, 39, 40	31	9
N	4, 52	15	5
O	12	21	6
P	56, 57, 58.	14	7
Q	28–30, 34	35	11
R	54, 55	26	8
S	8, 14	25	13

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Cougar Management Zones and Game Management Units

