

General Rules

It Is Illegal to:

New Mexico state law makes the following unlawful: reckless and careless handling of firearms; improper handling of fire; property damage; polluting streams, lakes and other water; discarding refuse on public or private property without permission; damaging telephone wires by gunfire or otherwise interfering with communications; and hunting while intoxicated.

Furthermore, it is illegal to:

- Kill more than one of the following: elk, pronghorn antelope, cougar, Barbary sheep, bighorn sheep, javelina, oryx, ibex, bear, deer or turkey during any license year except as permitted by rule.
- Apply for, buy or use more than one license or tag for any big-game species during any license year, except as permitted by rule.
- Take or attempt to take any game for another person or to use a license issued to another.
- Take or attempt to take game species over ground baited with any material or scent distributed there to entice the animals, except quail on private land. Scent-masking agents may be used on one's person, but not to attract big game.
- Use live animals as blinds or decoys to take or try to take game species.
- Use any electronically or mechanically recorded calling device to take or try to take protected species except protected furbearers, cougars and nongame species.
- Park any motor vehicle or camp within 300 yards of any man-made water hole, water well or watering tank used by wildlife or domestic stock without prior consent of the private landowner, private land lessee or public land management agency.
- Shoot at, wound, take, attempt to take or kill any protected species or artificial wildlife (decoy) on, from or across any graded and maintained public road or to shoot at game from within the fenced right-of-way of any paved road or highway or from within 40 feet of the pavement or maintained surface if no right-of-way fence exists.
- Shoot at, pursue, harass, harry, drive or rally any protected species by use of or from a motor-driven vehicle, powerboat, sailboat or aircraft.
- Hunt from, signal game's location to hunters from or harass game with aircraft; hunt game observed from aircraft within 48 hours of observation; or hunt game the same day of air travel, except by commercial airline or direct flight to a landing strip.
- Shine spotlights or other artificial lights into areas where big game or livestock might be, if persons using the light have in possession any firearm or implement capable of killing big game or livestock.
- Discharge a firearm within 150 yards of a dwelling or building, not including abandoned or vacated buildings on public land, during the hunting seasons, without permission of the owner or lessee thereof.
- Take any animals that are protected by law but not listed as game species and those that are listed as endangered or threatened species.

License Privileges Can Be Revoked

A varying number of points are assessed based on the type of violation committed, including providing false information on a harvest report. Any person accumulating 20 points or more within any consecutive three-year period, shall be considered for revocation and suspension of all hunting, fishing and trapping license privileges or guiding and outfitting registration or for revocation and suspension of any permit or certificate issued under Chapter 17 and its implementing rules.

Defendants may request a hearing by an outside Hearing Officer if they disagree. Recommendations for point assessment are made to the State Game Commission, which in turn, can revoke a person's license privileges.

As a state participating in the interstate "Wildlife Violator Compact", New Mexico may recognize the suspension of license privileges of a person listed as a wildlife violator by another participating state. Contact the Law Enforcement Division for specific revocation information at (505) 476-8065.

Forfeitures

Sporting arms may be seized and forfeited if they are used in taking, attempting to take, illegally possessing or transporting big game during closed season, exceeding the bag limit on big game during open season or taking or attempting to take big game by use of spotlight or artificial light. Vehicles and sporting arms used by anyone charged with spotlighting or hunting with the aid of artificial light may be confiscated at the scene and are subject to forfeiture and sale at auction upon conviction.

Substantial Civil Assessments for Poaching

The State Game Commission has adopted substantial civil assessments for the illegal taking of trophy game animals to recover the loss of public trust resources. Maximum assessments are:

• Elk	\$10,000
• Deer	\$10,000
• Bighorn sheep	\$10,000
• Ibex	\$10,000
• Oryx	\$10,000
• Pronghorn antelope	\$8,000
• Barbary sheep	\$6,000
• Turkey	\$500
• Trout	\$150

In addition to the above civil assessments, poachers may incur criminal fines listed below.

Criminal Fines for First Offense

- Illegally taking or attempting to take elk, bighorn sheep, oryx, ibex or Barbary sheep; illegally selling big-game meat: **\$1,000**;
- Illegally taking or attempting to take deer, pronghorn antelope, javelina, bear or cougar; exceeding the big-game bag limit; falsely purchasing a resident license: **\$400**;
- Hunting with artificial light: **\$300**;
- Attempting to exceed the big-game bag limit after having tagged a similar species: **\$200**;
- Hunting without a license, using another person's license: **\$100**;
- Hunting without a Habitat Stamp or Habitat Management and Access Validation: **\$50 to \$500**;

Fines for other offenses can be up to \$500 and/or six months in jail, fines for second, third and subsequent offenses are increased.

Possession, Donation or Sale of Game

It is unlawful to possess game without a proper license or other evidence that game was legally taken. Carcasses, meat and internal organs of game mammals or game birds may be donated, but not sold or bartered. Only the skin, head, antlers, horns and claws of legally taken protected species and feathers from nonmigratory game birds may be donated, sold or bartered. The person conveying any of the above to another person must supply the recipient with a written statement showing a description of the skin, head, antlers, horns, claws or feathers or kind and number of the game, the date and county where the item was taken, the disposer's name and address, number of the hunting license under which the hunter took the item and the date and place of the transaction or donation. See page 60 for an example of a donation certificate. It is unlawful to possess the head, horns or antlers of all big-game species found in the field (except for obviously shed antlers) without a receipt from the Department.

Waste of Game

Anyone who takes a deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, Barbary sheep, ibex or oryx, must transport the edible portions of the meat from the field for human consumption. "Edible portions" of game mammals include all four quarters with 90% of the meat taken, backstraps, tenderloins and at least 75% of the neck meat. Hunters are not required to remove the rib cage or organs from the field. Anyone who takes a turkey, must remove the breast, legs and thigh meat from the field. Anyone who wounds or may have wounded any big-game species must make a reasonable attempt to track the animal and reduce it to possession. This requirement does not authorize trespass.

Proof of Legal Game

You must keep proof of sex with all game species until you get the game to the place where it will be consumed or placed in cold storage. The antlers or horns (or the scalp and both ears of female or immature animals) of any deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep or Barbary sheep, ibex or oryx must remain attached to the skull or skull plate. The external genitalia of any bear or cougar must remain attached to the hide and be readily visible until the hide has been inspected and tagged by a Department of Game and Fish representative. The beard and a small patch of feathers surrounding the beard of a turkey must remain attached when the bag limit is a bearded turkey.

Use of Dogs

Dogs may not be used to hunt big game except bear and cougar. Furbearers may be hunted with dogs. Certain exceptions apply. See specific species sections. When dogs are used during a hunt, the licensed hunter intending to harvest the bear or cougar must be present continuously once any dog is released. Leashed dogs may be used to locate wounded or dead pronghorn antelope, elk, deer or javelina. Hunters must register at the local Department Area Office before their hunt begins.

Federal Laws

Transporting illegally taken game across state lines is a violation of the federal Lacey Act. Such transport, if done in connection with commercial activity, may be classified as a felony.

Carcass Tag

A carcass tag must be attached to all big game and turkeys by the person who killed the animal.

1. Immediately after killing any big game or turkey, notch out the month and date of kill from the carcass tag.
2. Attach the tag, NOT THE LICENSE, to the carcass. The tag must remain attached to the carcass when the carcass is left unattended in the field, is in camp, is in any vehicle, is at a residence or is at a place of storage. To prevent its loss, you may temporarily remove the notched tag from the carcass while you are removing the animal from the field to a camp or vehicle, but you must immediately reattach the tag upon arrival. If you have to make numerous trips to remove the carcass from the field, the tag should remain attached to the portion of the carcass you leave in a camp or vehicle.
3. Bear, cougar and bobcats also must be tagged with a pelt tag. In addition, bear and cougar must be tagged with a carcass tag provided with the hunting license. See pages 53, 55 and 58.
4. Every bighorn sheep ram head taken in or imported into New Mexico must have a seal inserted into one horn by the Department or other wildlife agency. The seal authorizes possession and transportation of the head within New Mexico. Bighorn sheep heads found in the field in New Mexico remain the property of the State. See page 42.

Storage

Big game and turkey carcass tags must remain with the meat. They authorize possession and storage for one year from the date of kill. To store or possess meat after this date, you must have a storage permit from the Department of Game and Fish.

Trophies taken to a taxidermist should be accompanied by a written statement showing the kind and number of game involved, the name and hunting license number of the person who took it and the date of delivery to the taxidermist.

Transportation of Horses

All horses being transported must be inspected by your local livestock inspector. Nonresidents with horses must have proof of ownership. More information is available from the Livestock Board in Albuquerque, N.M. at (505) 841-6161.

Blaze Orange

There is no state law requiring hunters to wear blaze orange, but it is highly recommended. However, all hunters on military properties and youth hunters participating in firearm hunts on the Valles Caldera National Preserve must wear at least 244 square inches of blaze orange, approximately the size of a hunting vest. See specific requirements for each military reservation.

Transportation of Game

Game properly carcass tagged or accompanied by a written statement may be transported within and outside the state. However, bighorn sheep ram heads must have a seal; bear, cougar and bobcat hides must have a pelt tag. It is unlawful to transport portions of dead deer or elk taken in designated areas in which chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been confirmed. See page 22.