

2026

UPLAND GAME BIRD

MONTANA FWP | Hunting Regulations



Spruce Grouse | *Falciennis canadensis*

TURN IN POACHERS: TIPMONT.MT.GOV

fwp.mt.gov

Highlights/ Reminders

- **Nonresidents hunting on public lands and privately owned lands that are a part of a hunting access program begin hunting 10 days later than residents for all species except mountain grouse.**
- Free supplemental permit required for sage grouse hunting.
- Due to restoration efforts in recent years, sharp-tailed grouse may now be encountered west of the Continental Divide and sharp-tailed grouse hunting west of the Continental Divide is closed.
- Anyone training bird dogs using game birds NOT raised in captivity needs to hold a license, whether on private or public land. If you are training on captive-reared birds, a license is not required. Nonresident training dates have changed since last year (Sep. 1 through March 31).

Regulations Adopted by Fish and Wildlife Commission

Regulations for season dates, structures, and restrictions were adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission on Dec. 4, 2025, under the authority granted in MCA 87-1-301 and are valid March 1, 2026, through Feb. 28, 2027. The F&W Commission reserves the authority to amend the seasons, limits, and regulations herein if deemed necessary for wildlife management purposes. Statutes and other information, including other agencies' restrictions, are provided as a courtesy and do not fall under commission authority. Christy Clark, Director.

Discrimination Prohibited – State and Federal laws, Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or disability. Anyone believing he or she has been discriminated against (as described above) in any FWP program, activity, or facility may write to FWP Human Resources, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701 or the Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW Washington, DC 20270. Any changes made to this printed publication can be found on the FWP website or by inquiring at any local FWP office.

Definitions

Upland Game Birds: sharp-tailed grouse, blue grouse, spruce (Franklin) grouse, prairie chicken, sage hen or sage grouse, ruffed grouse, ring-necked pheasant, Hungarian partridge, ptarmigan, wild turkey, and chukar partridge.

Hunt: to pursue, shoot, wound, take, harvest, kill, chase, lure, possess, or capture, or the act of a person possessing a weapon, as defined in MCA 45-2-101, or using a dog or a bird of prey for the purpose of shooting, wounding, taking, harvesting, killing, possessing, or capturing wildlife protected by the laws of this state in any location that wildlife may inhabit, whether or not the wildlife is then or subsequently taken. The term includes an attempt to take or harvest by any means, including but not limited to pursuing, shooting, wounding, killing, chasing, luring, possessing, or capturing.

Site of the Kill: the location where a game animal or game bird expires and the person responsible for the death takes physical possession of the carcass.

License Chart		
License	Cost/Stipulation(s)	
	Resident	Nonresident
Base Hunting License	\$10	\$50
	Prerequisite for hunting or applying for a permit or license.	
Conservation	\$4 Ages 12-17, 62+ \$8 Ages 18-61 years	\$10
	Prerequisite	
Upland Game Bird	\$10 Ages 18 - 61	\$127 Ages 18 and over
	\$5.00 Ages 12-17*, Senior (62+) or Disabled	\$63.50 Ages 12-17*
Turkey	\$6.50 Residents must have an Upland Game Bird License to purchase a Turkey License.	\$57.50 with an Upland Game Bird License, OR \$115 without an Upland Game Bird License.
Supplemental Sage Grouse Hunting Permit	Free: Permit required for hunting sage grouse.	
3-day Upland Game Bird License	-	\$60: 3-day license for nonresidents. The license is not valid for sage grouse at any time or for ring-neck pheasants during the opening week of the season. See page 9 and 10 for season dates.
Bird Dog Training License	\$5.00 Ages 18+ Free: Ages 12 - 17	\$10.00 Ages 18+ Free: Ages 12 - 17
3-day Shooting Preserve License	-	\$20: Alternative to an Upland Game Bird License for nonresidents who wish to hunt only on shooting preserves (private).
Resident Flathead Reservation Use Permit	A valid "Resident of the Flathead Reservation Use Permit" with a valid Flathead Reservation Bird Stamp will be honored by the state wherever hunting for upland or migratory game birds is lawful in Montana. Check with Flathead Reservation at 406-675-2700 ext 7200 for details.	
* Some 10- and 11-year-olds are also eligible. See Youth Hunting Opportunities for license requirements.		

Obtain A License Or Permit (MCA 87-2-401 - 405)

Licenses are available at all Fish, Wildlife & Parks offices, license ambassadors throughout the state, and online at ols.fwp.mt.gov. The license is valid March 1 through Feb. 28 of the following year.

Turkey License Limit – A turkey hunter may hold up to 17 wild turkey licenses per year. This may include one General Turkey License and a combination of Regional Turkey Licenses. Per-hunter limits for Regional Turkey Licenses vary by opportunity.

Supplemental Sage Grouse Hunting Permit - All upland game bird hunters that choose to hunt sage grouse must obtain a free “Supplemental Sage Grouse Hunting Permit” before engaging in sage grouse hunting.

Bird Dog Training License - Anyone training bird dogs using game birds NOT raised in captivity needs to hold a license, whether on private or public land. If you are training on captive-reared birds, a license is not required. Season dates only apply for training on wild birds on public lands. These licenses can be purchased online through the FWP online license service, and any FWP regional office or any licenses provider. As a condition of issuance an individual must identify the number of dogs he or she intends to train and any other information the department deems necessary. A special recreational use license (SRUL) from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation may be needed. See information under “State School Trust Lands” on page 6.

Residency (MCA 87-6-302)

- It is unlawful to swear to or to affirm a false statement in order to obtain an original or replacement resident hunting and/or fishing license OR to assist an unqualified applicant in obtaining a resident license.

Resident (MCA 87-2-102)

- To be a lawful Montana resident and eligible to purchase any Montana resident fishing, hunting, and trapping licenses, you must:
 - have been physically living in Montana for at least 180 consecutive days immediately prior to purchasing a resident license;
 - register your vehicle(s) in Montana;
 - be registered to vote in Montana if you're registered to vote at all;
 - not possess (or have applied for any) current resident hunting, fishing, or trapping privileges in another state or country;
 - file Montana state income tax returns as a resident, if you are required to file.
 - Once you have established your residency, you must continue to meet all these requirements and physically reside in Montana as your principal or primary place of abode for not less than 120 days per year (days need not be consecutive).
 - A person is NOT considered a resident for the purposes of this section if the person:
 - > claims residence in any other state or country for any purpose; or
 - > is an absentee property owner paying property tax on property in Montana.
- To purchase an annual resident Conservation License you will be required to show a valid Montana Driver's License

(MDL), a valid Montana Identification Card (MIC), or a valid Tribal Identification Card (TIC).

- If your MDL or MIC was issued less than six months ago, you may be required to show additional proof of residency. An out-of-state driver's license is NOT an acceptable form of ID for resident license purchases. Contact your local FWP office for specifics.

Hunter Education Requirements (MCA 87-2-105)

If you were born after Jan. 1, 1985, you are required to show proof of completing a Montana hunter safety and education course or an approved hunter safety course from any other state or province prior to applying for or purchasing a hunting license, whether the hunting license is for the rifle or archery season.

Licensing Youth Hunting Opportunities

A resident or nonresident **youth 12 years of age or older** may hunt any game species for which their license is valid. Those who will reach 12 years of age by Jan. 16, 2027, may hunt any game species, for which their license is valid, after Aug. 15 of the 2026 license year. Proof of hunter education must be presented at the time of purchase.

An **Apprentice Hunter** is a resident or nonresident at least 10 years of age, certified at an FWP office. This allows the apprentice to hunt some species, while accompanied by a mentor, without first completing a hunter education course. The Apprentice Hunter may not purchase a mountain lion, black bear, or wolf license or apply for a bighorn sheep license or a hunting license or permit with a limited quota. The Apprentice Hunter may not purchase an elk license if he/she is under 15 years of age. Other restrictions apply. See our website for details: fwp.mt.gov/hunt/education/apprentice-hunter

In order to carry or use a firearm for any reason, a youth under 14 years of age must be accompanied by a person having charge or custody of the youth, or be under the supervision of a qualified firearms safety instructor or an adult 18 years of age or older who has been authorized by the youth's parent or guardian, MCA 45-8-344.

Hunters with a Disability

If you or someone you know has a disability and/or is aging, and is in need of assistive technology (AT) or adaptive equipment to help you participate in outdoor recreation, please contact:

MonTech at the University of Montana Rural Institute,
29 McGill Hall,
Missoula, MT 5982
(406) 243-5751

montech.ruralinstitute.utm.edu/



Laws & Rules

- Statute denoted by MCA.
- Commission Rule denoted by CR.
- Administrative Rule denoted by ARM.

Aircraft, Unlawful Use (MCA 87-6-208) (includes UAVs/drones)

A person may not:

- Kill, take, or shoot at any game bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal from an aircraft;
- Use an aircraft:
 - to spot or locate any game animal for the purpose of hunting within 24 hours after utilizing an aircraft;
 - to concentrate, pursue, drive, rally, or stir up a game bird, migratory bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal; or
 - to intentionally interfere with the hunting of a game bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal, including operating an aircraft in a manner that disturbs or otherwise affects the behavior of a game bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal;
- Land an aircraft in violation of state or federal land use travel plans while pursuing a game bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal;
- Land an aircraft on private property without written permission while pursuing a game bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal; or
- Spot or locate a game animal or fur-bearing animal and communicate the location of the game animal or fur-bearing animal to any person as an aid to hunting;

while in, using, or operating an aircraft; or within 24 hours after utilizing an aircraft. The provisions of this section do not apply: during emergency situations; when search and rescue operations are being conducted; or for predator control as permitted by the department of livestock; or when supporting an agricultural operation.

Artificial Light (MCA 87-6-401) - It is unlawful for anyone to take or attempt to take any game bird with the aid of projected artificial light. Use of rifle scopes that project an artificial light to illuminate the target or project infrared light visible only with specialized optics to illuminate the target are unlawful for the taking of game birds.

Baiting (MCA 87-6-401, CR)

- It is unlawful for anyone to hunt or attempt to hunt any game animal or game bird by the aid of or with the use of any bait, salt lick, trap, snare, or set gun.
- Baiting means the placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering of food sources or salt so as to constitute a lure or attraction.

Bird Dog Training (MCA 87-3-602, 87-6-102, CR) - Training of bird hunting dogs using game birds not raised in captivity is allowed with the purchase of a Bird Dog Training License. This applies to both public and private lands. Training dates are Aug. 1 to March 31 for Montana residents. Training dates are Sep. 1 to March 31 for Non-residents. Training on captive-reared birds does not require a Bird Dog Training License. Training dates only apply to training on public lands.

Check Stations (MCA 87-6-218) - All hunters are required by law to stop as directed at all designated check stations on their way to and from hunting areas, even if they have no game to be checked.

Evidence of Sex for Pheasants and Turkey (MCA 87-6-406, CR)

It is unlawful to possess or transport within the state any pheasant or any turkey taken during the spring (male) season unless one leg and foot are left naturally attached for evidence

of sex. The leg and foot shall remain attached at all times while being transported from the place where taken until it has arrived at the permanent residence of the possessor. When transporting any species for which an electronic tag is issued, the individual transporting the harvested animal's carcass must retain the confirmation number. The confirmation number must be presented to a department employee upon request MCA 87-6-201.

Evidence of Species for Upland Game Birds (MCA 87-6-406, CR)

- No person shall transport within the state any sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, mountain grouse, or partridge unless one fully feathered wing is left naturally attached for species identification. The wing shall remain attached at all times while being transported from the place where taken until it has arrived at the permanent residence of the possessor.
- If a hunter puts or leaves any game birds at any place or in the custody of another person, the birds should be tagged by the hunter with the following information: 1) the hunter's ALS number; 2) the hunter's signature; 3) the hunter's address; 4) the total number of birds involved, by species; and 5) the dates such birds were killed. Game birds should be tagged if the birds are being transported by another person for the hunter, or if the birds have been left for cleaning, storage (including temporary storage), shipment, or taxidermy services.

Hunter Orange - Shooting another hunter while swinging the gun on an upland bird is the leading cause of hunting-related accidents in Montana. Although not required, it is strongly recommended that all bird hunters wear at least a hunter orange hat or cap to reduce the chance of an accident.

Hunting Hours (CR) - Authorized hunting hours for the taking of upland game birds begin one-half hour before sunrise and end one-half hour after sunset each day of the hunting season. See official sunrise-sunset tables in these regulations.

Indian Reservations (CR) - The F&W Commission has, by rule, closed all lands within the exterior boundaries of Montana's Indian Reservations to the hunting of upland game birds with the use of state licenses unless provided for in a cooperative agreement between the Tribal Government and the State of Montana. The State of Montana and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have entered into a cooperative management agreement on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Please check for upland game bird regulations specific to the Flathead Reservation. For information call the Kalispell FWP office at 406-752-5501 or the Tribes in Pablo at 406-883-2888 ext. 7200.

Exception: State upland game bird regulations apply to deeded "fee" land within the exterior boundary of the Crow Indian Reservation.

Kill Site Verification (ARM 12.6.1005) - At the request of a department game warden, it is required to return to the kill site of any game animal, game bird, wolf, or furbearer that has been hunted or trapped.

Landowner Permission (MCA 87-6-415) - A person may not hunt or attempt to hunt furbearers, game animals, migratory game birds, nongame wildlife, predatory animals, upland game birds, or wolves while hunting on private property without first obtaining permission of the landowner, the lessee, or their agents. Regardless of whether the land is posted or not, hunters must have permission from the landowner, lessee, or their agent before hunting on private property.

For the purposes of this section, the term “hunt” has the same meaning as provided in **87-6-101** and includes entering private land to: (a) retrieve wildlife; or (b) access public land to hunt.

License and Permit Possession/Use (MCA 87-6-304, MCA 87-6-305)

- A person may not apply for, purchase, or possess more than one license, permit, or tag of any one class or more than one special license for any one species. This provision does not apply to more than one license, permit or tag authorized by the commission.
- A person may not hunt in this state unless the person is carrying the required license or permit at the time.
- A person may not refuse to exhibit a license or permit and the identification used in purchasing a license or permit for inspection to a warden or other officer requesting to see it.
- A person may not at any time alter or change a license in any material manner or loan or transfer any license to another person.
- The person, including a minor child, to whom a license is issued shall validate the license.
- A person commits the offense of unlawful possession of a hunting license or permit if the person knowingly carries or has physical control over a valid and unused hunting license or permit issued to another person while in any location that the species to be hunted may inhabit.
- This does not apply: to a person who is carrying or has physical control over a valid and unused license or permit issued to that person’s spouse or to any minor when the spouse or minor is hunting with that person. This exception also applies to a license or permit issued electronically.

License Validation and Tagging of Turkeys (MCA 87-6-412)

A person who kills, captures, or possesses a wild turkey by authority of any turkey tag or permit:

- shall validate the tag either electronically in accordance with rules adopted pursuant to 87-2-119 or by cutting out from the license or tag the date the turkey was killed prior to the person leaving or the turkey being removed from the site of the kill;
- shall keep the license or tag accompanying the turkey while the turkey is in the person’s possession unless the license or tag was electronically validated; and
- may not validate a turkey license or tag that is restricted to a hunting district other than the hunting district where the turkey was killed.

Littering (MCA 75-10-212, 87-6-920)

It is unlawful to dump or leave any garbage, dead animal, or other debris or refuse:

- in or upon any highway, road, street, or alley of this state;
- in or upon any public property, highway, street, or alley under the control of the state;
- within 200 yards of a public highway, road, street, or alley or public property;
- on privately owned property where hunting, fishing, or other recreation is permitted.

A holder of a Montana resident or nonresident fishing or hunting license or camping permit convicted of littering campgrounds, public or private lands, streams, or lakes while hunting, fishing, or camping shall forfeit any current hunting, fishing, or trapping license issued by this state and the privilege to hunt, fish, camp, or trap in this state for a period of one year from the date of conviction.

Means of Take (CR) - Upland game birds may only be taken by hunting (firearms, archery, or falconry). See individual species regulations for species specific restrictions.

Motorized Vehicles (MCA 87-6-405)

It is unlawful for anyone to:

- Hunt or attempt to hunt any game animal or game bird from any self-propelled (motorized) or drawn vehicle. To be lawful, a hunter must have two feet on the ground and his/her body outside of the vehicle. Holders of the Permit To Hunt From A Vehicle are the exception to this.
- Use a motorized vehicle to concentrate, drive, rally, stir up, corral, or harass game animals.
- While hunting a person may not use a motor-driven vehicle off-road on state land.
- Use a motor-driven vehicle on a road or trail on state land if that road or trail is posted as closed by the land management agency. This restriction applies only to state land and not to federal land. For more information related to state school trust lands, see page 6.
- Use a motor-driven vehicle other than on a road or trail designated for travel by a landowner unless permission has been given by that landowner.

Off Road- Federal lands (CR)

- A person may not operate, on federal public lands, a motorized wheeled vehicle off legal routes (including game retrieval). All federally approved travel plans on public lands in Montana have been adopted by the F&W Commission. Contact the appropriate land management agencies for travel plan information.

Boats (MCA 87-6-207)

- A person may not use a motorboat or a sailboat as defined in 23-2-502 for the purpose of killing, capturing, taking, pursuing, concentrating, driving, or stirring up any upland game bird, migratory bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal until the motor is shut off or the sails are furled and the progress of the vessel has ceased.

Nontoxic Shot - Hunters are reminded that nontoxic shot is required for the hunting of upland game birds on federal refuges or waterfowl production areas. Only federally-approved nontoxic shot may be used on these areas. Specific questions regarding this regulation should be made through local offices of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Outfitters and Guides (MCA 37-47-301)

- A person may not act as an outfitter or guide or advertise or otherwise represent to the public that the person is an outfitter or guide without first securing a license.
- It is unlawful to engage in outfitting/guiding while not licensed.
- It is unlawful to hire an outfitter or guide not licensed by the Department of Labor and Industry. For information, call 406-841-2300.

Possession Limit while in the Field (CR) - No person shall possess more than one daily bag limit while in the field, or while returning from the field to one’s vehicle, hunting camp, home, etc.

Possession Limit (CR) - The number of birds that may be possessed at any time in any form: fresh, stored in freezers or lockers, salted, smoked, dried, canned, or preserved.

Public Roadways (MCA 87-6-403) - It is unlawful for anyone to hunt or attempt to hunt any game bird: on, from, or across any public highway or the shoulder, berm, barrow pit, or right-of-way of any public highway (the entire width between the

boundary lines of every publicly maintained way when any part thereof is open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel).

Recorded Animal Sounds (MCA 87-6-401) - It is unlawful to use any recorded or electrically amplified bird or animal calls or sounds or imitations of bird or animal calls or sounds to assist in the hunting, taking, killing, or capturing of any wildlife except predatory animals, wolves, and those birds not protected by state or federal law.

Shooting Preserves (Private) (MCA 87-4-504) - To hunt upland game birds on a private shooting preserve, resident hunters must possess a valid upland game bird license and nonresident hunters must possess either a valid Upland Game Bird License or a 3-day Shooting Preserve License.

Waste of Game (MCA 87-6-205)

It is unlawful to waste any part of any game animal, game bird, or game fish suitable for food.

- The following are upland game bird parts “suitable for food:”
 - all birds that fall into the size category of the partridge or smaller, only the breasts must be retained;
 - all birds larger than a partridge and up to the size category of, and including, pheasants and sage grouse, the breasts and the thighs must be retained;
 - all turkeys: the breasts, thighs and wings must be retained.
- For migratory birds, “suitable for food” means the breast meat.

Hunter Land Access

Hunters, it is your responsibility to know where you are, to know who owns the land, and to know what access restrictions apply.

Block Management - The Block Management Program is a cooperative effort among private and some public landowners, FWP, and hunters. The program seeks to: 1) maintain public hunting access to private and isolated public lands; 2) help landowners manage public hunting and provide benefits to offset impacts like increased road maintenance and weed control; and 3) help FWP manage wildlife. Each FWP region administers the Block Management Areas (BMAs) for its portion of the state. If you are interested in hunting a BMA, contact the regional office in the area you wish to hunt. The BMA hunting access guide lists current information on lands enrolled in the program statewide. These are available annually on Aug. 15. The earliest date to reserve access to a BMA is Aug. 22.

Federal Land Access

- National Parks Service: National parks are closed to hunting. For other lands administered by the National Park Service, please contact the specific site managers for additional information.
- National Wildlife Refuges – More restrictive regulations, including species specific restrictions and closures, may apply to national wildlife refuges open to public hunting. Contact the specific refuge and/or visit fws.gov/refuges/ for additional information.
- U.S. Forest Service: Area-specific closures or restrictions may apply. Inquire at the appropriate regional Forest Service office.
- Bureau of Land Management: Area specific closures or restrictions may apply. Inquire at the appropriate BLM field office.
- Other federal lands: Area specific closures or restrictions may apply. Inquire at the local federal land management agency office.

Unlawful Posting of State or Federal Land (MCA 45-8-115): It is unlawful for a person to knowingly post land that is under the ownership or control of the state or federal government to restrict access or use of state or federal land.

Fishing Access Sites - Many of Montana’s fishing access sites (FAS) offer hunting opportunities, however certain restrictions may apply such as no-hunting safety zones and/or restrictions on the type of hunting weapon or firearm that may be used. Refer to the fishing access site webpage at myfwp.mt.gov/fishMT/explore for site specific information, opportunities and restrictions.

Indian Reservations - Some reservations may offer hunting opportunities with the use of tribal licenses to non-members. Please contact the appropriate tribal government. See “Contacts Outside FWP” on page 12 for contact information.

Montana State Parks - Some of Montana’s state parks provide hunting opportunities; however certain restrictions may apply such as no-hunting safety zones and/or restrictions on the type of hunting weapon or firearm that may be used. Contact the specific park and/or refer to the Montana State Park website at fwp.mt.gov/stateparks for site specific information regarding hunting opportunities and restrictions.

Private Land Access - Montana law requires permission for all hunting on private land. See above for information on FWP’s Block Management Program.

Railroad Access - Railroads and railroad rights-of-ways are **private** property and may not be hunted without permission, nor should they be used as access to other lands (private or public) without explicit permission from the railroad.

State Game Preserves - See Closed or Restricted Areas.

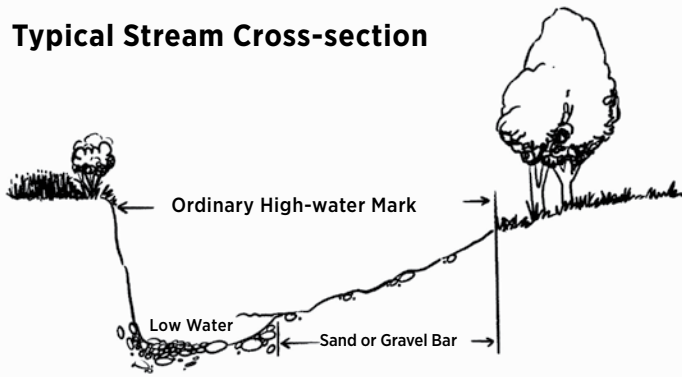
State School Trust Lands - Additional information, including closures and restrictions, is available from the DNRC at 406-444-2074.

- A Conservation License provides hunters, anglers, and trappers access to lawfully accessible State School Trust lands for related activities during applicable seasons.
- Commercial use, such as outfitting or dog training, concentrated (group) use, and trapping on state trust lands requires a special recreational use license (SRUL) from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. For questions regarding commercial or concentrated use and trapping on state trust lands please contact the DNRC.
- Overnight use must not exceed the following limits: two consecutive days on leased land, 16 consecutive days within designated campgrounds or on unleased land.
- Motorized travel is only allowed on public roads or on roads designated as open. This restriction applies to all activity including game retrieval.
- Firearms may not be discharged upon trust lands within one-quarter mile of inhabited dwellings or outbuildings without permission of the inhabitant.
- Open fires are prohibited outside of fire pits within designated campgrounds.

State Wildlife Management Areas - FWP’s wildlife management areas (WMA) are generally open to hunting during the game animal hunting season. WMAs with game winter range are closed to public entry, unless otherwise posted, from the day following the end of the general deer-elk season or Dec. 1, whichever is later, to noon on May 15 each year, as posted.

Exception: There are several exceptions to these guidelines. For WMA-specific information, please call the regional office (see page 8 for contact numbers) or visit the FWP website at: fwp.mt.gov/conservation/wildlife-management-areas

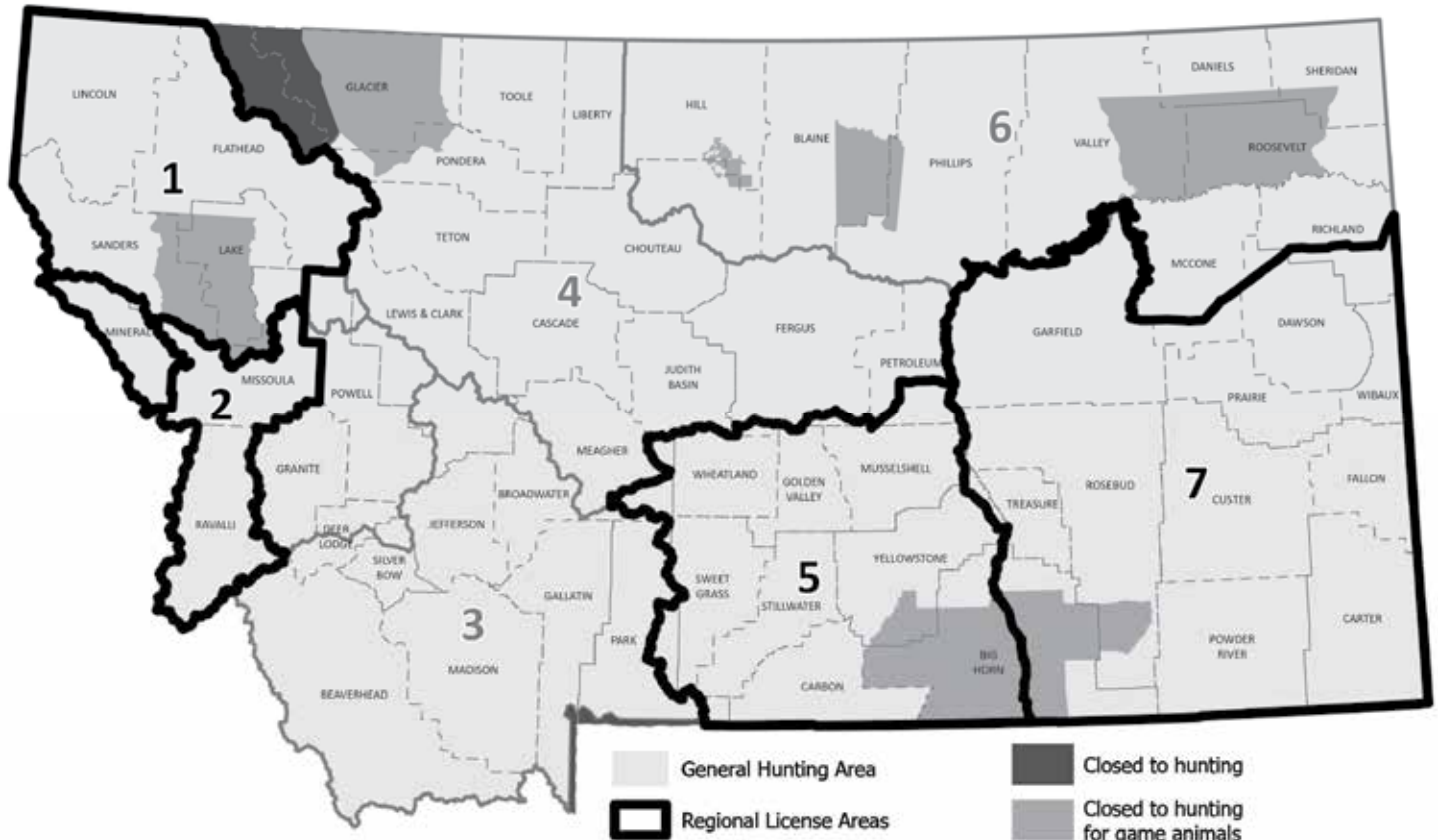
Typical Stream Cross-section



Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGBEP) - Provides technical and financial assistance to enhance and conserve upland game bird habitats on lands open to public upland game bird hunting. Partnerships are formed between FWP and 1) private landowners, 2) government agencies, 3) conservation organizations, or 4) a combination of the various partners. Hunters can order the annual Projects Access Guide, which includes project specifics, area maps, and the method used to request permission to hunt on private lands enrolled in UGBEP. Visit fwp.mt.gov to order your guide. Obtaining landowners' permission to hunt upland game birds is required prior to hunting or entering any private land project area.

Stream Access (MCA 23-2-301) - Hunting for upland game birds and waterfowl is lawful between the ordinary high-water mark of rivers and streams. Hunters will need landowner permission to retrieve any upland game birds or waterfowl which fall above the ordinary high-water mark. "Ordinary high-water mark" means the line that water impresses on land by covering it for sufficient periods to cause physical characteristics that distinguish the area below the line from the area above it. Characteristics of the area below the line include, when appropriate, but are not limited to deprivation of the soil of substantially all terrestrial vegetation and destruction of its agricultural vegetative value. A flood plain adjacent to surface waters is not considered to lie within the surface waters' high-water marks.

Turkey Hunting Areas



Hunting Season Information

License	Licenses Per Hunter	Residents hunting on all lands in the state and Nonresidents hunting on privately owned lands that are not a part of a hunting access program Season Dates	Nonresidents hunting on public lands and privately owned lands that are a part of a hunting access program Season Dates	Opportunity	Opportunity Specific Details
Turkey					
Wild turkey may be taken with: a shotgun not larger than a 10 gauge; a long, recurve or compound bow and arrow; a rifle, handgun or crossbow may be used during the fall season except in areas with weapons restrictions limiting their use; an air rifle: fall turkey may be taken with an .177 caliber air rifle shooting a performance ballistic alloy pellet at least 1250 feet per second as specified by the manufacturer or with an .22 caliber air rifle shooting a performance ballistic alloy pellet at least 950 feet per second as specified by the manufacturer. (MCA 87-6-401, CR) All other means of taking are prohibited.					
General Turkey License: Over-the-Counter valid in General Hunting Areas (see map).					
General Turkey License	1	Apr. 15 - May 31	Apr. 25 - May 31	Male Wild Turkey. Shotgun/Archery only.	-
		Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Either-sex Wild Turkey.	Not valid in Region 4.
Regional Turkey Licenses: Over-the-Counter					
Region 1 Turkey License: Turkeys in Region 1 are mostly on private land. Hunters must get permission.					
199-00	1	Apr. 15 - May 31	Apr. 25 - May 31	Male Wild Turkey. Shotgun/Archery only.	Valid in Lincoln, Flathead, Sanders, and Lake counties and those portions of Sanders and Missoula counties within Region 1. Not valid on the Flathead Indian Reservation.
		Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Either-sex Wild Turkey.	
199-01	Up to 4	Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Female or beardless Wild Turkey.	
Region 2 Turkey License: Rifles are not allowed in Deer & Elk HD 260.					
299-00	1	Apr. 15 - May 31	Apr. 25 - May 31	Male Wild Turkey. Shotgun/Archery only.	Valid in Missoula and Ravalli counties.
		Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Either-sex Wild Turkey.	Valid in Missoula and Ravalli counties.
299-01	Up to 4	Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Female or beardless Wild Turkey.	Valid in Missoula and Ravalli counties.
299-02	1	Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Female or beardless Wild Turkey.	Valid in Missoula, Ravalli and Mineral counties.
Region 4 Turkey License					
499-00	1	Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Either-sex Wild Turkey.	Valid in those portions of Fergus and Petroleum counties within Region 4.
Region 5 Turkey License					
599-00	1	Apr. 15 - May 31	Apr. 25 - May 31	Male Wild Turkey. Shotgun/Archery only.	-
		Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Either-sex Wild Turkey.	-
Region 6 Turkey License					
699-00	1	Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Either-sex Wild Turkey.	-
Region 7 Turkey License					
799-00	1	Apr. 15 - May 31	Apr. 25 - May 31	Male Wild Turkey. Shotgun/Archery only.	-
		Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Either-sex Wild Turkey.	-
799-01	1	Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Either-sex Wild Turkey.	Only valid on private land.

Hunting Season Information

Residents hunting on all lands in the state and Nonresidents hunting on privately owned lands that are not a part of a hunting access program Season Dates	Nonresidents hunting on public lands and privately owned lands that are a part of a hunting access program Season Dates	Bag Limit	Additional Information
Mountain Grouse: Blue, ruffed, and Franklin's grouse may be taken with a shotgun not larger than a 10 gauge; a long, recurve or compound bow and arrow; a crossbow; a firearm; or air rifle: mountain grouse may be taken with an .177 caliber air rifle shooting a performance ballistic alloy pellet at least 1250 feet per second as specified by the manufacturer or with an .22 caliber air rifle shooting a performance ballistic alloy pellet at least 950 feet per second as specified by the manufacturer. All other means of taking are prohibited.			
Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Bag Limit: 3 in aggregate daily. Possession limit is four times the daily bag limit.	-
Partridge: Hungarian and chukar partridge may be taken with a shotgun not larger than a 10 gauge; a long, recurve or compound bow and arrow. All other means of taking are prohibited.			
Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Bag Limit: 8 in aggregate daily. Possession limit is four times the daily bag limit.	Chukar partridge occur primarily in Carbon County.
Sep. 01 - Jan. 10	Sep. 11 - Jan. 10	Bag Limit: 8 in aggregate daily. Possession limit is four times the daily bag limit.	Portion of Carbon County within the following boundary: Beginning at the junction of Route 72 and the Wyoming-Montana state line, then northerly along said route to Bridger, then northerly along Hwy. 310 to Edgar, then east on the Edgar-Pryor Road to the Crow Indian Reservation boundary, then southerly and easterly along said boundary to the west shore of Big Horn Lake, then southerly along said shore to the Wyoming-Montana state line, then west along said state line to its junction with Route 72, the point of beginning.
Ptarmigan			
Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Ring-necked Pheasant			
See Page 10			
Sage Grouse (Free Supplemental Sage Grouse Hunting Permit Required): Sage grouse may be taken with a shotgun not larger than a 10 gauge; a long, recurve or compound bow and arrow. All other means of taking are prohibited.			
Sep. 01 - Sep. 30	Sep. 11 - Sep. 30	Bag Limit: 2 daily. Possession limit is two times the daily bag limit.	Closed West of the Continental Divide.
Sharp-tailed Grouse: Sharp-tailed grouse may be taken with a shotgun not larger than a 10 gauge; a long, recurve or compound bow and arrow. All other means of taking are prohibited.			
Sep. 01 - Jan. 01	Sep. 11 - Jan. 01	Bag Limit: 4 daily. Possession limit is four times the daily bag limit.	Closed West of the Continental Divide.
Falconry: All areas open to hunting of upland game birds and/or migratory game birds by firearms shall be open to either-sex hunting of that species by falconry.			
Sep. 01 - Mar. 31	Sep. 11 - Mar. 31	Bag Limit: 2 daily in aggregate and 6 in possession. Bag and possession limits are not in addition to general limits.	Falconry Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. Year round sunrise/sunset tables are available on the FWP website. A current valid Upland Game Bird License is required to hunt with falconry. A free supplemental sage grouse hunting permit is required for hunting sage grouse.

Residents hunting on all lands in the state Season Dates	Nonresidents hunting on pri- vately owned lands that are not a part of a hunting access program Season Dates	Nonresidents hunting on public lands and privately owned lands that are a part of a hunting access program Season Dates	Bag Limit	Additional Information
Ring-necked Pheasant: Pheasants may be taken with a shotgun not larger than a 10 gauge; a long, recurve or compound bow and arrow. All other means of taking are prohibited.				
Sep. 19 - Sep. 20 Youth Only	Sep. 19 - Sep. 20 Youth Only	Sep. 19 - Sep. 20 Youth Only	Bag Limit: 3 cock pheasants daily. Possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.	Legally licensed youth ages 15 and under when accompanied by a nonhunting adult at least 18 years of age. Mentors for Apprentice Hunters must be at least 21 years of age.
Oct. 10 - Jan. 1	Oct. 10 - Jan. 1	Oct. 20 - Jan. 1	Bag Limit: 3 cock pheasants daily. Possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.	Resident and Nonresident Season License holders.
-	Oct 17 - Jan 1	Oct. 20 - Jan. 1	Bag Limit: 3 cock pheasants daily. Possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.	Nonresident 3-day License holders.

Closed or Restricted Areas – Upland Game Bird and Falconry

Bad Rock Canyon WMA: Hunting by limited access permit only. Archery and general season are open Thursday through Sunday (or Monday if it is a holiday). Archery hunting is open to archery equipment for all legal species, limited to two individuals/week awarded by lottery. General hunting and spring turkey seasons are open to youth ages 10-15 and hunters with a PTHFV for all legal species, limited to one party/day awarded by lottery. Closed to spring black bear hunting. Area rules, maps, and the access permit application process available at FWP-R1 HQ (406-752-5501).

Gates of the Mountains Game Preserve: Closed to all hunting: Beginning in Section 2, T12N, R3W at the southeast corner of Upper Holter Lake, then proceeding westerly along the northern shoreline of Upper Holter Lake in the Gates of the Mountains area located in Lewis and Clark County, then northerly along Stoney Point Beacon Road, then northerly along the powerline to said beacon, then along Bulldozer Road to the point of the ridge in Section 23, T13N, R3W, then northerly to the Missouri River, then easterly across said river and lake to the USFS boundary to the wilderness boundary, then south along wilderness boundary to the southeast corner of Section 1, T12N, R3W, then west back to Upper Holter Lake, the point of beginning. Intending hereby to include in said game preserve all the territory adjacent of the Gates of the Mountains area, shall be called and known as the Gates of the Mountains Game Preserve.

Helena Valley Regulating Reservoir (Lewis and Clark County): Open to upland game bird hunting up to the opening day of the waterfowl season at which point it is closed to all hunting.

Freezout Lake Wildlife Management Area (Teton County): Open to upland game bird hunting until the opening of the general waterfowl season, then it will be closed to all hunting in the following described portion of the Wildlife Management Area: SW 1/4 Section 19, Sections 29 and 30, T22N, R3W, W 1/2 Section 12, W 1/2 of E 1/2 Section 12, and that portion of Sections 13 and 24 within the posted boundary of the Freezout Lake Wildlife Management Area, T22N, R4W. The area closed will reopen Nov. 20.

BIRD HUNTERS:



Know How to Release Your Dogs from Snares and Traps

For more information, go to the FWP website at fwp.mt.gov/hunt/trapping and click on the links under “Helpful Information.”

2026 Sunrise-Sunset Tables For Determining Hunting Hours

These tables, including adjustments for daylight savings time, are the official sunrise-sunset tables adopted by the Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission for hunting in Montana. Authorized hunting hours for the taking of upland game birds and falconry begin one-half hour before sunrise and end one-half hour after sunset each day of the hunting season.



Do not use other sources.

ZONE 1: INCLUDES: Flathead, Granite, Lake, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli and Sanders counties

Day	Apr		May		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec		Jan	
	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
1	7:15	8:05	6:20	8:46	6:56	8:15	7:35	7:15	7:19	5:20	8:01	4:49	8:21	4:58
2	7:13	8:07	6:19	8:48	6:57	8:13	7:36	7:13	7:20	5:18	8:02	4:49	8:21	4:59
3	7:11	8:08	6:17	8:49	6:58	8:11	7:38	7:11	7:22	5:17	8:03	4:48	8:21	5:00
4	7:09	8:10	6:16	8:50	7:00	8:09	7:39	7:09	7:23	5:15	8:04	4:48	8:21	5:01
5	7:07	8:11	6:14	8:52	7:01	8:07	7:40	7:07	7:25	5:14	8:05	4:48	8:21	5:02
6	7:05	8:12	6:13	8:53	7:02	8:05	7:42	7:05	7:26	5:13	8:06	4:48	8:21	5:03
7	7:03	8:14	6:11	8:54	7:04	8:03	7:43	7:04	7:28	5:11	8:07	4:48	8:20	5:04
8	7:01	8:15	6:10	8:56	7:05	8:01	7:44	7:02	7:29	5:10	8:08	4:47	8:20	5:06
9	6:59	8:16	6:09	8:57	7:06	7:59	7:46	7:00	7:31	5:09	8:09	4:47	8:20	5:07
10	6:57	8:18	6:07	8:58	7:07	7:57	7:47	6:58	7:32	5:07	8:10	4:47	8:19	5:08
11	6:56	8:19	6:06	9:00	7:09	7:55	7:49	6:56	7:33	5:06	8:11	4:47	8:19	5:09
12	6:54	8:21	6:05	9:01	7:10	7:53	7:50	6:54	7:35	5:05	8:12	4:47	8:19	5:10
13	6:52	8:22	6:03	9:02	7:11	7:51	7:51	6:52	7:36	5:04	8:13	4:47	8:18	5:12
14	6:50	8:23	6:02	9:03	7:13	7:49	7:53	6:50	7:38	5:03	8:14	4:48	8:17	5:13
15	6:48	8:25	6:01	9:05	7:14	7:47	7:54	6:49	7:39	5:02	8:15	4:48	8:17	5:14
16	6:46	8:26	6:00	9:06	7:15	7:45	7:56	6:47	7:41	5:00	8:15	4:48	8:16	5:16
17	6:44	8:27	5:59	9:07	7:17	7:43	7:57	6:45	7:42	4:59	8:16	4:48	8:16	5:17
18	6:43	8:29	5:57	9:08	7:18	7:41	7:58	6:43	7:44	4:58	8:17	4:49	8:15	5:18
19	6:41	8:30	5:56	9:09	7:19	7:39	8:00	6:41	7:45	4:58	8:17	4:49	8:14	5:20
20	6:39	8:32	5:55	9:11	7:20	7:37	8:01	6:40	7:46	4:57	8:18	4:50	8:13	5:21
21	6:37	8:33	5:54	9:12	7:22	7:35	8:03	6:38	7:48	4:56	8:18	4:50	8:12	5:23
22	6:36	8:34	5:53	9:13	7:23	7:33	8:04	6:36	7:49	4:55	8:19	4:51	8:11	5:24
23	6:34	8:36	5:52	9:14	7:24	7:31	8:06	6:34	7:50	4:54	8:19	4:51	8:11	5:26
24	6:32	8:37	5:51	9:15	7:26	7:29	8:07	6:33	7:52	4:53	8:20	4:52	8:10	5:27
25	6:30	8:38	5:50	9:16	7:27	7:27	8:08	6:31	7:53	4:53	8:20	4:52	8:09	5:29
26	6:29	8:40	5:50	9:17	7:28	7:25	8:10	6:29	7:54	4:52	8:20	4:53	8:08	5:30
27	6:27	8:41	5:49	9:18	7:30	7:23	8:11	6:28	7:56	4:51	8:21	4:54	8:06	5:32
28	6:25	8:42	5:48	9:19	7:31	7:21	8:13	6:26	7:57	4:51	8:21	4:55	8:05	5:33
29	6:24	8:44	5:47	9:20	7:32	7:19	8:14	6:24	7:58	4:50	8:21	4:55	8:04	5:35
30	6:22	8:45	5:47	9:21	7:34	7:17	8:16	6:23	8:00	4:50	8:21	4:56	8:03	5:36
31	-	-	5:46	9:22	-	-	8:17	6:21	-	-	8:21	4:57	8:02	5:38

ZONE 2: INCLUDES: Beaverhead, Broadwater, Cascade, Chouteau, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Glacier, Hill, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Liberty, Madison, Meagher, Park, Pondera, Powell, Silver Bow, Teton and Toole counties.

Day	Apr		May		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec		Jan	
	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
1	7:07	7:57	6:13	8:38	6:48	8:07	7:27	7:08	7:10	5:13	7:52	4:42	8:12	4:51
2	7:05	7:59	6:12	8:39	6:50	8:05	7:28	7:06	7:12	5:11	7:53	4:42	8:12	4:52
3	7:03	8:00	6:10	8:40	6:51	8:03	7:30	7:04	7:13	5:10	7:54	4:42	8:12	4:53
4	7:01	8:01	6:09	8:42	6:52	8:01	7:31	7:02	7:15	5:08	7:55	4:41	8:12	4:54
5	7:00	8:03	6:07	8:43	6:53	7:59	7:32	7:00	7:16	5:07	7:56	4:41	8:12	4:55
6	6:58	8:04	6:06	8:44	6:55	7:57	7:34	6:58	7:17	5:05	7:57	4:41	8:12	4:56
7	6:56	8:05	6:04	8:46	6:56	7:55	7:35	6:56	7:19	5:04	7:58	4:41	8:12	4:58
8	6:54	8:07	6:03	8:47	6:57	7:53	7:36	6:54	7:20	5:03	7:59	4:41	8:11	4:59
9	6:52	8:08	6:02	8:48	6:59	7:51	7:38	6:52	7:22	5:02	8:00	4:41	8:11	5:00
10	6:50	8:10	6:00	8:50	7:00	7:49	7:39	6:50	7:23	5:00	8:01	4:41	8:11	5:01
11	6:48	8:11	5:59	8:51	7:01	7:47	7:40	6:48	7:25	4:59	8:02	4:41	8:10	5:02
12	6:46	8:12	5:58	8:52	7:02	7:45	7:42	6:47	7:26	4:58	8:03	4:41	8:10	5:04
13	6:44	8:14	5:56	8:53	7:04	7:43	7:43	6:45	7:28	4:57	8:04	4:41	8:09	5:05
14	6:43	8:15	5:55	8:55	7:05	7:41	7:45	6:43	7:29	4:56	8:05	4:41	8:09	5:06
15	6:41	8:16	5:54	8:56	7:06	7:39	7:46	6:41	7:31	4:55	8:06	4:41	8:08	5:07
16	6:39	8:18	5:53	8:57	7:08	7:37	7:47	6:39	7:32	4:53	8:06	4:41	8:07	5:09
17	6:37	8:19	5:52	8:58	7:09	7:35	7:49	6:37	7:33	4:52	8:07	4:42	8:07	5:10
18	6:35	8:20	5:51	8:59	7:10	7:33	7:50	6:36	7:35	4:52	8:08	4:42	8:06	5:12
19	6:33	8:22	5:49	9:00	7:11	7:31	7:52	6:34	7:36	4:51	8:08	4:42	8:05	5:13
20	6:32	8:23	5:48	9:02	7:13	7:29	7:53	6:32	7:38	4:50	8:09	4:43	8:04	5:14
21	6:30	8:24	5:47	9:03	7:14	7:27	7:54	6:30	7:39	4:49	8:09	4:43	8:04	5:16
22	6:28	8:26	5:46	9:04	7:15	7:25	7:56	6:29	7:40	4:48	8:10	4:44	8:03	5:17
23	6:26	8:27	5:45	9:05	7:17	7:23	7:57	6:27	7:42	4:47	8:10	4:44	8:02	5:19
24	6:25	8:28	5:45	9:06	7:18	7:21	7:59	6:25	7:43	4:46	8:11	4:45	8:01	5:20
25	6:23	8:30	5:44	9:07	7:19	7:19	8:00	6:24	7:44	4:46	8:11	4:46	8:00	5:21
26	6:21	8:31	5:43	9:08	7:20	7:17	8:01	6:22	7:46	4:45	8:11	4:46	7:59	5:23
27	6:20	8:33	5:42	9:09	7:22	7:15	8:03	6:20	7:47	4:44	8:12	4:47	7:58	5:24
28	6:18	8:34	5:41	9:10	7:23	7:13	8:04	6:19	7:48	4:44	8:12	4:48	7:57	5:26
29	6:17	8:35	5:41	9:11	7:24	7:11	8:06	6:17	7:49	4:43	8:12	4:49	7:56	5:27
30	6:15	8:37	5:40	9:12	7:26	7:10	8:07	6:16	7:51	4:43	8:12	4:50	7:54	5:29
31	-	-	5:39	9:13	-	-	8:09	6:14	-	-	8:12	4:50	7:53	5:30

ZONE 3: INCLUDES: Big Horn, Blaine, Carbon, Fergus, Golden Valley, Judith Basin, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Wheatland and Yellowstone counties

Day	Apr		May		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec		Jan	
	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
1	6:56	7:47	6:02	8:29	6:37	7:57	7:17	6:57	7:01	5:01	7:43	4:30	8:04	4:39
2	6:55	7:49	6:00	8:30	6:39	7:55	7:18	6:55	7:02	5:00	7:44	4:30	8:04	4:40
3	6:53	7:50	5:59	8:31	6:40	7:53	7:19	6:53	7:04	4:58	7:46	4:29	8:04	4:41
4	6:51	7:52	5:57	8:33	6:41	7:51	7:21	6:51	7:05	4:57	7:47	4:29	8:04	4:42
5	6:49	7:53	5:56	8:34	6:43	7:49	7:22	6:49	7:07	4:55	7:48	4:29	8:03	4:43
6	6:47	7:54	5:54	8:35	6:44	7:47	7:24	6:47	7:08	4:54	7:49	4:29	8:03	4:44
7	6:45	7:56	5:53	8:37	6:45	7:45	7:25	6:45	7:10	4:53	7:50	4:28	8:03	4:45
8	6:43	7:57	5:51	8:38	6:46	7:43	7:26	6:43	7:11	4:51	7:51	4:28	8:03	4:47
9	6:41	7:58	5:50	8:39	6:48	7:41	7:28	6:41	7:13	4:50	7:52	4:28	8:02	4:48
10	6:39	8:00	5:48	8:41	6:49	7:39	7:29	6:39	7:14	4:49	7:53	4:28	8:02	4:49
11	6:37	8:01	5:47	8:42	6:50	7:37	7:31	6:37	7:16	4:47	7:54	4:28	8:01	4:50
12	6:35	8:03	5:46	8:43	6:52	7:35	7:32	6:36	7:17	4:46	7:55	4:28	8:01	4:51
13	6:33	8:04	5:44	8:44	6:53	7:33	7:33	6:34	7:19	4:45	7:56	4:28	8:00	4:53
14	6:31	8:05	5:43	8:46	6:54	7:31	7:35	6:32	7:20	4:44	7:56	4:29	8:00	4:54
15	6:30	8:07	5:42	8:47	6:56	7:29	7:36	6:30	7:22	4:43	7:57	4:29	7:59	4:55
16	6:28	8:08	5:41	8:48	6:57	7:27	7:38	6:28	7:23	4:42	7:58	4:29	7:59	4:57
17	6:26	8:09	5:40	8:49	6:58	7:25	7:39	6:26	7:24	4:41	7:59	4:29	7:58	4:58
18	6:24	8:11	5:38	8:51	7:00	7:23	7:40	6:25	7:26	4:40				

Lethality Table

The Lethality Table below is intended to help hunters select the most appropriate nontoxic shotshell load for the type of hunting they intend to do. It provides field-tested data collected and analyzed by Tom Roster and the Cooperative North American Shotgun Education Program. Montana was an active member of this program. The database is comprised only of birds taken with one shot at known ranges under normal hunting conditions. All birds were necropsied and X-rayed from two angles. Hunters can find information in the table on shot-size selection, maximum effective range for various pellets on different sized birds, and the pattern density needed to achieve a lethal load and cleanly kill a bird. It takes a combination of penetration and pattern density to effectively harvest a bird. Testing by Tom Roster showed that pellets need to penetrate at least $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through a bird's body in order to result in a clean kill. The pellets need to strike a lethal area (heart, lungs, spinal column, brain). Also required is a pattern density that, when placed on the front half of a bird, will result in sufficient pellets striking those areas. Developing the shooting skills needed to consistently hit the targeted bird in the front half of the body is a responsibility of an ethical hunter.

TOM ROSTER'S 2016 NONTOXIC SHOT LETHALITY TABLE[®]

Proven Nontoxic Loads For Waterfowl, Doves, & Upland Game Birds¹ <i>Vel. Range Tested: 1,225 – 1,700 FPS</i>	Observed Hunters' Typical Shooting Range During Activity (Yards)	Most Effective Nontoxic Shot Size(s) For Birds Listed Under ACTIVITY At The Distances Listed In The Second Column	Minimum Load Weight (Ounces)	Minimum Pellet Hits Needed on Lethal Areas for Clean Kills	Minimum Pattern Count Needed at Any Distance for Clean Kills (# of Pellets in 30" Circle)	Most Effective Choke(s) at Distance (Given n Lead Shot Choke Designations)	NOTE: The pellets in the steel shot loads listed in this table were traditional, highly spherical ball-shaped pellets of - 7.86 g/cc density and 90-95 DPH hardness. The HEVI-Shot pellets were of 12.0 g/cc density and are harder than traditional steel pellets.
ACTIVITY							
Ring-Necked Pheasants	20-50 20-50	Steel 3 to 2 HEVI-Shot 6 to 4	1 1-1/8	2-3 2-3	90-95 90-95	I.C. (20-30 Yds), Mod. (30-50 Yds) I.C. (20-30 Yds), Mod. (30-50 Yds)	
Turkeys (Head and Neck Shots)	20-40	Steel 4; HEVI-Shot 6	1-1/4	3-4	210-230	Full or Extra Full	
Mourning Doves	20-45 20-45	Steel 8 to 7 HEVI-Shot 7½	$\frac{5}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$	1-2 1-2	200-210 200-210	IC-8's/LM-7's (20-30 Yds); Mod >30 Yd I.C. (20-30 Yds); Light Mod (30-45 Yd)	
Northern Bobwhite Quail	20-30	Steel 8 to 7	$\frac{5}{8}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$	1-2	200-210	Imp. Cyl., Light Modified	
Swatter Load For Wounded Birds	20-30	Steel 7 to 6	1	1	175	Improved Modified, Full	

This table summarizes Tom Roster's analyses to date of the lethality data bases for certain of the 16 U.S. steel vs lead waterfowl & dove shooting tests published between 1968 & 2014 & one steel-only pheasant shooting test (1999) plus lethality data bases owned by ammunition companies for birds taken with nontoxic shotshell loads Roster tested for them & the CONSEP Org.

Note: Steel #BBB (.190") & HEVI-Shot #2 (.150") have exhibited the best all-around performance for taking geese; steel #3 (.140") & HEVI-Shot #4 (.130") the best all-around performance for taking ducks; steel #2 & HEVI-Shot #4 (.130") the best all-around performance for taking ring-necked pheasants; & steel 7's (.100") the best all-around performance for taking doves.

¹These findings are derived from testing 2¾" 28 gauge; 3" 20 ga.; 2¾", 3" & 3½" 12 ga.; & 3½" 10 ga. steel loads; plus 2¾" 28 ga.; 2¾" & 3" 20 ga.; and 2¾" & 3" 12 ga. HEVI-Shot loads.

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FWP Contacts

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Helena, MT 59620-0701 **406-444-2535**
Hunter Education **406-444-9948**
Wildlife Division **406-444-2612**
Enforcement Division **406-444-2452**
Parks Division (Montana State Parks) **406-444-3750**
Licensing **406-444-2950**
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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Regional Headquarters

REGION 1 490 N Meridian Rd Kalispell, MT 59901 (406) 752-5501	REGION 5 2300 Lake Elmo Dr Billings, MT 59105 (406) 247-2940	HELENA Area Res Office (HARO) 930 Custer Ave W Helena, MT 59620 (406) 495-3260
REGION 2 3201 Spurgin Rd Missoula, MT 59804 (406) 542-5500	REGION 6 1 Airport Rd Glasgow, MT 59230 (406) 228-3700	LEWISTOWN Area Res Office (LARO) 190 Terminal Dr. PO Box 938 Lewistown, MT 59457 (406) 538-4658
REGION 3 1400 South 19 th Ave Bozeman, MT 59718 (406) 577-7900	REGION 7 352 I-94 Business Loop PO Box 1630 Miles City, MT 59301 (406) 234-0900	HAVRE Area Res Office (HVARO) 2165 Hwy 2 East Havre, MT 59501 (406) 265-6177
REGION 4 4600 Giant Springs Rd Great Falls, MT 59405 (406) 454-5840	BUTTE Area Res Office (BARO) 1820 Meadowlark Ln Butte, MT 59701 (406) 494-1953	

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406-841-2300
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406-444-7323
State Lands (DNRC)
406-444-2074
Tourism
406-841-2870

Federal Agencies

US Department of
Interior (USDI)
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USDI Fish & Wildlife
Service
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USDA Forest Service
406-329-3511

Tribal Governments

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