



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 1501:31-15-11 Deer regulations.

Effective: July 6, 2026

It shall be unlawful to hunt, take, or possess deer except in accordance with Chapter 1531. or 1533. of the Revised Code, division 1501:31 of the Administrative Code, or as otherwise authorized by the chief of the division of wildlife or the chief's designee.

(A) Season dates

- (1) Deer archery season is open in disease surveillance area 2021-01 established under rule 1501:31-19-03 of the Administrative Code from the second Saturday in September through the first Sunday in February.
- (2) Deer archery season is open statewide from the last Saturday of September through the first Sunday of February.
- (3) Deer gun season is open in disease surveillance area 2021-01 from October 10, 2026, through October 12, 2026. All deer gun season rules apply to these dates within disease surveillance area 2021-01.
- (4) Youth deer gun season is open November 21 and 22, 2026, for persons seventeen years of age and younger. All deer gun season rules apply to these dates.
- (5) Deer gun season is open from the first Monday after Thanksgiving through the following Sunday and is open on December 19 and 20, 2026.
- (6) Deer muzzleloading season is open from the first Saturday after New Years day through the following Tuesday.
- (7) The chief of the division of wildlife may provide a permit which allows the taking of deer from division owned or administered lands to young or handicapped hunters prior to or after the opening of deer gun season. Provided further, all provisions of this rule or any other division of wildlife rule apply to all persons issued said permit.

(B) Bag limits

- (1) It shall be unlawful to take more than six deer per license year, regardless of method of take or location taken, except as provided in paragraphs (B)(8) and (B)(9) of this rule.
- (2) It shall be unlawful to take more than one antlered deer per license year, regardless of method of take or location. For purposes of this rule an antlered deer is any deer with antlers three inches in height or greater. An antlerless deer is any deer with no antlers or antlers less than three inches in height.



1501:31-15-11

2

(3) It shall be unlawful to take an antlered deer with a deer management permit.

(4) It shall be unlawful to hunt or take more than:

- (a) One antlerless deer per license year from the following counties: Athens, Meigs, and Washington counties;
- (b) One deer per license year under the authority of a deer permit or deer management permit outside of a division of wildlife authorized controlled access opportunity, from the following counties: Athens, Meigs, and Washington counties;
- (c) Two deer per license year from the following counties: Athens, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Morgan, Vinton, and Washington counties;
- (d) Two deer per license year under the authority of a deer permit or deer management permit outside of a division of wildlife authorized controlled access opportunity, from the following counties: Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Morgan, Paulding, and Vinton counties.

(5) It shall be unlawful to hunt or take more than::

- (a) Three deer per license year from the following counties: Adams, Ashland, Ashtabula, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Carroll, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Columbiana, Coshocton, Darke, Erie, Fairfield, Fayette, Fulton, Gallia, Geauga, Greene, Guernsey, Harrison, Henry, Highland, Holmes, Huron, Jefferson, Knox, Lake, Licking, Logan, Lorain, Madison, Mahoning, Medina, Mercer, Miami, Monroe, Montgomery, Muskingum, Noble, Ottawa, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Portage, Preble, Putnam, Richland, Ross, Sandusky, Scioto, Seneca, Shelby, Stark, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Van Wert, Wayne, Williams, and Wood counties;
- (b) Three deer per license year from the portions of the following counties outside disease surveillance area 2021-01: Crawford, Delaware, Hancock, Morrow, and Union counties;
- (c) Three deer per license year under the authority of a deer permit or deer management permit, outside of disease surveillance area 2021-01 or a division of wildlife authorized controlled access opportunity, from the following counties: Adams, Ashland, Ashtabula, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Carroll, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Columbiana, Coshocton, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Erie, Fairfield, Fayette, Fulton, Gallia, Geauga, Greene, Guernsey, Hancock, Harrison, Henry, Highland, Holmes, Huron, Jefferson, Knox, Lake, Licking, Logan, Lorain, Madison,



1501:31-15-11

3

Mahoning, Medina, Mercer, Miami, Monroe, Montgomery, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Ottawa, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Portage, Preble, Putnam, Richland, Ross, Sandusky, Scioto, Seneca, Shelby, Stark, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Union, Van Wert, Wayne, Williams, and Wood counties.

(6) It shall be unlawful to hunt or take more than four deer per license year from the following counties: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, and Summit, counties, provided further,

(a) It shall be unlawful to hunt or take more than four deer per license year under the authority of a deer permit or deer management permit, outside of a division of wildlife authorized controlled access opportunity, from the following counties: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, and Summit counties.

(7) It shall be unlawful to hunt or take more than six deer per license year from disease surveillance area 2021-01.

(8) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or take more than six deer per license year from controlled access opportunities where the taking of additional deer has been authorized by the chief of the division of wildlife. Said deer may be taken in addition to any other deer taken in that county, disease surveillance area 2021-01, and the limit of six deer taken per license year as indicated in paragraph (B)(1) of this rule.

(9) It shall be unlawful to take more than two antlerless deer per license year from state-owned or administered lands designated as public hunting areas in rule 1501:31-15-04 of the Administrative Code, except:

(a) The lake La Su An public hunting area;

(b) Public hunting areas located within disease surveillance area 2021-01;

(c) Division of wildlife authorized controlled access opportunities.

(C) Hunting implements

(1) Archery

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt deer with any archery equipment except:

(i) A longbow and arrow.



1501:31-15-11

4

- (ii) Crossbow and arrow having a working safety and a shoulder-mount stock. Cocking levers and other cocking devices may be used on crossbows.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or take deer while being in possession of, or take a deer with, explosive or poisoned arrows.
- (c) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or take deer with a longbow having a draw weight less than forty pounds, or with a crossbow having a draw weight less than seventy-five pounds.
- (d) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or take a deer with a broadhead having less than two cutting edges measuring less than three quarters inch wide.
- (e) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or take a deer during the deer archery season with any hunting implement other than the archery equipment described in paragraph (C)(1) of this rule.

(2) Firearms

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or take deer with any firearm except:
 - (i) A shotgun no larger than ten-gauge or smaller than .410 caliber firing a single projectile per barrel.

It shall be unlawful for any person hunting deer to use any shell casing which is necked down or made totally of metal for any of the shotguns listed.
 - (ii) A muzzleloading rifle or muzzleloading shotgun, .38 caliber or larger using a single projectile per barrel.
 - (iii) A handgun with the following criteria:
 - (a) Chambered for .357 caliber magnum or larger.
 - (b) Using a straight-walled cartridge.
 - (c) Single barrel not less than five inches in length, as measured from the front of the cylinder or chamber to the end of the barrel.
 - (iv) A rifle with the following criteria:



1501:31-15-11

5

Chambered for a straight-walled cartridge with a minimum caliber of .357 to a maximum caliber of .515.

- (b) It shall be unlawful for any person hunting deer to use in any rifle or possess any rifle cartridge which is necked down.
- (c) It shall be unlawful for any person hunting deer during any deer gun season, to possess or use any shotgun or rifle which is loaded with more than three shells or cartridges in the magazine and chamber combined.
- (d) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or take deer during the deer gun season with any hunting implement other than described in paragraph (C) of this rule.
- (e) It shall be unlawful for any person to possess or carry a rifle, pistol, revolver or any other type of firearm while hunting deer or when assisting or accompanying a person that is hunting deer during the archery season, outside of the youth deer gun season, deer gun season and deer muzzleloading season.

This paragraph does not prohibit a person from legally carrying a concealed handgun in accordance with law.

- (f) It shall be unlawful for any person to possess rifle cartridges while hunting during the deer muzzleloading season.
- (g) It shall be unlawful to possess shotgun shells, containing shot, while hunting during the youth deer gun season, deer gun season and deer muzzleloading season except:
 - (i) Persons hunting waterfowl may possess shotgun shells containing non-toxic shot.
 - (ii) Persons hunting other legal game may possess shotgun shells containing shot not larger than number four.
 - (iii) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or take a coyotes during the youth deer gun season or the deer gun season without using a hunting implement described in paragraph (C) of this rule.
- (h) It shall be unlawful for any person hunting during the deer muzzleloading season to possess shotgun slugs or rifle ammunition.



1501:31-15-11

6

- (i) It shall be unlawful for any person to be in possession of shotgun slugs or rifle ammunition while hunting during the youth deer gun season, except youth hunters hunting deer.
- (j) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt or take deer during the deer muzzleloading season with any hunting implement other than the archery equipment described in paragraph (C)(1) of this rule or a muzzleloader as described in paragraph (C)(2)(a)(ii) of this rule.
- (3) It shall be unlawful for any person to possess more than one hunting implement, singly or in the aggregate, to include a firearm, longbow or crossbow while hunting deer.

This paragraph does not prohibit a person from legally carrying a concealed handgun in accordance with law.

(D) Hunting methods and hours.

It shall be unlawful to:

- (1) Hunt or take deer at any time except from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset;
- (2) Hunt or take wild animals from one-half hour before sunrise to one half-hour after sunset, except deer, waterfowl, and coyotes during the youth deer season, deer gun season and muzzleloading season with any hunting implement other than a shotgun using shot not larger than number four. Waterfowl may only be hunted during the hours specified in rule 1501:31-7-06 of the Administrative Code;
- (3) Hunt or take coyotes at any time other than from one-half hour before sunrise to one half- hour after sunset during the youth deer gun season, deer gun season and deer muzzleloading season;
- (4) Hunt or take coyotes from one-half hour before sunrise to one half-hour after sunset during the youth deer gun season, deer gun season and the deer muzzleloading season without possessing both a valid hunting license and valid deer permit or management permit;
- (5) Hunt or take coyotes during the deer muzzleloading season without using a muzzleloader as described in paragraph (C)(2)(a)(ii) of this rule or any archery equipment described in paragraph (C)(1) of this rule;
- (6) Possess a loaded hunting implement while going to or coming from hunting deer or coyote at any time except between one-half hour before sunrise to one half-



1501:31-15-11

7

hour after sunset during the youth deer gun season, deer gun season or the deer muzzleloading season;

- (7) Hunt or take any wild animal except waterfowl, from one-half hour before sunrise to one half-hour after sunset, during the youth deer gun season, deer gun season or the deer muzzleloading season, unless such person is visibly wearing a vest, jacket or coveralls colored solid hunter orange, or camouflage hunter orange;
- (8) Hunt or take deer by the aid of dog, except wounded deer may be tracked using a dog that is leashed;
- (9) Hunt or take coyotes by the aid of a dog during the deer gun season and deer muzzleloading season from one-half hour before sunrise to one half-hour after sunset;
- (10) Hunt or take a deer that is in the water;
- (11) Construct, place, or use permanent-type tree stands, or place spikes, nails, wires, or other metal objects to hold tree stands or as steps to tree stands on any property except with the landowner's permission.

(E) Permits.

It shall be unlawful for any person to:

- (1) Hunt or take a deer without possessing a valid electronic or printed deer permit or deer management permit during any of the open deer seasons;
- (2) Hunt with or carry an electronic or printed deer permit or deer management permit of another;
- (3) Hunt or take deer or aid another person in the hunting of deer, while having in their possession a hunting implement, while being solely in possession of a deer permit or deer management permit for which a game check confirmation number has been issued or the date, time and county of kill have been written on the deer permit or deer management permit;
- (4) Hunt or take a deer under the authority of a deer management permit, except from the first day of the deer archery season through the last day of the deer archery season. Deer management permits may be used at any time in division of wildlife administered or authorized controlled hunts.

(F) Tagging and game checking.



1501:31-15-11

8

It shall be unlawful:

- (1) To hunt or take a subsequent deer before the date, time and county of kill are written on the corresponding deer permit, deer management permit or landowner deer tag or the date, time and county of kill have been submitted to the game check system for the deer that was taken;
- (2) To attach, affix, or otherwise use a deer permit, deer management permit, landowner deer tag, or a game check confirmation number on or for a deer or parts of a deer, taken by another person;
- (3) To attach, affix, or otherwise use an antlerless game check confirmation number on or for an antlered deer;
- (4) To attach, affix, or otherwise use a deer permit or deer management permit on or for any deer that was taken before the permit was purchased or otherwise obtained;
- (5) To manufacture, counterfeit, sell, trade, distribute, forge and/or falsify a deer permit, deer management permit, landowner deer tag, or a game check confirmation number;
- (6) To possess, attach, affix or otherwise use a counterfeit or falsified deer permit, deer management permit, landowner deer tag, or game check confirmation number on or for any deer;
- (7) To possess any deer, or part thereof, which has a counterfeit or otherwise falsified deer permit, deer management permit, landowner deer tag or game check confirmation number attached, affixed, or otherwise used on or for the deer or parts thereof;
- (8) After killing a deer to fail to immediately complete a deer permit, deer management permit, or landowner deer tag with the hunters name, date, time, and county of kill prior to moving the carcass from the place where it fell or fail to game check your deer prior to moving the carcass from the place it fell;
- (9) To leave a deer that has been killed unattended, or with another person, without first attaching or affixing a completed deer permit, deer management permit, or landowner deer tag with the hunters name, date, time and county of kill to the deer or a game check confirmation number to the deer;
- (10) To fail to immediately attach or affix your deer permit, deer management permit or landowner deer tag with the hunters name, date, time and county of kill,



1501:31-15-11

9

or the game check confirmation number to a harvested deer upon arrival at a personal or temporary abode;

- (11) To obtain a game check confirmation number with a deer management permit for any deer hunted or taken in any county or at any time in which a deer management permit is not valid, outside of a division of wildlife authorized controlled hunt;
- (12) To remove a deer permit, deer management permit, or landowner deer tag from any deer until the deer has been game checked and a valid game check confirmation number has been attached or affixed to the deer;
- (13) To skin or remove the head of a deer until the deer has been game checked and a valid game check confirmation number has been attached or affixed to the deer;
- (14) For each person who kills a deer to fail to game check and attach or affix a game check confirmation number to a deer, taken during any open deer season, by noon of the day following the date the deer was killed. Provided further, it shall be unlawful to fail to game check and attach or affix a game check confirmation number to a deer taken by eleven-thirty p.m. on the final day of the archery season, youth deer gun season, deer gun season and deer muzzleloading season;
- (15) To provide false information or data when game checking any deer;
- (16) To game check a deer that has been killed within a wild animal hunting preserve as described in section 1533.731 of the Revised Code;
- (17) While at any personal or temporary abode, for any person to fail to immediately and permanently attach or affix their valid game check confirmation number to the deer after it has been game checked;
- (18) To attach, affix, or otherwise use an invalid or falsified game check number on or for any deer or parts thereof;
- (19) To attach, affix or otherwise use a game check confirmation number for a deer, or parts thereof, other than for the deer the game check confirmation number was issued to at the time of game checking;
- (20) For any person to leave the state of Ohio with a deer that was taken by hunting that has not been game checked and the game check confirmation number permanently attached or affixed;



1501:31-15-11

10

- (21) To possess a dead deer, or any part thereof, unless such deer, or parts thereof, are accompanied by an attached valid permit, tag, seal, certificate of legal ownership, statement or receipt, except naturally shed antlers and a hunter harvested deer prior to reaching a personal or temporary abode. For the purposes of this section a valid permit, tag, seal, certificate for legal ownership, statement or receipt for any deer, or part thereof is any one or more of the following:
- (a) A valid Ohio division of wildlife deer permit, deer management permit, landowner deer tag, permanent deer tag or permanent deer tag number or game check confirmation number.
 - (b) An Ohio division of wildlife deer damage control permit temporary tag or a receipt for deer carcass-deer damage control tag or the tag number.
 - (c) An Ohio division of wildlife approved tag or seal under the authority of section 1533.74 of the Revised Code if the deer or parts thereof were sold for food.
 - (d) A signed statement or receipt, legible in the English language, which states the previous owners name, address and phone number and the valid commercial propagation permit number if the deer or parts thereof were sold or given away under the authority of section 1533.71 of the Revised Code.
 - (e) A certificate for legal ownership issued under the authority of section 1533.121 of the Revised Code.
 - (f) A tag as described in division (G) of section 1533.731 of the Revised Code.
 - (g) A signed statement or receipt, legible in the English language, which lists the owner or previous owners name, address and phone number, the state and county of kill, the date of kill and the assigned permanent deer tag number or game check confirmation number, if applicable.
 - (h) An official tag or seal, and an accompanying valid hunting license issued by another state or province if the deer was killed outside of Ohio.
 - (i) A valid Ohio division of wildlife food pantry stamp or seal on each package of meat distributed by a bona fide food pantry or charitable organization.
 - (j) A certificate for legal ownership issued by a law enforcement officer within their jurisdiction.



1501:31-15-11

11

- (k) A valid tag, seal, certificate for legal ownership, statement or receipt or game check confirmation number for the purposes of this rule is considered attached if it is physically affixed to the deer, or parts thereof, in the following manner:
 - (i) In the case of antlers:
 - (a) The valid tag, permanent tag number, seal, certificate for legal ownership, statement or receipt or game check confirmation number must remain attached to the antlers until the deer has been processed into a taxidermy product. At this time the valid tag, seal, certificate for legal ownership, statement or receipt or game check confirmation number may be removed from the antlers and placed in another location on the taxidermy product which allows for visual inspection.
 - (b) If antlers are removed from the deer, but not processed into a taxidermy product, the permanent tag or game check confirmation number may be removed from the antlers provided the permanent deer tag number or game check confirmation number is legibly written in permanent ink or inscribed on the antlers in a location which allows for visual inspection. However, the valid tag, seal, certificate of legal ownership, statement or receipt shall be maintained by the owner and available for inspection.
 - (ii) When through the butchering process, multiple packages of meat are produced, the valid tag, permanent tag number, seal, certificate for legal ownership, statement or receipt or game check confirmation number shall be maintained and available for inspection until the entire deer has been consumed.
 - (iii) If through the taxidermy process multiple taxidermy products are produced the permanent deer tag or permanent tag number or game check confirmation number must remain attached to the taxidermy product to which the antlers are connected. Any other products from the same deer must have the permanent deer tag number or game check confirmation number written legibly in permanent ink or inscribed on the item in a location which allows for visual inspection.
- (22) For any person to place or leave a deer, or any part thereof, unattended or in the custody of another person for the purpose of skinning, processing, taxidermy, transportation, shipping, storage, including temporary storage, or any other



1501:31-15-11

12

reason, unless such deer or parts thereof are accompanied by an attached or affixed valid permit, tag, seal, certificate for legal ownership, statement or receipt or game check confirmation number;

- (23) After shooting a deer during an open season, to fail to make a reasonable effort to recover said deer and complete the game check process;
- (24) To possess a deer, or parts thereof, that were taken in violation of any division rule or the Ohio Revised Code.

(G) Sales

It shall be unlawful to buy, sell or offer for sale any deer, or part thereof, taken from the wild, except:

Legally acquired and possessed deer hides, feet, and antlers may be bought or sold at any time. At the time of the purchase or sale these deer parts must be accompanied by a signed statement or receipt, legible in the English language, which lists the previous owner's name, address and phone number, the state of kill(s) and the assigned game check confirmation number or tag, seal, certificate for legal ownership or permit number(s), if applicable, and the number of deer, from which the said deer parts originated, that were sold during the transaction. This information must remain with these parts until said deer parts are manufactured into a wildlife ornamental product.

- (H) All definitions set forth in rule 1501:31-1-02 of the Administrative Code apply to this rule.