

General Information

- License Requirements and Fees (see pages 12–17).
- All Bear Harvests Must Be Tagged (pages 37).
- Legal Sporting Arms for Bear Hunting (see page 30).
- Youth-Only Hunts (see page 19).
- Bear Licenses must be purchased at least two calendar days before hunting.
- It is Legal to Harvest a Marked Animal (see page 9).

Restrictions and Requirements

Bear Licenses must be purchased at least two calendar days before hunting.

Bag Limit: The bag limit is one bear. No cub younger than one year old or any female accompanied by a cub(s) may be taken.

Closed Areas: Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River Area, including Taos Valley Overlook, and unit 6B (Valles Caldera National Preserve).

Electronic Calls: Electronic calls are allowed for bear hunting.

Bear Management Zones and Harvest Limits (map, page 127): New Mexico is divided into Bear Management Zones, enabling NMDOW to better manage regional bear populations. Each zone has two harvest limits: 1) the total number of bears that may be harvested (total limit); and 2) the number of female bears that may be harvested (female limit). Harvest limits for each Bear Management Zone are listed in the table on page 125-126. Bear management zones close when harvests reach 90% of the total limit, 90% of the female limit, or when the season has ended—whichever occurs first.

Bow Only: Sandia Ranger District in Zones 8 and 14, and the draw hunt in Sugarite Canyon State Park.

Zone Closure: Before hunting, hunters must verify their preferred zone is still open. Check online: <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/hunting/information-by-animal/big-game/bear/> or call: **1-877-950-5466**.

Pelt Tags Required: Harvested bears 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 conservation officer or any NMDOW office **within five days** of killing the bear before the pelt can be frozen, processed, tanned or salted by a taxidermist or before transporting the hide outside New Mexico, whichever occurs first. **Hunters who appoint a designee to transport the harvested bear for pelt tagging are required to contact a conservation officer prior to pelt tagging to receive a designee code.** Hunters or their designees are required to present the **unfrozen skull of any bear killed with the mouth fixed open** for removal of a premolar tooth. Hunters or their designee must provide all required information at the time of pelt tagging including, but not limited to: sex of the animal and date and location of harvest. The pelt tag must remain attached to the hide until the hide is processed. Improperly tagged hides will be seized by NMDOW.

Bear

Licenses, applications, harvest reporting and general information: wildlife.dgf.nm.gov

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 NMDOW tagging official. NMDOW will pelt tag a harvested bear only if proof of sex is attached to the hide and readily visible to the tagging official. Bears presented to NMDOW for tagging without proof of sex attached will be seized.

Use of Dogs: Dog use is **not allowed** on wildlife management areas (WMAs) or during September bow seasons. Dog use is **allowed** to hunt bears elsewhere during hunts for any legal sporting arm (see table, page 125). When dogs are used to hunt bears, the licensed hunter who harvests the bear must be present continuously from the time any dog is released. Dogs may be released only during legal hunting hours. There is no pursuit or training season outside the regular open season.

Baiting and Trapping: Baiting and trapping are **not legal methods** for taking bear. If accidentally trapped, the bear must be released. For assistance releasing a bear, contact NMDOW.

Valle Vidal and Wildlife Management Areas: It is unlawful to hunt bears on the Valle Vidal or WMAs, with the following exception: hunters with a valid deer or elk license, or bear draw permit, who also possess a valid bear license. Licensed deer and elk hunters or bear draw permit hunters may hunt bears in the Valle Vidal or WMAs provided they: 1) possess a valid deer or elk license or bear draw permit for the Valle Vidal or WMA; 2) possess a bear license; 3) use the sporting arm type specified for their bear draw, deer or elk hunt; 4) hunt only during the dates of their bear draw, deer or elk hunt; and 5) the harvest limit in the bear zone has not been met. Dogs are not allowed on WMAs. Dogs are allowed on the Valle Vidal during the April 15-May 20 and the Aug. 1-31 hunts.

Livestock Damage: Landowners, lessees or their regular employees do not need a license to kill a bear 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 NMDOW 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 NMDOW.

Over-the-Counter (OTC) License Hunts

An OTC Bear License is required to hunt bears in New Mexico, including to validate draw permits. Licenses may be purchased online at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov>, by telephone: **1-888-248-6866**, or in person at NMDOW offices or from license vendors. If planning to hunt within 14 days of online or telephone purchase, hunters may be required to obtain tags at a license vendor or NMDOW office, unless the E-Tag option is chosen.

Over-the-Counter Seasons

Zone: Open Units	Hunt Dates	Sporting Arm	Dog Use	Total Limit	Female Limit
Zone 1 Units 4–7, 51, 52				168	67
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Nov. 15	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 2 Unit 2				15	6
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Nov. 15	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 3 Units 49, 50, 53				65	26
	Aug. 16–31	Any Legal	Allowed		
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Nov. 15	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 4 Units 45, 46, 48				109	43
	Aug. 16–31	Any Legal	Allowed		
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Nov. 30	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 5 Units 54, 55, 57				108	43
	Aug. 16–31	Any Legal	Allowed		
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Nov. 15	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 6 Units 39–43, 47, 56, 58, 59				51	20
	Aug. 16–31	Any Legal	Allowed		
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Nov. 15	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 8 Unit 8				11	4
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Oct. 15–Nov. 15	Any Legal *	Allowed		
Zone 9 Units 9, 10				36	14
	Aug. 16–31	Any Legal	Allowed		
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Nov. 15	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 10 Units 12, 13, 15–18, 20–24, 26, 27				197	79
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Dec. 15	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 11 Units 37, 38				36	14
	Aug. 16–31	Any Legal	Allowed		
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Nov. 30	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 12 Unit 34				33	13
	Aug. 16–31	Any Legal	Allowed		
	Sept. 1–24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Dec. 15	Any Legal	Allowed		

* USFS Sandia Ranger District is bow only.

Zone: Open Units	Hunt Dates	Sporting Arm	Dog Use	Total Limit	Female Limit
Zone 13 Unit 36				16	6
	Aug. 16-31	Any Legal	Allowed		
	Sept. 1-24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Sept. 25–Nov. 30	Any Legal	Allowed		
Zone 14 Unit 14				19	7
	Sept. 1-24	Bow Only	Not Allowed		
	Oct. 15–Nov. 15	Any Legal	Allowed		

Bear Draw Permits (OTC Bear License required)

Deadline to apply for bear draw permits is Feb. 11, 2026. Only one hunter may apply per application.

Successful applicants must purchase an over-the-counter Bear License to validate their draw permit. Licenses may be purchased online at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov>, by telephone: **1-888-248-6866**, or in person at NMDOW offices or from license vendors. Online and telephone purchases must be made at least 14 days prior to hunt start date to allow mailing of tags unless the E-Tag option is chosen.

Bear draw permits are available for the areas listed in the table below. Only New Mexico residents may apply for WMA bear draw permits. Hunters may hunt during the over-the-counter season if they have not taken a bear during their draw hunt. During draw hunts, dogs are prohibited on WMAs and Sugarite Canyon State Park, and are allowed only on the Valle Vidal.

Bear Draw Seasons

	Date	Hunt Code	Permits
Unit 2			
Any Legal – Youth Only	Aug. 1-31	BER-1-100	5
Unit 4 Sargent WMA Only			
Any Legal – NM Resident Only	Aug. 1-31	BER-1-101	10
Unit 4 Humphries WMA Only			
Any Legal – NM Residents Only	Aug. 1-31	BER-1-102	5
Unit 9 Marquez/LBar WMA Only			
Any Legal – NM Resident Only	Aug. 1-31	BER-1-103	10
Units 54 and 55A Urraca, E.S. Barker, and Colin Neblett WMAs, and Valle Vidal			
Any Legal	Aug. 1-31	BER-1-104	60
Unit 55A Valle Vidal Only			
Any Legal	Apr. 15–May 20	BER-1-105	20
Unit 57 Sugarite Canyon State Park Only			
Bow	Aug. 1-31	BER-2-106	5

Bear Management Zones and Game Management Units

