

Balcones Canyonlands

National Wildlife Refuge Youth and General Drawn Big Game Hunt Regulations 2026



Welcome

Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1992 to conserve habitat for two songbirds: the endangered golden-cheeked warbler and the black-capped vireo, and to maintain habitat for numerous other wildlife species native to the Texas Hill Country.

Accessibility

Prospective hunters with disabilities should apply through TPWD. If you are drawn in the lottery, contact the refuge manager by calling 512-339-9432 for more information about accommodations for hunters with disabilities.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. For more information please contact the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo/public-civil-rights>.

Safety

Hunts are self-guided and in remote areas over difficult terrain with limited vehicle access. All hunters must visibly wear 400 square inches of hunter orange above the waist while hunting and scouting. Hunters must also wear a hunter orange hat.

Firearms

Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on National Wildlife Refuge System lands must comply with all provisions of State and local law. Persons may only use (discharge) firearms in accordance with refuge regulations (50 CFR 27.42 and specific refuge regulations in 50 CFR Part 32).

Vehicles

Licensed motor vehicles and ATVs/UTVs are permitted only on public use roads. High clearance vehicles are necessary and four-wheel drive is recommended.

Multiple hunters may be assigned to a single compartment. Hunters are assigned specific locations to park but are allowed to hunt anywhere within that compartment.

Hunting Regulations

Hunting regulations are designed to provide safe recreational opportunities through wise use of renewable wildlife resources. Hunting is permitted in accordance with Federal regulations governing public use on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Hunting will be in accordance with applicable State of Texas regulations subject to the conditions stated below. We require proof that hunters possess a valid Texas hunting license.

Access

The refuge manager may close all or part of the refuge, including roads, without notice to safeguard natural resources and public safety. For each hunt compartment, a check in/out station is provided at the entrance gate for that hunt compartment. Please close access gates immediately after passing through.

Scouting

Permitted hunters may scout designated hunt areas from sunrise to sunset on November 7-12, November 19, December 3, and December 10, 2026. On scouting days hunters also need to check in and out.

Blinds and Stands

Portable hunting stands can be used during these hunts but are not provided. They may be set up on the last scouting day before your hunt. The refuge is not responsible for theft of stands.

Harvest Reporting

Hunters must report harvest information at the check in/out station located near the entrance gate of each compartment.

Permit Application

Permits are processed through the TPWD online Public Drawn Hunt System. Up to 2 hunters may apply on one application. Each hunter age 9 to 16 must be under the direct supervision of an adult age 18 or older. Applications must be completed online at: https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/public/public_hunt_drawing/.

Fees

Permits cost \$80.00 per hunter plus a processing fee of \$3.00 per application. Hunt permits are non-transferable and all hunt fees are non-refundable. While hunting, please have a signed copy of your permit with you. Standby hunting is not available. Fees are waived for youth.

Hunter Orientation

Prior to arriving at the refuge to hunt, each hunter must complete an online orientation (roughly 10 minutes). Hunts begin at legal shooting hours on Friday and extend through legal shooting hours on Sunday.

Facilities

A skinning and quartering facility is not available. Animals may be field dressed or skinned and quartered in the hunting units, according to TPWD regulations. Entrails, organs, hide, etc. may be left in the field for scavengers to consume.

Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge
Refuge Headquarters
24518 E. FM 1431
Marble Falls, Texas 78654
512-339-9432
fws.gov/refuge/Balcones-Canyonlands

June 2026



Hunt Type	Season Dates (2026)	Harvest	Hunt Areas	Other Regulations
Youth Hunt	Nov. 13 – 15 (48 permits for youth hunt)	5 deer either sex, 2 bucks - State regulations apply.*	Assigned blind or compartment	State regulations apply. Online hunter orientation mandatory.
General Hunt	General Hunt 1 Nov. 20 – 22 General Hunt 2 Dec. 4 – 6 General Hunt 3 Dec. 11 – 13 (48 permits for each hunt)	5 deer either sex, 2 bucks - State regulations apply.*	Assigned blind or compartment	State regulations apply. Online hunter orientation mandatory.
*Unlimited feral pigs and other exotic wildlife, and 1 turkey (either sex) per hunt.				

Guests

One non-hunting guest per hunter is allowed. Guests may assist in game retrieval or field dressing activities. Guests are not allowed to carry a firearm or harvest game. This guest must remain with and in sight of the permitted hunter during scouting and hunting days. Guests must also wear hunter orange.

Youth Hunt

Youth hunters under the age of 17 must apply through the TPWD online drawing system. There are no application or permit fees for youth hunters. Each youth must be supervised during the hunt by a licensed hunter age 18 or older.

Bag Limits/Harvest

Hunters must abide by all regulations set by TPWD. Limit set by TPWD for the County being hunted apply for white-tailed deer. Hunters may harvest up to one turkey, as allowed by TPWD regulations. Hunters are also allowed to harvest an unlimited number of feral pigs and other exotic wildlife. No special hunting tags are provided for this hunt. Hunters must possess and use the tags contained on their TPWD hunting license. Harvested animals must be tagged according to TPWD regulations. Please consider using non-toxic ammunition.

Signs and Boundaries

- No Vehicles: All Traffic prohibited
- Parking Area: Designated areas to park while hunting, applies to the area located behind the sign
- Refuge Boundary: Entry permitted in accordance with refuge regulations
- Closed Area: All entry prohibited
- No Hunting Zone: Hunting, weapons, and game retrieval prohibited
- Private Property: Do not trespass

Prohibited Activities

- Possession of alcoholic beverages
- Camping and fires
- Possession or distribution of bait is not allowed on the refuge. Natural scents are allowed
- Dogs may not be used for scouting or hunting
- Target practice, sighting-in of firearms
- Searching for or removal of any natural items such as antlers, plants, historic, and archaeological features, all of which are protected by Federal law
- Use of electronic or photographic trail monitoring devices
- Marking or flagging any tree or other refuge feature with reflectors, paint, or other substance
- Permanent tree stands, nails, screw-in steps, or other items that penetrate the outer bark of a tree
- Any cutting of live or dead vegetation
- Leaving tree stands and ground blinds in the same location for more than 7 consecutive days
- Accessing the refuge from private property
- Hunting is not allowed within 50 yards of a road open to vehicle traffic or within 200 yards of any building
- Hunters should not shoot at any target that is not completely identified

