



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Big Game Hunting Regulations 2020

Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge

Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge allows hunting of white-tailed deer, feral hogs, and turkeys through an annual big game hunt. No other species are allowed to be harvested.

These hunts help maintain wildlife populations at a level compatible with available habitat and provide recreational opportunities. Three general hunts and one youth hunt will be conducted this year.

The refuge manager may close all or part of the refuge—including roads—without notice to safeguard resources or for safety reasons. Also, prescribed burns may be conducted in portions of hunting units during non-scouting and non-hunting dates to improve habitat.

Scouting

Permitted hunters may scout designated hunt areas during daylight hours on November 7-12, November 19, December 3, and December 10, 2020. On scouting days, hunters do not check in and out at Refuge Headquarters.

2020 Hunt Dates

Youth Hunt	November 13-15
General Hunt 1	November 20-22
General Hunt 2	December 4-6
General Hunt 3	December 11-13

Prior to hunting, each hunter must participate in a hunter orientation. Orientations (roughly 45 minutes) are held at Refuge Headquarters on hunt weekends at 12:00 pm on Friday of the scheduled hunt. The youth hunt has an extra orientation available at 10:00 am on Saturday of the hunt. Hunters must attend only the orientation of their weekend hunt. Each hunt begins at 1:00 pm on Friday, and extends through legal shooting hours on Sunday.

Important Information

1. A check in/out station is provided at each hunt unit entrance gate. Hunters must check in and out each time they enter/leave the property during the hunt.

2. All prospective hunters must apply through Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). Balcones Canyonlands NWR does not offer standby hunting.

3. Hunt permits are not transferable.

4. A skinning and quartering area is not available at Refuge Headquarters. Animals may be field dressed, according to TPWD regulations. Entrails, organs, hide, etc. may be left in the field for scavengers to consume.

5. 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 animals. This guest must remain with (close enough for normal voice control) and in sight of the permitted hunter during scouting and hunting days.

6. 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.

7. Hunters are assigned tracts to hunt. In some cases hunters must park at a specific location, but are allowed to walk around within their assigned tracts. Areas closed to hunting will be designated on maps and marked with signs and/or barricades.

8. Access within hunt units will be on gravel/dirt roads. High clearance vehicles are necessary. Four-wheeled drive vehicles are recommended. When you arrive at your unit the gate will be closed, but unlocked. Please close the gate after entering and check in. Please do not block gates or roads.

General Hunt

Hunters are allowed to harvest white-tailed deer up to the limit set by TPWD for the County being hunted. Hunters must abide by all regulations (number, sex, size, etc.) set by TPWD. Refer to Texas Parks and Wildlife Outdoor Annual under "County Listings" for additional information. Hunters may harvest up to one turkey, either sex, as allowed by TPWD regulations. Hunters are also allowed to harvest an unlimited number of feral hogs.

Youth Hunt

Youth hunters under the age of 17 must apply through the Texas Parks and Wildlife 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. During the youth hunt turkeys, feral hogs, and white-tailed deer may be taken according to the limits set under "General Hunt" above.

Hunters with Disabilities

Prospective hunters with disabilities should apply through the same application process. If you are drawn in the lottery, notify the Refuge Manager and if possible, reasonable accommodations may be made on site.

Permit Process

Be sure to check the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge hunting page on our website and review the "Hunt Unit Descriptions" for details. Permits are issued through a partnership with TPWD. All applications and payment must be made online here: tpwd.texas.gov/drawnhunts. When searching for Balcones Canyonlands NWR hunt, select Browse Hunt Catalog, then select the National Wildlife Refuge Hunts. Drawings and award notifications for each hunt will be conducted at different times. Please consult the TPWD hunt application web page for more information.

Hunt Regulations

- Persons possessing, transporting, or carrying firearms on national wildlife refuges 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).
- Portable hunting stands are allowed. They may be set up on the last scouting day before your weekend hunt. The refuge is not responsible for theft of hunting stands.
- Driving nails, spikes, or other metal objects into trees or hunting from trees in which any objects have been driven into a tree is prohibited.
- The use or possession of all bait (corn, commercial food pellets, mineral blocks, etc.) is prohibited during scouting and hunting. Scents are allowed.

