

Shed Antler Gathering Closed in 11 Counties

Emergency closure will help protect deer and elk

You'll have to wait until April 1 to gather shed deer, elk and moose antlers in 11 counties in Utah this year.

On Jan. 31, Division of Wildlife Resources Director Greg Sheehan signed an emergency amendment to the 2017 Big Game Application Guidebook. The amendment closes shed antler gathering in the following counties:

Northern Utah

Box Elder

Cache

Rich

Morgan

Summit

Wasatch

Northeastern Utah

Duchesne

Uintah

Southeastern Utah

Carbon

Emery

Extreme, prolonged cold and deep snow are the reasons for the closure. These conditions are expected to continue for the next several weeks, making it difficult for deer, elk and moose to find food. To help the animals survive the winter, it's essential that activities that take place on winter ranges be kept to a minimum, to reduce stressing the animals.

"These animals and other wildlife in the areas are stressed," Sheehan says. "They cannot sustain being repeatedly moved around by shed hunters looking for dropped antlers.

"We support shed antler gathering," Sheehan says, "but we're asking, through this emergency order, that you wait until April 1 to move through these winter range areas."

Those caught gathering shed antlers before April 1, in any of the 11 counties, will be cited.

In late winter and early spring, the antlers of deer, elk and moose fall off the animals' heads. Then, they start growing a new set of antlers. By mid-summer, the new set is in place.

You can still gather shed antlers in 18 counties

Outside of the 11 counties in the emergency amendment, shed antler gathering is open across Utah. Before you gather antlers on public land, though, you must complete the DWR's free shed antler gathering course. The course will teach you how to gather shed antlers in a way that doesn't disturb deer, elk and moose and doesn't damage their habitat.

You can take the course at www.wildlife.utah.gov/shedantler. After completing it, you must print your certificate of completion and carry it with you while you're gathering shed antlers. If you don't, you could receive a citation.

One note: even though shed antler gathering is open in the 18 counties, many of the DWR's wildlife management areas in the counties are closed in the winter and spring. The closure is designed to give wildlife on the WMAs some extra protection during a critical time of the year.

Everyone can help

If you come across wildlife while you're out hiking, driving, snowshoeing or recreating in Utah this winter, Sheehan strongly encourages you to keep your distance.

"Do not approach, pick up, chase or handle wildlife," Sheehan says. "Even if you're trying to help, it's not good for the animals, and it's potentially dangerous for you. If you see something you're concerned about, please contact the nearest DWR office."

See www.wildlife.utah.gov for a list of offices and phone numbers.

More information

For more information, call the nearest Division of Wildlife Resources office or the DWR's Salt Lake City office at [801-538-4700](tel:801-538-4700).

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