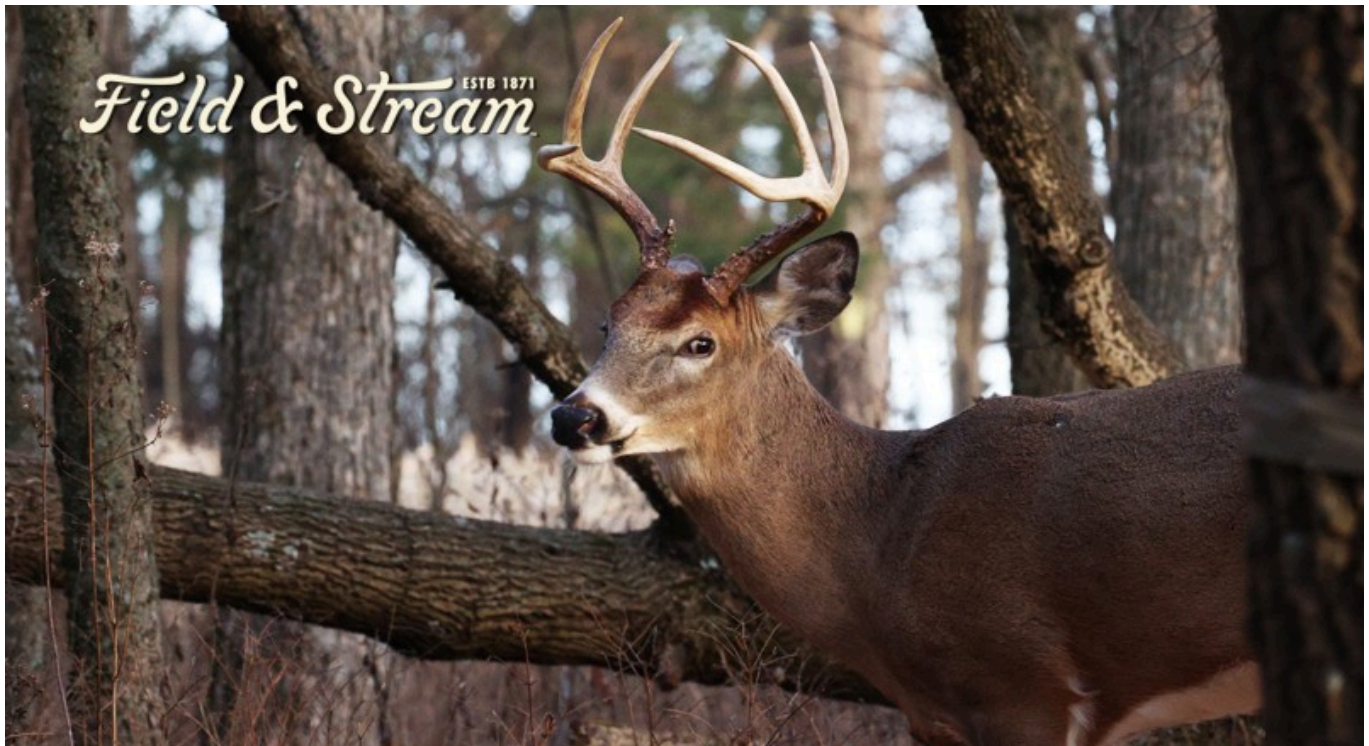


Deer Hunting by State: A Complete Guide



Every state in the country offers something different to deer hunters. Some offer greater deer herds with more opportunities, and others have bigger bucks. Some have great deer hunting habitat, and others present subpar ground. Some have cheaper tags, and others cost a fortune. The variations in deer hunting by state are vast, and hunters should be aware of these things. Read on for a comprehensive guide for each whitetail hunting destination in the U.S.

Northeast

The Northeast is known for big-woods tracts. In most areas, it's mountains, foothills, or hill country landscapes. Hunting pressure is high, but some of the bucks are big, in this hard-to-hunt region of the country.



Connecticut

One of the most underdiscussed states in the region, Connecticut offers typical northeastern habitat with decent deer numbers. Its deer herd is over 100,000. Unfortunately, EHD has had impacts in recent years, and that's something to consider. If you go, read up on deer hunting in Connecticut (<https://portal.ct.gov/deep/hunting/ct-hunting-and-trapping>).

Delaware

The state of Delaware is one of the most attractive states in the Northeast. It doesn't have a lot of deer, but that's only due to the size of the state. Plus, there isn't a lot of public ground, and what's there doesn't permit trail cameras. But if you can find a good piece of private, and an overlooked corner of public land, give it a try (<https://dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/licenses/fees/>).

Maine

Those who deer hunt in Maine are often drawn to the allure of the big-woods setting. There are more than 350,000 deer here, and there is a vast spread of public ground. Some of it is even off the coast in the Atlantic Ocean, which provides a unique opportunity you can't find anywhere else. Check season dates (<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/hunting-trapping/hunting/laws-rules/season-dates-bag-limits.html>), hunting license info (<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/hunting-trapping/hunting/licenses-permits.html>), and enjoy your time in the field.

Maryland

Perhaps the crowned jewel of the region, Maryland is a phenomenal area for whitetail action. There are approximate 200,000 deer, about 85,000 hunters, and a decent volume of land to roam. Interestingly, deer live in numerous habitat types here, including ag country, coastal country, pine thickets, challenging mountains, and more. Learn more about it here (<https://www.eregulations.com/maryland/hunting/deer-seasons-bag-limits>).

Massachusetts

Those who want a challenge should consider Massachusetts. There are about 100,000 deer, and the terrain isn't easy. But tags are cheaper, and it has a decent number of mature, and big, whitetail bucks. There is even some public land to hunt on. Read more about it here (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/deer-hunting-regulations>).

New Hampshire

A small state, New Hampshire makes up for it in quality. It has more than 100,000 deer hunters, and licenses and tags are certainly affordable. The deer herd is doing well, buck age structure continues to improve, and hunters are reporting exceptional successes. Plan your New Hampshire hunt (<https://www.wildlife.nh.gov/hunting-nh>).

New Jersey

Much like New Hampshire, New Jersey is another small state. It packs a big punch, though. There are about 150,000 deer, and it's virtually all private, small-property hunting. It's certainly a bowhunting-centric state. Learn more about it here (<https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/hunting/deer-seasons-and-regulations/>).

New York

Don't overlook New York as a potential force in the deer hunting world. Its deer herd is about 1 million strong, and habitat is diverse. According to the state wildlife agency, some areas have more than 100 deer per square mile, which is unheard of throughout most of the nation. Read season dates, learn the regs, secure a license and tag, and enjoy the hunt (<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting>).

Pennsylvania

It's likely that Pennsylvania has the most storied deer hunting heritage in the country. There's a lot of deer, but also a lot of deer hunters, meaning hunting pressure is high. Fortunately, there's a respectable amount of public land, and it's possible for hunters to find a sizeable buck to hunt. Take the right steps (<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pgc/huntingandtrapping/licenses-and-permits/license-types>) and have a great deer hunt in Pennsylvania.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island has few deer and few deer hunters. Even so, it's worth a shot for those who secure a place to hunt. Even better, if you do find one, it doesn't cost much to hunt here. The deer herd is doing well, and buck age structure promising, so hunters can plan their season accordingly (<https://www.eregulations.com/rhodeisland/hunting/licenses-fees>).

Vermont

Last up in the region, Vermont is one of the worst states in the country. Its deer herd consists of about 150,000 whitetails, and hunters have decent odds with various weapon types. But it's nothing special. This year is expected to produce a typical deer harvest (<https://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/hunt/hunting-and-trapping-opportunities/white-tailed-deer>). Learn more here (<https://anrweb.vt.gov/FWD/FW/LicenseInformation.aspx>).

Mid-South

The Mid-South is a unique mix of the three regions that surrounds it. With the Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast on the borders, each of these areas bleed together to create a region entirely its own. As such, this area has an interesting mix of habitat types and edge cover – all great for whitetails.



Southeast

The Southeast comes with a storied heritage. It's full of deer hunting tradition. Of course, it's known for big stands of pines, hardwood creek bottoms, and intermittent ag fields. You might even find the occasional mountain or swamp, location depending.



Arkansas

There are just shy of 1 million whitetails here. Many of the bucks harvested are 3 ½-plus-year-old deer, too. That's good news for those hoping to harvest a mature whitetail. This state has a unique diversity of habitat, too – mountains in the north to prairie in the southwest to river bottoms in the east and more. Read on for more details on hunting licenses (<https://www.agfc.com/hunting/>), regulations (<https://www.agfc.com/hunting/>), and more.

Kentucky

Most would refer to Kentucky as king of the Mid-South. The Bluegrass State is seeing an EHD outbreak this year, but other than that, this is a great place to hunt big, old bucks. The deer herd is about 1 million, and deer hunters number only about 300,000, meaning moderate hunting pressure. Of course, there's limited public ground, and what's available is mostly in the eastern and western stretches of the state. Now, there are three CWD surveillance zones to worry about, too. Even so, Kentucky's continued status as a one-buck state means a great buck age structure, and it always holds a lot of promise. If you can find a place to hunt, study the hunting regs (<https://fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/Deer.aspx>), secure a license and tags (<https://fw.ky.gov/Licenses/Pages/Fees.aspx>), and enjoy your hunt.

North Carolina

With a deer herd that's 1.1 million strong, deer hunters have plenty of whitetails to chase. It's also offering an increase of antlerless harvest opportunities. Plus, this state has a lot of public land access, which bodes well for deer hunters. Those who want diversity can find it here, from ag country to mountain lands. Focus on permit-only game land hunts for even better experiences. Get your license (<https://www.ncwildlife.gov>), plan your hunt, and get it done.

Tennessee

The Volunteer State is an excellent representation of the Mid-South region. This state has 700,000 deer, a lot of public land, and only moderate hunting pressure. It also offers a decent chance at a big, mature buck. Set your hunt off on the right foot (<https://www.tn.gov/twra/license-sales.html>).

Virginia

Another member of the Mid-South, Virginia is on the same plane as North Carolina, West Virginia, and others. Licenses and tags are affordable, deer populations are quite high, and there are some big whitetails running around, too. Hunt there this season (<https://dwr.virginia.gov>).

West Virginia

The northernmost stretch of the Mid-South region, West Virginia offers a unique opportunity to chase big mountain bucks on a budget. It has about 700,000 deer, and moderate deer hunting pressure, for an overall rewarding hunt. The downside? The western side of the state is seeing a massive EHD outbreak this year. Check hunting regulations (<https://wvdnr.gov/hunting/hunting-regulations/>), season dates, and license info.

Midwest

Commonly considered the king of whitetail country, the Midwest is a highly desirable destination among deer hunters. This region routinely produces the biggest whitetail bucks. It's put more deer in the record books than any other region. Hunters know its allure and value.



Illinois

The state of Illinois is home to about 800,000 deer and 300,000 deer hunters. The Land of Lincoln isn't what it was years ago, but it's still a solid place to hunt whitetails. There has been some EHD in recent years, but if crops are harvested early enough, expect a good deer season. Visit these links for season dates (<https://dnr.illinois.gov>) and hunting regulations (<https://dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/hunttrapdigest.html>).

Indiana

The Hoosier State is one of the more underrated states in the Midwest. It offers much the same as neighboring Illinois and Ohio, with a slight twist. It's on a gradual uptrend for record-class whitetails. That said, EHD outbreaks in 2022, 2024, and 2025 have taken big tolls on the state's deer herds. Click here (<https://www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/animals/white-tailed-deer/>) for deer season dates and hunting regulations.

Iowa

Perhaps the most sought-after state in the nation, Iowa offers an exceptional chance at hunting big, mature whitetails. The reason the hunting is so good? Limited hunting, with only about 165,000 hunters each of the past few years. For non-residents, while late-season muzzleloader tags are easier to obtain, it takes about four years to draw an archery tag. Visit the DNR's website (<https://www.iowadnr.gov/things-do/hunting-trapping/hunting-licenses-fees>) for info on hunting licenses and season dates.

Michigan

The state of Michigan isn't what most other states in the region offer, but it still provides hope. Approximately 1.3 million deer are killed each year, and 10 million acres of public land exists in various regions of the state. With recent milder winters, deer numbers are on the rise. Visit the state agency website for season dates (<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/hunting/hunting-season-calendar>) and licenses (<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/fishing/license-info>).

Minnesota

Perhaps the most overlooked state in the region, Minnesota is a great place to hunt deer. With less than 500,000 hunters, and a ton of public land, there's plenty of opportunity here. It also has a lot of swamps and wetlands, and deer grow old in such places. Check season dates (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/hunting/seasons.html>) and hunting licenses (<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/licenses/hunting/index.html>) for opportunities.

Missouri

In Missouri, the deer herd is about 1.5 million strong. A lot of non-residents travel here for big deer and over-the-counter tags. It also offers a lot of public lands, especially in the southern half of the state. That said, the northern half offers a better chance of top-end whitetails. Read on for season dates (https://mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/seasons?species_topic_filter=49) and license and permit info (<https://mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/deer/deer-permits>).

Ohio

The Buckeye State just might be a top three state in the country. With more than ¾ million deer, and several hundred thousand hunters, it puts a lot of big ones in the record books. The state is quite diverse, from flat ag lands in the west to mountainous country in the east, hunters can find what they're looking for here. The only downfall? Consecutive years of EHD, and according to officials, the 2025 outbreak is the worst one on record. Check season dates (<https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/ohiodnr.gov/documents/wildlife/laws-regs-licenses/Ohio%20Hunting%20and%20Trapping%20Regulations%20ENGLISH.pdf>), check regulations, and secure your licenses.

Wisconsin

No state in the nation has put more bucks in the books than Wisconsin. It has more than 1 million whitetails, and a noticeable volume of public lands. It's known for big whitetails and incredibly beautiful landscapes. It's the premier whitetail experience, especially from the over-

the-counter tag perspective. Read on for more info on season dates (<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/hunt/dates>) and license info (<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/permits>).

Great Plains

The Great Plains is dominated by large swaths of grasslands. Of course, timbered creek lines snake through these vast fields of agriculture and native grasses. Here, deer live long lives and grow massive antlers on these open prairies and in the scrub country.



Kansas

Perhaps the best state in the region, the Land of Oz is an excellent whitetail state. It has more than 775,000 whitetails, over 105,000 deer hunters, and a lot of land to roam. The eastern third of the state looks like parts of the Midwest, but the western 2/3 is loaded with grasslands. In recent years, the state was in drought. However, this year, it received more rain, and this season is set up for success. Currently, the deer populations are doing quite well. Check out details on deer season dates (<https://ksoutdoors.gov/Hunting/When-to-Hunt>) and hunting licenses and tags (<https://ksoutdoors.gov/Hunting/Applications-and-Fees>).

Nebraska

The state of Nebraska used to be overlooked, but it isn't any longer. No longer an underrated state, it sees more than 130,000 hunters each year. Plus, tag prices have went up, and available tags decreased, to stifle interest and manage hunter numbers more appropriately. Check season dates (<https://outdoornebraska.gov/hunt/hunting-seasons/>) and license details (<https://outdoornebraska.gov/hunt/>) for more info about the state.

North Dakota

Most people overlook North Dakota in favor of its neighbor to the south. That might be a mistake, though. It's a great state for whitetails. It's especially difficult to draw tags, but that shouldn't keep hunters from trying. If interested, check season dates (<https://gf.nd.gov/regulations>) and hunting regulations (<https://gf.nd.gov/regulations>).

Oklahoma

The Sooner State is another commonly overlooked destination. It's home to some big whitetails, and most hunters never even think of the state. Finding a place to hunt isn't easy, but the effort can be worthwhile. Check out the available info (<https://www.wildlifedepartment.com>) before going.

South Dakota

As someone who's hunted South Dakota, it's a great state for whitetails. Unfortunately, it's much more challenging to draw a tag than it once was, though. That said, those who do are in for a treat. (So long as they aren't banking on public land, because there isn't much of it.) Check season dates (<https://gfp.sd.gov/deer/>), license info (<https://gfp.sd.gov/license-types/>), and other details, before making a decision.

Northwest

One of the most overlooked regions for whitetails, the Northwest holds more than elk, sheep, moose, and mule deer. It also has big deer with white tails. Hunters who find a place to hunt, and draw a tag, can enjoy good odds of a successful deer hunt.



Montana

Another elk and mule deer state, Montana has some whitetails, too. Ever heard of the Milk River? It's famous and renowned. It has a lot of deer, and some big ones to boot. That said, EHD, hard winters, and a limited whitetail range doesn't allow for a lot of expansion or growth. There is a lot of public land, but most of whitetail country is locked up by private lands and outfitters. Check out details (<https://fwp.mt.gov/hunt/regulations/deer>) on seasons, licenses, regulations, and more.

Idaho

Maybe the most overlooked state in the West, Idaho has some great whitetail hunting. It holds approximately 200,000 whitetails, the northern region of the state is rough and rugged, but offers a unique hunt. You won't kill a giant here, and they're quite jumpy from all the big, toothy predators, but it's about 70% public land, which should make for a fun challenge. Learn more (<https://idfg.idaho.gov>) about season dates, license info, and hunting regulations.

Oregon

Home of the blacktail, mule deer, elk, and other big game, Oregon also has whitetails in eastern counties. It's rugged country, and there isn't a huge population, but those who find a place to hunt are in for a great adventure. Check the season dates (<https://myodfw.com/big-game-hunting/seasons>), license info (<https://myodfw.com/big-game-hunting/licensing-info>), and hunting regulation details.

Washington

Whitetail hunting in the state of Washington is much like that of Oregon – unique. Here, deer hunters find them in the easternmost counties, and currently, there are more than 100,000 whitetails. Check out their agency forecasts, season dates, license info, and more (<https://wdfw.wa.gov>).

Wyoming

There aren't many whitetails in Wyoming – only slightly more than 50,000 – and they're limited to eastern counties. Unfortunately, recent winters have taken tolls. And the state wildlife agency isn't exactly focused on whitetails. Even so, those who find a good spot should consider it. Learn more about it here (<https://wgfd.wyo.gov/regulations>).

Southwest

A highly unique landscape, the Southwest is a mountainous, and in places desert-laden region to pursue deer. Hunters who head afield here find unique adventures, whether it be due to the oddball nature of Coues deer, or the terrain itself.



Arizona

This state is home to almost 100,000 Coues whitetails. Incredibly, it's produced more than 500 Boone and Crockett records. Of course, this hunt requires a lot of hiking, scouting, and overall effort. It also oftentimes requires long shots. Read additional info (<https://www.azgfd.com/hunting/regulations/>) for details on season dates, licenses, and more.

Colorado

A state dominated by elk and mule deer hunters, there are some whitetails to chase, too. That's especially true for the eastern region of the state. However, it's expensive to deer hunt here, even more so than premium Midwestern hunts. While not all of it holds whitetails, it does offer 23 million acres of public lands, and approximately 80,000 of that is in whitetail country. Read here (<https://cpw.state.co.us/hunting/big-game>) for info on season dates and license info.

New Mexico

Although not as good as Arizona, New Mexico also has Coues deer (in the western region of the state). It also has the larger whitetail species (in the eastern region). Of course, this is a draw state, and only about 15% of Coues tags are available to non-residents. Read more about it (<https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov>).

Texas

Texas is a massive state, and has approximately 5.6 million whitetails, 1.2 million deer hunters, but not much public land to roam on. The deer hunting culture is incredible here, though. So, those who get the chance, or create an opportunity, should certainly do so. Biologists are forecasting another great year here. Learn more about the Lone Star state (<https://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/licenses/hunting-licenses-and-permits>).

Choose the Best Deer Hunt for You

All things considered, every state is right for someone. Choosing the best deer hunting state for you is a complicated matter, and it considers many things not mentioned here. So, decide where you'll hunt this season, and make it the best one yet.