

**1. Does your agency give landowners big game permits or vouchers that they can use or sell to compensate landowners or offset crop damage? If so, are the permits for antlerless animals, bucks/bulls, or both? Please explain the details of these permits or vouchers?**

- (Yes) Mitigation permits - <https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r657/r657-044.htm>

Free antlerless permits are issued to either the landowner or lessee, his/her immediate family, or employees. We issue up to 5 for deer and pronghorn and up to 2 for elk and turkey. The permits are only valid on private, cultivated property for deer and pronghorn; elk permits are valid for private, cultivated property and rangeland. A minimum of 5 acres with a commercial agricultural use on the property is required to qualify. Permits can be issued anytime between Aug 1 to Dec 31 for deer and pronghorn; Aug 1 - Jan 31 for elk.

- Mitigation vouchers - <https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r657/r657-044.htm>

Mitigation vouchers are transferable antlerless vouchers that the landowner or lessee can sell for profit or give away. The qualifications are similar to the requirements as above, however they are not limited to landowner, family, or employees. Generally, we issue up to 15 deer vouchers and 18 elk vouchers to private landowners depending on the severity of their depredation. A fee is charged when the voucher is redeemed for a permit. The season dates are the same as above.

- Buck/bull vouchers - <https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r657/r657-044.htm>

In rare instances, when the value of the crop damage exceeds the value of the animals causing damages, we can issue vouchers for bucks or bulls as a form of compensation.

**2. Are landowners allowed to remove big game animals depredating on private lands in an effort to protect their agricultural resources? If so, under what circumstances?**

- (Yes) 72 hour notice- [https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title23/Chapter16/23-16-S3.1.html?v=C23-16-S3.1\\_1800010118000101](https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title23/Chapter16/23-16-S3.1.html?v=C23-16-S3.1_1800010118000101)

This is legislatively mandated. A landowner has the right to lethally remove protected wildlife from cultivated property if s/he has notified the division in writing and 72 hours has passed without resolution. Landowners are required to notify Division personnel immediately upon killing an animal whereupon it becomes property of the state (including antlers) and all attempts are made to donate the meat.

**3. Does your agency call depredation hunts to target populations on private lands?**

- (Yes) Depredation hunt - <https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r657/r657-044.htm>

Public antlerless depredation hunts can be called on short notice. Public hunters are available and contacted through a depredation hunter pool. Season lengths of each hunt can be customized within the season dates above.

### **similar program that promotes hunting on private property?**

- (Yes) Private lands only cow elk permits - <https://wildlife.utah.gov/private-lands-elk.html>

We developed an over the counter antlerless elk permit that is available to all hunters and is only valid on private land. The season dates are very liberal (Aug 1- Jan 31) in an effort to put hunting pressure on elk harbored on private property. These permits have been very successful in redistributing elk populations across both public and private land and reducing damage for landowners. We do not have over the counter "private lands only" permits for any other big game species.

### **5. What type of landowner incentive programs does your agency have that promotes wildlife and allows public hunters on private property (e.g., ranching for wildlife in CO or - programs where landowners financially benefit from big game)?**

- Cooperative Wildlife Management Unit (CWMU) program - <https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r657/r657-037.htm>

Requirements: Minimum of 5,000 contiguous acres of private land that contains suitable habitat for deer and pronghorn (10,000 acres required for elk and moose).

Landowners are issued transferrable antlered vouchers that are valid for the private property enrolled in the program. Any revenue generated from the sale of the vouchers is disseminated amongst the landowners according to their choosing.

A percentage of the permits allotted to each CWMU must go to the public draw and public access must be given to the successful applicants. Ex: If a CWMU chooses a 90% private 10% public split for bull elk and receives 10 permits they are given 9 transferrable vouchers and 1 permit goes to the public draw. The 90/10 split also comes with a requirement of a 0/100 antlerless split meaning that if they are also allotted 10 cow elk permits, 0 of the permits will be transferable vouchers and 10 shall go to the public draw. Splits for pronghorn and moose are more beneficial to public hunters (60% private / 40% public) compared to splits for deer and elk. Again, full access must be given to the successful public applicants.

- Landowner Association (LOA) program - <https://wildlife.utah.gov/r657-43.html>

For Limited Entry units only, a Landowner Association must be formed that includes over half of the private land classified as big game habitat within the unit. The LOA is then issued transferrable vouchers that are valid for the entire unit. Permit allocation is based off of acres enrolled vs. acres of available habitat in the unit. Landowners are required to allow one public hunter on their property for every voucher received, but this has proven difficult to enforce.

- Walk in-Access program - <https://wildlife.utah.gov/r657-56.html>

The land owner needs at least a 40 acres block of land, at least one acre of lake, reservoir or pond, or at least 0.25 miles of stream or river. The landowner receives compensation for allowing public access to their property.

- General landowner tags - <https://wildlife.utah.gov/r657-43.html>

We also have general landowner deer buck permits. The landowner qualifies for one buck tag with 640 acres of privately owned land. They qualify for an additional permit with each additional 640 acres. This is for general season units, and they can hunt the entire unit. The tags are limited to landowners and lessee's and their immediate family.

- Landowner incentive tags - <https://wildlife.utah.gov/r657-43.html>

The land owner needs at least 100 acres of cultivated crop that is shown to benefit deer. The maximum they can qualify for is one permit. The tag is limited to the landowner or immediate family.

#### **6. Does your agency provide damage payments or fencing for big game on private lands? If so, how much per year is paid and how is it funded?**

- (Yes) Damage reimbursement payments - <https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r657/r657-044.htm>

When cultivated crop depredation occurs, we are legislatively mandated to reimburse the landowner if requested. The majority of our crop depredation deals with alfalfa and we quantify damage using a count method, but we also deal with other crops such as winter wheat, orchards, corn, sunflower, etc. We also pay for residue crop forage if livestock is being grazed and quantify the damage using counts. We can pay for stored crops, labor to repair fence damage, and damage to irrigation equipment. Our annual statewide budget for depredation currently sits at \$700,000. Half of the money in that budget comes from license sales and the other half from the state general fund (taxpayers). Most years we typically pay around \$500,000 in depredation payments and we use the remaining \$200,000 for permanent solutions such as providing materials for stackyard fences. If budgets are exceeded, damage payments can be pre-rated to landowners.

#### **7. What mitigation measures does your agency employ to reduce big game damage (e.g., provide temporary fencing, hazing animals, agency removals of big game)?**

- Alleviation measures - <https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r657/r657-044.htm>

We use temporary and permanent fencing, hazing, and agency removals along with other methods answered on the survey like mitigation permits and vouchers. We try to use agency removal as a last result. Permanent fencing is expensive and we generally have a waiting period of a couple of years before we can provide it.

#### **8. Does your agency have an urban deer program? If so, what does that entail?**

- (Yes) Urban deer rule - <https://wildlife.utah.gov/r657-65.html>

The main tool used to handle urban deer populations is lethal removal by Division personnel. This is typically done at night using a spotlight and suppressed .22's, but we also trap and cull in some cases. In some areas the workload associated with urban deer problems has become such that we have involved municipalities in the management of local populations and given them authority to lethally remove deer

(within set parameters). We used to have a trap and relocation program, but we have discontinued the practice to prevent spreading diseases such as CWD.

**9. What other programs does your agency have in place to promote tolerance of big game on private lands?**

- N/A for Utah.

**10. Does your agency respond to all wildlife conflict calls or is it limited to specific species or guilds of species?**

- (Yes) In Utah, we respond to all calls that involve protected wildlife. Although we are not legally mandated, we often respond to non-protected wildlife calls involving animals like raccoons and coyotes. We are mandated by code to respond to big game doing crop depredation and compensate producers for confirmed livestock losses to bears, cougars, wolves and eagles - <https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title23/Chapter16/23-16-S3.html>, <https://wildlife.utah.gov/r657-24.html>
- Damage or nuisance caused by bears, cougars, badgers, weasels, bobcats, spotted skunks and beavers can be addressed by landowners under guidelines set forth in administrative rules - [Administrative rule R657-24](#), [Administrative rule R657-11](#), <https://wildlife.utah.gov/r657-33.html>

**11. What program(s) in your agency provide response to negative wildlife interaction (wildlife conflict) complaints and depredation. If the responsibility is split or shared between programs (i.e. Wildlife Program/Enforcement Program) or contracted or referred to another agency or private party, please describe how the work is assigned or shared. (e.g. by species, commercial agriculture versus residential, public safety versus property damage, etc.)**

- In Utah, we have a depredation program in our wildlife section dedicated to handle all wildlife conflicts ranging from nuisance to depredation; however, the rest of our wildlife section and law enforcement sections frequently help. We also have some contracts with private entities to pick up dead wildlife on freeway/highway routes.
- We have specific policies that guide our decision making when responding to incidents involving bears and mountain lions. These incidences are classified into categories based on severity and/or risk to the public (e.g. level 1, 2, or 3 bear incidents).
- We work closely with Wildlife Services personnel to verify livestock losses, and remove predators that are causing damage to livestock. In addition, producers and landowners may remove animals caught in the act of depredation or receive depredation permits to remove animals that are causing chronic losses in a particular area.
- Damage or nuisance caused by migratory birds is handled by our agency and Wildlife Services, depending on the situation. We use propane cannons, pyrotechnics, and other hazing materials are used to deter bird use in problem areas. We also work with Wildlife

Services and USFWS on issuing depredation permits in locations with extreme bird damage. We also relocate urban geese to rural areas outside of the Wasatch Front.

**12. Please describe what funding sources support wildlife conflict response and depredation payments if applicable in your agency. Please include specifics regarding where the funding comes from for expenses such as staff and equipment, commercial crop loss compensation, livestock predation compensation, non-lethal deterrent programs, outreach and education, or any other services or materials provided in response to wildlife conflict issues.**

- Our big game program is allocated money from the state general fund (taxpayer dollars) to pay for crop damage and fencing, which our agency matches with restricted funds (license sales). Staff and equipment is paid for through restricted funds.
- Compensation for confirmed livestock loss is funded by general fund and restricted funds (50/50). Verification of loss is done by USDA Wildlife Services and Utah Department of Agriculture and Food personnel who receive some funding via restricted funds.
- Funding for regional predator specialists is provided from restricted funds (specifically from big game license sales) to address predator issues.