

2025 Elk Hunting Regulations

2025 Season Dates

Bull Archery	Sept. 1 - Oct. 31, 2025
Firearm	Sept. 21 - Oct. 31, 2025
Antlerless	Aug. 1, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026
Early Antlerless	Aug. 1 - Oct. 31, 2025
Late Antlerless	Nov. 1, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2026
Public land closed to Antlerless permits from Aug. 1 – Sept. 20, 2025	

Legal Weapons

- Rifles .25 caliber or larger that deliver at least 1,700 foot-pounds of energy at 100 yards (centerfire rifles are legal during the November firearm deer season)
- Muzzleloading rifles .45 caliber or larger
- Long bows, compound bows, recurve bows and shoulder-fired, nonelectronic crossbows (with a draw weight of at least 125 pounds).
- Hand-thrown spears

Restrictions

- Ammunition with multiple projectiles is illegal.
- Semi-automatics capable of holding more than six cartridges is illegal.
- Full-metal jacket and incendiary bullets are illegal.
- Arrows and spears must have a sharpened hunting head with a blade of at least 7/16-inch cutting radius.
- Arrows and spears containing poison or stupefying chemical or having an explosive tip are illegal.
- Use of electronic calls for elk is illegal.

Sights - It is unlawful to use any electrical device to amplify natural light or to project a light beam or image to a target, including night-vision or infrared scopes and laser sights. Red-dot and illuminated reticle sights and scopes are permitted. Magnifying and variable-power scopes are allowed.

Shooting Hours - It is legal to shoot 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.

Get Permission - Permission is required when hunting private land. It is unlawful to hunt with a rifle within 200 yards of an occupied dwelling or feedlot without specific permission or within 100 yards using other methods.

Minimum Age - Age 12 and older are eligible to apply.

Unlawful Hunting Methods - It is unlawful to:

- chase, harass, run, kill or shoot at any elk from a moving motor vehicle or vessel.
- shoot from the right-of-way of a public road.

- carry a firearm on a snowmobile, except when it is unloaded and in a case.
- hunt from or with a snowmobile.
- use two-way radios, cell phones or any other electronic devices to transmit information about the location of any game animal or game bird to or from a conveyance of any type.
- possess a night-vision scope while hunting game animals and game birds.
- use a spotlight or other artificial light from a vehicle or vessel while having in possession or control any firearm, crossbow or bow and arrow.

Hunter Orange - Archers do not have to wear hunter orange while hunting elk, but firearm and muzzleloader hunters must display on his or her head, chest and back at least 400 square inches of hunter orange material when hunting elk.

Possession - There is no restriction on the length of time game birds or game animals may be possessed.

Permit - A permit or tag is valid only in the area for which it is issued and must be signed by the permittee. It is unlawful to borrow a permit or tag or to transfer or loan a permit or tag to another person.

Habitat Stamp - Valid statewide and required of all hunters in Nebraska, except residents younger than 16 years of age and residents who hold veteran or 69 or older senior permits. EXCEPTION: Farmers, ranchers and qualifying family members who hunt with a landowner permit on land they own or lease for agricultural purposes are exempt. One stamp is required for all hunting in a calendar year, but January deer hunters may use the previous year's stamp.

Use of Aircraft/Drones

It is unlawful for any person one day before or throughout any open season to spot, locate, or place under surveillance any game animal or game bird with the aid of any aircraft (to include drones) and convey information about such animal's or bird's location to any person or group of persons by radio or other electronic device (which includes imagery and/or location data taken from unmanned aircraft). The use of aircraft (which includes drones) any time to hunt, drive, molest, chase, or harass game birds or game animals is illegal. Use of aircraft, including drones, to locate or recover wounded or dead game animals is prohibited.

Sale of Parts - It is lawful to sell the hide, hair, hooves, bones, and antlers of any elk that is taken legally. The sale or purchase of elk meat is unlawful.

Permit Cancellation - Following the harvest of any big game animal, hunters must immediately punch or notch the permit or tag to indicate sex and date of kill. The canceled permit or tag must be attached to the animal or remain with the hunter if the carcass remains in the hunter's possession until completion of the check in process.

Checking - Registering your elk harvest is mandatory in Nebraska and must be completed before the carcass leaves the state.

- It is unlawful to separate an elk carcass into sections smaller than quarters before completing the harvest check in process. Quartering is defined as four legs, with femur or scapula naturally attached, and loins.
- Elk must be checked via Telecheck within 48 hours of kill and before 1 p.m. on the day following the close of the season.
- Permit and check station seal number or check station verification number must be retained when transporting all or a portion of the carcass to a point of permanent storage or processing.
- Hunters must record the seal number on their permit.

Baiting - It is illegal to hunt any big game animals or turkeys within 200 yards of a baited area. An area is considered baited for 10 days following the complete removal of all bait. The hunter and the animal must be outside of the baited area during the harvest or attempted harvest. A baited area is any location where grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, hay, minerals (including salt), or any other natural food materials, commercial products containing food materials, or by-products of such materials that may attract big game or turkey. The use of scents alone, normal environmental conditions, standard farming and ranching practices, forest management, wildlife food plantings, orchard management, or similar land management activities do not constitute a baited area. It is unlawful to create a baited areawands owned or controlled by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Hunter Education - Hunter education is required for hunters ages 12 through 29 hunting with a firearm or air gun. Bow hunter education is required for those ages while hunting big game with a bow and arrow or crossbow. They must carry with them proof of certification.

Apprentice Hunter Education Exemption Certificate - Available for two consecutive years for hunters who have not completed hunter education. The fee is \$5.

ELK MUST BE CHECKED VIA TELECHECK

- All elk must be checked via Telecheck.
- Telecheck allows hunters to check elk by phone or online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. See OutdoorNebraska.gov and search "Telecheck" for more information.
- There are several ways to access and complete your harvest report:
 - Scan the QR code on your permit with your smartphone.
 - From your permit profile at goOutdoorsNE.com. Once logged in, select "Game Check Reporting" in the left-hand column and submit the required information.
 - From the login page on goOutdoorsne.com, select "Report Your Harvest – Big Game Check-In" in the list of white boxes below the login options.
 - Call 844-279-4564 to complete over the phone.
- When completing Telecheck, the following information will be required from your permit or animal: species, permit code, permit number, date of kill, county of kill, management unit, weapon used, sex of animal, and age of animal (adult or fawn).
- You may be asked questions about biological information, such as elk main beam length (measure from the base of the antler to the tip of the main beam).
- Write the seal number on the permit after completing Telecheck.

Accompaniment - All elk hunters age 12-15 and all hunters using the Apprentice Hunter Education Exemption Certificate must be accompanied by a licensed hunter age 19 or older when hunting. The accompanying person, if age 19-29, must be certified in firearm hunter education if hunting with a firearm or crossbow, or bow hunter education if hunting with bow and arrow. He or she must be at all times in unaided visual and verbal communication with the hunter. There may be no more than two hunters using the certificate accompanied by the experienced hunter at any time.

NEBRASKA WILDLIFE CRIMESTOPPERS

Now there are three ways to report a game law violation:

- call 1-800-742-7627
- on a report form at Outdoornebraska.gov/wildlifecrimestoppers/
- scan the QR code to the right

