

CONTROLLED HUNTS 101

What is a controlled hunt?

Unlike general season hunts where anyone can buy a tag over-the-counter, controlled hunts are limited entry hunts that require you to apply in advance for the opportunity to draw a tag in ODFW's random computerized drawing. Much of Oregon's rifle deer and elk hunting is limited entry—along with all antelope, sheep and goat hunting.

How does the controlled hunt draw work?

Most tags (75%) are awarded based on preference points. Every year you don't draw your first choice tag on deer, elk, pronghorn and spring bear hunts, you get a preference point, which increases your odds the following year. The remaining 25% are awarded randomly amongst all remaining 1st choice applicants, so you always have a chance to draw your first choice hunt.

Controlled hunts are divided into hunt series based on species, and then further divided into hunt numbers based on location. Hunters can apply once in each hunt series each year.

Hunt series:

- 100 – Buck deer
- 200 – Elk
- 400 – Antelope
- 500 – Bighorn Sheep (no preference points awarded for sheep hunts)
- 600 – Antlerless deer
- 700 – Spring Black Bear
- 900 – Rocky Mountain Goat (no preference points awarded for goat hunts)

How do I apply for a controlled hunt?

Step 1: Choose a hunt.

Controlled hunts are broken down by species and location. All hunts are listed in the Oregon Big Game Regulations, and each hunt has a unique hunt number. You can choose up to five hunts per series (1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice, etc.), though most tags run out after the 2nd choice drawing is completed.

You can get an idea of your odds of drawing a hunt by looking at the Big Game Regulations, where you will see the number of tags and number of 1st choice applicants from the previous year. Tag numbers and applicants can change from year to year, but usually

not by huge amounts. A point to consider, hunts that have more 1st time applicants than tags available will never be drawn as anything other than a first choice hunt.

ODFW's online [Point Summary Reports](#) can also help you figure out your odds. You can also purchase the [Oregon Tag Guide book](#) or visit the [Oregon Tag Draw Percentages](https://sites.google.com/site/oregontags/) website at <https://sites.google.com/site/oregontags/>. Both of these resources are unaffiliated with ODFW.

Step 2: Decide if applying as an individual or in a party.

Many hunters choose to join together with family and friends and apply for a hunt as a party. This means that either everyone in the party will draw a tag or no one will. When applying as a party, individual preference points are combined and then averaged for the group. If you are new to hunting, it helps to go with more experienced family and friends. Keep in mind that if you are just joining a long-established hunting party, your low points could reduce their chances at drawing a tag. (Make it up to them by being a good addition at hunting camp!) Hunts also have party size limits: 18 for deer and elk, six for black bear, two for antelope, individual only for goat and sheep. Party members must submit their party leader's Hunter/Angler ID# on their application.

Step 3: Get a hunting license.

To apply, you must first purchase an annual hunting license. You can purchase the hunting license at the same time you apply for a controlled hunt.

Step 4: Complete your tag application and apply by May 15 11:59 p.m. PT.

Once you have completed steps 1-3 above, you are ready to apply for your tag! You can apply [online](#), at a [license sales agent](#), at [ODFW offices](#) that sell licenses. Use the Oregon Controlled Hunt Application Worksheet to organize your information.

Get your application right - simple mistakes can derail your chances of drawing a tag. Triple-check your hunt number (and party leader's number if applying with others) to make sure they are correct. Also, be sure to include a daytime telephone number and E-mail so licensing staff can reach you if there is a problem.

If applying at a license sales agent, check your application before you leave the store and get a receipt showing your hunt choices. Keep this receipt for proof of application.

Step 5: Wait for draw results.

ODFW runs the controlled hunt draw after the June Commission meeting, when final tag numbers are adopted. Hunter results are

always available by June 20, but sometimes results are available online at the [My Hunter Information](#) page before that.

Step 6: After the draw.

If you drew the tag, congratulations! But don't forget to pick up your tag by the deadline, which is the day before the first hunt period begins. If you purchased a Sports Pac, you still need to pick up the tag for your particular hunt.

If you didn't get your first choice hunt, you now have a preference point for that hunt series for next year's draw. Points are affiliated with a hunt series, not a particular hunt number, so even if you change your mind and choose a different area to hunt next year, your point will count toward your new choice.

Tips & Additional Information:

- **Scouting is the key to successful hunting.** ODFW has developed many tools to help you get started. Consulting the Big Game Regulations or our web based tools such as the [Oregon Hunting Access Map](#), the weekly [Recreation Report](#), and our [ODFW Outdoors](#) Facebook page can all help point you in the right direction. Also, consider joining sporting groups such as the [Oregon Hunters Association](#) and attending their local chapter meetings – many of the members will be happy to share their advice with you.
- **Don't wait until the last minute** - or you could be waiting in a long line as many procrastinating hunters do in the week leading up to the deadline. Stores that sell licenses have also been known to stop accepting customers due to long lines on deadline day. ODFW's fax machine also gets very jammed up in the days before the deadline so your best bet is to apply early.
- **Correct mistakes through June 1.** If you got something wrong or want to change your application, you have until June 1. Use the [Controlled Hunt Change Form](#) online to submit changes or call the Licensing Department at (503) 947-6100 for assistance.
- **Get a point saver.** If you can't hunt this year, or choose to hunt in a general season, apply for a point saver to gain a preference point and increase your odds the next time you apply for a controlled hunt. You must have a hunting license. If you don't go through the draw, you can also apply for a point saver for each point series by mail order application July 1 through November 30. Point saver hunt numbers always end in 99 (i.e. use hunt number 199 when applying for a buck deer point saver, 299 when applying for an elk point saver, etc.)
- **Double-check your hunt** when the final proposed tag numbers are announced. ODFW posts proposed tag numbers on its [Hunting Resources page](#) the first week of May each year—after district staff have had a chance to survey animals (in early spring), propose tag numbers, and meet with Headquarters Staff. It's always a good idea to see if your hunt's tag numbers have gone up, down or stayed the same.
- **Non-resident tags.** There are limits on how many non-residents can draw Oregon controlled hunt tags: No more than 3% of antelope and bear tags, 5% of deer and elk, and 5-10% of sheep tags go to non-residents. Also, a number equal to one half of non-resident deer and elk tags drawn in the previous year go to Guides and Outfitters.
- **Age limits:** The minimum age to hunt big game is 12 years old. However, youth may begin purchasing point savers and accumulating preference points at age 9. They will need to purchase a juvenile hunting license first.
- **Mentored Youth Hunter Program (MYHP).** Youth ages 9-13 who register for the MYHP earn 1 preference point each year they register. These points are banked and can be redeemed into the hunt series of the youth's choice at any time. Some [special rules](#) apply to use these points.
- **Track your points for next year:** The [My Hunter Information pages](#) are updated with new hunt numbers on January 1 each year. So if this is your first year applying for a controlled hunt and you didn't draw your first choice, expect to see a "1" for that hunt series when you check your points on Jan. 1 the following year. If you did draw, your points for that series go back to zero, even if you don't purchase the tag. Pioneer License holder's points reset to 1 when they are successful drawing their 1st choice hunts.
- **Preference points** stay in the system until they are used: Even if you take a year off from hunting, the system keeps track of your preference points.



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