

UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

COUGAR

— GUIDEBOOK —



2023

REVISED MAY 2023

CONTACT US

Turn in a poacher

Phone: 1-800-662-3337

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Online: wildlife.utah.gov/utip

Division offices

Offices are open 8 a.m.–5 p.m.,
Monday through Friday.

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Springville, UT 84663
801-491-5678

Northeastern Region

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Vernal, UT 84078
435-781-9453

Northern Region

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801-476-2740

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Price, UT 84501
435-613-3700

Southern Region

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Cedar City, UT 84721
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Washington County Field Office

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Hurricane, UT 84737
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WHAT'S NEW?

Cougar hunting with a hunting or combination license: In March 2023, the Utah Legislature made changes to the laws regarding cougar hunting. Beginning May 3, 2023, a person may hunt cougars with any legal weapon if they have a valid hunting or combination license, provided they comply with all rules set forth in *Utah Admn. Rule R657-10* (taking cougar) and in this guidebook.

Cougar take limit: There is no annual limit on the number of cougars a person may take. Each harvested animal must be checked in at a DWR office within 48 hours of harvest. See page 21 for reporting requirements.

Cougar regulations cycle: In March 2023, the Utah Legislature changed the cougar regulatory cycle to run from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31. This guidebook covers rules that go into effect May 3 and will run through Dec. 31, 2023.

Changes to trail camera regulations: The Utah Legislature made changes to the state's trail camera rules, effective May 3, 2023. Trail cameras are prohibited on public land from July 31 to Dec. 31, with some exceptions for research and monitoring by land management agencies. The sale or purchase of trail camera footage in the take—or attempted take—of big game, cougar or bear is still prohibited. The new law allows the use of trail cameras that utilize internal data storage to be used on private property. For details, see the information box on page 19, or visit *wildlife.utah.gov/trailcams*.

Dog restrictions on specific units: For most areas in the state, a person using dogs may harvest or pursue cougars with a valid hunting or combination license year round. (You must have written permission to hunt or pursue cougars on private land.) However, on the La Sal; San Juan, Mtns; and Book Cliffs, East units you may not use dogs March 31–Nov. 2, 2023—except for those

KNOW THE LAWS

This guidebook summarizes Utah's cougar hunting laws and rules. Although it is a convenient quick-reference document for Utah's cougar regulations, it is not an all-encompassing resource.

For an in-depth look at the state's cougar hunting laws and rules, visit *wildlife.utah.gov/rules*.

You can use the references in this guidebook—such as *Utah Code § 23-20-3* and *Utah Administrative Rule R657-10-13*—to search the Division's website for the detailed statute or rule that underpins the guidebook summary.

If you have questions about a particular rule, call or visit the nearest Division office.

Who makes the rules?

The Utah Wildlife Board passes the rules and laws summarized in this guidebook.

There are seven board members, and each serves a six-year term. Appointed by the governor, board members are not Division employees.

The Division's director serves as the board's executive secretary but does not have a vote on wildlife policies.

Before board members make changes to wildlife rules, they listen to recommendations from Division biologists. They also receive input from the public and various interest groups via the regional advisory council (RAC) process.

If you have feedback or suggestions for board members, you can find their contact information online at *wildlife.utah.gov*.

Wildlife Board members

Wade Heaton
Karl Hirst
Gary Nielson
Bret Selman
Bryce Thurgood

Kevin Albrecht, *Chair*
Randy Dearth, *Vice Chair*
J. Shirley, *Division Director*
& *Executive Secretary*

hunters with valid black bear permits where the use of dogs is allowed. Please confirm those unit boundaries before you go into the field using the Utah Hunt Planner at hunt.utah.gov. For details, see *Key dates* on page 7.

Trapping cougars: Under the new legislative rule, a person may trap or snare cougars if they have valid hunting or combination license, a valid trap registration license, and they comply with all rules set forth in *Utah Admn. Rule R657-11* (taking furbearers and trapping). See the current *Utah Furbearer Guidebook* for information about rules and requirements for trapping furbearers.

Have more questions about changes to cougar hunting? Visit wildlife.utah.gov/cougar-hunting or contact your regional DWR office (page 2).

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Hunting or combination license required: You must have a valid Utah hunting or combination (hunting and fishing) license to hunt or trap cougar. To purchase a license, visit wildlife.utah.gov, a license agent or any Division office. You can also buy a license over the telephone at 800-221-0659. Please see page 9 for more information.

Restrictions on harvesting collared cougars: It is illegal to use dogs to harvest a collared cougar in units that are active research areas. For a list of hunting units where this applies, see the information box on page 12.

Child support law: There are restrictions on fishing and hunting license purchasers for nonpayment of child support. For additional information—or to arrange a payment schedule—please contact the Office of Recovery Services at 801-536-8500.

Download the app: The free Utah Hunting and Fishing app makes it easy to store digital versions of your licenses and permits on a mobile device. For details, see wildlife.utah.gov/mobileapp.

Exact harvest location required: Be prepared to provide the exact location of your harvest when you check in a cougar with a Division employee. GPS coordinates are preferred. See page 18 for details.

Stay informed: We will communicate changes that may affect you and your hunt via email and social media. Visit wildlife.utah.gov/stay-connected to sign up for email updates and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

Trial hunting program: People who haven't hunted may be able to try it for the first time without taking Hunter Education. For details, see the box on page 9

Maps and boundaries online: All unit maps and boundary descriptions are available at hunt.utah.gov.

Corrections: If errors are found in the printed guidebook, the Division will correct them in the online version. Visit wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks to view all of the Division's guidebooks.

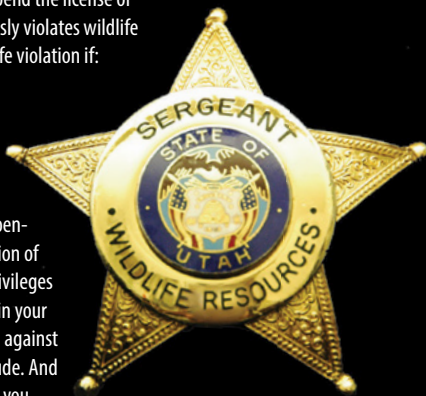
Protection from discrimination: The Division receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior and its bureaus prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility, or if you desire further information, please visit www.doi.gov/pmb/eo/public-civil-rights.cfm.

Don't lose your hunting and fishing privileges

If you commit a wildlife violation, you could lose the privilege of hunting and fishing in Utah. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources can suspend the license of anyone who knowingly, intentionally or recklessly violates wildlife laws. Your license can be suspended for a wildlife violation if:

- You are convicted.
- You plead guilty or no contest.
- You enter a plea in abeyance or diversion agreement.

Suspension proceedings are separate and independent from criminal prosecution. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources may suspend your license privileges whether or not the court considers suspension in your criminal case. You will be notified of any action against your privilege after criminal proceedings conclude. And remember, if your license is suspended in Utah, you may not be permitted to hunt or fish in most other states. (Visit wildlife.utah.gov/know-the-consequences to see a map of participating states.)



Private lands: The Division cannot guarantee access to any private land. Under certain circumstances, you must obtain written permission from the landowner or the landowner's authorized representative before hunting on private lands. To learn more, please see page 10.

Division funding: The Division is mostly funded by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and through federal aid made possible by an excise tax on the sale of firearms and other hunting- and fishing-related equipment.

KEY DATES AND FEES

License fees

Resident license fees

License	Fee
365-day hunting license (age 13 and under)	\$11
365-day hunting license (ages 14-17)	\$16
365-day hunting license (ages 18-64)	\$34
365-day hunting license (age 65 and older)	\$25
365-day hunting license for disabled veterans (see the box on page 13 for details)	\$25.50
Multi-year hunting license (age 18 and older)	\$33 per year, up to five years
365-day combination* license (age 14-17)	\$20
365-day combination* license (age 18-64)	\$38
365-day combination* license (age 65 and older)	\$29
365-day combination license for disabled veterans (see the box on page 13 for details)	\$28.50
Multi-year combination* license (age 18 and older)	\$37 per year, up to five years

* A combination license allows you to hunt or fish in Utah and also allows you to fish with a second pole.

Nonresident license fees

License	Fee
365-day hunting license (age 17 and younger)	\$29
365-day hunting license (age 18 and older)	\$72
Multi-year hunting license (up to five years) for age 18 and older	\$71 per year, up to five years
365-day combination* license (age 17 and younger)	\$33
365-day combination* license (age 18 and older)	\$98
Multi-year combination* license (age 18 and older)	\$97 per year, up to five years

* A combination license allows you to hunt or fish in Utah and also allows you to fish with a second pole.

License fee changes July 1

The Utah Legislature approved several proposed changes to Utah's hunting and fishing license fees, which will go into effect on July 1, 2023.

This is the first fee increase for Utah residents since 2014. The DWR is currently 92% self-funded through license and permit fees, and receives only limited funding from the state's General Fund, which is appropriated for specific issues that impact all Utahns.

Visit wildlife.utah.gov after June 1, 2023 for a full list of license and permit fee changes.

Key dates

Season dates

Cougar hunting

Year round (beginning May 3, 2023)

No dogs allowed

No dogs allowed for hunting or pursuing cougar on the following units (except for hunters with valid bear permits):

- La Sal
- San Juan, Mtns March 31–Nov. 2, 2023
- Book Cliffs, East

**See the Utah Hunt Planner at hunt.utah.gov for unit boundaries.*

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Are you thinking about hunting cougars in Utah this year? If so, you'll need to make sure you meet Utah's hunter education and license requirements before you go out into the field.

Licenses

Utah Code §§ 23-19-22.5 and 23-20-20

To hunt cougar in Utah, you must have a valid hunting or combination license.

Adults must accompany young hunters

Utah Code § 23-20-20

While hunting with any weapon, a person under 14 years old must be accompanied by their parent, legal guardian or other responsible person who is 21 years of age or older and who has been approved by the parent or guardian.

A person at least 14 years old and under 16 years old must be accompanied by a person 21 years of age or older while hunting with any weapon.

The Division encourages adults to be familiar with hunter education guidelines or to complete the hunter education course before accompanying youth into the field.

While in the field, the youth and the adult must remain close enough for the adult to see and provide verbal assistance to the young hunter. Using electronic devices, such as walkie-talkies or cell phones, does not meet this requirement.

Take the voluntary cougar-hunting course

The Division offers a voluntary orientation course for cougar hunters. By taking the course, you will learn more about cougar identification, target selection and how to have a successful hunt. Visit wildlife.utah.gov/cougar to take the course today.

Trial Hunting Program

Utah Code § 23-20-20

If you're 12 years old or older, you can participate in the Trial Hunting Program.

For details, see the box on page 9 or visit wildlife.utah.gov/trial.

Have you passed hunter education?

Utah Code § 23-19-11 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-23

If you were born after Dec. 31, 1965, you must provide proof that you've passed a hunter education course approved by the Division before you can apply for or obtain a hunting license.

The only exception to this law is for individuals who are participating in the Division's Trial Hunting Program. You can find details about the program on page 9 or by visiting wildlife.utah.gov/trial.

Proof of hunter education

You can prove that you've completed hunter education by obtaining a hunter education card (called a "blue card" in Utah) or if you have a verified hunter education number on file with the Division. The number is assigned when you complete hunter education and your blue card is issued.

How to take hunter education

To get started, you should visit wildlife.utah.gov/huntereducation. You'll see links to various traditional and online hunter education courses. Follow the instructions on the website to obtain a hunter education registration certificate (required) and to register for a course online.

If you need assistance, please contact your local Division office or call 801-538-4727.

When you finish the course, your instructor will verify your course completion in the online hunter education system. At that point, you will be able to apply for or obtain permits in the Division's hunt drawings, and your hunter education registration certificate will become your hunting license.

Approximately four to six weeks after you complete the course, you will receive your blue card by mail.

You should also keep the following in mind:

- Hunters under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult while hunting.
- Regardless of when a student graduates, all hunting regulations (such as season dates and bag limits) will apply.
- Students who are planning to hunt out of state should allow enough time for their hunter education card to arrive in the mail.

New to Utah?

If you become a Utah resident, and you've completed a hunter education course in another state, province or country, you must obtain a Utah blue card before you can buy a resident hunting license. You can obtain a Utah blue card at any Division office by providing proof that you've completed a hunter education course approved by the Division.

Do you have a license?

Utah Code §§ 23-19-1, 23-19-22.5 and 23-20-25

You must have a current Utah hunting or combination (hunting and fishing) license before you can harvest or pursue cougar in Utah.

To purchase a license, visit wildlife.utah.gov, a license agent or any Division office. You can also buy a license over the telephone at 800-221-0659. In addition to the fee for the license, you'll also be charged a \$2 transaction fee for each item you buy.

Utah's Trial Hunting Program

Utah Admin. Rule R657-68

Have you ever wanted to bring your spouse, child or friend along on a hunt and give them a chance to try hunting? Now, they can join you on your next cougar hunt.

Utah's Trial Hunting Program allows anyone over the age of 12 to try hunting for a few years—while accompanied by a licensed hunter over the age of 21—before taking a Hunter Education course.

The program applies to hunts for many different species, including cougars. To sign up for the program or to learn more about it, visit wildlife.utah.gov/trial.

Remember: There are restrictions on fishing and hunting license purchasers for nonpayment of child support. For additional information—or to arrange a payment schedule—please contact the Office of Recovery Services at 801-536-8500.

PREPARE TO HUNT

Utah Admn. Rule R657-62-19

New: The Utah Legislature made changes to the state's cougar hunting rules during the March 2023 legislative session. Beginning May 3, 2023, a person may hunt, pursue or trap cougars using a valid hunting or combination license, provided they comply with all rules set forth in *Utah Admn. Rule R657-10* (taking cougar) and *Utah Admn. Rule R657-11* (taking furbearers and trapping) and in this guidebook. A separate permit is not required to hunt cougar under the new rule.

Residency

As long as you have a valid Utah hunting or combination (hunting and fishing) license, Utah residents and nonresidents may hunt cougar year-round.

Complete the voluntary orientation course

Before you go out into the field, the Division strongly encourages you to complete the online cougar orientation course.

The course is completely voluntary, but it provides valuable information about cougar identification, target selection and how to have a successful hunt. You will find the orientation course online at wildlife.utah.gov/cougar.

Is a permit required?

Utah Admn. Rule R657-10-3 and R657-10-3

No. Beginning May 3, 2023, a person may hunt or pursue cougars with any legal weapon, provided they have a valid Utah hunting or combination license. You are not required to apply for or purchase an additional permit.

If you chose to take a cougar by trapping, you must also have a valid Utah trap registration license. Licenses are available at wildlife.utah.gov and from license agents and Division offices. Refer to the revised *Utah Furbearer Guidebook* for more information about requirements for trapping cougars.

Obtain permission to hunt private property

If you want to hunt on private property, the Division strongly encourages you to obtain written permission from the landowner. Ideally, you should have permission **before** you even apply for a license.

If you obtain written permission in advance, you know you'll be able to use the license if you purchase it.

The Division cannot guarantee access to private land, and the agency cannot provide the names of landowners who own property where hunts occur.

Guides and outfitters

If you are a guide or outfitter—and you charge a customer more than \$100 for a cougar hunting or pursuit trip—you are not required to purchase a hunting or combination license to guide a customer in the field.

What about bonus points?

Utah Admin. Rule R657-62-8

Prior to 2023, you were able to apply for a limited entry cougar permit which used the bonus point system. Utah's bonus point system was put in place to increase your chance of drawing limited-entry permits.

Due to legislative rule changes effective May 3, 2023, cougar permits are no longer in a limited entry draw. Your previously accrued cougar bonus points will not expire nor be revoked, and they will remain on record with the Division. Refunds will not be provided for points earned or purchased before 2023. Additionally, for applications submitted for the 2023-2024 cougar season, bonus points were not earned.

Reminder: Per rule, there is no allowable transfer of points from one species to another species. Your cougar bonus points will remain in your profile history, but are non-transferable.

Hunters with disabilities

Utah Admin. Rule R657-12

Utah provides special hunting accommodations for people with disabilities. These accommodations include the opportunity to hunt with a companion, hunt from a vehicle or other accommodations.

To learn more about hunting accommodations for people with disabilities, please visit wildlife.utah.gov/disabled or call any Division office.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Utah Admin. Rule R657-62-19

Although you do not need to apply for a permit to hunt, pursue or trap cougar in Utah, there are rules that may apply to your hunting or combination license.

Duplicate licenses

Utah Code § 23-19-10 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-42

If your unexpired license is destroyed, lost or stolen, you can obtain a duplicate from a Division office or a license agent for \$10 or half of the price of the original license, whichever is less.

The Division may waive the fee for a duplicate unexpired license, provided you did not receive the original document.

Keep in mind that you can also use the Utah Hunting and Fishing app to legally carry hunting or combination licenses on a phone or tablet for all the members of your family. To download the app, visit wildlife.utah.gov/mobileapp.

Restrictions on harvesting collared cougars

The Division has placed GPS tracking collars on cougars in various areas across the state. The Division is monitoring these animals in a handful of ongoing studies, and it is an expensive and time consuming process to capture and collar replacement animals. Please avoid harvesting collared cougars whenever possible.

Collared cougar restrictions

Year-round, there is a no-harvest restriction on collared cougars that applies only to collared cougars in an active research study area. It is prohibited to use dogs to take collared cougars in the following units in 2023: Central Mtns, Nebo (excludes West Face); Central Mtns, Nebo-West Face; Oquirrh-Stansbury, East; Wasatch Mtns, Cascade; Wasatch Mtns, West-Strawberry; and Wasatch Mtns, Timpanogos.

There are exceptions for cougars that are preying on livestock.

If you harvest a collared animal, please remove the collar **without cutting it** and contact your local Division office for information on how to proceed.

Discounted licenses for disabled veterans

The Division offers discounted hunting and combination licenses to Utah veterans who were disabled in the line of duty.

The discounted hunting license is \$25.50, instead of the \$34 full price. Likewise, the discounted combination license is \$28.50, instead of the \$38 full price. Either license is good for 365 days from the day you buy it. Discounted licenses are available online or from all Division offices listed on page 2.

To purchase a discounted hunting or combination license, you must be a Utah

resident and have a qualifying service-connected disability of at least 20 percent.

To apply for a license online, please visit wildlife.utah.gov/disabledvet and complete the online form. If you need assistance, please call the nearest Division office.

If you choose to visit a Division office to purchase your license, simply bring the verification of service-connected disability documentation that the Department of Veterans Affairs issued to you.

You can find additional resources for hunters and anglers with disabilities at wildlife.utah.gov/disabled-access.



Download the free

**UTAH
HUNTING &
FISHING APP**

wildlife.utah.gov/MobileApp

FIELD REGULATIONS

Several rules govern cougar hunting in Utah. These rules exist to help keep you safe and to ensure an ethical hunt. Please know the requirements for carrying and using firearms and archery tackle. You should also know the different types of hunting methods you may use and what you're required to do with any cougar you take.

Firearms and archery equipment

The firearms and archery equipment you can use during a cougar hunt are consistent with the equipment allowed during a Utah big game hunt.

Prohibited weapons

Utah Code §§ 23-20-3 and 23-13-18 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-7

You may only use firearms and archery tackle that are expressly permitted in this guidebook.

While hunting a cougar, you may not use:

- A firearm that's capable of being fired fully automatic
- Any light-enhancement device or aiming device that casts a visible beam of light
- A firearm equipped with a computerized targeting system that marks a target, calculates a firing solution and automatically discharges the firearm at a point calculated most likely to hit the acquired target
- A computer or other device to remotely control the aiming and discharge of a firearm or other weapon for hunting an animal.

These restrictions do not apply to laser range-finding devices or illuminated sight pins for archery equipment.

Rifles, airguns, shotguns and crossbows

Utah Code § 23-20-3 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-8

You may use a rifle or shotgun to hunt a cougar, but your firearm and ammunition must meet the following requirements:

- Your rifle must fire centerfire cartridges and expanding bullets.
- Your shotgun must be 20 gauge or larger, and you may use only slug ammunition or buckshot that's 00 or larger in size.

If you use an airgun to hunt a cougar, that airgun must:

- Be pneumatically powered
- Be pressurized solely through a separate charging device
- Only fire a bolt or arrow

Your arrows or bolts must be at least 16 inches long and travel at least 400 feet per second at the muzzle. They must also have either a fixed broadhead that is at least 7/8-inch

Are you allowed to possess a weapon?

Utah Code §§ 76-10-503 and 76-10-512 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-10

It is illegal under *Utah Code §§ 76-10-503 and 76-10-512* to possess or use a firearm, muzzleloader or any other dangerous weapon if you have been charged or convicted of certain offenses.

The purchase or possession of any hunting license, permit, tag or certificate of registration from the Division does not authorize the holder to legally possess or use a firearm, muzzleloader or any other dangerous weapon while hunting if they are otherwise restricted from possessing these weapons under Utah Code.

To determine whether you are allowed to possess a weapon, please review the Utah Code sections listed above or contact the law enforcement agency that oversees your case.

wide at the widest point or an expandable, mechanical broadhead that is at least 7/8-inch wide at the widest point when the broadhead is in the open position.

A crossbow used to hunt a cougar must have a minimum draw weight of 125 pounds and a positive mechanical safety mechanism.

A crossbow arrow or bolt used to hunt a cougar must be at least 16 inches long and have at least one of the following:

- Fixed broadheads that are at least 7/8-inch wide at the widest point
- Expandable, mechanical broadheads that are at least 7/8-inch wide at the widest point when the broadhead is in the open position

It is unlawful for any person to:

- Carry a cocked crossbow containing an arrow or a bolt while in or on any motorized vehicle on a public highway or other public right-of-way, except as provided in R657-12-4.
- Hunt any protected wildlife with a crossbow bolt that has any chemical, explosive or electronic device attached.

A crossbow used to hunt a cougar may have a fixed or variable magnifying scope.

Handguns

Utah Code § 23-20-3 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-9

You may use a handgun to take a cougar, but the handgun must be a minimum of .24 caliber and must fire a centerfire cartridge with an expanding bullet.

If you're hunting cougar, the handgun must develop at least 500 foot-pounds of energy at the muzzle.

No drones allowed

Utah Code § 23-20-3 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-14

Although drones are growing in popularity, it is illegal to use them while looking for sign or tracks, scouting or hunting protected wildlife in Utah.

Muzzleloaders

Utah Code § 23-20-3 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-10

Muzzleloaders may be used during any cougar hunt. To hunt a cougar with a muzzleloader, your muzzleloader must meet all of the following requirements:

- It can be loaded only from the muzzle.
- It may have open sights, peep sights or a variable- or fixed-power scope, including a magnifying scope.
- It can have only one barrel, and the barrel must be at least 18 inches long.
- It cannot be capable of firing more than once without being reloaded.
- The powder and bullet—or powder, sabot and bullet—cannot be bonded together as one unit for loading.
- It must be loaded with black powder or a black powder substitute. The black powder or black powder substitute cannot contain smokeless powder, but may contain some nitrocellulose.
- To hunt a cougar, you must use a lead or expanding bullet or projectile that's at least 40 caliber in size.
- Your bullet must be 130 grains or heavier, or your sabot must be 170 grains or heavier.

If you choose to use a muzzleloader during your hunt, you may use only the muzzleloader equipment authorized in this section to take a cougar.

Archery equipment

Utah Code § 23-20-3 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-11

Archery equipment may be used during any cougar hunt.

To hunt a cougar with archery equipment, your equipment must meet all of the following requirements:

- Your bow must have a minimum pull of 30 pounds at the draw or the peak, whichever comes first.
- Your arrowheads must have two or more sharp-cutting edges that cannot pass

through a 7/8 inch ring. If you're using expanding arrowheads, the arrowheads must have two or more sharp-cutting edges that cannot pass through a 7/8 inch ring when expanded.

- Your arrows must be at least 20 inches long, from the tip of the arrowhead to the tip of the nock.

Please remember that your bow may be equipped with a range-finding device. Also, if you carry arrows in or on a vehicle, the arrows must be in an arrow quiver or a closed case.

If you choose to use archery equipment during your hunt, you may use only the archery equipment authorized in this section to take a cougar.

Traps and trapping devices

Utah Admn. Rule R657-10-8 and R657-11

Beginning May 3, 2023, you may take cougar with a trap, snare or other trapping device if you comply with all the regulations set forth in *Utah Admn. Rule R657-11* (taking furbearers and trapping), which is summarized in the current *Utah Furbearer Guidebook*.

Loaded firearms in a vehicle

Utah Code §§§§ 76-10-502, 76-10-504, 76-10-505 and 76-10-523

You may not carry a loaded firearm in or on a vehicle unless you meet all of the following conditions:

- You own the vehicle or have permission from the vehicle's owner.
- The firearm is a handgun.
- You are 18 years of age or older.

A pistol, revolver, rifle or shotgun is considered to be loaded when there is an unexpended cartridge, shell or projectile in the firing position.

Pistols and revolvers are also considered to be loaded when an unexpended cartridge, shell or projectile is in a position whereby the

manual operation of any mechanism once would cause the unexpended cartridge, shell or projectile to be fired.

A muzzleloading firearm is considered loaded when it is capped or primed and has a powder charge and ball or shot in the barrel or cylinders.

Carrying a dangerous weapon while under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Utah Code § 76-10-528

You may not carry a dangerous weapon or hunt cougar while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Please see wildlife.utah.gov/rules for more information.

Areas with special restrictions

Although many areas are open to hunters, some areas have hunting, weapons and access restrictions.

Areas where you cannot discharge a firearm

Utah Code § 76-10-508

You may not discharge a dangerous weapon or firearm under any of the following circumstances:

- From a vehicle
- From, upon or across any highway
- At power lines or signs
- At railroad equipment or facilities, including any sign or signal
- Within Utah state park camp or picnic sites, overlooks, golf courses, boat ramps or developed beaches
- Without written permission from the owner or property manager, within 600 feet of:
 - A house, dwelling or any other building
 - Any structure in which a domestic animal is kept or fed, including a barn, poultry yard, corral, feeding pen or stockyard

State parks

Utah Code § 76-10-508 and Utah Admin. Rule R651-614-4

Hunting of wildlife is allowed within the boundaries of all state park areas, **except** those areas and hunts specifically closed by the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation in *Utah Admin. Rule R651-614*. For more information, visit stateparks.utah.gov/resources/hunting-at-state-park.

State laws regarding the possession and discharge of dangerous weapons apply in state park areas open to hunting. For information about discharging a dangerous weapon or firearm in a state park, see the *Areas where you cannot discharge a firearm* section above or review *Utah Code § 76-10-50*.

Hunting hours and methods

Hunting hours

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-4

You are permitted to pursue or take cougar anytime between 30 minutes before official sunrise until 30 minutes after official sunset.

Prohibited methods

Utah Code §§ 23-20-3, 23-20-12 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-9

Cougars may be taken or pursued using only during open hours, and by using only the methods listed in this guidebook, provided a person has a valid Utah hunting or combination license. For trapping requirements, all rules in the current Utah Furbearer Guidebook apply. Otherwise it is unlawful for any person to:

- Possess, capture, kill, injure, drug, rope, trap, snare or in any way harm or transport a cougar
- Restrict or hinder a cougar's ability to escape after it has been pursued, chased, treed, cornered or held at bay
- Use dogs to harvest a cougar wearing a GPS tracking collar (see page 12 for details)

- Engage in a canned hunt
- Take cougar from an airplane or any other airborne vehicle or device (including drones), or from any motorized terrestrial, aquatic or recreational vehicle
- Use electronic locating equipment to locate cougars wearing electronic radio devices

Trail cameras and their data (new)

Utah Admin. Rule R657-5-7 & Utah Code 23-13-18

At the direction of the Utah Legislature, changes to the state's trail camera laws went into effect May 3, 2023.

Trail cameras—and other non-handheld devices capable of capturing image, video, location, time, or date data in the field to take, attempt to take, or aid in the take or attempted take of big game—are prohibited on public land from July 31 to Dec. 31. There are some exceptions for research and monitoring by land management agencies (and other approved applications).

The sale or purchase of footage or data from any trail camera (or non-handheld device) that could be used to take, attempt to take, or aid in the take or attempted take of big game, cougars or bears is prohibited. That includes images or video, location information, time and date of the footage, and any other data that could aid in the harvest or attempted take of big game, cougars or bears.

The new law allows for the use of trail cameras that utilize internal data storage to be used on private property for the purposes of taking protected wildlife.

For details, see the information box on page 19, definitions on pages 28-29, and visit wildlife.utah.gov/trailcams for answers to frequently asked questions.

Spotlighting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-9 and Utah Code §§ 23-20-3, 76-10-504 and 76-10-523

You may not use spotlighting to take cougar.

You may not use a spotlight, headlight or other artificial light to locate any protected wildlife while having in your possession a firearm or other weapon or device that could be used to take or injure protected wildlife.

The use of a spotlight or other artificial light in any area where protected wildlife are generally found is considered probable cause of attempting to locate protected wildlife.

The provisions of this section do not apply to the use of the headlights of a motor vehicle or other artificial light in a usual manner where there is no attempt or intent to locate protected wildlife.

In addition, the above restrictions do not apply to concealed firearm carriers, provided the person is not using the concealed firearm to hunt or take wildlife.

Party hunting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-10

A person may not harvest a cougar for another person.

Use of dogs

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-11

You may use dogs to take or pursue cougar only during the open hours listed in this guidebook.

Reminder: You may **not** use dogs to harvest a cougar that's wearing a GPS tracking collar in an active research study area. (See the information box on page 12 for details.)

Make it easy, make an appointment

Please call the nearest Division regional office for an appointment to tag your cougar. This will ensure that a wildlife biologist or conservation officer is available to assist you.

Reminder: You will be required to provide your exact harvest location when you get your cougar tagged. Please be ready to share that location—preferably the GPS coordinates—with the Division employee who helps you.

If you are the owner or handler of the dogs, you must have a valid hunting or combination license in your possession while you are taking or pursuing cougars.

When dogs are used to pursue a cougar, the licensed hunter who intends to take the cougar must be present when the dogs are released. Then, the licensed hunter must continuously participate in the hunt until it ends.

When dogs are used to take a cougar, the owner or handler of the dogs must either:

- Have a valid hunting or combination license; or
- Be a guide or outfitter receiving more than \$100 in compensation

Changes to trail camera and night-vision device rules for 2023

Utah code § 23A-5-307 and Utah Admin. Rules R657-5-7, R657-33-9 & R657-10-9

The Utah Legislature made several wildlife-related amendments in March 2023, including laws regarding the use of trail cameras that went into effect May 3, 2023.

What is a trail camera?

- “Trail camera” means a device that is not held or manually operated by a person, and is capable of capturing images, video or location data of wildlife using heat or motion to trigger the device.

What are the trail camera regulations in Utah?

- All trail cameras are prohibited on public land from July 31 to Dec. 31 (with some exceptions, listed below).
- A trail camera using internal data storage and **not** capable of transmitting live data is permitted for use on private land for the purposes of taking protected wildlife.
- Utah Wildlife Board 2022 approved rule still applies: The sale or purchase of trail camera or other non-handheld device media, or the storage and sale or purchase of stored media—including images, video, location, time or date data—to take, or aid in the take or attempted take of big game, cougar or bear is unlawful.

The seasonal restrictions on trail camera use do not apply to:

- Monitoring and research conducted by the DWR.
- A land management agency in the course of its regular duties.
- Approved organizations or individuals conducting research or monitoring in collaboration with the DWR. These

include non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, individuals or groups monitoring active agricultural operations (including the take of a bear or cougar that is causing livestock depredation), or municipalities participating in the Urban Deer Program.

- Private landowners may use any trail camera or other non-handheld device to monitor their property for trespass and active agricultural operations.

What should I do if I see a trail camera in use during the seasonal closure?

Leave it alone and contact our conservation officers with the camera coordinates. Do not attempt to remove or damage the camera—it’s someone else’s property and may be in use legally.

What are the rules for night-vision devices?

- The rule prohibits the use of any night-vision device to locate—or attempt to observe or locate—big game, cougars or bears between July 31 and Jan. 31.
- A night-vision device is defined as anything that enhances visible and non-visible light and includes the use of night-vision devices, thermal-imaging devices, infrared-imaged devices and other electronic devices that enhance the visible and non-visible light spectrum.
- A trail camera is not a night-vision device.

For more information

Visit wildlife.utah.gov/trailcams for more details about these rules.

Taking cougar

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-22

You must have a valid Utah hunting or combination license to take cougar.

Whether you are harvesting or pursuing cougar, you may not:

- Pursue or take a female cougar with a kitten.
- Pursue or take kittens. See page 28 for the definition of a kitten.
- Repeatedly pursue, chase, tree, corner or hold at bay, the same cougar during the same day after the cougar has been released.
- Use dogs to harvest a cougar that's wearing a GPS tracking collar in an active study unit. (See the information box on page 12 for details.)

Remember: If you are a Utah-licensed guide or outfitter, you may not need to purchase a hunting or combination license if you are not taking a cougar. For details, see page 10.

Possession and transportation

Once you've harvested a cougar, there are several rules governing its possession and transportation.

Evidence of sex and age

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-13

Evidence of the cougar's sex must remain attached to the cougar's carcass or pelt until a Division employee attaches a permanent tag.

The pelt and skull must be presented to the Division in an unfrozen condition. This allows Division biologists to gather management data.

A Division employee will remove two of the cougar's smaller teeth at the time of permanent tagging. These teeth help biologists determine the cougar's age. If possible, please use a stick or other object to prop open the cougar's mouth so the teeth may be easily removed.

The Division also requires the cougar's exact

harvest location. GPS coordinates are preferred.

The Division may seize any pelt not accompanied by its skull.

Permanent tag

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-14

The licensed hunter must take the harvested cougar to a conservation officer, biologist or Division office within 48 hours of the time of kill.

A Division employee will affix a permanent possession tag to the pelt or unskinned carcass. The employee will also ask you for the GPS coordinates of the harvest location.

If you need to reach a conservation officer after regular business hours, over the weekend, or on a holiday, contact your local police dispatch office.

You may not possess an unskinned carcass or a green pelt after the 48-hour check-in period without a permanent tag. In addition, you cannot ship a green pelt out of Utah or present it to a taxidermist if the pelt does not have a permanent possession tag attached.

Transporting cougar

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-15

If you are a license holder who has legally harvested a cougar, you may transport the carcass if you have your valid Utah hunting or combination license on your person or downloaded on the DWR app.

Exporting a cougar from Utah

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-16

You may export a legally taken cougar or its parts if you have a valid license, and the cougar is properly tagged with a permanent possession tag.

You may not ship a cougar pelt from Utah without first obtaining a shipping permit issued by a Division office.

Harvest reporting

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-14

If you take a cougar, you must contact the Division within 48 hours. You will need to report exactly where the cougar was taken (GPS coordinates preferred) and meet with a Division employee to have a permanent tag affixed to the carcass. For more information on the tagging process, see page 27.

It is illegal to inaccurately report—or neglect to report—the correct hunting location where the cougar was killed. If you are convicted for failure to accurately report, your hunting privileges could be suspended.

Administrative checkpoints

Utah Code §§ 23-20-25 and 77-23-104

To help the Division fulfill its responsibility as trustee and custodian of Utah's wildlife, Division conservation officers and biologists monitor the taking and possession of cougars and the required permits, firearms and equipment used for hunting. You should expect to encounter conservation officers and biologists checking hunters in the field and at checkpoints.

If you're contacted by a conservation officer, you must provide the officer with the items they request, including any licenses and permits required for hunting, any devices used to participate in hunting and any cougars you've taken. These contacts allow the Division to collect valuable information about Utah's cougar populations.

Participating in surveys

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-21

If the Division contacts you about your cougar hunting experience, please participate in the survey regardless of your success. Your participation helps the Division evaluate population trends, assess harvest success and collect other valuable information.

Disposal of wildlife

Donating

Utah Code § 23-20-9 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-17

A person may only donate protected wildlife or its parts to another person at one of the following locations:

- The residence of the donor
- The residence of the recipient
- A meat locker
- A storage plant
- A meat processing or taxidermy facility

A written statement of donation must be kept with the protected wildlife or parts showing all of the following information:

- The number and species of protected wildlife or parts donated
- The date of donation
- The license or permit number of the donor and the permanent possession tag number
- The signature of the donor

A green pelt of any cougar donated to another person must have a permanent possession tag affixed. Along with the pelt, the recipient must also retain the written statement of donation.

Purchasing or selling

Utah Code § 23-20-3 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-18

You may purchase or sell legally obtained, tanned cougar hides.

You may not purchase, sell, offer for sale or barter a tooth, claw, paw or skull of any cougar.

Waste of wildlife

Utah Code § 23-20-8 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-19

You may not waste—or permit to be wasted—any protected wildlife or its parts.

Note: The skinned carcass of a cougar may be left in the field and does not constitute a waste of wildlife.

Aiding or assisting

Utah Code § 23-20-23

You may not aid or assist another person to violate any provisions of the Wildlife Resources code, rule, proclamation or guidebook.

The penalty for aiding or assisting is the same as that imposed for the primary violation.

Livestock depredation

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-21

If a cougar is harassing, chasing, disturbing, harming, attacking or killing livestock, or has committed such an act within the past 96 hours, livestock owners have the following options:

- In depredation cases, the livestock owner, an immediate family member or an employee of the owner on a regular payroll (not someone hired specifically to take cougar), may kill the cougar.
- A landowner or livestock owner may notify the Division of the depredation or any human health and safety concerns. The Division can then authorize a local hunter to take the offending cougar or notify a USDA-Wildlife Services specialist.
- The livestock owner may notify a USDA-Wildlife Services specialist of the depredation, and the specialist may then take the depredating cougar.

A depredating cougar may be taken at any time by a USDA-Wildlife Services specialist. This individual must be supervised by the USDA-Wildlife Services program and be performing their assigned duties in accordance with procedures approved by the Division.

A depredating cougar may be taken with any weapon authorized for taking cougar. Use of snares or traps must follow rules set forth in the current *Utah Furbearer Guidebook*.

The cougar carcass must then be reported to a Division office or employee within 96 hours.

In some cases, permits may be issued to a landowner experiencing chronic depredation problems. Please contact your regional office for more information.

Trespassing

Utah Code §§ 23-20-14 and 23-20-3.5

While taking wildlife or engaging in wildlife-related activities, you may not—without permission—enter or remain on privately owned land that is:

- Cultivated
- Properly posted
- Fenced or enclosed in a manner designed to exclude intruders

In addition, you may not:

- Enter or remain on private land when directed not to do so by the owner or a person acting for the owner.
- Obstruct any entrance or exit to private property.

“Cultivated land” is land that is readily identifiable as land whose soil is loosened or broken up for the raising of crops, land used for the raising of crops, or a pasture that is artificially irrigated.

“Permission” means written authorization from the owner or person in charge to enter upon private land that is cultivated or properly posted. Permission must include all of the following details:

- The signature of the owner or person in charge
- The name of the person being given permission
- The appropriate dates
- A general description of the land

“Properly posted” means that signs prohibiting trespass—or bright yellow, bright orange or fluorescent paint—are clearly displayed at all corners, on fishing streams crossing property lines, and on roads, gates and rights-of-way entering the land. Or, they are displayed in a manner that is visible to a person in the area.

You may not post private property you do not own or legally control or land that is open to the public as provided by *Utah Code § 23-21-4*. In addition, it is unlawful to take protected wildlife or its parts while trespassing in violation of *Utah Code § 23-20-14*.

You are guilty of a class B misdemeanor if you violate any provision described in this section. Your license, tag or permit privileges may also be suspended.

Division-owned management areas

Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-23

Most Division-owned wildlife management areas (WMAs) are closed during the winter months to protect big game animals. Contact the nearest Division office to see if any WMAs are open near you.

You may not use motor vehicles on WMAs closed to motor vehicle use without first obtaining written authorization from the appropriate Division regional office.

The Division may, at its sole discretion, authorize limited motor vehicle access to its WMAs under the following circumstances:

- Motor vehicle access is necessary to effectively hunt, pursue or trap cougars by legal means.
- Motor vehicle access will not interfere with wildlife or wildlife habitat.



Utah Turn in a Poacher

Reporting Options

Help us protect your wildlife. The following methods are available to report a suspected wildlife crime.

Call

800-662-3337

Text

847411

Use the
UTDWR app

Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play

UTiP

To submit a report online, scan the QR code to the left or visit wildlife.utah.gov/utlp.

COUGAR IDENTIFICATION TIPS

Get a good look before you harvest the animal you've been pursuing.

You've already done the hard part. For hours, you pursued the cougar across all kinds of terrain. Now, it's treed, and you need to decide if this is the animal you want.

Before you pull the trigger, grab your binoculars, take a close look at the cougar and consider the following questions:

- Is the cougar legal? The cougar is not legal if it has spots, is accompanied by young or is accompanied by an adult.
- Is the cougar an adult? You will be able to tell by looking at its head, overall size and teeth.
- Is the cougar male or female? Key identifiers include body and head size and a noticeable genital spot on male cougars. This is important because the Division encourages hunters not to harvest female cougars.

The following descriptions and photos should help you better identify cougars in the field.

Body and head size

Older cougars are broader, more muscular (especially in the front shoulders and chest) and generally larger than other cougars. Dogs often prove helpful in comparing size:

- Juvenile cougars are about the same size as a dog.
- Young males and adult females are about one-and-a-half to two times larger than dogs.
- Adult male cougars are two to three times larger than dogs.

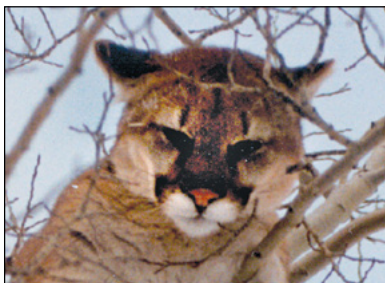
When assessing head sizes, keep in mind that a mature male's head is larger and rounder than the heads of younger males and females.



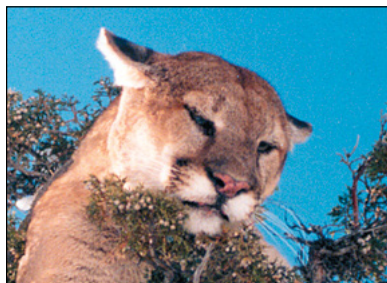
Adult female



Adult male



Adult female head



Adult male head

Photos by Bryan Bateman

Avoid illegal pursuit of female cougars with kittens

It is illegal to pursue a kitten or a female cougar accompanied by a kitten. You can avoid doing this by looking carefully for tracks.

Adult female cougar tracks average about 3.5 inches wide. Tracks in that size range, accompanied by similar, smaller tracks, could indicate a female with kittens. If you come across tracks like these, do **not** pursue the animals.

Condition of teeth

Older cougars' teeth are thicker and often more worn and yellow than the teeth of younger cougars.



Female kitten

Ernie Millgate



Young female

Photos by Byron Bateman



Adult male

Location of genital spot

When treed, a male's genital spot is often visible. This is because it's located four or five inches away from the anus. In contrast, a female's genital spot is only about an inch below the anus and is less noticeable.



Female

Photos by Colorado Division of Wildlife



Male

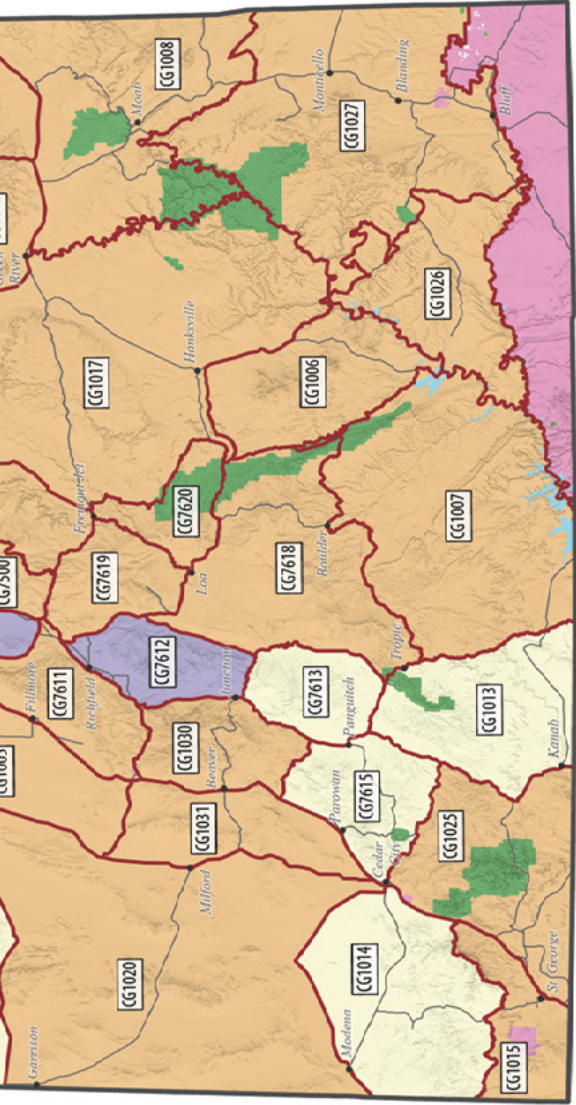
As a cougar hunter, you must take reasonable precautions to avoid harming kittens and their mothers.

Take the voluntary cougar-hunting course

For cougar identification tips, complete the voluntary orientation course at wildlife.utah.gov/cougar.

Utah Cougar Guidebook • 2023

wildlife.utah.gov



This map is for general reference only. The Division does not guarantee access to any private or public land. Hunters must research land accessibility before purchasing a license. *Refer to page 7 of this guidebook for units that do not allow dogs during seasonal closures. See page 12 of this guidebook for restrictions on using dogs to harvest GPS-collared cougars in active study areas.

This map is for general reference only. The Division does not guarantee access to any private or public land. Hunters must research land accessibility before purchasing a license. *Refer to page 7 of this guidebook for units that do not allow dogs during seasonal closures. See page 12 of this guidebook for restrictions on using dogs to harvest GPS-collared cougars in active study areas.

DEFINITIONS

Utah Code §§ 23-13-2, 23-24-1 and Utah Admin. Rule R657-10-2

The definitions in this section are listed in Utah's state laws and administrative rules (see the citations above). You can use these references—including throughout the guidebook—to look online for the complete text of the relevant laws and rules.

Canned hunt means that a cougar is treed, cornered, held at bay or its ability to escape is otherwise restricted for the purpose of allowing a person who was not a member of the initial hunting party to arrive and take the cougar.

Carcass means the dead body of an animal or its parts.

Compensation means anything of economic value in excess of \$100 that is paid, loaned, granted, given, donated, or transferred to a dog handler for or in consideration of pursuing cougar for any purpose.

Cougar means *Puma concolor*, commonly known as mountain lion, lion, puma, panther or catamount.

Dog handler means the person in the field that is responsible for transporting, releasing, tracking, controlling, managing, training, commanding and retrieving the dogs involved in the pursuit. The owner of the dogs is presumed the dog handler when the owner is in the field during pursuit.

Domicile means the place:

- where an individual has a fixed permanent home and principal establishment;
- to which the individual if absent, intends to return; and
- in which the individual and the individual's family voluntarily reside, not for a special or temporary purpose, but with the intention of making a permanent home.

To create a new domicile an individual must:

- abandon the old domicile; and
- be able to prove that a new domicile has been established.

Drone means an autonomously controlled, aerial vehicle of any size or configuration that is capable of controlled flight without a human pilot aboard.

Evidence of sex means the sex organs of a cougar, including a penis, scrotum or vulva.

Green pelt means the untanned hide or skin of any cougar.

Highway means the entire width between property lines of every way or place of any nature when any part of it is open to the use of the public as a matter of right for vehicular travel.

Hunting means to take or pursue a reptile, amphibian, bird or mammal by any means.

Immediate family member means a livestock owner's spouse, child, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepchild and grandchild.

Kitten means a cougar that has obvious spots on its sides or its back or has obvious leg barring coloration.

Livestock means cattle, sheep, goats or turkeys.

Location of harvest means the exact location where the cougar is killed. GPS coordinates are preferred.

Night-vision device means anything that enhances visible and non-visible light and includes the use of night-vision devices, thermal-imaging devices, infrared-imaged devices and other electronic devices that enhance the visible and non-visible light spectrum. Trail cameras are not a night-vision device.

Nonresident means a person who does not qualify as a resident.

Pursue means to chase, tree, corner or hold a cougar at bay.

Resident means a person who has a domicile (fixed permanent home and principal establishment) in Utah for six consecutive months immediately preceding the purchase of a license or permit, AND DOES NOT claim residency for hunting, fishing or trapping in any other state or country.

An individual retains Utah residency if he or she leaves Utah to serve in the armed forces of the United States, or for religious or educational purposes, and does NOT claim residency for hunting, fishing or trapping in any other state or country.

Members of the armed forces of the United States and dependents are residents as of the date the member reports for duty under assigned orders in Utah, if:

- the member is NOT on temporary duty in Utah and does NOT claim residency for hunting, fishing or trapping in any other state or country.
- the member presents a copy of his or her assignment orders to a Division office to verify the member's qualification as a resident.

A nonresident attending an institution of higher learning in Utah as a full-time student may qualify as a resident if the student has been present in Utah for 60 consecutive days immediately preceding the purchase of the license or permit and does NOT claim residency

for hunting, fishing or trapping in any other state or country.

A Utah resident license or permit is invalid if a resident license for hunting, fishing or trapping is purchased in any other state or country.

An individual DOES NOT qualify as a resident if he or she is an absentee landowner paying property tax on land in Utah.

Tag means a card, label or other identification device issued for attachment to the carcass of protected wildlife.

Take means to hunt, pursue, harass, catch, capture, angle, seine, trap or kill any protected wildlife or to attempt any of these actions.

Trail camera means a device that is not held or manually operated by a person and is used to capture images, video, or location data of wildlife using heat, or motion to trigger the device.

Trapping means taking protected wildlife with a trapping device.

Use means participating in the activity.

Waiting period means a specified period of time that a person who has obtained a cougar permit must wait before applying for any other limited-entry cougar season.



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- Learn new skills
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wildlife.utah.gov/stayconnected

