



GMU 17A

Feb. 13, 2024

Species within this unit: Antelope, Black Bear, Elk, Javelina, Merriam's Turkey, Mountain Lion, Mule Deer, Dove, Tree Squirrel, Quail

Unit Boundaries

Beginning at the junction of the Williamson Valley Rd. (County Road 5) and the Camp Wood Rd. (FR 21); westerly on the Camp Wood Rd. to the west boundary of the Prescott National Forest; north along the forest boundary to the Baca Grant; east, north and west around the grant to the west boundary of the Prescott National Forest; north and east along this the forest boundary to the Williamson Valley Rd. (County Rd. 5, FR 6); southerly on Williamson Valley Rd. (County Rd. 5, FR 6) to the Camp Wood Rd.

Species Information

Antelope

Overview: Unit 17A provides good opportunities for antelope hunting. Antelope in some portions of Unit 17A may move to and from adjacent units such as 17B, 18A, 18B, or 19B. This can create a challenge if a buck you have located while scouting decides to move prior to the hunt. Hunter success is generally high. Antelope occur in limited areas where important access issues exist. Whether hunting public or private land, hunters should always pick up litter, leave gates as they are found (usually closed), and never drive off road in any vehicle, including ATV's. By obeying laws and being friendly and courteous to landowners and other recreational users, hunters can do their part to keep hunter access open in the future.



Areas: Northwestern Corner/New Water Area. This area can be accessed by way of Forest Road 2 off the Williamson Valley Rd near the Yavapai Ranch Headquarters south of Seligman. This area represents the vast majority of antelope habitat in Unit 17A and most antelope are harvested here.

Northeastern Corner/Cowden Area. This area is just west of the Williamson Valley Rd in the northern portion of Unit 17A near the Yavapai Ranch Headquarters south of Seligman. Antelope can sometimes be found in the open grassland areas between juniper covered ridges.

Note - The two areas above are within the Yavapai Ranch, which is a checkerboard of U.S. Forest Service and private land. The ranch allows public access and is supportive of hunting in the area. The ranch asks that you sign in when you pass sign-in boxes and obey all laws and rules, as a condition of your access.

Southeastern Corner/Williamson Valley Area. This area can be accessed from the Camp Wood Rd (FR 21) on the south and the Williamson Valley Road (Yavapai County Rd 5) on the east. Most of this area is posted private property making hunter access challenging. Hunting on posted private land is allowed by permission only.

Black Bear

Overview: Unit 17A is combined with other units for bear seasons, so refer to the current hunting regulations for additional information. Unit 17A does not have a high-density bear population, but some opportunity exists.

Anyone going bear hunting must contact 1-800-970-BEAR (2327) or go to <https://harvest-tracking.azgfd.gov/> to determine if a particular hunt unit is still open. If a hunter has harvested a bear, they must contact the Arizona Game and Fish Department within 48 hours of take. This can be done in person during business hours, online (click on the black bear mandatory 48 hour report link) or by calling 1-800-970-BEAR, which is a 24-hour number. In addition, within 10 days of taking a bear, the hunter shall present the bear's skull, hide, and attached proof of sex for inspection. A premolar tooth will be removed during this inspection. Keep in mind that local Wildlife Managers may not be readily available to inspect a bear, which may require the hunter to take the animal to a Department office.

When in the field, care should be taken to watch for cubs near a potential game bear. Small bruins are not always visible in dense cover. It is unlawful to take a sow with cubs.

Areas: Focus bear hunting efforts in the high elevation drainages off the Juniper and Santa Maria Mountains.



Bears use a variety of habitat types found within Unit 17A, so scouting for food sources will help you locate likely areas to hunt bears.

Tips:

Black bears, more than any other big game species in Arizona, must be hunted early morning or late afternoon during the fall hunts if the hunter is to have an opportunity to locate them. Scouting prospective areas helps greatly and the use of binoculars and/or a spotting scope is almost mandatory. To judge a bear, look at body bulk and relative size of legs to the body and the ear size relative to the head. A bear with long, lanky looking legs is probably a young smaller bear. A bear with small appearing ears probably means a larger bear since bears' ears (young and old) are generally about 5 inches long. Hence the smaller the ears appear in relation to the head, the bigger the bear's head, which probably means a bigger bear.

Elk

Overview: Unit 17A has relatively low elk densities with herds that move back and forth across unit boundaries. This nomadic behavior results in a challenging hunt that requires equal amounts of skill, pre-hunt scouting, and luck. Unit 17A is combined with several other units for elk hunts. Refer to the current hunting regulations for specifics on which units are combined. The elk hunts in Unit 17A are "Limited Opportunity" and can be very challenging.

The management objectives for Unit 17A are to maintain a limited number of elk far below the carrying capacity of the unit and to minimize elk conflicts for landowners.

Areas: The elk population is mainly concentrated in the western portion of Unit 17A all the way from the southern boundary to the northern boundary. This area has relatively good public access. From south to north, areas elk can be found are: Yolo Ranch and 7Up Ranch area (both ranches are posted private property surrounded by Prescott National Forest), Forest Road 9 corridor, Juniper Mesa, and the Juniper Mountains on the Yavapai Ranch.

The Yavapai Ranch is a checkerboard of U.S. Forest Service and private land. The ranch allows public access and is supportive of hunting in the area. The ranch asks that you sign in when you pass sign-in boxes and obey all laws and rules as a condition of your access.

Other ranches in the southeastern portion of Unit 17A are occasionally used by elk. The ranches in this area are posted private property and generally do not give permission to hunters without prior relationships or arrangements.



Javelina

Overview: Javelina can be found in all of the different habitat types in Unit 17A. Scout areas prior to your hunt to locate fresh sign where javelina travel, bed, and feed. Look for scat, tracks, and rooting. Once you have located an area likely to contain javelina, find a good vantage point nearby to glass from. Many hunters make the mistake of just scanning the hillsides without really picking them apart, thus missing a lot of game. Attaching your binoculars to a tripod will make glassing much more effective, especially when glassing long distances. When hunting in areas where thick vegetation precludes glassing, try sitting waters frequented by javelina.

Hunter success during javelina season can be weather dependent. On rainy or windy days javelina will stay brushed up or in the bottom of draws in an attempt to stay warm. This obviously makes them difficult to locate. However, on calm days with the sun shining, javelina can be found relatively easily feeding on open slopes.

Once a javelina has been harvested, care should be taken to dress and skin it as soon as possible. A common misconception is that the scent gland on a javelina's back must be cut out. This is incorrect. The gland is contained within the skin, and simply skinning a javelina as you would any other animal will completely remove the scent gland. However, be sure not to touch a knife or fingers to the gland or hair and then touch the meat.

Areas: There are decent javelina numbers on the Yavapai Ranch, which is a checkerboard of U.S. Forest Service and private land. The ranch allows public access and is supportive of hunting in the area. The ranch asks that you sign in when you pass sign-in boxes as a condition of your access. To ensure this access continues in the future, hunters should obey all ranch requests such as road closures, driving only on existing roads, and limiting travel on roads during wet weather to reduce rutting. Access to this area is off the Williamson Valley Rd (County Rd 5), on Forest Road 1 and 2.

Most of the rest of Unit 17A has good numbers of javelina. Many of these areas, however, are covered with thick vegetation making locating javelina very challenging.

Merriam's Turkey

Overview: The turkey population in Game Management Unit 17 is fair after supplemental transplant efforts from 2015-2022. Currently, there are only two open seasons for turkeys in Unit 17, both in the spring. The draw tags issued for the



first and second spring seasons are valid for bearded turkeys only.

When hunting turkeys during the spring season, make sure the bird you're about to bag has a visible beard. Don't rely on a colorful head or even the sound of a gobble when deciding to shoot. Also, be sure no other turkeys are behind or adjacent to the bird you decide to take. Accidentally killing multiple birds with one shot is more common than one might think.

Areas: Turkeys can be found in southwestern Unit 17A near the Yolo and 7Up ranches, western Unit 17A near Juniper Mesa, and in north central Unit 17A on the Yavapai Ranch in the Juniper Mountains.

Mountain Lion

Overview: Mountain lions are found in good numbers throughout Unit 17A. Annual lion harvest numbers in Units 17A and 17B are usually fairly high. Lions are reclusive animals that spend most of their time in rough more remote country. By far, the most effective lion hunting method is trailing them with hounds. However, lions will respond to predator calls, and hunters using this tactic harvest some each year.

When setting up to call mountain lions, pick an elevated calling location that allows you to view a lot of country from one point. Lions will generally come in slow and cautiously, so call on and off for at least 45 minutes, while glassing open areas and rock piles.

****Special Note:** Successful lion hunters must report their kill online and using the mountain lion 48 hour mandatory report link on the website, or by telephone 1-877-438-0447, within 48 hours of taking a lion. In addition, within 10 days of taking a lion, the hunter shall present the lion's skull, hide, and attached proof of sex for inspection. A small premolar tooth will be removed during this inspection. Keep in mind that local Wildlife Managers may not be readily available to inspect a lion, which may require the hunter to take the animal to a Department office. Also, it is unlawful to harvest a spotted kitten or a female accompanied by spotted kittens.

Mule Deer

Overview: Unit 17A is dominated by rolling hills with pinyon/juniper and oak woodland with interspersed grasslands to the north. To the south and western portions of the unit, large areas of Ponderosa pine are present.



Areas with open slopes, ridges, or mesas should be meticulously glassed for deer during early morning and late afternoon periods. As with any hunt, pre-hunt scouting will greatly increase your chances for success. A Prescott National Forest map is a good place to start (refer to the west half).

Unit 17A is managed under Alternative Management Hunt Guidelines for deer. These Guidelines are designed to provide more older-age class bucks and results in a more conservative harvest. This is not to say there are big bucks everywhere, but on average the opportunity to harvest older-age class bucks can be better than Standard Management deer units.

Areas: Camp Wood and Hyde Mountain west to the Yolo Ranch. This area is predominantly Ponderosa pine with large granite boulder piles. Glassing in this area will be limited, although still-hunting and sitting waters can yield good results. The posted pastures north and south of the Yolo Ranch headquarters are closed to hunting. Take the Camp Wood Rd (FR 21, aka County Rd 68) west from the Williamson Valley Rd (County Rd 5) to access these areas.

Hitt Wash. This area is mostly gentle hills with pinyon/oak woodland. Glassing will be more effective in this area. Some of the private sections along Hitt Wash have been closed to vehicle travel to promote regeneration of the riparian area. Obey signs posted restricting trespass or vehicle access on private property. Access is generally by way of the Camp Wood Rd (FR 21, aka County Rd 68).

Walnut Creek Road (County Rd 125) parallels a popular corridor for deer hunters. Although this road goes through a good amount of posted private land, where permission is required, it is the northern access point for FR 9 and 95.

For those willing to get away from the roads and hike or go horseback, Juniper Mesa Wilderness will be the ticket. Best access is from the north off FR 7. The mesa is mostly Ponderosa to the west, grading to pinyon as you head east.

Haystack Peak. This area is on the Yavapai Ranch, which is a checkerboard of U.S. Forest Service and private land. The ranch allows public access and is supportive of hunting in the area. The ranch asks that you sign in when you pass sign-in boxes as a condition of your access. To ensure this access continues in the future, hunters should obey all ranch requests such as road closures, driving only on existing roads, and limiting travel on roads during wet weather to reduce rutting. The ranch maintains the road system, and it is asked that when weather conditions make these roads muddy that people refrain from using them, or at least limit travel on them to avoid extensive rutting. This area can be accessed by way of FR 664.

Happy Camp. Access is through the Yavapai Ranch headquarters on FR 1.



Dove

Overview: Unit 17A lacks large areas of irrigated cropland that provides optimum dove hunting associated with many other units.

Some of the tanks may provide decent hunting opportunities. Scouting potential areas shortly before the season will greatly improve your hunting success.

Tree Squirrel

Overview: Tree squirrels are associated with Ponderosa pine/oak woodland. This type of habitat can be found around Camp Wood off Forest Road 21 and Happy Camp to the north, off FR 1. Hunters can enjoy success by slowly walking through the forest looking and listening. Another tactic is to get in an area with fresh sign, such as cut pine limbs, then sit and wait.

Quail

Overview: Quail breeding activity and the survival of young birds is directly related to precipitation. Late winter and early spring moisture generally translates to a good quail season.

Early in the season, birds will most likely be tied to water. As the season progresses and temperatures fall, they will move away from tanks and washes to the uplands.

There are small pockets of quail in Unit 17A, but quail hunting opportunities are generally limited.

Unit Summary

Primary Game Species/ Hunting Month(s)

Mule Deer	August-January
Javelina	January/February
Elk	September-November

Secondary Game Species/Hunting Month(s)

Turkey	April
Antelope	August/September

Climate Information

Month	Avg. Temp	Avg. Rainfall	Avg. Snowfall
January	Max 50°/Min 20°	1.72"	4.50"
February	Max 54°/Min 23°	1.51"	3.50"
March	Max 59°/Min 23°	1.53"	3.90"
April	Max 68°/Min 33°	0.72"	1.10"
August	Max 86°/Min 56°	3.45"	0.0"
September	Max 85°/Min 50°	1.49"	0.0"
October	Max 72°/Min 38°	1.22"	0.20"
November	Max 60°/Min 28°	1.33"	1.90"
December	Max 52°/Min 23°	1.80"	5.60"

Other Pertinent Climate Information

Temperatures and precipitation levels vary considerably due to the wide range in elevations. High-elevation climate information is from Prescott. Higher elevation areas, such as Camp Wood, will experience cooler temperatures and considerably more snowfall.



Cities, Roads & Campgrounds

Major Cities and Towns in or Near Game Management Unit and Nearest Gas, Food, and Lodging

Prescott, Bagdad, Seligman

Major Highways and Roads Leading To

From the East: State Hwy 69

From the West: State Hwy 97

From the North: Williamson Valley Rd

From the South: State Hwy 89

Developed Campgrounds

None. All camping is primitive.

Undeveloped Campgrounds

All camping is primitive.

Brief Description of Terrain, Elevation, and Vegetation

Elevations range from roughly 5,000' up to more than 7,200' near Camp Wood. Terrain is very diverse, encompassing mesas with associated canyons, steep mountains, and wide flats. Vegetation varies from large expanses of chaparral and short grass meadow with interspersed pinyon-juniper, to coniferous forests.

Government Agencies and Phone Numbers

Arizona Game and Fish Department, Region III -928 692-7700

Prescott National Forest -928 443-8000