



GMU 8

August 12, 2024

Species within this game management unit (GMU): Pronghorn, Black Bear, Elk, Merriam's Turkey, Mountain Lion, Deer, Javelina.

Unit Boundaries

Beginning at the junction of I-40 and AZ Hwy 89 (in Ash Fork, Exit 146); south on AZ Hwy 89 to the Verde River; easterly along the Verde River to Sycamore Creek; northerly along Sycamore Creek to Volunteer Canyon; northeasterly along Volunteer Canyon to the west boundary of Camp Navajo; north along the boundary to a point directly north of I-40; west on I-40 to AZ Hwy 89.

All Hunts

Your big game hunter questionnaire link is located on the back of your tag. You also will receive a hunter questionnaire postcard in the mail. You can choose to return the hunter questionnaire postcard via postal mail or online: <https://www.azgfd.com/hunting/hunt-draw-and-licenses/harvest-reporting/hunter-questionnaires/>. You may also receive an email containing a link to your hunter questionnaire. You can respond by one method only. This information is a critical component of the hunt recommendation process, and your information helps us to accurately estimate species harvest and set permit levels.

Kaibab National Forest Travel Management

The Travel Management Rule only allows motorized use on designated roads, trails and areas as identified on a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). These maps are available for free at Forest Service offices or through the following links: [Coconino National Forest](#), [Kaibab National Forest](#). Only motorized retrieval of elk is permitted in Game Management Unit 8. Motorized retrieval of other wildlife, including all other big game species, is not permitted on national forest lands in Game Management Unit 8. For further information regarding the Travel Management Rule, please contact the Kaibab, Prescott or [Coconino National Forest](#).

Species Information

Pronghorn

Overview: Approximately 95 percent of the GMU is public land administered by the US Forest Service. Ponderosa pine is the dominant vegetation type in the higher elevations above 6,000 feet with scattered gambel oak. The mixed conifer vegetation type is most common on Bill Williams Mountain and the pinyon/juniper vegetation type is found at lower elevations. Water sources consist of mainly man-made lakes, stock tanks and wildlife waters with the Verde River making up the southern boundary.

The GMU is divided roughly north and south by the western extent of the Mogollon Rim with Sycamore Canyon on the east and the Welch Interchange along I-40 between Williams and Ash Fork on the west. The lower elevation ranges from 3600-5500 feet with the higher elevation ranging from 6000 to 9200 feet. Most roads are on the Kaibab National Forest map. Access is fairly good with two-wheel-drive, but poor weather could cause hazardous conditions that would require four-wheel-drive operations.

Areas: The two main areas to find concentrations of pronghorn in the GMU are Garland Prairie and Wagon Tire Flat. Other areas to find pronghorn are the areas west of the Hat Ranch, Putney Flat, Sunflower Flat, McDougal Flat and Page Flat. After opening day look for the pronghorn to move into the trees around these flats. If drought conditions exist, Pronghorn distribution may vary throughout the GMU due to water availability. Garland Prairie is located in the northeast portion of the GMU. Over the years, 50 percent of the harvest in GMU 8 comes from this area. There are private land blocks on the north, west and south ends of the prairie. Be careful of shooting within ¼ mile of a residence, please be courteous.

Black Bear

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GMU 8 has some outstanding bear habitat with numerous canyons, high-country mountains and high desert areas. Hunters can use a variety of different hunting techniques including glassing, still-hunting, sitting water, varmint calling and pursuit with dogs.

Areas: Bear distribution is throughout the GMU mostly above 5000 feet elevation. Bears can be found associated with whatever food crop is most prevalent in a given year. Search for areas with fruit bearing Manzanita, scrub live-oak, Gamble's oak and prickly pear cactus. Some areas where bears are commonly found include Bill Williams Mountain, Summit Mountain, Round Mountain, Morgan Hill and the canyons dropping off the Mogollon Rim such as Sycamore, Tule, Government, MC, and Hell canyons. Some areas are remote and access is difficult, warm to hot weather conditions can exist, be prepared to pack out the bear carcass, including all edible parts.

Hunters are required to report their black bear harvest information to the Arizona Game and Fish Department within 48 hours of taking a black bear. Hunters can report their black bear harvest in person, by telephone at 1-877-438-0447, or [online](#).

In addition to the 48-hr reporting requirement, the hunter (or their designee) needs to present the black bear's skull and hide with attached proof of sex to a designated Arizona Game and Fish Department employee for inspection within 10 days of taking the black bear.

The hunter is responsible for monitoring if the GMU's bear season is still open prior to going out into the field. Call 1-800-970-BEAR (2327) or monitor the AGFD [fall black bear harvest tracking page](#) to ensure that the season is still open. [Access more information](#) regarding black bear regulations and harvest reporting.

Elk

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conifer vegetation type is most common on Bill Williams Mountain and the pinyon/juniper vegetation type is found at lower elevations. Water sources consist of mainly man-made lakes, stock tanks and wildlife waters with the Verde River making up the southern boundary.

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Areas: During the early seasons such as archery and muzzleloader the elk will be found throughout the GMU mainly above 6000 feet elevation. Good areas to check are Garland Prairie, McDougal Flat, Barney Flat, Round Mountain, Summit Mountain, McCracken Knoll, Jackass Knoll, Dutchkid Knoll, Boyd Knoll, Snyder Knoll and Bill Williams Mountain. Good access roads are Forest Service Roads 12, 105, 108, 110, 122, 139, 140, 141, and 354.

During the late seasons such as general bull and general antlerless the elk may move to lower elevations if there is significant snowfall at the higher elevations. Check areas such as Sycamore Canyon, Sycamore Point, Tule Canyon, Lake Pocket, Deadman Pocket, Limestone Pocket, Government Canyon, Secret Pocket, May Tank Canyon, May Tank Pocket, Bear Canyon, MC Canyon, Wild Steer Mesa, Tule Basin, Hells Pocket, Hells Canyon, Devils Pocket, Devils Canyon, Rabbit Bill, and Flat Mesa. If there is no snow the majority of elk will remain at higher elevations (see above).

Mountain Lion

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National Forest map. Access is fairly good with two-wheel-drive, but poor weather could cause hazardous conditions that would require four-wheel-drive operations.

Areas: GMU 8 has some outstanding mountain lion habitat with numerous canyons, high-country mountains and high desert areas. Hunters can use a variety of different hunting techniques including glassing, still-hunting, sitting water, varmint calling and pursuit with dogs. Remember to purchase your lion tag before you head to the hills on your deer or elk hunt as you never know when you might run into one. Some areas where lions are commonly found include Bill Williams Mountain, Summit Mountain, Round Mountain, Morgan Hill and the canyons dropping off the Mogollon Rim such as Sycamore, Tule, Government, MC, and Hell canyons. Key in on areas with good deer and elk sign since this is where the lions will be.

Hunters are required to report their mountain lion harvest information to the Arizona Game and Fish Department within 48 hours of taking a mountain lion. Hunters can report their mountain lion harvest in person, by telephone at 1-877-438-0447, or [online](#).

In addition to the 48-hr reporting requirement, the hunter (or their designee) needs to present the mountain lion's skull and hide with attached proof of sex to a designated Arizona Game and Fish Department employee for inspection within 10 days of taking the mountain lion.

Harvest Thresholds – When the number of harvested mountain lions reaches the threshold, that zone closes to the additional harvest of mountain lions at sundown the Wednesday immediately following. Before each hunting trip, verify that the zone is still open, by calling 877-438-0447 or checking online: view [harvest thresholds and zone closures](#). A map of the zones can be found at the [mountain lion management zones map](#).

Deer

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National Forest map. Access is fairly good with two-wheel-drive, but poor weather could cause hazardous conditions that would require four-wheel-drive operations.

Areas for mule deer: Mule deer will be found throughout the GMU. Good areas to check at the higher elevations are Garland Prairie, McDougal Flat, Barney Flat, Round Mountain, Summit Mountain, McCracken Knoll, Jackass Knoll, Dutchkid Knoll, Boyd Knoll, Snyder Knoll and Bill Williams Mountain. Good access roads are Forest Service Roads 105, 108, 110, 122, 139, 140, 141, and 354. Concentrate on areas that have good acorn production. At lower elevations check the canyons that drop into the Verde river, access this country from the Verde Ranch Road, the Drake Road, and Forest Service Road 181.

Areas for white-tailed deer: White-tailed deer are by far the most difficult big game animal to harvest in GMU 8. They are found at very low densities in extremely rugged terrain. Good areas to check are Bill Williams Mountain, Dutchkid Knoll and any of the canyons from Sycamore to I-40 at the 5000 to 6500 foot elevation level. Most successful white-tail hunters either hunt over permanent water sources or glass the rugged canyon country. Good access points can be found along Forest Service Roads 12, 105, 108, 181, and 354.

Archery Deer Nonpermit-Tag Special Regulation - All archery deer nonpermit-tag hunters must report their deer harvest online at www.azgfd.gov/ArcheryDeerReport or by telephone at 623-236-7961 within 48 hours of taking a deer. When the number of deer equaling the archery deer harvest limit for a particular unit and species has been reported, that unit will be closed to further archery deer hunting at sundown the Wednesday immediately following. Hunters will be responsible for [checking online](#) or by telephone at 623-236-7961 before hunting to determine if their desired unit is still open.

Merriam's Turkey

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National Forest map. Access is fairly good with two-wheel-drive, but poor weather could cause hazardous conditions that would require four-wheel-drive operations.

Areas: General locations to look for turkeys are around most of the high country stock waters. More specific locations are Barney Flats, J.D. Dam, Pine Flats, Cougar Park and areas around Bill Williams Mountain and Summit Mountain. Spring gobbler hunters should try around the various knolls and small mountain peaks in the district. Popular areas include Round Mountain, Summit Mountain and Dutch Kid Knoll. Scouting water sources can improve your chances of locating turkeys.

Javelina

Overview: Approximately 95 percent of the GMU is public land administered by the US Forest Service. Ponderosa pine is the dominant vegetation type in the higher elevations above 6,000 feet with scattered gambel oak. The mixed conifer vegetation type is most common on Bill Williams Mountain and the pinyon/juniper vegetation type is found at lower elevations. Water sources consist of mainly man-made lakes, stock tanks and wildlife waters with the Verde River making up the southern boundary.

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Areas: Javelina can be found throughout GMU 8, however most hunters concentrate their effort at lower elevations and along canyon edges. Glassing is the preferred technique for locating foraging javelina herds. Good areas to locate javelina are Bear, MC and Government Canyons. Other areas to check are the numerous side draws and washes of small side canyons along Highway 89 and those canyons that drop into the Verde River.

Game Management Unit Summary

Primary Game Species/ Hunting Month(s)

Mule Deer October/November

Elk September-December

Turkey April/May, October

Secondary Game Species/Hunting Month(s)

Black Bear October-December (see sow quota)

Mountain Lion Year-round

Average # permits in past 5 years

Mule Deer 600 Rifle

Elk 1000 Rifle, 250 Archery, 150 Muzzleloader

Turkey 300 Spring, 600 Fall

Climate Information

MONTH	AVG. TEMP	AVG. RAINFALL	AVG. SNOWFALL
January	37°	1.80"	20.0"
February	37°	1.86"	20.0"
March	41°	2.00"	24.0"
April	46°	1.50"	18.0"
May	54°	0.50"	0.0"
June	62°	0.50"	0.0"
July	69°	2.75"	20.0"
August	68°	3.50"	0.0"
September	59°	1.50"	0.2"
October	47°	1.25"	16.0"
November	35°	1.50"	18.0"
December	30°	2.25"	24.0"

Other Climate Information

Always check weather conditions during fall hunts. Early snowfall may lead to road closures. Be prepared for winter weather.

Cities, Roads & Campgrounds

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

Williams, Ash Fork, Parks, Flagstaff



Major Highways and Roads Leading To

From the East: I-40

From the West: I-40

From the North: State Hwy 64

From the South: State Hwy 89

Developed Campgrounds

U.S. Forest Service campgrounds at Dogtown Reservoir and White Horse Lake open May 1-Sept. 30.

Undeveloped Campgrounds

Camping is allowed on Forest Service administered lands throughout the GMU.

Brief Description of Terrain, Elevation, and Vegetation

Elevation ranges from 4,100' to 9,256' on Bill Williams Mountain; predominant ponderosa pine forest and open prairies at higher elevations and mixed pinyon pine and juniper at lower elevations below the Rim (south). The GMU has numerous canyons on the Rim area: Bear, MC, Government, Hell, Sycamore, Tule, and Volunteer.

Government Agencies and Phone Numbers

Arizona Game and Fish Department, Region II – 928 774-5045

Kaibab National Forest, Supervisor's Office – 928 635-2681 Kaibab

National Forest, Williams Ranger District – 928 635-2676

Prescott National Forest, Chino Valley Ranger District – 928 636-2302