



GMU 20A

April 17, 2025

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

Unit Boundaries

Beginning at the intersection of AZ Hwy 89 and AZ Hwy 69; west on Gurley St. to Grove Ave.; north on the Grove Ave. to Miller Valley Rd., northwest on the Miller Valley Rd. to Iron Springs Rd., west and south on Iron Springs Rd. (County Road 10) to Kirkland; south and east on AZ Hwy 96 to Kirkland Junction (U.S. Hwy 89); southeasterly along Wagoner Rd. (County Road 60) to Wagoner (mp 17); from Wagoner easterly along County Road 60 (FR 362) to intersection of FR 52; easterly along FR 52 to intersection of FR 259; easterly along FR 259 to Crown King Rd. (County Road 59) at Crown King; continue easterly to the intersection of Antelope Creek Rd. cutoff (County Road 179S); northeasterly along Antelope Creek Rd. cutoff to intersection of Antelope Creek Rd. (County Road 179); northeasterly on Antelope Creek Rd. to Cordes; east on Bloody Basin Rd. (County Road 73) to I-17 (Exit 259); north on the southbound lane of I-17 to AZ Hwy 69; northwest on AZ Hwy 69 to junction of AZ Hwy 89 at Prescott; except those portions that are sovereign tribal lands of the Yavapai-Prescott Tribe.

Species Information

Bear

Overview: Unit 20A has a healthy bear population and is often overlooked by bear hunters. The highest elevations in the unit such as Mt. Union or Towers Mountain often provide the best habitat and highest bear densities. With that said, bears can also be found in the lower elevation forested areas south of Prescott. Traditional glassing for bears in Unit



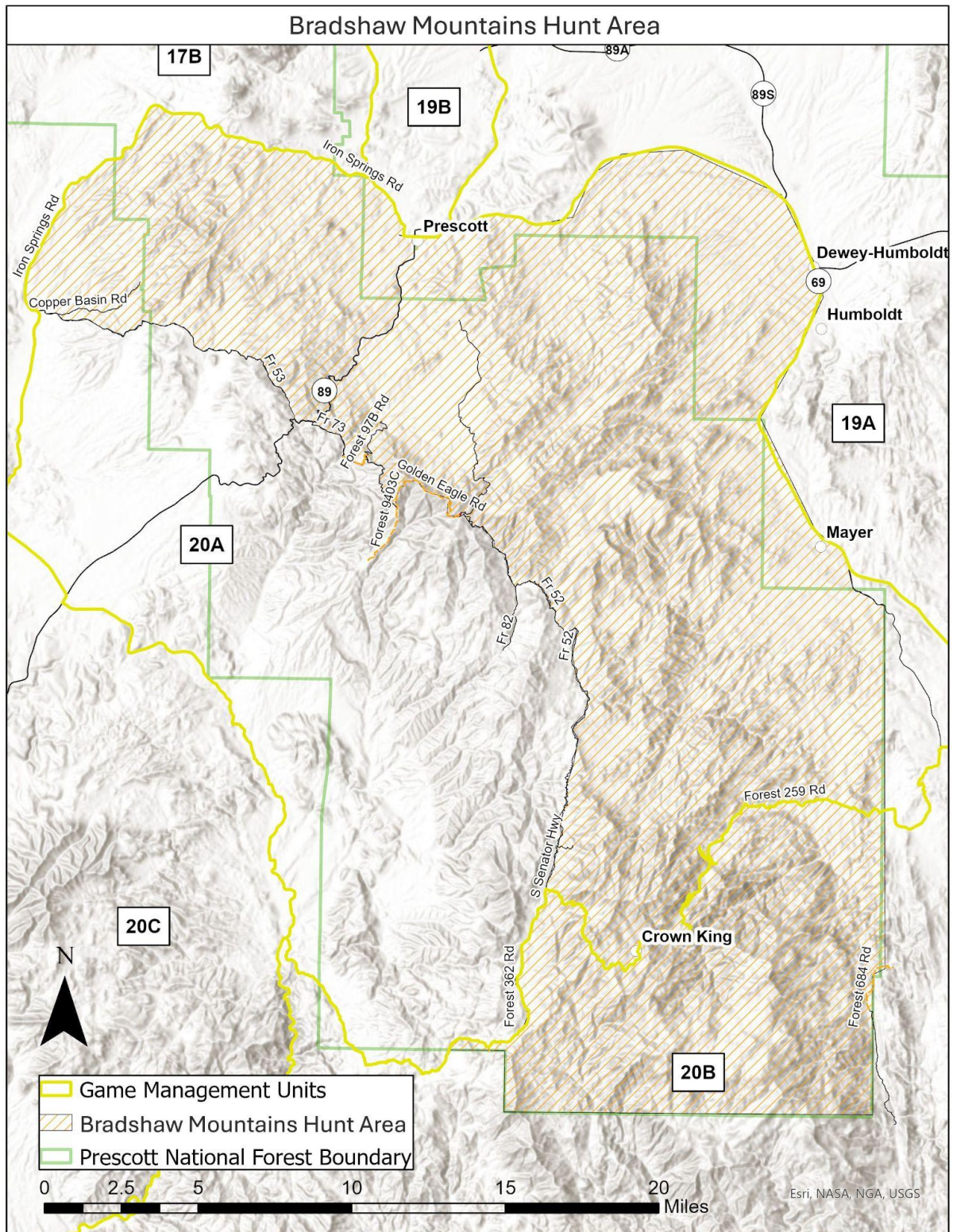
20A is limited so other techniques should be considered such as still hunting, locating tracks, predator calling or sitting water. While hunting other species such as deer, it is recommended to purchase an over-the-counter bear tag. Every season deer hunters encounter bears and some have successfully harvested a bear while targeting other wildlife. Pre-season scouting is highly encouraged.

A new OTC bear season within a new hunt area named the “Bradshaw Mountain Hunt Area” has been established starting in May 2025 to combat bear issues within residential communities. Bear populations in this area are healthy but can often be near residential areas especially during the dry summer months. Homes are scattered throughout and close attention to the ¼ mile law should be considered. A mapping program such as onX Hunt is a great tool to ensure you are not hunting too close to an occupied structure. Please refer to the bear hunting regulations for specific season dates and a boundary description of the new “Bradshaw Mountain Hunt Area”. Click this [link](#) for a detailed view of the “Bradshaw Mountain Hunt Area”.

Areas: South – The Crown King area provides excellent bear habitat and healthy bear populations. Towers Mountain is the main mountain range in the area but consider all drainages that feed off Towers Mountain that head north or west all the way to Minnehaha.

North – The Mt. Union area provides a mix conifer habitat type and is considered excellent bear habitat. From Mt. Union bears can wander onto the Big Bug Mesa or further south along Ash Creek Ridge. Other areas to consider include Mt. Tritle, Spruce Mountain, Porter Mountain and West Spruce Mountain. Much of the areas listed here are near residential communities that border the Prescott National Forest. All of these areas should be considered when hunting bears.

Glassing is limited in most areas so locating bears can be difficult but realize a healthy number of bears occupy the unit. In most of these areas mentioned, homes are scattered throughout and close attention to the ¼ mile law should be considered. A mapping program such as onX Hunt is a great tool to ensure you are not hunting too close to an occupied structure.





Elk

Overview: Unit 20A has low elk densities, and low population levels. These elk can be very transient, and may also wander into adjacent units. Unit 20A is currently managed to maintain a limited number of elk far below the carrying capacity of the unit and to minimize conflicts on private land. Unit 20A is combined with several other units in one of the “Multi-Unit” Limited Opportunity elk hunts. This gives hunters the opportunity to hunt different units due to the nomadic nature of the elk populations. Check the current regulations to see which other units are combined with Unit 20A and reference the notes associated with the Limited Opportunity hunts. These elk hunts can be challenging, even for hunters familiar with the area. Pre-season scouting is highly encouraged.

Areas: In Unit 20A, elk can sometimes be located near the Skull Valley and Kirkland Creek areas. Focus on hunting on the deep remote drainages that hold water year-round. Hunt opportunities in these areas are sometimes on private land. Permission to access posted private land must be obtained from the landowner prior to hunting or scouting.

Javelina

Overview: Javelina are widely distributed throughout Unit 20A. Javelina can be found in ponderosa pine forests, but are generally found in higher densities at lower elevations. Successful hunters find javelina by pre-scouting and by using optics to locate animals. Focus on areas where there is abundant sign. Scouting is important because javelina often do not move far from a well-established home range. If you locate a group of javelina before the season, and the weather remains the same, there is a high probability they will be in the same area on opening day. Using optics is important and probably the only tool you cannot leave home without for javelina hunting. Javelina blend in well with their surroundings and when not moving they are hard to detect. Effective use of optics will save a person a lot of walking. If you find an area with tracks and rooting, be patient, javelina are probably in the area. It is wise to skin the animal as quickly as possible. There is a scent gland located on the rear portion of the back. This gland does not need to be cut out because it comes off with the skin. Great care must be taken not to touch this during skinning because the scent is easily transferred to your hands and from your hands to the meat.

Areas: North – Copper Basin is located east of Skull Valley. The Copper Basin Road is accessed in Skull Valley between the railroad tracks and the Skull Valley Café. This road will take you east 12 miles to Prescott. There are several roads which fork off Copper Basin Road that go into prime javelina country. Because of the vegetation, visibility is poor, and you should glass open areas often. Habitat type: scrub oak and prickly pear cacti.

South – SA Hill is located northwest of Cleator and can be accessed by State Route 59 (Crown King Road) from there



you can take Forest Road 259B which doesn't go all the way to SA Hill, but there is a lot of good country before it ends. Hunters can also access the SA Hill area from the Blue Bell Mine Rd in Cleator. Hunters can improve their odds significantly if they do a little walking and glassing. Visibility is very good. Habitat type: juniper and prickly pear cacti.

East – Turkey Creek is located south of Brady Butte and can be accessed by Highway 69 in Mayer. Take State Route 177 south to Forest Trail 202. Go south towards Turkey Creek. All along this route there are high points from which to glass. Habitat type: prickly pear cacti and scrub oak.

West – The Hassayampa River is located southeast of Wilhoit. It can be accessed by Highway 89 and Forest Road 72. Take Forest Road 72 south to the Hassayampa River. The road parallels the river for several miles and comes out on Wagoner Road. There are several little drainages and canyons that come into the Hassayampa River. Visibility is dependent on which side of the canyon you are on. Once on Wagoner Road, you can continue east all the way to Crown King. Along this route there are several access points to different areas that all hold javelina. Habitat type: prickly pear cacti, pinyon pines, and scrub oak.

Mountain Lion

Overview: Mountain lions are distributed throughout Unit 20A. Lions are primarily taken with the aid of dogs. A few are taken by calling, or incidental encounters while hunting another species. Some lions have been taken in accordance to depredation laws.

Areas: East – Turkey Creek is located south of Mayer. Take State Route 177 to Forest Trail 202 and go south to the creek.

Northeast – Copper Basin Rd located between the railroad tracks and Skull Valley Café.

Northwest – Big Bug Mesa is accessed from Walker Rd in Prescott or Poland Rd from highway 69 near Dewey. This leads to a five-point intersection that is signed with directions to Big Bug Mesa.

West - The Hassayampa River is located southeast of Wilhoit. It can be accessed by Highway 89 and Forest Road 72. Take Forest Road 72 south to the Hassayampa River. The road parallels the river for several miles and comes out on Wagoner Road.

Mule Deer



****NOTE:** *Changes to the over the counter (OTC) deer season have been made including harvest limits for each unit. Once the harvest limit is met, the unit will close to archery deer hunting and will not reopen till the following August season. All OTC archery deer hunters are required to report their harvest either online or by telephone at 623-236-7961, within 48 hours of taking their deer. Failure to report a harvest, as well as hunting in a closed unit, will be strictly enforced. For more details on the harvest limits and if a unit is open, please visit <https://www.azgfd.com/hunting/draw/archerydeerhunting/>*

Overview: Mule deer are distributed throughout Unit 20A. Drought conditions continue to be the biggest concern for the mule deer population. The fall of 2024 and winter of 2025 have provided very little precipitation and will have an adverse effect on habitat conditions which will affect the deer population. Habitat types include ponderosa pine in the higher elevations, juniper and pinyon in the mid-elevations, scrub oak and Sonoran desert in the lower elevations. Hunters in the higher elevations need to move slowly and locate trails that show sign of use. Hunters in the mid and lower elevations need to find a high point overlooking canyons and washes. Use of good optics is a must. Glass in the early morning and late afternoon hours. The majority of Unit 20A is Prescott National Forest, with access permitted. Be aware that within the forest boundaries are parcels of private land. If they are posted you are required to obtain permission prior to hunting. Remember the 1/4-mile rule around houses now includes archery equipment. The weather in Unit 20A can change abruptly overnight. This means road conditions can quickly deteriorate. Most roads are not regularly maintained. It is a good idea to obtain a Forest Service map of the area and let someone know where you'll be camped. Before you leave, clean up the area and please take the trash with you. Leaving trash in a plastic bag at your campsite is littering.

Areas: Northeast – Big Bug Mesa is located in the northeast portion of the unit. It is accessed two ways from Highway 69: From Highway 69 and Walker Road six miles south to Forest Road 670. Continue south five miles to the signed intersection. The other way is from Highway 69 and Poland Junction, head south on Forest Road 58 through Breezy Pines to the signed intersection. There are two non-maintained roads on the mesa. Both turn to slime with a little rain and can be dangerous if hauling a trailer. This area is popular with archery and firearm hunters. Be aware the US Forest Service has done extensive work to roads on the Big Bug Mesa for a timber harvest that started in 2023. They have installed a gate on Forest Road 103 which will be locked at times to protect the roadwork completed. Foot access will still be permitted. For details on gate closure dates, please contact the Prescott National Forest Bradshaw Ranger District. Habitat type: ponderosa pine.

South – Cellars Basin is located in the southwest portion of the unit. It is accessed from Highway 89 and Wagoner Road, 12 miles south on Wagoner Road to Forest Road 682. Follow 682 to Forest Road 682B. This accesses several two-track roads to different areas of the basin. There are no private land restrictions in this area. Habitat type: scrub oak and junipers.



East – Antelope tanks can be accessed by Interstate 17 and exit 259 (Bloody Basin Rd.), two miles west to “Old Cordes.” From this junction at “Old Cordes” you can go west towards Cleator and access area such as Forest Road 178. You can also go east at the “Old Cordes” junction and work towards Mayer along Antelope Creek Rd and access several Forest Roads such as Forest Road 9218B. There are several high points along this route from which to glass. Habitat type: prickly pear cacti, scrub oak.

West – Crooks Canyon is located east of Wagoner Road and the Forest Road 94 junction. Forest Road 94 parallels Crooks Canyon extending east to Palace Station. All habitat types within the unit are included along this route. Look to see which habitat type has the most sign then spend the majority of your time in these areas. Another area nearby is The Hassayampa River which is located southeast of Wilhoit. It can be accessed by Highway 89 and Forest Road 72. Take Forest Road 72 south to the Hassayampa River. The road parallels the river for several miles and comes out on Wagoner Road. Along this route there are several access points to different areas that all hold deer. Habitat type: prickly pear cacti, pinyon pines, and scrub oak.

Merriam’s Turkey

Overview: The turkey population in Game Management Unit 20A is relatively stable. Turkeys occupy higher elevation areas in the Bradshaw Mountains south of the Prescott area. Unit 20A turkey populations have been augmented with several translocations and recent forest management activities have benefited this species as well. The fall over-the-counter archery turkey hunt has been removed from Unit 20A in an effort to allow translocated hens additional opportunities to reproduce. A limited stratified spring shotgun shooting season was initiated in 2009 and is still being offered.

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.

Starting with the 2025 spring shotgun season Unit 20A has been split into a west and east unit. The unit was split to provide more hunter opportunity and have hunters focus on hunting newly established turkey populations occupying habitat in the west end of the unit. Please check your tag to confirm which unit you have and refer to the turkey hunting regulations for a boundary description of the new 20A West and 20A East Units.



Areas: Pre-season scouting is important in locating birds and areas of activity. Look for tracks in the road or at water tanks. Listening for gobbles early in the morning can help locate birds during the spring season.

20A East: The most popular areas with hunters include Big Bug Mesa, Spruce Mountain, Mount Union and the Bannie Mine area. Spruce Mountain and Mount Union can be accessed from Senator Highway in the Prescott area. Big Bug Mesa and Bannie Mine is accessed from Walker Rd in Prescott or Poland Rd from highway 69 near Dewey. The Crooks Fire of 2022 did move some birds from the Mount Union area towards Turkey Creek. Lastly, Towers Mountain near Crown King is another area that has turkeys but access is somewhat limited and will require hiking away from the few main roads.

20A West: The most popular areas with hunters include Mt. Tritle, Wolf Creek Rd, Beans Peaks, Mt. Francis, Williams Peak, Porter Mountain and West Spruce Mountain. For the areas furthest west in 20AW, access can be found along Thumb Butte Rd or along Copper Basin Rd out of Prescott. The areas further east in 20AW can be accessed along Senator Hwy. BE AWARE, the areas off Copper Basin Road near Prescott hold a decent population of turkeys but those birds can often be close to residential areas or even inside the residential area. A hunter may consider hunting the forest boundary at least $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the structures and attempt to call in turkeys.

In most of these areas mentioned for both units, homes are scattered throughout and close attention to the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile law should be considered. A mapping program such as onX Hunt is a great tool to ensure you are not hunting too close to an occupied structure.

Tree Squirrel

Overview: Tree squirrels exist in the higher elevations of the unit. The habitat type consists of ponderosa pines.

Areas: Mount Union is located 11 miles south of Prescott along Senator Highway. There is a fire lookout tower on top and a summer camp and a few private residences along the road.

Big Bug Mesa is accessed from Walker Rd in Prescott or Poland Rd from highway 69 near Dewey. This area provides good habitat for squirrels and is mostly forest service land once you reach the actual mesa.

Thumb Butte is located on Forest Road 377 west of Prescott. Forest Road 377 can be accessed from Copper Basin Rd or Thumb Butte Rd in Prescott. Most of this area is Forest Service land and offers good hunting opportunities.



Towers Mountain is located north of Crown King. To access this area, take Forest Road 52 out of Crown King. There are private property parcels on top.

Quail

Overview: Gambel's quail can be found throughout Unit 20A except for the higher elevations such as Towers Mountain and Mount Union. One of the prime areas to hunt quail with dogs is south of Mayer. This area is grassland, prickly pear cacti habitat. Be alert for rattlesnakes. Gambel's quail populations fluctuate in direct proportion to the amount of winter moisture.

Areas: West – Between Wilhoit and Skull Valley. This area can be accessed at the junction of Highway 89 and Walden Road in Wilhoit. Take Walden Road north one mile and go across cattle guard to the right. This is Forest Road 56. There are several washes to hunt and there are several two-track roads to take you in good areas. If you stay on Forest Road 56 will take you to Forest Road 64 (Copper Basin Road), and you can come out at Skull Valley.

South – Cellars Basin is located in the southwest portion of the unit. It is accessed from Highway 89 and Wagoner Road, 12 miles south on Wagoner Road to Forest Road 682. Follow Forest Road 682 to Forest Road 682B. This accesses several two-track roads to different areas in the basin. There are no private land restrictions in this area. Habitat type: scrub oak, juniper, and prickly pear cacti.

East – Areas between Mayer and Cleator: accessed by exiting Interstate 17 at milepost 259 to “Old Cordes.” From this junction at “Old Cordes” you can go west towards Cleator and access area such as Forest Road 178. You can also go east at the “Old Cordes” junction and work towards Mayer along Antelope Creek Rd and access several Forest Roads. Habitat type: prickly pear cacti, scrub oak.

Southwest – Crooks Canyon Road (Forest Road 94). It can be accessed from Highway 89 and Wagoner Road. Take Wagoner Road south to Forest Road 94. There are areas all along this road that have quail. Some areas are very brushy so a dog would come in handy. Habitat type: scrub oak, pinyon pines, juniper, and prickly pear cacti.

Unit Summary

Primary Game Species/ Hunting Month(s)

Elk	September-December
Mule Deer	August-January
Javelina	January-February

Climate Information

MONTH	AVG. TEMP	AVG. RAINFALL	AVG. SNOWFALL
August	Max 86°/Min 56°	3.0"	0.0"
September	Max 82°/Min 49°	2.1"	0.0"
October	Max 72°/Min 37°	1.5"	0.2"
November	Max 60°/Min 27°	1.5"	3.9"
December	Max 51°/Min 22°	1.9"	11.4"

Other Pertinent Climate Information

Check weather conditions during fall hunts. Early snowfall may lead to closed roads. Always be prepared for winter weather. During late hunts, animals tend to stay at lower elevations, out of deep snow.



Cities, Roads & Campgrounds

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

Prescott, Mayer, Skull Valley, Cordes Junction

Major Highways and Roads Leading To

From the East: I-17 to Hwy 69, I-17 exit 259, Crown King Road

From the West: Hwy 89 to Wagoner Road or Iron Springs Road

From the North: Iron Springs Road, Senator Hwy

From the South: Bumble Bee Road or Wagoner Rd.

Developed Campgrounds

Lynx Lake and Wolf Creek Campgrounds.

Undeveloped Campgrounds

Camping is allowed on Forest Service lands throughout the unit. Camping within the Prescott Basin is limited to dispersed camping with a limit of 7 days. Camping outside of the Prescott Basin is limited to 14 days and not limited to dispersed campsites.

Brief Description of Terrain, Elevation, and Vegetation

Elevations range from 3,000' to 8,000'. Habitat types range from Upper Sonoran desert, scrub oak, pinion-juniper, ponderosa pine, to mixed conifer.

Government Agencies and Phone Numbers

Arizona Game and Fish Department, Region 3 – 928 692-7700

Prescott National Forest-Prescott Ranger District- 928 443-8000

Operation Game Thief 800 352-0700