



GMU 9

April 8, 2025

Species within this game management unit (GMU): Pronghorn, Elk, Mule Deer, Merriam's Turkey, Tree Squirrel, Javelina, Bear, Lion, Bighorn Sheep.

Game Management Unit Boundaries

Beginning where Cataract Creek enters the Havasupai Reservation; easterly and northerly along the Havasupai Reservation boundary to Grand Canyon National Park; easterly along the Grand Canyon National Park boundary to the Navajo Indian Reservation boundary; southerly along the reservation boundary to the Four Corners Gas Line; southwesterly along the Four Corners Gas Line to U.S. Hwy 180; westerly along U.S. Hwy 180 to AZ Hwy 64; south along AZ Hwy 64 to Airpark Rd.; west and north along Airpark Rd. to the Valle-Cataract Creek Rd.; westerly along the Valle-Cataract Creek Rd. to Cataract Creek at Island Tank; northwesterly along Cataract Creek to the Havasupai Reservation Boundary.

The best map that encompasses the entire GMU is a GMU 9 Flatline.

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/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 this link. Only motorized retrieval of elk is permitted in Game Management Unit 9. Motorized retrieval of other wildlife, including all other big game species, is not permitted on national forest lands in Game Management Unit 9. For further information regarding the Travel Management Rule, please contact the Kaibab National Forest.

Species Information

Pronghorn

Overview: Pronghorn are scattered throughout the central and southern portions of GMU 9. Most of the pronghorn habitat in GMU 9 is on state and private land. Please be respectful and obey all signs. Hunter success has been high and I'd expect it to continue. Every hunter should familiarize himself with the boundaries of the GMU they are hunting. The southwest portion of GMU 9 has some access problems. The private landowner has many areas marked "No Trespassing", so please respect these signs or you will be cited. There are also some areas east of Valle and north of Highway 180 where access is blocked, so again please respect the private landowner rights. These closed areas encompass a small portion of GMU 9 and the open areas offer plenty of opportunity to harvest a buck. Access is not a problem in GMU 9, but it is every hunter's responsibility to know where they are and respect private property. Sportsmen should obey all signs and leave gates as they find them. Respect private property and always pick up litter, even if it's not yours. These acts of kindness go a long way to ensure access onto private property. The Babbitt Ranch sections in the southeast portion of the GMU is part of the Landowner Compact program and does require that hunters register online (<https://www.azgfd.com/COBarRanchAccess>) and get a ranch pass before accessing the private land.

Be sure and identify your target and watch your background. Male pronghorns have a black cheek patch and a legal buck must have horns longer than his ear. Pronghorn groups often are composed of does and one dominant buck. They will often bunch up before they run, so make sure there are no additional pronghorns standing behind the buck before you shoot. Some common problems or violations associated with pronghorn hunts include: camping within a quarter mile of waterholes, driving cross country and the wounding of other pronghorn resulting from hunters not being aware of their backgrounds.

Areas: The first area is west of Highway 64 to Cataract Canyon (boundary between GMUs 9 & 10). The Willaha Road goes west from HWY 64 at milepost 221. This is the main access road to the west part of GMU 9. The other access road to the west part of GMU 9 is Forest Road 347 (Anita Road) and goes west from HWY 64 at milepost 228. This side is very open grassland country and ideal for glassing lots of wide open areas.

The second area is east of Highway 64 and borders GMU 7 to the south. This area consists mainly of pinyon/juniper habitat with open grassland in between. It can be a little more difficult to hunt than the west side, but may offer some better quality bucks due to the thicker habitat. The main access off highway 64 is Forest Road 320 at Milepost 224. From Highway 180, there are several ways to access GMU 9, mostly through State and private lands that are not numbered. From the Dog Knobs east to the Navajo Reservation is where the



most pronghorn habitat will be.

Elk

Overview: GMU 9 is a large GMU encompassing about 1,600 square miles. The land status in GMU 9 is mostly Kaibab National Forest on the north end, and state private lands to the south and west. Maps can be obtained by calling the Williams Visitor Center at 928-635-1418. The Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP) is on the north end of GMU 9 and hunting is not allowed in the park. The boundary is well fenced and signed. Some forest roads parallel and/or enter into the GCNP and hunters need to be aware of where they are. The elk are scattered throughout the GMU, but the highest densities occur in the ponderosa pine/Gambel oak areas on the Kaibab National Forest. The presence of elk can be found just about anywhere water is found. GMU 9 is managed for a high bull to cow ratio, and has good numbers of older bulls in the population. This GMU can be dry and elk may come to water during shooting hours during archery hunts, but rarely during the late general hunts. This GMU can be difficult to hunt as it has lots of areas with good cover (thick vegetation) and is relatively flat, making glassing difficult.

Areas (for antlered hunts): The Skinner Ridge area, which encompasses a mixture of ponderosa pine, Gambel oak, pinyon and juniper, and scattered pockets of sagebrush, is a good area to start. This area can be very thick, which is why lots of bulls prefer to use it. Successful hunters slowly walk the edges of the ridgetops glassing often.

The Red Butte area, which encompasses pinyon and juniper woodlands with sagebrush openings, can be very good, especially during the late general hunts. The Red Butte area is closed to any off-highway vehicle (OHV) and a successful hunter who harvests an elk inside the closure may not drive off-road to retrieve game.

The Moqui Stage Station to Lockwood Canyon area (FR 301), which encompasses mostly pinyon and juniper woodlands, has been good in the past. This area has lots of openings and is good for glassing at first and last light.

The Upper Basin, which encompasses pinyon and juniper woodlands with scattered openings of sagebrush, can hold lots of elk. However, water availability is the critical factor. If water is available, elk will be present early in the fall. If not, this area is best for the late general hunt as some elk will begin movement onto this winter range.

West of Tusayan along Forest Road 328, mostly pinyon and juniper woodlands with lots of sagebrush openings, can be good for bull hunts. However, there is lots of country out here and if it's wet, the elk can be scattered everywhere and difficult to find. If it's dry, check the water holes for sign.

The Coconino Rim area along FR 310, mostly ponderosa pine and Gambel oak forest, can be good for both early and late hunts. If it snows during or before the late general hunt, most of the elk will head for lower country as



this is the highest elevation area (about 7,600 feet).

Areas (for antlerless elk): The Upper Basin area, mostly pinyon and juniper woodlands with scattered openings of sagebrush, is one of the best areas for late antlerless elk hunts. This is one of three main wintering areas for elk in GMU 9. There are scattered openings throughout this area and successful hunters need to glass these areas at first and last light. Many of these elk will feed in the openings just north of the Coconino Rim and retreat to the rim for cover and bedding. The main forest roads in this area include 307, 682, 683, 2807, 2815, and this area can be easily accessed from State Highway 64.

The Harbison Ranch to Lockwood Tank area, mostly pinyon and juniper woodlands, is a good area for late season antlerless elk hunts. This is a wintering area for elk and will usually have high densities and will have a high number of hunters as well. This area has openings as well as good cover areas, so don't give up if you are not seeing many elk. This is the last hunt of the year in GMU 9 and these elk have become wise and find cover quickly. The successful hunters will walk the edges of these openings at first light, and slowly walk the thicker areas during the day.

The Red Butte area, mostly pinyon and juniper woodlands with scattered openings of sagebrush and saltbush, can be a good area for late season antlerless elk hunts. These elk move often depending on weather, water availability, and hunting pressure, but will usually be scattered in small groups all through this area. This area is bordered by the railroad tracks on the west, Forest Road 347 (Anita Road) on the north, Highway 64 to the east, and the Willaha

Road to the south. Forest Roads to watch for in this area include 320, 305, 776, 318, 319, 308, 347, 2623, and 2625. The west part of GMU 9, mostly pinyon and juniper woodlands with lots of big openings of sagebrush, will have good numbers of antlerless elk herds, but can be difficult to hunt due to good hiding and escape cover. The area from Tusayan to Grandview, mostly ponderosa pine habitat, can be good depending on the weather. This is summer elk habitat, however if the fall weather has been mild, there will still be elk using this country. The main forest roads in this area include 302, 303, 688, 2719, 301, 304, 310, and 2732.

The Peterson Flat to Willows Camp area is mostly pinyon/ juniper habitat with scattered openings throughout. As you go east from Peterson Flat, the openings get larger with small pockets of trees. The Forest Roads in this area include 320, 313, 316, 312, 337, and 2743. This area will border the Navajo Reservation so know where you are and look for the boundary fence that is not well marked.

Mule Deer

Overview: Mule deer can be found throughout most of the GMU, but the highest densities occur in the ponderosa pine and pinyon juniper woodlands. Adjacent lands are under state and private ownership. The Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP) is on the north end of GMU 9 and hunting is not allowed in the park. The GCNP boundary is fenced and signed well. Sportsmen traveling forest roads need to be aware that some roads



parallel and some enter into the park. GMU 7 and GMU 9 are part of a combined hunt for mule deer. Hunters can choose to hunt either GMU with their deer permit.

Areas: The Skinner Ridge area can be good and encompasses a variety of habitats, including: ponderosa pine, pinyon juniper, and scattered sagebrush areas. The deer density is high along Skinner Ridge especially if the Gambel oaks produce acorns. If there are little or no acorns present, look for areas with lots of cliffrose as this becomes an important deer food as the fall season progresses.

The Red Butte area (pinyon-juniper and sagebrush habitat) can be good as there are no roads other than around the perimeter, which limits hunters who may not want to walk as much. The Red Butte area is closed to any off highway vehicle (OHV) and a successful hunter who harvests a deer inside the closure may not drive off-road to retrieve game.

The Anita area, which is mostly pinyon-juniper and sagebrush, (near forest roads 347 and 306 going north to the Grand Canyon National Park boundary) can hold some good concentrations of deer. This is especially true if the weather turns cold and/or snowy and the deer start looking for areas with high concentrations of browse to feed on. This area will also attract high concentrations of hunters, which can be beneficial to move deer around. The Harbison Ranch to Peterson Flats area, some ponderosa pine, but mostly pinyon -juniper woodlands, can be good, but somewhat difficult to hunt. This area is very dense, but has some scattered small openings which deer will use at first and last light of the day.

The Coconino Rim area, mostly ponderosa pines with scattered oaks and junipers, can hold lots of deer. This area is closed to OHV's and successful hunters cannot use vehicles to retrieve downed game. This area is full of big and small canyons. If acorns are present, hunt the oak thickets along the rim.

The Bucklar Ranch to Cabin Tank area, mostly ponderosa pines with some dense pockets of pinyon trees, offers some opportunities to hunters who like to hike. This area, especially after opening weekend, will not get a lot of hunting pressure but is worth a try.

The west side, mainly pinyon and juniper woodlands with big openings of sagebrush, some years, has high densities of mule deer. The main forest roads on the west side are 306, 328 and 335. This part of the GMU can get a lot of hunting pressure on opening weekend, but tapers off towards the end of the hunt. Some years this area can be very dry, so check the limited waterholes for deer signs. Some of the west side is conducive to using binoculars as you may catch deer crossing the sagebrush openings.

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

Overview: Merriam's Turkey can be found in the ponderosa pine/Gambel oak habitats of GMU 9. In the late fall and throughout the winter, turkeys will use pinyon-juniper woodlands that are usually associated with some ponderosa pine stringers (drainages consisting of ponderosa pine trees). The GMU 9 turkey numbers have declined in recent years. GMU 9 can be very dry and water is a critical factor. Hunters should also look for areas producing Gambel oak acorns, as this is where the turkeys will be feeding during the fall hunts. During the spring hunts, hunters should look for the greenest areas among the ponderosa pine habitats, as turkeys will slowly move to the high country, following the green up.

Areas: The spring turkey season is for bearded turkeys only. The successful spring hunters will scout roost areas and listen for toms gobbling from or near their roosts. Calling is the most effective method as toms are actively seeking out females to breed. Areas and Forest Roads (FR) to consider include: Skinner Ridge (FR's 688, 305A, 2732, 304, and 343, Grandview and Hull Tank (FR's 301, 310, 307, and 2719), Camp 36 (FR's 301, 301A, 317, 902, and 684, Red Horse Tank to Skousen Tank (FR's 339, 310, 311, 320, and 2752), Ten X (FR's 302, 303, 688, and 2709).

Tree Squirrel

Overview: Squirrel populations will cycle with weather patterns. The highest densities of squirrels will be found in the ponderosa pine habitats. They can be found in pinyon-juniper woodlands close to the ponderosa pine habitats, but in low densities. Squirrels will be active throughout the day, but sometimes more so in the mornings.

Areas: Most of GMU 9's squirrel habitats are located east of Highway 64 on the Kaibab National Forest. The area from Tusayan going east towards Michigan Tank is where the highest densities will be found. This includes Forest Roads 301, 301A, 302, 303, 304, 305A, 308, 310, 311, 316, 317, 320, 339, 343, 684, 688, 902, 2719, 2741, and 2752.

Javelina

Overview: GMU 9 has an increasing population of javelina. The animals are scattered throughout the GMU and can be found just about anywhere there is water.

Areas: The Anita area, which is mostly pinyon-juniper and sagebrush, (near forest roads 347 and 306 going north to the Grand Canyon National Park boundary) has the highest concentration of javelina.

Game Management Unit Summary

Primary Game Species/ Hunting Month(s)

Mule Deer	August/ September/ November
Elk	September-December
Turkey	April/ May
Javelina	January

Secondary Game Species/ Hunting Month(s)

Pronghorn	August/October
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Average # permits

Mule Deer - 1100 combined with GMU 7
Elk - 1010
Turkey - 20
Pronghorn - 25

Climate Information

MONTH AVG. TEMP AVG. RAINFALL AVG. SNOWFALL

April Max 60°/Min 29° 1.03" 2.90"
May Max 69°/Min 35° 0.74" 0.03"
September Max 75°/Min 42° 1.41" 0.0"
October Max 64°/Min 32° 1.13" 0.7"
November Max 50°/Min 28° 1.59" 5.8"
December Max 44°/Min 18° 1.34" 6.9"

Cities, Roads & Campgrounds

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

Tusayan, Grand Canyon Village, Valle

Major Highways and Roads Leading To

From the East: Hwy 64
From the West: I-40 to Hwy 64
From the North: State Hwy 64
From the South: State Hwy 180



Developed Campgrounds

Ten-X Campground- located along Hwy 64 about 2 miles south of Tusayan. Open May 1 through September 30.

Brief Description of Terrain, Elevation, and Vegetation

The elevation ranges from 5,800' to 7,600'. The major vegetational communities include: plains and desert grasslands, sagebrush, pinyon-juniper, ponderosa pine, pine-oak woodlands.

Government Agencies and Phone Numbers

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

Tusayan Ranger District (Kaibab National Forest) – 928-638-2443

Grand Canyon National Park (South Rim) – 928-638-7888

Arizona State Land Department – 928-774-1425