



## **Camp Pendleton 2026 Archery Only Tag Deer Hunting Rules**

*These rules are in addition to the General Hunting Rules and offer **deer specific information**. These rules augment and do not replace relevant California Fish and Game Code.*

### **AO Tags:**

- Archers may use the California Archery Only (AO) tag on base, which is available over the counter. Archers must watch the **Archery Hunting video prior to the test** and pass an **Annual Archery Proficiency Test** which will be held on **weekends in August**.
  - If you hunt with archery equipment only, you do **NOT** need to enter the G-10 Lottery.
  - If you enter the G-10 Tag lottery and you are not selected for a G-10 Tag, you may purchase an AO Tag and hunt with archery equipment only.

### **Archery Proficiency Test Requirements:**

- All hunters **must** successfully complete the **Archery Proficiency Test** prior to hunting aboard Camp Pendleton. Failure to pass the proficiency test will prohibit your ability to check in and hunt.
- The **Archery Proficiency Test** will be conducted on **Saturdays in August**.
- The **Archery Proficiency Test** is valid only for the season in which it is completed and must be retaken each year.
- **Archery Proficiency Test** scheduling, locations, and scoring criteria are established annually by the Camp Pendleton Game Wardens.
- Standards may be updated to reflect safety considerations, equipment changes, or mission requirements.
- 3D Targets will be used.
- To improve the likelihood of passing, hunters are encouraged to practice accurate shot placement at distances of **40–50 yards**.
- Ranges will be reduced for traditional bows.
- Game Wardens **WILL NOT** escort a hunter on base.

### **Failure / Remediation:**

- Hunters who fail the **Archery Proficiency Test** may retest the following weekend. Not on the same day or same weekend.
- Hunters who are unable to attend the **Archery Proficiency Test** on the scheduled Saturdays in August because of deployment or military training may request alternate arrangements, subject to availability and the Game Wardens approval.



## **To Enter the Lottery for Deer Archery Only:**

- Hunters will enter the lottery using “Acquire Permit(s)” on iSportsman from **Sunday through Wednesday** prior to the weekend hunt.
  - Remember to add to cart, then **Confirm Checkout** to fully enter the lottery.
  - You will receive an email stating you have entered the lottery.
  - To improve the odds of being drawn for the lottery, hunters *should* apply as an individual.
- The Game Wardens will conduct the lottery on **Thursday** (*or on Wednesday if it is a holiday weekend*), and winners will be notified via email.

## **Only G-10 Deer Tags and Archery-Only (AO) Tags are valid for hunting on Camp Pendleton.**

- The **AO Tag** authorizes a hunter to harvest **one (1) deer** on Camp Pendleton only.
- Use of any other deer tag from a different zone (*e.g., D-11, D-13, D-15, etc.*) on Camp Pendleton is **strictly prohibited**.
- Hunters in possession of **both** an AO Tag and a G-10 Tag **SHOULD** use the G-10 Tag when hunting on Camp Pendleton, regardless of the weapon system used, due to the (1) deer per person limit.

## **Archery Season:**

- AO Tag holders may participate in **all 12 weekends** of the deer season (*Archery Only and General*); however, **reservations** may only be made during the AO season dates **assigned** by the Camp Pendleton Game Wardens.
- AO Tag holders are not eligible to make reservations during the G-10 General season dates.
  - *Example:* Hunter John Smith is issued an **AO Tag**. John may hunt with archery equipment during **all** twelve (12) weekends of the deer season (*Archery-Only and general*); however, he may **only** make reservations during the **archery only season** John may not make reservations during the general season.
  - *Example:* Hunter Jane Smith wins a **G-10 Tag**. Jane may hunt during all twelve (12) weekends of the deer season using her archery equipment during the Archery Season and her general during the general season. She may make hunting reservations during the **AO reservation period** after successfully completing the Archery Proficiency Test, and she may also make reservations during her **G-10 Tag reservation period**.



## Use of Crossbows during Archery Season:

- Crossbows are not authorized for use during archery season unless the hunter possesses a valid California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) **Disabled Archer Permit**.
- **Disabled Archer Permit** holders using a crossbow during archery season must comply with all applicable California and Camp Pendleton regulations.
- Hunters must provide evidence of their **Disabled Archers permit** while hunting with a crossbow during archery season.
- Failure to comply may result in citation and/or revocation of hunting privileges.
  - *Example:* Hunter *John Smith* possesses an AO Tag but does not have a **CDFW Disabled Archer Permit**. *John* may not use a crossbow during AO season. If *John* wishes to use a crossbow, he must hunt during the general season in rifle designated areas.
- Please **NOTE**: a **Disabled Archer Permit** is **NOT** the same as a Disabled American Veteran's (DAV/VA) card.

## Deer Limit:

Each Hunter may harvest **one** deer on Camp Pendleton.

## Typical Hunt Schedule:

### **0535** the day prior to the hunt:

- Hunters with the appropriate tag may make a reservation for the following day.

### **0445-0529:**

- Reservation holders may check into their reserved areas.
- Other tag holders can check for availability on a first come first served bases.

### **0530:**

- Unused reservations become available to all hunters.

### **60 minutes after last shot (90 minutes after sunset):**

- All hunters must be checked out of areas or have **contacted** the Game Wardens to avoid suspension.



## After the Harvest:

- You may **NOT** enter a different hunting area to track a wounded or dead deer **without** prior coordination with the Game Warden's Office.
- The hunter must first fill out the tag (*always bring a pen/marker with you*) prior to field dressing the deer.
- Field Dress the deer in the field. Do not leave the gut pile on a road, within **150 feet water**, or in a exposed place that could affect military training.
- Bring the carcass or eatable portions back to the Game Warden's office with the tag **attached** to the **ear of a doe** or the **antler of a buck**. If you bring the **quartered portions**, you will be asked to produce the **Head**, the **Two Hind Quarters**, the **Two Front Quarters** and the **Two Back Straps**.
- Call the Game Wardens office to ensure someone will be there to meet you and counter sign your tag.
- Game Warden personnel will collect data on the deer and validate your tag. The hunter will submit the tag data to the state by mail or online by following the instructions on the tag.
- Hunters may utilize the game processing station and discard animal parts in the "gut cans"; do not throw regular trash in the "gut cans."
- Deer must be removed from the cooler No Later Than (NLT) Close of Business (COB) Wednesday, so we can clean the refrigerator for next weekend. Call the Game Wardens to make sure someone will meet you at the cooler.
- Any person/hunter who was issued a deer tag **must** submit a harvest report card through the state of California.
- Successful hunters must submit a completed report within **30 days of harvesting** a deer.
- Unsuccessful hunters or hunters who did not hunt must submit a completed report by answering the applicable questions on the harvest report card and submit the report by January 31, 2027.

## Guzzlers:

- These artificial water sources provide valuable water to thousands of animals each day during the dry season, which coincides with the deer hunting season.
- Hunting over a guzzler is **not an ethical hunting practice** as it discourages wildlife from visiting the guzzler.
- The hunter may be suspended for the remainder of the season for hunting **over** a guzzler.
- Remember, you can bring water with you, the wildlife cannot.



## Deer Hunting Activities:

- While checked in to hunt deer, you may only hunt deer and shoot coyotes as a target of opportunity.
- No predator calling nor small game hunting may be conducted while deer hunting.
- If you encounter a Mountain Lion, inform the Game Warden's office as soon as reasonable.

## Hunting Blinds and Stand Alone/Tree Stands:

- Hunting blinds used during in co-use areas shall display **blaze orange** on **all four (4) sides** of the blind. **Blaze orange** markings must be clearly visible from all directions and **always remain unobstructed** while the blind is in use.
- **Hunting blinds and stands** shall be placed the morning of the hunt and removed at the end of the day. **No blinds or stands** may remain in place overnight nor outside of the authorized **hunting period**.

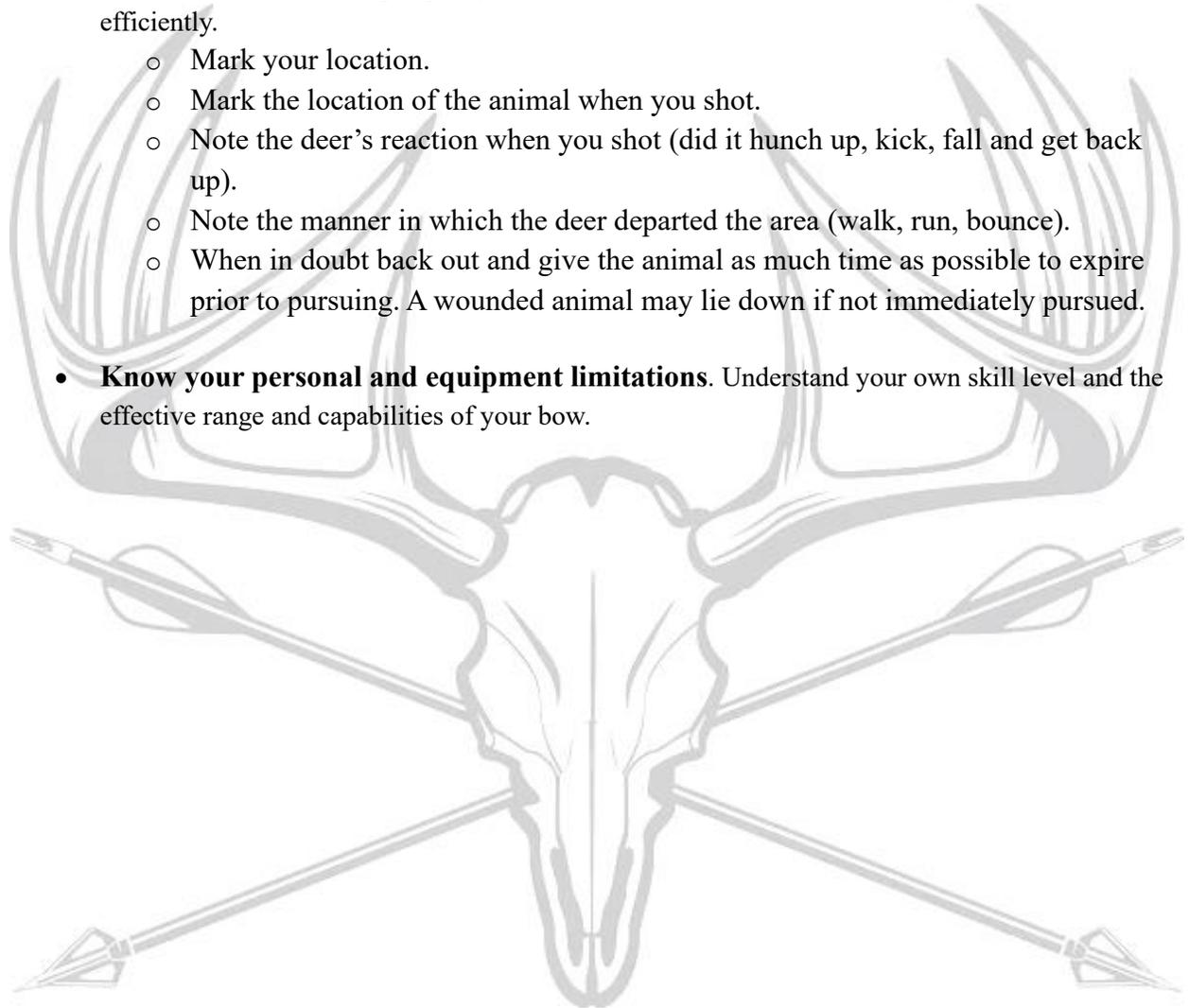
## Etiquette:

- Deer hunting on Camp Pendleton is the base's most popular hunting activity. Hunters from all over the country participate. Some are hunting on Camp Pendleton for the first time; some are hunting deer for the first time. Each hunter brings different levels of experience and different traditions from their home state.
- Here are a few etiquettes notes to reduce angst in the field:
  - If another hunter is in "your spot", go somewhere else. Have a plan B and C.
  - Give other hunters space, buffer with a large terrain feature or distance suitable for your hunting equipment.
  - Avoid walking through areas being glassed by other hunters. This may not always be possible since hunters try to remain hidden from their game, so assume that another hunter walking through an area you are "glassing" simply did not see you.
  - Parked vehicles are clues that other hunters are in the area, maybe go somewhere else.
- Area quotas give each hunter about 1 square kilometer (more than 1/2 of a mile) to spread out, please use the space.
- Know your effective range and your weapon's effective range, these are not the same. Taking shots outside your practiced ranges or capability or outside the effective range of your weapon and cartridge, will likely result in a wounded animal.



## **Safety Note from the Game Wardens:**

- **Know your target and what lies beyond it.** Always be certain of your target before shooting.
- **Do not shoot over ridgelines or into the sky.** Other hunters or personnel may be present on the opposite side.
- **Track harvested deer properly.** Follow blood trails carefully to recover game safely and efficiently.
  - Mark your location.
  - Mark the location of the animal when you shot.
  - Note the deer's reaction when you shot (did it hunch up, kick, fall and get back up).
  - Note the manner in which the deer departed the area (walk, run, bounce).
  - When in doubt back out and give the animal as much time as possible to expire prior to pursuing. A wounded animal may lie down if not immediately pursued.
- **Know your personal and equipment limitations.** Understand your own skill level and the effective range and capabilities of your bow.



*[Updated: February 2026]*