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Homework is the Key to Hunting Success

Whoever said the early bird gets the worm clearly never hunted for big game in Nevada. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) wants to remind sportsmen that unless you do your homework before the hunt, a worm might be the only thing you do get.

“Preparation is the key to a successful hunt,” said Larry Gilbertson, Game Division Chief for NDOW. “Scouting the area, research, sighting in your weapon, physical fitness, gear and packing; all these things are important and if you don’t spend time preparing and doing your homework your chances of a successful and enjoyable hunt decrease.”

Each step to preparing for your hunt is just as important as the next. You can’t have an enjoyable hunt if you don’t know your area, but don’t forget that your chances of success are low if you haven’t prepared your weapon. Forget your tag and your trip is over before it begins. Luckily, the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) has many resources on its website, ndow.org, to help you do your research as you prepare for your hunt.

It is important to know your hunt unit; ndow.org can help with its hunter information sheets, hunt unit advisories that warn of difficult hunter access and detailed maps. However, nothing can replace scouting your hunt unit.

“The biggest thing is to know your unit by scouting two or three times and studying the resources NDOW has online,” said Mike Cox, a big game staff biologist at NDOW.

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“Sometimes it’s been a while since you had a tag, so you definitely want to familiarize yourself with the unit and its boundaries. Nevada is 80 percent public land, which is great, but you need to know how best to access it. Make sure you also know where Department of Defense and tribal lands exist, which are closed to hunting and make sure you get permission from a landowner to hunt on any private land.”

While studying unit maps, keep an eye out for restricted vehicle use areas. While it sounds obvious, it’s important to remember that hunting is a physical activity and that hunters will want to be in shape when they head out into the field.

“Get back into shape,” Cox said. “It’s important to have a regimented exercise routine so that you are prepared physically for the hunting season.”

Don’t forget to prepare your weapon for the hunt. Make sure to sight in your rifle or bow and practice several times at a local range if available. Always pack extra ammunition and arrows. Making sure your weapon is ready and you can accurately shoot it will ensure a clean kill and prevent senseless wounding of an animal.

What hunters pack is very important to the success of their trip as well. For clothing, be sure to pack clothes for all types of weather and temperature. Make sure your boots have been broken in. Don’t forget that you must have your hunting license and tag with you at all times. Binoculars, scopes, rope and a headlamp with extra batteries are a must.

The important thing about preparation is that it’s a process that should be spread out over weeks and even months. Doing all this the weekend before you leave on your hunt is a

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daunting task, but when it's spread over the course of a few months it's a great way to extend your hunts from a few days in the field to an activity that you get to enjoy throughout the year at home.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) protects, restores and manages fish and wildlife, and promotes fishing, hunting, and boating safety. NDOW's wildlife and habitat conservation efforts are primarily funded by sportsmen's license and conservation fees and a federal surcharge on hunting and fishing gear. Support wildlife and habitat conservation in Nevada by purchasing a hunting, fishing, or combination license. Find us on Facebook, Twitter or visit us at www.ndow.org.

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