



Frequently Asked Questions

Late Start Date for Nonresident Archery Hunters

What impacts will the start date being pushed back have on resident hunters?

Residents will have exclusive use of public lands to archery hunt in September. This includes the time period that the potential to shoot a buck still in velvet is at its highest, reducing pressure on these public lands from nonresident hunters.

As a nonresident archery hunter, will I still be able to hunt the rut in November?

Yes, nonresident archery hunters who applied before the application deadline will be able to hunt the rut in November on public lands.

Nonresident archery hunters who did not apply by the application deadline will still be able to hunt the rut in November on private lands, excluding lands leased by the department.

Why was October 1 selected for a start date?

October 1 was selected for a start date because it gives resident hunters a one month head start for hunting public lands which have been identified by many hunters to experience a high level of pressure.

October 1 also is after the archery elk season has ended. This reduces hunting pressure on the areas that elk hunters could potentially be hunting as well. The elk tag is highly coveted and difficult to draw, reducing this pressure adds to the elk hunter's experience.

This includes the time period the potential to shoot a buck in velvet is at its highest. The two peak hunting periods have shown to be when velvet antlers are the most possible and also the rut. The timing of this start date allows residents enhanced opportunity on public lands to target the first of these two peaks, while still giving nonresidents the ability to hunt this peak on private land.

Does this mean there will be no nonresident archery hunters all through September?

No, nonresident archery hunters will still be eligible to hunt in South Dakota on private lands only.

Application Deadline

Why is August 1 the application deadline for 2019, but April 1 is the application deadline beginning 2020?

These changes occurred at the June 2019 Commission meeting. At this time, an April 1 deadline was not possible. An August 1 deadline allowed appropriate time to communicate these changes to impacted hunters, while still being able to put this rule into effect for the 2019 deer season.



The written rule specifies August 1 for 2019 only and April 1 for 2020 and beyond.

As a nonresident archery hunter, does this mean I will be unable to apply for an archery tag after the deadline has passed?

No, you will still be able to obtain a license. This license would just be valid for private lands only.

When do nonresident archers generally purchase their tags?

Approximately half the total nonresident archery licenses in 2018 were acquired in September and October as hunters prepare to hunt the rut in South Dakota.

Month	Purchased
June	169
July	427
August	1,136
September	1,015
October	1,253
November	398
December	51

Access Permits on 35L

What prompted the department to recommend these changes?

Multiple hunters and sportsman groups had expressed concern regarding hunting pressure on certain areas. Hunter harvest surveys also indicate hunter satisfaction has decreased.

In 2018, 78% of firearm hunters expressed concern over seeing too many hunters in the field to the point it had decreased their hunt satisfaction.

How many archers hunted on 35L in 2018?

In 2018, approximately 1,050 both resident and nonresident archers hunted on 35L.

Why were the access numbers of 625 total permits with 500 to residents and 125 to nonresidents selected?

The numbers were selected as they roughly cut in half the number of hunters on 35L. This also gives a mix of both residents and nonresidents on the land.

These numbers will be evaluated following the 2019 deer hunting season.



Why would the access permits not be the same as the 8% allocation for nonresidents?

With 500 resident access permits available, utilizing an 8% allocation would only allow 40 nonresidents the opportunity to hunt 35L. This would be extremely limited compared to what had been previously offered, thus greatly reducing opportunity for nonresident hunters who had made plans to hunt this area.

What is the harvest data of mule deer bucks for Unit 35L?

For residents and nonresidents combined, the mule deer buck harvest for Unit 35L is as follows:

Year	Archery	Firearm
2014	35	57
2016	52	72
2018	76	63

As the archery harvest goes up, the firearm harvest has come down. When evaluating hunter harvest survey reports it also shows that firearm hunter satisfaction goes down as archery harvest goes up. In 2018, 78% of firearm deer hunters reported that they had encountered too many hunters.

Does this mean Unit 35L is considered a trophy area?

No, Unit 35L is not considered a trophy area and trophy regulations are not in place.

Implementing trophy regulations reduces opportunity for all deer hunters. The definition of a trophy for each individual hunter varies, making trophy classifications difficult to quantify and can have implications for hunter satisfaction.

Would it be easier to just make Unit 35L its own unit?

By making 35L its own unit, it would limit the ability for hunters to hunt in other lands in the 35L area. Many of these lands offer excellent numbers of deer as well.

