

District 13

Snohomish, San Juan and Island Counties

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District 13 includes GMU 448 (Stillaguamish), a portion of GMU 450 (Cascade), and the southern section of GMU 407 (North Sound) in Snohomish County. The islands of the San Juan Archipelago and Island County—GMU's 410 (Islands), 411 (Orcas), 412 (Shaw), 413 (San Juan), 414 (Lopez), 415 (Blakely), 416 (Decatur), 417 (Cypress), 419 (Guemes), 420 (Whidbey) and 421(Camano)—are also part of District 13.

Much of the eastern portion of District 13 is public land managed by the US Forest Service on the Mt Baker Snoqualmie National Forest. Hunters should contact the Darrington Ranger District (360-436-1155) for updates on road and trail conditions in GMU 448 and 450. Many roads have been decommissioned or damaged by floods in recent years. Trail conditions also vary and information on trail conditions can be found at: the [Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Recreation web page](#).

The remaining public land in the district is managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Northwest Region (360-856-3500). Hunters should be aware that many access roads to DNR lands are gated and should contact the DNR to obtain the latest information about gates and road conditions; additional contact information is found at [DNR Recreation](#) web page. Unusually hot and dry conditions have resulted in camp fire restrictions on state-owned lands; contact DNR for updated fire information.

A number of private industrial timber land owners also manage land in GMU 448 (Stillaguamish). Many of their roads are closed to motorized vehicle traffic, but walking or biking access is allowed. Hunters are advised to scout their areas early and be aware that parking at access gates may be very limited. Hunters are further advised not to drive beyond any gate that is open unless they are certain the gate will remain open on their return. Active logging is taking place in some areas, so gates may be open in the morning, but closed and locked later in the day. Some access gates on private industrial timber lands will have signs that specify ownership and the rules that apply to the property.

Much the Snohomish County portion of GMU 407 (North Sound) is dominated by homes on small acreages or relatively small farms. Hunters should obtain permission from landowners to hunt on private land and should be very mindful of where houses, livestock and outbuildings are situated in relation to the areas where hunting will take place. Portions of the GMU are under firearm restrictions. Hunters should research landownership, and understand firearm limitations prior to hunting. A map showing “no shooting” areas and shotgun only areas within Snohomish County is found at: http://sheriff.snoco.org/Sheriff's_Office/Maps.htm.

Big Game:

Deer: District 13 includes Game Management units GMU 448 (Stillaguamish) and GMU 450 (Cascade and the majority of the harvest comes from GMU 448. In 2012, 850 hunters harvested 118 deer in GMU 448 (Stillaguamish). Hunter success averages around 14%. In GMU 450 (Cascade), 135 hunters had a success rate of 5% and harvested 6 deer in 2012.

Much of GMU 448 is forested, with trees in a 20-45 year age class on public lands. This results in relatively tightly stocked stands where seeing deer may be challenging. On private timberlands, clear cutting has increased, so more open areas will be available. However, food may be limited in clear cuts, so deer may be harder to find than anticipated. For hunters who enjoy walking or hiking in un-crowded conditions, GMU 448 offers a very rewarding opportunity to get outside and enjoy the season.

Very little public land is available for hunting on any island including Whidbey Island. Hunters should have permission from landowners prior to hunting private property. [The Island County Public Works Department](#) owns a few small parcels on Whidbey and Camano Islands that are open to hunting. Hunters should contact them directly for maps and restrictions.

Limited deer hunting will also be allowed on the Trillium Community Forest property, owned by the Whidbey/Camano Land Trust. Hunters should contact the Whidbey Camano Land Trust for additional information regarding access dates, maps etc. at <http://www.wclt.org/stewardship-trillium-community-forest/>. Note: hunting on this property is for the purpose of habitat improvement, thus hunting is limited to a few specific days within the total deer season. Deer hunting at Naval Air Station Whidbey is restricted to military personnel.

Public access on islands within the San Juan Archipelago (San Juan and Skagit Counties) is also extremely limited. Deer in the islands are plentiful, but typically smaller than their mainland cousins. Most hunting occurs on private property; in San Juan County, written landowner permission is required in order to hunt anywhere in the county. Small parcels of public land are open to hunting on Lopez Island on Bureau of Land Management ownership. BLM lands in the San Juan Islands are administered out of the Wenatchee field office. Hunters should call (509) 665-2100 for information.

Beginning this year, several islands have been designated as a separate GMU. This change will provide more accurate and specific harvest information in the future.

Elk: District 13 does not have an established elk herd within GMU 448 (Stillaguamish) boundaries. Elk occur sporadically along Highway 2 at the south end of GMU 448 in small numbers, and sometimes come south of GMU 437 (Sauk) onto the Sauk Prairie in the north end of the GMU. However, few to no elk are harvested from this GMU in a given year. For hunters looking for new opportunities, we recommend scouting the area thoroughly because, although elk sightings have increased, they tend to move around and are not always present in GMU 448.

Bear: Bears are plentiful in the area, but hunters should be mindful of the access restrictions discussed above. We expect bears to remain at relatively low elevations early in the season, moving to the high country in search of berries and insects later in the season. Rain throughout most of June provided good vegetation growth and berry production. Unusually dry and hot conditions starting in July may result in more bears moving to high elevations earlier than usual.

Upland Birds:

Pheasant: For pheasant and waterfowl hunters, there are 2 access sites on the east side of the Ebey Island Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. The first access site is under State Highway 2 on the north east side of the property. The second access site is just off of Homeacres Road just off of Highway 2. Access will be open on the west side of the property in the WDFW parking lot near the intersection of Home Acres Road and 51st St SE and pheasants will be released on the west side of the property in addition to the east section. All pheasant release sites on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area are going back to the 8am to 4pm hunting hours during the Western Washington pheasant hunting season.

Two sites will be open on private land on Whidbey Island: Ebey Prairie/Arnold Farm, and Bayview. Directions to these sites are found at:

<http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/pheasant/western/>.

The Sea Plane Base (Upper and Lower Game Ranges) and OLF Coupeville on the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station will be open this year. Access to the Sea Plane Base pheasant release sites is open to all hunters. All hunters (military and civilian) need to purchase the installation hunting permit (\$13). This is the required authorization to access and carry a firearm. Check-in is done at the Torpedo Road gate by signing in and out of the logbook. Pheasant hunting is open to non-military hunters; however civilian hunters may only hunt waterfowl as a guest of a military hunter. For additional information contact WNAS Biologist John Phillips (360-257-8873).

Grouse: Ruffed grouse is the common species in District 13, and blue grouse may be found at higher elevations. A cold, wet spring, may have negatively affected chick survival this spring. Hunters should look for mixed conifer and hardwood areas, especially in riparian areas, for the most likely place to find grouse.

Waterfowl:

Waterfowl hunting in District 13 is expected to be productive if weather conditions are favorable. During mild winters, ducks tend to stay in more northerly areas of British Columbia. However, as colder fronts move in and conditions become colder and stormy, hunters can expect increasing numbers of waterfowl to arrive in District 13.

Access on public lands on Whidbey Island is extremely limited. Hunters should be aware that Deer Lagoon is now closed to hunting. Hunters interested in accessing Dugualla Bay should contact the [Whidbey Camano Land Trust](#), which now owns portions of the upland area, for information on property boundaries and whether or not hunting is permitted on their ownership.

Waterfowl hunting on Naval Air Station Whidbey Island is open to military personnel and their guests. All hunters (military and civilian) need to purchase the installation hunting permit (\$13). This is the required authorization to access and carry a firearm. Duck blinds are accessed by entering the SPB gate and non-military guests must be in the same vehicle as the military hunter. For additional information contact WNAS Biologist John Phillips (360-257-8873).

The Spencer Island Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area will be boat access only until the beginning of November due to construction by the City of Everett. Once construction is complete, parking for the Spencer Island Unit will be a ¼ of a mile back from the bridge to the island near the sewage treatment facility buildings.

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For an excellent introduction to waterfowl hunting, [see “Let’s Go Waterfowling.”](#)