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Elk permit application period opens May 1

CHANGES MADE TO DISCOURAGE NO-SHOWS

Staff Report
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LITTLE ROCK – If you’ve applied for an Arkansas elk permit in the past, you’ll see one major change this year when the application period opens May 1. Beginning this year, applying for an Arkansas elk permit will

require a nonrefundable \$5 application fee.

Under the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission’s new permit and license system, all permit applications will carry the same \$5 fee.

“Elk, alligator, and WMA hunt permits for deer and turkeys, as well as waterfowl hunt permits for Steve N. Wilson Raft Creek Bottoms, Sheffield Nelson Dagmar and Freddie Black Choctaw Island West Unit WMAs,

will now have this upfront cost,” said Brad Carner, chief of wildlife management for the AGFC. “We’re hoping the small fee will help eliminate some of the applicants who do not really have the intention of hunting under the permit if they’re drawn.

Carner says there have been problems in the past with hunters drawing one of Arkansas’s few public land elk permits, and then not showing up for the hunt or only hunting a morning or two and calling it quits.

“A few years ago we made the stipulation that a person had to have a valid hunting license at the time of application because we had no shows and people who would show up to the elk hunt orientation with no experience even shooting a firearm,” Carner said. “And we still have people applying for their wives, sons and daughters, who later decide they don’t want to go.”

Carner says not only do wasted permits take away from another hunter who would have made use of the opportunity, but it also affects management of the animals the permit hunts are based on.

“We have objectives as to how many elk, particularly cow elk, should be removed each year to maintain healthy populations and prevent more expansion of the elk herd,” Carner said. “Hunting is the best method to control

those numbers.”

Carner says the total number of elk permits available for public draw will be set during the Commission’s May 18 meeting, but he expects it to be the same number as last season. Twenty-six permits will be proposed for the online applications and an additional three permits will be reserved for onsite draws at the 20th Annual Buffalo River Elk Festival, June 24.

“All public land permits will be drawn publicly at the festival, and the onsite draws will not require the \$5 application fee,” Carner said. “Our goal is to get these permits in the hands of the people that will use them.”

Applicants for Arkansas elk hunt permits must have a valid Resident Sportsman Hunting License or must be a holder of a Lifetime Sportsman’s Permit. Hunters under 16 (as of May 1, 2017) must enter their social security number to create an account and apply, unless they have not yet been assigned one by the U.S. government. Applicants must be 6 or older as of the beginning of the hunt to participate. Anyone with 12 or more violations points are ineligible to apply.

Elk permits are listed under the WMA permit section of the licensing menu. Applications will be accepted May 1-June 1, 2017.

Visit <https://ar-web.s3licensing.com> to obtain a permit online.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARKANSAS GAME AND FISH COMMISSION
In an effort to discourage no-shows (and the attendance of those without prior hunting experience) to elk hunts, the AGFC has attached a \$5 fee to the application for an elk permit.




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