



## **Circle 8 Outfitters**

### **Late Season Mule Deer Hunts**

Late season mule deer hunting is a special hunt we provide at the end of the season. The group sizes are very limited, and the hunts are generally 5 days. These hunts take place at the very beginning of the rut at the tail end of the Montana big game hunting season. We hunt the deer this time of year as they are beginning to come out of the mountains and gather for the rut in their traditional wintering grounds at the foot of the Rockies.

On a late season hunt we primarily hunt mule deer, but we also have occasional opportunity for elk and wolf. There is no extra charge from us if the opportunity presents itself to hunt species other than deer. However, you will always need a license for each species. Mule deer and elk licenses are available by drawing only. Wolf licenses have a nominal fee and are available at any time prior to the hunt online or by mailing in an application.

The mule deer hunts take place the last 2 weeks of November. The hunting is along the east slope of the Rocky Mountain front primarily in the area where the Teton River emerges from the mountains and makes a break for the plains to the east. This is some of the most spectacular country anywhere in the US and is well noted for stunning vistas and a convergence of all of the major big game species of North America.

#### **Weather:**

The weather this time of year is closing in on winter. Snow on the ground is expected, and often as much as a foot where the wind cannot get to it. It will also tend to be pretty cold this time of year with temperatures below freezing, and occasionally below zero (F). This time of year the country can be pretty windy, so we have specific recommendations for late season gear.

#### **Montana Mule Deer:**

The mule deer of the west tend to be physically larger than their brethren. You will find that a live weight mule deer buck can easily go 250 pounds. We strongly encourage harvest of mature bucks, with the average being large 3x3 (we use western count) or 4x4. There is good representation of larger bucks as well, with those going to heavier 4x4 and 5x5 deer.

#### **Rifles/Ammo:**

Due to the size of the deer, we recommend 270, 30-06, 7mm Rem mag, and similar sized caliber rifles. The distances can easily go 250 yards, and we find the flat shooting rifles perform well in these conditions. While we like to get hunters within 250 yards, it's not always possible. Thus, shots can approach 350 yards or more. We do not expect proficiency at these longer distances, but it never hurts and can make the difference between a "sighting" and a harvest.

### **Licenses:**

All non-resident licenses are available by drawing. The application deadline is March 15. You have two options for licenses. You can apply for the mule deer only license (with a slightly lower price) which come from a smaller pool. Or you can apply for the elk/deer combination license (with a higher price) which has a larger pool to draw from and a higher chance of success. We do have occasional elk in this area so an elk license is not a sunk cost.

Special permits (by area) are not needed. This is a general season hunt and all that is needed is a general season deer tag. For the area we hunt, Montana does not distinguish between mule deer and white tail deer for licensing purposes, so a deer license is all that is necessary. We hunt area 441 if you reference a Montana hunting district map.

### **What is included:**

The rates include guided hunts with 2 hunters per guide (may be adjusted depending on individual request), riding and packing stock, and lunches each day. Since these hunts are not based in a tent camp, there is no time needed to ride into camp. The result is that you get 5 full days of hunting on a 5 day trip. We recommend you plan on arriving early afternoon the day before the hunt and departing the morning after the hunt. Lodging, dinner, and breakfast meals are not included in the rates. We can make lodging recommendations in Choteau (about 25 minutes drive from the ranch). Choteau also has a nice selection of restaurants conveniently close. For budgetary purposes, you should figure lodging will be \$100/night/person and meals \$25/day/person. Also, meat processing and taxidermy work are not included and we can make recommendations with well established local resources to provide these services if you wish. Meat spoilage is not an issue this time of year due to below freezing temperatures, so you can also keep the meat hanging at our ranch and take it home with you if you drive.

### **Logistics:**

We are located 25 miles west of Choteau, Montana. Choteau is the nearest town and the location where you'd be lodged during the hunt. Choteau is 50 miles northwest of Great Falls, Montana. If you fly, you would fly into Great Falls (GTF). We can provide round trip services to/from Great Falls for a nominal fee if you fly. There are well regarded meat processors and taxidermists in Choteau if you chose to use local services. The hunts are limited to a maximum of 4 hunters, and we generally take 2 hunts per year at the end of November. We do take single hunters, and unless specifically arranging for a 1x1 hunt we reserve the right to add another single to that person.

**Late Season Hunting Gear:**

This time of year can be cold, so it's best to come prepared to be out in it all day. The following is generally recommended gear for this kind of hunt. Feel free to contact us with any specific questions or concerns as your hunt gets closer.

- Binoculars
- 4 sets of gloves suitable to expected cold weather
- Glove liners
- Scarf or other neck protection
- Warm wool hat that sheds snow and water
- Boot packs with extra set of liners
- 4 pair of warm wool socks. Stay away from cotton
- Thermal underlayer (under armor, therma-silk, etc) Generally polar-weight is preferred
- Warm wool hunting jacket or similar
- Layer under the jacket such as lighter fleece or thermal jacket
- Heavy wool pants
- Baklava or similar face protecting gear
- Daypack for lunches, dry gloves, ammo, etc

**Rates and Schedules:**

See attached rate sheet. Dates are finalized as each hunt is filled.

**Contacts:**

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