

Panhandle Region

The Panhandle isn't just the top of the state geographically, it's also the top hunting region. Last year, the region accounted for two of the top five spots for harvest for deer and elk.

But a hard winter in 2007-08 caused low fawn and calf production last year, so the region is cutting back on its doe and cow seasons to protect the breeding animals and ensure a quick rebound of the herds.

The doe hunt has been shortened from a month to 10 days and the cow season from a week to three days.

But that shouldn't mean a shortage of animals. The region still boasts some of the state's most generous hunting seasons and a good chance for a mature animal.

The Panhandle is thick and can be a challenge to hunt, and weather plays a greater role in the harvest than the actual number of animals. In short, snow means good hunting and open ground means tougher hunting.

Big game managers in the Panhandle hope this year's shortened either-sex seasons are going to be short-lived, but it depends on how the animals fare over the winter.