

Hunting across America

By Robert James

Many service members enjoy hunting, and PCS moves provide an opportunity to hunt different game on some of the country's best hunting grounds.

Photo by Eugene Hester, courtesy U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

But be prepared to fulfill each state's requirements to enjoy those hunting privileges.

Each state has its own rules and regulations regarding hunting within their borders—from how long a person must be a resident to obtain a local license to what game and when a hunter may hunt.

Being able to buy a resident license to hunt or fish can be an enormous money saver—in Louisiana, for example, the fee for a non-resident hunting license is 10 times as much as a resident license.

State wildlife agencies that sell hunting licenses are the best source of information regarding hunting seasons, areas open/closed to hunting, etc. (Hunting of migratory birds such as ducks and geese is managed cooperatively by state fish and wildlife agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Migratory waterfowl hunters must possess both a state hunting license and a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp), and each hunter needs a Harvest Information Program (HIP) number for each state in which they hunt migratory birds.

We have selected a few states across the country and some of their rules regarding hunting in the military. Visit www.fws.gov/offices/statelinks.html for a list of each state and its wildlife offices.

Alabama

Active duty military personnel may purchase a resident hunting and/or fishing license while stationed in Alabama. Alabama residents on active duty who are home on leave may hunt and fish without a license, but you must have proof of leave in your possession.

Alaska

In Alaska, active-duty service members and their dependents—even non-residents—can now obtain hunting licenses, fishing licenses and big-game tags for the same prices that

residents pay. This new law eliminates the old 12-month residency requirement for military members.

Colorado

Military members (and their dependents) who are stationed in Colorado on permanent active duty orders—or who were residents at the time they entered the military and have kept Colorado as their home of record—can apply or buy a license as a resident. Colorado residents on active military duty home on leave are exempt from buying the state's habitat stamp. Colorado residents on active duty out of state can fish free without a license while here on temporary leave, for up 30 days a year. You must carry official leave papers while fishing.

Georgia

Among those who may purchase resident hunting and fishing licenses are military personnel on active duty who list Georgia as their home of record in their official military files or who are stationed at a military base located in Georgia and the dependants of such military personnel.

Kansas

Members of the armed services on active duty who were Kansas residents at the time of entering the service are considered to be residents, along with their immediate family members. Members of the armed services on active duty and officially stationed in Kansas may purchase resident licenses and permits, except for lifetime licenses.

Louisiana

Any active duty military member or their spouse or dependent may purchase a license for hunting or recreational fishing in Louisiana for the same fee as that required of Louisiana residents for that same license.

Texas

The Texas Resident Active Duty Military "Super

Combo" Hunting and All-Water Fishing Package (Type 510), is free to any Texas resident who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the Reserves or National Guard on active duty. The package includes all five state stamp endorsements (archery, freshwater fishing, and migratory game bird, saltwater fishing with a red drum tag and upland game bird). The Federal Waterfowl (duck) Stamp is not included. For a member of the military to qualify for a free "Super Combo," he or she must have continuously resided in Texas for more than six months before obtaining the license. The free military license may not be obtained over the telephone or Internet.

A member of the military who does not qualify as a Texas resident for the purpose of obtaining a military "Super Combo" Texas may purchase any resident hunting and fishing license.

Virginia

Members of the armed forces may purchase a resident hunting or fishing license if they reside in the Commonwealth, are on active duty and are stationed at military installations within, or on ships based in the Commonwealth.

Washington

Military personnel must have lived in the state of Washington for 90 days immediately preceding the purchase of a license, and may not be licensed to hunt as a resident in any other state. The licensing year runs from April 1-March 31 of the following year.

For more information on hunting in your new state, visit www.fws.gov/hunting. Don't forget to keep your hunter's safety card handy during your move. Most states offer the course, and require proof of completing a hunter safety course before issuing a hunting license. The good news is, most hunter safety course certificates are transferable. ●

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