



An Overview of Wild Game Laws for Wild Game Processors

This document provides direction for wild game processors on carcass handling regulations and game laws of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource (DNR). The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) also enforces meat handling regulations at these establishments. Below are common questions and with wild game processing and supporting statutes for your guidance.

Can a hunter or wild game processor buy or sell wild game parts?

It is unlawful to buy or sell living animals and/or parts of the carcass including products such as sausage, raw meat cuts including steaks and roasts, ground meat or any other edible products from that carcass. In this case, the definition of “Buy” or “Sell” includes exchange for consideration, barter, an offer to buy/sell, intent to buy/sell, and attempt to buy or sell. This type of violation is very serious and has a criminal penalty of a gross misdemeanor.

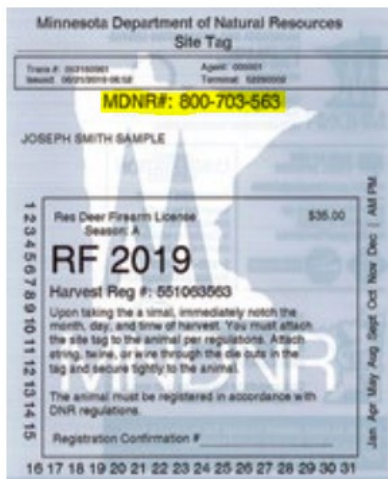
Please note! Inedible portions of lawfully taken game, including bones, antlers, feather, hides, and hoofs may be bought or sold unless specifically prohibited by statute (bear meat, bear paws, bear gall bladder, etc.).

- M.S. 97A.015.44, 97A.015.4, 97A.501.1, 97A.325.1-2, 97A.512(a)

What type of records must the hunter provide to the processor for processing a wild game carcass and/or part?

The hunter must register the carcass with the DNR prior to processing of the carcass. When the processor received the carcass, they should use the carcass tag to collect and record the name and address of the hunter and the MN DNR license number of the hunter.

It can be difficult to find the license number as there are many numbers printed on the carcass tag; these examples highlight the location of this information on the registration tag





What are the packaging and labeling requirements for wild game meat?

A processor that stores or processes wild game for others must mark the package, box and/or carcass with:

- The name and address of the owner;
 - The DNR license number of the person that took the animal; and
 - If the products are stored in bulk containers, the number and species in the package.
 - The products must be marked legibly as “Not for Sale” directly on the product packaging
- M.S. 97A.505.4, 31A.15

Can a processor process a wild game carcass brought into Minnesota from another State?

Hunter harvested deer (all sub-species), elk, caribou, moose or any other cervid **whole carcasses** cannot be transported into the state unless the products are wrapped meat, quarters or other portions of meat with no part of spinal column or head attached. However, antlers, hides, teeth, or skull caps that are cleaned of all brain tissue may be brought into the state.

This means that wild game processors should not accept any whole carcasses of the species mentioned above from out of state for further processing. If a hunter brings a carcass from an animal harvested out-of-State, the processor should refuse the carcass and contact the local conservation officer.

Note that Wild game processors can further process quartered carcasses, boneless trim or parts that do not contain spinal column or the head that were harvested out-of-State.

- M.S. 97A.505.8

Can a conservation officer enter a wild game processing establishment and review the products and records?

Conservation officers with probable cause may enter and inspect any package, container, place, vehicle, commercial cold storage warehouse, locker plant, butcher shop, and other buildings used to store dressed meat or game under the game and fish laws as described in M.S. 97A.215.1. During these investigations a conservation officer may inspect relevant records with probable cause of a game and fish law violation.

If a processor has questions about the rules or requirements or any carcasses brought to their establishment, they are encouraged to contact their local conservation officer. Contact information for these individuals can be found here:

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/officer/patrolareas/index.html>

For more information please contact Minnesota Department of Agriculture-Dairy and Meat Inspection Division at 651-201-6300, MDA.meatpoultryegg@state.mn.us or visit their website at www.mda.state.mn.us

Or

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources at 651-296-6157 or 888-MINNDNR (646-6367)
info.dnr@state.mn.us