

Hunters take aim on rules, regulations



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MEAS CHERRY POINT

A stealthy hunter silently perches himself on a tree stand, patiently waiting for a trophy buck to pass within the range of his bow.

The avid hunter didn't have to travel far from his home on base to land a six-point buck, as the air station hunting season opened Sept. 9.

Hunting and fishing are encouraged here, as long as hunters abide by rules and regulations set forth by the state of North Carolina, the air station and the game warden. There are three ponds for fishing, forests for hunting large game and a 15-acre field for dove hunting on the air station.

The first thing a hunter should acquire is a North Carolina hunting license. A license may be obtained by attending a North Carolina hunter education course. These courses are given aboard the air station several times per year to educate hunters on safety, hunting techniques and regulations. After attending the course and receiving a North Carolina hunting license, there are a few more steps to go before setting out on a hunt, including a Cherry Point orientation.

"In order to purchase a (hunting permit), if the hunter has never hunted here before, he or she is required to attend an orientation course that we give every Friday," said Paul F. Boniface, a conservation law enforcement officer with the environment affairs office.

This year the beginner's course is provided in the Training and Education Building every Friday until December 23.

Boniface said once hunters have attended the hunting orientation course, a hunting license may be purchased at the main exchange.

"That course isn't required for fishing," he added.

Hunting permits cost \$10, and fishing permits cost \$5. A combination of the two permits in one costs \$15 for outdoor sportsmen.

"All the hunters need to make sure that all their weapons are registered at (the) pass and identification (office) prior to bringing them on the base, which does include bows and arrows," Boniface said.

Boniface said all active duty military, retired service members, civil service personnel and their dependants are authorized to hunt and fish on the air station. These hunters are also allowed to sponsor a guest.

The conservation law enforcement officers claim deer, duck and dove hunting are the most common and ample types of game harvesting on Cherry Point.

Master Sgt. Jack P. Sizemore and Gunnery Sgt. Dylan R. Pash hunt here more than three times a week, relishing the relaxing forest and the thrill of tracking a buck, possibly a record breaker.

The avid hunters, who work at the Air Traffic Control tower, said they plan on taking their junior Marines on a wild bore hunt in the future to promote camaraderie in the unit.

"I hunt for the thrill of it," Sizemore said. "I love the outdoors. It's my release."

During the hunting season, there are signs posted around Cherry Point warning people about the dangerous areas where hunters are present.

To plan a hunt aboard the air station, or to get detailed information on hunting regulations, visit the Cherry Point game warden's Web site at <http://www.cherrypoint.usmc.mil/gamesarden>.

Master Sgt. Jack P. Sizemore draws on his bow while hunting deer here. Hunting is encouraged, as long as hunters abide by rules and regulations set forth by the state of North Carolina, the air station and the game warden.

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