

Pronghorn Capture & Handling Procedures

30 January 2026 | Horse Heaven Wind & Solar Farm Pronghorn Study

The procedures outlined below should be followed by capture vendors who will be net-gunning, hobbling, collaring, and releasing pronghorn in south-central Washington.

Helicopter chase times: pronghorn exist in small populations in Washington, and it is critical to avoid chasing the same group repeatedly. Cumulative stress from repeated chases in the same group can lead to capture myopathy (severe muscle damage from extreme exertion, struggle, or stress), often resulting in death. The capture vendor should avoid chasing the same group over 2 consecutive days.

- Max chase time for the same group of pronghorn: 10 minutes cumulatively; the clock starts when pronghorn visibly start moving to avoid the helicopter
- Max chase time for an individual pronghorn: 2 minutes

Handling time per individual: 4 minutes or less, from hobbling to release for each individual. If multiple animals are net-gunned at once, the 4-minute clock starts for both animals once they are hobbled. Position animals with heads uphill to avoid inhibition of respiration and bloat.

Temperature checks: Obtain rectal temperature immediately following restraint of the animal. Rechecks of temperature should occur at the start and end of mugging and be recorded on the individual animal's datasheet.

- Temperature threshold for immediate release: $\geq 105^{\circ}\text{ F}$. If ≥ 2 individuals have a temperature of 105° F , capture vendor should notify WDFW staff on site
- Tip of the thermometer should be placed against the wall of the rectum, and not within a fecal mass, to ensure an accurate reading

Euthanasia protocol: If a captured individual presents with any of the listed conditions (see backside of this page), the individual should be euthanized as soon as possible by gunshot (at least a .22magnum or larger caliber, preferably with non-toxic ammunition to avoid lead poisoning in avian scavengers) to the upper neck near the base of the skull, or in the head (see Fig. 1 for placement). Capture vendor should also notify WDFW staff on site.

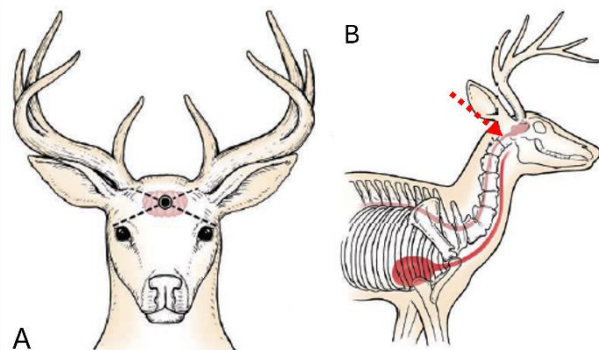


Figure 1. Gunshot placement for front of head (A) and back of neck (B)

Indications for euthanasia

- Exposed internal organs
- Long-bone (leg), pelvic, or neck fracture that prevents or severely restricts mobility
- Unable to stand or walk
- Persistent neurological signs (seizures, circling)
- Clearly in significant pain with poor likelihood of relief
- Unable to fulfill normal functions as a wild animal