Check an ARK Ascended save before adopting usestore

ARK: Survival Ascended can store player and tribe data inside the world save through the `-usestore` mode documented by Wildcard. Treat a change to this mode as a save-format migration. Checking a box or copying one map file without understanding the current layout can leave you with a misleading recovery plan.

Inventory the present save mode

Download or record the complete startup configuration, server build, map, save location and mod list. Look for `-usestore` and `-converttostore` in the effective startup arguments, including options the hosting template supplies. Do not infer the active mode from a filename alone: Wildcard notes that conversion leaves the old profile and tribe files in place.

The publisher describes `-converttostore` as importing existing player and tribe data into the world save, with `-usestore` selecting that storage method. Those flags have different purposes. Do not add a conversion flag to a production restart as a routine optimisation. Ask support to confirm the actual current mode if you cannot inspect the effective arguments.

Prepare evidence before proposing a conversion

1. Stop the original server through its normal control and capture a complete checkpoint containing the world, player and tribe files plus configuration. Keep this original outside the test location.
2. Write a small verification list with at least two established characters, their tribes, representative structures and a few known tames. Avoid publishing private player identifiers in that list.

3. Arrange an isolated test server or support-assisted test with the same build and gameplay mods. Give it separate allocations and save storage. Prevent test characters from interacting with the live cluster.
4. Ask the operator to apply Wildcard's documented conversion sequence to that copy. Record the exact first-start and later-start arguments. Do not run a second writer against the original save directory.
5. On the copy, verify the listed characters, memberships, ownership and inventories. Save, stop and start the copy again using the intended ongoing configuration, then repeat the checks.

Prove that recovery still works

Take a checkpoint from the converted test and restore it to a separate stopped test location. Confirm that the expected character and tribe state comes back with the world. Record the storage mode with the archive so a future operator does not combine instructions for two layouts. A successful launch without established-player checks leaves the most important part of the migration unverified.

Do not remove old `.arkprofile` or `.arktribe` files during this evaluation. They may belong to your original recovery set, and their presence alone does not establish which copy the running server uses. Storage housekeeping can wait until you have an agreed retention policy and a verified recovery copy.

Return to the original if the trial fails

Keep the production server on its recorded startup mode and untouched checkpoint while you investigate. For a failed conversion after a planned cutover, stop writes before restoring the complete pre-conversion save and its matching arguments. Record any gameplay since cutover before choosing a rollback. Ask support to review unclear ownership or identity results rather than repeating conversion attempts against the only original.

Related help and sources

- Move an ARK Survival Ascended save safely
- Restore an ARK Ascended checkpoint with consistent player and tribe data

Wildcard usestore save-system notes.

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