

your guide to
hunting
& **fishing**
in the Gonzales area



A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF
The Gonzales Inquirer
OUR SIXTH YEAR SERVING GONZALES COUNTY

Deer Hunting	4
Animal Tracks	6
Dove Hunting	9
Fishing & Boating	10

Feral Hogs	16
Hunter Education	19
Rules & Regulations	20

Photos inside courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Hunting seasons for Gonzales County

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Those who love to hunt and who might feel disappointed when the season ends might be thrilled to learn that Gonzales County is offering extended hunting seasons. This applies mostly to deer and to birds.

Dove: Besides the regular seasons for dove (Sept. 14 to Oct. 30, and then Dec. 17 to Jan. 22, 2021, with a daily limit of 15 white-winged, mourning and white-tipped doves in the aggregate, to include no more than two white-tipped), there's also a falconry season that runs from Nov. 18 to Dec. 4. Daily bag limit is three in the aggregate. Possession limit is three times the daily bag limit. Legal shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Special white-wing dove days are usually held the first two weekends of September with a daily limit of 15 white-winged, mourning and white-tipped doves in the aggregate, to include no more than two white-tipped and two mourning. Legal shooting hours on those days are noon to sunset.

Duck: Regular seasons include Oct. 29-30 for youth only and veterans and active military duty, along with two regular seasons: Nov. 5-Nov. 27 and then Dec. 10 to Jan. 29, 2023.

"Dusky" Ducks (mottled, Mexican like duck, black duck and their hybrids) maybe hunted Nov. 10-27 and then Dec. 10 to Jan. 29, 2023.

Daily duck bag limit with a gun is six in the aggregate, including mergansers. No more than five mallards (only two may be hens), three wood ducks, two redheads, two canvasback, one scaup, one pintail, one dusky duck (mottled, Mexican like duck, black duck and their hybrids are closed the first five days in their zone) and six of all other species not listed. Coot daily

bag limit is 15 birds and possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.

As for falconry for ducks, that season is Jan. 30-Feb. 13, 2023. Daily bag limit by falconry consists of three migratory game birds, singly or in the aggregate. Possession limit by falconry is nine game birds, singly or in the aggregate.

Geese: The early Canada geese season ran from Sept. 10-25 (bag limit was five). Besides the Nov. 5 to Jan. 29, 2023 season for light and dark geese (bag limit five dark geese, to include no more than two white-fronted geese and 10 light geese in the aggregate), there's also a Jan. 30-March 12, 2023 season for light geese (conservation order), where there is neither a bag limit, nor a possession limit.

Javelina: The regular season runs from Oct. 1 through Feb. 26, 2023. The bag limit is two per license per year and possession limit is two.

Quail: The regular season is from Oct. 29 through Feb. 26, 2023. Daily bag limit is 15 and possession limit is 45. There is no open season on Mearns' (Montezuma) quail.

Rails, Gallinules, and Moorhens: Besides the regular seasons of Sept. 10-25 and then Nov. 5 to Dec. 28 (bag limit of 15 king and clapper rails in the aggregate, 25 Sora and Virginia rails in the aggregate; 15 Moorhens and Purple Gallinules in the aggregate with possession limit of three times the daily bag limit). The three birds will be subject to a Falconry season Jan. 30 through Feb. 13, 2023, whose daily bag limit is three in the aggregate, and a possession limit of three times the daily bag limit.

Sandhill crane: In Zone C, the regular season is Dec. 17 through Jan. 22, 2023, with a daily bag limit of two and possession limit of six.

Squirrel: General season is from Sept. 1 through Aug. 31, 2023.

Teal: September teal only season

was from Sept. 10-25 with daily bag limit of six in the aggregate and three times the daily bag limit for possession.

Turkey: There are fall and spring seasons for gobblers or bearded hens. Fall season in the South Zone is Nov. 5 to Jan. 15, 2023, while youth hunt from Oct. 29-30 and then Jan. 16-29, 2023.

Also for turkey hunting, in the fall there's an archery only season from Oct. 1 to Nov. 4. Bag composition can be either sex, while the annual bag limit for turkey, in the aggregate for all counties, is four, no more than one of which may be an Eastern turkey.

In the spring, the season for the Rio Grande-South Zone is March 18-April 30, 2023. Youth only season is March 11-12, 2023 and then May 6-7, 2023. Bag composition can be gobblers or bearded hens, while the annual bag limit for turkey, in the aggregate for all counties, is four, no more than one of which may be an Eastern turkey.

White-tailed Deer: General season for white-tailed deer in the North Zone is Nov. 5 to Jan. 1, 2023. There are two youth-only seasons: early is Oct. 29-30, and late is Jan. 2-15, 2023. For the deer, archery only is Oct. 1 to Nov. 4. Muzzleloader season is from Jan. 2-15, 2023. A special season, restricted to antlerless deer by MLDP tag or hunting license tag, is from Nov. 24-27. Bag limit is four deer, no more than two bucks and no more than two antlerless, all seasons combined.

Antler Restrictions: The bag limit in this county is two legal bucks, but only ONE may have an inside spread of 13 inches or greater. A legal buck deer is defined as a buck deer with: at least one unbranched antler; OR an inside spread of 13 inches or greater (does not apply to a buck that has an unbranched antler). A hunter may also take ONE buck with an inside spread of 13 inches or greater in a different

county with antler restrictions, and not to exceed that county's bag limit.

Antlerless Deer: Antlerless deer may be taken by hunting license tag during archery, muzzleloader, and youth-only seasons, except on properties where antlerless MLDP tags have been issued then take is by MLDP tag only. Antlerless deer may also be taken by hunting license tags during designated periods in the General Season, see General Season section below for specific dates.

Mandatory Harvest Reporting: Any antlerless deer harvested during archery, youth-only, muzzleloader, or the 4-doe days during the general season is required to be reported within 24-hours of harvest to the department via mobile application or online. Report your antlerless deer harvest with the "My Texas Hunt Harvest" app (Apple app Store for IOS devices, Google Play for Android devices), or online at www.tpwd.texas.gov/myhunt.

MLDP: If MLDP buck tags have been issued for a property, harvest is by MLDP tag only and all bucks must be tagged with a MLDP tag. If MLDP antlerless tags have been issued for a property, harvest is by MLDP tag only and all antlerless deer must be tagged with a MLDP antlerless tag. The landowner or designated agent are responsible for providing MLDP tags to the hunters on MLDP properties. All hunters using MLDP tags are required to possess a Resident or Non-resident General hunting license.

Woodcock: Regular season for woodcocks is Dec. 18 to Jan. 31, 2023. Falconry season for the bird is Jan. 30 through Feb. 13, 2021. Daily bag limit is three, with a possession limit of three times the daily bag limit.

For more information, go online to tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/regs/counties/gonzales.

Welcome!

You couldn't have picked a better place to come bag that big buck, drop that dove, take down that turkey or root out that feral hog. Gonzales County and its neighbors (Lavaca, DeWitt, Karnes, Wilson, Guadalupe and Caldwell counties) can boast some of the best hunting in the state.

There are an estimated 5.58 million deer in the state of Texas, up from prior years due to the significant rainfall, with an average of about 43.5 deer per 1,000 acres. Certainly most of the deer population is in the Hill Country, which boasts an estimated 2.32 million deer, or about 147 deer per 1,000 acres, or 76 per square mile. But next up is the Post Oak Savannah, which includes Gonzales County, and has more than 793,000 deer at an average of 46 per 1,000 acres.

According to a survey by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, an estimated 70.05 percent of hunters were successful in harvesting white-tail deer in Texas in 2021-22. An estimated 756,172 hunters spent an estimated 8,342,002 days hunting and harvested an estimated 827,928 deer last year.

We are glad to have you here. You may be aware that Texans spend an average of about \$1.5 billion annually on deer hunting with a total impact of about \$2.2 billion when throwing in deer breeding and tourism, according to a study by Texas A&M University.

Hunting certainly provides a boost to the local economy, whether it is in the form of leases which generate income; shops and restaurants which equip and feed hungry hunters who pass through our community; or even our hotels for those who choose more modern accommodations than those found on the lease.

Then there are our local gun shops, meat processors, taxidermists and hunting guides who benefit directly from the hunters who come here and shop local when it comes to everything they need from preparation to harvest.

Hunting is a way of life for a lot of folks here in this part of Texas we like to call God's country. It is a tradition passed down from generation to generation and many a person around here can tell you about that first hunting trip they ever took and what it was like to be accepted as an equal among their elders.

And what better camaraderie can be found than among friends sitting around a campfire, eating and drinking and telling tales of the prey that got away before turning in for an early morning start.

Hunting is not only about family; it is also about conservation. It is about respecting the environment, especially wildlife habitats, and it is about respecting the less fortunate, through programs like Hunters for the Hungry, which feeds area families in need with harvested meat.

It is also about getting away from computers and video games and work emails and Facebook and getting back in touch with the naturalist that is there inside of us.

On behalf of the staff here at the Gonzales Inquirer, I want to thank each and every one of you for choosing our community and wish each one of you a safe, successful and happy hunting season.

LEW K. COHN

Publisher
Gonzales Inquirer



WE WANT YOUR PHOTO

For our **VETERAN'S DAY Tribute Section!**

The Inquirer will say "thank you" to local veterans in our Thursday, Nov. 10 print edition as we observe Veteran's Day!

We are seeking photos of local veterans – either from their time in service or current – to publish along with their name, rank, service branch and years of service.

Just e-mail the photo and information to lew.cohn@gonzalesinquirer.com or sanya.simmons@gonzalesinquirer.com. You may also come by our office, 622 St. Paul St. and we will scan your photo – or even take a new one!

The photos will appear at no



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Photos must be received by Nov. 2!

The
Gonzales Inquirer
SERVING GONZALES COUNTY SINCE 1858

Biologists predict moderate hunting conditions ahead of deer season opener

AUSTIN — With drought affecting most of the state over the summer, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologists foresee a moderate season for hunters this fall.

“Overall, 2022 year is expected to be good in terms of harvest numbers and opportunities, so don’t let the chance to spend time afield with family, friends and fellow hunters pass you by,” said Alan Cain, White-Tailed Deer Program Leader for TPWD. “Texas has one of the longest deer seasons in the nation, so take some time this fall and winter and enjoy one of the best deer herds in the country right here in your home state.”

Deer hunting kicks off with archery season on Oct. 1 across most of the state. Cain noted that while harvest numbers may look good, drought impacts on deer habitats mean hunters should generally expect average to below average antler quality and body weight this fall.

Additionally, hunters may see fewer deer at feeders when archery season opens, as recent rains have improved habitat conditions, providing an abundance

of native forage that means deer won’t have to travel far to find something to browse. Archery hunters may need to alter their hunting strategies to find harvest success, Cain said.

DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Temperatures in the early summer months frequently soared above 100 degrees across most of the state, and lack of significant rainfall limited the spring production of important food sources like forbs (weeds) and woody shrubs for deer.

“Woody plants are critical in times like these because these deep-rooted plants are often the only abundant supply of green groceries for deer, but even these browse plants are showing

some signs of stress,” said Cain. “Mesquites appear to be on track to produce an abundance of beans this year and were critical sources of natural forage for deer in late summer in the central, south and western portions of the state.”

Wildfires have plagued large areas of the state as well, causing significant habitat loss and damage, but Cain said nature finds a way to rejuvenate the landscape.

“Where fires have occurred, there’s been new grass and weed growth providing some much-needed nutrition and cover for deer,” Cain said. “Although habitat conditions have improved immensely with recent rains, the timing was a bit late to have any meaningful influence on antler quality.”



While the archery-only season kicks off Oct. 1, the general season opens more than a month later, on Nov. 5. The general season runs through Jan. 1, 2023 in the North Zone and Jan. 15, 2023 in the South Zone. A special youth-only gun deer season is set in both zones for Oct. 29-30 and Jan. 2-15, 2023. For additional late season deer hunting opportunities, county specific regulations and information on how to properly tag and report a harvest, consult the 2022-23 Outdoor Annual.

Archery hunters are required to purchase an Archery Endorsement in addition to their hunting license. Hunters taking advantage of Texas Public Hunting Lands must have the Annual Public Hunting Permit. Public land hunters should also consult the Public Hunting Lands Map Booklet to review regulations that may apply to specific areas. The My Texas Hunt Harvest app can be used to complete on-site regis-



tration electronically at a public hunting area

Those interested in learning more about archery and bowhunting, or anyone who is looking to brush up on their skills ahead of the season, are encouraged to explore Bowhunter by Fall, a newsletter series presented by TPWD's Community Archery Program.

CWD TESTING

TPWD reminds hunters that TPWD wildlife biologists and animal health officials are collecting and testing Chronic Wasting

Disease (CWD) samples from hunter-harvested deer to get a clearer picture of the prevalence and distribution of the disease across Texas. Proactive monitoring improves the state's response time to a CWD detection and can greatly reduce the risk of the disease further spreading to neighboring captive and free-ranging populations.

Hunters in surveillance and containment zones must meet submission requirements of harvested CWD susceptible species. Additionally, hunters outside of established surveillance and containment zones are encouraged to voluntarily submit their harvest for testing at a check station, for free, before heading home from the field. A map of TPWD check stations for all CWD zones can be found on the TPWD website.

For more information about CWD, visit the TPWD web site or the TAHC web site.

PROCESSING IN CAMP

DEER AND PRONGHORN

- A deer and pronghorn may be skinned and quartered (two forequarters, two hindquarters, and two backstraps) for transport, provided the quartered deer or pronghorn is tagged and proof of sex accompanies the deer or pronghorn. See Cold Storage or Processing Facility for exceptions.
- Deer or pronghorn may only be processed beyond quarters at a location that qualifies as a final destination.

ALL GAME ANIMALS (including deer and pronghorn)

- The four quarters and two backstraps are the only parts of a game animal required by law to be kept in edible condition.
- Tagging and proof-of-sex requirements, if required, continue to apply until the wildlife resource reaches a final destination and is quartered.
- While in camp you may remove and prepare a part of a wildlife resource if the removal and preparation occur immediately before the part is cooked or consumed; however, all tagging and proof of sex regulations apply to remaining parts until the parts reach a final destination.

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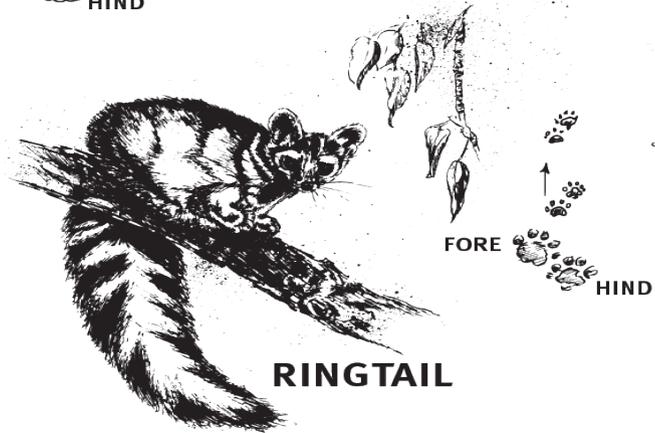

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TEXAS TRACKS

Do you know them?



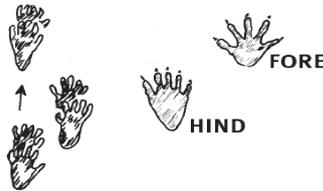
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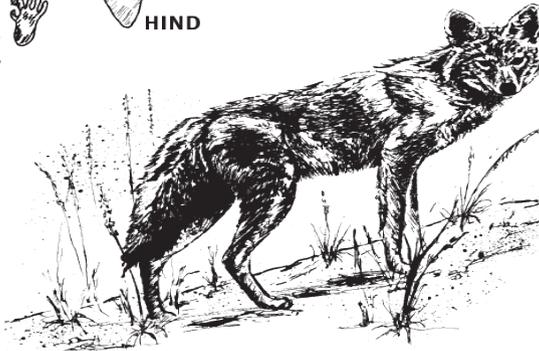
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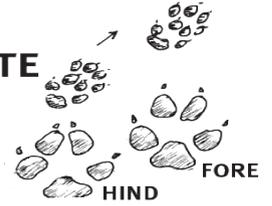
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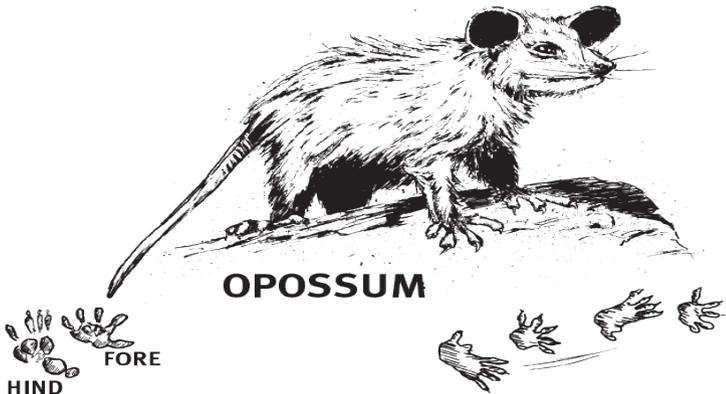
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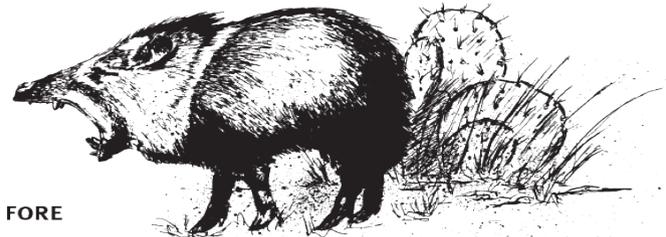
WHITE-TAILED DEER



OPOSSUM

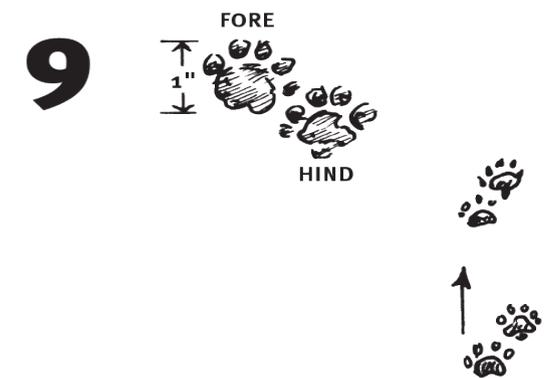
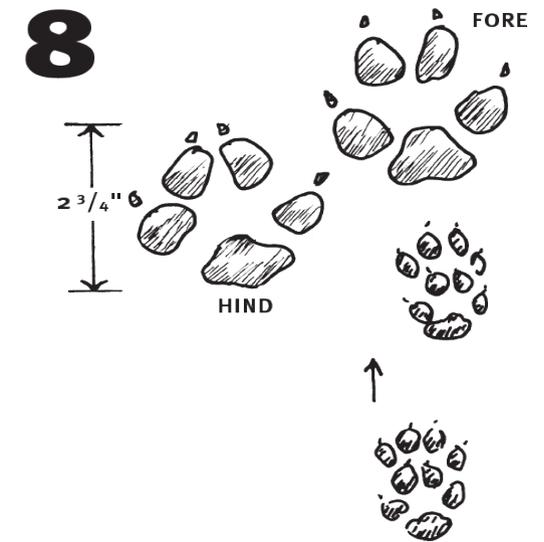
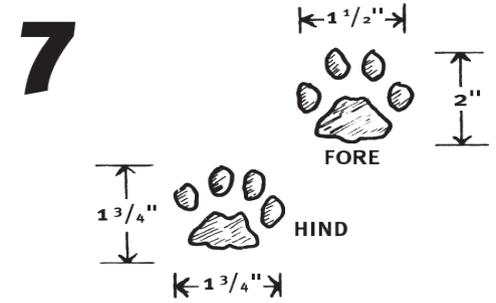
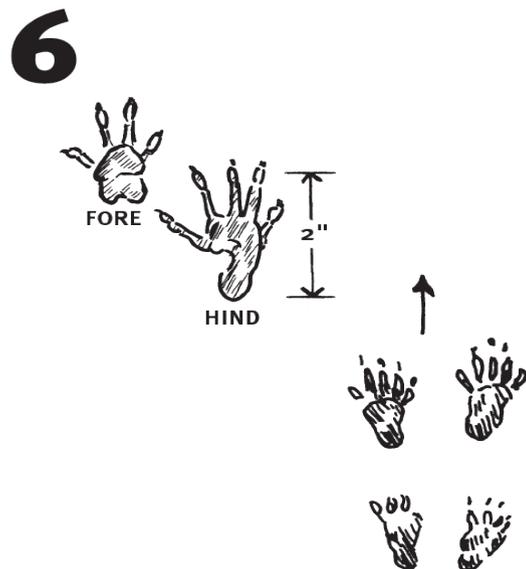
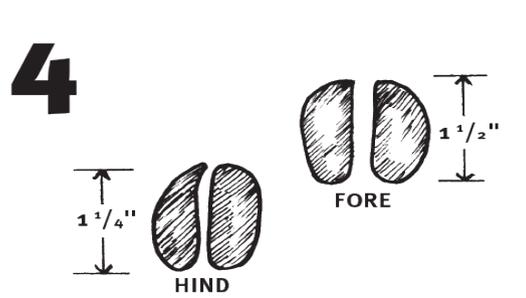
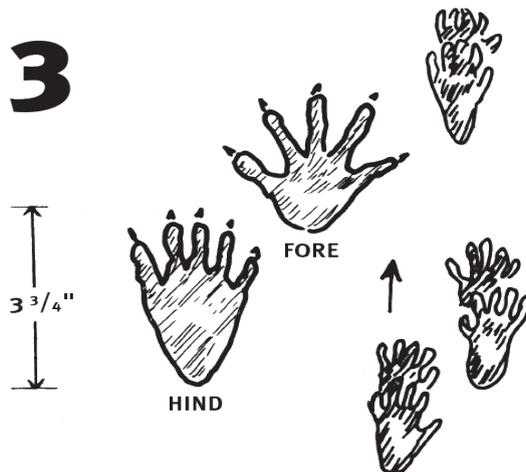
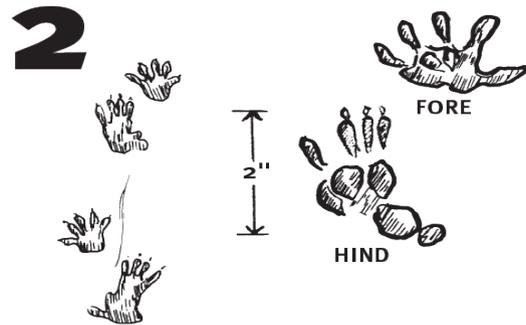
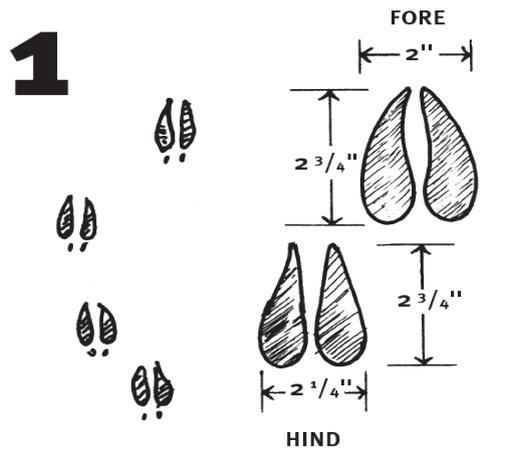


COLLARED PECCARY (Javelina)



Can you identify these tracks?

You may know Texas wildlife, but do you know their tracks? Some like the rabbit and opossum are easily recognized. Others such as the coyote, collared peccary and bobcat may be confused with their domestic look-alikes the dog, pig and house cat. Tracks are easily followed in snow or loose sand. Prints made in soft mud are best for study. (Answers at the bottom of page.)



1. White-tailed Deer 2. Opossum 3. Raccoon 4. Collared Peccary 5. Skunk 6. Fox Squirrel 7. Bobcat 8. Coyote 9. Ringtail



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MANDATORY HARVEST REPORTING

White-tailed deer harvested and tagged with a hunting license tag in the counties listed below during any open season (archery, general muzzleloader, and youth) must be reported within 24 hours of harvest via the “My Texas Hunt Harvest” mobile application or online version.

- Report using the “My Texas Hunt Harvest” mobile app (for iOS and Android), or
- Report online in your web browser

COUNTIES WITH MANDATORY BUCK AND ANTLERLESS WHITE-TAILED DEER HARVEST REPORTING:

- Collin
- Dallas
- Grayson
- Rockwall

COUNTIES WITH MANDATORY ANTLERLESS WHITE-TAILED DEER HARVESTED REPORTING:

- Austin
- Bastrop
- Caldwell
- Colorado
- Comal (East of I-35)
- De Witt
- Fayette
- Goliad (North of US 59)
- Gonzales
- Guadalupe
- Hays (East of I-35)
- Jackson (north of US 59)
- Karnes
- Lavaca
- Lee
- Travis (East of I-35)
- Victoria (North of US 59)
- Waller
- Washington
- Wharton (North of US 59)
- Wilson



The Rut in Texas White-tailed Deer

The following was based on three years of data collected by Wildlife Technicians and Biologists throughout Texas. Our goal is to get the information out to the hunters and landowners who assisted and helped fund the project. You may have seen parts of the article in outdoor magazines.

This project was funded by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department through Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project 95, W-127-R.

The phenomenon known as “the rut” is the period when deer breed. People often ask biologists when the rut is going to occur. It’s a question biologists commonly hear in the fall. Many hunters want to make sure that they plan hunting vacations to include that magical time when bucks lose all caution and deer are moving.

Can hunting the rut help? You bet. Anything that encourages bucks to move enhances the chance of seeing one. Buck deer, like most male mammals, seem to lose a lot of their natural caution when the scent of a receptive female is in the air. One of the tips gained from this study is that rutting bucks can be found during most of the hunting season in many regions of the state. Consistently successful hunters spend a lot of time in the field throughout the hunting season, not just during the peak of the rut.

Hunters and ranchers often encourage Texas Parks and Wildlife to move the season later to give deer a chance to breed. The study showed that no matter when the rut occurred, the vast majority of does were bred. Individual ranch and deer herd management are much more important than timing of the hunting season. The data will assist TPWD in determining whether the number of bucks in an area has an effect on breeding season length and success. There are many interacting factors which affect breeding.

The breeding study involved the examination of 2,436 does, the largest number of deer ever utilized in a Texas breeding study. The date of conception can be determined by looking at fetus length. An average of 200 days from conception was used to determine fawning dates. Biologists got as much information as they could from the does collected. They looked at the timing of the

rut and at breeding success on 16 study areas throughout Texas for three years.

All years were combined to produce the graphs that show the rut timing. In most areas the rut varied very little from year to year. You can use the map and graphs to determine the timing of the rut in your area of interest. Will the information help with the planning of your hunt? You be the judge.

Acknowledgments: Written in 1996 by Max Traweek, Susan Wardroup, Jay Williams and E.L. Young. Maps and graphs by Max Traweek. Field activities coordinated by Jay Williams and conducted by biologists and technicians of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Wildlife Division, Bob Cook, Director.

BREEDING SUCCESS AND FAWN SURVIVAL

In some Texas circles, you still hear people talk about the “old barren doe” that lives in a certain pasture. This train of thought blames poor fawn production on the idea that many older does do not get pregnant. In reality, if the doe isn’t

bred during the first estrous period, she will be receptive again in 28 days. This explains the high breeding success in white-tailed deer even when bucks are scarce. We found that on the average, 92 of every 100 does sampled in the state were pregnant. The western part of the state was in a drought during much of the study. In the Trans-Pecos the number of bred does was the lowest. There the breeding rate dropped to only 81 percent (81 of 100).

White-tailed deer are known for producing twins. Statewide, over half of the does examined had twins. Triplets were not common, and the occurrence of triplets was less than two percent. Quadruplets didn’t show up in the study. There were more male fetuses than female fetuses. Males represented 56 percent of the unborn fawns over the three years of the study.

An average sample of ten does had 15 fawns, or 1.5 fetuses per doe. In some parts of the state, though, deer numbers

See **DEER**, page **B14**

E.J. MEAT

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Conditions heating up for dove season

AUSTIN – Texans are used to scorching summers, but this year's record highs across much of the state have left many dove hunters wondering about the upcoming season opener.

“Unless conditions change drastically over the next few weeks, hunting near water will be key for opening day this year,” said Owen Fitzsimmons, TPWD Dove Program Leader. “Hunters will likely see larger concentrations of birds at watering holes and food sources than they have in the past due to limited resources. Agriculture production has been hit hard by drought so birds may be more reliant on native foods this September. Look for stands of common sunflower, croton, and other native annual forbs and grasses.”

Doves are well-adapted to dry conditions, particularly white-winged doves, which are a sub-tropical species.

“Our spring surveys indicated a decrease in breeding abundance, which is a carry-over from poor hatch-year production last year,” added Fitzsimmons. “However, doves kick reproduction into high gear in dry years like this, and we’re seeing a lot of young birds this summer, based on our banding efforts.”

TPWD officials remind hunters to prepare for the extreme heat and make sure they are packing all the essentials for a day in the field. They should bring plenty of water to stay hydrated and take measures to stay cool in a shaded area. The same is true for canine hunting partners.

“If this extreme heat persists, think twice about bringing your dog out in the early season,” said Fitzsimmons. “Temperatures this high can be dangerous for dogs, particularly when they’re excited and running hard after birds. If you do bring them, try to limit the hunts to early mornings or late evenings.”

The regular dove season in the North Zone runs Sept. 1-Nov. 13 and resumes Dec. 17-Jan. 1, 2023. The regular season in the Central Zone is Sept. 1-Oct. 30, then resumes



Dec. 17-Jan. 15, 2023. The regular season in the South Zone is Sept. 14-Oct. 30 and Dec. 17-Jan. 22, 2023. For the second straight year, there will be six Special White-Winged Dove Days. The Special White-Winged Dove Days will be Sept. 2-4 and 9-11.

During the regular season in the South Zone, the aggregate bag limit is 15 with no more than two white-tipped doves. During the Special White-winged Dove Days in the South Zone, hunting is allowed only from noon to sunset and the daily bag limit is 15 birds, to include not more than two mourning doves and two white-tipped doves.

All updated hunting regulations for this year's hunting season can be found in the Texas Outdoor Annual mobile app or online at OutdoorAnnual.com.

Hunters are reminded that licenses are on sale now for the 2022-23 hunting seasons and can be purchased through the agency's 28 law enforcement field offices, at more than 50 state parks and over 1,700 retailers across the state. Licenses may also be purchased online through the TPWD website or by phone at (800) 895-4248. Call center hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and there is a required \$5 administrative fee for each phone or online transaction. The online transaction system is available 24/7.

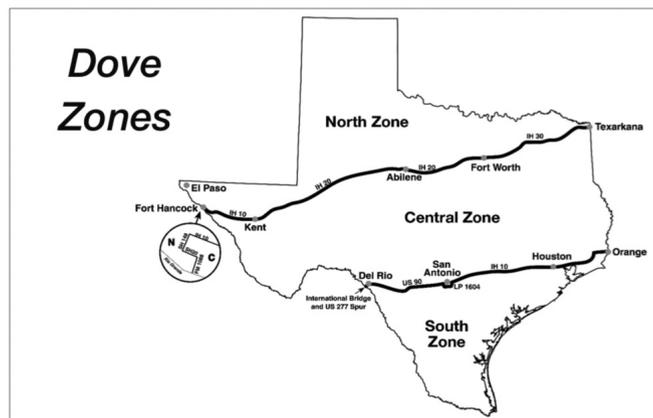
Enhancements have been made to make the licensing process simpler and faster. “Expedited checkout” improves the process of purchasing the same license items bought most recently

within the last three years. It's also now easier to show proof-of-license. Now hunters can use a digital image of their license as proof-of-license for any hunting that doesn't require a tag, like dove hunting. Accepted formats include: (1) a digital photo, (2) an emailed receipt, (3) within the Outdoor Annual app or the My Texas Hunt Harvest app, or 4) online purchase record.

For the first time, Texas residents can purchase a digital Super Combo license (Items 111, 117 and 990) that will authorize digital tagging of harvested deer, turkey and oversized red drum. The digital license option is available through online purchase only when licenses go on sale Aug. 15. A digital license holder will not receive a printed license or tags but must keep their digital license available while in the field. The license can be viewed through the TPWD Outdoor Annual and My Texas Hunt Harvest mobile apps.

In addition to a hunting license, anyone born after Sept. 1, 1971, must successfully complete a hunter education training course to hunt legally in Texas. The TPWD Hunter Education certification is valid for life and is honored in all other states and provinces. Hunters can find more information or print a replacement at no cost online.

A Migratory Game Bird Endorsement (Stamp) and Harvest Information Program (HIP) certification are also required to hunt dove. HIP certification involves a brief survey of previous year's migratory bird hunting success and is conducted at the time licenses are purchased.



Changes to regulations for freshwater fishing

AUSTIN – The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission adopted multiple changes to the freshwater fishing regulations for the upcoming 2022-2023 season at the meeting held March 24.

Defining reservoir boundaries and modified harvest regulations on designated waterbodies highlight this year's list of changes. The changes also include modifications on Red River tributaries to prevent the transfer of invasive carp, largemouth bass harvest regulations correction, clarification of striped bass species information and Sam Rayburn Reservoir county designation.

“Our approach this year was to simplify and clarify rules to reduce the potential for confusion near certain river-reservoir boundaries where exceptions to statewide limits exist, eliminate exceptional rules for bygone fisheries, harmonize rules with our Oklahoma neighbors on border waters, sustain quality bass fishing at a newly-opening reservoir, and reduce risks of inadvertent spread of invasive carps from where they currently exist in the Red River and its tributaries in Northeast Texas,” said Craig Bonds, TPWD’s Inland Fisheries Division Director.

The changes enacted for the 2022-23 license year

take effect Sept. 1, 2022. Texas Parks and Wildlife will incorporate the details of these new regulations into the 2022-23 edition of its Outdoor Annual.

The regulation changes are as follows:

- Sam Rayburn Reservoir (Angelina, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Sabine, and San Augustine counties) — Delineate the upstream reservoir boundary for Sam Rayburn Reservoir to differentiate between the inflowing river and the reservoir where special exceptions to statewide channel and blue catfish daily bag, possession and length limits are in place.
- Lake Texoma (Cooke and Grayson counties) – Delineate the upstream reservoir boundary for Lake Texoma to differentiate

between the inflowing river and lake where special exceptions to statewide daily bag, possession and length limits are in place.

- Bois d’Arc Lake (Fannin County) – Implement largemouth bass harvest regulations for soon-to-be opened Bois d’Arc Lake, establishing a 16-inch maximum size limit and exceptions for temporary possession of 24-inch bass for weighing as potential ShareLunkers.
- Lake Texoma (Cooke and Grayson counties) – Modify harvest regulations for walleye in Lake Texoma to eliminate special exceptions to statewide daily bag, possession and length limits for walleye in Lake Texoma and return to statewide regulations.



- Lake Texoma (Cooke, Grayson, Fannin, Lamar, Red River, and Bowie counties), Red River and tributaries – Modify harvest regulations for alligator gar in Lake Texoma to expand the harvest closure during May to align with Oklahoma harvest regulations.

- Coletto Creek Reservoir (Goliad and Victoria counties) and Fairfield Lake (Freestone County) – Modify harvest regulations for red drum for lakes Coletto Creek and Fairfield to eliminate special exceptions to statewide daily bag, possession and length limits and return to statewide regulations.

- Red River Tributaries – Modify regulations to prevent transfer of invasive carp as bait, adding tributaries of the Red River in Grayson, Fannin, Lamar, Red River and Bowie counties to the list of designated waters forbidding the transport of live nongame fish.

- Largemouth Bass Harvest Correction — Correct a largemouth bass regulatory exception error for a suite of lakes.

- Striped Bass – Clarify species information.

- Sam Rayburn Reservoir County Designation – Modify Sam Rayburn Reservoir county list.

The online version of the TPWD Outdoor Annual will not reflect any new changes until mid-August. Find more information regarding these amendments and all fishing regulations on the TPWD fishing regulations website.

GET TO KNOW...

Guadalupe Bass

(Micropterus treculii)

OTHER NAMES

Black Bass, Guadalupe Spotted Bass

DESCRIPTION

Game fish - see statewide bag & size limits and lake-specific exceptions

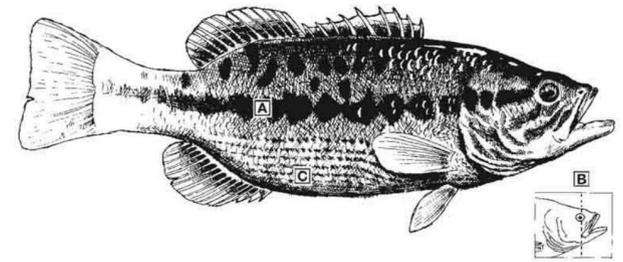
Micropterus is Greek, meaning “small fin” and is a rather unfortunate misnomer arising from an injured type specimen that made it appear that the posterior rays of the soft dorsal fin formed a small separate fin. Treculi refers to Trecul, the French compatriot of Vaillant and Bocourt. Trecul actually caught the specimen. The Guadalupe bass is generally green in color and may be distinguished from similar species found in Texas in that it doesn't have vertical bars like smallmouth bass, its jaw doesn't extend beyond the eyes as in largemouth bass, and coloration extends much lower on the body than in spotted bass.

LIFE HISTORY

Guadalupe bass do not grow to large size because they are adapted to small streams. However, a propensity for fast flowing water, and their ability to utilize fast water to their advantage when hooked, make them a desirable sport fish species. Their preference for small streams enhances their allure to anglers because of the natural setting where small streams are usually found. Specimens in excess of 3.5 pounds have been landed.

Both males and females become sexually mature when they are one year old. Guadalupe bass spawning begins as early as March and continues through May and June. A secondary spawn is possible in late summer or early fall. Like all other black bass, Guadalupe bass build gravel nests for spawning, preferably in shallow water. As with spotted bass and smallmouth bass, males tend to build nests in areas with higher flow rates than largemouth bass. When a male has successfully attracted a female to the nest she may lay 400 to over 9,000 eggs. The female is then chased away and the male stands guard over the incubating eggs. After hatching, fry feed on invertebrates and switch to piscivory as they grow older. Very young fish and older

Guadalupe, Alabama and Spotted Bass



- A:** Irregular lateral stripe is similar to, but more broken than in largemouth bass.
- B:** Jaw does not extend beyond the back margin of the eye when mouth is closed.
- C:** Spots on scales form "rows" of stripes on whitish belly area.

Illustration © TPWD

adults tend to include more invertebrates in their diet than do largemouth bass. Juveniles and younger adults tend to include more fish in their diets than do largemouth bass.

HABITAT

Typically, Guadalupe bass are found in flowing water, whereas largemouth bass are found in quiet water.

DISTRIBUTION

The Guadalupe bass is found only in Texas and has been named the official state fish. It is endemic to the northern and eastern Edwards Plateau including headwaters of the San Antonio River, the Guadalupe River above Gonzales, the Colorado River north of Austin, and portions of the Brazos River drainage. Relatively small populations can also be found outside of the Edwards Plateau, primarily in the lower Colorado River. Introduced populations exist in the Nueces River system.

OTHER

The Guadalupe bass, like other “black bass” including largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass, is not a true bass at all but a member of the sunfish family Centrarchidae.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Is it a Guadalupe or a largemouth? For assistance in identifying species, see our Bass Identification guide.

TPWD encourages anglers to report blotchy bass

AUSTIN – Anglers across the nation are asked to report signs of Blotchy Bass Syndrome (BBS) to support research being conducted by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and West Virginia University (WVU).

Bass Pro Shops is partnering with WVU and USGS to incentivize angler participation through the donation of gift cards for weekly drawings, including \$3,000 in gift cards specifically for Texas anglers.

Anglers are encouraged to report signs of BBS to the MyCatch app. To be eligible for the Texas-specific prizes provided by Bass Pro Shops, anglers

who suspect that their fish has symptoms of BBS must submit photos, name of the waterbody where it was caught, and the date of the catch to Cynthia Fox-Holt (Cynthia.fox@tpwd.texas.gov).

Photos will be accepted through 11:59 p.m. Central Time on Dec. 31, and prize drawings will occur over the course of three weeks in January (Jan. 9 -13, 16-20, 23-27). Each fish an angler enters is one entry for the drawings so individual anglers who submit more than one fish are eligible for multiple prizes.

After scientists joined forces to study the distribution and prevalence of BBS, they found evidence

that it is associated with a virus.

BBS produces black ink-like spots on the skin of freshwater bass species and has been documented in 18 states, including Texas. Even though BBS is associated with a virus, the fish generally appear to be in great condition and are actively feeding. The viruses that cause BBS have never been identified in humans or domestic pets and fish are safe to eat when properly cooked.

For more information about this study and BBS, contact TPWD biologist Cynthia Fox-Holt through email at Cynthia.fox@tpwd.texas.gov.

VETERANS DAY TRIBUTE

Thursday, Nov. 10, 2022



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TPWD stresses importance for boaters to “clean, drain, and dry.”

AUSTIN – The upcoming holiday weekend offers numerous opportunities for Texans to enjoy the summer sun and water during the heart of boating season. Now more than ever, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is urging boaters to do their part to fight back against aquatic invasive species that threaten Texas lakes.

“The July 4th holiday is an exciting time of year for boating in Texas, and while we want everyone to have a great time, we also want them to avoid giving free rides to invasive species and helping them travel to new lakes,” said Brian Van Zee, TPWD Inland Fisheries Regional Director. “The best way to prevent the spread of many destructive aquatic invasive species is to clean, drain and dry your boats and equipment – every time.”

Zebra mussels and giant salvinia continue to spread to new areas in Texas. Yet while they remain some of the biggest threats to Texas lakes, other highly invasive species can also be spread by boat-

ers, including water hyacinth, crested floating heart and quagga mussels.

Zebra and quagga mussels, non-native shellfish that attach to hard surfaces, pose a significant threat to our lakes. These invasive mussels damage boats and infrastructure for water supply and control, alter lake ecosystems and cause harm to native species. They also litter shorelines with hazardous, sharp shells that impact lakefront recreation.

Zebra mussels are found in 33 Texas lakes across six river basins, as well as in river reaches downstream of infested lakes. Quagga mussels, a close relative of zebra mussels, have also been detected in Lake Amistad. The TPWD and partners monitor numerous at-risk lakes around the state for early detection of these invasive mussels, but once they’ve been introduced and become established in a lake, nothing can be done to control or eradicate them.

“Invasive mussels can be attached to boats or even carried by anchors or attached to plants clinging to boats,” said Monica McGarrity, TPWD Senior Scientist for Aquatic Invasive Species Management. “Microscopic invasive mussel larvae can be transported in residual water in the boat. Taking just a few minutes to clean, drain, and dry boats can make a huge difference in our efforts to prevent further spread of this highly damaging species and harm to Texas lakes. Boats with attached mussels need to be properly decontaminated before moving them to a new lake.”

Giant salvinia, a highly invasive, free-floating aquatic fern that can double its coverage area in a week, is one of the major threats to our lakes. The

invasive plant can produce thick surface mats that make fishing, boating, swimming and other water recreation nearly impossible.

Giant salvinia is currently present on 23 East Texas lakes and numerous rivers, creeks and marshes between Houston and Beaumont. While TPWD efforts have kept giant salvinia from currently limiting angling or boating access in Texas public waters, they could still hitchhike from one lake to another on a boat, trailer or other equipment.

“Many Texans will spend the Fourth of July holiday boating on one of Texas’ numerous lakes or rivers” said John Findeisen, TPWD Brookeland Aquatic Habitat Enhancement Team Lead. “We need Texans to take action to help protect their lakes. It only takes a tiny fragment of an invasive plant to create a new infestation and preventing aquatic invasive species introductions avoids costly, long-term efforts to manage these species once they infest a lake.”

Boaters need to remove all plants, mud and debris from boats, trailers, vehicles and gear and drain all water from the boat, equipment and on-board receptacles before leaving the lake. In addition, boats should be dried completely before visiting another lake, preferably for at least a week. If drying isn’t possible, washing the boat and compartments using high-pressure water from a carwash or spray nozzle on a water hose before visiting another lake can help reduce the risk of spreading aquatic invasive species.

See **BOATING**, page **B14**

FISH ART CONTEST

ATHENS – The Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center (TFFC) is excited to announce it is accepting entries for the 2023 Texas division of Wildlife Forever’s Fish Art Contest through Feb. 28. The Fish Art Contest is part of an international conservation education program designed to foster youth interest in fisheries and fishing.

“The Fish Art Contest does a tremendous job of exposing students across Texas to the wonders of fish and fisheries resources through the nexus of art,” said TFFC Director Tom Lang. “We always look forward to this time of year when we are once again amazed by the

outstanding work and artistic interpretations of these young Texans.”

Participants must submit a completed entry form and an original illustration of a wild fish found in Texas. Participants in grades 4-12 are also required to submit a one-page creative writing piece. Once the entrance form is submitted, applicants must mail their artwork to the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, 5550 FM 2495, Athens, TX, 75752. Dimensions for the physical artwork must be between 8X10” and 9X12” and postmarked by Feb. 28, 2023.

This program is part of Wildlife Forever’s national contest and Texas winners will be automatically entered into the national contest. Texas students may choose to enter national specialty awards with fish not found in Texas, however, they will not be eligible for Texas state awards due to the one entry per student limit.

“We have a unique opportunity to celebrate the talents of our Texas students and the beauty of our diverse fish found

in Texas,” said Kate Barkalow, Education and Interpretation Coordinator. “In doing so, we also recognize the amazing efforts of our teachers and biologists who support them. To complete their piece of art, students research their fish, its habitat and conservation efforts being made to protect the species, forging a connection between the student and fish.”

Educators who wish to have their students enter the 2023 contest can find entry forms, rules, guidelines and more online. A lesson plan offers interdisciplinary curriculum including lessons and activities, a species identification section profiling each state fish, a glossary and student worksheets. Learn more at www.wildlife-forever.org.

“The process comes full circle on Free Fishing Day at our Fish Tag Friendly where we invite state finalists, their families, and teachers to celebrate at Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center,” Barkalow added. “Here they will see their fish in person, fish for the first time and learn more about the efforts being made to

conserve our freshwater resources. None of which would be possible without the help of our sponsors. We believe that through the Texas Fish Art Contest, a new generation of stewards is created.”

The Fish Art Contest is sponsored by Wildlife Forever, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Rapala, U.S. Forest Service, Bass Pro Shops, Wonders of Wildlife, Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, National Fish Habitat Partnership, and Western Native Trout Initiative.

Located in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, Wildlife Forever is a nonprofit multi-species conservation organization dedicated to conserving America’s wildlife heritage. Working at the grassroots level, Wildlife Forever has funded conservation projects in all 50 states, committing millions of dollars to “on-the-ground” efforts. Wildlife Forever supports habitat restoration and enhancement, land acquisition, research and management of fish and wildlife populations.

For more information, visit the TFFC Texas State-Fish Art Contest website.

BOATING

from page B13

If you have stored your boat in the water at a lake with invasive mussels, it is likely infested and poses an extremely high risk for moving these invasive species to a new lake. Before moving your boat, call TPWD at (512) 389-4848 for guidance on decontamination.

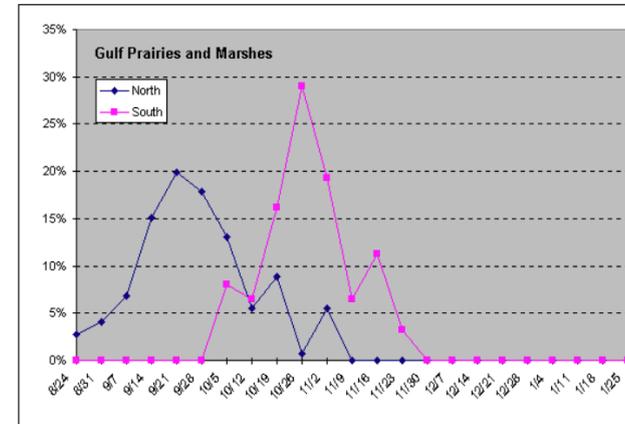
On top of the harm aquatic invasive species can cause to aquatic ecosystems, water infrastructure, and the recreational experience at lakes, the transport of these organisms can result in legal trouble for boaters. Transporting prohibited aquatic invasive species in Texas is illegal and punishable with a fine of up to \$500 per violation. It's also the law that boaters must drain all water from their boat and onboard receptacles, including bait buckets, before leaving or approaching a body of fresh water and

remove all invasive plants from the boat, trailer, and tow vehicle before leaving a lake.

For more information on how to properly clean, drain and dry boats and equipment, visit the TPWD YouTube channel for a short instructional video. To learn more about giant salvinia, zebra mussels and other invasive species in Texas, visit tpwd.texas.gov/StopInvasives.

TPWD and partners monitor for invasive species in Texas lakes, but anyone who finds them in lakes where they haven't been reported before or who spots them on boats, trailers or equipment that is being moved can help identify and prevent new introductions by reporting the sighting to TPWD at (512) 389-4848 or by emailing photos and location information to aquaticinvasives@tpwd.texas.gov.

GULF PRAIRIES AND MARSHES



The earliest whitetail breeding in the state occurred in this ecological region. Breeding occurred in the period August 24 to November 25. There were two study areas: the northern study area had a peak date of September 20, while the southern area was a month later with an October 31 peak breeding date. Does showed a 92 percent breeding success and 1.6 fetuses were found on the average for each doe sampled. The majority (90%) of the fawns would have been born by May 10 in the northern area and by June 6 in the southern area.

DEER

from page B8

build up slowly. Failure to breed is not a problem, so where do the fawns go? Life is full of dangers for a fawn, and food and cover (the fawning habitat) is the difference in living and dying for fawns. In many parts of the state, predation is severe unless there is adequate hiding cover for young fawns. Imported fire-ants are a problem for fawns in heavily infested areas, but their impact can often mask the real problem. Adequate nutrition is often limiting, and if fawns make it past fire-ants and predators to weaning, they still face the challenge of finding food and cover.

Fawn survival depends primarily on habitat quality. Malnutrition and associated problems are probably responsible for poor fawn survival in much of the state. Dry conditions aggravate the problem of inadequate food. "Empty belly disease" is the most limiting factor on whitetails in Texas. Delayed breeding could cause fawns to be born late, which would be a disadvantage on ranges where food is scarce.

THE EARLY AND LATERUTS

What about the early and late rut? Hunters and outdoor writers often talk about the rut being early or late. In Texas, at least, the breeding season for white-tailed deer is fairly predictable from year to year. Within a specific area, habitat conditions not only affect fawn survival, but can affect the timing of breeding. A doe in poor condition or a young doe may not breed until late in

the season. A doe may be attractive to bucks for about five days, but may be willing to breed for a period of only 24 hours. If the doe is not bred during her first cycle, she will generally come into heat again about 28 days later.

In areas where there are few bucks, a doe may not encounter a buck when she is first receptive and may not be bred until one of her later cycles. A hunter, landowner or biologist who sees the late breeding activity may be convinced that there was a late rut. On the other hand, those who see does attended by bucks in the early part of the season believe there was an early rut. This helps explain the wide variety of opinions on the timing of the rut during a particular year.

"Hunter chronology" has a lot to do with the perceived timing of the rut. Traditionally, hunters are more likely to be afield during cool weather. They will usually be out in force with the onset of the first weekend norther during the deer season. When there are many observers spending time in the field it is more likely that breeding activity will be noticed.

Bucks, like hunters, have a tendency to move around during cool weather. Bucks with hardened antlers are ready to breed and are looking for a willing doe. This increased movement helps give rise to the idea that cold weather causes the rut. However, this theory is disproved by white-tailed deer breeding in tropical climates.



SOMETIMES IT'S NOT JUST THE CRITTER YOU WANT TO GET CLOSER TO



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Hunters for the Hungry

Hunters for the Hungry is a statewide hunger relief program dedicated to providing a healthy source of protein to needy Texans. In Texas, one in five people struggle to afford food.

The Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Inc., has worked with the Hunters for the Hungry program for the past two decades, and administered the program directly for 15 years. Since the program's inception, it has provided nearly 2.5 million pounds of meat – or an estimated 10 million servings – to Texans in need.

In 2013, the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Inc., entered into an agreement with the Texas Food Bank Network to take over the Texas Hunters for the Hungry program.

For information on the program, visit the Texas Hunters for the Hungry website or contact Lee Pipkin at (325) 617-2228.

INDIVIDUALS IN NEED

Hunters for the Hungry does not donate directly to individuals. Individuals in need of food assistance should call 211, visit 211texas.org, or contact a food assistance provider directly.

HOW CAN HUNTERS, CONTRIBUTE?

To donate deer, bring your legally tagged, field-dressed deer to a participating meat processor. You will be asked to pay a greatly-reduced processing fee (~\$40) to compensate the processor for their labor. You will receive a receipt for your donation. The processing fee may be tax-deductible; consult your tax advisor for details.

That's it! The meat processor will prepare the meat and provide it to a local food assistance provider.

Due to state regulations, only white tail and mule deer are accepted.

If your local meat processor is not a Hunters for the Hungry participant, consider sharing information about the program and asking them to sign up.

MEAT PROCESSORS

To become a Hunters for the Hungry participating meat processor, you must sign a participation agreement. Please contact us at hfth@tfn.org to request an agreement.

To be eligible, meat processors must either be inspected on a federal, state, or local level, or fall under the jurisdiction of the Texas Department of State Health Services. Verification is required to ensure the safety of donations.

Prior to each hunting season, participating processors receive supplies to manage the donated meat: donation receipts, two-pound chub packs for the donated venison and promotional



materials. Participating processors will be listed on this website.

FOOD ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Food banks, soup kitchens, food pantries, and other food assistance providers are eligible to receive Hunters for the Hungry venison donations. If your organization is interested in receiving venison, contact us at hfth@tfn.org to be added to the list of recipient organizations. Hunters for the Hungry does not directly determine recipients (that is up to the individual meat processor), but we do provide lists of nearby food assistance providers to help processors find recipients.

Hunters for the Hungry does not donate directly to individuals. Individuals in need of food assistance should call 211, visit the Texas Food Bank Network website, or contact local food assistance providers directly.

DONATE FUNDS

Hunters for the Hungry always appreciates monetary donations to sustain this program.

Here's some tips for getting your deer to the processing plant:

* If the weather is warm, it is important to take the carcass to the processing plant as quickly as possible. If this is not possible and the weather is warm and the animal is to be left in the field for a day or more, it is possible to take further precautions to assure that the meat brought to the processor is in good condition.

* Skin the deer except for the head, and wash it clean of dirt and hair. The skinned deer can then be placed in a shroud sack or wrapped with porous cloth to cool (cheesecloth is recommended). The cloth covering should be porous enough to allow air circulation but firmly woven enough to prevent contamination by insects and dirt.

* If you do not have porous cloth, you can coat the inside of the body cavity with black pepper to repel insects.

Big Game Harvest Survey

The big game harvest survey tracks hunter and harvest trends for javelina, mule deer, and white-tailed deer at the statewide, management unit, and ecoregion level. The survey has been run every year since the 1972-73 hunting season. Significant design changes happened after the 2004-05 hunting season; results prior to this are not directly comparable to those calculated afterward.

A survey form was mailed to 100,000 random hunters on 22 January 2022. Additionally, 25,000 randomly selected hunters for which we had an email address were sent a link to the online version of the survey on 28 January 2022. The mail survey had a link to the online survey printed on it, and respondents could choose to respond by mail or online. Both the mail and online survey were closed on 24 May 2022. 10,892 mail survey recipients responded,

of which 2,721 (24.98%) responded online. 1,106 email recipients responded. Only one mailing was sent, and non-respondents were not contacted by other means.

A demographic analysis of all license buyers was performed; the same analysis was done for survey respondents. Fourteen statistics were estimated for each species at 13 different analysis levels, as well as the 95% confidence intervals for the estimates.

For more information on this survey, to receive the full survey analysis or to receive prior years surveys, email hunt@tpwd.texas.gov. Please note, full survey analysis files are not accessible to people who use an assistive device to access information. If you need assistance reading these files let our Hunt Information folks know and they will assist you.

2021-22 Big Game Harvest Estimates

	Statistic	Javelina	Mule Deer	White-tailed Deer
Hunters		36,691	29,673	756,172
Success Rate		52.08%	30.96%	70.05%
Female Harvest		11,301	877	388,457
% Female Harvest		29.77%	7.77%	46.59%
Male Harvest		16,892	8,780	439,474
% Male Harvest		70.23%	92.23%	53.41%
Total Harvest		28,192	9,658	827,928
Harvest per hunter		0.60	0.34	1.07
Hunter days		206,435	167,602	8,342,002
Days per Hunter		5.46	5.94	10.63
Days per Harvest		9.81	17.92	10.64
Hunters per 1000 acres		0.24	1.03	6.03
Days per 1000 acres		1.30	5.87	65.65
Harvest per 1000 acres		0.18	0.32	6.45

FERAL HOGS



It's never a bad time to kill a feral hog.

Just ask anyone with land bearing damage from the hogs' nighttime rutting and wallowing. The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) has few restrictions on feral hog hunting, with no seasons or bag limits for the exotic, non-game animal. (A hunting license and landowner permission are required to hunt feral hogs.)

The estimated 2.6 million feral hogs in the state (as many as eight million nationwide) are quite comfy, with almost 80 percent of the Texas landscape considered suitable wild hog habitat, according to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, which has studied the species extensively.

Feral hogs are despised by many landowners because of the indirect, but substantial, harm they do. They "compete directly with livestock as well as game and non-game wildlife species for food," TPWD experts have said.

Most critical is habitat destruction from wallowing, damaging trees, and "rooting and trampling for food, [which] can damage agricultural crops, fields, and livestock feeding and/or watering facilities. Often wildlife feeders are damaged or destroyed."

Pinning down a dollar amount on damages is as difficult as doing a census on wild hogs, but "some reports place the total damage figure as high as \$1.5 billion in the United States annually," according to Dr. Billy Higginbotham, professor and wildlife and fisheries specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

For all this destruction and frustration, we can thank Hernando DeSoto and the 13 hogs his crew of explorers hauled to Florida in 1539.

"A brief three years later, DeSoto's exploration party left the banks of the Mississippi River in Arkansas and headed straight for Texas, with 800 pigs in tow," according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service researchers.

Over generations, many hogs escaped into the wild. The 1930s brought the introduction of the European wild boar, which crossbred with the Spanish hogs, creating the ubiquitous feral hog.

WHAT ARE FERAL HOG SIGNS?

Because feral hogs are largely nocturnal, the visible signs they leave behind are often all there is to indicate their presence. These signs include wallowing, rooting, rubs, crossings, trails and scat (droppings). Wallows are found in muddy areas and are made where hogs root and roll in the mud. They do this to cool off and also the mud protects their skin from the sun and insects. Rubs are then made when hogs scratch or rub themselves on tree trunks, telephone poles, fence posts, and rocks leaving a noticeable sign with mud and hair often left clinging. The height of the rub often indicates the size of the hog. Rooting is easily recognized because it looks as if the soil has been plowed. Most often rooting takes place over a large area. Some rooting holes can be as much as three feet deep, which possibly could cause vehicle damage. A hog track is similar to a deer track except the toes are more rounded and wider in comparison to length. Hog hair is easily distinguished from other mammals and may be found at fence crossings and rubs. Scat appears very much like that of a small calf, being dropped in several small piles, which is very distinct from deer pellets or predator cord-like droppings.

“With each generation, the hog’s domestic characteristics diminish and they develop the traits needed for survival in the wild,” TPWD experts said.

The idea that an unchecked hog population can double in a year is a myth, Higginbotham said, but sows still are “able to produce an average of 1.5 litters a year with between five and six pigs per litter, [meaning] the Texas population grows at an annual rate of about 20 percent.” To hold the population in check, “studies suggest that 50-70 percent of the animals must be removed annually.”

There’s still work to do.

A 2011 AgriLife Extension study estimated less than 30 percent of the statewide population (or about 750,000 pigs) is being killed each year. The majority of pigs are trapped (57 percent), while 35 percent are shot.

TPWD has attempted to promote the controlling of the wild hog population by providing liberal regulations regarding hohunting

and trapping. Because they are not considered a game animal, hunters can shoot them at night (they are largely nocturnal,) run them with dogs, use electronic calls and even shoot them from helicopters.

Game wardens advise that, hunters planning to hunt wild hogs should notify law enforcement if they plan to do a lot of shooting in the process of eliminating hogs from property.

Hunters who shoot the feral pigs and who plan to use them as a food source are reminded to wear gloves when they’re cleaning them and to cook the meat well done, as the hogs are known to carry many diseases.

For details, including scientific studies, feral hogs statistics, 830-693-3572 and ways to build a hog trap, visit the Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension: feralhogs.tamu.edu.

For more information from TPWD, including information about hunting laws and tips, visit tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/nuisance/feral_hogs.

GET TO KNOW...

The feral hog

REPRODUCTION

Feral hogs are capable of breeding at six months of age but eight to ten months is normal, provided there is good nutrition. Under poor habitat conditions, sows have been known to eat their young. Gestation is around 115 days with an average litter size of four to six, but under good conditions may have ten to twelve young. While capable of producing two litters per year, research has shown the majority of sows have only one per year. Young may be born throughout the year with peak production in the early spring. The young are born with a 1:1 male to female sex ratio. Feral hogs generally travel in family groups called sounders, comprised normally of two sows and their young. Mature boars are usually solitary, only joining a herd to breed.

WHAT DO FERAL HOGS EAT?

Feral hogs are omnivorous, meaning they eat both plant and animal matter. They are very opportunistic feeders and much of their diet is based on seasonal availability. Foods include grasses, forbs, roots and tubers, browse, mast (acorns), fruits, bulbs and mushrooms. Animal matter includes invertebrates (insects, snails, earthworms, etc.), reptiles, amphibians, and carrion (dead animals), as well as live mammals and birds if given the opportunity. Feral hogs are especially fond of acorns and crops such as corn, milo, rice, wheat, soybeans, peanuts, potatoes, watermelons and cantaloupe. Feral hogs feed primarily at night and during twilight hours, but will feed during daylight in cold or wet weather.

WHERE DO FERAL HOGS LIVE?

Feral hogs are found in a variety of habitats from moist pine forests in East Texas to the brush country of South Texas. They prefer bottomlands such as rivers, creeks, and drainages when available. Hogs are generally found in dense vegetation cover often associated with water, but also do well in drought prone environments. During hot weather, feral hogs enjoy wallowing in wet, muddy areas and are never far from dense protective cover. They will concentrate in areas of food availability. Their home range is based mainly on food availability and cover. It is usually less than 5,000 acres, but can range up to 70,000 acres. In gen-

eral, boars have a larger home range and will also travel greater distances.

WILL THEY HARM LIVESTOCK OR WILDLIFE?

Feral hogs compete directly with livestock as well as game and nongame wildlife species for food. However, the main damage caused to livestock and wildlife is indirect destruction of habitat and agriculture commodities. Rooting and trampling activity for food can damage agricultural crops, fields, and livestock feeding and watering facilities. Often wildlife feeders are damaged or destroyed. They also destabilize wetland areas, springs, creeks and tanks by excessive rooting and wallowing. In addition to habitat destruction and alteration, hogs can destroy forestry plantings and damage trees. While not active predators, wild hogs may prey on fawns, young lambs, and kid goats.

HOW LONG DO HOGS LIVE?

The average life expectancy, under good conditions, is about four to five years; however, they may live up to eight years.

DO FERAL HOGS CARRY DISEASE?

In general, diseases from wild hogs do not pose a significant threat to humans; however, some diseases can be transmitted to livestock and wildlife. It is important to keep all livestock vaccinated, especially where large feral hog populations are concentrated. Various diseases of wild hogs include pseudorabies, swine brucellosis, tuberculosis, bubonic plague, tularemia, hog cholera, foot and mouth disease, and anthrax. Internal parasites include kidney worms, stomach worms, round worms and whipworms. Liver flukes and trichinosis are also found in hogs. External parasites include dog ticks, fleas and hog lice.

HOW DO I KEEP FROM CONTRACTING DISEASES?

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department recommends all hunters use disposable plastic or rubber gloves when field dressing or cleaning wild swine. Bury or burn the gloves and entrails and then wash your hands with soap and hot water. And finally, make sure the meat is thoroughly cooked.



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GET TO KNOW... The javelina

Javelina are members of the peccary family. There are actually three species of peccaries that range from the Southwestern United States south to central South America. The only species found in the United States is the collared peccary, or javelina. In Texas, the javelina is found in the more arid or semi-arid parts of the state, with most occurring in the South Texas brush country, the Trans-Pecos' desert grasslands, and the Edwards Plateau's oak-juniper woodlands.

Javelina travel in small herds or "family groups" and seem to have a somewhat limited home range. In the winter, they are generally active in the early morning and late afternoon. Javelina are largely nocturnal during the hotter times of the year. They feed primarily on cacti (particularly prickly pear), mesquite beans, lechuguilla, sotol, mast, fruits, and insects.

Javelina have long held an undeserved reputation for ferocity. They have poor eyesight and will often remain around humans longer than other wildlife when startled. When cornered, they can defend themselves very effectively with sharp canine teeth or "tusks". Many dogs have been crippled or killed when trying to attack javelina. Yet aggressive encounters with humans are very, very rare. Javelina can be very troublesome to landowners when they become habituated to homes and human activities. They often sleep in caves, and cave like areas, and seem to find the crawl spaces under homes attractive. They may cause significant damage to yards and sprinkler systems because of their habit of rooting for food.

In Texas, javelina are classified as a game animal and may be legally harvested with a hunting license, during hunting season, in counties which have a season. However, local ordinances often prohibit the discharging of a firearm within city limits. Thus the methods described here are usually preferred over the killing of problem animals.



PROBLEM JAVELINA MANAGEMENT

As the population of Texas continues to grow, many people are rediscovering the rural countryside as a picturesque and peaceful site to reside. While country living often provides a fantastic opportunity to view some of the state's wildlife, it can also pose problems when this wildlife comes into conflict with the activities of home owners. Interactions between people and species such as deer, coyotes, skunks, raccoons, turkey, and javelina continue to increase as development expands into previously unoccupied areas. One of the most least understood, and often feared animals that individuals come into contact with is the javelina.

One of the primary reasons people have problems with javelina is because they intentionally feed them. Soon they become accustomed to humans and may eventually become dangerous. Never deliberately feed javelina!

Similarly, access to unintentional food sources such as garbage, pet food, some flowering plants, bird seed, and fruit from trees should be minimized. All garbage should be stored securely. Pets should be fed indoors or, if fed outside, the pet owner should completely remove all left over food immediately.

Some flowering plants, such as tulips produce a bulb that javelina find very tasty. Often poultry wire placed right at, or below the surface can protect gardens or flower beds. Grubs that are frequently found in gardens and manure also attract javelina. Fruit from trees should be picked up as soon as possible or fenced effectively.

If total enclosure is desired or poultry wire proves insufficient, a low voltage electric fence is very effective.

One of the primary reasons people have problems with javelina is because they intentionally feed them. Soon they become accustomed to humans and may eventually become dangerous. Never deliberately feed javelina! When javelina are encountered around your home, attempt to scare them off by making loud noises and throwing rocks. Inform your neighbors of these guidelines. It is often necessary for every individual in a neighborhood to make an effort in order to completely prevent javelina problems.

Generally, a single strand of wire ran 5 to 10 inches above the ground will completely exclude javelina from a particular area.

Larger landowners are often concerned about javelina damaging net wire fences. In these situations, landowners may "peg" holes under fences to avoid the need for javelina to create more holes. Javelina will generally use existing openings rather than creating new ones.

Other hints to avoid javelina problems include closing off all opening to spaces

under buildings. Dogs should not be allowed to run loose or be left tied up where javelina can have access to them. Any low growing shrubbery that may provide cover should be avoided or trimmed from the ground up.

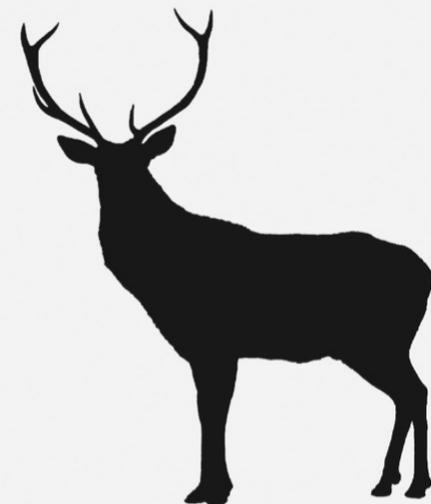
When javelina are encountered around your home, attempt to scare them off by making loud noises and throwing rocks. Inform your neighbors of these guidelines. It is often necessary for every individual in a neighborhood to make an effort in order to completely prevent javelina problems.

Do you know all the animals' names?

Seasoned hunters surely know what a buck, doe and fawn is. But, even the most veteran in the field can sometimes get stumped when it comes to knowing what names go with what genders in certain species. For instance, know what a shoat is? How about a cygnet?

Here's an easy-reference chart that lists the names of the genders and young of various animals and birds.

Species: male, female and young
Antelope: buck, doe, calf
Bear: boar, sow, cub
Caribou: buck, doe, fawn
Deer: buck, doe, fawn
Elk: bull, cow, calf
Goat: billy, nanny, kid
Moose: bull, cow, calf
Sheep: ram, ewe, lamb
Swine: boar, sow, shoat
Beaver: male, female, kit
Coyote: dog, bitch, whelp
Duck: drake, hen, duckling
Fox: dog, vixen, kit
Swan: cob, pen, cygnet



HUNTER EDUCATION



Valid Sep. 1, 2022 through Aug. 31, 2023.
Cost of hunter education certification is \$15.

WHO MUST COMPLETE HUNTER EDUCATION?

Every hunter (including out-of-state hunters) born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, must successfully complete a Hunter Education Course. Proof of certification or deferral is required to be on your person while hunting, either printed or electronically (including the Texas Outdoor Annual mobile app). Certification is not required to purchase a hunting license. Minimum age of certification is 9 years. In-person course cost is \$15. Persons 17 years of age and older have the option of taking the course in person or on-line. Online course costs vary. Call (800) 792-1112 or view the Hunter Education web pages for information about course options.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

Minimum age of hunter education certification is 9 years. If you were born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, and you are:

- Under 9 years of age: You must be accompanied. Accompanied means: By a person (resident or non-resident) who is at least 17, who is licensed to hunt in Texas, who has passed hunter education or is exempt (born before Sept. 2, 1971), and you must be within normal voice control.
- Age 9 through 16: You must successfully complete a hunter education course or be accompanied.
- Age 17 and over: You must successfully complete a hunter education course; or purchase a "Hunter Education Deferral" and be accompanied.
- "Accompanied" means: by a person (resident or non-resident) who is at least 17, who is licensed to hunt in Texas, who has passed hunter education or is exempt (born

before Sept. 2, 1971), and you must be within normal voice control.

MILITARY & LAW ENFORCEMENT HUNTER EDUCATION EXEMPTIONS

The following persons are exempt from requirements to complete a hunter education course to hunt in Texas:

- Active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the United States armed forces;
- Active duty members or those who have previously served as members of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, or the Texas State Guard; or
- Persons who are serving or have previously served as a peace officer as described by Subdivision (1), (2), (3), or (4), Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure.

PROOF OF CERTIFICATION

Proof of certification or deferral is required to be on your person while hunting. Certification is not required to purchase a hunting license.

HUNTER EDUCATION DEFERRAL

Allows a person 17 years of age or older who has not completed a hunter education program to defer completion for up to one year.

A deferral may only be obtained once and is only valid until the end of the current license year.

A person who has been convicted or has received deferred adjudication for violation of the mandatory hunter education requirement is prohibited from applying for a deferral.

COURSE INFORMATION

For course information, please consult TPWD Hunter Education or call toll-free (800) 792-1112 (menu 6) or call (512) 389-4999.

Want to teach hunter education?

Texas Parks & Wildlife Hunter Education's goals are to reduce hunting related accidents and violations; promote safe, responsible and knowledgeable hunting; and enhance hunting traditions and values. We now have more than 3,100 active instructors, including TPWD staff & game wardens, volunteers and professional educators. Instructor-led courses certify and average of 23,000 students per year.

STEPS TO INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION

1. Complete the Hunter Education Student Course if you have not already done so.
2. Register for a Hunter Education Instructor Course - see Instructor Course Schedule.
3. Download and complete documents on the TPWD website.
4. Take your completed APPLICATION and signed consent/waiver forms to the Instructor Course. TPWD staff or Area Chief teaching the instructor course will collect all applicable, signed forms and mail to Austin, Attn; Hunter Education, along with their Instructor Final Report form.
5. Also, take the GAME WARDEN INTERVIEW form with you to the instructor course. If a game warden is present at the course, he/she will conduct an interview and give your completed form to the TPWD Staff member or Area Chief. If a game warden is not present at the Instructor course, please take the blank form to your local game warden. He/she will conduct a proper interview and sign the form, then send it directly to TPWD, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744, Attn: Hunter Education. (Please go to TPWD web site for county list of Game Wardens and their cell phone #s.)
6. Review the required Instructor Manual prior to attending the instructor training. After processing your application, interview, and course results, TPWD will mail you a "Congratulatory Letter/Packet" with your a name tag template and an instructor patch. Once certified, you will access your own certification card at your account page called 'dashboard' on the ORS (hunter education database) system.

INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Hunter Education Instructors are responsible to and represent the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
- Instructors shall accept students of all ages in the Hunter Education program as prescribed in Hunter Education Program, Policies and Procedures.
- Instructor applicants must be at least 21 years of age, of reasonably good health, high integrity, pass a written exam and submit to an oral interview by a game warden. Assistant Instructor applicants must be at least 15 years of age and be sponsored by a certified instructor. A criminal background check will be conducted, and those failing to meet certain standards may be denied certification.
- In order to maintain active status, instructors must certify five or more students per year.
- Instructors should attend a minimum of one conference, meeting and/or in-service training workshop at least one time per year.

New hunting regulations for 2022-23

Effective September 1, 2022

WHITE-TAILED DEER

- New mandatory harvest reporting in Collin, Dallas, Grayson, and Rockwall counties.
- Modified definitions of "buck" and "antlerless" deer.
- Modified proof of sex requirements for harvested buck deer.
- New definitions of two types of commercial cold storage facilities.
- Modified tagging, proof of sex, log procedures, and destinations for cold storage facilities.

MULE DEER

- Expanded antler restrictions to additional 21 counties in the Panhandle and Terrell County in the Trans-Pecos.
- Extended general season in 15 southwestern Panhandle counties from 9 to 16 days.

ARCHERY

- Special season added.

DUCK

- Veterans and active-duty special waterfowl hunting season established to occur concurrently during youth-only season in all duck zones.
- Daily bag limit restrictions removed on hooded mergansers.
- Merganser and duck daily bag limits combined into a single aggregate daily bag limit.

TURKEY

- Season east of IH-35 in Ellis County closed.

TAGGING

- Digital tagging option for deer and turkey available for holders of specific electronic license types.

RULES & REGULATIONS

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

It is legal to:

- hunt animals and non-migratory game birds from a motor vehicle, powerboat, sailboat, or from any other floating device within the boundaries of private property or upon private water.
- use calling devices (including manual and mouth-operated), recordings, and electrically amplified calls to hunt game animals and game birds. Electronic calls may not be used to hunt migratory game birds except during the Light Goose Conservation Order season.
- use decoys to hunt game animals and game birds. NO person may use live decoys when hunting migratory game birds.
- bait for game animals, nongame animals, and upland game birds, except for Eastern turkey and migratory game birds. (Baiting is unlawful on most public property. Please check specific regulations for that public property.)
- trap nongame/exotic animals (such as feral hogs, rabbits, etc.) on private property.
- use dogs to aid in the hunting of any game bird.

FIREARMS

Game animals and non-migratory game birds may be hunted with any legal firearm, except:

Rimfire Ammunition (of any caliber) may NOT be used to hunt white-tailed deer, mule deer, desert bighorn sheep, or pronghorn.

FULLY AUTOMATIC FIREARMS

Shotguns are the only legal firearm that may be used during spring Eastern turkey season.

Magazine Capacity (number of shells/ cartridges allowed): there are no restrictions on the number of shells or cartridges a legal firearm may hold when hunting game animals or game birds (except migratory game birds).

Muzzleloader: any firearm that is loaded only through the muzzle (as opposed to breech-loading firearms). A cap and ball firearm in which the powder and ball are loaded into a cylinder is not a muzzleloader. Muzzleloader deer seasons are restricted to muzzleloading firearms only.

Suppressors (aka "silencers"): may be used to take any wildlife resource; however, all federal, state and local laws continue to apply.

AIR GUNS AND ARROW GUNS

Alligator, game animals, furbearers, squirrels, and non-migratory game birds (except Eastern Turkey) may be hunted with air guns and arrow guns provided:

- alligators, bighorn sheep, javelina, mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn, and turkey (except Eastern Turkey) may be taken only with pre-charged pneumatic arrow guns, or pre-charged pneumatic air guns.
- pre-charged pneumatic air guns must fire a projectile of at least .30 caliber in diameter and at least 150 grains



in weight with a minimum muzzle velocity of 800 feet per second or any combination of bullet weight and muzzle velocity that produces muzzle energy of at least 215 foot pounds of energy.

- squirrels, pheasant, quail, and chachalaca may be hunted with air guns that fire a projectile of at least .177 caliber (4.5mm) in diameter producing a muzzle velocity of at least 600 feet per second.
- arrows or bolts used with an arrow gun must conform to the same standards for projectiles for archery.
- arrow guns may not be used to hunt deer or turkey during archery season.

ARCHERY AND CROSSBOWS

Only the archery and crossbow equipment prescribed in this section may be used for taking game animals or game birds.

Archery and crossbow equipment may not be used to hunt deer during the Muzzleloader-Only Deer Season.

Archery and crossbows are lawful for non-protected non-game animals.

LONGBOWS, COMPOUND BOWS, RECURVED BOWS

There is no minimum draw requirement.

Lighted pins, sight magnification, overdraw rests, and devices that allow a bow to be locked at full or partial draw are lawful during any season when lawful archery equipment may be used.

CROSSBOW

Crossbows are lawful for any person during the Archery- Only Open Season except in Collin, Dallas, Grayson, and Rockwall counties, where no person may use a crossbow to hunt deer during the Archery-Only Open Season (Sep 28 - Nov 1) unless the person has an upper-limb disability and has in immediate possession a physician's statement that certifies the extent of the disability. An upper-limb disability is a permanent loss of the use of fingers, hand, or arm in a manner that renders the person incapable of using a longbow, compound bow, or recurved bow.

An Archery Endorsement is required to hunt deer during the Archery-Only Open Season. An archery endorsement is required to hunt deer, turkey and/or javelina at any time in Collin, Dallas, Grayson, and Rockwall counties, including during the general open season (Nov 2 - Jan 5).

Any person, regardless of physical

ability, may use a crossbow to hunt game animals or game birds in any county, including Collin, Dallas, Grayson, and Rockwall counties, during a general open season or Eastern spring turkey season.

PROJECTILES (ARROWS AND CROSSBOW BOLTS)

While hunting game animals and game birds, a projectile may not be poisoned, drugged, or explosive.

When used to hunt turkey and all game animals other than squirrels, a projectile must be equipped with a broadhead hunting point. An archer may have arrows/ bolts with field, target, or judo points in the quiver with the broadhead hunting points.

There are no restrictions or minimum requirements on arrow or bolt lengths, arrow material, arrow weight, lighted nocks, broadhead lengths or diameter, number of cutting edges, broadhead material, or mechanical broadheads.

UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES

It is unlawful to:

- knowingly discharge a firearm causing a projectile to cross a property line, unless the person owns both sides of the property line or has obtained written permission from the owner of any land crossed by the projectile.
 - discharge a firearm on or across a public road or hunt from public roads.
 - use a computer, or operate a facility that uses a computer, to assist in remote firearm or archery hunting, if the animal being hunted is located in Texas.
 - hunt with the aid of artificial light of any form that casts or reflects a beam of light onto or otherwise illuminates a game animal or bird; EXCEPTION: legally blind hunters, or hunters who have a documented permanent physical disability that prevents them from using traditional firearm sighting devices (Parks and Wildlife Code Sec. 62.0055- 62.0056) may use battery- powered scoping devices that project a light or dot only inside the scope, pin sight lights on archery equipment, or laser sighting devices.
- Blind hunters must possess a physician's signed statement attesting to legal blindness; and be assisted by a licensed hunter at least 13 years of age who is not legally blind. Legal blindness is defined in section 62.104 (c) of the Texas Government Code.
- Hunter education and licensing requirements still apply to legally blind hunters, hunters with a documented permanent physical disability, and persons assisting blind or disabled hunters.
- use traps to hunt game birds or game animals.
 - use dogs to hunt deer in this state.
- A person who violates this law is subject to a fine of \$500-\$4,000 and/or a year in jail. Additionally, a person's hunting and fishing licenses may be revoked or suspended. In addition, no person may possess a shot- gun and buckshot or slugs while in the field with dogs on another person's land during an open deer season in An-

gelina, Hardin, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Orange, Sabine, San Augustine, Shelby, and Tyler counties.

Not more than two dogs may be used to trail a wounded deer in counties not listed above. A "wounded deer" is a deer leaving a blood trail.

- use aircraft (including drones, except by activity-specific permit) to hunt, locate (including wounded animals), manage, harass, drive, trap or photograph any wild animal.
 - hunt on Public Hunting Areas without the required permits.
 - hunt in a subdivision on lots 10 acres or less in an unincorporated area of a county if prohibited by local ordinance. Contact local county clerk and ask about §235.022, Local Government Code.
 - hunt anywhere by means or methods that have been prohibited by county or city ordinance.
 - hunt on any area named as a wildlife sanctuary, nesting, or propagation area.
 - hunt in state and/or national parks or refuges except during scheduled hunts or under other special state or federal policies.
 - hunt any wild animal or wild bird on or over privately-owned land that is submerged under public fresh water due to seasonal or occasional inundation or submerged under salt water above the mean high tide line. The property must be posted to indicate that hunting is prohibited. (Class C misdemeanor: \$25- \$500 fine.)
 - hunt any wild animal or wild bird, including exotic animals, on foot or from a vehicle on any public road or road right- of- way, or a boat on public water, except that migratory waterfowl may be hunted from a boat or any floating craft (except a sinkbox) under certain conditions.
 - possess a firearm if a convicted felon, with limited exception. Texas law allows the possession and use of a muzzle loading firearm if it is an antique or curio firearm manufactured before 1899, or is a replica of an antique or curio firearm manufactured before 1899 that does not use rimfire or centerfire ammunition.
- For questions regarding the possession and use of firearms by convicted felons, refer to Texas Penal Code Ch. 46 and/or seek guidance from legal counsel.

The Party Starts Here

Wine, Spirits and Beer



After getting that Big Buck, come by D&D Liquor to pick up some Spirits & Beer to celebrate and to check us out!

You can either come through our Drive Thru or come in and Browse!



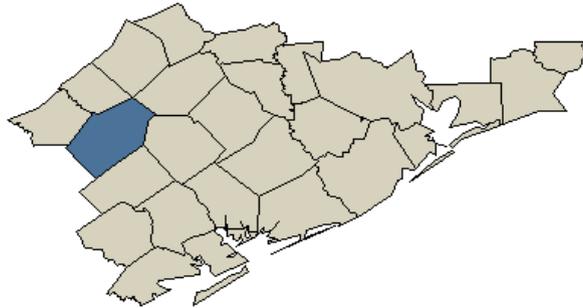
102 W. Wallace @ Water St. • Gonzales

830-672-9477

Cathy & John DuBose, Owners

Gonzales County

The Oak-Prairie wildlife district covers 26 counties in the southern Post Oak Savannah and Coastal Prairies ecoregions. If you are searching for your **local wildlife biologist** or the **district supervisor** click on any county in the map below.



Wildlife Contacts

Name	Title	Address	Phone
Trent Teinert Trent.Teinert@tpwd.texas.gov	Natural Resources Specialist	20700 State Hwy 80 N Gonzales, TX	(830) 203-0896
Bobby Eichler Bobby.Eichler@tpwd.texas.gov	Technical Guidance Biologist	111 E. Travis, Suite 200 La Grange, TX	(979) 968-9942
Trey Barron Trey.Barron@tpwd.texas.gov	Wildlife Diversity Biologist	Victoria, TX	(361) 576-0022
David Forrester David.Forrester@tpwd.texas.gov	District Leader	111 E. Travis, Suite 200 La Grange, TX	(979) 968-6591



Gonzales County Wardens & Offices

Report violations of game law to [Operation Game Thief](#).

For help in rescuing wildlife, [find a wildlife rehabilitator in a nearby county](#).

Game Warden	Phone
Balfanz, Dustin M	830-857-5436



Sheriff's Office: [830-672-6524](tel:830-672-6524)

Temple Regional Office: [254-778-8913](tel:254-778-8913)

Unlawful means and methods in specific county areas

It is unlawful to:

- possess, shoot or hunt with a firearm or any archery equipment on all land and water in the Aransas River and Poesta Creek in Bee County; on all land and public water in the state-owned riverbeds of La Salle and McMullen counties; and on all land and public water in the state-owned riverbeds of the Nueces, Frio and Atascosa rivers in Live Oak County; except for waterfowl hunting on any reservoir (existing or to be constructed) owned, operated, or maintained by a government entity.

- discharge a firearm or shoot an arrow in or on the bed or bank of a navigable stream in Dimmit, Edwards, Frio, Hall, Kenedy, Llano, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, or Zavala counties. This law does not apply to persons fishing by means of archery equipment or shotguns loaded with shot, including buckshot. A shotgun slug is prohibited.

- hunt on water of Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir or land adjacent to the reservoir owned by the federal government in Bell County, except for game birds hunted with a shotgun. A hunter must be 600 feet from the nearest private property line.

- discharge a pistol or rifle in, on, along, or across Wallisville Reservoir, and Lake Anahuac in Chambers County; the water of the Trinity River or Wallisville Reservoir in Liberty County.

- discharge any firearm or shoot any crossbow or bow and arrow on, along, or across the waters of Oyster Bayou in Chambers County from State Hwy. 65 south to the mouth of Oyster Bayou in the East Bay.

- hunt wild animals or wild birds or target shoot on land in Harris County owned by another without having in immediate possession written consent of the landowner of that land. The written consent must contain the hunter's name, identify the land on which hunting or target shooting is permitted, be signed by the landowner or legal agent for the owner, and must show the address and phone number of the person signing consent. The owner or agent and any person hunting or target shooting with the owner or agent on public or private shooting ranges are exempt from this special regulation.

HUNTING ON FEDERAL LANDS

- It is the responsibility of the hunter to be aware of applicable federal regulations on federal lands (Forest Service, National Recreation Areas, Corps of Engineers, etc.).

- On the LBJ National Grasslands in Montague and Wise counties, antlerless may only be taken during archery, youth-only, and during the 4-day season (known as doe days).

- On all other US Forest Service (USFS) lands, antlerless deer may only be taken during archery, muzzleloader, and youth-only seasons.

HUNTING ON FEDERAL OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL LANDS

When hunting on U.S. Forest Service, Army Corps of Engineers, River Authority properties or other lands owned or administered by units of government (federal, state, or local), additional regulations and/or requirements may apply. It is the responsibility of the hunter to determine if such additional regulations or requirements apply.



More information about harvest reporting and required physical documentation for deer and turkey, as well as harvest reporting requirements for red drum, can be found on the digital tag webpage at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/digitaltags>.

New digital license option available for super combo users

AUSTIN— Never worry about forgetting a paper Super Combo license at home again with the new digital tag option from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). Beginning with the 2022-23 license year, Texas residents can purchase a digital Super Combo license (Items 111, 117 and 990) that will authorize digital tagging of harvested deer, turkey and oversized red drum. The digital license option is available through online purchase only when licenses go on sale August 15.

A digital license holder will not receive a printed license or tags but must keep their digital license available while in the field. The license can be viewed through the TPWD Outdoor Annual and My Texas Hunt Harvest (MTHH) mobile apps.

“Texas Parks and Wildlife is excited to be offering a digital license and tag option for the first time for outdoorsmen and women this license year,” said Carter Smith, Executive Director of TPWD. “We are piloting this with the Super Combo license types which is one of our most popular licenses that we sell. Lifetime Combo license holders will also be able to use the digital tagging portion of this pilot as well. This has been a long-time coming, but we think this is a great first step to offering more options for our hunters and anglers in the field. We intend to evaluate how well this works as we move forward and look forward to feedback from our customers who choose this option.

Texans using this option will need to adhere to these requirements for using the digital Super Combo tag:

Digital tagging for harvested deer, turkey and oversized red drum must be completed through the MTHH mobile app. An updated version of the app that supports digital tagging will be available August 15.

Digital license holders are not exempt from the Federal Duck Stamp requirement. If you purchase a Federal Duck Stamp, it will be mailed to your address on file. The stamp must be signed on its face and is required to be on your person while hunting waterfowl.

Other license purchases made for this season (e.g., Annual Public Hunt, Federal Sandhill Crane Permit, Bonus Red Drum Tag, etc.) will be provided in digital format only and will show up as separate items on your digital license.

Number and type of tags issued with digital licenses are limited by species. A full list can be found on the digital tag webpage on the TPWD website. All county bag limits, special provisions and restrictions apply. Execution of a digital tag serves as completion of mandatory harvest reporting for deer and turkey in applicable counties.

It is your responsibility to track tag usage. Use the Harvest History section in MTHH and ensure that your app is synced. Do not harvest an animal if you are not certain that you have a tag available to use.



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