

... Fall Hunting Season

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Hunting stamp endorsements which are required are an archery stamp - \$7; migratory game birds - \$7; upland game birds - \$7; and a federal migratory game bird (duck stamp) - \$17.

Hunting Lease License
(Types 132, 133, and 134)

Required of a landowner or landowner's agent who leases hunting rights to another person on property they own or control for pay or other consideration. The license must be displayed on the property.

License fee: \$79 for 1 through 499 acres; \$147 for 500 through 999 acres; or \$252 for 1,000 acres or more; Note: Recordbook no longer required.

Have a wonderful time during your stay in our area. Please remember that you are ambassadors for all of us involved in the hunting and outdoor industry. Don't forget to think SAFETY every time you handle a firearm, and make proper gun handling and safe shooting a part of your everyday life at home or in the field. Have a safe and successful season.

TPWD taking action on Bobwhite Quail decline

Agency urges hunters, landowners to consider ways to help this season

The drought has taken a toll on all Texas wildlife resources, but among the hardest hit is the bobwhite quail. This iconic grassland game bird already faces mounting obstacles to recovery and state wildlife officials say the drought is exacerbating the problem.

"We've been on point monitoring quail declines

well before this current drought," said Clayton Wolf, Wildlife Director for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "We've been taking steps to address the problem, but the drought is raising the sense of urgency."

The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), an annual field census survey used to track quail productivity, shows a decline in Texas bobwhite quail breeding numbers at a rate of 3.9 percent per year from 1970 to 2009. Texas bobwhite harvest has declined by 80 percent during the past three decades. Although this decline is not as steep as seen in southeastern states, it is still cause for concern.

Many reasons are cited for these declines, but evidence points to changes in the quantity and quality of habitat as the leading cause. The topic has broad relevance, because grassland habitat used by quail is important for dozens of other wildlife species, and it also can affect water quantity and quality for people.

"For all of us who care about the future of this prized game bird and the habitats it occupies around the state, complacency is not an option," said Carter Smith, TPWD Executive Director. "We need hunters, landown-

ers, government agencies and non-profit groups all making this a priority in order to advance the recovery of this species. Rest assured, the department will do its part."

While TPWD wildlife biologists are focusing their efforts on assisting landowners develop habitat-based management strategies that can benefit quail and other grassland wildlife, the department is also taking action in other areas, including possible changes in hunting regulations.

Potential changes in season length and bag limit framework for the 2012-13 hunting season will be discussed during the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission's Nov. 2 Regulatory Committee meeting in Austin. Over the next few months, the TPWD Wildlife Division's upland game bird staff and technical committee will review season length, bag limits and the possibility of regional differences for quail season to determine if modifications to the 2012-13 seasons are warranted.

Wolf said regulation changes alone won't solve the problem. "But, we can look at a variety of approaches to address quail management, including regulations," he said.



Robert Lee angler Alicia Williams caught this "one for the record book" large mouth bass at Oak Creek Lake on August 1, 2011. The huge bass weighed in at 13.14 pounds.

Good news is that in one area of the state, the Gulf Prairies and Marshes region, quail numbers this year have actually risen due to proactive habitat management and adequate weather conditions.

Even in areas of the state where quail numbers have dropped considerably this year, particularly the Rolling Plains region in North Texas, there are still pockets with huntable numbers of bobwhites. But, dry conditions this year contributed to major wildfires that consumed millions of acres of vegetation. Quail production in the Rolling Plains hit an all-time

low, according to this year's BBS, and biologists say every bobwhite that survives the winter will be critical to next year's production.

"Burned areas will likely provide good habitat after future rainfall events but for now they offer very little cover for quail and other wildlife," said Robert Perez, TPWD's upland game bird program leader. "We're advising landowners if you are seeing low quail numbers on your ranch, you should consider reducing quail harvest. It's okay to hunt, work your dogs, but take a conservative approach. Flush a

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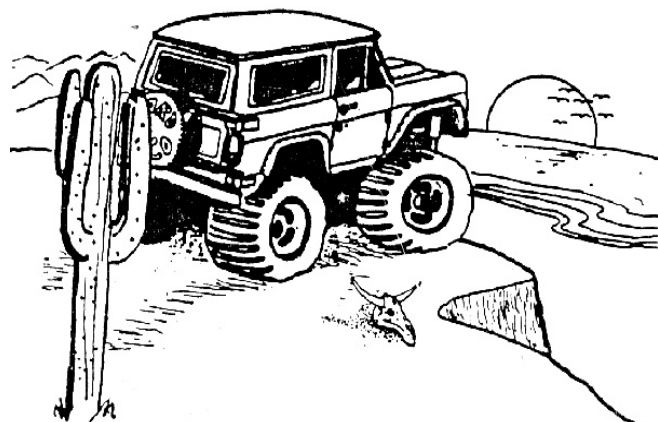
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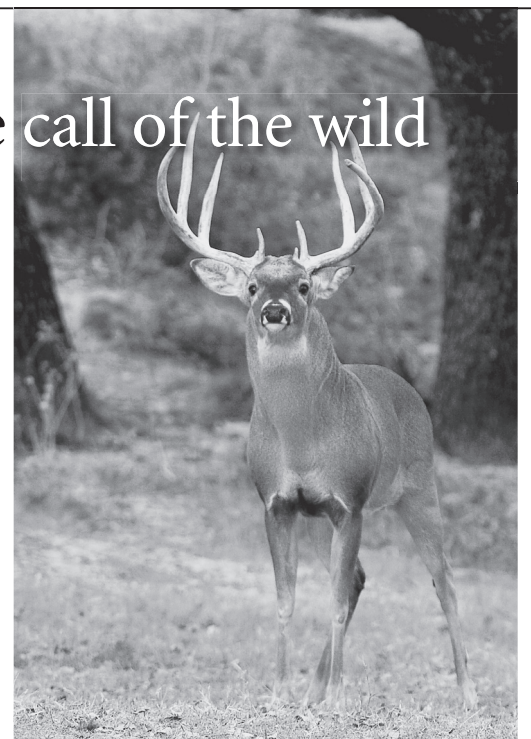
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