

Outlook favorable for Texas Deer Season

While not clear of the drought, things are looking up in many parts of the state this year and the outlook for deer and deer hunting is much brighter.

Archery-only deer season opened Saturday, Sept. 28 and runs through Nov. 1. The general firearms season begins Nov. 2. The special youth-only deer seasons are Oct. 26-27 and Jan. 6-19.

Biologists can provide some general predictions each year based on rainfall and general habitat conditions that are applicable at a landscape level scale, but whether those predictions hold true for individual properties is like trying to guess the Lotto numbers on the Saturday night drawing. Factors like rainfall, availability of native foods like acorns or mesquite bean crops, habitat quality and availability, even hunting pressure, play a role in shaping your hunting success. Aside from rainfall and general habitat conditions biologists also consider previous year's deer population characteristics to make predictions for the upcoming season.

"Statewide population trends remain stable and hunters should expect good numbers of deer year in and year out," says Alan Cain, TPWD whitetail deer pro-

gram leader. "I would predict the statewide deer population to be close to or slightly above the long-term average and hover around that 3.6 million deer mark for 2013."

"One factor hunters should also keep in mind is the good carryover of deer from the 2012 season as harvest was down resulting from heavy acorn and mast crops in several regions of the state," Cain notes. "For hunters this translates into plenty of opportunities to harvest a deer." Though the deer population numbers are expected to be good this year, Cain predicts the recent September rains that resulted in a flush of green vegetation may cause bow hunters to rethink their early season hunting strategies as deer may spend



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