

Fall hunting season is upon us

By Hal Spain

Once again we are set to begin a new hunting season in Coke County and throughout the state. We've been pretty warm here lately (October 15th, as I type this), and that is a good thing for pastures that need to grow some grass for winter. It will also help a late wheat crop, which needs some more moisture and some warm temps to provide some nutrition for our deer herd and livestock grazing.

While we are on the subject of weather, let's talk about our rainfall data so far this year. We all know from much experience that our annual rainfall and when we receive it are the two factors that most impact our hunting success. The news in that category, this year, is good. Since the first of the year, most of the county has received from fourteen to eighteen inches of rainfall during the first three quarters of the year. Nearly all of our wet weather occurred during the first two quarters of the year; so we had excellent conditions for early horn (antler) growth. And, we have raised a really good crop of quail and turkey this year as a result of the good early conditions.

Not all the news is good, however. The third quarter of the year brought 100 degree temps and no rainfall for July, August, and most of September. That's the reason our wheat crop is behind and may not catch up to provide any grazing for our deer herd.

That may be all bad for early season hunters, as deer should be coming to corn earlier this year than in most others. This should provide some early season opportunities to fill your freezer. If what you are after is horns (antlers), then you may have to wait until we get some

cooler weather to get these bucks in the rut and chasing does.

As to our quail hunting, we have had quite a hatch this year; so there should be a big improvement in quail numbers. Whether or not we have enough to hunt will depend upon your individual hunting situation. In most cases, I would err on the side of caution and defer my quail hunting for another year to see if we can maintain and increase the numbers we currently have.

We also have reports of increased turkey numbers this year so don't pass up a chance to have some fried turkey breast for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners.

As to seasons, dove season will conclude on October 25, 2015. The winter short seasons runs from December 18, 2015 through January 1, 2016, with a daily bag limit of 15 in the central zone, which includes Coke County.

Archery season for deer and turkey will close on November 6, 2015, with no antlerless permit required except on MLD properties. The general deer and turkey season will run from November 7, 2015 through January 3, 2016. The special late general season will run from January 4 - 17, 2016 for antlerless and spike bucks only. The bag limit for deer is 5, with no more than 2 bucks, all seasons combined.

Turkey season will run concurrently with deer season, November 7, 2015 through January 3, 2016. Spring turkey season has been set for April 2 through May 15, 2016, gobblers or bearded hens only, with a bag limit of 4 (all seasons combined).

Quail season will run statewide October 31, 2015 through February 28, 2016, with a daily



Family Hunt! Hal Spain (far right) enjoyed a successful dove hunting weekend with his family on their property in Haskell County. The group gets together annually for opening weekend of dove season. Attending the outing this year were (from left) Dwight Maxson, Wade Spain, Mason Spain, Tyler Spain, Robert Maxson, Phil Spain, Hal Spain and Kevin Maxson (not pictured).

bag limit of 15 and a possession limit of 45.

Legal shooting hours for all game animals and nonmigratory game birds are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

Hunting stamp endorsements which are required in addition to your license include an archery stamp - \$7; migratory game birds - \$7; upland game birds - \$7; and a federal migratory game bird (duck

stamp) - \$25.

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.

In closing, we want you to 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 industries. 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.

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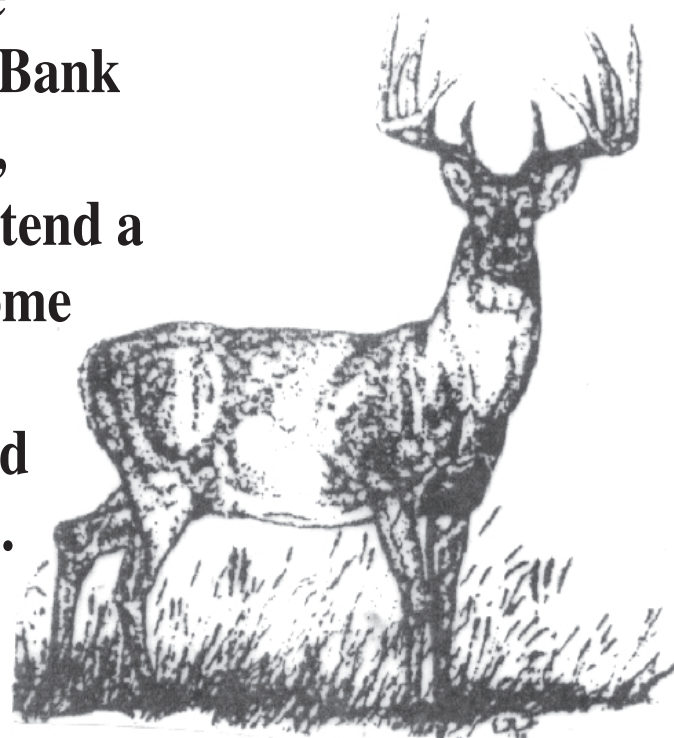
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