

Fall hunting season is upon us

By Hal Spain

Rather than talk about the good news concerning the upcoming hunting seasons, let's talk about the bad news. The point is that it's easier to talk about the bad news, cause there's not any. Weather conditions have been no less than excellent this year for wildlife, with record rainfall amounts (through the third quarter of the year, at least).

I guess if we had to gripe about anything at all, it would be that our impoundments (lakes) have not caught as much water as we would like with this much rainfall. That is about the only gripe I can come up with.

The hot, dry weather conditions were limited this year to just one month. After an excellent spring, we thought we were going to melt in July, but August turned off wet and cool, which is very unusual for our area. Quail and turkey numbers should be way up this year, as the wet conditions have supplied a bumper crop of grasshoppers and other bugs, and a lot of little weeds and browse for the deer herd.

About the only other negative I can come up with is that we have so much browse on the

ground that bow hunters and early gun season deer hunters may not be able to lure deer to feeders with corn, at least until we have some freezing weather. The deer and quail around my place this summer have had a pretty cavalier attitude about my feeding efforts. For the most part, they have thumbed their nose and acted like they don't need me at all. Wait and see what happens when it's January 15th and 20 degrees. They may have a change of attitude by then.

As to seasons, we are at the tail end of a dove season that should set a couple of records. The first should be the number of doves harvested, and the second record will be that this is the longest dove season in eighty years. We usually only hunt dove on Labor Day weekend in Haskell County where we still own some property. This year we had a lot of kinfolks hunting, and a lot of dove. I think we ended up with about 360 dove total over the long weekend. In our dove hunting zone in Coke County (Central Zone), the regular season will end November 6, 2016, with the late winter season set for December 17 to January 8, 2017. Daily

bag limits for dove are 15, with the possession limit set at three times the daily limit or 45.

Archery season for deer and turkey will close on November 4, 2016, with no antlerless permit required except on MLD properties. The general deer and turkey season will run from November 5, 2016, through January 1, 2017. The special late general season will run from January 2 - 15, 2017, 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 5, 2016, through January 1, 2017. Spring turkey season has been set for April 1 through May 14, 2017, for gobblers or bearded hens only, with a bag limit of 4 (all seasons combined).

Quail season will run statewide October 29, 2016 through February 26, 2017, with a daily 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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