

Bow season, general season prospects bright

Texas deer hunting's silent season, limited to archery equipment only, opened on Oct. 1, 2016 statewide, and all indicators point to excellent prospects, according to wildlife biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

The Texas deer hunting season opened Saturday, Oct. 1, for bowhunting and Nov. 5 for the general gun season. A special youth-only weekend season is set for Oct. 29-30. The general season runs through Jan. 1, 2017 in North Texas and Jan. 15, 2017 in South Texas. A late youth-only season is also slated for Jan. 2-15, 2017. For additional late season deer hunting opportunities and county specific regulations, consult the 2016-17 Outdoor Annual of hunting and fishing regulations.

"It's has been quite a while since I remember a time when we've experienced great back-to-back years of good rains across most if not all of the state," offered Alan Cain, TPWD whitetail deer program leader. "Because Texas is such a large state we don't always see good habitat conditions that stretch from Amarillo to Brownsville or El Paso to Houston, but 2016 has been an unusual year in that the vast majority of the state has received good rains and surprisingly, temperatures have remained relatively mild."

Ideal weather conditions this year have helped produce a smorgasbord of lush green forbs and woody browse plants which comprise the majority of a deer's diet, Cain went on to add. "These favorable range conditions will put deer in top body condition this year and antler quality should be above

average."

Although good for the deer, ideal habitat conditions could make hunting tough at the onset of the archery season. Cain said most deer are still in a summer pattern, which means minimal movement, especially in South Texas where the rut is still a couple of months away. Bowhunters might consider focusing their efforts along heavily traveled game trails or near acorn producing trees.

Unfortunately, in some parts of East Texas, too much rain this year may wash out much of the early archery season as traditional prime river bottom hotspots may be tough to access. Those bottomland hardwood habitats along portions of major river drainages (Brazos, Trinity, Sabine, Colorado and Neches) that are still recovering from floodwaters will likely lack near-term browse and forb production, but acorn production can still make these productive places to hunt if hunters can access them.

Texas boasts a whitetail deer

population in excess of 4 million and those numbers are expected to climb across much of the state due to high fawn production and survival this year. Parts of East Texas that have experienced extended flooding conditions may be the exception. Hunters play a key role in habitat management by helping to maintain deer numbers within the amount of food supplies the land can sustain. Wildlife biologists have conducted extensive deer habitat research over time and recommend deer harvest based on their findings.

The Edwards Plateau, commonly referred to as the Texas Hill Country, supports the highest deer population in the state with a 2015 estimate of 2.27 million deer and the greatest deer densities at 117 deer per 1,000 acres. Cain estimated 2016 numbers will have increased from last year due to higher fawn crops.

"Despite the excellent range conditions in the Hill Country this year, deer populations left

unchecked can do serious damage to the native habitat that supports all wildlife," he noted. "By managing for lean times and keeping numbers in check, we can help ensure the long term health and sustainability of our state's natural resources. We encourage hunters to take advantage of the harvest bag limits in their hunting area."

New this season is the opening of a white-tailed deer general and special archery-only seasons in 14 additional Panhandle counties and additional areas added for mandatory chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing of hunter killed white-tailed deer and mule deer. For details visit the CWD informational page online.

As a reminder to hunters check out the "My Texas Hunt Harvest" mobile app that allows Texas hunters to voluntarily report and track their harvested game from a smartphone or tablet. Hunters can log harvest for all resident game species,

including white-tailed deer. The information collected will help TPWD biologists assess annual harvest and manage healthy game populations across Texas. Hunters should note that electronic reporting using the app does not fulfill tagging requirements for any game required to be tagged or requirements for the completion of the harvest log on the back of the hunting license as it applies to white-tailed deer.

The app is available at the App Store for IOS devices and Google Play for Android devices. Harvest can also be reported online at <https://apps.tpwd.state.tx.us/whs/>.

For more hunting season information, check out the Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine's new Hunting Guide. It's a free, go-to source for species information and hunting tips. This special feature is exclusive to the Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine mobile app, which can be downloaded (also for free) to your Android or Apple devices.

Welcome Hunters!

- * Furniture
- * Clothing
- * Jewelry
- * Gifts



- * Housewares
- * Books
- * & More..



"New & Used"
Furniture & Antiques
Collectibles & Resale Clothes

Open
 Mon. - Fri. 9am - 5pm
 Sat. 10am - 4pm

Shirley Denton
325-473-7371

116 N. State Street, Bronte, TX 76933

TOM'S TIRE, LUBE & DETAIL

TOMMY SCATES, OWNER

Monday - Friday • 8 am to 5 pm
 Saturday • 8 am to 12 noon

201 N. State Street
 Bronte, Texas

Business (325) 473-2400
 Mobile (325) 473-8534



Fresh . Simple . Delish

103 W. MAIN STREET, BRONTE
 (CORNER OF HWY 277 & 158)
(325) 473-2160

HOURS: MON, THURS, FRI 11-2 & 5-8, SAT 11-8, SUN 11-2
 CLOSED TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY
 *EXTENDED HOURS DURING HUNTING SEASON.

NY Style Pizza • Burgers & Sandwiches
 Salads • Classic American Favorites
 Daily Specials • Casual Dining • TV's

PALMER FEED & SUPPLY, Inc.

DEER HUNTERS



HEADQUARTERS

With The Best Selections In:

- Deer Feeders
- Deer Corn
- Deer Blocks
- Feeder Batteries
- Deer Food Plot Mix
- Timers
- Deer Protein Pellets
- Spinner/Timer Units
- The Best in Carhart & Wrangler

Two Locations to Serve You Better!

PALMER FEED & SUPPLY, INC.
 1318 N. Chadbourne • San Angelo
 (325) 653-6765

BALLINGER FEED & SEED
 621 Strong Ave. • Ballinger
 (325) 365-2647