

...Mule Deer Revival

(Continued from previous page)
By 2008, the percentage of bucks in that age class had dropped to 21 percent. Conversely in the 1990s (in regards to older age bucks 4.5 years or older), only 4 percent of the bucks were in the older age class. By 2008, 41 percent of the

deer harvested fell into the advanced age class. Because of the success of the initial counties, the regulations began to creep into other counties in the region. In all areas where whitetail antler restrictions were implemented, improved sex ratios, age classes and antler quality have all seen steady

improvement. In short, antler restrictions work. While only one year of the mule deer antler restriction experiment is under their belt, Wright said that the management strategy seems to be working as planned and that her constituents are satisfied.

“I have received a lot of positive comments from hunters and landowners saying that they have seen more mule deer bucks this past year, but it’s still too early to tell what effect the antler restriction is having on the population,” she said. “We hope to see a lot of older bucks at the mule deer check

stations and continue to hear stories about all the great bucks that people are starting to see in the area. Every week someone calls me or sends me pictures of nice bucks they are seeing, complimenting the new regulation. *The above article was originally published online at texas-wildlife.org*

White-winged dove hunting has become a ‘Texas thing’

By Will Leschper
Texas Outdoor Digest
White-winged dove hunting was a “Valley thing.”

Years ago, it was a specialized pursuit that had Texans in metro areas driving 300 or 400 miles one-way to make it down to prized whitewing havens not far from the Mexican border in the Rio Grande Valley to blast at the high-flying quarry.

Then, in the 1980s, the whitewing population slowly started expanding north — first into areas such as Kingsville and Corpus Christi - and later into the southern reaches of San Antonio.

Today, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department biologists are close to declaring whitewings in nearly every one of our 254 counties, with roughly 90 percent of the breeding population occurring in urban areas.

Simply put, whitewing hunting is now a “Texas thing.”

Sure, there are much higher concentrations of whitewings in

South Texas, but it’s not uncommon for hunters in regions to the north to bag a few of these distinctive game birds to go along with the more common mourning doves that fill most bag limits in those locales. In fact, in some places west of Houston, it’s becoming commonplace to find more whitewings than mourning doves, something unheard of 30 or 40 years ago.

Dove hunting in Texas continues to maintain its strong appeal, both signaling the start of fall and winter seasons while providing an affordable opportunity to spend time outdoors. The numbers back it up. Not only does Texas have the highest dove populations in the country, it also boasts the largest number of hunters, according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. In an average season, roughly a quarter-million people put time in the field hunting mourning doves, while 125,000 target whitewings.

(Continued opposite page)



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