

# Fishin' is the Reel Deal at Oak Creek!



*Ashlyn Lovett (above photo) caught this 10.16 pound Largemouth Bass on May 15, 2020, at Oak Creek Reservoir.*

*Wyatt Morton, age 9, (top left photo) caught this Largemouth Bass on June 20, 2020, at Oak Creek Reservoir.*

*The Mendoza bunch (top photo) caught this 37 pound Yellow Cat at Oak Creek Reservoir.*

*The Clark bunch (above photo) caught this Channel Cat on May 17, 2020, at Oak Creek Reservoir.*

*Heath Glenn (left middle photo) caught this 5.95 pound Bass on May 5, 2020, at Oak Creek Reservoir.*

TPWD said the regulation should help to improve overall hunter as well as manager satisfaction. In addition, the restrictions are hoped to improve sex ratios and age class and improve reproductive successes and fawn recruitment.

“The antler restriction was implemented in response to landowner and hunter requests for a regulation that would limit over-harvest of young bucks,” Wright said.

She said there was also concern from both landowners and hunters in the area that the quality of the mule deer bucks they were seeing had been significantly affected by the lack of mature bucks primarily due to the over-harvest of young bucks in the area. Prior to the antler restriction, Wright explained, 73 percent of the mule deer bucks harvested in those counties were 4 1/2 years old or younger.

“The experimental antler restriction is meant to shift the harvest to older bucks,” she said.

According to TPWD data, during the first year of the

experiment, 65 percent of the bucks brought to the check stations were 5 1/2 years old or older. The sex ratio, which averaged 4.5 does per buck (an indicator of intense buck harvest). After the initial year of the experimental antler restriction, the average sex ratio was improved by almost half. Helicopter surveys showed more bucks than in years past and regions surveyed showed 2.6 does per buck - signs that the restrictions are paying positive dividends.

### The Whitetail Analogy

The basis for antler restrictions is nothing new. For two decades, whitetail deer in parts of Texas have been under the guise of antler restrictions. Beginning with six counties east of Austin, the antler restrictions went into place in 1999. According to the department’s research, in the 1990s 52 percent of the bucks harvested in the counties under the initial, experimental guidelines were 1 1/2 years old.

*(Continued on next page)*

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