

Fall hunting season is upon us

By Hal Spain

Every year I look back at our rainfall and summer temperature situation to get an idea of what this year’s hunting conditions might be. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be a good place to go if you are looking for a confidence boost concerning the upcoming season.

This year’s rainfall totals so far are comparable to 2011, a year most of us would like to forget. My rainfall total for the first three quarters of this year (near Lake Spence) is 7.69 inches. Add to that a near record of 100 degree days this past summer, and you’ll get a realistic picture of some pretty bad environmental conditions for wildlife. Pastures are extremely short, and there is absolutely no wheat grazing in the county.

The good news is that we have been getting a few showers here lately, and we are getting some pastures with a tint of

green back in them. Our adult deer and turkey populations seem to have made it through the summer as well as possible, considering the poor weather conditions. Fawn and turkey poult numbers are down this year due to poor breeding conditions, which may have an effect on next year’s hunting prospects. However, we do have a surprising number of adult deer and turkeys that will be available to hunters during the upcoming season.

As to seasons, in our dove hunting zone in Coke County (Central Zone), the regular season will end October 30, with the late winter season set for December 17 through January 15, 2023. 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, 2022, with no antlerless permit required except on MLD properties. The general deer

and turkey season will run from November 5, 2022 through January 1, 2023. The special late general season will run from January 2 - 15, 2023, for antlerless and spike bucks only. The bag limit for deer is 5, with no more than 2 bucks, all seasons combined.

Turkey season in Coke County (North Zone) will run concurrently with deer season, November 5, 2022 through January 1, 2023. Spring turkey season has been set for April 1 through May 14, 2023, gobblers or bearded hens only, with a bag limit of 4 (all seasons combined).

Quail numbers, in Coke County and throughout the

Rolling Plains and Concho Valley, have been impacted severely by the drought. This may be a good year to forego any quail hunting and see if we can get the numbers up for next year. Quail season will run statewide October 29, 2022 through February 26, 2023, 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.

Hunters are reminded that licenses are on sale now for the 2022-2023 hunting seasons and can be purchased through the

agency’s 28 law enforcement field offices, at more than 50 state parks and over 1,700 retailers across the state. Licenses may also be purchased online through the TPWD website or by phone at (800) 895-4248. Call center hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and there is a required \$5 administrative fee for each phone or online transaction. The online transaction system is available 24/7.

Enhancements have also been made to make the licensing process simpler and faster. “Expedited checkout” speeds the process of re-purchasing the same license items bought most

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