

**...TxDOT
call to drivers**

(Continued from previous page)
 “But make no mistake: this is an urgent call to action for all of us behind the wheel,” Ryan said. “We can do better. We should do better. We must do better – for ourselves, our loved ones and our larger community of fellow Texans. Not a single death on our roadways is acceptable. Let’s end this streak.”
 #EndTheStreakTX is a

broad social media and word-of-mouth effort that encourages drivers to make safer choices while behind the wheel, like wearing a seat belt, driving the speed limit, never texting and driving and never driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Nov. 7, 2000 was the last deathless day on Texas roadways. #EndTheStreakTX asks all Texans to commit to driving safely to help end the streak of daily deaths.

Areas with historically strong turkey populations sets the table for hunter success this spring

Areas in Texas that have historically had huntable populations of wild turkeys will have solid numbers again this spring hunting season. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologists say hunters will have the most luck in the Cross Timbers, the Edwards Plateau and South Texas regions.

“Much of the state had fair to good recruitment last spring and summer, and hunters should expect to see quite a few jakes,” said Jason Hardin, TPWD Wild Turkey Program Leader. “That also means there will be a lot of jennies (juvenile hens) on the landscape, which could distract gobblers and make a hunter’s calls and decoys less desirable. It’s hard to beat the real thing!”

In East Texas, only 12 counties have an open hunting season. Areas in the region that have traditionally supported a good population of turkeys will see similar conditions this year. Hunters are reminded to report their harvest of wild turkeys through the My Texas Hunt Harvest app or online within 24 hours of harvest. The East Texas counties with an open spring season and mandatory reporting include Bowie, Cass, Fannin, Grayson, Jasper, Marion, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Red River and Sabine counties.

The Rolling Plains has been a long-time destination for wild turkey hunters. This area has

historically held very good numbers of birds along major and secondary watersheds like the Canadian River, the Salt Fork and the Red River. Timely winter and spring rainfall led to good poult (young turkeys) production and recruitment last spring and summer. However, there has been a significant decline in some areas over the past decade due to dry winter weather patterns. Fortunately, the southern counties in the Rolling Plains are in better shape, even seeing birds expanding their range in some areas.

The Edwards Plateau has long been a stronghold for wild turkeys, providing some of Texas’ highest bird densities and annually providing some of the highest harvest numbers. The western Edwards Plateau has some of the highest densities and production and recruitment appears to have been fair to good over the past few years.

As with most large ecoregions, TPWD biologists have mixed reports of turkey numbers and recruitment in south Texas. While the areas around Uvalde reported below average production and recruitment over the last two years, other areas just east reported good recruitment. Hunters should expect to see lots of jakes across most areas that hold wild turkeys in south Texas. Hunters should focus their efforts on creeks and drainages with larger trees in the central and western portions of


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south Texas and around oak mottes in the Coastal Sand Sheet in Brooks, Kenedy and Willacy counties.

Only 10 counties in the Oaks and Prairies region of central Texas (Bastrop, Caldwell, Colorado, Fayette, Jackson, Lavaca, Lee, Matagorda, Milam and Wharton County) offer a spring season from April 1-30. Historically, there hasn’t been a significant number of turkeys in the region so only a spring season is offered, and hunters are only allowed a one bird bag limit per county. Starting this year, all wild turkeys harvested in these counties now have mandatory harvest reporting requirements and must be reported within 24 hours of

harvest through the My Texas Hunt Harvest app or online.

The traditional North Zone spring season boundary has moved south to Highway 90 west of San Antonio. Several counties in the southern Edwards Plateau that were previously in the South Zone are now part of the North Zone and will have an opening date of April 2 this spring season. Hunters are reminded to review the Outdoor Annual before opening day to ensure they are hunting during a legal season. Hunters must possess an Upland Stamp Endorsement to hunt wild turkeys in Texas.

The spring season dates are as follows:

Youth Only

Rio Grande - North Zone - March 26 - 27; May 21 - 22;

Rio Grande - South Zone - March 12 - 13; May 7 - 8

Spring Regular Season

Rio Grande - North Zone - April 2 - May 15;

Rio Grande - South Zone - March 19 - May 1;

Rio Grande - Special 1 Turkey Bag Limit - April 1 - 30;

Eastern Turkey - April 22 - May 14

Additional information about harvest reporting, bag limits and more can be found in the Outdoor Annual on the TPWD website or via the Outdoor Annual app. Both apps are available for free download from Google Play or the App Store.

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