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**City of
Eagle Lake**

Operation Game Thief

The poacher is a crook

Operation Game Thief, established by the 67th Legislature, is a system in Texas for rewarding citizens who report game law violators to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Operation Game Thief permits the payment of a cash reward to any person who provides information regarding a game law violation which results in a conviction.

To report a violation, simply dial, toll free, 1-800-792-GAME, any time, day or night, and give the person on duty the information you have. The nature of the violation, where the violation occurred, vehicle description, license number, name(s) and any other pertinent information that will help apprehend the violator(s). Call immediately, or as soon as possible, after witnessing a violation. The more information you have and the fresher it is, the more likely it is that a case can be made.

You do not have to give your name. If you want to remain anonymous, a code number will be assigned and no one, not even the dispatcher you speak with on the telephone, needs to know who you are.

Since Operation Game Thief receives its funding directly from private donations, both from individuals and organizations, you can help support the program by sending your contributions to: Operation Game Thief, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744. The tax-deductible donations by individuals, businesses and organizations are placed into a reward fund, administered by a six-member Operation Game Thief committee.

The poacher is a thief and a cheat. He steals property, your wildlife and robs you of tax, license and business dollars. He cheats you out



Call
1-800-792-GAME

of recreation, and your children out of their future. He also causes thousands of dollars a year in property damage. Don't let him get away with it, call 1-800-792-GAME. A game warden will be dispatched to investigate. Help support the program.

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HUNTERS

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Another record deer harvest possible

Statewide whitetail season Nov. 14-Jan. 3

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials predict the white-tailed deer season opening November 14 will be a good one, with the potential to be a fourth straight record harvest year.

During the 1986-87 hunting season, Texas hunters harvested an estimated 445,000 deer while setting records for hunter participation and success as well as harvest.

Similar conditions will greet the state's half-million deer hunters when they take to the field this fall, according to Horace Gore, white-tailed deer program leader.

The statewide whitetail season is November 14-January 3. The mule deer season in the Panhandle is November 21-29, and in the Trans-Pecos it is November 28-December 6. To determine information on the seasons and bag limits, hunters should obtain the department's 1986-87 Texas Hunting Guide and Supplement, available at department offices and hunting license outlets across the state.

"We still have extremely high deer populations across most of the state's deer range, and the animals are almost without exception in excellent body condition," Gore said. The upcoming season is shaping up not only in terms of numbers of deer, but also in quality, Gore said. "It looks like 1987 may be a very good year for antler development, especially in South Texas."

The upcoming season, however, may be less favorable to the hunter than to the deer, Gore said. "The excellent range conditions that helped the deer may cause hunting to be tougher, especially early in the year." He explained that lush conditions have a dual effect on hunting. "The extra vegetation cuts down on the hunter's visibility, and it allows the deer to move around less during daylight hours to feed," he said. Deer also tend to avoid feeders and out patches when the range is so lush, Gore added.

On the other hand, a poor acorn crop this fall in the Edwards Plateau and East Texas will have the opposite effect and should contribute to more deer movement, he said.

Gore said there are several factors that might contribute to another record-setting deer harvest this season, even though this year's season is a week shorter than last year's because of calendar variations.

Gore said deer populations continue to be high because of good range conditions during the past two years. The dynamic East Texas deer herd continues to expand, and population levels in other areas remain comparable to last year when the statewide whitetail population was estimated at 4.2 million.

The "either-sex" system of bag limits now in effect in all of South Texas, the Edwards Plateau and most of the Trans-Pecos may help increase the antlerless harvest,

a major deer die-off if the weather turns dry.

That's why it's important for hunters to take all the antlerless deer they are legally permitted, and take them early in the season if possible, Gore said.

The following is a roundup of deer hunting prospects in each of the state's major ecological areas, obtained from the department's district wildlife leaders and biologists.

Several factors point to an outstanding hunting season in the "Hill Country" west of Austin this year, according to biologist Max Traweck of Kerrville. "I expect hunting to be good because of high deer populations and a very spotty acorn crop," Traweck said. A slim acorn crop usually forces deer to move around more to forage, and also makes them more likely to

respond to corn or other bait. Traweck said he would predict an all-time high harvest this year, but rains during the early fall brought out some greenery that will reduce deer movement somewhat, he said, "and this year there just aren't going to be very many acorns."

The "Brush Country" of South Texas is known for producing quality whitetail bucks, and 1987 should be a good year for trophies, according to biologist W.J. Williams of San Antonio. "We have flown much of South Texas on our aerial surveys, and we saw lots of bucks most people would consider

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South Texas Plains

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