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Dove baiting cases increase in South Texas

Game wardens report that the illegal baiting of hunting areas to attract doves appears to be increasing.

Glen Felps of San Antonio, a district law enforcement supervisor for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, said several groups of hunters have been caught shooting mourning doves over baited areas near San Antonio in recent weeks.

"Using bait to attract and concentrate migratory birds is highly effective, and that's why it is prohibited by both state and federal law," said Felps.

Texas hunters should be aware that under state regulations, corn or other feed can be used to bait non-migratory species such as quail,

turkey or deer, but not migratory species such as doves, ducks, geese or sandhill cranes.

"Hunters can legally take birds in areas where grain is present because of normal agricultural activities," Felps said, "but it is illegal to distribute or re-distribute grain in an area and then hunt migratory birds there."

Felps added that guest hunters

should be aware that they may be subject to a fine if caught shooting over a baiting area, even though the landowner or someone else may have done the baiting without their knowledge. "I would advise any hunter to inspect the ground around the area where he or she is planning to hunt," he said. "If some sort of grain has been scattered around, it would be advisable to cancel hunting plans."

Attwater Refuge closed for hunts but open to visits

The Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, five miles northeast of Eagle Lake on

FM 3013, reminds hunters that the refuge is closed to all hunting. The refuge is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is located off FM 3013 between that highway and Interstate 10 at the eastern edge of Colorado County.

The 8,000-acre refuge was established in 1972 to provide habitat for the decreasing population of Prairie Chickens. The centerline of the San Bernard River forms the eastern boundary of the refuge. Boundary signs mark fences and indicate that unauthorized entry is prohibited.

Tours can be arranged by calling the Refuge at 234-3021.

Currently, Potter Ford Tractor is offering dealer incentives if you purchase a Polaris machine before Nov. 15. See their ad elsewhere in this edition for more information. Potter Ford Tractor is just east of Columbus on the north I-10 service road at the corner of Reese Lane.

Polaris ATV machines available at Potter Ford

A new addition to this year's Hunting Guide is Potter Ford Tractor in Columbus, which offers the well-known Polaris ATV — the four-wheel vehicle that hunters and sportsmen find invaluable for their trips into the field.

While much has been written about All Terrain Vehicles, the addition of a fourth wheel has made the machine much more usable while retaining power and spirit. Just like any other vehicle, the four-

wheeler can be pushed too far, but so can any other four-wheel machine when mixed with poor judgment.

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Know Your Ducks

Easily confused with greater scaup, Best field mark is the light strip in the wings; short, half a wing length in the lesser scap; longer, two-thirds the wing length, in the greater scap.

Drakes purr; hens are usually silent.

GREAT SCAUP

Flock movement is rapid, in fairly compact formation; over feeding areas they normally fly under hundred-foot altitude. The wings produce a loud rustling sound.

Longer light strip showing through the wing is the best way to distinguish from the lesser scap in the air.

Frequents the largest bodies of water, where it rafts up during the day.

Drakes utter a discordant scap, scap; hens are usually silent.

COMMON GOLDENEYE
Distinctive wing-whistling sound in flight has earned the name of Whistlers.

Active, strong-winged fliers, moving in small flocks, often high in the air. Exceedingly wary. Large numbers winter in Great Lakes and

both seacoasts. Barrow's goldeneye, predominantly a westerner, differs mainly in the white crescent in front of the eye.

Drakes have a piercing speer-speer; hens a low quack. Both are usually quiet.

REDHEAD

Ranges coast to coast, often found with canvasback. On migration, large flocks travel in V's; in feeding areas, flocks fly in irregular formations. Movements in the air always seem to be hurried.

Usually spends the day in the large rafts in deep water; feeds morning and evening in shallower sections.

Drakes purr and meow; hens have a loud squak, higher than hen mallard's.

CANVASBACK

Extremely powerful fliers, migrating in lines and irregular V's; in feeding areas, compact flocks fly in indefinite formation. Wingbeat is rapid and noisy. Normally late migrants.

On the water, body size and head shape distinguish them from scaups and redheads.

Drakes croak, peep, and growl; hens quack, similar to a mallard hen.

BROODED MERGANSER
Often seen in pairs, or very small flocks. The birds are graceful fliers, give an impression of great speed.

Flushes straight up or patters along water.

Wingstrokes are short, rapid; the wings appear to blur.

Seldom goes to salt water; wintering grounds are the inland waters in all coastal states.

Only call is a series of coarse grunts.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER
Flight is very similar to common mergansers, but drakes show far less conspicuous white.

Juveniles and many adult drakes resemble hens during migration, for adult males grow out of eclipse plumage late.

Winter principally along both coasts, as well as Gulf of Mexico. Voice; croaks, seldom heard.

COMMON MERGANSER
Strong fliers; the flight is swift and direct, low over the water, often in "follow the leader" line.

A very large duck; drakes show more white than any other species.

Winters from ice-free water in the north to the coastal waters of the Southern States.

The only call seems to be a startled croak.

SPECIES WITH LIMITED RANGES
These birds: Harlequin.

(Continued On Page 24)

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