

Hunters for the Hungry to accept venison donations

With deer hunting season just around the corner, it's time again for hunters to consider what to do with their game. One option is to donate deer meat to the statewide Hunters for the Hungry program.

"Last year, 50,000 pounds of venison were donated to feed our fellow Texans, and this year can be even better," said Stella Rodriguez, executive director of the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies (TACAA), administrators of the program. This low-fat, nutritious meat has been greatly appreciated by the food banks and pantries that serve Texans in need. In addition to the food donation, it's also a great way for hunters to promote a positive aspect of hunting to the community at large, Rodriguez said.

It's very easy for hunters to participate. Hunters simply tag their legally harvested deer, take it to one of the participating meat processing plants around the state and pay a tax-deductible processing fee of \$20 per deer. Participating meat processors handle the meat at a fraction of the usual fee, package it and distribute it to established charitable agencies, such as food pantries and soup kitchens. The food banks and pantries receive the venison in frozen plastic 2-pound packets donated by the Harbro Packing Company of Chicago. Donations are covered by the state, "Good Faith Donor Act" and by the federal "Emerson Good Samaritan Act."

TACAA, with funding from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, has worked with Hunters for the Hungry program for almost 10 years. This includes operation of the toll-free hotline (800) 992-9767, where hunters or other interested

parties can call to find the participating processors in their area, for program information, or to request a brochure about the program. Currently there are 100 participating processors, but additional meat processors are needed in many parts of the state. The hotline will also provide information to processors who are interested in joining the program.

Dr. Lee Jan, director of the Meat Safety Assurance Division of the Texas Department of Health (TDH), suggests that hunters, processors and food providers should all remember that "the objective of the Hunters for the Hungry program is to provide a healthy protein source to the less fortunate. We must rely on all participants to (See Venison, Page 17)

Welcome Sportsmen!

to




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Know Continued from Page 15

DIVING DUCKS

Diving ducks frequent the larger, deeper lakes and rivers, and coastal bays and inlets.

The colored wing patches of these birds lack the brilliance of the speculums of puddle ducks, but are still important field marks in most species. Since most of them have short tails, their huge, paddle feet may be used as rudders in flight, and are often visible on flying birds. When launching into flight, most of this group patter along the water before becoming airborne.

They feed by diving, often to considerable depths. To escape danger, they can travel great distances underwater, emerging only enough to show their head or bill tip before submerging again.

Their diets of fish, shellfish, mollusks, and aquatic plants make them second choice, as a group, for sportsmen. Canvasbacks and red-heads fattened on eel grass or wild celery are notable exceptions.

Since their wings are small in

proportion to the size or weight of their bodies, they have a rapid wing beat in comparison with puddle ducks.

PUDDLE DUCKS

Puddle ducks are typically birds of fresh, shallow marshes and rivers rather than of large lakes and bays. They are good divers, but usually feed by dabbling or tipping rather than submerging.

The speculum, or colored wing patch, is generally iridescent and bright, and often a telltale field mark.

Any ducks feeding in croplands will likely be puddle ducks, for most of this group are sure-footed and can walk and run on land. Their food is mostly vegetable, and grain-fed mallards or pintails or acorn-fattened wood ducks are highly regarded.

They ride higher in the water than divers, and launch themselves directly upward when rising, whether from land or water.

"The Vineyard Hunting Club"

Waterfowl Outfitters is located in the 'Goose Hunting Capital'

Waterfowl Outfitters Unlimited, "The Vineyard Hunting Club", is located in Eagle Lake, the "Goose Hunting Capital of the World".

The goose hunting in our area

has been known for many years as some of the best in the world, largely due to the thousands of acres of cropland, mainly rice, which acts as not only wetlands but prime feeding grounds for waterfowl as well.

The club also flood several hundred acres every year to serve as holding or rest ponds. These ponds are not hunted and, therefore, hundreds of thousands of geese roost here every night.

Waterfowl Outfitters Unlimited offers goose hunting (consisting of snows, blues, white fronted and Canadians). Goose hunts take place in rice stubble, soybean, rye grass and/or plowed fields.

A guide is provided along with decoys, dogs and white parkas where necessary. Unguided hunts are also offered.

Goose hunts take place in the mornings only.

We also offer duck hunts on flooded ponds or flats.

On my upland game preserve, I offer Ringneck Pheasant, Chucker and Quail hunts.

Hunts can take place in the mornings or afternoon from Nov. through mid March. The hunts are fully guided behind well-trained

English Pointers.

Skeet shooting and fishing are also an option for the sportsman who hunts with Waterfowl Outfitters Unlimited. These are great options after a morning goose hunt.

Waterfowl Outfitters Unlimited also offers bay hunting and fishing in the morning or afternoon.

An afternoon of hunting Red Heads and catching Redfish is a great option after a morning goose hunt. The club hunts and fishes Matagorda Bay which is a little over an hour drive from Eagle Lake.

These hunting and fishing excursions are guided by a professional guide with a captain's license.

If you are interested in having a fun, relaxing time with your family, friends or clients, then book this year's hunt with us.

We look forward to serving you.

For information and reservations, call Brian Balas at 409-234-5705 or 409-234-3245; write: P.O. Box 195, Eagle Lake, Texas 77434; or e-mail waterfowl@elc.net.