

Deer Season Could Be A Great One According To TPWD

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but fewer will probably use them this season.

Coastal Prairies and Marshes

"Like everybody else we've had an incredible year as far as rainfall and the acorn crop is excellent so it might be tough for hunters waiting for deer coming to feeders," offered

David Forrester, TPWD biologist in LaGrange. "Our recruitment is above average and the deer are in great shape going into the season."

Forrester tempered his outlook by noting that similar conditions in 2004 resulted in a decline in deer harvest. Plus, he has not had

many reports of deer being taken during the archery season. "Harvest may drop this year because they definitely don't have to come to a feeder," he said. "Bowhunters typically hunt near feed. If you're wanting a big, quality buck this season, you're probably going to have to get down and do some old-fashioned hunting."

Pineywoods

Gary Calkins has seen many East Texas deer seasons come and go, but this one is looking like the best, according to the Jasper-based TPWD biologist. "It got dry toward the end of summer, after the deer had finished growing antlers and body weights were in good shape," he said.

Despite an average acorn crop this year, Calkins reported an abundance of other natural food sources. "Because it has been so wet, the acorns have not dropped so that might make it tough around the opening of the season."

Calkins added that hunters in the 16 counties that fell under the special buck antler regulations last year should see more mature bucks in the woods this season. "Last year, our harvest didn't take a hit but there were a lot of spikes taken," he noted. "We're starting to see some co-ops coming along because of the

Managed Lands Deer Permits."

Trans Pecos

Deer condition should be really good antler-wise and body-wise, said Ruben Cantu, TPWD regional wildlife director in San Angelo. "Range conditions are absolutely great with lush forage thanks to good rainfall," he said. "We had a pretty good fawn crop and the thing that's difficult for hunters to do at times like this when everything looks so good is to remember to manage deer populations for drought because that's much more

prevalent out here."

Cantu is encouraging hunters to help keep deer numbers below the normal capacity of the land to carry, but admits that might be tough to do early in the season due to the abundance of natural browse.

"Corn is piling up around the feeders," he admitted. "Animals are coming by as creatures of habit, but they are not staying. Things are starting to dry up and look like normal so hopefully by the start of the season the deer will start coming to feed."

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2007-2008 Rule Changes Continued

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activity (sale, offer for sale, barter, or exchange), provided a Nongame Permit or Nongame Dealer's Permit has been obtained.

Commercial activity involving any other species of nongame wildlife is unlawful. Any person may possess up to 25 specimens of species on the list for personal, non-commercial use without a permit.

The possession for commercial activity of any species of nongame wildlife not on the list is unlawful; however, up to 6 specimens of any unlisted species may be possessed for personal, non-commercial use.

A landowner or landowner's agent may kill any nongame wildlife other than threatened or endangered species at any time in any number, provided the wildlife is not used in a commercial activity. In addition, the rules will provide for the grandfathering of existing collections.

The take of any nongame species for commercial purposes from public lands or waters is unlawful.

Except for red-eared slider, common snapping turtle, and soft-shell turtle, the take or possession of turtles for commercial activity is unlawful.

At the time this publication was sent to the printer, the rules had not been completely finalized. Additional rules will be proposed in the near future to address issues such as captive breeding. For more information, contact TPWD at (800) 792-1112, menu 7 or (512) 389-4481 or go to Nongame Permits on the TPWD Web site.

* Black bears are protected and cannot be hunted or killed. Mountain lions are not protected and may be harvested at any time. Please report black bear and mountain lion sightings or mortalities to (512) 389-4505.



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