

TPWD Says Deer Hunting Prospects Looking Good

White-tailed Deer Forecast

Deer hunting for the upcoming season is shaping up to be very good from the standpoint of finding deer.

Due to the severe drought and less than lush habitat conditions, deer will be very easy to encounter especially if you are hunting over a food source.

Also, if you have a water source in your hunting area, hunting trails to this source can prove to be very productive.

Although antler production may be average to less than average due to the dry conditions, there are older bucks in the herd, and we have reports of some impressive antler production.

Finally, last year's fawn survival was above average, so there should be a decent number of yearling deer in the herd.

Since the entire district has experienced dry conditions for almost two years, fawn survival appears to have suffered this year.

Fawn survival may be average to just below average in your creek and river bottom areas, but in your upland sites fawn survival appears to be well below average.

Last year's fawn crop should translate into more yearling bucks



this year.

You may see a higher number of spikes this year than in past years.

In most of the Oak Prairie district doe harvest during the general season is only legal via Managed Lands Deer Permits.

It is important to follow the biologist's recommendations on doe harvest.

We have experienced about two years of drought that has severely impacted the native vegetation and browse that deer utilize.

We have also been experiencing

a continuous increase in the overall deer population across the district for the last several years.

Harvesting doe is the one means we have of keeping populations at sustainable levels where the deer herd remains healthy and the habitat remains healthy.

Remember, we should be trying to manage for all wildlife, not just deer.

Drier conditions in late spring/early summer generally translate into better turkey and quail production for most of the Oak Prairie

district.

This is contrary to what is experienced in South Texas. However, we experienced dry conditions all the way back to last year's spring.

Reports from the field indicate lower production for turkey and quail.

Feral hogs are still doing real well in the Oak Prairie district.

Like last year, the dry conditions have confined a lot of the hog activity in the bottoms and near water sources.

There is no hunting season on feral hogs and you can take them by any legal means.

As long as you are hunting hogs on your own land or have landowner permission, and there is no money changing hands, you don't need a license to harvest hogs.

Make sure you look at this year's Outdoor Annual if you have any questions about hunting seasons, bag limits, and other restrictions.

There have been changes to the youth only season and there is an added muzzleloader season.

Anyone with a current hunting license can harvest two doe during archery season.

The Rut in Texas White-tailed Deer

The following was based on

three years of data collected by Wildlife Technicians and Biologists throughout Texas. Our goal is to get the information out to the hunters and landowners who assisted and helped fund the project. You may have seen parts of the article in outdoor magazines.

This project was funded by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department through Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project 95, W-127-R.

The phenomenon known as "the rut" is the period when deer breed. People often ask biologists when the rut is going to occur. It's a question biologists commonly hear in the fall. Many hunters want to make sure that they plan hunting vacations to include that magical time when bucks lose all caution and deer are moving.

Can hunting the rut help? You bet. Anything that encourages bucks to move enhances the chance of seeing one. Buck deer, like most male mammals, seem to lose a lot of their natural caution when the scent of a receptive female is in the air.

One of the tips gained from this study is that rutting bucks can be found during most of the hunting season in many regions of the state. Consistently successful hunt-

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