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Texas Hunting, Fishing Licenses on Sale



The beginning of a new hunting season is quickly approaching and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) reminds hunters and anglers to purchase their new licenses for 2022-23. Texas hunting and fishing licenses (except the Year-from-Purchase All-Water Fishing Package) for the current year expire at the end of August. The new licenses for the 2022-23 season are on sale now.

Annually, Texans purchase more than 2.7 million hunting and fishing licenses and directly fund a multitude of conservation efforts and recreational opportunities, helping make Texas one of the best places in the country to hunt and fish. Some of the many projects made possible by license sales include fish stocking, wildlife management, habitat restoration, public hunting leases, river fishing access and Texas Game Wardens.

Outdoorsmen and women can purchase a variety of licenses online through the official TPWD website, by phone at 1-800-895-4248 during regular business hours or in person at more than 1,800 retailers across the state. Anyone planning to buy their license from TPWD's Austin Headquarters is reminded to make an advance appointment. Appointments may be scheduled up to one week in advance. Call 1-800-262-8755 or 512-389-4828 to schedule.

Brand new for this year, Texas residents can purchase a digital Super Combo license (Items 111, 117 and 990) that will authorize digital tagging of harvested deer, turkey and oversized red drum. The digital license option is available through online purchase only. A digital license holder will not receive a printed license or tags but must keep their digital license available while in the field. The license can be viewed through the TPWD Outdoor Annual and My Texas Hunt Harvest (MTHH) mobile apps.

TPWD encourages repeat license buyers to use the expedited checkout process, which speeds up re-purchasing the same license bought in recent years.

Customers can access their past and current licenses in several ways: (1)

an electronic photo of your license; (2) an emailed receipt of your purchase; (3) your account in the online license sales system; (4) via License Lookup in the Outdoor Annual app or in the My Texas Hunt Harvest app.

Hunting and fishing regulations for the 2022-23 season are available online at outdoorannual.com, on the Outdoor Annual mobile app. The mobile app is free, and once downloaded, it works without internet connectivity which makes it easy for hunters and anglers to view regulations in even the most remote locations. Other features include license lookup, location-based functionality such as "Hunting Seasons and Regulations by Location," "Where to Fish," and more. Thanks to partners at Chevrolet, a limited supply of printed booklets will be available at select TPWD offices. Hunters and anglers are encouraged to call their local offices to check availability.

The My Texas Hunt Harvest app enables electronic submission of mandatory harvest reports, including alligator gar harvest reporting, and new this year, supports digital tagging of harvested deer, turkey, and oversized red drum for certain license holders. The app also allows

hunters to complete their on-site registration for many TPWD public hunting lands. Hunters can hunt on more than one million acres of public land with the purchase of an Annual Public Hunting Permit.

When buying their license, resident hunters and anglers may wish to purchase an entry in the Lifetime License Drawing. Three lucky winners will each win a Lifetime Super Combo License and never need to buy a Texas hunting or fishing license again. Entries are \$5 each and can be purchased online, by phone or at any license retailer. **The first entry deadline is Sept. 30.**

When making their purchase, license buyers can also add a donation of \$1, \$5, \$10 or \$20 to help support the Hunters for the Hungry program or the Fund for Veterans Assistance. Donations to the Hunters for the Hungry program provide hunters with a way to donate legally harvested deer to participating processors. The processed meat goes to local food banks to feed Texas families in need. Donations to the Fund for Veterans Assistance program provide grants to veteran service organizations and nonprofit charitable institutions, assisting veterans and their families at the community

level throughout Texas.

For frequently asked questions about Texas hunting and fishing licenses, visit the TPWD website at tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/licenses/faqs

New Digital License Option for Super Combo Users

Never worry about forgetting a paper Super Combo license at home again with the new digital tag option from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). Beginning with the 2022-23 license year, Texas residents can purchase a digital Super Combo license (Items 111, 117 and 990) that will authorize digital tagging of harvested deer, turkey and oversized red drum. The digital license option is available through online purchase only.

A digital license holder will not receive a printed license or tags but must keep their digital license available while in the field. The license can be viewed through the TPWD Outdoor Annual and My Texas Hunt Harvest (MTHH) mobile apps.

"Texas Parks and Wildlife is excited to be offering a digital license and tag option for the first time for outdoorsmen and women this license year," said Carter Smith, Executive Director of TPWD. "We are piloting this with the Super Combo license types which is one of our most popular

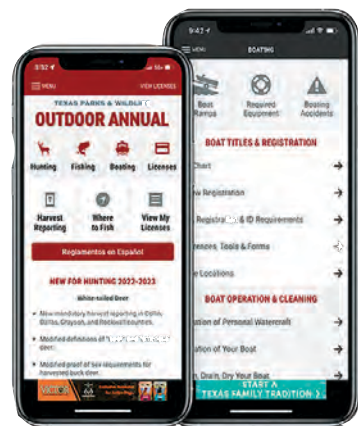
licenses that we sell. Lifetime Combo license holders will also be able to use the digital tagging portion of this pilot as well. This has been a long-time coming, but we think this is a great first step to offering more options for our hunters and anglers in the field. We intend to evaluate how well this works as we move forward and look forward to feedback from our customers who choose this option."

Texans using this option will need to adhere to these requirements for using the digital Super Combo tag:

-Digital tagging for harvested deer, turkey and oversized red drum must be completed through the MTHH mobile app. An updated version of the app that supports digital tagging is available now.

-Digital license holders are not exempt from the Federal Duck Stamp requirement. If you purchase a Federal Duck Stamp, it will be mailed to your address on file. The stamp

**-Digital License-
Page 4-D**



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Biologists Predict Moderate Hunting Conditions

Ahead of White-Tailed Deer Archery-Only Season Opener

With drought affecting most of the state over the summer, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologists foresee a moderate season for hunters this fall.

"Overall, 2022 year is expected to be good in terms of harvest numbers and opportunities, so don't let the chance to spend

time afield with family, friends and fellow hunters pass you by," said Alan Cain, White-Tailed Deer Program Leader for TPWD. "Texas has one of the longest deer seasons in the nation, so take some time this fall and winter and enjoy one of the best deer herds in the country right here in your home state."

Deer hunting kicks off with archery season on Oct. 1 across most of the state. Cain noted that while harvest numbers may look good, drought impacts on deer habitats mean hunters should generally expect average to below average antler quality and body weight this fall.

Additionally, hunters may see fewer deer at feeders when archery season opens, as recent rains have improved habitat conditions, providing an abundance of native forage that means deer won't have to travel far to find something to browse. Archery hunters may need to alter their hunting strategies to find harvest success, Cain said.

Drought conditions

Temperatures in the early summer months frequently soared above 100 degrees across most of the state, and lack of significant rainfall limited the spring production of important food sources like forbs (weeds) and woody shrubs for deer.

"Woody plants are critical in times like these because these deep-rooted plants are often the only abundant supply of green groceries for deer, but even these browse plants are showing some signs of stress," said Cain. "Mesquites appear to be on track to produce an abundance of beans this year and were critical sources of natural forage for deer in late summer in the central, south and western portions of the state."

Wildfires have plagued large areas of the state as well, causing significant habitat loss and damage, but Cain said nature finds a way to rejuvenate the landscape.

"Where fires have occurred, there's been new grass and weed growth providing some much-needed nutrition and cover for deer," Cain said. "Although habitat conditions have improved immensely with recent rains, the timing was a bit late to have any meaningful influence on antler quality."

While the archery-only season kicks off Oct. 1, the general season opens more than a month later, on Nov. 5. The general season runs through Jan. 1, 2023 in the North Zone and Jan. 15, 2023 in the South Zone. A special youth-only gun deer season is set in both zones for Oct. 29-30 and Jan. 2-15, 2023. For additional late season deer hunting opportunities, county specific regulations and information on how to property tag and report a harvest, consult the 2022-23 Outdoor Annual.

Archery hunters are required to purchase an Archery Endorsement in addition to their hunting license. Hunters taking advantage of Texas Public Hunting Lands must have the Annual Public Hunting Permit. Public land hunters should also consult the Public Hunting Lands Map Booklet to review regulations that may apply to specific areas. The My Texas Hunt Harvest app can be used to complete on-site registration electronically at a public hunting area

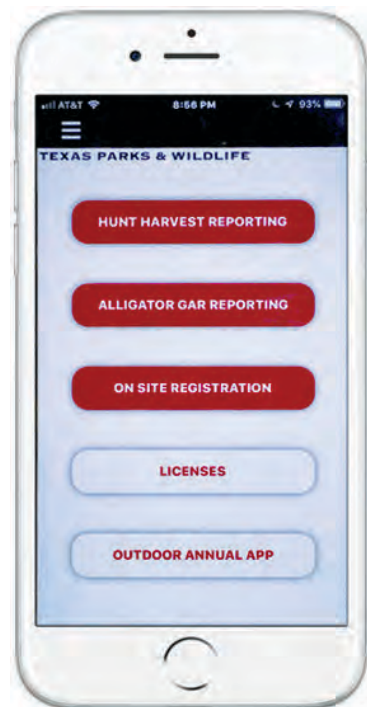
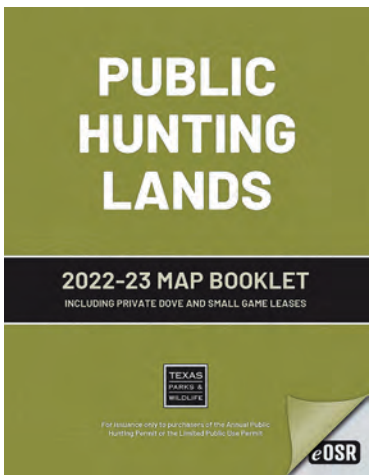
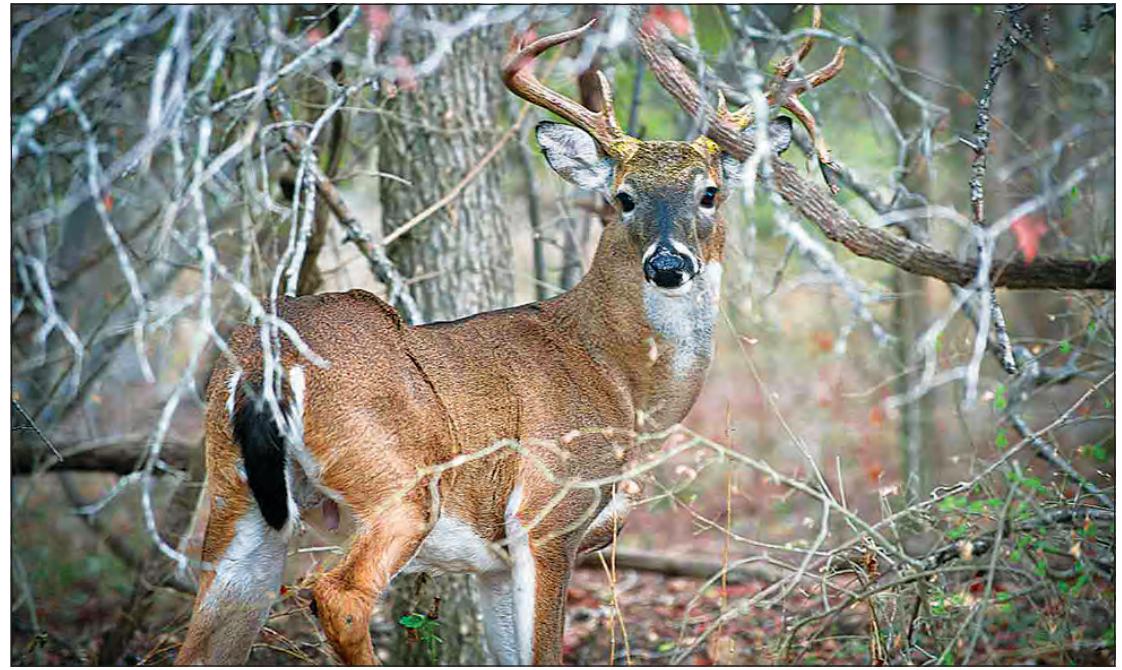
Those interested in learning more about archery and bowhunting, or anyone who is looking to brush up on their skills ahead of the season, are encouraged to explore Bowhunter by Fall, a newsletter series presented by TPWD's Community Archery Program.

CWD Testing

TPWD reminds hunters that TPWD wildlife biologists and animal health officials are collecting and testing Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples from hunter-harvested deer to get a clearer picture of the prevalence and distribution of the disease across Texas. Proactive monitoring improves the state's response time to a CWD detection and can greatly reduce the risk of the disease further spreading to neighboring captive and free-ranging populations.

Hunters in surveillance and containment zones must meet submission requirements of harvested CWD susceptible species. Additionally, hunters outside of established surveillance and containment zones are encouraged to voluntarily submit their harvest for testing at a check station, for free, before heading home from the field. A map of TPWD check stations for all CWD zones can be found on the TPWD website.

For more information about CWD, visit the TPWD web site at tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/diseases/cwd or the TAHC web site at www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/elk-deer/#cwd.



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Chronic Wasting Disease

Confirmed at a Deer Breeding Facility in Limestone County

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) discovered Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a deer breeding facility in Limestone County. This marks the first positive detection of the disease in the county.

As part of a required CWD surveillance program, samples from four deer were detected with CWD prions by the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory in College Station on September 5. The National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa confirmed CWD in two of these samples on Sept. 13 and should complete testing of the other two samples soon.

Animal health and wildlife officials have taken action to secure the facility and identify and notify other breeding facilities that received deer or shipped deer to this facility in the last five years.

"TPWD and TAHC are taking this situation very seriously," said John Silovsky, Wildlife Division Director for TPWD. "Fortunately, these positive cases were detected early, and we have a good sample distribution across the facility. At this time, CWD appears to be contained to one pen within the facility. Animal health and wildlife officials will continue to investigate to determine the extent of the disease within the facility and mitigate risks to Texas' CWD susceptible species. Quick detection of CWD can help mitigate the disease's spread."

TPWD officials are developing surveillance zone boundaries that may include portions of Limestone, Hill, Freestone and Navarro counties. CWD zones are an effective strategy for managing and containing the disease. Hunters in surveillance and containment zones must take harvested CWD susceptible species to a check station or otherwise meet submission requirements. TPWD will provide additional information to landowners and hunters within the surveillance zone regarding CWD sampling locations and options to have their deer or other CWD susceptible species tested (there is no cost to the hunter for this testing). A public meeting will be held in Limestone County prior to implementation to provide the details of the zones and CWD management.

"Surveillance is an essential part of managing CWD," said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Executive Director and State Veterinarian. "While the disease's incubation period poses challenges, quick detection can help mitigate the disease's spread and protect cervid populations in Texas."

Testing for CWD allows wildlife biologists and animal health officials to get a clearer picture of the prevalence and distribution of the disease across Texas. Proactive monitoring improves the state's response time to a CWD detection and can greatly reduce the risk of the disease spreading further to neighboring captive and free-ranging populations.

TPWD and TAHC encourage hunters outside of established surveillance and containment zones to voluntarily submit their harvest for testing at a check station, for free, before heading home from the field. A map of TPWD check stations can be found on the TPWD website.

First recognized in 1967 in captive mule deer in Colorado, CWD has since been documented in captive and/or free-ranging deer in 30 states and three Canadian provinces. To date, 392 captive or free-ranging cervids — including white-tailed deer, mule deer, red deer and elk — in 16 Texas counties have tested positive for CWD.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease found in certain cervids, including deer, elk, moose and other members of the deer family. The disease is highly transmissible and can remain infectious on the landscape for several years. If left unmanaged, CWD can have long-term impacts on the native deer herd and local economies. Clinical signs may include progressive weight loss, stumbling or tremors with a lack of coordination, excessive thirst, salivation or urination, loss of appetite, teeth grinding, abnormal head posture and/or drooping ears. These signs may not become evident until long after animals have become infected. Therefore, testing remains the best available tool for detecting CWD at an early stage and containing it with appropriate management strategies.

To date, there is no evidence that CWD poses a risk to humans or non-cervids. However, as a precaution, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization recommend not to consume meat from infected animals.

For more information about CWD, visit the TPWD web site at tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/diseases/cwd or the TAHC web site at www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/elk-deer/#cwd.



Photo by Warden Micheal Hopper, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism

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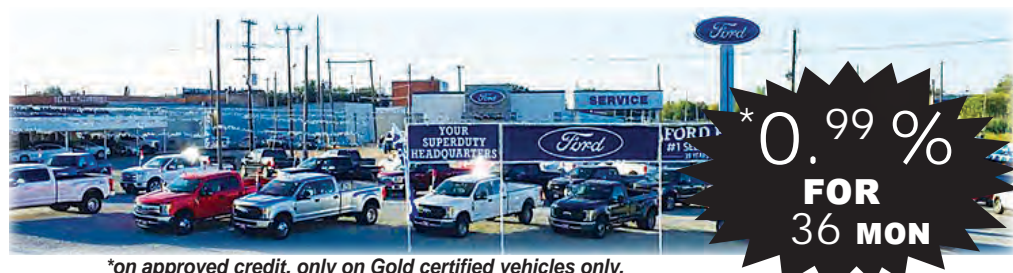
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Big Time Texas Hunts, Entries Open for 2022-23 Season

Deadline to purchase entries is Oct. 15

This season, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) Big Time Texas Hunts (BTH) program is offering Texans some of the very best hunting opportunities in the state. Ten premium guided hunt packages are offered in this year's Big Time Texas Hunts drawing.

In the last 25 years, Big Time Texas Hunt participants have helped raise more than \$18 million to fund wildlife research, habitat conservation and public hunting access. The 2021-22 hunting season was the biggest revenue producing year for the program, raising over \$1.32 million.

Conservation efforts funded by Big Time Texas Hunts include desert bighorn sheep restoration work in West Texas, thousands of acres of brush control work across the state for the benefit of species like mule deer, pronghorn and quail, along with multiple grassland

restoration projects. Public hunting efforts include the funding of numerous public hunting leases and the purchase of hunting equipment like ADA accessible blinds for a number of Wildlife Management Areas (WMA).

"Hunters pay for conservation and the BTH program is the perfect example of that," said Kevin Mote, TPWD's Private Lands and Public Hunting Program Director. "In our 26th year, we are extremely excited to continue offering hunters an opportunity at once in a lifetime hunting opportunities and raising important wildlife conservation funding at the same time."

Some of the popular hunts included in this year's drawing include an Exotic Safari, where the winner and a guest will have a chance to hunt gemsbok and scimitar-horned oryx at Mason Mountain WMA— plus win a Browning X-Bolt Hunter .270 rifle with Leupold scope being donated by McBride's Guns in Austin, the Texas Grand Slam which offers the winner four separate hunts for desert bighorn sheep, white-tailed deer, pronghorn, and desert mule deer, and the Ultimate Mule Deer Hunt, a three-to five-day hunt for mature mule deer in the Texas Panhandle.

Big Time Texas Hunts entries are available online for \$9 each or for \$10 each at license retailers, or by calling 800-895-4248. The deadline to purchase entries is October 15 and winners will be announced within two weeks.



Deadline Friday September 30th

Applications Being Accepted for Texas Game Warden Cadet Class

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is currently accepting applications for its 66th Texas Game Warden Cadet class.

As fully commissioned peace officers, game wardens are responsible for the enforcement of Texas laws across the state, including water safety, natural resource protection and environmental management. Unconstrained by city or county jurisdictions, Texas Game Wardens patrol the state's natural waterways, oversee hunting and fishing regulations, and often support local landowners. Additionally, game wardens learn specialized skills, making them a reliable resource for disaster response.

"Texas Game Wardens have a long and proud tradition of protecting and conserving Texas' valuable natural resources, including our waterways, landscapes and the wildlife we enjoy daily," said Col. Chad Jones, TPWD Law Enforcement Director who stressed that the role of a game warden goes beyond the badge. "Not only are game wardens trained in a



number of specialized fields like search and rescue and disaster response, but they're also active members of the communities they serve. Game wardens are out in neighborhoods hosting fishing events, educating boaters and encouraging another generation of Texans to enjoy and preserve the outdoors."

TPWD will accept applications through

Sept 30. Applicants must be 21 years old by the start date of the academy, with a bachelor's degree from an accredited college. For a list of requirements, please visit the Texas Game Warden recruitment webpage.

All cadets accepted to the program are required to live at the Game Warden Training Center near Hamilton, Texas for the duration of the 33-week training period, set to begin October 2023.

For more information, check the game warden career webpage or contact Texas Game Warden recruiter Chelsea Bailey at chelsea.bailey@tpwd.texas.gov.

TPWD Requesting Ideas on Freshwater Fish Habitat, Shoreline-based Angler Access Improvement Projects

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Inland Fisheries Division requests ideas from angling organizations, local governments, non-governmental organizations, river authorities and tribal organizations on freshwater fish habitat and shoreline-based angler access improvement projects to be completed in public waters statewide during fiscal years 2024-2025.

Project ideas and recommendations inform development of a statewide plan for investing approximately \$500,000 over that period.

Launched in fiscal year 2022, the Inland Fisheries Division's Habitat and Angler Access Program (HAAP) is currently implementing 21 projects throughout the state during its initial two-year cycle. These include fishing piers, kayak launches, shoreline stabilization, native vegetation restoration, aeration systems and fish attractors. Learn about each of the 21 active projects supported by the HAAP on the project website.

In preparation for the next two-year HAAP cycle, the Inland Fisheries Division requests

ideas on additional potential fish habitat and angler access improvements in public waters throughout the state. In order to be considered for the 2024-2025 cycle, project ideas and recommendations should be shared with TPWD through email at FishGrants@tpwd.texas.gov by Nov. 11, 2022.

Those sharing recommended projects should be prepared to provide the following:

- Project name
- Project location (waterbody, city, county)
- Controlling authority (e.g., city or county parks department, river authority, US Army Corps of Engineers, etc.) of the public waterbody
- Contact information for the partnering organization and a contact person
- Brief description of the project
- Potential partner dollars and in-kind support

To learn more, visit the HAAP program website at tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/water/habitats/habitat-angler-access-program/haap_rfp.phtml

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-Digital License- Continued from 1-D

must be signed on its face and is required to be on your person while hunting waterfowl.

--Other license purchases made for this season (e.g., Annual Public Hunt, Federal Sandhill Crane Permit, Bonus Red Drum Tag, etc.) will be provided in digital format only and will show up as separate items on your digital license.

--Number and type of tags issued with digital licenses are limited by species. A full list can be found on the digital tag webpage on the TPWD website. All county bag limits, special provisions and restrictions apply. Execution of a digital tag serves as completion of mandatory harvest reporting for deer and turkey in applicable counties.

--It is your responsibility to track tag usage. Use the Harvest History section in MTHH and ensure that your app is synced.



Do not harvest an animal if you are not certain that you have a tag available to use.

More information about harvest reporting and required physical documentation for deer and turkey, as well as harvest reporting requirements for red drum, can be found on the digital tag webpage at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/digitaltags>.

Hunting and fishing regulations for the 2022-23 season will be available online at outdoorannual.com, and on the Outdoor Annual

mobile app. The mobile app is free, and once downloaded, it works without internet connectivity which makes it easy for hunters and anglers to view regulations in even the most remote locations. Other features include license lookup, location-based functionality such as "Hunting Seasons and Regulations by Location," "Where to Fish," and more. Additionally, the Outdoor Annual website offers the option to download and print all or select sections of the Outdoor Annual.

Conditions Heating Up for Dove Season



Texans are used to scorching summers, but this year's record highs across much of the state have left many dove hunters wondering about the upcoming season opener.

"Unless conditions change drastically over the next few weeks, hunting near water will be key for opening day this year," said Owen Fitzsimmons, TPWD Dove Program Leader. "Hunters will likely see larger concentrations of birds at watering holes and food sources than they have in the past due to limited resources. Agriculture production has been hit hard by drought so birds may be more reliant on native foods this September. Look for stands of common sunflower, croton, and other native annual forbs and grasses."

Doves are well-adapted to dry conditions, particularly white-winged doves, which are a sub-tropical species. "Our spring surveys indicated a decrease in breeding abundance, which is a carry-over from poor hatch-year production last year," added Fitzsimmons. "However, doves kick reproduction into high gear in dry years like this, and we're seeing a lot of young birds this summer, based on our banding efforts."

TPWD officials remind hunters to prepare for the extreme heat and make sure they are packing all the essentials for a day in the field. They should bring plenty of water to stay hydrated and take measures to stay cool in a shaded area. The same is true for canine hunting partners.

"If this extreme heat persists, think twice about bringing your dog out in the early season," said Fitzsimmons. "Temperatures this high can be dangerous for dogs, particularly when they're excited and running hard after birds. If you do bring them, try to limit the hunts to early mornings or late evenings."

Harvest Authorization Drawing Closes for Trinity River Alligator Gar Sept. 30

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) opens the annual Alligator Gar Harvest Authorization drawing application process Sept 1.

From Sept. 1 through Sept. 30, anglers holding a valid license-year or year-from-purchase fishing license can use the My Texas Hunt Harvest mobile app or online to enter the drawing for an opportunity to harvest one alligator gar over 48 inches from a section of the Trinity River. Anglers can choose to apply as an individual or as part of a small group. Winners of the random drawing will be notified by Oct. 15. Harvest authorizations will be valid from the date issued through Aug. 31, 2023.

Anglers can use any legal means or method to take an alligator gar over 48 inches day or night from a section of the Trinity River from the I-30 bridge in Dallas downstream to the I-10 bridge in Chambers County, including Lake Livingston and the East Fork of the Trinity River upstream to the dam at Lake Ray Hubbard. This includes the following counties: Anderson, Chambers, Dallas, Ellis, Freestone, Henderson, Houston, Kaufman, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Navarro, Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity, and Walker.

"This segment of the Trinity River has become one of the most popular destinations in the world to catch a large alligator gar, but concerns have been raised about the potential for overharvest and its risks to fishing quality," said Craig Bonds, Inland Fisheries Director at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "With this drawing system, we are able to give 150 anglers the opportunity to harvest the fish of a lifetime while also meeting our management goal to conserve this unique resource for current and future generations of anglers."

In addition, all alligator gar harvested, including those using a harvest authorization, from public freshwater and saltwater waterbodies (other than Falcon International Reservoir) must be reported on the My Texas Hunt Harvest mobile app or online within 24 hours of harvest.

"In order for us to manage our alligator gar populations among growing angler interest, it is crucial to know how many are being harvested in Texas," Bonds said. "By gathering data on alligator gar harvest through the My Texas Hunt Harvest app and online, our fisheries management team gains a better understanding of this species' distribution, sizes, and numbers and can use that information to help manage for quality fishing in the future."

Other Trinity River alligator gar regulations that remain in effect include a 48-inch maximum length limit for alligator gar from the I-30 bridge in Dallas downstream to the I-10 bridge in Chambers County, including Lake Livingston and the East Fork of the Trinity River upstream to the dam at Lake Ray Hubbard (see above for list of affected counties). Additionally, a ban on the take or possession of an alligator gar by means of lawful archery equipment or crossbow is in effect on the same section of the Trinity River between one half-hour after sunset and one half-hour before sunrise (unless using a harvest authorization through the drawing system).

A one-fish-per-day bag limit remains in effect for alligator gar statewide except for Falcon International Reservoir, where a daily bag limit of five fish and possession limit of 10 fish remains in effect.

The My Texas Hunt Harvest app can be downloaded free from the Apple App Store and Google Play. For more information about alligator gar fishing regulations, visit The Outdoor Annual online.

The regular dove season in the North Zone runs Sept. 1-Nov. 13 and resumes Dec. 17-Jan.1, 2023. The regular season in the Central Zone is Sept. 1-Oct. 30, then resumes Dec. 17-Jan.15, 2023. The regular season in the South Zone is Sept. 14-Oct. 30 and Dec. 17-Jan. 22, 2023. For the second straight year, there will be six Special White-Winged Dove Days. The Special White-Winged Dove Days will be Sept. 2-4 and 9-11.

During the regular season in the South Zone, the aggregate bag limit is 15 with no more than two white-tipped doves. During the Special White-winged Dove Days in the South Zone, hunting is allowed only from noon to sunset and the daily bag limit is 15 birds, to include not more than two mourning doves and two white-tipped doves.

All updated hunting regulations for this year's hunting season can be found in the Texas Outdoor Annual mobile app or online at OutdoorAnnual.com.

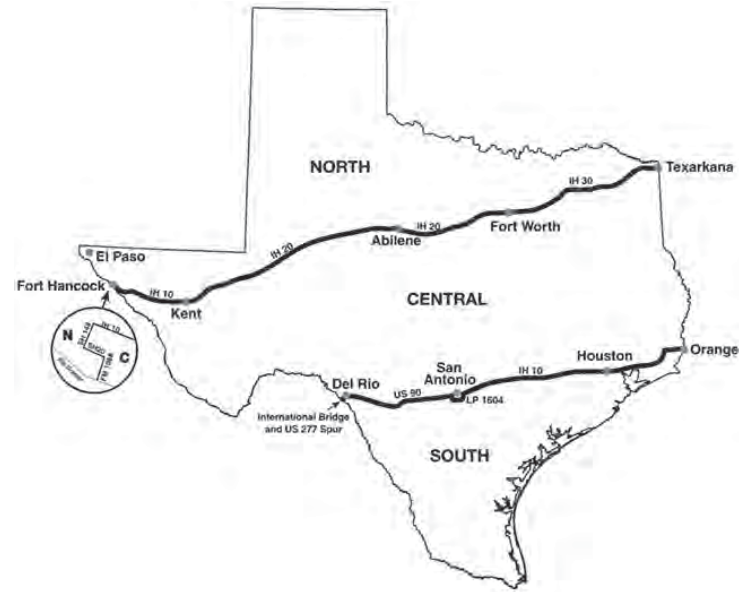
Hunters are reminded that licenses are on sale now for the 2022-23 hunting seasons and can be purchased through the agency's 28 law enforcement field offices, at more than 50 state parks and over 1,700 retailers across the state. Licenses may also be purchased online through the TPWD website or by phone at (800) 895-4248. Call center hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and there is a required \$5 administrative fee for each phone or online transaction. The online transaction system is available 24/7.

Enhancements have been made to make the licensing process simpler and faster. "Expedited checkout" improves the process of purchasing the same license items bought most recently within the last three years. It's also now easier to show proof-of-license. Now hunters can use a digital image of their license as proof-of-license for any hunting that doesn't require a tag, like dove hunting. Accepted formats include: (1) a digital photo, (2) an emailed receipt, (3) within the Outdoor Annual app or the My Texas Hunt Harvest app, or 4) online purchase record.

For the first time, Texas residents can purchase a digital Super Combo license (Items 111, 117 and 990) that will authorize digital tagging of harvested deer, turkey and oversized red drum. The digital license option is available through online purchase only. A digital license holder will not receive a printed license or tags but must keep their digital license available while in the field. The license can be viewed through the TPWD Outdoor Annual and My Texas Hunt Harvest mobile apps.

In addition to a hunting license, anyone born after Sept. 1, 1971, must successfully complete a hunter education training course to hunt legally in Texas. The TPWD Hunter Education certification is valid for life and is honored in all other states and provinces. Hunters can find more information or print a replacement at no cost online.

A Migratory Game Bird Endorsement (Stamp) and Harvest Information Program (HIP) certification are also required to hunt dove. HIP certification involves a brief survey of previous year's migratory bird hunting success and is conducted at the time licenses are purchased.



Dove Hunting Zones.



White-winged Dove. (TPWD Photo by Bob Gress)

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Alligator Gar Fishing Tips and Tactics

Anglers use a variety of methods to catch alligator gar. Legal methods include bowfishing, rod-and-reel, and passive gear such as juglines, limblines, and trotlines. Bowfishing is regulated as a lethal method to harvest fish: once a fish is shot with an arrow, it cannot be released. For other methods, if catch-and-release is intended, the goal should be to maximize survival of fish.

Rod-and-reel fishing for alligator gar can require climbing a steep learning curve. Even experienced anglers and professional guides experience a high proportion of dropped baits, debris hang-ups and failed hook sets. In fact, the jury may still be out regarding the best technique for catching alligator gar on pole and line. In spite of these difficulties, alligator gar can and have been caught using just about every setup possible on a rod and reel, including casting artificial lures, using live or cut bait, and even fly fishing.

The most common setup used in Texas is cut common carp placed on a 3/0 treble hook or J-hook. Considering the potential size of an alligator gar, fishermen are often inclined to use a larger hook; however, hook sizes of 4/0 or larger increase the likelihood of mortality when deep hooked. The hook is often fastened by strong braided line to a steel leader, with or without a weight, and fished suspended or on the bottom of a river or lake. Alligator gar typically pick up a bait and travel a good distance before stopping to ingest the bait. The upper jaw and mouth of an alligator gar is cartilaginous and bony, full of teeth, and unlike most fish is very resistant to penetration by fish hooks. For this reason, many rod and reel anglers actually allow fish enough time to swallow the bait and hook before attempting to set the hook or reel in the fish. Upon landing the fish, the steel leader is cut and the fish is released with hook-in-tow. When this technique is used, we encourage the use of relatively small, non-stainless hooks which will degrade over time and reduce the potential for internal damage. The long-term survival of an alligator gar that has swallowed a hook is not well studied, but limited data suggests mortality may be higher in small fish because large hooks occasionally can penetrate vital organs.

Successfully hooking a fish in the mouth, and removing the hook prior to release, is believed to provide the highest chance for survival. Attempting to set the hook before the fish has ingested the bait may only provide the angler with a about a 50% success rate; however, this success rate may be similar regardless of how the fish is hooked. The more time an alligator gar is allowed to travel with the bait before swallowing the hook, the more likely the fish may be to drop the bait or wrap the fishing line around timber or other debris. The best opportunity for successfully mouth-hooking an alligator gar may be using a powerful hookset to penetrate the mouth just after the fish takes the bait. Often, using a large slip-float on the fishing line can help an angler identify the direction a fish is oriented before setting a hook. Additional leverage or power may be generated if the gar is facing away from the angler when the hook is set. Successfully hooking an alligator gar in the mouth allows the angler to remove the hooks with a good pair of thick gloves and needle-nose pliers. A thick stick or other device can be used to hold the mouth open for access to the hooks. Following hook removal, the fish can simply be released to be caught again another day.

Best Practices for the Successful Catch and Release of Alligator Gar

Conservation efforts for one of the nation's largest freshwater fish, the Alligator Gar, have increased the popularity of catch and release rod-and-reel angling for the species over the last two decades. As science has shed more light on the Alligator Gar's unique, long life-history and inconsistent spawning success, it has revealed a species worthy of angling practices that seek to maximize the survival of released fish. The most effective yet least harmful angling method for Alligator Gar may still be unknown. However, the best available science suggests gar anglers follow a few key guidelines to maximize survival.

Use non-stainless-steel leaders and hooks 3/0 or smaller.

We recommend the use of aberdeen (aka bronze) hooks no larger than 3/0 when fishing for alligator gar. A few small scale, unpublished studies and angler accounts suggest hook sizes larger than 3/0 are more likely to result in damage to internal organs, and smaller fish are increasingly vulnerable considering the proximity of vital organs to the gut tract. Stainless hooks and leaders have been known to persist in internal tissues for years while bronze hooks and leaders degrade relatively quickly.

Land fish on shore rather than on a boat.

Whenever possible, landing the fish on shore is a better practice than lifting the fish over the gunnel and onto a boat deck. The use of lassos or snares to lift a fish over a boat gunnel may result in internal injury to a heavy fish like alligator gar. If possible, it is always best to keep a fish



Removing a Hook. (Courtesy Photo)

in or near the water and fully support the weight of the fish when taking pictures before release. Minimizing handling times will also provide the best opportunity for survival.

Cut the line or leader on deeply hooked fish.

Hooks lodged beyond the mouth cavity (e.g. throat, gullet, or stomach) should not be removed. Most studies suggest additional damage is often caused to a fish by attempting to remove a deep hook. Long-term survival is more likely if the line or leader is cut and the hook left in place. Non-stainless-steel hooks degrade relatively quickly and can be more easily shed by a gar.

Source: tpwd.texas.gov



Alligator Gar aren't easy to catch. (Courtesy Photo)

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Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame Accepting Nominations Thru Nov. 1

The Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame committee is seeking nominations through Nov. 1 of individuals and organizations for induction in next year's hall of fame.

"The Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame is made up of a growing list of 37 individuals and organizations who have made a significant impact on freshwater fishing in the state," said Dan Kessler, TFF Hall of Fame Committee Chair. "Whether it's an outdoor writer, pro-angler, fishing club or leader of industry, we look forward to continuing to honor and recognize everyone that helps make Texas fishing the best it can be."

The nominees will be evaluated by the members of the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame committee made up of anglers, industry professionals and organizations involved in Texas freshwater fishing. Inductees will be chosen based on the following criteria: ethics, leadership and commitment, unselfish contributions to the sport, scope of impact on freshwater fishing and fishing/fisheries management expertise and impact. The winner will be announced in spring 2023 and will be presented with their award in a special ceremony.

"We are excited to review all of this year's nominations and welcome the newest inductee into this prestigious group of individuals and organizations that have contributed so much to the world class fishing that Texas offers," Kessler added.

Professional angler Gary Klein of Mingus -- the 2022 inductee -- will officially be inducted at the annual Hall of Fame banquet which will take place in October at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center.

The recently remodeled Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame is housed at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens. Its mission is to "recognize and honor those who have made a lasting contribution to freshwater fishing in Texas, and to foster a sense of appreciation, awareness and participation in the sport of fishing."

Nomination forms and instructions are available online or by calling (903) 676-2277.

Following his induction, a video highlighting the 2022 TFF Hall of Fame selection Gary Klein will be available at TPWD's YouTube Channel under the title: Gary Klein, Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame.



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