



## Vegetable Plants

Lawn & Garden  
Fertilizers Control  
Chemicals

## Local Honey



## Circle E Candles



## Fresh Fish

## Spring Gardening Essentials

- Garden Seeds
- Carhartt Clothing
- Muck Boots & Georgia Work Boots
- Sport Mix Dog Feeds 21%
- Maintenance & 26% High Pro
- Turkey & Deer Feed
- Spring Deer Plot Seed
- Fish Pond Fertilizers & Chemicals
- Lawn & Garden Fertilizers & Chemicals
- Frozen Catfish Filets
- Monroe Sausage



A Variety of Baby Chicks

### LODGE CAST IRON



U.S. Hwy 43 Leroy  
**251-246-3512**

# OPPORTUNITIES: State offers to mentor hunters

## FROM PAGE 35

will also learn firearms safety, how to prepare harvested game for cooking and other skills.

In the first six weeks of registration in 2018, more than 400 people from seven states applied. They averaged 42 years old with women making up 40 percent of the applicants. During a deer hunt in January 2019 at Portland Landing Special Opportunity Area, all eight novice hunters, including two women, bagged eight deer and eight hogs. Each one harvested at least one animal.

“Looking at their exit interviews, to say they were all pleased would be a severe understatement,” quipped Chuck Sykes, director of the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division. “Despite the horrible weather including tornadoes hitting the state, everyone took some meat home with them. I spent quite a bit of time with the group. It was a good experience for the hunters, but a great experience for my staff and me. The mentors get almost as much out of it as the hunters.”

Everyone who participated in that January deer hunt stayed at the lodge on Portland Landing SOA. The property, one of several new special opportunity hunting areas across the state, opened for selective public hunting for the first time in the fall of 2018. It covers 4,744 acres of the Black Belt in Dallas County with another 4,000 acres scheduled to open for the 2019-20 season.

“Portland Landing SOA is right in the heart of some of the best hunting in the state,” Sykes reported. “This area has produced some big deer in the past. The genetics are there. The numbers are there and the habitat is there. I was

fortunate enough to hunt this property some years ago when it was private. It’s a special place.”

Besides the Mentored Hunts, sportsmen can also apply for special do-it-yourself hunts at Portland Landing and other SOAs in Clarke, Dallas, Russell and Jackson counties. People need to pick the area, days and types of game they wish to hunt and apply. In the fall, the state will offer opportunities to hunt doves, waterfowl, small game and deer with modern firearms, primitive weapons or bows, all for the cost of the appropriate Alabama hunting licenses and wildlife management area permits. For waterfowl, sportsmen will need to buy federal migratory bird stamps.

“When people apply and are randomly selected to hunt a Special Opportunity Area, that person and one hunting companion will be given a 300- to 500-acre block of land all to themselves to hunt for those days,” Sykes explained. “We do not hunt every unit on each property each day. We rotate the areas to keep pressure to a minimum.”

Sportsmen can also apply to hunt turkeys in the spring on designated SOAs. The state will also hold Mentored Hunts for turkeys. During the first Mentored Hunt for turkeys in 2018, some applicants had previously hunted deer, small game or waterfowl, but never turkeys. More novice turkey hunters will participate this spring.

People can learn more about Mentored Hunts and apply at [www.outdooralabama.com/adult-mentored-hunting-program/selection-process-adult-mentored-hunts](http://www.outdooralabama.com/adult-mentored-hunting-program/selection-process-adult-mentored-hunts). For more information on the SOA hunts, see [www.outdooralabama.com/hunting/special-opportunity-areas](http://www.outdooralabama.com/hunting/special-opportunity-areas).