

BOW HUNTING: Archers enjoy longer seasons in state

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stays wet all year long.

"Last year, the delta had some of the worst flooding I've ever seen," recalled Thomas Harms, area biologist for the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division in Spanish Fort. "It was flooded for almost the entire hunting season."

However, floods probably didn't seriously affect the delta deer or pig populations. Those animals know to find higher ground. The flood could possibly help the deer population. Flood waters fertilize the soil. After a flood, the vegetation always comes back stronger.

"Deer hunters should have a good year in the delta," Harms advised. "Since the flooded water receded, the vegetation in the delta has been awesome. Those nutrients in the vegetation



Photo by John N. Felsher

Joella Bates

passes onto the animals that eat it. The deer should be in good shape with plenty of food. Southwestern Alabama is loaded with deer. There's a lot of deer and pigs in the delta."

Feral pigs live throughout the delta. Archers and other hunters can bag all the hogs

they want. On most public properties, the state allows people to shoot unlimited hogs during any open game or bird seasons as long as hunters use weapons and ammunition legal for that species. For deer and pigs, look for higher ridges growing with hardwoods. Both species love to eat acorns.

"In the early season, if people can find oak trees just starting to drop their acorns, that's where people need to hunt," Cook emphasized. "Deer will find those acorns and get on them. There's not much anyone can put in front of a deer that they will eat before an acorn. Bow hunters can hunt at that tree or travel routes between the tree and where the deer like to bed."

People can also hunt the Perdido River WMA near Gateswood in Baldwin

County. The Perdido River WMA spreads across 17,337 acres. To the east, sportsmen can hunt Blue Spring WMA and Geneva State Forest WMA. People can also find some smaller Forever Wild properties not in the WMA system, such as the Red Hills Complex in Monroe County, where they can hunt.

"Blue Spring WMA and Geneva State Forest are both pretty good areas for bow hunting," Cook advised. "The Red Hills area is a pretty good piece of public land for people to check out."

In any property, people need to do frequent scouting. Things change rapidly in a system like the delta, especially after a flood. A hot deer spot last year might not even exist this season. Scout early and scout often to determine where deer really want to go.

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