

Recent rains provide boost for deer

"Hunting might be a little tough. . ."

Bowhunters might need to adjust their game plan for Saturday's archery-only white-tailed deer season due to recent rains, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The advance scouting report could be out the window.

"Hunting might be a little tough with the exceptional rainfall in September that has created a giant food plot of native forage across the state," said Alan Cain, TPWD whitetail deer program leader. "Deer may be visiting the feeders less frequently with the abundant forage, so hunters might rely on information gathered recently on their trail cameras to help narrow down windows of opportunity as to when deer are visiting feeder and blind locations."

Texas boasts a robust white-tailed deer population of about 4.6 million and the influx of new groceries on the ground should provide a boost of nutrition heading into the fall. It should also give wildlife managers some relief after range conditions across much of the state heading out of the summer doldrums began to decline.

"Range conditions had diminished somewhat with the long stretches of 100 degree weather and wind," Cain noted. "The majority of the state had reasonable forb production and good brush green-up this past spring, which provided a good foundation

of native forage to get deer off to a good start in terms of antler growth and fawn production. By late August, we were seeing preferred forbs becoming less available for deer. The rains came at an opportune time."

While the archery-only season kicks off this weekend and runs through Nov. 2, the general gun season opener is still more than a month away on Nov. 3. A special youth-only weekend season is set for Oct. 27-29. The general season runs through Jan. 6, 2019 in North Texas and Jan. 20, 2019 in South Texas. A late youth-only season is also slated for Jan. 7-20, 2019. For additional late season deer hunting opportunities and county specific regulations, consult the 2018-19 Outdoor Annual of hunting and fishing regulations.

Hunters are also reminded to review the TPWD chronic wasting disease regulations for information about CWD testing requirements and carcass movement restrictions for the 2018-19 season. Also as a reminder, Texas hunters harvesting deer, elk, moose, or other susceptible species in other CWD-positive states must also comply with carcass movement restrictions when bringing those harvested animals back into Texas. Additionally, the Texas Animal Health Commission has mandatory testing requirements that apply to elk, red deer, sika, moose, and reindeer.



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