

Texas Dove hunting season outlook is promising:

Texas dove hunting prospects bright

Though Hurricane Harvey caused a significant drop in dove hunter effort and harvest numbers last year, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department expects the 2018-19 season to be back to normal.

In Texas terms, normal means exceptional.

Opening day of dove hunting was Saturday, September 1 statewide and for the third consecutive year, Texas dove hunters can look forward to a liberal 90-day season and 15-bird daily bag limits.

Over 300,000 Texas hunters harvest nearly one third of the mourning doves taken nationwide each year, far more than any other state. In recent years, an estimated 10 million doves are harvested in Texas annually. While Texas supports breeding populations

of over 34 million mourning and 10 million white-winged doves, those numbers swell during the fall when birds from northern latitudes funnel south.

“Texas is uniquely situated to catch a lot of migratory birds as they move through the central part of the continent. Couple that with the fact that we are such a big state with diverse habitats, and it makes sense that we have such large numbers of doves,” TPWD Dove Program Leader Owen Fitzsimmons said.

“Despite the dry conditions this summer, we had excellent production very early in the spring thanks to a mild winter and good rains in February and March, so

there are a lot of birds around,” Fitzsimmons said.

White-winged doves were historically found in the lower Rio Grande Valley, but they have rapidly expanded in numbers and distribution across Texas in recent years. According to Fitzsimmons, white-wing populations continue

to grow and are making up a larger percentage of daily bag limits statewide. White-wings are now found mostly in and around urban areas, providing hunting opportunity for those hunting just outside major cities and urban centers.

During the early two weekends for 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. During the general season in the South Zone, the aggregate bag limit is 15 with no more than two white-tipped doves.

Hunters are reminded that licenses went on sale Aug. 15 for the 2018-19 hunting seasons and can be purchased through the agency’s 28 law enforcement field

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2018-19 DOVE SEASON CALENDAR

North Zone: Sept. 1-Nov. 4 & Dec. 21-Jan. 14, 2019

Central Zone: Sept. 1-Nov. 4 and Dec. 21-Jan. 14, 2019

Special White-winged Dove Days

(entire South Zone): Sept. 1-2, 8-9

South Zone: Sept. 14 – Oct. 30 and Dec. 14 – Jan. 21, 2019



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