

Don't end up with a ticket...

Obey the law this season

By John Palacios,
TPW Game Warden

Deer Season is finally here. Much like hunters, Game Wardens look forward to this season all year long. Most deer hunters comply and follow the laws. However, every hunting season some individuals unwittingly or knowingly violate game laws.

Here are some of the most common deer hunting violations:

Hunter Education Violation: One of the most common hunting violations is hunting without proper hunter education. Texas requires hunters born on or after Sept. 2, 1971 to have passed a state-approved Hunter Education Training course. Texas allows those falling under the hunter education requirement to purchase, for \$10, a one-time, one-year deferral of the requirement. Effective September 1, 2017, Peace officers, state and federal military, and retirees are exempt from Hunter Ed requirements.

Hunt without Valid Hunting License Violation: The definition of "hunt" is to capture, trap, take, kill, and includes any attempt to capture, trap, take or kill. Anybody engaged in deer hunting is obligated to obtain a valid hunting license.

Hunt in Closed Season Violation: The Closed Season is the period of time when hunting that species is not permitted. Note: There is no open season for any wild animal, wild bird, or exotic animal on public roads or the right-of-way of public roads.

Untagged Deer Violation: After a deer is killed and before the deer is field dressed or moved, the appropriate hunting license tag or permit must be immediately filled out and dates cut out. Except for deer killed by MLD permit, LAMPS permit, TPWD Special Drawn Legal Deer Tag, U.S. Forest Service antlerless permit, or Big Time Texas Hunt, all deer must be tagged immediately upon kill in a secure manner anywhere on the deer, with an appropriate license tag with the month and date cut out.

Improperly Tagged Deer Violation: If required, the tag from the hunting license of the person who killed the deer must be correctly and legibly completed (including name of property and county) and must:

- * be used on a specific type of deer (for example, buck tags must be used only on buck deer, antlerless tags on antlerless deer, etc.).
- * have the month and date of kill CUT OUT
- * It is against the law to use:
- * a tag taken from the license of another person or allow your tag to be used by another person.
- * a tag more than one time (or on more than one deer).
- * an incorrect tag on a deer (example: mule deer tag used on a white-tailed deer, etc.)

Harvest Log Violation: if a hunting license tag is used, then the Hunting License Harvest Log must be legibly completed. Immediately upon kill of a white-tailed deer the hunter must

complete the log, in ink, on the back of the hunting license. Completion of the log is not required for mule deer, or for white-tailed deer lawfully taken under an MLD permit.

Illegal Dumping: a person commits an offense if the person disposes or allows or permits the disposal of a dead animal at a place that is not an approved solid waste site, including a place on or within 300 feet of a public highway, on a right-of-way, on other public or private property. If the carcass weighs more than five pounds the violation is a Class B misdemeanor, and is punishable by up to 180 days in jail, a fine of up to 2,000, or both.

Unplugged Shotgun Violation: If you plan to hunt migratory birds make sure that your shotgun has a plug in it. Federal and state regulations limit shotguns used to hunt migratory game birds to holding no more than three shotshells. In most pump-action and semi-automatic shotguns, this requires a wooden or plastic plug be secured inside the firearm's magazine to limit that magazine to holding no more

than two shotshells.

Exceeding the Daily Bag Limit Violation: The daily bag limit on doves is 15. That's a daily bag limit, not a trip limit. Each year, hunters are caught "double-dipping" – meaning, taking a limit of doves in a morning hunt, and then returning to the field for an afternoon hunt.

Hunting over a Baited Area Violation: A baited area is an area where bait has been directly or indirectly placed, exposed, scattered or distributed to serve as a lure or attraction for harvesting migratory birds. A hunter may be cited for hunting over bait, which can include salt, grain or other feed, even if they didn't know it was there. A baited area is considered to be baited until 10 days after all the bait has been removed. However, a hunter may hunt migratory game birds over standing crops, standing flooded crops, flooded harvested crops, and at any time over natural vegetation that has been manipulated, where seeds or grains have been scattered as a result of normal agricultural planting, harvesting or post-harvest manipulation.

Most of these violations are Class C misdemeanors, punishable by a fine of from \$25 to \$500 plus court costs. Also, when resources are seized, the department can seek civil restitution for the value of any game confiscated.

Game Wardens urge hunters to review an Outdoor Annual of rules and regulations to ensure they act within the law and that they recognize when others violate the hunting regulations and related laws. Outdoor Annuals are available where licenses are sold. Texas Parks and Wildlife encourages hunters to protect the future of their sport by hunting responsibly and reporting hunting violations to their local Game Warden.

If you have information that will assist Game Wardens in apprehending people violating hunting regulations of this state, call Game Warden John Palacios (830) 334-1540 in Frio County or call Game Warden Ryan Johnson (830) 267-1170 in LaSalle County.

