

Feral hogs: No need for a license in Texas

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They're a nuisance, plain and simple, feral hogs are killing wildlife, uprooting crops and damaging property. They feed off wild acorns, hazelnuts and corn left for deer. They show no respect for corn fields and peanut crops and are known to tear up hay fields. Repeated wallowing and rooting of tanks can destroy livestock water sources. In extreme cases, hogs have been suspected of eating wildlife eggs.

Earlier this year the legislation answered the pleas of landowner's from across the state and passed Senate Bill 317.

Under the measure Governor Greg Abbott signed into law in July the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code will be amended to allow residents in the state to kill wild boars, or feral hogs, without having acquired a hunting license.

The legislation, Senate Bill 317, states



A group of Frio County hunters returned with a number of hogs after a 24-hour predator hunt in July

that a "resident landowner or any person, with the consent of the landowner, [the landowner's agent or lessee] may take feral hogs [causing depredation] on the resident landowner's land without having acquired a hunting license."

Abbot's signature comes after the bill sailed through the state Senate by an unanimous margin earlier this year. The bill was also reportedly passed overwhelmingly by the state's House of

Representatives in a 141-9 vote.

Wild boars have plagued South Texas for many years and leaving landowner's no choice but to set traps or hire help in an effort to try and control the hog population.

However, the dent in the population goes unnoticed as hogs breed every three months and can have litters up to 20.

In July, the La Salle County Fair Association launched a cash for ears campaign in response to numerous complaints from local ranchers pertaining to the destructive, aggravating and all around nuisance of the feral hogs.

The association paid five dollars per pair of wild boar ears turned in on July 20.

Wild hogs have multiplied in numbers over several decades in South Texas and are now accountable for millions of dollars in damage to agribusiness, crops and property, according to the state's AgriLife Extension Service.

Conditions (Continued from Page 8)

hunters in the southern part of the state," said Fitzsimmons. "The vast majority of our dove harvest occurs in September. Getting the feds to agree to a set September 14 South Zone opener beginning last year ensures hunting opportunity in the south every weekend in September when you consider the early whitewing days."

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 regular season in the South Zone, the aggregate bag limit is 15

with no more than two white-tipped doves.

All of the most up-to-date hunting regulations for the new season can be found in the Texas Outdoor Annual mobile app or online at OutdoorAnnual.com.

Hunters are reminded that licenses are on sale now for the 2019-20 hunting seasons and can be purchased through the agency's 28 law enforcement field offices, at more than 50 state parks and over 1,700 retailers across the state. Licenses may also be purchased online through the TPWD website or by phone at (800) 895-4248. Call center hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and there is a required \$5 administrative fee for each

phone or online transaction.

New this year, enhancements have been made to make the licensing process simpler and faster. "Expedited checkout" speeds the process of re-purchasing the same license items bought most recently within the last three years. It's also now easier to show proof-of-license. Now hunters can use a digital image of their license as proof-of-license for any hunting that doesn't require a tag, like dove hunting. Accepted formats include: a digital photo, an emailed receipt, within the Outdoor Annual app or the My Texas Hunt Harvest app, or online purchase record.

In addition to a hunting license, anyone born after

September 1, 1971, must successfully complete a hunter education training course in order to hunt legally in Texas. The TPWD Hunter Education certification is valid for life and is honored in all other states and provinces. More information about hunter education is available online. If you misplace your certification you can print a replacement online at no cost.

A Migratory Game Bird endorsement and Harvest Information Program (HIP) certification are also required to hunt dove. HIP certification involves a brief survey of previous year's migratory bird hunting success and is conducted at the time licenses are purchased.