

# Show what drives you!

If you live to hunt or fish, you can show off your passion for the outdoors with a White-tailed Deer or Largemouth Bass license plate. Each plate costs \$30, with \$22 going directly to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to support big game hunting and bass fishing in Texas. The Largemouth Bass plate is also available for trailers and either plate can be personalized for an additional \$40.

Order online today at [www.conservationplate.org/tpwd](http://www.conservationplate.org/tpwd) and your new plate will be ready in just two weeks!



## 2008-2009 Hunting Seasons Calendar

Cut out on dotted line, fold in half, laminate and carry for convenience. Folding in half again will make it wallet size.

Proposed 2008-2009 Hunting Seasons		
<b>Alligator</b>	22 core counties (by permit only) Remainder of the state	Sept. 10-30 Apr. 1-June 30
<b>Pronghorn Antelope</b>	by permit only	Oct. 4-12
<b>Dove</b> (Please report leg bands to 1-800-327-BAND) <b>see Important Notice</b>	North Zone Central Zone	Sept. 1-Oct. 30 Sept. 1-Oct. 30, Dec. 26-Jan. 4 Sept. 20-Nov. 2, Dec. 26-Jan. 20
	South Zone	Sept. 6, 7, 13, 14, Sept. 20-Nov. 2, Dec. 26-Jan. 16
	Special White-winged Dove Zone	Sept. 27-Oct. 31
<b>White-tailed deer</b>	Archery General: <b>*Special Youth Season</b>	Oct. 25-26, Jan. 17-18 Nov. 1-Jan. 4 Nov. 22-Dec. 7 Nov. 1-Jan. 18
	<b>North Texas</b> (200 counties) <b>Panhandle</b> (6 counties) <b>South Texas</b> (30 counties) <b>Late Antlerless and Spike</b> Edwards Plateau (39 counties) South Texas (30 counties) Muzzleloader (23 counties)	Jan. 5-18 Jan. 19-Feb. 1 Jan. 10-18
<b>Mule deer</b>	Archery General: <b>Panhandle</b> (36 counties) <b>SW Panhandle</b> (7 counties) <b>Trans-Pecos</b> (19 counties)	Nov. 22-Dec. 7 Nov. 22-30 Nov. 29-Dec. 14
<b>Javelina</b>	(Approximately 43 counties) (Approximately 50 counties)	Oct. 1-Feb. 22 Sept. 1-Aug. 31
<b>Squirrel</b>	<b>**Special Youth Season</b> <b>East Texas</b> (51 counties)	Sept. 27-28 Oct. 1-Feb. 1, May 1-31
	<b>Other Open counties</b> (see County Listings in current Outdoor Annual)	Sept. 1-Aug. 31

<b>Lesser Prairie Chicken</b>	By property (by landowner permit only) (see current Outdoor Annual)	Oct. 18-19
<b>Pheasant</b>	<b>Chambers, Jefferson &amp; Liberty counties</b> <b>Panhandle</b> (37 counties)	Nov. 1-Feb. 22 Dec. 6-Jan. 4
<b>Quail</b>	<b>Statewide</b> (all counties)	Oct. 25-Feb. 22
<b>Rio Grande Turkey</b>	Archery Fall Season: <b>*Special Youth Season</b>	Sept. 27-Oct. 31 Oct. 25-26, Jan. 17-18 Nov. 1-Jan. 4 Nov. 1-Jan. 18
	<b>North Zone</b> (122 counties) <b>South Zone</b> (26 counties) <b>Brooks, Kenedy, Kleberg &amp; Willacy counties</b>	Nov. 1-Feb. 22
	Spring Season: <b>North Zone (NZ)</b> (101 counties) <b>*Special Youth Season NZ</b>	Apr. 4-May 17 Mar. 28-29, May 23-24 Mar. 21-May 3 Mar. 14-15, May 9-10 Apr. 1-30
	<b>South Zone (SZ)</b> (54 counties) <b>*Special Youth Season SZ</b>	
	<b>I-Turkey counties</b> (11 counties)	
<b>+ Eastern Turkey</b>	<b>Spring Season Only</b> <b>East Texas</b> (43 counties)	Apr. 1-30
<b>Chachalaca</b>	<b>Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr &amp; Willacy counties</b>	Nov. 1-Feb. 22
<b>Rabbits and Hares</b>	No closed season.	

\* In all counties that have an open season for those species.  
\*\* In all counties that have a Oct. 1-Feb. 1 and May 1-31 Open Squirrel Season.  
+ Rio Grande and Eastern Turkey may be hunted in these counties.

**Important Notice:** Texas dove and early teal season dates are tentative pending federal approval. For final dove seasons, check the Texas Outdoor Annual when it comes out in July. September Teal Season will be set in mid-July and will be posted on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Web site by July 18.

Executive Director  
Carter P. Smith

Editor  
Tom Harvey



Life's better outside.™

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### TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

"To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

All inquiries: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744, telephone (800) 792-1112 toll free, or (512) 389-4800 or visit our Web site for detailed information about TPWD programs: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)

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Renew your Super Combo August 15!

Purchase licenses online at:  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us/licenses](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/licenses)



Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologists are acutely aware of the effects of weather on game populations, and on their reputations when predicting hunting conditions for the coming season. As one veteran biologist likes to quip, "Mother Nature can make us look like geniuses or idiots." Still, most feel the 2008-09 seasons will be average or slightly above average. And, in a state that arguably offers some of the best deer, turkey, dove, quail and waterfowl hunting in the nation, an average season can still furnish plenty of excitement. And with just a little rain at the right times, the experts say, the season could be very good in most parts of the state.

With good reproduction rates over much of the state the last couple of years, hunters should have plenty of game available. There should be an abundance of dove, particularly whitewings, in areas having available food and water supplies, and whitetail deer populations

have flourished thanks to ideal habitat conditions across much of the state.

With so much hunting opportunity waiting, the \$64 Super Combo license has never been a better bargain. The Super Combo is an all-in-one package that provides you with all the individual licenses and tags you will need to pursue just about any outdoor activity.

Super Combo licenses go on sale Aug. 15 wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold. You can also purchase a Super Combo online at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/licenses](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/licenses) through the TPWD Web site or by calling (800) 895-4248.

Whether you are wing shooting doves or quail; chunking lures at largemouth bass; rattling up big whitetail bucks; chasing reds in the salt-water flats; or any number of outdoor pursuits, the Super Combo can be your ticket to these wonderful opportunities for just a few pennies per hour.

## Looking Ahead to the Future

Like many of you, I am a bit smitten by any prospect to get out and hunt doves. It's something I look forward to every September ... sitting out under a bull mesquite tree by a stock tank, or along a tree line overlooking a sunflower field. Sometimes I limit out, most times I don't, and occasionally all I walk away with is a nice sunset. No matter the bag size, I never grow weary of the experience.

Dove hunting is still awfully good in Texas, but like so many wonderful things about our natural heritage, there is some cause for concern. Call counts show our mourning dove population may be declining about 0.7 percent per year, or about 25 percent in total since 1966. Call counts aren't a perfect indicator, so five years ago our biologists started dove banding research. Preliminary results indicate a possible drop in survival rates from the previous banding study (1964-76). That would support the call count trend, but more banding data is needed. (You can help—if you find a dove with a leg band, report it at (800) 327-BAND or [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov).) Similarly, there is universal concern among North American fish and wildlife agencies about another precious resource—people like you.

If you're reading this newsletter, you are a precious commodity. For decades, hunters and anglers have funded the lion's share of conservation work through license purchases and federal excise taxes. But beyond economic self-interest, we recognize another very important point: If you buy a Super Combo license, chances are you really understand conservation issues and are more likely to buy, vote and act in ways that will help our fish and wildlife. Also, your mentorship is the key to growing the next conservation generation.

Looking ahead, we face substantial challenges to safeguarding our heritage. That's why we are beginning to talk with constituents now about a possible license fee increase in the next year or two. We haven't increased Texas hunting and fishing license prices since 2004, when fees increased 16 percent overall. Since then, our operating costs have increased 26.5 percent.

In the long run, we need to explore new revenue streams besides what hunters and anglers pay. But regardless of the funding source, Texans appear willing to invest in conserving land, water, fish, wildlife and parks. In the last several years alone, Central Texans have voluntarily supported over \$250 million in bond and sales tax investments for conservation purposes. Survey after survey shows that Texans are willing to financially support enhanced conservation.

So as you head to the field—whether your destination is a sunflower field, bass boat, kayak or duck blind—take heart. There is reason to hope. And isn't it great knowing that just by enjoying the outdoors, you can be part of the solution? Here's wishing you a great season.



Carter P. Smith, TPWD Executive Director



## Another Mild Winter — Good News for Tropical Trio

With redfish and speckled trout numbers at near-record highs coastwide, Texas saltwater anglers should have little trouble this year landing some great memories.

For those looking for something a little different, there is even more good news: Another mild winter should increase the chances of hooking up with one of Texas' "exotic natives," the kind of gamefish people pay big bucks to stalk in warmer climes.

For many years, Texas anglers who wanted to jump a tarpon or tangle with a big snook were most likely to hop a flight to southern Florida, Belize or Costa Rica. Now, those species are no more than a day's drive away on the lower coast.

Snook up to 40 inches are common enough that some South Padre Island-area guides are now booking trips specifically targeting that hard-fighting species, as well as tarpon, which also are appearing in greater numbers. Jetties at South Padre Island as well as at Packery Channel near Corpus Christi are reliably giving up both species during the warmer months.

Rounding out Texas' new tropical trio is the feisty (and tasty) gray or mangrove snapper. The inshore relative of the red snapper is being found in larger numbers—and sizes—in every bay system in Texas. "Eating-size" mangrove snapper, considered to be about 12-18 inches by most anglers (there is no bag or size limit), can be found on mid-bay wrecks, platforms and reefs. Because the species hold tightly to structure, opportunities for bank anglers also abound around piers, jetties and bulkheads.

## Where the \$\$\$ Goes

Nearly one-third of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's annual budgeted funds comes from the Game, Fish and Water Safety Account (Fund 9). A large portion of the revenue comprising Fund 9 is generated from hunters and anglers in the form of license and stamp sales and boat registration and titling fees. Federal funds generated through excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment are also a part of Fund 9.

### Sources of Revenue for the Game, Fish and Water Safety (Fund 9) 2008 Estimated Revenues – \$157.2 Million

Federal Funds	\$35.1	22.3%
License and Stamps	\$88.6	56.3%
Boat Registration /Titling	\$21.2	13.4%
Other	\$12.3	8.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$157.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: State Comptroller's Biennial Revenue Estimate

These funds may only be used for fisheries and wildlife management and conservation activities, including, research, habitat management and acquisition, private lands initiatives, fish hatcheries and enforcement of game and fish laws.

An example of the agency's "user pay, user benefit" philosophy is the sale of certain stamps (such as migratory game bird, upland game bird, freshwater and saltwater sport fishing), which may be spent only for specific purposes as set forth in statute. Revenue from the upland game bird stamp, for instance, can only be used for research and management of upland species, such as turkey and quail. Migratory game bird stamp monies can only be used on programs affecting waterfowl and dove.

## Toyota Texas Bass Classic Boosts TPWD Outreach

The 2007 Toyota Texas Bass Classic provided \$250,000 to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to use to expose youth and non-traditional users to fishing and conservation of freshwater resources.

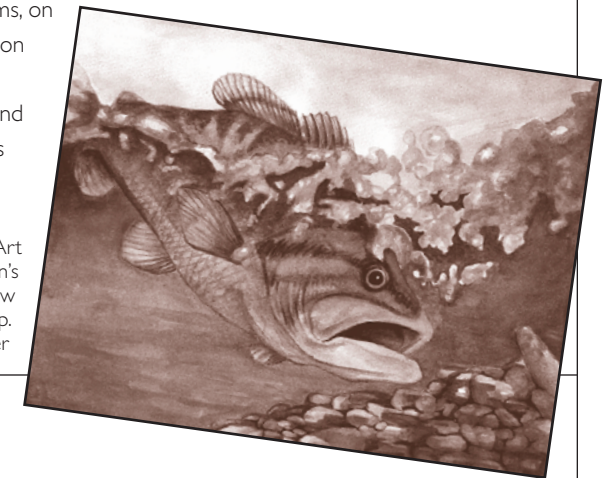
The bulk of the money was used to purchase fish for the Neighborhood Fishing Program. Nine public park lakes in Amarillo, College Station, Duncanville, Hurst, Katy, San Angelo, San Antonio, Waco and Wichita Falls received stockings of catfish in summer and rainbow trout in winter every two weeks to keep catch rates high. Research data show that of the 30,000 people who fished in these lakes, approximately half were youth or new to fishing, about two-thirds lived within five miles of the lake they fished, and about half fished only in Neighborhood Fishing lakes.

TPWD estimates that every \$16 spent on the program brings one new person into fishing. Each new freshwater fishing license sold brings TPWD \$28 for natural resource management, conservation and restoration. The goal is to expand the program to 20 lakes statewide and involve 75,000 different anglers annually.

Also funded was the Texas State-Fish Art Contest, which uses art to involve non-traditional users in fishing and conservation. Funds were used to create a traveling exhibit on the State-Fish Art Contest and to provide prizes for the winners and travel for them to attend the national awards ceremony in Minneapolis, MN, in July. More information on the contest can be found at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishart/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishart/).

Attracting and retaining new anglers were the goals of the "How to Fish" videos and the "Fish Texas" trailer. The 90-second "Fishing 101" videos are designed to be used in conjunction with TPWD programs, on the *Texas Parks & Wildlife* television show and on the Web site. The "Fish Texas" trailer takes fishing and conservation messages to events around the state.

2007 Texas State-Fish Art Contest winner Clayton Bowen's Guadalupe Bass is now used on a collector's stamp.  
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## We are on the hunt for your advice!

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is interested in your feedback on Big Time Texas Hunts and any ideas you may have to make it better. Please visit [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/btthcomments](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/btthcomments) to give us your thoughts. You can also sign up to receive next year's entry information by e-mail (instead of by mail) so that more of the proceeds can go to help increase public hunting.

