THE ART OF CONSERVATION

The The Art of Conservation

For more than a quarter of a century, Collectors Covey has published some of the finest wildlife and sporting artists. When you purchase special edition Texas wildlife stamp sets or prints from Collectors Covey, a share of the proceeds goes to support TPWD conservation efforts. Each year a set of collector stamps features artwork of a migratory game bird, upland game bird, saltwater fish, freshwater fish, and a native nongame species. Each set costs $20 and makes a great gift or personal collectible. Collector’s prints are also available for $14.50 unframed. Visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/shopcovey to shop for this year’s collection!

Visit Our Web Site

The TPWD Web site has a wealth of information, including:

Free outdoor e-mail updates! TPWD offers free e-mail updates about hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation news. Choose from trout stocking schedules, public hunting updates, red tide bulletins, public meeting notices, emergency site closings, hunter education classes, landowner workshops and more. See the “Sign up for e-mail updates” envelope icon on the TPWD home page at www.tpwd.state.tx.us (TPWD follows Public Information Act guidelines; your e-mail address will not be provided to any outside organization).

Video on the Web! Our Web site features video clips from our award-winning TV series about state parks, fishing and more at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/video

2007–2008 Hunting Seasons Calendar

In accordance with Texas State Depository Law, this publication is available at the Texas State Publications Clearinghouse and/or Texas Depository Libraries.

EDITORS
Philip Montgomery 
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NEED-TO-KNOW NEWS FOR SUPER COMBO HUNTERS AND ANGLERS

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

In all counties that have an open season for those species.

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 Sept.

Oct. 27-28

Proposed 2007–2008 Hunting Seasons

Alligator

Rio Grande Turkey North Zone (51 counties)
South Zone (21 counties)

Spring Season:

Proposed 2007–2008 Hunting Seasons

North Texas (200 counties)

North Zone (21 counties)

Special Youth Season

Rio Grande Turkey South Zone (4 counties)

Mosque Springs (23 counties)

Early Fall

Special Youth Season

North Zone (48 counties)

South Texas (30 counties)

Recommended by permit only

Other Open counties (see County Listing in Current Outdoor Annual)

Panhandle (43 counties)


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Here in Texas, those who cherish the outdoors know that richness of opportunity and the value of experience are worth more than all the gold and silver in the world. What really counts are the memories of a day spent catching a stringer full of pan fish with your youngest on his or her first freshwater fishing trip, the pounding of your heart as the biggest white-tailed buck you’ve ever seen cautiously approaches your ground blind or the taste of salt water splashed across your face as a 28-inch speckled trout does you in in last attempt at freedom before you guide it into your net. These experiences and countless others like them are almost priceless for those who spend their hard-earned dollars and limited free time in the great outdoors.

Whether you’re wing shooting doves or quail, chucking lures at largemouth bass, rattling up big bucks, chasing reds in the saltwater flats, or any number of outdoor pursuits, the Super Combo is your ticket to these wonderful opportunities for just a few pennies per hour. Super Combo licenses go on sale Aug 15 whenever hunting and fishing licenses are sold. You can also buy online on the TPWD Web site at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/licenses or by calling toll-free at (800) 895-4248. Not only does the Super Combo save money for the Lone Star State’s outdoor enthusiasts, but funds from license sales also provide revenue for conservation and preservation of our natural resources. Unlike sales taxes, hunting and fishing license revenue is dedicated by law for fisheries and wildlife conservation, including programs that stock millions of fish in lakes and bays across Texas and manage habitat for deer, turkey, dove, and other game. Your license dollars also fund law enforcement to keep the playing field level, to make sure everybody follows the rules so you can enjoy the outdoors when your turn comes.

NEED-TO-KNOW NEWS FOR SUPER COMBO HUNTERS AND ANGLERS
**New, Lower Laguna Madre Regulations to Aid Declining Seatrout**

New, lower bag and possession limits for spotted seatrout (“speckled trout”) in the Lower Laguna Madre will begin Sept. 1, 2007. The TPW Commission in April voted to lower both the bag and possession limit to five fish.

The reduction in the daily bag limit addresses a downward trend in the spawning stock biomass of spotted seatrout in the Lower Laguna Madre—a trend that runs counter to steadily increasing populations elsewhere on the coast.

Of particular concern to TPWD biologists is that spotted seatrout spawning stock biomass currently is about half what it was at the time of the 1983–1984 freeze, which resulted in a major kill of spotted seatrout and other species along the lower coast. A greater number of reproducing fish can help stocks recover faster after such a catastrophic event.

The new regulation applies to the entire Lower Laguna Madre, from Marker 21 in the Laredo to South Bay including the Brownsville Ship Channel and Arroyo Colorado, and to the base of the jetties at East Cut near Port Mansfield and Bravos Santiago Pass at South Padre Island. The Gulf beaches are not included in the area, but any boats fishing in Gulf waters and landing their catches within the regulation boundaries would be subject to the lower bag limits.

**Congratulations to the Winners!**

Each year, the Big Time Texas Hunts program raises hundreds of thousands of dollars for wildlife conservation and public hunting opportunities. Please see the enclosed brochure for all the details on this year’s great hunts. Hunters are selected through a random computer drawing. Following are last year’s winners:

**Grand Slam**
- Danny Joe Bennett, Victoria, TX
- Larry Lescher, Shapirg, GA

**Premium Buck Hunt**
- Duver Dale Eshler, Senda, TX
- James Ray Hrabovsky, Victoria, TX
- Garrett E. Taylor, San Antonio, TX

**Exotic Safari**
- John T. Kennedy, Lufkin, TX
- Houston P. Staine, Victoria, TX
- A. Ed Long, Joshua, TX
- Claudia Hopkins, Bonine, TX
- Mark G. Bryan, Bryan, TX
- Stephen B. Harpold, Kerrville, TX
- Michael C. Coker, Tyler, TX
- Laron L. Hobbs, Houston, TX
- Walaca Benton Hughes, Spring, TX

**Whitetail Bonanza**
- Samuel Cardenas, San Antonio, TX
- Brian C. Laieste, Graham, TX
- Eddie A. Long, Joshua, TX
- Claudia Hopkins, Bonine, TX
- Mark G. Bryan, Bryan, TX
- Stephen B. Harpold, Kerrville, TX
- Michael C. Coker, Tyler, TX
- Laron L. Hobbs, Houston, TX
- Walaca Benton Hughes, Spring, TX

**Bass Classic, ShareLunker Program Connect at Lake Fork**

The Toyota Texas Bass Classic presented by Enterprise Rent-a-Car held on Lake Fork in April 2007 is the latest testament to the quality of bass fishing in Texas. The Professional Anglers Association teamed up with Toyota, TPWD and other sponsors to showcase great fishing, promote conservation and raise money for youth outreach in the first-of-its-kind tournament.

Lake Fork has produced not only the current state record largemouth bass but also the six largest Texas bass and 35 of the top 50. While TPWD inland fisheries biologists manage the fishery, their work would not be possible without angler support through fishing license purchases. Also due credit are the Sabine River Authority, which works closely with TPWD in the management of the lake, and the almost universal catch-and-release ethic among anglers and guides on Lake Fork.

Reservoirs all over Texas benefit from what happens on Lake Fork, which has produced more than half the entries into the Budweiser ShareLunker program, which allows anglers to donate live fish to hatcheries in an attempt to produce more and bigger bass in Texas. These fish are stocked into public waters, and someday you might find one on the end of your line.

The ambitious undertaking to return eastern wild turkeys to suitable habitat in Texas was made possible through a cooperative partnership between TPWD private landowners and the National Wild Turkey Federation. Systematically over a 10-year period beginning in the mid-80s, TPWD released more than 7,000 eastern wild turkeys to sites with sufficient habitat to support a turkey population. Using funds from hunting licenses and stamp sales, TPWD defined the trapping costs of other states that supplied wild-trapped turkeys to Texas. The NWTF helped coordinate trapping and shipping logistics between the states.

And, while turkeys continue to flourish in many areas of East Texas, there are places where the birds have not done as well as biologists had anticipated. The TPWD staff is evaluating the old release site data for clues and training current researchers to help evaluate why some releases worked better than others. Biologists will be looking to a group of researchers from Stephen F. Austin University to help solve the mystery. The data from the next three years will be used to test whether land management and weather conditions affected turkeys on three different sites in Nacogdoches, Anderson and Houston counties. About 80 wild-trapped turkeys from Tennessee and South Carolina were stocked at each location.

As with the previous sites where turkeys were released, no turkey hunting will be allowed for several years on those properties. Private landowners volunteer their land and resources to assist in the effort. There is still plenty of hunting available for both eastern and Rio Grande turkeys in Texas, and to maximize opportunity, the TPWD Commission adjusted season dates in South Texas starting with the 2008 spring hunting season, which will open March 15.

**Study to Guide Eastern Wild Turkey Management**

Proof that TPWD’s eastern wild turkey restoration initiative is a booming success can be found in the woods, where wily gobblers can now be heard in more than 40 East Texas counties.

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**Bay Team Seeks Flounder Pounders This Fall**

TPWD is inviting angler to join the Coastal Fisheries Bay Team at special events on the middle and upper coasts this fall. The program, launched in 2005, recruits experienced anglers to help catch brood stock for hatchery programs. This fall, the focus is flounder.

“Since fish population levels have been down in Texas bay systems, we are giving up for hatchery production with the southern flounder,” said Robert Adams, coastal TPWD fisheries biologist, adding that all flounder larvae will be stocked back into the bay from which their parents came. Bay team participants will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a Garmin Etrex GPS unit, Shimano Cinch Reel, Roca Gips and a Shimano Calcutta 2000 on a Texas Tackle Factory Rod. Regardless, every participant will receive a T-shirt and commemorative lure. The prizes, equipment and program are made possible through support from Anheuser-Busch, Inc. For more, contact Adam at Robert.Adam@tpwd.state.tx.us or (361) 215-7340.

**Game Wardens: Conservation’s Front Line**

Why are fishing and hunting so great in Texas? There are many reasons (our state is naturally blessed, for one), but here’s one factor:

Every day every night, for many decades, Texas game wardens have epitomized community-based conservation law enforcement. They put their lives on the line. They take educational messages to schools. They save lives during hurricanes and floods. And they do it all with irrepressible humor and a positive, can-do outlook.

Sometimes they pay the ultimate price. This happened May 30, when Tyran “Ty” Patterson lost his life trying to recover a drowning victim in the rain-swollen Paliyu River. It happened March 17, when Justin Hurst was killed in the line of duty by a suspected poacher on his 34th birthday.

Justin and Ty’s stories illustrate not only the danger our game wardens face daily but also how their role has expanded. Ty’s sacrifice underscores a water safety role which came to national prominence in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Justin began his TPWD career in 1995 as a wildlife biologist, specializing in waterfowl management along the mid-coast, before he became a game warden in 2002.

Long gone are the days when game wardens focused solely on “poaching.” Today’s game wardens must be educators and trainers, food rescue specialists, boat safety officers, and environmental crime investigators. Game Warden Academy cadets must possess a high school diploma, which many now come with wildlife or fisheries science backgrounds.

Such broad responsibilities require quality training. Since the 1970s, cadets have trained at an aging facility in Austin. This fall, we are beginning a multi-million dollar fundraising effort to build a new state-of-the-art training facility.

We have an outstanding new location in Hamilton County thanks to an agreement with the Palo Alto Activities League. Now we need to raise the necessary funds to build needed facilities.

**Texas Game Warden Training Center plans include a new education building with library, computer lab, classrooms and 100-seat auditorium an armory to securely store firearms and house a Fire Arms Training Simulator; a gymnasium for fitness and defensive tactics training a water rescue building with a 25-meter heated pool for aquatic survival and rescue training an emergency vehicle operations course a firing range and cadet cabins for lodging during each academy.

The new center will be connected with the combination of private donations and corporate sponsorships, and every Texan has a role to play in this endeavor.

Look for complete information on the Texas Game Warden Association Web site at www.texasgamewarden.com or phone toll-free (800) 322-8992.

Texas game wardens have helped many people in many places. Now they could use our help. Please help.

Robert L. Cook, TPWD Executive Director