

State

Drought hurts deer herds

Experts believe hunting still to be adequate

The summer heat and drought were rough on Texas wildlife, but most experts feel the deer hunting season that opens Saturday will be more than adequate.

"We suspect that overall, the deer population is below the 3 million mark for the first time in 12 years," said Charles Winkler, big-game program director for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, who based his conclusion on preliminary figures from wildlife census counts.

"But that still leaves a heck of a lot of deer out there," he said Monday.

Hunting season for both mule deer and white-tails begins a half-hour before sunrise Saturday in all sections of the state except the Panhandle, where the season starts Nov. 22, and extreme west Texas, where it opens Nov. 29. The season ends Jan. 4.

Last summer's extended drought caused widespread starvation of deer in some sections of south Texas, Winkler said, noting that the estimated population is down 50 percent in western south Texas.

Although the Brackettville area in Kinney County was probably hardest hit, said Dr. Dwight Guynn, area wildlife specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service in Uvalde, "this is still within the realm of fluctuations that have been experienced in the past."

He said the 50 percent decrease probably applies in Kinney County but estimated the decrease in surrounding counties at about 30 percent.

The figures may not be as disconcerting as they appear.

Parts of the south Texas brush county experienced overpopulations of deer in recent years,

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Guynn said, and the dry weather may have helped bring them under control.

He predicted, nevertheless, that the earlier overpopulation and dry weather would produce smaller animals with smaller antlers.

In other areas of south Texas — where rainfall, particularly that brought by Hurricane Allen, was more abundant — deer are more plentiful and of higher quality.

"Generally, as you move east through the rainfall patterns (in south Texas)," Winkler said, "the populations are as high as last year and higher in some areas. Along the coast, it is a little higher."

Winkler said the eastern part of Texas, where little drought effects were felt, will provide adequate game, maybe even more than last year.

In the Hill Country, the state's deer-hunting stronghold, summer die-offs were recorded, but

the area had an overpopulation of up to 60 percent in some places before the drought began, Guynn said.

Even with dry weather and tolls taken on the herd in previous years, deer still abound in the Hill Country.

"An average harvest in the Hill Country is about 10 percent of the herd," Guynn continued. "But a 25 percent harvest is necessary to keep the herd from increasing, and a harvest over 25 percent is needed to decrease the size of a deer herd significantly."

Winkler said continuing good weather coupled with a solid food supply could mean good Hill Country hunting throughout the season.

Other regions of Texas reporting slightly lower deer populations are areas of the Edwards Plateau and parts of north central Texas, sections also particularly hard hit by drought.

Shifting discussion from the hunted to the hunter, Winkler said he had one prime piece of advice for shooters going afield Saturday.

"Be sure of what you are shooting at," he said. "That's the main thing I try to get across."

To help hunters distinguish deer from other hunters, he recommended everyone in the wild wear some item of fluorescent orange clothing.

"Deer are color blind," he said, "so they can't distinguish this color."

Because deer have a weak sense of eyesight, a skillful hunter can make the most of it, Guynn said.

"Deer fail to recognize still objects, yet they're quick to pick up even the slightest movements," he said. "By remaining motionless, even though in full view of the deer, the hunter stands an excellent chance of going undetected and may get the chance to squeeze off a shot at close range."

Finders keepers in Japan makes truck driver \$317,500 richer

TOKYO — A Japanese truck driver, wearing a home-made, bullet-proof vest over a jogging suit, dropped in at police headquarters Tuesday and claimed \$473,900 he found wrapped in a cloth on a Tokyo street eight months ago.

"I ran about two kilometers (1.25 miles), then on an impulse decided to claim the money and took a taxi to the police office," Isao Onuki, 42, said, showing the check for 100 million yen to newsmen.

Since the real owner had not claimed the money by last Saturday, Onuki became the new possessor under Japanese law.

After taxes, Onuki's net take will be \$317,500. Police had held the money, a bundle of 10,000-yen notes, since Onuki turned it in.

When Onuki first spotted the cloth bundle on a corner on Tokyo's famous Ginza April 25, he said he thought it contained old newspapers, which he could sell to scrap dealers.

Onuki, who quit his truck-driving job sometime after finding the bundle, arrived for the "pickup" protected only by his vest. He then headed to the bank with the same protection to deposit the bonanza.

He explained he fired his 10 guards, who were to accompany him, because of what he called a difference over security arrangements.

Police are still puzzled about the origin of the money, saying the absence of any claims strongly suggests the cash was a payoff for illegal deals.

After the brief encounter with the press and TV cameras, Onuki left for the bank to deposit the money.

Street to honor King opposed

LUBBOCK, Texas — Advocates of a move to rename a street in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. have been rebuffed repeatedly, but they also have refused to accept alternative commemorations to the slain activist.

At a Human Relations Commission meeting Monday night, only 13 people showed up at the Mae Simmons Community Center to discuss alternative means of honoring the late civil rights leader. Participants

indicated they would accept nothing less than the renaming of Quirt Avenue, a major east side thoroughfare in Lubbock.

Vera Newsome, representing the United Political Action League, said her organization has mailed letters to City Council members requesting that Quirt Avenue's name be changed to Martin Luther King Boulevard.

"I don't think the council members are listening to what the people

are saying," she said. At two council meetings on the proposed name change, only two persons spoke against the change while hundreds supported it, she said.

An HRC representative said the council has failed to give reasons for opposing the name change. However, he said, in the past council members have argued that a precedent would be set, leading to hundreds of requests to rename streets.

Some council members have also argued that the idea to rename Quirt

Avenue is without full support of the minority community, he said.

Proponents for the change argue that surveys conducted in other cities show no overflow of requests to rename streets after street names were changed to honor King.

"They can take a rock 'n' roll singer," an HRC member said, "and put a statue of him in front of the Civic Center. What has he (hometown celebrity Buddy Holly) ever done for human rights?"



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