

Hunters' Edition Advertiser Index

4th Street Coin Laundry.....	11
Adamsville VFD.....	19
Advanced Window Tint.....	27
AMVETS	26
Bottle Shop.....	28
Brown Feed Store	17
Capital Farm Credit.....	21
Country Inn.....	13
Country Kitchen	13
Cummings Fencing.....	10
Donut Palace	14
First Texas Bank	24
G's Steakhouse.....	2
Glenda's Wagon Wheel Cafe.....	24
Harold Harton Real Estate	17
Herrmann Feed & Supply.....	9
Hoffpauir Ford-Mercury.....	6
Jackson Buildings.....	10
Kirby Dozer Service	23
Kuker Company.....	7
L&M Ranchwear.....	13
Lampasas Builders Mart.....	8
Lampasas Co. Chamber of Commerce.....	5
Lampaas Hardware.....	15
Lawson Implement.....	25
Lucy Creek Arms.....	25
McDonald's	22
Morgan Roberts Welding & Fencing.....	16
Mustang Equipment.....	17
Myrick Taxidermy.....	18
Oakalla VFD	20
P&R Processing.....	10
Physical Therapy Clinic	23
Ranch Connection.....	4
Sheppard & Sheppard Dozing.....	21
Storm's Drive-In	27
Sulphur Creek Deer Processing.....	12
Texas Land Bank	14
Texas Pawn	20
Truck Stuff.....	8
United Country Real Estate.....	19
Wal-Mart.....	16
Windsor Foods.....	9
Yumm Factory Cafe.....	2

Publisher/Editor: Jim Lowe
Co-publisher: Gail Lowe
Managing Editor: Lisa Carnley
Staff Writer: David Lowe
Ad Sales: Jan Griffin
Ad Layout & Design: Brenda
Smith and Bonnie Leese
Content Layout & Design: Lisa
Carnley
Photo Editing: Gayle Lang

A special thanks to our guest contributors Mat Taylor, Harold Harton, John Johnston and Jed Dunning.

The Lampasas Dispatch Record (ISSN-87501759), is published semi-weekly by Hill Country Publishing Co., Inc., 416 S. Live Oak St., Lampasas, TX. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Lampasas Dispatch Record, P.O. Box 631, Lampasas, TX 76550-0631. Mailing address for the Lampasas Dispatch Record is P.O. Box 631, Lampasas, TX 76550-0631. Phone (512)556-6262. One-year subscriptions, payable in advance, are \$35, in Lampasas; \$45 elsewhere in Texas; and \$55 out-of-state.

The cover...

This Seth Taylor photograph of a buck in Lampasas County shows excellent antler growth, despite low rainfall and average forage conditions during the spring and summer.

The photo shows that this buck exceeds the county's antler restrictions for the 13-inch inside spread.

Hunters can expect average season

By MAT TAYLOR
Special Correspondent

Every year about this time, hunters start wondering, "Will this be a good deer season or not?"

Several factors will affect the answer, and they include condition of deer habitat, deer numbers and weather. Although the official forecast from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has not been released, game biologists in Central Texas have made some observations in the area and offer insight into what hunters may expect for the general deer season.

Mike Krueger, TPWD Edwards Plateau Wildlife District Leader and former Lampasas County technical guidance biologist, said the dry conditions last winter put bucks in less than optimal condition for spring antler growth and affected the latter stages of pregnancy in does. Also, the long dry summer and early fall also affected fawn growth and antler development.

Fawn survival rates in the district are below the average, and the same holds true for antler development and quality for the 2008-09 season.

The Edwards Plateau Wildlife District includes the 25-county area of Lampasas, Bell, Burnet, Coryell, San Saba, Crockett, Schleicher, Sutton, Val Verde, Edwards, Menard, Kimble, Kerr, Real, Bandera, McCulloch, Mason, Gillespie, Kendall, Llano, Blanco, Williamson, Travis, Hays and Comal.

Harvest numbers of bucks and does was less in the 2007-08 season than in the previous two seasons. That does not mean there were less deer, but it could be attributed to an excellent growing season in 2007 that produced a good cover of weeds, brush and grass for adequate food and reduced visibility for hunters. Even with the smaller harvest numbers, the Edwards Plateau has higher harvest rates than any other region in the state.

Recent rains have encouraged some fall deer forage, but Krueger said deer should be attracted to feeders. "If it stays dry and acorns are slim, there'll probably be a stampede every time a corn feeder goes off."

He said overall the region has a younger age structure in the buck population which will limit the num-



PHOTO BY MAT TAYLOR

Even with the dry weather this year, wildlife biologists say most deer show good body condition, and deer have been coming readily to corn feeders.

ber of "trophy bucks," but any county has the potential to produce impressive bucks. The best chance will be in areas with excellent management programs and places that surround them.

Derrick Wolter, TPWD biologist for Lampasas, Bell and Coryell counties, said the deer season should be average to below average. Recent spotlight deer surveys have indicated the fawn survival rate in this area was about 50 percent, however Wolter said he has reports of from 20 to 65 percent fawn survival.

The biologist also said the local deer population is about the same as last year, but buck antler quality will be average to below average.

"However, even with the dry weather, most deer have good body condition," Wolter said. "This is probably due to carryover good range conditions from last year's above-average rains."

He also agreed that deer have been coming readily to corn feeders, and this will make it easier to collect this year's venison.

Rio Grande turkey and quail seasons also will open in conjunction

with deer season. Biologists say there probably were lower hatching rates for turkey and quail this year. Krueger said he did not expect very many quail would be available for hunters in the Edwards Plateau region.

Rio Grande turkeys had a fair to good brood survival rate during 2007, and any gap in turkey production during 2008 won't be felt for two to three years since turkeys live much longer than quail.

The consensus is that hunters are facing an average to below-average season in Central Texas. With many deer coming to corn, however, and with poorer antler quality, it would be a good season for hunters to concentrate on taking more does to reduce the overall deer population and improve the buck-doe ratio.

Mat Taylor is a Kempner native and retired Soil Conservation Service employee. An avid hunter and wildlife photographer, Taylor is a former staff writer for the Lampasas Dispatch Record.

Hunters' 10 Commandments are reviewed

Hunters in the field or at the range should review and observe the Ten Commandments for Safe Use of Firearms and Archery Equipment:

1. Treat every firearm or bow and arrow with the same respect you would show a loaded gun.
2. Always point the muzzle of a firearm in a safe direction.

3. Be sure of your target and of what is in front and beyond the target.

4. Unload firearms and unstring conventional bows when they are not being used.

5. Handle firearms, bows and arrows, and ammunition very carefully.

6. Know your safe zone of fire, and stick to it.

7. Control your emotions when hunting.

8. Wear hearing and eye protectors.

9. Don't drink alcohol or take drugs before or during the handling of firearms or archery equipment.

10. Be aware of any other circumstances that require additional caution or safety measures.