

Shot placement plays important role in hunts



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lung while aiming for the offside shoulder. This shot gets one lung and if it is at the right height, it will take out the spine also.

The quartering toward you shot is a marginal one and should be taken only if you are fairly sure you can hit the spine. You should put your crosshairs on the neck just in front of the shoulder as if aiming for the back-side shoulder. This should take out the spine and the back shoulder.

And of course the broad-side shoulder/spine shot, with the right caliber/bullet, usually

will drop the deer in its tracks.

You may have heard the hunting phrase "Texas heart shot." This refers to a shot at a deer that is going directly away from you. This is not an efficient shot placement and can lead to a very messy cleaning job -- or worse, a wounded deer. I highly suggest this shot never be taken.

Fortunately for me, I have a choice of calibers to hunt with based on the situation. If you want only one rifle for whitetail hunting in Texas, I suggest one of the following calibers: .260 Remington, .6mm Remington, .243 Winchester, .308 Winchester, .30-06 and .270. The last three calibers are good for larger game as well.

Recent ammunition sales records show the old .30-30 has fallen from the number-one position as the most popular cartridge for deer hunters. It was replaced by the .30-06 and the .270. Keep in mind this is a nationwide sales statistic. This decline is partially due to the fact

that two years ago Winchester closed the production plant that made the Winchester Model 94 .30-30.

Study the illustrations that accompany this article and while in the field watching deer, try to visualize where the spine, lungs and heart are on the animal. As hunters, we should all strive for one-shot, humane harvests.

Bullet choice is crucial. If you purchase factory ammunition, buy only that designed for the soft-skin whitetail deer. Some brands post this information on the box. Varmint bullets may explode on impact, and bullets for big game and deep penetration may go right through a deer without expanding.

One of the best deer bullets on the market is the Barnes TSX. Upon impact, it opens up like the petals of a flower and retains most of its total weight. This makes for a very efficient bullet with hardly any peripheral damage due to bullet disintegration.

Plus, this bullet is extremely accurate. It is available in commercial ammunition made by Weatherby, Federal, Black Hills, Norma and Cor Bon.

When field-dressing your deer, that is the best time to evaluate your shot placement and bullet performance. You can learn a lot. We all learn from our experiences, both good and bad.

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John would like to give special thanks to Texas Parks and Wildlife's Terry Erwin, Hunter Education coordinator, and Barnes Bullets.

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