



## Good dove season expected across Texas

By Jennifer Whitlock  
Field Editor

Despite some changes in regional populations due to increased rainfall and February's winter storm, hunters across the Lone Star State should see an average to good dove season this year.

Overall, bird numbers are average and should offer good prospects for hunters, according to Owen Fitzsimmons, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)'s Webless Migratory Game Bird program leader.

"We had that big freeze back in February and numbers are down in the northern parts of the state, but numbers are way up in the south zone," Fitzsimmons said in an [interview](#) with the [Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network](#). "So, I think the south zone is looking to have a really good regular

season this year. Statewide, we're looking at bird numbers at just about the average long-term average."

Although wetter weather was a welcome change from drought conditions, Fitzsimmons said drier years are a mixed blessing to Texas dove hunters. When it's dry, birds tend to concentrate in larger numbers near food and water sources in the fall. But this year will be different as birds have multiple food and water sources to choose from, lessening the odds that they will be concentrated in any particular place.

There will be plenty of dove throughout the season, too.

"We've had really good hatches later in the year because we had such big storms in April and May. Birds are nesting in these good conditions later into the summer. So, I think we're going to be looking pretty good in early September, if you can find those concentrations of birds," Fitzsimmons said. "But once the birds start moving from the states north of us down into Texas later in September and October, because we have so much food and water on the landscape, we're going to really hold those birds. So, I think it's going to be a pretty good steady season all the way through."

In terms of **dove species**, he expects to see populations trending closely to overall numbers. There might be slightly fewer mourning doves in the northern portion of the state, but the south zone will have plenty of both mourning and white-winged dove.

And that plentiful supply will give South Texas hunters a little more time to hunt white-winged dove. Fitzsimmons said the south zone's **special white-winged days** were extended by two days this year to provide hunters more opportunity and time to enjoy the sport.

"Instead of the usual four days, we're going to have six," he said. "That'll be the first two weekends of September—Friday, Saturday and Sunday with the usual noon-to-sunset shooting hours."

Bag limits remain the same in 2021. Hunters are limited to 15 birds a day, with no more than two white-tipped dove. During the special white-winged

dove days in the south zone, hunters may take no more than two mourning doves and two white-tipped doves per day. Possession limits for all zones are three times the daily bag limit.

The 2021 season information is below:

**North Zone**

Sept. 1 – Nov. 12, 2021

Dec. 17, 2021 – Jan. 2, 2022

**Central Zone**

Sept. 1 – Oct. 31, 2021

Dec. 17, 2021 – Jan. 14, 2022

**South Zone**

Sept. 14 – Oct. 31, 2021

Dec. 17, 2021 – Jan 21, 2022

**Special White-winged Dove Days in South Zone:**

Sept.3-5, 2021 and Sept. 10-12, 2021