

# Texas Wildlife Association

*"Working for tomorrow's wildlife ... TODAY!"*

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## **Texas Big Game Awards Celebrates 33<sup>rd</sup> Year This Hunting Season**

**New Braunfels** – Celebrating its 33<sup>rd</sup> year, the Texas Big Game Awards (TBGA), a partnership of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA), continues to be the leader in recognizing the contributions that landowners, land managers and responsible hunters make to managing and conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat on Texas' private and public lands.

To kick off the 2023-2024 hunting season, the TBGA would like to encourage the hunters and landowners of Texas to enter the TBGA this coming fall hunting season. The TBGA is a free, certificate-based awards program recognizing hunters, landowners, youth, and first-time hunters across the state.

"The TBGA is unique because it acknowledges that a quality big game animal is much more than what is hanging on a wall," said David Brimager, Chief Operating Officer at the Texas Wildlife Association as well as a Certified Wildlife Biologist. "It's a complete process that begins with a landowner's decision to do the right things for habitat and ends with a hunter's well-placed shot. We realize that somewhere along the way that hunter made a conscious decision to embrace our hunting heritage and become a responsible sportsman."

"By bringing attention to the positive impacts of hunting, whether they're ecological or economic, TBGA strengthens our hunting community," Brimager said. "TBGA encourages ethics, recruits new participants, makes business better for those enterprises connected to hunting and champions natural resources education. It is a win for hunting, hunters and habitat."

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### **A Few FAQ's about TBGA**

#### **What sets the TBGA apart from traditional "big buck" contests?**

First, it's free. There is no entry fee. Second, hunters enter it after they've harvested an animal. Most traditional contests require hunters to register before the season begins in anticipation of the hunt. Third, it's statewide. Most traditional contests are limited to a county or a region. Fourth, TBGA emphasizes education. We want everyone who attends a TBGA event to leave knowing something that they didn't when they arrived.

#### **What species does the TBGA recognize?**

White-tailed deer (typical, non-typical/high-fence and low-fence categories); mule deer (typical, non-typical/high-fence and low-fence categories); pronghorn antelope; desert big horn sheep; and javelinas.

#### **Who is eligible for TBGA recognition?**

Any licensed hunter in the state of Texas who meets the program rules. We have a first-harvest

category to honor those people, of any age, who have taken their first animal and entered the community of hunters. We have a youth division for hunters 17 and younger. Then, we have the scored entry category that is open to all hunters, regardless of age, whose animals meet a minimum scoring requirement.

### **How does a hunter qualify for TBGA?**

To account for the difference in habitat types across Texas, the TBGA is divided into eight eco-regions: Trans Pecos, Panhandle, Cross Timbers, Edwards Plateau, Post Oak Savannah, Pineywoods, Coastal Prairies and South Texas. Each eco-region has a minimum qualifying score for the species that occur there. To qualify in the scored entry division, a hunter must have his entry scored by an official TBGA measurer. There are more than 1,000 trained scorers statewide. To find one, the hunter can access the list at [www.texasbiggameawards.org](http://www.texasbiggameawards.org). If the score meets the minimum qualifications for the eco-region where it was harvested, the hunter simply fills out an application, available on the website or from the scorer, and mails it in to TBGA.

Hunters in the first-harvest and youth divisions do not have to have their entries scored unless they want to enter them in the scored entry category. First-timers and youth just fill out an application and submit it to TBGA. The deadline for entry each year is March 1 annually. Animals are eligible only during the year they are harvested.

### **Is there anything else that people need to know about TBGA?**

We've recently launched the Trophy Search Database on [www.texasbiggameawards.org](http://www.texasbiggameawards.org). It allows users to search our database by county, type of animal and hunter's name. Also of note, Carter's Country Outdoor Stores, a statewide sponsor, operates a scholarship program in conjunction with TBGA. Each year, the company gives \$20,000 in college scholarships to students majoring in a natural resource field.

### **Where can people go for more information?**

Our website, [www.texasbiggameawards.org](http://www.texasbiggameawards.org) is the place to go for information on all things related to TBGA.