

For Immediate Release

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Partners Launch Axis Deer Control Project in Texas Hill Country

Fredericksburg, Texas – The Hill Country Alliance, Texas Tech University’s Department of Natural Resources Management, and partners have launched the 2021 Axis Deer Control Project and are encouraging landowners and hunters to participate.

Axis deer are an exotic species that were introduced from India to the Texas Hill Country in the 1930s. Since their introduction, this species has proliferated in several portions of the Hill Country, adversely impacting agricultural production, native wildlife, and riparian, or creek-side, habitat.

The goals of the Axis Deer Control Project are to raise awareness about the impacts of free-ranging Axis deer, recognize land stewards for their efforts to control this exotic species, and support research that will improve control efforts.

“There are certainly landowners that are managing Axis and other exotic species on their properties in a thoughtful, sustainable manner that doesn’t impact their neighbors, which is great. This project is intended to spark conversations about another scenario, where landowners with low-fences are seeing large herds of free-ranging Axis deer hinder their agricultural and stewardship goals,” notes Daniel Oppenheimer, Hill Country Alliance Land Program Manager.

Participants will be entered into a drawing for prizes from local businesses. In order to participate, hunters and trappers are encouraged to bring a frozen, complete lower jawbone from each harvested Axis deer to one of the scheduled drop-off points. The first set of drop-off dates is as follows:

- *February 9th at Stonewall Smokehouse in Stonewall from 5 pm – 6:30 pm*
- *February 10th at Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Office in Fredericksburg from 8 am – 12 pm and 1 pm – 5 pm*
- *February 12th at Bandera County River Authority in Bandera from 1 pm – 3 pm*
- *February 18th and 19th at Blanco County AgriLife Extension Office in Johnson City from 9 am – 5 pm*
- *February 19th at Bandera County River Authority in Bandera from 1 pm – 3 pm*
- *February 22nd and 23rd at the Texas Tech University Llano River Field Station – Admin Building in Junction from 9 am – 12 pm*

Complete jawbones with teeth included are required for scientific analysis, to be completed by a graduate student at Texas Tech University. This research will enhance the understanding of the Axis deer population growth and dynamics in the Hill Country. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will support research by providing logistical support for collecting samples.

Lower jaw bones should be brought uncleaned (i.e. gum tissue intact and remaining muscle tissue still attached) and frozen in a bag labeled with the GPS coordinates, sex, and date harvested. If GPS coordinates are not known, please include the name of the nearest town and public road intersection.

Unlike native white-tailed deer, which have a set hunting season, exotic Axis deer may be hunted year-round with a hunting license; they may also be trapped. Note, the project partners are unable to provide hunters with information about where they may hunt Axis deer and may not have the capacity to respond to such inquiries.

Project collaborators include the Hill Country Alliance, Texas Tech University's Department of Natural Resources Management, Gillespie and Blanco County AgriLife Extension Offices, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Llano River Watershed Alliance, Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District, and Cibolo Center for Conservation.

The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country. Visit us at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

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