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### **Texas Big Game Awards to Feature New Rules Changes for the 2011-2012 season**

**San Antonio, Texas** – Hunters and landowners participating in the Texas Big Game Awards (TBGA) this upcoming hunting season will see some new rules and changes for this year's program, including the creation of low-fence and high-fence categories for white-tailed deer and mule deer.

The TBGA is a free, certificate-based program with the purpose of creating awareness of the important role that ethical hunting and sound habitat management play in the lives of our young people and to the ecosystem over which we must be responsible stewards.

New rules and changes for the 2011-12 season will include:

- New TBGA website: [www.TexasBigGameAwards.org](http://www.TexasBigGameAwards.org)
- The TBGA will create low-fence and high-fence categories for white-tailed deer and mule deer.
  - Low-fenced Category – to be considered for this category, the animal(s) must be harvested from a property with no game-proof fencing or a property that has at least one mile of its perimeter with no game-proof fencing.
  - High-fenced Category – to be considered for this category, the animal(s) must be harvested from a property which is completely surrounded with game-proof fencing or the property has less than one mile of non-game proof fencing or no fencing.
- All animals making the "Top 5" in each category, both low- and high-fenced, will be re-scored (or be initially scored) by an official B&C measurer, and the original cape must be provided, upon request. This includes white-tailed deer, mule deer, and pronghorn antelope.
- Any hunter who has a valid state of Texas hunting license and lawfully harvests a white-tailed deer, mule deer, pronghorn, javelina, or bighorn sheep in Texas during the current year's hunting season is eligible for entry into the TBGA, contingent on additional entry requirements for each recognition category.

- The following species will be eligible for entry into the TBGA: white-tailed deer, mule deer, pronghorn, javelina, and bighorn sheep. Each animal must meet the following **NEW** eligibility requirements:
  1. The animal must be native to the state of Texas.
  2. The animal must have been wild-raised. Animals that were born or bred in captivity and subsequently released into the wild are not eligible.
  3. The animal must not have been trapped and/or released at any time during its life.
  4. Animals that were trapped, and then released under a TPWD approved university/institute scientific study, are eligible.
  5. The animal must have been lawfully harvested in the state of Texas by a licensed hunter during the current year's hunting season, with the exception that javelina will be accepted until Feb. 15<sup>th</sup> of the following hunting season to allow for submittal of a clean skull.
  6. Minimum scoring criteria will apply for all scored categories.
- Any ranch in the state of Texas is eligible for program recognition if an animal harvested on that ranch is entered into the Scored Category, First Harvest, or Youth Division. Ranch recognition is optional, at the landowner's discretion.

#### Additional Information on the Texas Big Game Awards:

Under this program, awards are given to all "Scored Entries" that meet minimum regional requirements, and there are no entry fees. Deadline to enter is February 15, 2012. Hunters who harvest a white-tailed deer, mule deer, or pronghorn this season meeting the minimum net score B&C requirements for their respective Region may be eligible to receive recognition in the "Scored Entry" category, as well as the landowner of the property from which the trophy was taken.

Hunters of any age who harvest their first big game animal in Texas are eligible for the "First Big Game Harvest" category. Hunters who harvest a white-tailed deer, mule deer, javelina, or pronghorn are eligible whether they harvest a buck or doe, regardless of score of the animal in this category.

And, any youth hunter (under 17 years of age when they purchase their hunting license) with a Special Resident Hunting License who harvests a white-tailed deer, mule deer, javelina, or pronghorn is eligible for the "Youth Division," whether they harvest a buck or doe, regardless of score.

The TBGA will continue its "Best of 2011-2012 Field Photos Contest" sponsored by Game Guard. A panel of judges will look at all field photos that are part of an official TBGA entry this season and recognize the top 20 of the season. Prizes will be awarded to the top three photos. Look for the photos to appear in a fall 2012 issue of *Texas Wildlife*, the official magazine of the Texas Wildlife Association.

All program information, program history, entry rules and minimum scores are also featured on the website. You can also find a local scorer in your area for official entry forms or download the First Harvest/Youth Division forms on-line, as no scorer signature is required for those entries. The TBGA website will also feature photos of entries that are entered this season. Last season, over 500 photos were submitted via email. You can check out links to great TBGA Sponsors on the TBGA website, too.

For more information on the Texas Big Game Awards, entry information, or for a local certified TBGA scorer, please visit at [www.TexasBigGameAwards.org](http://www.TexasBigGameAwards.org) or call (800) 839-9453, ext. 114 for more information.

**About the Texas Big Game Awards:**

Celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> season, the Texas Big Game Awards (TBGA) is a partnership between the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA). This program recognizes the contributions that landowners, land managers and responsible hunters make towards the management and conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat on Texas' private lands. The Texas Big Game Awards program is designed to recognize 1) the quality of big game animals in Texas, 2) the hunters who harvest these animals, 3) the land managers who produce these animals through their management efforts, 4) the importance of our hunting heritage, and 5) the achievements of young and new hunters. For additional information on the Texas Big Game Awards, please visit <http://www.TexasBigGameAwards.org/>.

**Texas Big Game Awards Sponsors**

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