

TEXAS BIG GAME AWARDS (TBGA) PROGRAM RULES 2021-2022

Program Sponsorship

The Texas Big Game Awards is co-sponsored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Texas Wildlife Association (TWA).

Program Goals

The Texas Big Game Awards is designed to promote big game hunting in Texas and to promote and encourage sound habitat and wildlife management. The program recognizes:

1. The importance of our hunting heritage.
2. The landowners who work to achieve healthy habitats.
3. The quality of big game animals in Texas.
4. The achievements of young and new hunters.
5. The hunters who harvest these animals.

Program Regions

Eight geographic regions are recognized by the TBGA (see TBGA website for detailed map). All program entries will be recognized within the TBGA region where the animal was harvested. Minimum scoring criteria for Scored Entries differ among program regions.

Program Eligibility

(For all categories including First Big Game Harvest and Youth Division)

1. **Hunters** Any hunter who has a valid state of Texas hunting license and lawfully harvests a white-tailed deer, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, 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.
2. **Animals**
 1. The animal must be native to the state of Texas.
 2. The animal must have been wild-raised.
 3. Animals that were born or bred in captivity and subsequently released into the wild are not eligible.
 4. The animal must not have been trapped and/or released at any time during its life, including approved university research study animals.
 5. The TBGA program will no longer accept scored entries from release sites for five (5) years of the last release date. This will affect all properties with pen-raised deer, Trap/Transport/Transplant deer (TTT), and Deer Management Permit (DMP) releases after March 1, 2017.
 6. The TBGA Scoring Committee has established specific guidelines to aid in detecting the attempt of an individual to enter an entry from a property with pen-raised deer, Trap/Transport/Transplant deer (TTT), and Deer Management Permit (DMP) releases. Should there be any doubt in a TBGA Official Scorers mind about the authenticity of an entry, he/she should contact the TBGA office to notify us of an incoming entry which may be ineligible.
 7. **NEW FOR 2021-2022:** The High Fence Division will be broken out into two categories.
 - a. **High Fence** – This category represents those landowners/ranches with pure native genetics which are indigenous to those properties where the animal was harvested, with no history of capture or breeding to be recognized. Participants who wish to be recognized in this

category will be asked to declare to the best of their knowledge, that the animal is from a property having a native indigenous herd.

- b. **High Fence Released** – This category represents those landowners/ranches with enhanced genetics. This includes any properties which have introduced any type of genetic enhancement to include but not limited to properties with pen-raised deer, Trap/Transport/Transplant deer (TTT), and Deer Management Permit (DMP) releases.

8. The TBGA Scoring Committee has the authority to then implement the following verification process:

- a. After the hunter gives permission, the TBGA may obtain a hair sample from the original cape as well as antler material samples by means of drilling a 1/16-inch diameter hole on the backside of the right antler or horn, near the base. The hole will be drilled just deep enough to go through the outer surface and into the under-surface, providing a DNA sample to be examined for proof that the antler and original cape are from the same animal.
- b. The sample will be placed in a plastic bag and submitted along with the completed and signed TBGA entry form to the TBGA, whereby the TBGA Scoring Committee will have the test completed to determine if the entry can be legally entered into the TBGA program.

8. If the TBGA Scoring Committee determines that the material removed from the antler and hair do not match, or if the hunter denies the TBGA's permission to drill the antler, the entry in question will be disqualified from entry into the TBGA program. Final acceptability in such a case will be made by the TBGA Scoring Committee and documentation of the hunters attempting such deception.

9. Polygraph Test: All hunters, including minors, agree to take a polygraph test if required by the TBGA Scoring Committee. By the submission of their entries, all entrants, at any time, may be subject to a polygraph test. Any entrant refusing to submit or abide by the results of a polygraph test is subject to immediate disqualification and withholding of any awards.

10. The animal must have been lawfully harvested in the state of Texas by a licensed hunter during the current year's hunting season.

11. Minimum scoring criteria will apply for all scored categories.

3. Ranches

Any ranch in the state of Texas is eligible for program recognition if an animal harvested on that ranch is entered into the Scored Entry Category, First Harvest, or Youth Division. Ranch recognition is optional at the landowner's discretion.

4. Low fenced and high fenced categories for white-tailed deer

- a. **Low Fenced Category** – To be considered for this category, the animal(s) must be harvested from a property where the harvested big game species has a reasonable opportunity to move freely beyond the borders of the property from which the animal was harvested.
- b. **High Fenced Category** – To be considered for this category, the animal(s) must be harvested from a property which is completely fenced with game-proof fencing, or a property where fencing would deter or prevent reasonable movements of the big game species from the hunting property to neighboring property/land. If a property has a section of ranch boundary which is low-fenced or any other fence type that may not be considered game-proof fencing, and would like to be awarded in the low fenced category, that decision will be made at the discretion of the TBGA Scoring Committee. *High Fence subcategories are listed above in number 7.*

Recognition Categories

1. **Scored Entries:** All qualifying scored entries will be placed into one of five categories (listed below). All scored entries must meet minimum regional scoring criteria (see Minimum Scoring Criteria, below). Selection of typical vs. non-typical category will be at the discretion of the hunter under the guidance of the certified TBGA scorer. Any entry that does not select which category they want to be entered in, the TBGA will make that decision at their discretion. A deer must have at least one abnormal tine (point) to be categorized as a non-typical.
 - a. Typical white-tailed deer
 - b. Non-typical white-tailed deer
 - c. Typical mule deer
 - d. Non-typical mule deer
 - e. Pronghorn antelope
 - f. Javelina
 - g. Desert Bighorn Sheep

2. **First Big Game Harvest:** Any hunter (regardless of age) who harvests his/her first lifetime big game animal (white-tailed deer, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, javelina, or bighorn sheep) in the State of Texas during the current year's hunting season is eligible for recognition. Any big game animal (subject to program eligibility: animals above), regardless of sex or score, is eligible. A hunter may receive a First Harvest Certificate only once during his/her lifetime. Eligibility examples: A hunter who has previously harvested a white-tailed deer in Texas and harvests their first mule deer, pronghorn antelope, or javelina this year is not eligible. A non-resident hunter who has previously harvested deer, pronghorn, or javelina in other states but takes their first Texas deer this year is eligible. Landowner recognition is also available.

3. **Youth Division:** Any hunter hunting under the authority of a Youth Hunting License who lawfully harvests any white-tailed deer, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, javelina, or bighorn sheep (subject to Animal Eligibility, above) during the current year's hunting season is eligible. Any big game animal (subject to Program Eligibility: Animals, above), regardless of sex or score, is eligible. A maximum of one Youth Division certificate will be issued per hunter per year. Landowner recognition is also available.

Entry into Multiple Categories

Any individual who has a qualifying scored entry and is also eligible for either the First Big Game Harvest category or Youth Division may receive certificates for both categories. An individual **may not** receive both a First Big Game Harvest certificate and a Youth Division Certificate during the same program year. Youth who enter the First Big Game Harvest division will not receive a Youth Division certificate during that program year.

2021-2022 Entry Forms

Entry forms for all categories are on a one-page form. Completed entry forms must be mailed to Texas Wildlife Association in San Antonio and must be postmarked **no later than March 1st** immediately following the close of the current year's hunting season. Xeroxed and/or faxed entry forms will be accepted on a case by case basis. Incomplete entries will not be accepted and will be returned to the hunter.

Scored Entry Forms

All Scored Entry Forms must include the following:

- 1) Hunter information must be complete.
- 2) Harvest information must be complete.
- 3) Ranch information must be complete.
- 4) The form must be signed and dated by the applicant. If the applicant is a minor, the application must also be signed by the applicant's parent or legal guardian.
- 5) The Scoresheet must be completed, in ink, by the official TBGA scorer who scored the animal.
- 6) The Scoresheet must be signed and dated by the official TBGA scorer.
- 7) If an entry is scored by an official Boone and Crockett (B&C) measurer who is not a TBGA scorer, we will accept an original, official Boone and Crockett scoresheet. The hunter may be asked to provide additional information needed by the TBGA program, which the hunter must complete and return to the TBGA prior to March 1st to be recognized.

All Scored Entries are Subject to Re-Score

The top five entries in each category in each region will be subject to re-score and the entry must have been scored by an official Boone and Crockett (B&C) measurer, either initially or upon rescore. Scorers are encouraged **not** to submit application forms for the hunter but to rather encourage them to submit their applications as early as possible. The original cape must be provided upon request. Photos of all top 5 statewide entries may be required prior to the statewide awards ceremony.

First Big Game Harvest and Youth Division Entry Forms

Entry forms are available online at www.TexasBigGameAwards.org, or from certified scorers and the TWA office. All First Big Game Harvest and Youth Division Entry Forms must meet the following requirements:

- 1) Entry category must be indicated.
- 2) Hunter information must be complete.
- 3) Harvest information must be complete.
- 4) Ranch information must be complete.
- 5) The form must be signed and dated by the applicant. If the applicant is a minor, the application must also be signed by the applicant's parent or legal guardian.

Scoring

- 1) All Scored Entries must be scored by a certified TBGA scorer or an official Boone and Crockett (B&C) measurer.
- 2) Scoring will follow all Boone and Crockett Club guidelines as published in the most recent edition of Measuring and Scoring North American Big Game Trophies, published by the Boone and Crockett club.
- 3) The TBGA will utilize net green scores for the Scored Entry category for ranking criteria.
- 4) Animals in velvet may not be scored unless the velvet is removed prior to scoring.
- 5) Animals with split skulls may not be scored.
- 6) Antlers with broken tines may be measured to the point where the breakage occurred. Repaired antler material may not be measured. But if the hunter has the broken piece of antler material, and you as a scorer determine it fits the break, then the broken piece may be added into the score prior to the repair being made by a taxidermist.
- 7) "Shopping for Scores" is prohibited. If it is determined that an animal has been scored by more than one scorer, the entry will be removed from the program, at the discretion of the Scoring Committee.
- 8) All Scored Entries are subject to re-score.
- 9) Scorers are encouraged to inform hunters that the top five entries in each category in each region will be subject to re-score and the entry must have been scored by an official Boone and Crockett measurer, either initially or upon re-score. A list of official Boone and Crockett measurers can be found on the TBGA website.
- 10) STAGS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ENTRY: Stag is a word that is also used to identify a male animal that is castrated after maturity, a male animal with injury to testicles, genetic defect such as hypogonadism, or cryptorchidism, or any other condition which would cause antlers to grow continuously. Such stags, which occasionally occur in the wild in the antlered categories, are not eligible for entry because their antlers continuously grow. They also never lose their velvet and the antlers are never shed.

Re-Scoring

- 1) The TBGA Scoring Committee may choose to re-score any entry submitted to the TBGA.
- 2) The top 5 entries in each category and region shall be re-scored prior to the regional banquets.
- 3) ALL TOP FIVE ENTRIES IN EACH CATEGORY MUST BE OFFICIALLY SCORED BY AN OFFICIAL B&C MEASURER, either as an initial entry score or as a re-score.
- 4) A TBGA Scoring Committee member may choose to waive re-scoring of any entry (such as if scored originally by a Boone and Crockett measurer.)
- 5) Decisions to modify the original reported score for any re-scored animal shall rest entirely with the TBGA Scoring Committee and are final.
- 6) Refusal by a hunter to allow re-scoring shall be grounds for removal from the TBGA.
- 7) A hunter may petition the TBGA Scoring Committee, in writing, if he/she feels that the original score is incorrect. This petition must be received by the TBGA

Scoring Committee no later than April 1 immediately following the current year's hunting season.

- 8) All Texas Slam awardees animals must be re-scored prior to the statewide awards ceremony.

Minimum Scoring Criteria

The following regional minimum scores are established for entry into Scored Categories.

White-Tailed Deer

White-tailed Deer Region	Typical Minimum Score	Non-Typical
1. Trans Pecos	125	140
2. Panhandle	130	145
3. Cross Timbers	130	145
4. Edwards Plateau	130	145
5. Post Oak Savannah	125	140
6. Pineywoods	125	140
7. Coastal Prairies	125	140
8. South Texas	140	155

Mule Deer

Mule Deer Region	Typical Minimum Score	Non-Typical
1. Trans Pecos	145	160
2. Panhandle	145	160

Pronghorn Antelope

Pronghorn Region	Minimum Score
1. Trans Pecos	70
2. Panhandle	70
3. Cross Timbers	70

Javelina

Javelina Region	Minimum Score
1. Statewide	13 4/16"

Scorers

- a. Certified TBGA scorers are unpaid volunteers, and serve at the discretion of the TBGA Scoring Committee.
- b. All scorers must be trained and certified by a member of the TBGA Scoring Committee.
- c. Current scorers shall attend a refresher course at the discretion of the TBGA Scoring Committee. Refusal to attend a refresher course shall be grounds for removal from the list of TBGA certified scorers.
- d. Each scorer is responsible for obtaining their own scoring equipment, including the most recent edition of Measuring and Scoring North American Big Game Trophies, published by the Boone and Crockett Club.
- e. All TBGA certified scorers shall be active in the TBGA. Any TBGA scorer who does not measure an accepted entry for two consecutive years may be removed from the scorers list, at the discretion of the TBGA Scoring Committee.
- f. TBGA scorers may not measure an animal that they harvested or a member of their immediate family harvested.
- g. TBGA scorers shall measure all potential entries presented to them in a reasonable time, manner and condition. Appointments may be required, at the discretion of the TBGA scorer. TBGA scorers who refuse to score an animal may be removed from the TBGA scorers list, at the discretion of the TBGA Scoring Committee.
- h. TBGA scorers may also maintain a copy of each entry form that is submitted for program entry by having a copy made, or taking a photo of the entry form.
- i. TBGA scorers should, immediately after scoring, transmit the score form to the hunter for mailing to TWA.
- j. TBGA scorers may, at their discretion and with the hunter's permission, mail the Scored Entry form for the hunter, although this practice is strongly

discouraged. In the event that a score sheet mailed by the TBGA scorer is not received by TWA, the TBGA scorer assumes complete responsibility and the entry will not be accepted if it is not received by March 1st. Multiple instances of this situation shall be grounds for removal from the TBGA scorers list.

- k. TBGA scorers who hold entry forms and mail them at a late date to TWA may be removed from the TBGA scorers list, at the discretion of the TBGA Scoring Committee.
- l. If it is determined that a TBGA scorer received compensation for scoring an animal, that TBGA scorer will be removed from the TBGA scorers list, at the discretion of the TBGA Scoring Committee.
- m. The TBGA Scoring Committee may, at its sole discretion and for sound reason(s), remove any TBGA scorer from the scorer list.

Javelina Scored Entry Category

- 1) Score will be based upon cleaned skull width and length; similar to B&C standards for cats and bears.
- 2) All Certified TBGA scorers are allowed to score javelinas for entry in the program. Only scorers who are comfortable should participate. Additional scoresheets can be sent from the TWA office.
- 3) The creation of a scored entry category for Javelina, a big game species in Texas, is expected to provide for promotion of the species as a big game species and provide another species from which land managers may benefit from their management efforts. Since Javelina are only found in three states in the United States, it is expected that such a category will promote an otherwise underutilized renewable nature resource.

Recognition, Awards, and Ceremonies

- 1) An Awards Ceremony will be held to honor program participants. These awards ceremonies will be coordinated by the Texas Wildlife Association. Scorers may access this information through the TBGA website. www.TexasBigGameAwards.org.
- 2) TBGA offers a college scholarship program (Freshmen-Juniors) annually. Further information on this program may be accessed via the TBGA website.
- 3) All program participants will be recognized at an awards ceremony where they will receive a certificate acknowledging their entry. Participants who are unable to attend the ceremony will be mailed their certificate.
- 4) The top three Scored Entries in each region and category will receive a special gift.
- 5) A Statewide Ceremony will be coordinated by TWA in conjunction with the TWA Annual Convention. The top three animals statewide, in each fenced category, will be recognized and receive awards at the Statewide Ceremony.
- 7) No awards of monetary value will be given.