

Scenario 1

Big Buck Dilemma

You are a serious deer hunter hunting on a very expensive lease in Culberson County, Texas. It is the final day of the season. You have had an excellent year, taking two good bucks and two mature does. This morning you are using LAMPS permits provided to the landowner to help him reduce the deer herd to the prescribed level determined by a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department biologist. Thus, you are hunting with doe tags while your buddy is trying to fill his buck tags at a spot that has been active for the past several days about a half mile away. You have been watching a flock of turkeys for about a half hour when a monster buck walks into the opening around the feeder. You have invested most of the past three seasons trying to get a clean shot at this trophy buck, always settling on decent deer in the past few days of the season. Until this morning, every previous sighting this year has been before or after legal shooting hours or brief glimpse as he crossed a road or a narrow opening. This is the first time you have had a clear shot at him during legal shooting hours for those three years. When you split up before dawn, your buddy said, "if you see a good one, shoot him for me." This buck clearly qualifies as a "GOOD one". You have no doubt that he is Boone and Crockett material and that he has a great chance to win the Texas Parks and Wildlife Big Buck Contest.

Outline your course of action.

Scenario 2

Hunting Deer along Public Waters

You are new to Texas and have found that gaining access to land for hunting is challenging unless you are willing to part with a substantial amount of money or have friends who are feeling generous. In addition to your Hunting and Fishing license, you have purchased an annual public hunting permit. You applied for the lottery hunts in the public hunting permit manual, but your usual luck with drawings held and you were not drawn for any of them. While prospecting for good fishing spots, you have found several places where you can launch or take out a canoe on a river in Uvalde County. Deer and javelina sightings were common on your fishing trips, and early fall sightings included several excellent bucks. Hunting from a canoe seems to be an excellent tactic and the water is public once you get on the river. Outline the legal and ethical considerations involved. Discuss any restrictions with respect to your strategy that must be considered.

Scenario 3

Hunter Choice, Antler and Sex Restrictions, and Landowner Relations

You are hunting whitetail deer on your lease in Cooke County on the final day of the general season. Late in the afternoon you manage to bag a small buck. You shot a doe while walking out on the ranch road to get your truck. You are pleased to have some venison, having had only a few days to hunt, all late in the season after your lease mates have hunted the ranch hard. While you are processing the deer to get them into the walk-in cooler at the ranch headquarters, the landowner drops by for a visit.

After some preliminaries, he asks if you would be willing to stay a couple more days to assist him in reaching the prescribed deer management objectives during the Special General Season that starts at sunrise the next morning. You still have two tags on your license, one doe tag and one buck tag. In addition, the landowner has 10 doe tags that he needs to fill in order to reach a management objective. Those, too, are available to you in addition to your tags. You make a quick call, then agree to stay a couple days to help him meet his management goals.

The land owner states that any deer taken in excess of your personal tags are yours if you want them. Alternatively, you can donate them to several processors who work with Hunter's for the Hungry group. There is a \$20 processing fee for each animal to defray the processing and packaging costs. As he is leaving, he reminds you that only spikes and does are legal in this season.

Early the next morning you enter a stand that "feels good" to wait for shooting time. Shortly after you get settled, a pair of spike bucks feed into a shooting lane. Your binoculars reveal that the closer buck has brow tines at least an inch long. The more distant buck has long, curved spikes with no visible points coming off them. Unfortunately the true spike is shielded from anything except a head shot by the other buck. You are a good shot, but a head shot would require precise shot placement, and even a small error could result in wounding the animal and a difficult recovery.

As you are deciding what to do, a doe larger than either buck enters the opposite end of the shooting plane. She has her head down and is quartering away from you, offering a clean shot. You decide to try to take her, then try for the legal buck if he delays. At your shot the doe goes down. The two young bucks bolt a few yards and stop. They are standing quartering away and facing the downed doe. Their ears are up, covering the bases of their antlers from your position. You know that your host is convinced that spikes are genetically inferior and predisposed to poorer antler quality. He is adamant about shooting spikes any time a legal chance presents itself. The bucks are acting nervous and are only a couple yards from dense oak brush. Once into that cover, any chance at them would be difficult at best. Discuss the potential challenges and their consequences then select a course of action for this situation.

Outline your course of action, giving reasons for those choices.

Scenario 4

“Canned” Hog Hunts on Public Lands

Billy Bob and Eugene trap feral hogs for local land owners. They are paid for their services by local landowners, and they get to keep the hogs. Shoats have a ready market, but the larger hogs, particularly the boars, are much less desirable to most folks who handle feral hogs. Because they had no real market for them, Billy Bob and Eugene started started dumping the bigger boars on a nearby state recreation area. Soon they found that there were hunters willing to pay to hunt hogs. So they decided to kill two birds with one stone: get rid of the hogs permanently and make some money as guides while doing so. Their service was in demand because the guaranteed their hunts. No hog, no pay was their motto. They could use the same dogs they used in capturing hogs, and they offered hunts for archers, rifle or pistol shooters and even those who wanted to use a spear or a knife.

They knew that feral hogs can be a challenge, so they gave themselves an edge. They planted caged hogs on the public recreation area. When one of them went to “check the dogs” he would release the hog where the dogs could bay it. With the hog out of the pen and the dogs baying, the other member of the team took the “client” into the recreation area to locate the hog and either shoot it or use a long knife or spear to kill it. Generally the “hunter” took the head or had it cleaned and shipped to him. The meat was left to the guides for “dog food” since they sated that the meat on these old boars was rank smelling, musky to the taste, and tough.

Customers did not know that the entire affair was staged from beginning to end with the outcome planned and orchestrated. Their “hunts” were conducted on public lands, almost entirely at night.

Please comment on both the legality and the ethical position of such hunts.