



Air Gun Hogs & Exotics

story by
DUSTIN VAUGHN WARNCKE



O

NE OF

my fondest
memories growing
up was shooting my
grandfather's old Winchester .177 caliber air rifle
at empty soda cans on my grandparent's property. I'll
never forget those days.

Many of us grew up using airguns for target practice and to learn the basic fundamentals of shooting. When I started exploring the world of modern air rifles and pistols for today's hunting, I soon realized things were in a different league than they were back then.

Today's airguns aren't what your grandpa used to shoot. Sure, spring operated break-open airguns are still on the market (or springers, as we call them in the airgun realm), but a whole new breed of airguns is among us now.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ▶

TEXAS Outdoor Nation

54 ▶ TF&G REPORT: NEWS OF THE NATION
Reported by **TF&G Staff**

54 ▶ TEXAS HOT SHOTS
Trophy Photos from **TF&G Readers**

56 ▶ TEXAS DEPT. OF DEFENSE
by **Stan Skinner** and **Dustin Ellermann**

60 ▶ TEXAS DEPT. OF CONSERVATION
by **Will Leschper** and **Andi Cooper**

62 ▶ TEXAS COASTAL FORECAST
by **Eddie Hernandez, Mike Holmes, Mike Price, Chris Martin, Mac Gable** and **Cal Gonzales**

70 ▶ TEXAS FISHING HOTSPOTS
by **Tom Behrens, Dustin Warncke** and **Dean Heffner**

80 ▶ SPORTSMAN'S DAYBOOK
Tides and **SoLunar Data**

TEXAS FISH & GAME



TEXAS Outdoor Nation

PCP (Pre-charged Pneumatic) airguns are lightweight, powerful, and virtually recoil-free. They pack the punch of a "powder burner" gun, but are powered by air. What's more, airguns are fairly inexpensive to shoot when compared to loaded or even reloaded firearm ammunition. They also shoot cleaner than firearms, leaving less fouling and residue to clean up after you are finished shooting.

Although PCP airguns may cost more than their firearm counterparts, ammunition is fairly reasonable, and it is becoming more and more available via online retailers. This is especially true within respect to big-bore airguns, which typically use cast lead ammunition. Also, this new breed is more than capable of handling large game at surprising ranges.

Hunting hogs and exotics with today's revolutionary and innovative big-bore airguns is a different experience, but not far removed from hunting with a firearm.

I have hunted many animals in the past

with archery equipment or firearms but hunting solely with airguns is a newer experience for me. One of my favorite Texas hunting ranches, DB Hunting Ranch (www.dbhunting.com), offers a wide variety of hunting opportunities, and I recently visited DBHR for an airgun hog hunt.

I own a few air-powered rifles and pistols and chose the Airforce Texan from Airforce Airguns (www.airforceairguns.com) as my weapon of choice for this hunt. As you can gather from the name, the Texan is manufactured right here in our great state. The Airforce Texan is the most powerful production PCP airgun on the market today.

I own a Texan chambered in .45 caliber and love this gun for many reasons. It is powerful, accurate, and an overall incredible hunting weapon, well suited for just about any

big-game-sized beast in the Lone Star state—or the rest of the nation for that matter.

I can typically get eight shots per fill of the air tank on this rifle. Refilling one of these PCP guns is as easy as acquiring a used scuba or carbon fiber air tank and a universal refill assembly.

You can even get your air tank refilled at your local dive shop where you would normally go for scuba gear. It's much easier to refill your rifle with an air tank like this than with a hand pump. Trust me, I've done both!

Although it's not yet legal to hunt native wildlife, such as whitetail deer with an airgun, the entire spectrum of exotic species and wild hogs we have here in Texas are fair game. So, numerous opportunities are available for you to take an airgun afield to fill the freezer and maybe even garner a trophy for your wall.

Although many options such as .22 and .25 caliber small bore airguns can do the job on larger wild game if the shot placement is exact,



42nd Annual

HOUSTON FISHING SHOW

Fishing Boats & Fishing Tackle

**Largest FISHING SHOW
in the Southwest**

MARCH 8 - 12, 2017

Fishing Experts Representing Area Lakes
 Toledo Bend • Rayburn • Conroe • Livingston • Lake Fork • Freeport
 Port O'Connor • Port Aransas • Port Mansfield • Corpus Christi
 Mexico • Alaska • British Columbia • Louisiana • Brazil

ONE PRICE FOR EVERYTHING
 Admission: Adults - \$9.00
 Children (6-12) - \$2.00
 Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 12:00 - 9:00 pm
 Saturday: 10:00 am to 7:00 pm
 Sunday: 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

DAILY SEMINARS

KIDS' CLINIC
**Saturday & Sunday
at 2 pm**
 Fishing Clinic with
FREE Tackle Boxes

*Sponsored by
Fishing Tackle Unlimited
Plano and 2 of Us Bass Club*

**SPRING FLOUNDER
TACTICS**
**Saturday, March 11
at 1:30 pm**
 By Chester Moore
*Editor in Chief
Texas Fish and Game Magazine*

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER
1001 Avenida De Las Americas "A" - Downtown Houston

Thousands
of Tackle and Boat
Items Reduced for
Sale at the Show!

DON'T
MISS
IT!

Watch video of Dustin's air gun hog hunts:

[fishgame.com/2017/02/
air-gun-hogs-exotics/](http://fishgame.com/2017/02/air-gun-hogs-exotics/)



I am a fan of using guns in these smaller calibers for predators such as coyotes, foxes, and bobcats as well as small game such as rabbits and squirrels.

For larger game, such as wild hogs and larger exotic game, the minimum size chambering I recommend is .308, which is the beginning of the big bore class of airguns. Many modern big bore airguns are even as big as .50 caliber.

As with powder burners (firearms), the smaller the caliber of lead slug going down range, the flatter the trajectory. So, I was delighted to find out that Airforce will chamber the Texan in .308 and .357. Although I love my .45 caliber, the two smaller calibers showcase even flatter shooting trajectories and numerous other bullet options.

You can find cast lead airgun bullets from various manufacturers or even cast your own. For hunting big game critters, I highly recommend using only all lead slugs so you get the proper penetration and expansion.

Modern day big bore airguns are similar to black powder rifles in that muzzle velocity is slower than a firearm. The Texan, for instance, shoots a lead bullet at about 900 to 1,000 feet per second. As such, it's slower than many traditional firearms, but it hits like a sledgehammer. It's like shooting a .45 ACP handgun load out of a long-barreled rifle, except you are shooting a heavy lead bullet powered by a

metered burst of air.

If you are new to hunting hogs or exotic big game species with airguns, I would recommend you stay inside 100 yards for your first couple of hunts. Depending on where you live, you might not see a shot farther than that. Nevertheless a modern PCP airgun can reach out well beyond 100 yards. For general airgun hunting, I would keep most shots inside 250 yards if possible, so you can assure a quick and ethical kill.

Target shooting and hunting with airguns

in the off season provides hours upon hours of enjoyable fun. To learn more about this sporting tradition, check out our TF&G podcast, The Best of the Outdoors, hosted by yours truly at www.FishGame.com—or download the show on your mobile device. On our podcast, we talk about year-round hunting opportunities and many other topics, including hunting with airguns.



IT'S NOT THE SIZE THAT MATTERS, IT'S THE MOTION.

**NEW! MAD[®]
SPIN-N-STRUT
MOTION DECOY**



Model MD-735
MADE IN U.S.A.



- No electronics
- No batteries
- No noise
- No worries

The simple, reliable pull-string operation of the MAD[®] Spin-N-Strut™ brings trophy tom's screaming in.



The only difference between the NEW Spin-N-Strut and the bird now in your sights is a heartbeat.



FLAMBEAUOUTDOORS.COM

©2017 Flambeau Outdoors

MAD[®]
BE A MAD MAN[™]