

# Texas Exotics

## Overview & Regulations

Axis deer / Chital | *Axis axis*



Texas' exotic animal species are as varied as its people. These animals can range from medium to large sizes and include various species of non-native mammals and birds (mostly flightless). The majority are kept in Central and South Texas, the former being home to the most confined animals, while the latter keeps the majority of free-range animals.

Hunting is one of the most common reasons for keeping exotics. Most exotic game species don't have a closed season or bag limit, so long as the owners of the animals and/or the lands they're kept on grant permission to hunters. The hunter must also possess a valid hunting license, must not hunt on private land, and may not possess the carcass of an exotic without the owner's permission. Some exotics are also kept for conservation efforts, as many species are threatened in their native habitats. They may even be reintroduced to their home after a time.

Anyone wishing to import and/or maintain exotic animals must meet federal and state import regulations/restrictions. The state requires a license for operating a zoo, animal park, exotic meat operation, or otherwise keeping animals caged. They will also periodically be subject to unannounced inspections.

All regulations are subject to change. Check with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas Animal Health Commission, and the Texas Department of Health to verify current regulations and restrictions.

## Exotic Species

Any animal or fowl that is not indigenous to Texas is considered an exotic. Species include, but are not limited to:

- Aoudad Sheep
- Axis Deer
- Cassowary
- Elk
- Emu
- Fallow Deer
- Nilgai Antelope
- Ostrich
- Red Deer
- Rhea
- Russian Boar
- Sika Deer



Nilgai antelope | *Boselaphus tragocamelus*



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