



LEE COUNTY WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION



October 2012

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979-542-2753

Game Cameras, Tools in Wildlife Management and for Fun

Trail cameras also known as game cameras are weatherproof outdoor cameras equipped with infrared motion sensors that trigger the camera to take pictures any time an animal crosses the sensor's beam. The use of game cams by deer hunters has grown during the last few years as the quality has increased and prices have come down. Game cameras are a fun way to monitor your deer herd. A good hunter or outdoors person can usually do some pre-season scouting and get a pretty good idea of the number of deer using an area or feeder. As you scout you are looking for sign that may tell you where a big buck might be hanging out. You see the large tracks, rubs on trees, the scrapes and worn trails, all telling you a story of what is happening, but not necessarily when or for sure what is

using that trail.

Hunting is not the only use for these handy tools, trail cameras can be used to collect information to help you manage your deer herd but they can just plan be fun to see what photos you can get. I have seen people use them to get photos of the fox pups being raised under their deck or to figure out what time that armadillo is rooting up your yard. Like setting a trotline or trap, I am always excited to get out early the next morning to see if I have caught anything. These cameras can be the same way. I am always excited to look through the photos to see what it captured. I like setting my camera in unusual places and hoping to capture either animals doing unusual things "when they think no one is

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Keep the Wildlife Photo Contest in Mind

While you're out and about this fall and into the spring keep those cameras handy. We want to see your best wildlife photos at the spring meeting. We will be **awarding the top three places** for handheld and trail camera categories. This means more people have an opportunity to win.

You are welcome to send your photos to me as you take them, and I will start compiling a collection. Please be sure to have your name as part of the file name for each photo. I also need to know what WMA you are a member of and if the photos are trail camera or hand held if it isn't obvious. You can

enter as many photos as you want, but please have the file names changed accordingly. I receive photos from members of Fayette County WMAs also. So help me make sure I get your photos to the correct file. The only rules are that the photo was taken in Lee County during the past year and isn't of a dead animal.

Please have your photos in to Greg Pleasant's office, in person or e-mail, by January 25. The photos will be judged and awards will be given during the annual meeting on February 1st. My email address is tpwbiologist@bluebon.net

Trail Camera continued

(Continued from page 1)

watching” or better yet unexpected animals. It is interesting to see what predators are checking out our chicken coop, to what birds and other animals are eating the fish from my ever shrinking pond. They can be helpful in trapping pigs, so you can tell when to set the trap. Also, other things like what really lives in that hole or is digging holes in the garden, the uses are endless.

If you haven't yet gotten one of these, the choices are endless and the price range is too, — white flash, inferred flash to invisible flash. Heck, there's one now that will take a picture of the area in 360 degrees. There are even some to view pictures over the internet so you don't even have to disturb the area to see them. A camera in the \$100 to \$200 dollar range is probably the most popular and usually does a pretty good job. I recommend them. They are a lot of fun.

The 8th Annual Lee County Youth Shooting Event

On Tuesday, October 23, the Lee County Wildlife Association and Texas Parks & Wildlife will be hosting our 8th Annual Shooting and Hunter Safety Program for middle and high school students at Nails Creek Park on Lake Somerville. This event actually runs for two days with Lee County students on the first day, followed by Washington County students on the second day run by Washington County volunteers. We can accommodate 68 students each day. Each student has the opportunity to shoot archery, shotgun, pistol and rifles, including black powder, in a safe and controlled situation. This is a fun and rewarding program that the students and the volunteers really enjoy. It takes about 25 volunteers per day to make this event happen. **We can always use more help.** So if you have any interest give me a call or contact one of your directors. Some firearms experience is preferred but not required. The expense of this event is paid for through grants received from the local chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, private donations and the Tejas Trading Post has also been a big help with ammunition and targets.



**Rocky Mountain
ELK FOUNDATION**

Voluntary Deer Check Stations

Deer check stations will be in place again this year across the 6 counties that started the Antler Regulations back in 2002 (Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lavaca, Lee, and Washington). As you may remember, check stations were in place the first 6 years of the regulation but have been absent until last season. The information collected at these check stations will help Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) determine what effect the antler regulation is having on both antler quality and age structure of harvested deer.

Check stations will be manned by TPWD personnel for the first 2 weekends of gun season (November 3-4th, and 10th-11th). Additionally, hunters will be able to self-register harvested deer when TPWD personnel are not present. TPWD biologists may contact you after self-registering in order to obtain additional records from your deer. If possible, please retain jawbones from your deer and hang them in a safe location to air dry.

For folks who bring their deer to a check station, there will be a raffle for various prizes. Prizes include a Lifetime Hunting OR Fishing License, various guns, feeders, and knives. We encourage you to bring all harvested bucks to the check station, whether they are spikes, bucks just over 13 inches, or wall hangers.

The Check Stations for Lee County should be in place by October 1 and are at the following locations:

Giddings - Bread Basket Citgo, 791 N Main St
979-542-7507

Lexington - Herk's Country Store, 8603 N Hwy 77

Fall Co-op Meetings

South Lee hosted their Co-op meeting on Friday, August 24 at the Serbin Picnic Grounds, **West Yegua** Co-op met on Sunday, September 30 at the Flying Z Ranch and **Two Creeks** meeting was held on Friday, October 5 at the Lee County Extension Office. Clubs reported great attendance.

Blue Branch and **East Yegua** will have a joint meeting on October 13 at the Park Pavilion in Lexington. A hamburger meal will be provided by the Co-op. Social beginning at 5:30 p.m. and meal to be served at 6:00 p.m.

Old Buck and Spike Contest

We are adding more categories to the buck contest **this year**. We are adding categories for youth and for archery. This is still an oldest buck contest but now up to **3 prizes will be awarded for oldest bucks and 1 drawing for a spike**.

Youth, 16 and under
Adult, 17 and over
Archery

Prizes are awarded for the oldest buck harvested in Lee County by a member during the 2012-13 season. We will still have a drawing from members who harvest a spike (at least one unbranched antler). To be eligible, all bucks must have been harvested in Lee County and be registered by a TPWD biologist.

Deer heads cannot be frozen at time of registration and the jaw bone must be attached. In the event of a tie for the oldest buck, the winner will be the buck with the highest gross Boone & Crockett score. Hunters entering spikes will have their names put into a random drawing to determine the winner. There haven't been many entries in the spike category in the past, so chances of getting drawn, if you enter, are high.

Call me to register your deer so I can collect age and antler measurements. **My phone number is 979- 540 -2744. ~ Greg Pleasant**

Predator Calling Contest

The fourth annual predator calling contest in Lexington is during the last weekend in January. For more information contact Tommy Ramsey at 512-636-9488. He is also looking for sponsors for this event.

Food Plot Seed Reimbursement

The reimbursement amount for wildlife food plots is \$35. It is not too late to plant fall food plots. Remember to take advantage of the food plot seed reimbursement program. Members purchasing seed for wildlife food plots can receive a reimbursement of up to half the cost, up to **Thirty-five dollars**.

Lee County Wildlife Association is doing this in an effort to reward members for helping wildlife in Lee County and to possibly encourage others to do the same.

You can purchase the seed from any retailer but the seed must be planted in Lee County to qualify. The deadline to have receipts to the Extension office for fall food plot seed will be **December 1st**. Plants like winter peas, chicory, oats and turnips are all good choices for fall food plots.

Prescribed Burn Workshop — December 8

A field day on the safe and effective use of prescribed burning to improve habitat for wildlife and to mitigate the damage by wildfire. The objective of this class is to show landowners what benefits fire can provide for vegetation management, how and when to use fire safely and what help is available to landowners who want to burn.

Topics will include site selection, preparation, the tools and equipment that are needed and all the how-to's. If conditions allow **we will be burning a pasture as part of the class**. The workshop will be on December 8 in Fayette County but is open to anyone interested. This is a private property where the owner is using fire as a tool to help plant native grasses.

Coffee and snacks will be provided, but you should bring a lunch. Please RSVP for this workshop by December 5 to Greg Pleasant at 979-540-2744 or e-mail tpwbiologist@bluebon.net. The address is 8016 Bohuslav Rd near Ammansville. Call or e-mail for more directions or information. Registration will start at 8:30 a.m. and the program will start at 9:00 a.m. and should be done shortly after lunch depending on burning conditions. Please dress for the weather and come prepared to participate. Jeans, work boots, gloves and long sleeve shirts are highly recommended.

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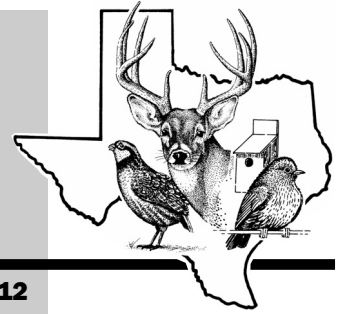
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WILDLIFE NEWS



October 2012

SETTING HARVEST RECOMMENDATIONS: THE NUMBERS BEHIND THEM*By Bobby Eichler - TPWD Technical Guidance Biologist, La Grange*

By the time you receive this newsletter you should have accepted your Harvest Recommendations through the TWIMS system and hopefully received your Managed Lands Deer Permits (MLDPs). It is normally this time of year, October and November, when the district office and local biologist offices get many phone calls from landowners, lessees, and hunters inquiring about their permit issuance. More often than not the caller wonders why they did not get more permits. The intent of this article is to help our MLD customers understand how a biologist makes harvest recommendations.

Harvest recommendations are made annually and we use two types of deer surveys to derive the recommendations. Your local biologist relies heavily on the spotlight surveys that should be conducted annually by your Wildlife Management Area (WMA), as well as, herd composition counts which are to be conducted by each member who wants to receive permits. Both of these methods are conducted in August.

WMA spotlight lines are to be conducted a minimum of three times annually. A spotlight line should be looked at as a true census in which the key outcome is a density estimate expressed as 'acres per deer'. Spotlight lines are a sample of a population, they are not intended to count every deer or to sample every square mile of a county. Spotlight lines take into consideration how much area was observed (acres) and this is calculated by using simple math of figuring the average width of a spotlight line and the total length (Area = width X length). For example, if a three mile line was sampled and the calculations indicate 200 acres observed and ten deer were counted, then the density estimate would be expressed as 20 acres per deer (200 acres divided by 10 deer seen). Once again, all biologists are after from a spotlight census is a density estimate and yearly trend data. Simply driving through your pasture with a spotlight and counting deer without determining acreage observed is not a true census, it is just driving around and looking at deer.

The second survey that is important is herd composition counts. Herd composition counts basically are either driving or sitting in a location and identifying deer as bucks, does, fawns, and unknowns. This survey is more 'relaxed' with basically very few rules other than to identify the deer and

record them EVERY time you see them. Yes, you will get repeats, but we are just looking at sex ratios so repeats are not a problem. Basically, biologists derive two ratios from herd composition data; 1) does per buck, and 2) fawn recruitment. Herd composition counts are often compiled for WMA members within an area of a county so that recommendations can be tweaked for that area. WMA members are critical for this data and this is why we require it from you. Simply returning a data sheet stating 'I have too many doe and need a lot of doe permits' does not suffice nor help out our recommendations. And yes we get this type of 'data'.

Once a biologist has a density estimate, sex ratios, and fawn recruitment estimates, harvest recommendations can be made. Below is an example of this process:

- Three WMA spotlight counts in a section of a county sampled 450 acres per count (1,350 acres total) and observed a total of 96 deer on all counts combined. This results in 14 acres per deer (1,350 divided by 96).
- WMA members within this same section of the county observed 2,160 identifiable deer (470 bucks, 1,215 doe, and 475 fawns). Using these numbers we get the following ratios:
 - 2.6 does per buck (1215 / 470 = 2.6)
 - 39% fawn recruitment (475 / 1215 = 39%)
- Now, let's assume the cooperators in the above scenario encompass 9,500 acres; using the above data this amounts to 678 total deer (9,500 divided by 14) comprised of approximately 149 bucks, 383 doe, and 147 fawns.
- In order to create harvest recommendations we use the fawn recruitment to 'guide' us in the process. Typically, to maintain this year's current deer density estimate, you should harvest about the same number of deer that is produced.
- For this example we will conduct a maintenance harvest (maintaining the 14 acres per deer estimate for the following hunting season and assuming another 40% fawn crop for the following year). At this point, biologist turn to

(Continued on page 2)

there computers to run various harvest scenarios to try and get a harvest that will give the desired after season results.

- The recommended harvest for this area of the county will be 40 bucks (27% of the bucks) and 100 doe (26% of the doe).
- ***Permit issuance would average 1 doe permit for every 95 acres within the WMA.***
- ***The buck recommendation would be to harvest no more than one buck for every 238 acres.***
- ***Average issuance for the WMA as a whole would be near 95 acres per permit. This however does not mean that properties comprised of less than 95 acres would not get a permit. This also does not mean that larger properties would get one permit for every 95 acres. The WMA system allows biologist to 'tweak' permit issuance by property in order to achieve the overall goal. If a landowner is consistently underutilizing their permits, often times we will issue to other properties at a slightly higher rate.***
- If the buck and doe harvest was 100% achieved, and assuming the following fawn crop would be near 40%, next season there would be approximately 183 bucks, 356 doe, and 142 fawns, which comes out to 14 acres per deer and 2 does per buck.

As you can see from the above scenario, harvest recommendations need to be tweaked on an annual basis. Obviously 100% of the harvest recommendations are never achieved and when biologists 'estimate' the next year's fawn crop it is solely based on historical data and averages. Because weather variables can't be controlled or predicted, it is critical for biologist to acquire proper spotlight and herd composition data each August from the WMA and its members to adjust population parameters.

The above scenario used a density estimate of 14 acres per deer. Counties across our district vary greatly in deer densities ranging from high density areas of 8 acres per deer to low density areas of 30+ acres per deer. Because of this, permit issuance varies widely across the district and sometimes even within parts of a county. Within our district we have areas where the doe recommendation may be one antlerless deer for every 40 acres while other areas may be at a harvest rate of 200 acres plus. Also, using the above example (which is in a 'good' density area with a good buck:doe ratio) the buck recommendation is only one buck for every 238 acres. Often it takes 200 to 500+ acres to annually produce a MATURE quality buck. Not every property is intended to harvest a mature buck on an annual basis.

Hopefully this helps you understand where your property fits regarding the harvest within your county and trust that your local biologist is using sound science in harvest management decisions.

THE PROPER USE OF MLD PERMITS

By Bobby Eichler – TPWD Technical Guidance Biologist

Each year Texas Parks and Wildlife District biologists witness or hear about various incidents that occur with hunters and landowners concerning the incorrect use of Managed Lands Deer Permits (MLDPs). Most folks do not intend to break the law, but none-the-less, there are regulations associated with MLD Permits. Please remember the following regulations this coming season concerning MLDPs.

- Permits are to be used only on the property for which they were issued. When you receive your permits, the property name is printed on the tag. If you own multiple properties and receive several issuances, make sure you give your hunters the correct permit for the associated property.
- Once a property is issued MLD antlerless permits, the number of permits issued is the MAXIMUM number of antlerless deer that may be harvested on that property. The harvest includes archery season, both youth seasons, the general season, and muzzleloader season. For example;
 - If a property has been issued two permits and you received them on September 30th and you then harvest two antlerless deer during the October archery season, you cannot harvest anymore antlerless deer on the permitted property for the remaining season.
 - If you received five permits but not until November 10th and there has all ready been two antlerless deer harvested during archery season on the property, you should withhold two permits and only use the remaining three for the rest of the season.
- According to TPWD Regulations, permits must be attached to the harvested deer either immediately after the kill or immediately upon arrival at tagging facilities ON the ranch where killed. Although the previous statement is found on the back of permits and you can transport your deer to the tagging facilities on the ranch prior to attaching a permit to them, it makes the most sense to go ahead and attach the permit immediately upon the kill to remove all suspicions. By no means should the harvested deer leave your property without a permit. Additionally, if you do transport your harvested deer to the 'tagging facility', you should immediately attach the permit upon arrival. If you have started cleaning the deer (or your even further along in the process) and have not attached the permit, then you are subject to receiving a citation.
- When filling out the permits, make sure the permit is signed by both the hunter and the landowner/agent. Also, remember to **cut out** the dates. Marking them out with a pencil or pen is not sufficient.

- Lastly, there is no need to return your used and/or unused permits to your local biologist after the season. The unused permits are not needed and can not be used again since they are location/time specific. Any used permits should obviously have been attached to an animal.

Remember these few important rules associated with the use of MLD permits over the next season and please make sure your lessees are also aware.

DO YOU NEED TO RECEIVE FEWER MLD PERMITS?

By Bobby Eichler – TPWD Technical Guidance Biologist

The Managed Lands Deer Permit (MLDP) program was created over 20 years ago and consists of three levels. The MLD program allows landowners involved in a formal management program to have more flexible harvest regulations than the standard county regulations. The program was and is intended to be incentive based and habitat focused. Since the inception of the program, the MLD properties to which Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologists now provide technical assistance has increased annually and has been a large success. This is especially true in District 7 where the MLDP Level One participation is very high and allows landowners/hunters to harvest doe during the gun season.

In order to receive MLD permits, there are some simple program requirements that participants must adhere to. The main requirements are; 1) to possess a written Wildlife Management Plan approved by a TPWD biologist, and 2) collect and submit the required data as stipulated by the biologist (this data includes pre-hunting season population data and post-hunting season harvest data).

Most Level One participants in District 7 fulfill requirement one above by joining their local Wildlife Management Association (WMA). The WMA possesses a written and TPWD approved wildlife management plan. An up-to-date member/landowner is thus eligible to receive MLDP Level One (doe) permits using that plan. Due to the nature of the program and the requirements, one can see where it would be burdensome for a TPWD biologist to write plans for hundreds of small landowners within a county. Additionally, as a landowner you might realize that population data on a single small tract of land really does not mean much when trying to manage a white-tailed deer population on a landscape level; but when data from multiple landowners is pooled together, the data can be more meaningful. Because of the difficulty in administering this program to numerous small landowners in our counties, the creation of many Wildlife Management Associations (WMA's) across the district has been a solution to both the TPWD biologist and many small landowners who would normally not be able to obtain doe permits.

As WMA memberships have grown and time has gone by, good data submission has started to decrease and it appears that members have lost site of the program requirements. Herd composition data (which is normally due in September and should consist of 4-6 weeks of observations) is non-existent by some folks, and lacking in quality by others. Post season harvest data has also been on a large decline. Some WMA's that historically ran greater than 90% compliance were down below 55% during the 2011 season. TPWD has attempted to make data submission easier. Between mailing data to the biologist and submitting online on TWIMS, folks should find it easier to turn in good data. All that is required for harvest data in the MLDP Level One is the number and sex of animals harvested, which shouldn't be too difficult.

The data that TPWD requires is critical to setting harvest recommendations and trying to achieve certain deer population goals for a county or area of a county. Biologists do use the data that is submitted and view it as critical to manage the deer herd better. If a biologist receives no data or poor data, he/she is more apt to reduce the issuance rate for an area. Basically, we would rather err on the side of conservatism rather than make a mistake and over harvest a deer herd.

Hopefully this clarification on how the MLDP Level One program works will help members be more diligent this upcoming year about collecting and submitting pre and post hunting data. If we can't improve the data that is being submitted, there may be some downward adjustments on permit issuance applied to individual properties in the season that follows.

Native Prairies & Wildlife Field Day

Friday, November 9, 2012

Cat Spring Ag Hall

13035 Hall Road, Cat Spring, Texas

Registration & Refreshments: 7:00-8:15 am

Lunch will be provided. Program ends at 3:00 pm

Vendor booths close at 5:00 pm

Registration: \$20 per person or \$35 per couple

Children under 16 get in free

Hosted by the Wildlife Habitat Federation

Learn to manage grasslands for livestock production while benefitting quail, turkey, dove, deer and other wildlife. The morning will consist of equipment and field demonstrations. The afternoon will include a keynote talk from former TPWD Commission Chairperson Katharine Armstrong followed by an interactive panel discussion featuring landowners with knowledge and expertise in native grasslands, university experts and researchers, as well as TPWD specialists in the field of upland game bird management. Questions from the audience will be encouraged.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE OAK-PRAIRIE DISTRICT

AUSTIN COUNTY

Austin County West End WMA
Cat Spring WMA

BASTROP COUNTY

Alum Creek WMA
Bartons Creek WMA
Paint Creek WMA
Pin Oak Creek WMA
Red Rock WMA

CALDWELL COUNTY

Clear Fork Creek WMA
Tri-Community WMA

COLORADO COUNTY

Central Colorado County WMA
Colorado River WMA
Harvey Creek WMA
Northeast Colorado County WMA
Oakridge Ranch WMA
Sandy Creek WMA

DEWITT COUNTY

Central DeWitt County WMA
Meyersville WMA
Western DeWitt County WMA

FAYETTE COUNTY

Buckners Creek WMA
Colorado River WMA
Cummins Creek WMA
East Navidad WMA
North Central Fayette County WMA
Rabbs Creek WMA
West Navidad WMA

FORT BEND COUNTY

Thompsons Bottom WMA

GOLIAD COUNTY

Goliad County WMA

GONZALES COUNTY

Belmont WMA
Hamon River Bottom WMA
Northeast Gonzales County WMA
Salt Flat WMA
San Marcos River WMA
Sandies Creek WMA

GUADALUPE COUNTY

Guadalupe County WMA

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Rocky Creek WMA
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