



LEE COUNTY WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION



July 2014

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Wildlife Biologist
Texas Parks and Wildlife
979-540-2744

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Game Warden
Texas Parks and Wildlife
Cell 979-540-0194
leecountywildlife.org

Scholarships Awarded To Five Local Grads

The Lee County Wildlife Association offers five \$500 scholarships to deserving graduating seniors from our membership. As part of the application process, each applicant was asked to write a one-page essay with the topic: "In what ways can I inspire others to be good stewards of our natural resources?"

The five recipients of the scholarships this year were: Amanda Berger, Amanda Fischer, Brooke Fritsche, Allison Kasier, and Mariah Weise. Congratulations to these and all area graduates!

Membership Dues are Due

**If you don't think you have paid
your dues for this year please
Get-R-Done. You can check with
Susan Schatte at the Extension**

New Wildlife Biologist for Lee and Fayette Counties

Hi! I'm Laura Sherrod, your new Texas Parks & Wildlife biologist for Lee County. After spending many years helping with my family's ranch in Edwards County, I knew that I wanted to make a career out of helping others with their land and wildlife. I received my degree in Wildlife Biology, with a minor in Agriculture, from Texas State University in San Marcos. I worked for Horizon Environmental Services out of

Austin while I attended school, where I conducted habitat assessments, wetland delineations, and endangered species surveys, amongst others. I have been employed with Texas Parks and Wildlife since 2008, where I have worked with the Big Game Program, specifically the Deer Breeder Program, until this April. I accepted the wildlife biologist position for Lee and Fayette counties in late March, and I moved my husband and two little boys (3 and 4 years old) with me here from Buda, Texas. All have been very happy with the change! I have already met with several from Lee County, and all have made me feel very welcome to the community. I am very much looking forward to meeting and working with the rest of you!

Doe Permits

If you think you have more deer on your property than you think it should have and would like to receive doe permits this season, please turn in a herd composition form and other survey data completed during the month of August. It needs to be turned in to me by **September 5th**. If you have never before requested doe permits, please contact me as soon as possible so we can get you set up to conduct the most appropriate survey for your property. You can get a copy of all the forms you need from our web site at www.leecountywildlife.org or contact me at 979-540-2744 or laura.sherrod@tpwd.texas.gov.

The Importance of Your Local Wildlife Management Association

Wildlife Management Associations (WMA) are very important to both private landowners and to Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD). Many WMA members feel that the only reason to join a WMA is to get Managed Lands Deer Permits. We will discuss deer permits a little more in depth later in the article, but first we need to cover some basic information on WMA's. Wildlife Management Associations serve an important role in wildlife management across the Oak-Prairie Regulatory District. In this district, there are approximately 54 WMA's which cover over 1 million acres and are comprised of several thousand landowners.

A major issue in the state of Texas is habitat and land ownership fragmentation. Basically, properties are continually being sold and chopped into smaller and smaller parcels. From a wildlife management perspective, it is difficult to manage wildlife populations and habitat on 'smaller' acreage than on large properties. This is one important aspect of local WMA's. Many WMA's in Texas were formed strictly due to the desire to manage for quality deer populations. The most important aspect most of the time is to allow bucks to become mature and also for population control accomplished by harvesting the female portion of the herd.

From the view of TPWD, local WMA's allow us to get 'the word out' and to educate many landowners through periodic meetings and newsletters. Additionally, local WMA's can serve as a critical voice for landowners during the regulatory process of TPWD. As many of you are aware by now, many Texas counties have been placed under antler restrictions so that we can allow bucks to become mature. This regulation would likely not have occurred if it was not for the support of WMA's across the Oak-Prairie District in which this regulation was started as an experiment.

Now, back to deer permits and the importance of your local WMA to you as a private landowner. The permits TPWD issues are through the Managed Lands Deer (MLD) program. There are several requirements for a landowner to qualify for MLD permits, just a few are: 1) you must have an active wildlife management plan in place, 2) current deer population data must be provided, and 3) cooperators should provide harvest summary at end of season. As an agency, it would be very difficult to write individual wildlife management plans to every small landowner across the state. As a member of the local WMA, your property falls under the wildlife management plan provided for that WMA. Additionally, the deer population data on a single small acreage property is usually not adequate to allow for permit issuance. However, by grouping census, observation, and harvest data together from all the WMA members, the issuance of MLD permits can be allowed. Without the management of your local WMA, it would be safe to say that most folks with small acreage would not qualify for MLD permits.



Harmless Water Snake or Venomous Cottonmouth?

Many people see a snake in the water and automatically associate it with the venomous cottonmouth, also called the water moccasin. Truth is, in Lee County, most of the snakes you see in the water are actually harmless. The occasional cottonmouth is found in Lee County, but they are not very common. So how does one distinguish a harmless water snake from a venomous cottonmouth? In a lot of cases, the snakes can actually look very similar. Some sources will tell you to look at the shape of the head, shape of the pupils, whether the snake swims with its body under water, or to look if the snake has pits on its face....I would not depend on these 100% of the time. For one, how close would you need to be to examine whether the snake has pits on its face? Yep, pretty close! Most people are not wanting to sit there and study the snake's face that closely, and I would bet the snake would not appreciate it too much, either. Also, you hear that a snake with a triangular head is venomous, but there are actually several species of harmless snakes that will flatten their heads to appear more triangular. So, what is a good way to figure out if the snake you see in or near the

water is in fact venomous? The best way is to look for a ridge along the snake's head. A cottonmouth will have a prominent ridge along the head, which gives it a fairly distinct shape and look. With a bit of practice, this can be fairly easy to identify.

Cranial Ridge

Western Cottonmouth
(Photo: Pierson Hill)



No Ridge



Blotched Water Snake
(Photo: Kenneth Gisi)

Virtual Fishing Tournament

Lee County will be holding a virtual fishing tournament **July 4 through July 6.**

This is a catch and release tournament for **bass only**. Judging will be based on entry pictures posted at the **Lee County**

4-H Facebook group or sent to

Extension Intern,

Kelsey.pearson@agnet.tamu.edu.

The results of the contest will be posted by July 8, and a **prize** will be awarded for the longest bass!



Youth Wildlife Program

Friday, July 18

9:00 am– 4:00 pm

Ages: 6-12th grade

Lunch will be Served.

Register by July 14h.

- Dissection and anatomy of deer and fish
- Examples of fish from various bodies of water
- Observe different aspects of wildlife
 - Guest speakers

KEETON EHRIG

Extension Agent-Lee Co.
Agriculture/Natural Resources

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TO RECEIVE DOE PERMITS PLEASE COMPLETE THIS PORTION OF THE FORM ALONG WITH YOUR HERD COMPOSITION DATA ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS FORM

☐ I did not receive permits last year.

☐ I received permits last year using the TWIMS system but my contact information has changed

☐ I received permits last year and my contact information has not changed

☐ Other problem (describe): _____

Your Name: _____ Property Name: _____

Wildlife Management Association: _____

Requesters Mailing Address (road, city, zip): _____

Address of property permits are being requested for: _____

Phone Numbers: _____

E-mail: _____ Number of acres in the tract requesting permits: _____

HERD COMPOSITION DATA

Herd composition data (often called incidental observations) may be the most valuable data collected on a deer herd. When properly collected, herd composition data can reflect the overall health of a herd and help guide the manager in making proper harvest recommendations.

Herd composition data should be collected between August 1 and September 5

The fawns have become a part of the herd by this time, yet they are small enough to be easily distinguished from adult deer. Observations outside this period may result in inaccurate data. Observations may be collected any time during the day. However, the first and last hours of daylight are often the most productive.

All deer recorded must be viewed through binoculars or a spotting scope

Small antlers are easily overlooked without optical aids. Fawns whose spots have started to fade are also hard to distinguish when they are observed alone. Be sure to look at the hips of deer that you think could possibly be fawns because the hips are the last place to lose spots.

Ideally, a minimum of 150 deer should be identified

If possible, a larger sample size is desirable to strengthen the data and increase the confidence in the harvest recommendations. Observations can be made during routine ranch operations or as a special effort. On smaller ranches (<300 acres), it may not be feasible to obtain 150 deer observations, but efforts should be made to get **at least 50**. Members of **Wildlife Management Associations** should get at least 30 deer observations for ranches <300 acres and 50-100 deer observations for ranches >300 acres. Observing the same deer recorded on a previous count is not a concern. If a conscientious effort is made to record accurate data, a small amount of duplicate recording should not affect the ratios. All deer should be recorded as a buck, doe, or fawn. Recording bucks according to number of antler points is also beneficial. The occurrence of inferior animals versus multi point animals can be used to measure progress in the quality of the deer herd over time.

Submit data by SEPTEMBER 5 to
Laura Sherrod
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
200 S Main - 203A
Giddings TX 78942
979-540-2744

If you are requesting doe permits please complete the form on reverse side in addition

Observer: _____ Property Owner: _____

Blue Branch

Date	2-3 Point Bucks	4-7 Point Bucks	8+ Point Bucks	Undetermined Bucks	Does	Fawns	Comments
8/4	II	IIII	I	II	<div> <div>III</div> <div>III</div> </div>	<div> <div>III</div> <div>I</div> </div>	Example
TOTAL							

OAK-PRAIRIE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS

WILDLIFE NEWS

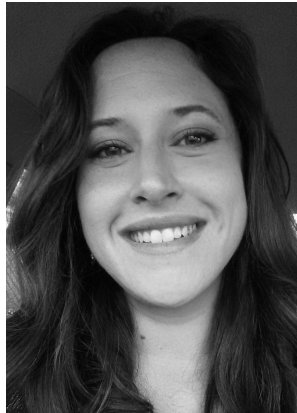


July 2014

DISTRICT 7 NEWS

District 7 would like to welcome two new biologists to the team. These two new additions finally bring the district up to full strength.

LAURA SHERROD took over for Greg Pleasant and covers Lee and Fayette counties. Greg left the district to become the Regional Fire Coordinator for Region 4 (which includes District 7). Laura comes to us from the Big Game Program where she worked in the permitting section primarily working with deer breeders. Laura's first official day with the district was April 1, 2014.



She has a degree from Texas State University in Wildlife Biology and has worked for Texas Parks and Wildlife for about six years. Laura will office at the courthouse in Giddings, in the same location Greg Pleasant occupied and the office phone number will remain the same.

TREY BARRON is the new biologist for Victoria, Calhoun and Refugio counties filling the vacancy left by the departure of Trent Teinert. Trent left District 7 for Wilson and Karnes counties in District 8. Trey received a bachelors and masters degree in wildlife biology from West Texas A&M. He comes to us from the Panhandle



District (District 2) where he has worked for the last 3+ years. He has a great deal of experience working with private landowners and will be a great addition to the district. Trey will office in Victoria in the same location that Trent occupied when he was in the district. The office phone number will also remain the same.

Complete contact information for these and all District 7 biologists can be found on page 3 of this newsletter.

RANGELAND AND WATERSHED HEALTH

Bobby Eichler, District 7 Technical Guidance Biologist

As I write this article (late May), most of the Oak Prairie district has received some nice rainfall over the last two weeks. Most folks have received a few inches of rain with some receiving upwards of ten inches or more. Living in La Grange, I saw the Colorado River rise quite a bit during this period. Chances are, if you live near a river such as the San Bernard, the Navidad, the Guadalupe, or some of the large creeks in the area, you saw the same. Heavy rainfall and ample runoff can be a good thing. Runoff is needed to fill the many stock tanks covering the area which are vital for the livestock industry. Runoff is also critical for stream and river health, as well as, the downstream bays in the Gulf.

However, the rainfalls we have been blessed with would be even more beneficial if we could 'catch' more of the water and decrease the volume of runoff we tend to experience. Some of you may be thinking I am promoting more dams and lakes; but this is not the case. It would be wonderful if our range conditions were in such shape that our rangelands 'captured' more of the rainfall and slowly released the water into the system, moderating the runoff over a longer period of time. Runoff can be a good thing, but not when it all hits the Gulf within 7-10 days after a moderate to heavy rainfall events. We get this increased runoff when our rangelands are degraded and lack the ability to absorb the rainfall. One could not help but notice the amount of sediment that flowed down the Colorado as the river rose. This was not a onetime event, every time the river rises substantially, it is full of sediment. You might think that is normal when you get rainfall and runoff, you get dirty water. While this may be the norm today, it is not healthy for our systems.

Healthy rangelands should function like a sponge to our watersheds. As rainfall occurs, there should be ample grass and forb coverage to intercept the raindrops and allow water to infiltrate the soils. Good root development on our grasses allows for infiltration of moisture. Subsurface moisture would then flow through springs, hillside seeps, and through the soil to the creek and river beds. Although healthy plant communities are related to

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

weather conditions and rainfall, grazing intensity, grazing duration, and stocking rates play a deciding role on how effective our rangeland is in absorbing rainfall. Too much grazing, without adequate rest or deferment, depletes plant root stores and increases soil exposure and compaction. All of this reduces the ability to absorb rainfall and increases runoff. Since we've been in a drought for the last several years, the effects of too much grazing have been exacerbated and can be seen across the landscape.

Another benefit of increasing infiltration and slowing runoff is the recharge of our groundwater aquifers. Groundwater is becoming more and more depleted with many different entities (municipal, industrial, or farm and ranch) all needing and wanting a part of the pie. For us to possibly protect groundwater for the long term, private landowners across the state will need to see the importance of capturing the rainfall that falls on their property. Many folks still remember the various springs that once dotted the landscape. These springs did not cease flowing totally because of changes to our rainfall patterns over the past 100 years. Most stopped flowing due to changes in land practices in conjunction with demand.

Here are some numbers to think about--a one inch rainfall event on one acre of land results in 27,154 gallons of water. Some of this water will run off, but what if the majority of the water infiltrated the soil? Expand the 1 inch rainfall event to a 100 acre property and this produces over 2.7 million gallons of water.

For the folks who were blessed with over 5 inches of rain over the past rainfall event, the same 100 acre property produced over 13.5 million gallons of water. How useful was this rainfall event to you if 90% of it ran off to the nearby creek and on to the Gulf. Will your property be dry again in six weeks with very little grass production and the need to feed hay this September or will it be a healthy rangeland with ample soil moisture that provides forage for properly stocked livestock and wildlife? It is up to you.

South Texas Wildlife Conference

The 14th South Texas Wildlife Conference will be held August 20-21 in Floresville, Texas. The Conference is an event sponsored by Texas Wildlife Association, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. This year's conference will focus on managing expectations when dealing with quail populations and restoration impacts. For more information and to register, visit www.texas-wildlife.org/resources/events/south-texas-wildlife-conference.

CHANGES TO HUNTER EDUCATION CERTIFICATION

Over the past year, a handful of changes have been made to the Texas Hunter Education Program and curriculum. The biggest changes are:

- 1) the Basic Hunter Education Course was reduced from ten hours of class time to six.
- 2) there is now a complete online course for Texas residents who are 17 years of age or older which does not require a skills test.

The hunter education curriculum also now offers an Enhanced Course and an Advanced Course for those wishing to take more hours in specific subjects of hunter education that may no longer be covered in the Basic Course.

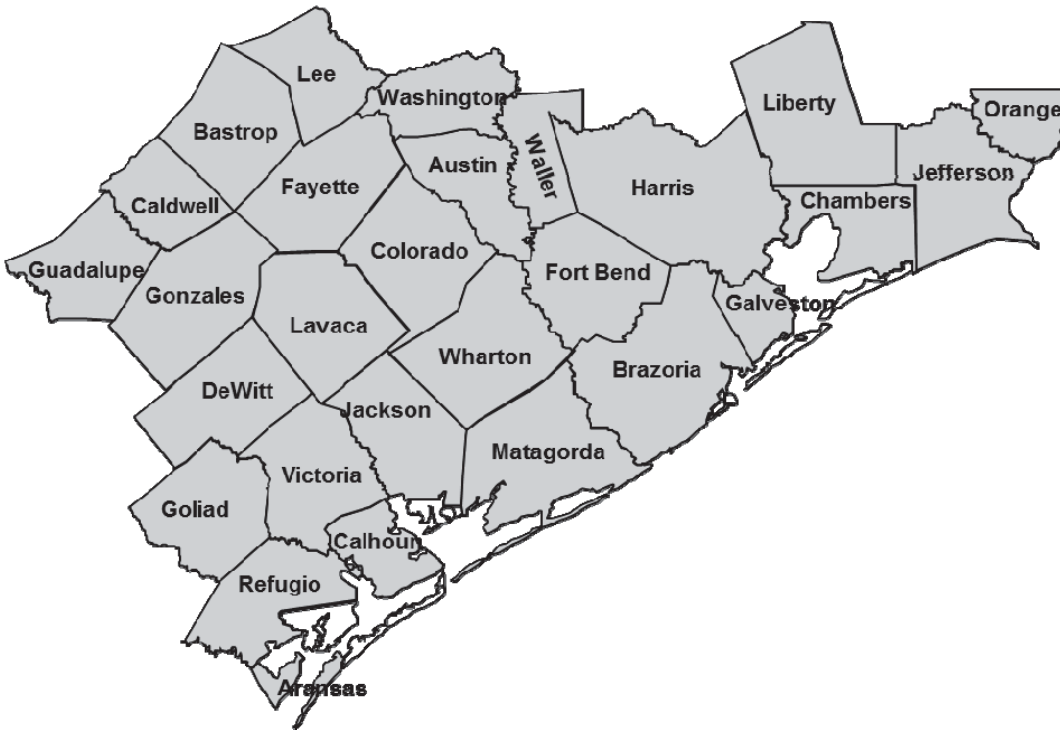
The Basic Hunter Education Course is the class that is required for hunters less than 17 years of age to be certified. Hopefully, by reducing the number of hours of instruction, the class will be easier for youth to attend and work into busy schedules. Additionally, the online course for hunters 17 and over should make it easier for this age group to become certified since you will no longer have to schedule a skills course to complete certification.

As a reminder, Hunter Education is a requirement for every hunter (including out-of-state hunters) born on or after September 2, 1971. Hunters must successfully complete a Hunter Education Training Course. Minimum age for certification is 9 years of age. The following guidelines may help you:

- ♦ For hunters under 9 years of age, you must be accompanied*.
- ♦ Hunters age 9 through 16, you must successfully complete a hunters education course, or be accompanied*.
- ♦ Hunters over 17 years of age must successfully complete a hunter education course or purchase a "Hunter Education Deferral" and be accompanied*.

*Accompanied means you must be with someone who is over 17, licensed to hunt in Texas, who has passed a hunters education course or be exempt (born before September 2, 1971), and be within normal voice distance.

With hunting season beginning in September (dove and teal), classes will likely start beginning in August in many parts of the state. If you need to enroll in a class, keep an eye out for notices in local papers as well as the website: www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/hunter_education/city.phtml



Upper Coast Wetland
Ecosystems Project
Wetland and regulatory
Issues in Jefferson, Chambers,
Orange and Liberty Counties
JIM SUTHERLIN, 409-736-2551
10 Parks & Wildlife Drive
Port Arthur TX 77640

Central Coast Wetland
Ecosystems Project
Wetland issues along
central coastal counties
MATT NELSON, 979-323-9553
2200 7th Street, 3rd Floor
Bay City TX 77414

Wildlife Diversity Biologist
and LIP Contact
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[www.tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/
land/habitats/oak_prairie/](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/habitats/oak_prairie/)

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS IN THE OAK-PRAIRIE DISTRICT

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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

JACKSON COUNTY

Lavaca River WMA
Sandy Creek WMA
Texana WMA
West Carancahua Creek WMA

LAVACA COUNTY

Honey Creek WMA
Rocky Creek WMA
South Central Lavaca County WMA
Sweet Home WMA
Vienna WMA
West Sandy Creek WMA

LEE COUNTY

Blue Branch WMA
East Yegua WMA
South Lee WMA
Two Creeks WMA
West Yegua WMA

REFUGIO COUNTY

Blackjack Peninsula WMA

VICTORIA COUNTY

Guadalupe River North WMA
Southwest Victoria County WMA
Victoria Prairie WMA

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Greenvine WMA
Mount Vernon WMA
New Years Creek WMA
Post Oak WMA
Rocky Creek WMA
Sand Town WMA
Sun Oil WMA

WHARTON COUNTY

Egypt WMA
Lost Prong WMA

