



# LEE COUNTY WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION



2016 Summer Newsletter

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979-540-2744

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Cell 979-540-0194

## Doe Permits

If you are seeing an abundance of deer on your property and are interested in receiving doe permits through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Managed Lands Deer Program (MLDP) for this hunting season, please return the enclosed herd composition survey, along with any additional data you have collected during the month of August, to Wildlife Biologist, Laura Sherrod no later than **September 5th deadline**. Permits will be issued in the order your data is received. The TWIMS system has a lag time of up to two weeks, so turning in data after this deadline could result in you receiving your permits late. Permits are printed and mailed from Austin, please take this into consideration.

If you've never made a request for doe permits, you will need to contact biologist Sherrod. Laura will set you up with the appropriate survey for your property. **Permit recommendations Must be accepted online before permits will be mailed to you.**

Regulations for MLDP will be changing in 2017. New regulations will require mandatory online application for permits, as well as mandatory on-line harvest reporting. **To continue receiving updates about regulation changes, be sure to submit an email address on your survey!**

For more information on MLDP or survey information for your property, contact Biologist, Laura Sherrod at 979-540-2744 or [laura.sherrod@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:laura.sherrod@tpwd.texas.gov).



## Common Sunflower

by Native American Seed and Znobla Wootan

The Common Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) is one of those natives that we all take for granted. We see them here, there and everywhere, but almost always at a distance. We have forgotten how attractive those big yellow blooms are, when seen up close. Sunflowers are a "nostalgic" flower that make us think of farms and country gardens of the past. They turn up on everything from clothing to pot holders in the kitchen.

They've never been out of fashion to the wild things, either. Common Sunflowers are a terrific habitat plant! They attract a variety of bees and butterflies, and are a larval food of choice for the Gorgone Crescentspot (*Chlosyne gorgone*), Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*), Silvery Crescentspot (*Chlosyne nycteis*), and Bordered Patch butterflies (*Chlosyne lacinia*). Common Sunflowers are also a major food source for seed-eating birds in the fall. To top it all off, they are hardy enough to withstand drought conditions, and if you allow them to re-seed, they will be there to feed wildlife and provide beauty every year.

The common sunflower is as much a part of our heritage as the buffalo, Native Americans and the Prairies on which they depend. Lewis and Clark mentioned the Indians use of Common sunflower in their journals. This evidence suggests that nearly 3,000 years ago Native Americans began domesticating the Common Sunflower by hand selecting the largest seeds for replanting the next year. This eventually yielded a product with larger seeds, that the Indians used for food, oil, crafts and medicine and that thankfully we enjoy today as well. Native Americans would pound and boil the flower for dyes which they used in weaving and basketry.

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## Common Sunflower cont.

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Some medicinal usages for common sunflower are for: snakebites, spider bites, pulmonary ailments, burns, malaria, high fevers, diuretics and expectorants. Not only are the seeds edible but also the sprouts and the yellow petals make a tasty addition to salads. Wild cousins of this early domesticated stock are still found along roadsides and in fields throughout North America. It is the most abundant wildflower in Texas probably because they thrive in full sun and require very little water. The bloom of this species faces east as the morning sun rises and follows the sun through the sky until sunset with its face turned towards the west. The name Common Sunflower in Spanish means looks at the sun. In Greek the scientific name *Helianthus* comes from "helios" which means sun and "anthos" meaning flower thus the name sunflower. The common sunflower is an annual that begins blooming the end of May continuing through the fall. It is an allelopathic species that produces a chemical that reduces competition from other plants. Common sunflowers can grow from 2ft to 8ft tall with numerous branches that have flowers ranging from 2 to 5 inches across. The seeds are eagerly eaten by doves, quail, turkey, and various song birds. It is a favored seed of the American Goldfinch. Pollinators rely on common sunflower as a dependable nectar source during the hottest part of the summer. Winter and early spring is the perfect time to plant seeds so that you can experience the uplifting site of the bright blooms during hot summer months. I know the birds enjoy their fall bounty of delicious seeds.



With over 830,000 estimated dove hunters taking to the field nationwide in 2014, it comes without saying that dove hunting is a popular sport that contributes significantly to the local and state economies (Seamans 2015).

Mourning dove populations were estimated to be 274 million in 2014. Hunter harvested mourning doves for the 2014 season was estimated at just over 13 million birds nationwide. Texas hunters harvested more doves than any other state with an estimated 5.2 million mourning doves being harvested in the lone star state (Seamans 2015). Unfortunately, there is no way to determine how many shots it took to harvest those birds, many hunters are hesitant to admit such numbers.

Many do not realize that all state wildlife agencies work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to set hunting dates and bag limits for all migratory species including dove. Information gathered from all the states is used to determine season lengths and bag limits which are in the best interest of both the birds and hunters nationwide. As the interest in dove hunting has grown, so have the regulatory and research efforts. Every year population surveys in both urban and rural areas, as well as dove banding efforts, are conducted to monitor populations of dove. My goal for the rest of this article is to shed light on national and state monitoring and banding efforts, as well as additional dove hunting opportunities available that you may not be aware of.

**Urban and rural dove surveys:** The urban surveys consist of biologists driving to predetermined points in urban areas and counting the number of individual dove of each species they see during a set amount of time. It is a relatively simple sampling method that is repeated annually to determine if either overall numbers of doves seen changed or if the composition of the dove species seen changed over time. Dove call counts are much the same except the obvious difference that biologists are listening for calls. So if you see a Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) pickup in your neighborhood or on your rural county road making frequent stops in the early summer months, wildlife biologists are likely contributing data to these efforts.

**Dove Banding:** TPWD biologists, as well as trained volunteers spend much of the summer trapping and banding both white-winged and mourning doves. White-winged dove trapping takes place primarily in June and early July while mourning dove trapping is conducted during July and early August.

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## "Huntember"

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If I said the word "Huntember" most hunters would immediately be able to tell me the exact date I am speaking of, Sept. 1. September 1 is opening day of dove season for the majority of the state and represents the start of hunting opportunities to be enjoyed by Texas hunters for several months to follow.

Dove hunting in Texas is a long standing tradition and one that is only getting more popular. An estimated 276,800 Texas dove hunters tested their wing-shooting skills in 2014, distantly followed by California with an estimated 52,600 active dove hunters that year.



Efforts begin by pre-baiting sites where the desired dove species seem to be frequenting. Most white-winged dove trapping occurs in urban areas where birds are roosting or coming to residential bird feeders. Mourning dove trapping occurs in more rural areas typically on the edges of roads or any clearing where bait can easily be found by the birds. Once dove are frequenting the baited areas, walk-in funnel traps are set to capture them. Once we have captured dove, the data collection process begins. The date and location of capture is recorded as well as the species of dove captured. The age of the individual is determined based on physical characteristics (plumage color, eye ring color and leg color) and molt pattern. A bird lacking more colorful plumage or the brightly colored eye ring and legs would be classified as a hatch year bird meaning a bird that hatched that current year. A bird having the brighter color characteristics would be a bird that hatched earlier than the present year. Molt pattern is determined by counting down the primary wing feathers to see which feather is currently being replaced by molting as it will be shorter than the other feathers or appear missing. The 10 primary feathers are replaced in order starting from the inside the right leg of the dove.

Ask any waterfowl hunter what the trophy of waterfowl hunting is and almost all will respond with harvesting a banded bird. Most waterfowl hunters, when they are retrieving downed game, will immediately look for a band on the leg. Unfortunately, that is not the same practice for the majority of dove hunters. Nationwide banding data show that 501,774 mourning doves were banded from 2003-2014 with only 26,322 (5 percent) of those bands being reported by hunters (Seamans 2015). While there are many potential reasons for the low number of bands being returned, it is likely that many bands on harvested birds are overlooked by hunters. The data gathered from banding dove and returned bands helps biologists determine population estimates, harvest rates, survival, movement of dove, and is vital in the regulation making process. So the next time you take to the field to test your wing-shooting ability on dove, take a split second to check for a band. If you are lucky enough to harvest a banded bird, please take the time to report it at [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov) or call toll free 1-800-327-2263 (BAND). When you report the band you will find out when the bird was banded, whether it was an adult or juvenile when banded, and where the bird was banded.

**Hunting Opportunity:** As dove hunting grows in popularity and hunting land gets harder to find, the

opportunity to hunt dove becomes increasingly precious. Hunters looking for limited dove hunting areas has created a growing market for dove leases. TPWD has recognized this dilemma and developed a program to offer landowners the ability to lease their land to the state. Across Texas, approximately 900,000 acres are leased by TPWD and offers hunters a wide array of legal game to be harvested. Most of the public leases in our area offer only dove hunting, but as competition increases for a good dove hunting location I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity. To legally hunt these areas you must possess a valid Texas hunting license as well as an Annual Public Hunting (APH) permit valued at \$48. Those permits can be purchased at any location that sells hunting licenses and can be used to access any TPWD public hunting lands in the state. To learn more about public hunting lands and the opportunities available to you in your area, visit <http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild.hunt/public>.

If you are interested in leasing your land to TPWD, contact your local biologist or Kyle Thigpen at [kyle.thigpen@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:kyle.thigpen@tpwd.texas.gov) or (979)696-4148 (office)/(979)255-2761 (cell).

Reference citation and for more information on the status of Mourning dove see:

Seamans, M.E. 2015. Mourning dove population status, 2015. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Management, Washington, D.C.

## LCWA Membership

Renewals—Lifetime Memberships

Yearly renewals of \$10 are due February 1 thru April 1. Please make payment to:

**LCWA**

**310 S. Grimes, Giddings 78942**

Memberships are dropped after two years of non payment. A "New Membership" fee of \$15 is then required to become current. You may contact the Extension office at anytime to check the status of Your membership.

### Life-time memberships

20 & under - \$475

21-50 years of age - \$355

51-65 years of age - \$275

66-80 years of age - \$180

81 & older - \$75

## Oxygen Depletion

Stock Fish Ponds more susceptible in the Summer

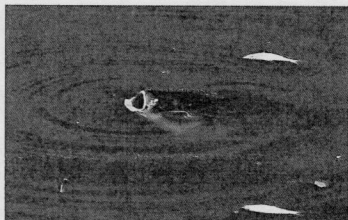
Are you managing your pond for fish production?

AgriLife Extension Service wildlife specialist advise landowners with stocked fish ponds to be aware of possible oxygen depletion pond problems as hot, still days become more prevalent.

Oxygen depletions occur for a variety of reasons between summer months of June and September. The air is increasingly hot and pond water temperatures climb, improper aquatic weed control, too many pounds of fish per surface acre and weather conditions are all contributing factors.

A typical pond can sustain 1,000 pounds of fish per surface area through the summer months. When the environment is optimized and pond owner stocks heavily, especially channel cat or blue fish, and feeds heavily with floating fish rations, the density level can be easily met and exceeded.

AgriLife's Wildlife Specialist, recommend to check your ponds at daybreak when ponds are at their lowest levels. If you notice fish are surfacing for air, that is a clear sign



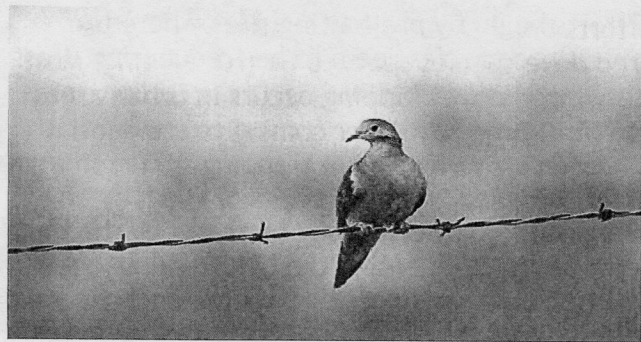
of oxygen depletion and you should act quickly to avoid a complete die-off of fish. Your larger fish of course are more effected by low oxygen levels than the smaller fish.

You can try various ways to produce more oxygen for the fish in your pond such as, backing a boat engine into the pond and circulating the water. You could also place a water pump in the shallow portion of the pond, spraying water along the surface to circulate water along the air-water interface.

Once levels are restored, manage the conditions that may have contributed to the depletion. Some recommendations are thinning your fish populations, another is controlling aquatic vegetation. Oxygen is removed from water as plant tissue decomposes, which can create a scenario where a die off may occur.

Efforts to control pond weeds should be done gradually, about 15-20 percent of the vegetation at a time, with a week break between treatments.

Consider investing in a aeration system and keep watch as we continue with these hot summer days!



## Understanding the Basic Biology & Ecology of Doves

Doves are some of the most well-known game birds in the state. As noted in previous article titled, "Huntember" Thousands of Texans annually enjoy hunting this bird. It is important that hunters and land managers understand the basic biology and ecology of this bird to ensure they continue to be abundant in the future.

Doves, like any animal require food, water, cover, and space. Doves feed mostly on hard-coated seeds. Because doves will not scratch for their food, seeds must be present on the ground surface. Some common seed producing plant species that are a food source for doves are:

Woody	Grasses	Forbs
Hackberry	Switch grass	Annual Sunflower
Prickly ash	Panic grasses	Croton (dove weed)
Sumac	Plains bristle grass	Western ragweed
Wolfberry	Yellow Indian grass	Pigweed
Black Brush		Prickly poppy

**Water** can be a major attractant, especially during drought years. Water sources should be no more than 4 miles apart. Make water troughs overflow a little so doves can drink at ground level, clear vegetation from around stock tanks, situate water sources around a tall perch (tree or powerline), and provide a floating platform or a ramp.

**Nesting** structures may vary from man made structures such as light poles and storefront letters, to trees, and in some regions, the ground. Dove will nest in isolated pairs, with both genders sharing nesting duties.



**\*\*\*Please remember that if you have an email address on file, you will need to accept your permit recommendations online before they are mailed to you from Austin headquarters. \*\*\***

**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

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: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*As of 2017, all receiving permits will be required to have a valid email address.**

**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.

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 efforts should be made to get at least 50. 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.

**Submit data by SEPTEMBER 5 to**

**Laura Sherrod**

**Texas Parks & Wildlife Department**

**898 East Richmond, #104**

**Giddings, TX 78942**

**979-540-2744**

**Laura.sherrod@tpwd.texas.gov**

**\*\*\*Please remember that if you have an email address on file, you will need to accept your permit recommendations online before they are mailed to you from Austin headquarters.\*\*\***

## HERD COMPOSITION / INCIDENTAL OBSERVATIONS

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

Ranch Name: \_\_\_\_\_ County: Lee Year: 2016

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Property Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Wildlife Management Assn (circle one): Two Creeks    South Lee    West Yegua    East Yegua    Blue Branch

**PLEASE MAKE SURE TO TOTAL THE NUMBERS AT THE BOTTOM!**

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



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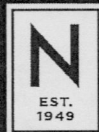
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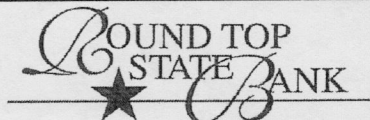


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## Upcoming Events

### August 26-27: Hunter Education Course

\$15 - Dime Box Fire Station  
Contact Roger at 979-820-5001

### August 26: South Lee Co-op Meeting

St. Paul Serbin Picnic Grounds  
5:30 pm - Social 6:30 pm - Meal

### September 10: Outdoor Extravaganza

Giddings High School  
Contact Larry at 979-542-6245

### September 25: West Vega Co-op Meeting

Flying Z Ranch  
4:30 pm - Social 5:30 pm - Meal

### October 18-19: Lee-Washington County

#### Youth Shooting Event

Nails Creek State Park  
Contact Laura at 979-540-2744

### October 2: Women's Firearm Class

Date to be decided.

Watch for Flyers or contact LC Extension

Office at 979-542-2753

### Two Creeks, East Vega & Blue Branch

#### Co-op Meeting.

In planning process.

Feel free to contact your local co-op directors  
regarding dates, times, and locations of your

co-ops fall meeting.