Oaks and Prairies Wildlifer

A newsletter for landowners in the Post Oak Savannah and Coastal Prairies Regions of Texas

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

January 2024

District Field Notes

BY BOBBY EICHLER

Hello folks. As David Forrester mentioned back in October, The Wildlife Division has undergone a reorganization that started back on September 1; at that time David became the Regional Director for the 'new' Region 4. When the October newsletter came out both District 8 and District 9 had vacancies for the District Leader (DL) positions. Each position has since been filled with Derek Wolter being named the DL for District 8 and myself, Bobby Eichler, being named the DL for District 9. Two Senior Biologists have also been named, with Blake Hendon now being the Senior Biologist for District 8 and Mark Lange accepting the District 9 position. Currently, several district biologist positions are vacant across both Districts with the hopes of having these filled in the next 6-8 months.

The reorganization should not affect landowners and constituents across the landscape. With added positions some biologists will only have one county of responsibility versus two or three counties as in the past. More staffing is a direct result of the Managed Lands Deer Permit fee that was put in place a few seasons ago. Increased staffing at the field level should allow biologists more time with constituents and hopefully result in more 'on the ground' habitat management. Our region will benefit greatly with the addition of four new district biologists once hiring is complete.

Now, what has been keeping staff busy since the fall newsletter? As always deer season keeps staff running with the collection of Age and Antler data and the collection of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples. Looking at Region 4, there has been approximately 2,080 CWD samples collected this season. Samples have been predominately taken from hunter harvest (62%) and roadkill (36%); 2% fall into 'other'. Bucks have accounted for 58% and does have accounted for 42% of the samples. Staff have done an excellent job at sampling whatever deer they can get their hands on and will continue to do so.

Thankfully, from the samples tested this season in Region 4, all have tested 'not detected' for CWD. Region 4 does have two CWD containment zones that were set up near facilities that tested positive in the spring of 2023. These zones are in Gonzales County and Washington County.

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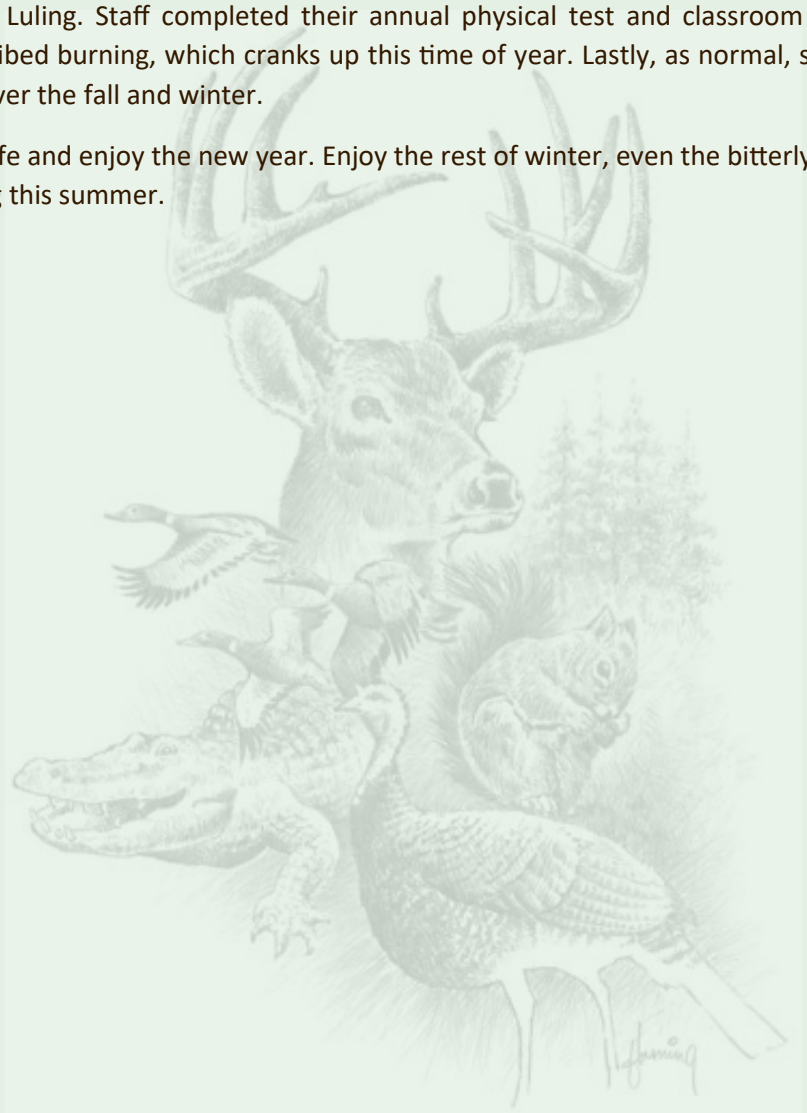
State of the District, continued

Samples collected this season within these zones have also shown 'not detected'. These zones will likely stay in place for the foreseeable future to continue monitoring. CWD can have a long incubation period and can have a lag from when first detected. Due to this lag we want to be vigilant in testing.

In addition to CWD collection, staff assist with other tasks and duties. Rarely does anything fall off the plate. Staff have assisted with public hunts on Wildlife Management Areas, State Parks, and some private lands youth opportunities. Most staff participated with the Annual Youth Firearms Safety Day which was held for 2 days at the Neasloney WMA near Luling. Staff completed their annual physical test and classroom training to be able to participate with prescribed burning, which cranks up this time of year. Lastly, as normal, staff have made quite a few landowner visits over the fall and winter.

Until next time, stay safe and enjoy the new year. Enjoy the rest of winter, even the bitterly cold days, because we know the heats coming this summer.



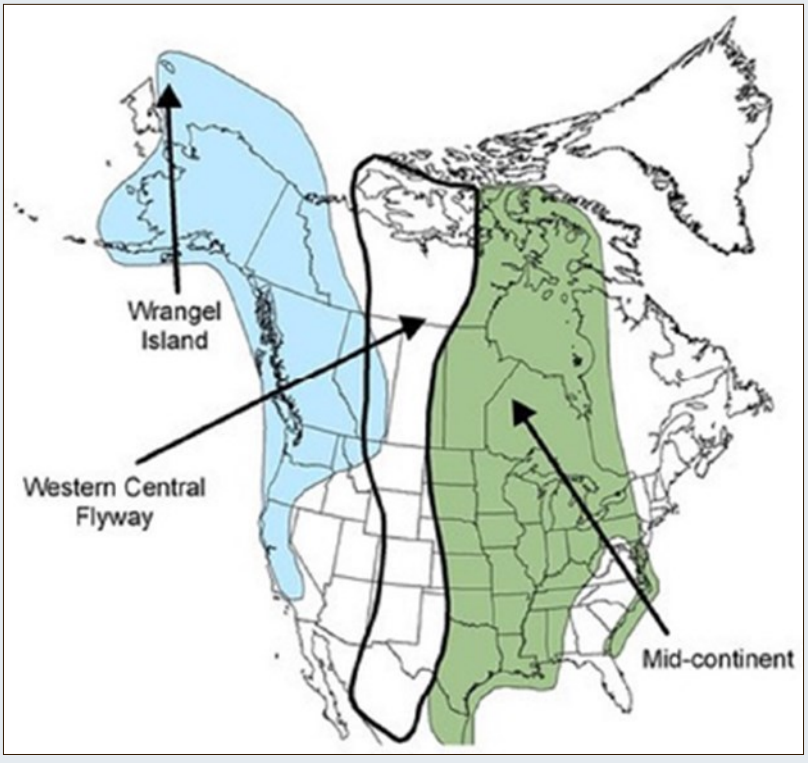
Bobby Eichler is the District 9 Leader. Prior to this position Bobby was the Technical Guidance Biologist for the Oak Prairie District for over 16 years and a Private Lands Biologist in Northeast Texas for 7 years. He has Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Forestry both with emphasis in Game Management, from Stephen F. Austin State University.

The Future of Light Goose Harvest Management in Texas?

WRITTEN BY KEVIN KRAAI, TPWD WATERFOWL PROGRAM LEADER

Historically, Texas coastal prairies and marshes were home to one of North America's largest wintering population of light geese. Light geese can be defined as snow geese (white and blue phases) and Ross's geese. Due to a variety of reasons, including habitat loss, changes in agricultural practices, and increase in hunting pressure, the Texas´ Gulf Coast no longer winters a significant number of light geese.

Concern about light geese impacting their breeding grounds by overgrazing has long been a theme amongst wildlife managers based on long-term research sites in the Arctic and subarctic. In fact, it was assumed that long-term impacts in this delicate ecosystem may be irreversible in our lifetimes. The establishment of the Conservation Order, a special management action under the authority of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, was implemented due to these concerns and attempted to decrease adult survival by using hunters during a special extended season (not an established hunting season) that allowed more flexibility, including electronic calls, increased or no daily bag limits, and extended shooting hours. Extensive liberalizations of bag and possession limits across the continent occurred simultaneously with the conservation order era.



Mid-continent light goose population range map.

Historic high light goose populations along the Texas Gulf Coast reached an estimated 1.2 million birds in 1978. This past year's mid-winter coastal goose survey resulted in an estimate of just 117,000 light geese, a 75-year and all-time low estimate and a 90% decline in abundance since the beginning of the Conservation Order.

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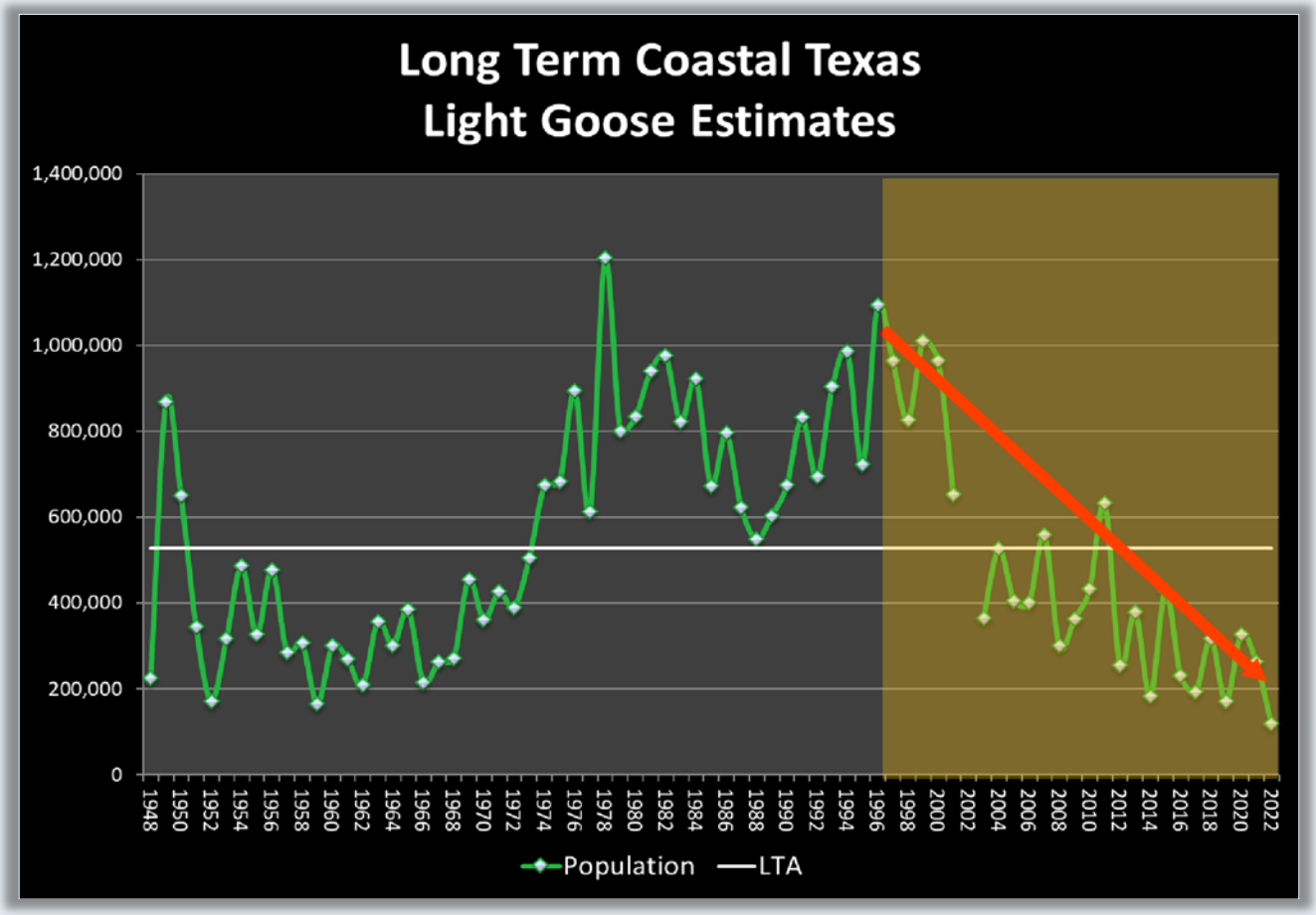
The Future of Light Goose Harvest Management in Texas?, continued



It is currently estimated that there are approximately 17,400 goose hunters in Texas, down from a high of 76,000 in 2001. The highest regular season light goose harvest estimate in Texas was 341,000 birds in 1999. The most recent harvest estimate for light geese in Texas in the regular season was down to 28,000.

Subsequently, participation and harvest of light geese during the Conservation Order has sharply declined since its establishment in Texas. Hunter participation was estimated at 1,436 individuals this past season, down from a high of 27,000 participants in 1999. Harvest of light geese in Texas this past season was 12,182, also a significant decrease from the high of 102,225 in 1999.

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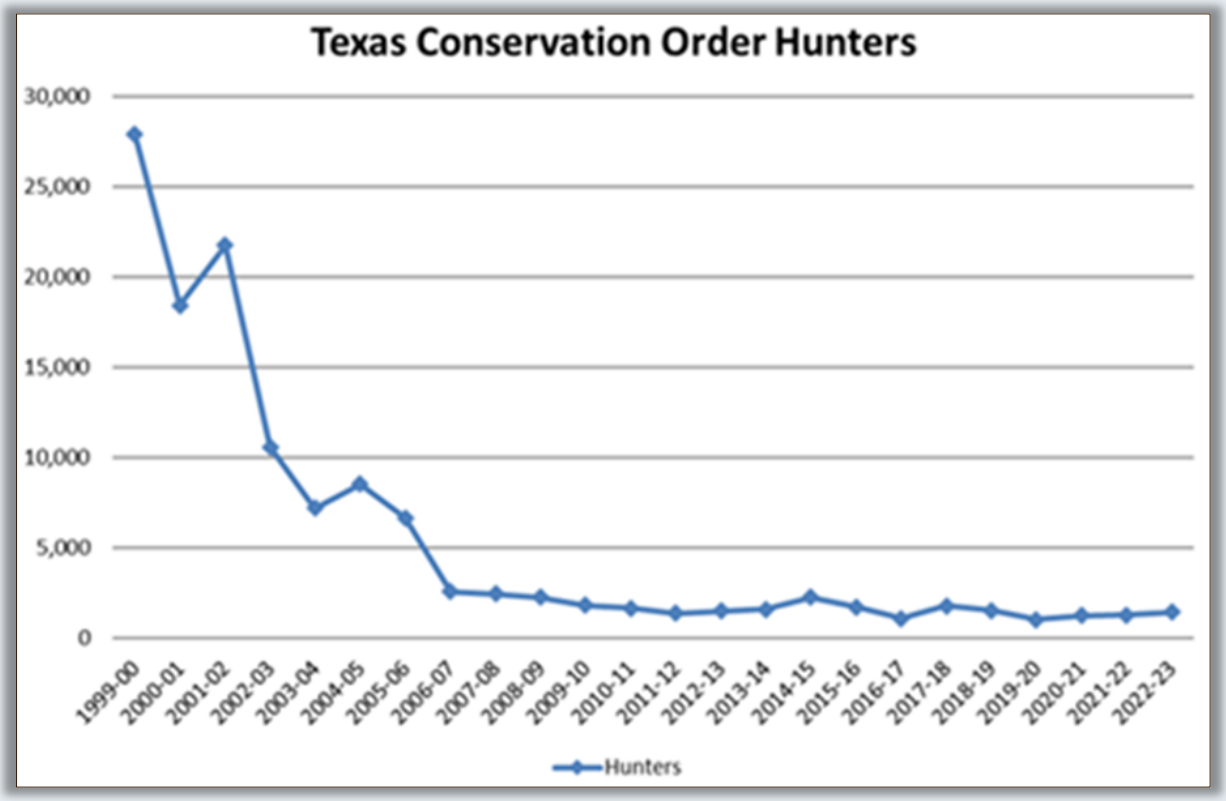
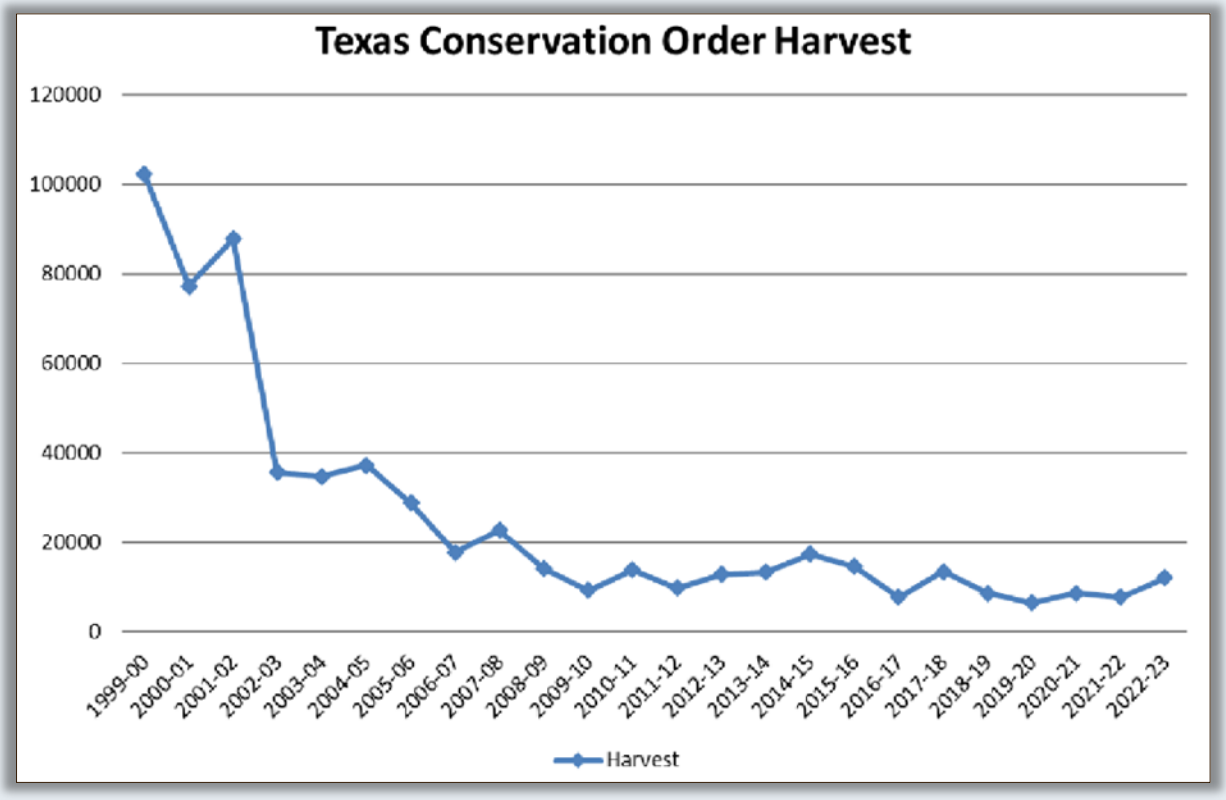
The Future of Light Goose Harvest Management in Texas?, continued





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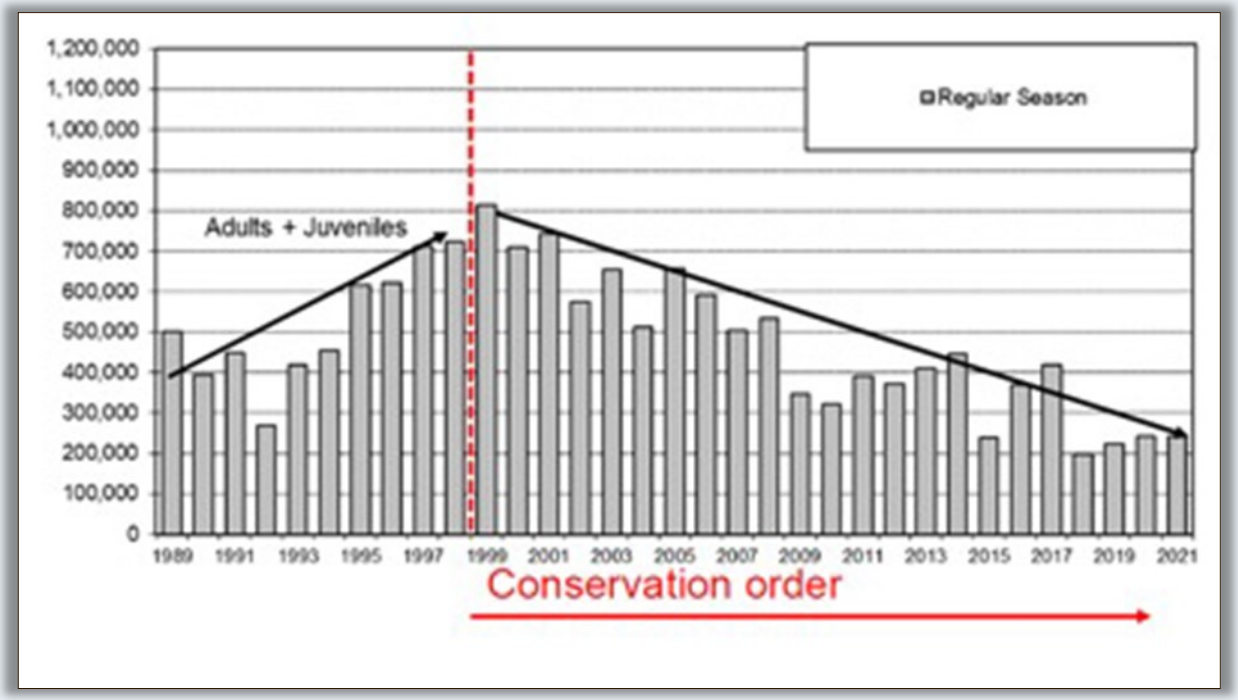
The Future of Light Goose Harvest Management in Texas?, continued

Continentally, there has been a dramatic shift in harvest of mid-continent light geese from the established regular seasons to the conservation order. In 1999, it was estimated that 1 million light geese were harvested in North America during the regular season. In 2018, it was estimated that there were 360,000 light geese harvested in North America during the regular season despite extreme liberalizations during that period. Later in 2018 we saw a total estimated harvest of light geese during the Conservation Order reach a high of 1.6 million, with nearly 700,000 of those birds coming from Arkansas alone. Most of the harvest of light geese is now coming from the Conservation Order and clearly in places other than Texas.

Regular Season Harvest of Midcontinent Light Geese



The long-term decline in light geese along the Texas coast is well-established. But few hunters are aware that the overall abundance of mid-continent light geese in North America has now sustained a 15-year population crash. Using population estimators that incorporate banding and harvest data, it is estimated that North America had a high of almost 20 million light geese in 2007, with the most recent estimates down very close to just 6 million. In a little more than a decade we have seen an apparent population decline of nearly 70% of the mid-continent population of North America's light geese.

Midcontinent Light Goose Abundance Estimates

Light goose recruitment (i.e., young produced during the breeding season) has been low and decreasing for many years and 13 out of the last 15 years, light geese have seen very poor, to almost zero recruitment at times. Researchers are telling us this is due to early vegetation greenup in the Arctic due to climate change creating a mismatch of resources at the time of gosling hatch and they simply aren't surviving to adulthood (Baldwin et al 2022, Aubry et al 2013). This phenomenon has resulted in very few juvenile birds in the flocks of mid-continent light geese for many years and we are seeing big impacts to the overall population in North America, not just in Texas.

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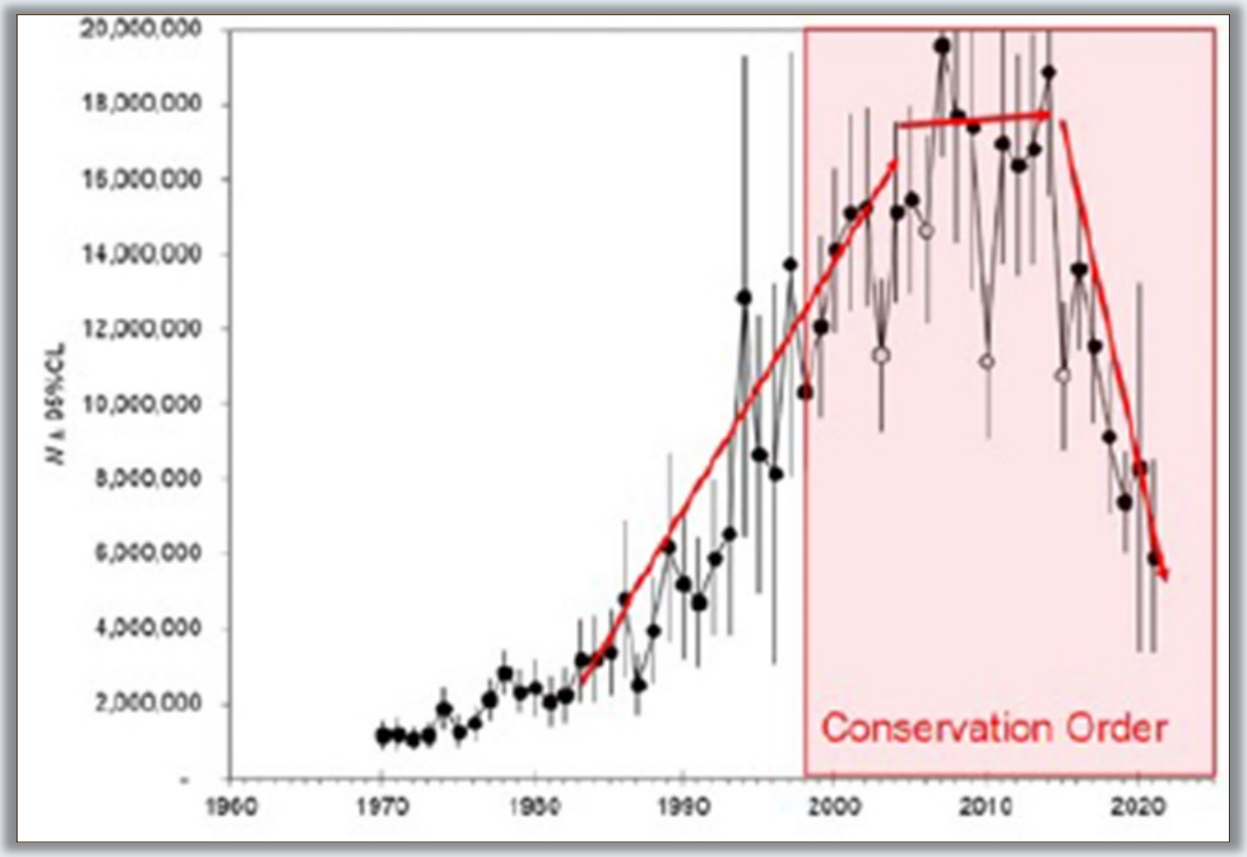
The Future of Light Goose Harvest Management in Texas?, continued

Light Goose Abundance Estimates 1960-2022



In the late 1990s goose hunters and biologist were all on the same page to address calls of overabundance of light geese and no one was more suited to answering the call for management than Texas goose hunters at the time. The concerns about overabundant geese eating themselves out of house and home are being examined more closely now that we are approaching 25 years since researchers started to take notice and the disastrous die-off's that were predicted have yet to come to fruition. Extensive damage by breeding geese to these fragile habitats appears to have not expanded much beyond a small stretch of the Hudson Bay shoreline, where most of North America's light geese stage for a few days prior to departing to the high Arctic where most of the geese breed. Additionally, it appears that there was an underestimate of the vastness and carrying capacity of the Arctic and the lights goose's breeding ground as a whole. These exaggerated claims of widespread damage are now being publicly acknowledged by researchers and biologist (NAAG Roundtable). Over two decades of liberalized regulations, and the establishment of the conservation order, has not significantly decreased adult survival of light geese like biologist once hoped and thus has not had the desired impact to the overall population (Alisauskas et al 2011). In fact, the increased disturbance associated with over 20 years of liberalized regulations has had significant impact to their behavior, habits, migrations, and distribution of birds across the landscape. The conservation order is a management tool that was designed to control an overabundant species, that may never have been overabundant in the first place, and not a hunting season or designed to increase hunting opportunity. It has had huge impacts to abundances in Texas and now we are experiencing a continental population crash.

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The Future of Light Goose Harvest Management in Texas?, continued

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Alisauskas, R. T., R. F. Rockwell, K. W. Dufour, E. G. Cooch, G. Zimmerman, K. L. Drake, J. O. Leafloor, T. Moser, and E. T. Reed. 2011. Harvest, survival, and abundance of midcontinent lesser snow geese relative to population reduction efforts. Wildlife Monographs 179: 1-42.

North American Arctic Goose Conference (NAAG) Round Table Discussion. Corpus Christi, TX December 8, 2022.

Snow Geese. Photo©Clinton Faas, TPWD

Smaller Acreage Restoration Program – One year Later

WRITTEN BY GARY KOCUREK

The Fayette Prairie Chapter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT) created the "Smaller Acreage Restoration Program" (SARP) during Fall 2023. The program is designed to promote restoration of properties less than 25 acres, which is the general cutoff for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) cost-sharing programs. SARP covers 50% of the upfront costs of herbicide and native grass/forb seeds, and provides advice, equipment, and workdays to help get the restoration accomplished. Given fragmentation of the Fayette Prairie and surrounding Post Oak Savanna, SARP addresses a growing niche. From the start, TPWD has worked closely with NPAT, and Oaks and Prairie Joint Venture (OPJV) has joined as another SARP partner. For the first year out, the decision was made to limit SARP advertising to NPAT online, presentations at local conferences, and mailed flyers to Wildlife Valuation holders in Fayette County.

So how did the first year go? There is interest and over 100 inquiries were received. These general inquiries filtered down to 33 site visits, and ultimately to 7 SARP projects in Fayette, Colorado, Washington, Austin, and Bastrop counties. Property sizes range from 1 to 17 acres, with an average size of 10 acres. In addition to the 7 SARP properties, 4 were directed to the TPWD Pastures for Upland Birds program because of their larger acreage, and others were directed to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) where brush clearing was the main objective.

Examining why the remainder of the site visits did not result in SARP projects is insightful in understanding the challenges in restoration. Firstly, those that did become successful SARP projects are all characterized by highly motivated landowners. Other landowners lost interest or declined the program for financial or timing considerations. Some declined after understanding the time and effort needed to develop a prairie restoration. However, the single most common reason for not pursuing a restoration was that herbicides would be involved. This objection was a prime motivator in the NPAT Fayette Prairie Chapter and several co-hosts sponsoring a Herbicide Workshop in La Grange on February 2, 2024 Herbicide Workshop Event Information.

Seeded rows on a recent SARP Project. Photo©Trey and Marvelyn Granger

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Smaller Acreage Restoration Program – One year Later, continued

Now that we have had some experience in managing SARP, the goal is to expand the program. But how? Education is one avenue. Many wish to have more quail, turkey, songbirds, and wildlife in general, but the direct correlation between wildlife and providing the habitat to support wildlife is often missed. We especially need expanded outreach, but this needs to be more effective and creative. There is a large pool of landowners holding Wildlife Valuations, and a much larger pool of landowners who are not aware of the value of habitat restoration and the available programs.

While restoration of smaller acreage directly benefits pollinators and many species of birds, the primary contribution is to provide "steppingstones" in corridors between larger restored and remnant tracts. It is vital that SARP work in conjunction with TPWD, OPJV and other agencies in creating a checkerboard of habitats to sustain the ecosystem. The NPAT Fayette Prairie Chapter includes Fayette and the adjacent 10 counties, and SARP is just one component of the state-wide restoration/conservation effort of NPAT (NPAT Website). As always, we would like to hear from landowners with properties to restore. We would also like to hear from potential program sponsors, including individuals, businesses, and organizations. Please contact us at NPAT-Fayette Chapter.

Left: Seeding is accomplished using a 'no-till' drill specific for native grass seeds. Right: Prescribed burn to remove unwanted thatch prior to seeding. Photos©Trey and Marvelyn Granger. Bottom: Alan Stahnke (USDA-NRCS) instructing at a soil pit during the Soils Workshop on September 29, 2023. Photo©Gary Kocurek

Species Spotlight: Nutria

WRITTEN BY LEE WILLIAMSON

In many areas of Texas, semi-aquatic rodents are a common sight, and it is no secret that these species can cause their fair share of headaches for Texas landowners. Beavers (*Castor canadensis*) and muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*) come to mind as species whose presence can lead to undesirable results on private and public lands, but no species is a more unwelcome sight in any part of Texas than the beaver's invasive cousin, the nutria (*Myocastor coypus*).

Unlike the beaver and muskrat, which are native to Texas, nutria are a relative newcomer to the state. Nutria were first brought to the region in the early 1900s for fur ranching. They quickly escaped their enclosures on some operations in Louisiana, and populations were well established in the state by the 1930s. It is likely that nutria first crossed into Texas around this time, but their populations were largely confined to marshes in the Southeast corner of the state. They may have remained there if not for a severe hurricane that hit the gulf coast in 1941. This hurricane dispersed nutria populations into Southeast Texas and along the Gulf Coast, and from there they have spread to their present-day range. Today nutria can be found along waterways from Central Texas eastward and along the coast.

Like beavers and muskrats, nutria are most commonly found in wetlands, marshes, and riparian corridors. Each of these species can impact their habitats by removing vegetation and creating burrows, but the damage that nutria can do to their environment in just a short amount of time is unlike anything done by Texas' native rodents. Nutria can cause substantial damage to its environment, and to human infrastructure, by consuming large amounts of above-ground and below-ground vegetation and by creating burrows. An adult nutria, weighing just under 12 pounds on average, will consume roughly 25% of its bodyweight in plants every day. It will feed at this rate year-round. This high rate of consumption is compounded by the fact that nutria, like many species of rodent, reproduce rapidly. Females can reach sexual maturity within 3 months of being born and will produce two litters a year on average. Each litter will consist of 1-13 offspring, and each of these offspring will begin consuming vegetation within 24 hours of being born. These factors can lead to a riparian plant community being rapidly defoliated once nutria are introduced to the area. This removes plants that serve as food and cover for a variety of native reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals.

Nutria in defoliated area. Photo©TPWD

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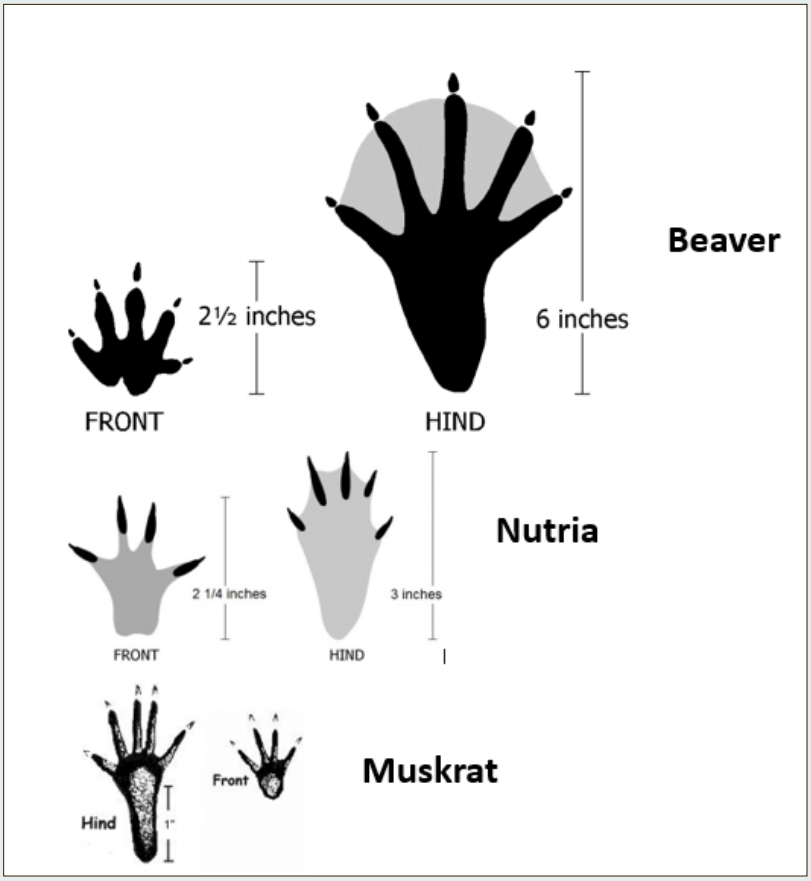
Species Spotlight: Nutria, continued

It can also lead to erosion as the plant roots that hold soils together are consumed. The effects of extensive defoliation are made worse by the nutria's tendency to create burrows, especially when combined with the nutria's high rate of reproduction. An area can quickly become riddled with burrows, destabilizing stream banks as well as docks, dams, roads, and other human structures.

If you notice large amounts of vegetation being removed along a water resource on your property, nutria may be the cause. Unfortunately, direct identification can be difficult as nutria are primarily crepuscular and nocturnal, and they are often mistakenly identified as beavers or muskrats. Nutria do leave some signs, however, that distinguish them from these other two species. Nutria leave tracks that are different from both species as their front feet are about 2½" long with 4 toes, and their rear feet are about 3" long with webbing between 4 of their 5 toes. Beavers have 5 toes on their front and rear feet and webbing between each of their toes on their rear feet. Muskrats do not have webbing on their front or rear feet. Nutria scat is also distinct from that of these two other species. It is cylindrical, about 2" long, and will have parallel grooves running along its length. Beaver scat is typically round and will often include woody debris. Muskrat scat can look somewhat similar to a nutria's but will be closer to 1" in length. Scat from both beavers and muskrats lack the parallel grooves present on nutria scat. If you can get a good look at the animal itself, nutria can be distinguished by their round, rat-like tail and white muzzle with white whiskers.

Nutria incursions can cause substantial damage to your property. They can be combatted by shooting and using lethal body-hold traps such as conibear traps. To take nutria via shooting, start by setting up a bait site of corn or any type of grain in an area where you have found nutria signs. The bait site should be well lit, even on nights where you will not be shooting if possible. Once the nutria are habituated to feeding from the bait site, you can use a shotgun or small caliber rifle to shoot individuals from dusk until a few hours after nightfall. Removal with firearms over the baited sites should be done randomly and not too consistently as to not deter nutria from using the bait. Trapping can be done as an alternative to, or in addition to, shooting. Conibear traps are especially popular for this as they are discrete and immediately euthanize the animal. These traps can be set up along nutria trails or at the entrance to their burrows. Be mindful that, because nutria are a destructive invasive species, it is illegal to live-trap and relocate individuals.

Comparison of Beaver, Nutria, and Muskrat tracks. Not to scale.
Photo©Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management



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Species Spotlight: Nutria, continued

You can protect your yard or garden from nutria by constructing fences of 2” mesh. These fences should be 4’ tall and have aprons buried at least 6” and extend out of the ground 12”. You can also use these materials to construct wire tubes to protect individual trees. Reducing the number of nutria on your property is going to be the best way to limit their damage.

Nutria are not the only semi-aquatic rodent in Texas that can cause problems for landowners, but the level of damage they can do in a short amount of time trumps that of any native species. To protect wildlife habitat and personal property, nutria should be removed wherever they are found. For more information on nutria and nutria control, you can visit any of the links below, or the Texas Parks and Wildlife website.

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McFalls, T., P. Keddy, D. Campbell, G. Shaffer. 2010. Hurricanes, Floods, Levees and Nutria: Vegetation Responses to Interacting Disturbance and Fertility Regimes with Implications for Coastal Wetland Restoration. Journal of Coastal Research 26:901-911

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University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management: Nutria. https://icwdm.org/. Accessed 6 Dec 2023.

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Lee Williamson is the biologist for DeWitt County. He has a bachelor's degree in Biology and a Master's in Wildlife Ecology from Texas State University. Originally from Wichita Falls, Lee Williamson started with TPWD at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area in 2021 before moving to his current position in late 2022.

Plant Profile: Frostweed

WRITTEN BY RACHEL PATTERSON

The first frost of winter is typically awaited with trepidation, as thoughts of frostbitten crops and trees locked in ice race through many landowners' minds. But those who are lucky enough to stumble across a particular flower may witness an enchanting natural phenomenon: ribbons of sparkling ice furling outwards from splits in the central stem, forming delicate, crystalline sculptures akin to cotton candy. But how does this botanical marvel occur? During temperatures low enough to freeze, but still warm enough for roots to absorb water, the water begins to freeze as it travels upward within the frosted stem of the plant. As the fluid solidifies into ice, it expands until it tears through the stem, spilling outwards in glistening sheets and curls. These frozen sculptures have been given many names, such as "ice ribbons," "ice flowers," and "frost beards."

Top: Frostweed blooms. Photo©R. W. Smith, Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center. Bottom: 'Frost'. Photo©Maureen BarcinskiTPWD

This process is how frostweed (*Verbesina virginica*) earned its name. It is also known as "white crownbeard," after its corona of pale flowers, and "Indian tobacco." The latter name was conceived from its historical use by Native Americans as an alternative to tobacco. Additionally, it was used to treat a variety of ailments, including fever, body aches, and indigestion.

Frostweed is a native perennial forb that exhibits alternate oval or lanceolate leaves with a dark green color and slightly toothed edges. This plant is a late bloomer, producing white petals during late summer and fall that are arranged in a star, a characteristic of plants in the family Asteraceae, around several small florets. Even though it grows under the shade of large cedar elms and live oaks, this peculiar plant still manages to thrive at 3-6 feet in height. Despite its affinity for moist, well-drained soils, frostweed still manages to persist during drought. Frostweed is typically found in shaded woodlands or along creeks and streams.

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Plant Profile: Frostweed, continued

Frostweed's late blooming cycle is particularly important for migrating butterflies, including the beloved Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). It provides a plentiful source of nectar for the weary migrators to nourish themselves during their long journey. Residential pollinators also make good use of its nectar, as the flat expanse of the flower tops make for a perfect landing pad. Frostweed also serves as larval host plant for several butterfly species, such as the Bordered Patch (*Chlosyne lacinia*) and the Silvery Checkerspot (*Chlosyne nycteis*).

Whether you wish to marvel at its icy blooms or help support native pollinators, frostweed is an excellent addition to the shaded areas on your landscapes and can be propagated by seed or directly planted.

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Frostweed. Photo©TPWD

Rachel Patterson is the wildlife biologist for Bastrop and Caldwell counties. She grew up in Conroe and graduated from Texas A&M University in 2022 with a B.S. in Wildlife & Fisheries Sciences. Following graduation, she interned with TPWD at the J. D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area, then worked two other seasonal positions with the East Foundation and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources before accepting her current position in August 2023. Rachel offices in Bastrop and enjoys helping landowners and wildlife management association members manage their habitat to benefit wildlife.

Black Bears Return to Central Texas?

WRITTEN BY BLAKE HENDON

The American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) is experiencing an apparent population rebound throughout much of its North American range, including a return to many areas where it has been mostly absent since the 19th and early 20th centuries. The recovery of black bear populations in Texas has mirrored the North American trend. Sightings of black bears are regularly reported from the mountains of the Trans Pecos and increasingly in the western regions of the Texas Hill County. Additionally, black bears sightings are occasionally reported in the eastern, forested regions of the state. A black bear wandering into the urbanized areas of Central Texas is a possibility, just not highly likely at this time.

Biologists with Texas Parks and Wildlife document reports of black bears within the state. This information helps the agency understand the distribution and potential dispersal trends of this species.

Below is a brief summary of the follow up stemming from a Hays County sighting report from Tuesday, November 7th, 2023.

- 3:45 pm - I received notification of a report of a possible black bear in a residential area along the Blanco River between Kyle and San Marcos in Hays County. The text of the notification indicated that a bear had been observed on multiple occasions over a two-week period in some open fields near an apartment complex. The construction on a water main and subsequent disturbance of habitat in the area was suggested by the individual reporting the sighting as a possible reason for the bear showing up in the residential area. Picture provided showing a bear in a parking lot.

- 4:02 pm – I reached out to Hays County Game Warden – Kally Marbach to find out if any reports or rumors of black bears in the area had been floating around. GW Marbach stated that they had not heard of any reports but would reach out to the other warden, Hays County Game Warden – Adam Alvarez.

4:14 pm – I received confirmation that neither game warden had heard of any reports of a black bear in the area or county.

A report of a black bear sighting near San Marcos in Hays County, including this picture of a bear, was received by staff in the Texas Parks and Wildlife - Wildlife Division. The report was forwarded to the local District Biologist assigned to Hays County (Blake Hendon) for follow up. (November 7th, 2023) Photo©TPWD

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Black Bears Return to Central Texas?, continued

5:08 pm – Further discussed report and location information with GW Alvarez who was currently in the area where the bear had been reported. GW Alvarez was able to confirm that the vehicle in the photo showing the bear was registered to an owner in San Marcos.

6:06 pm – Received communication from GW Alvarez indicating that San Marcos PD had not received any reports of a bear.

7:58 pm – Received communication from GW Alvarez indicating that the owner of the vehicle had taken the picture of the bear near their car the day before in Gatlinburg, TN.

The picture had been shared on social media with friends and family, allowing someone to create a potentially convincing story. It didn't take much time or effort for someone to create the story, but it did take several hours away from two game wardens and a district biologist. Time that could have been used for more meaningful and productive activities. Be careful of what you see and hear on social media. Keep an open mind, but let the evidence speak for itself. A picture of a black bear – confirmed, just not in Hays County.

Blake Hendon is the Senior Wildlife Biologist for District 8. Previously, he was the Natural Resource Specialist for Hays and Travis Counties. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Ecology and a Master of Science degree in Rangeland Ecology and Management, both from Texas A&M University. A native of the Pineywoods of Northeast Texas, Blake started his TPWD career in central Texas in 2007.

Herbicide Workshop

Friday, 2 February, 9:00-5:00

Casino Hall, 254 North Jefferson, La Grange

REGISTRATION: https://texasprairie.org/event/herbicide-workshop/

This workshop is intended for two audiences: (1) those already using herbicides in prairie/savanna restoration/maintenance and wishing to learn more about their effective and safe use, and (2) those not doing prairie/savanna restoration because herbicides are involved, but who are open to learning more about herbicides. A wealth of expertise has been assembled to address the educational needs of both groups. Lunch will be provided.

9:00 Check-in and Coffee

9:30 Understanding Herbicides: Mode-of-Action and Efficacy (Scott Nolte)

10:30 Toxicology of Herbicides (Mark A. Matocha)

11:30 Texas Pesticide Laws and Regulations (Elizabeth Prokop)

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Useful Herbicide Applications on Rangelands (Megan Clayton & Stacy Hines)

3:30 Management Decisions: When and Why? (Tim Siegmund)

4:30 Discussion

There will be time following the presentations for questions, with a designated discussion period following the presentations. Participants will also be able to interact with speakers during the workshop and over lunch.

Continued on page 19

Speakers

Megan Clayton (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)
Dr. Megan Clayton is a Rangeland Specialist with the Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension Service, and Professor in the Department of Rangeland, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management at Texas A&M University. Her responsibilities include providing support for Extension agents, specialists, clientele, and organizations through teaching, training, and providing technical expertise. Her current interests include blending wildlife habitat and livestock range management, small acreage management, UAV (drone) research, brush management, and youth natural resources education.

Stacy Hines (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)
Dr. Stacy L. Hines is a Rangeland Habitat Management Specialist with the Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension Service, and Assistant Professor in the Department of Rangeland, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management at Texas A&M University. Her responsibilities include integrating technologies and diversifying mediums to improve the educational experiences of stakeholders. Her research focuses on the interconnection between rangelands and the livestock and wildlife they support. Her main area of responsibility includes the Coastal Bend and South Texas.

Mark A. Matocha (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)
Dr. Mark Matocha is an Associate Professor and Extension Specialist with the Agricultural and Environmental Safety Unit of Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension Service in College Station. He holds a Ph.D. in weed science from Texas A&M University and routinely conducts educational programs for pesticide applicators across the state, in addition to working with state and federal agencies in evaluating pesticide uses and needs.

Scott Nolte (Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service)
Dr. Scott Nolte grew up on a small grain and cattle farm in Southern Illinois. He earned his Ph.D. in weed science in 2009 and then worked at Monsanto for 8 years prior to joining the Soil and Crop Sciences Department at Texas A&M. For the past 6 years he has served as the State Extension Weed Specialist. In this role, Scott conducts research on drift management and on weed management in our major row crops, pastures, hayfields, rights of way, and turf.

Elizabeth Prokop (Texas Department of Agriculture)
Elizabeth Prokop is currently the Coordinator for Agricultural Pesticide Certification & Compliance at The Texas Department of Agriculture in Austin, TX. Elizabeth has over 10 years of experience working with Texas agricultural, environmental, and oil and gas regulatory programs. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from the University of Texas at Austin, and she works in her home's vegetable and pollinator garden in her spare time.

Tim Siegmund (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)
Tim Siegmund is the Private Lands Program Leader for the Wildlife Division of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. His job duties include supervising a handful of habitat restoration incentive programs across the State of Texas. Tim has had a hand in over 10,000 acres of prairie restoration and many other brush control, prescribed fire, and riparian restoration projects.

TEXAS PARKS & WILDLIFE

Washington County Wildlife Valuation Workshop

MARCH 8, 2024

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Blinn Rankin Ag Complex

1409 Old Mill Creek Rd., Brenham, TX 77833

Registration is $20.00 per person and will include a catered lunch and refreshments

Topics Include:

- Washington County Appraisal District
- Introduction to Wildlife Valuation
- Brush Management
- Herps of the Southeast
- Native Pollinators
- Survey Techniques
- Feral Hog Control
- Washington County Wildlife Society
- Texas Wildlife Association
- Landowner Assistance Programs
- Texas Master Naturalist Program

TEXAS FARM CREDIT

BLINN COLLEGE DISTRICT

Registration deadline March 4, 2024

For more information, call 979-277-6297

TO REGISTER:

Mail registration fee, payable to WCWS, to:
1305 E. Blue Bell Rd., Brenham, TX 77833

Upcoming Events

JANUARY

26 **Washington County Wildlife Society Annual Meeting**
Washington County Expo Event Center
5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Contact Washington County Wildlife Society at 979-277-6297 to RSVP

FEBRUARY

2 **Lee County Wildlife Association Annual Meeting**
The Silos
1031 CR 223, Giddings, TX 78942
5:00 Exhibits & Raffles, 6:30 Ribeye Dinner, 7:30 Live Auction
Contact Lee County Agrilife at 979-542-2753
Leecountywildlife.org

2 **Native Prairies Association of Texas – Herbicide Workshop**
Casino Hall
254 North Jefferson, La Grange, TX 78945
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Limited Seating—Must RSVP
https://texasprairie.org/event/herbicide-workshop/

MARCH

1 **Goliad Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop**
Julie Wimberly Memorial Homemaking Building
925 US-183,Goliad, TX 77963
Begins at 8:30 a.m.
Contact Meagan Lesak at
meagan.lesak@tpwd.texas.gov

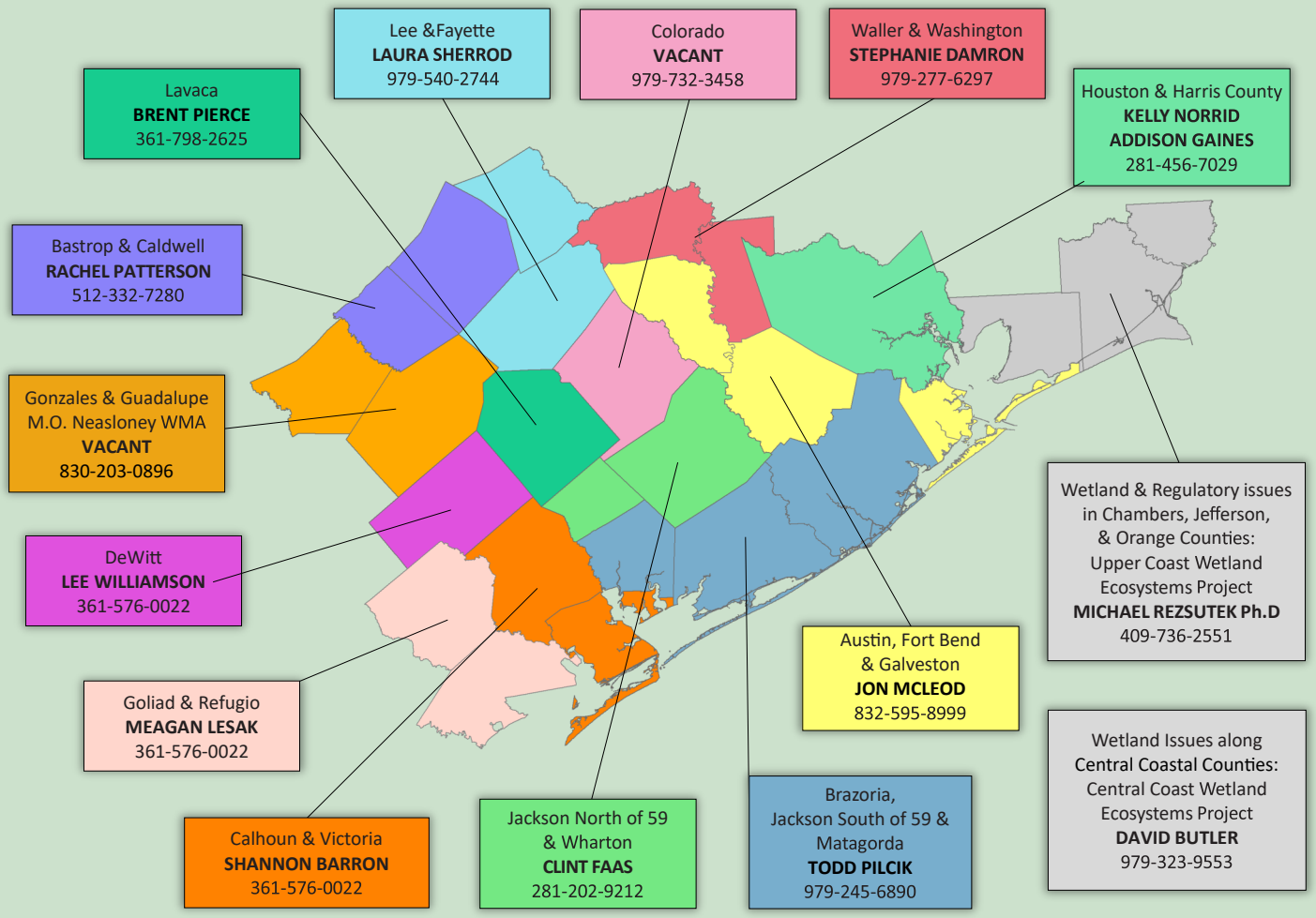
8 **Washington County Wildlife Valuation Workshop**
Blinn Rankin Ag Complex
1409 Old Mill Creek Rd., Brenham, TX 77833
RSVP before March 4, Includes lunch $20
Contact Stephanie Damron at 979-277-6297

16 **Colorado County Wildlife Management Association Spring Banquet**
Columbus Hall
Begins at 4:00 p.m.
Contact Chad Emmel at 979-732-1399

MAY

11 **Red Rock WMA Annual Fundraiser**
Sacred Heart Catholic Church - Holtman Hall
4045 FM 535, Bastrop, TX 78602
Live & Silent Auctions
5:00 .pm. - 10:00 p.m.
Contact Martie Mitchell at
martiesbuy@gmail.com

Our Wildlife Biologists



District 9 Leader	Senior Biologist	Wildlife Diversity Biologist
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TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT
"To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."

You may view this publication, as well as other newsletters created by the department, through the TPWD website. Please visit www.tpwd.texas.gov/newsletters/ for more information.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

All inquiries: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744, telephone (800) 792-1112 toll free, or (512) 389-4800 or visit our website for detailed information about TPWD programs:

www.tpwd.texas.gov

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