

Bee County Wildlife Management Association



Enhancing Quality and Quantity of Wildlife Habitat and Populations in Bee County, Texas

August 2006 Newsletter

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*deadline
approaching

Also...

See enclosed flyer

2 Day Summer Burn Workshop & Demo Burn

being put on by the
**Coastal Bend
Prescribed Burn
Association**

Check it out!

FROM THE PRESIDENTS DESK, PICKUP TRUCK AND LOCAL CAFE

During our monthly Board of Directors meetings we have been brain storming ways to raise money for the association. Liability is a concern due to the potential for accidents and law suits, and things are on hold pending one of our board members reporting back on insurance coverage options. We will keep you posted.

Some of our fund raiser ideas include 1) a Turkey Fun Shoot, 2) a dinner/dance on New Years weekend, and 3) various contests with entry fees. All these potential events are on hold pending insurance coverage. We would also like to have a real old fashioned BCWMA blow out with your directors and volunteers at the cooking pits and on the serving lines. Add some dominos, cards, a knee slapping good dance and it should be a good time for all.

Your board of directors welcomes your suggestions for future fundraisers and other projects. Phone numbers and addresses are in each news letter so feel free to convey your thoughts. You are also welcome to attend our board meetings the first Tuesday of each month.

We are in our twenty seventh month of existence and while the membership enrollment has slowed, we are still signing new members. There are now 111 members within our association and this past week, Todd's Welding/Trophy Blinds signed on as a sponsor. Welcome aboard Todd and all the new members!

The Texas Organization of Wildlife Management Associations (AKA, TOWMA) biannual conference is Thursday, August 10th to Saturday, August 12th. Several board members and wives will attend the meeting in College Station. We will hear experts talk on cow bird trapping, predator control, wildlife photography, prescribed burning, range improvements and game and fowl management. Larry Jones will speak on our Fire Ant program. Board members attending any/all conferences cover their own expenses in case anyone is concerned.

I've just got to mention our new WEBSITE. It's awesome! You can search archives and read every BCWMA newsletter from the first to the last. Check it out and see all the other good stuff we've included. Larry will show the site to other associations at the TOWMA conference. He designed it in a "template" format so it can be easily adapted if they want to build their own sites.

We hope future columns from the "Presidents Desk, Pickup Truck, and Cafe" will be of interest to you. You will see factual information, a story or two, some friendly roasting of tempting targets, plus tips, updates, and whatever else we think you should know.

We welcome your comments, suggestions, and feed back. Please let us hear from you.

Tip # 1 from the Presidents Column: Shake out your boots in the morning! You never know what critter spent the night in there.

Some thirty year back the wife and I were in deer camp. Around 5:00 AM I woke her for one of my famous breakfasts, and she assured me she was awake and getting dressed. Minutes passed before the silence was split with a horrible scream. Grabbing the lantern I

Good for a grin...

A guy from Houston was visiting a rancher near Beeville, and during the visit he saw the rancher feeding pigs in a really weird way. The rancher would lift a pig up to a mesquite tree, and the pig would eat mesquite beans directly off the tree. The rancher moved the pig from branch to branch until it was satisfied, then started again with another pig.

The Houston guy watched for a time and was totally astonished. When he couldn't stand it any more he asked the rancher, "Why are you feeding those pigs that way? Don't you know how much time could be saved if you just shook the beans off the tree and let the pigs eat them on the ground?"

The rancher looked at the Houston dude like he was crazy and finally asked, "What's time to a pig?"



Two roaches are munching on garbage behind a Beeville restaurant when one starts a discussion about a new restaurant.

"I was in that new restaurant," he says. "It's so clean! The kitchen is spotless, the floors are gleaming white, and there is no dirt anywhere--it's so sanitary that the whole place just shines."

ran to the bedroom to find her frozen in shock. "There's something in my boot besides with my foot!" she screamed. I grabbed her boot and pulled it off and out came a gray tree lizard about 8 inches long. I explained the lizard needed protection from the cold too, but that didn't make me any points. Anyway, I reckon she shakes those boots out every morning since that grand event.

Till next month, keep your powder dry and your hooks sharp.
Pat True

SEPTEMBER 16th FIELD DAY AT WELDER WILDLIFE REFUGE

"It's All About Habitat" will be conducted by Dr. Lynn Drawe, Manager of the Welder Wildlife Refuge located just outside of Sinton, Texas. Learn, hands on, in the field, to identify the first, second and third most desirable deer food plants from the expert who literally wrote the book (copies will be available). Also learn to conduct browse surveys to determine deer carrying capacity on your range. Deer season is just around the corner, fall is the one time of the year you can really make progress toward improving your habitat and your deer herd. Knowledge of habitat carrying capacity is vital to determining proper harvest levels for your property. Combine what you learn at this meeting with the October BCWMA Harvest recommendations meeting and you will be on the way to better habitat management and a better deer herd. Saturday, September 16, 9:30 a.m. to noon at the 7800 acre Welder Wildlife Refuge, 8 miles NE of Sinton on Hwy 77, or 1 mile SW of the intersection of Hwy 77 and the Aransas River. It's only 38 easy miles from Beeville to the refuge so come on out and start making a difference!

MAY MEETING

NRCS Range Specialist Stan Reinke spoke on Managing Wildlife and Habitat in Drought Conditions at our May meeting. Stan did a great job of putting the current drought in perspective, and pointed out that the best way to manage a drought is to start back when conditions are good and we have lots of rain. Unfortunately, many of us don't think this way. For some reason, when times are good we think it will last forever, and we may over stock cattle and allow deer populations to soar, thinking we will maximize profits and benefits to catch up from the last drought.

The reality in South Texas is that there is always another drought just around corner. Admittedly, this one has been the worst in almost 100 years, but it won't be the last. One key to effective drought management is to maintain conservative stocking levels of both game and cattle during the good times, and then be prepared to reduce further, and early, when a drought hits. It is important to prevent or minimize long term damage to pastures and habitat during a drought. Continuing to run cattle on barren pastures results in hoof packed soil and long term damage that can take years to recover, and when it rains water will run off and not penetrate without chiseling or some other treatment to loosen the soil.

Stan shared a lot of good information drawn from many years of field experience and research. If you missed the meeting and get a chance to hear him in the future I hope you will take it - most attendees agreed it was one of the best programs we have had.

2006 SPOT LIGHT SURVEYS SET FOR SEPTEMBER

It's that time again. BCWMA members will be conducting deer spotlight surveys in September. The information derived will be analyzed by professional wildlife biologists and will be a factor in establishing our 2006-2007 BCWMA Deer Harvest Recommendations. Year to year data comparisons reveal how much progress we are making toward our goals.

This information is used in determining deer herd size vs. habitat carrying capacity in various regions of the county. We also collect information on buck-doe ratios and fawn survival rates. Deer density and herd composition are important factors in regulating your annual deer harvest, including the total number of deer to harvest and the percentage of bucks and does that should be taken.

In 2005 we ran 4 survey routes, 2 in the Mineral area, 1 in the Hwy 59 East area, and 1 off Hwy 202 between the prison and the Medio Creek. We plan to add another this year

"Please," said the other roach frowning. "Not while I'm eating!"



Two hands are digging a ditch near Mineral on a very hot day. One finally asks the other, "How come we're down here digging this hole while the boss sits under that shade tree?" "I don't know," responded the other, "but I'll ask him."

He climbs out of the hole and asks the boss, "How come we're digging in the hot sun and you're sitting in the shade?" "Intelligence," the boss answers, and in a minute the hand asks, "What do you mean, 'intelligence'?"

So the boss says, "Well, I'll show you. I'll put my hand on this tree and I want you to hit it with your fist as hard as you can." The hand takes a mighty swing and tries to hit the boss' hand. The boss pulls his hand back and the guy's hand smashes into the tree. Then the boss says, "That's intelligence!"

The hand goes back to his hole and his friend asks, "What did he say?" "He says we are down here because of intelligence." "What's intelligence?" asks the friend. The first guy puts his hand on his face and says, "I'll show you, just take your shovel and hit my hand."



that will run from near Skidmore back toward Hwy 202.

Many members have expressed an interest in having their property included in these surveys. If you are one of them, now is the time to contact Pat True, Tom Keller, or Larry Jones. We will see if you can be included in an existing route or if a new route can be established. You will also be expected to assist in the actual surveys, if possible. There is considerable work and time involved, but it is normally fun (if tiring) and it is the best way we have found to get to know your neighbors, to share views and goals on wildlife management, and to develop mutual trust between the parties.

Up until now just a few of the BCWMA directors have been doing most of the work. Quite frankly, we are all getting to old and to tired to do it alone any more, and we need help, especially from younger people. This would be a great project in which to involve your teens and older kids or grand kids. At the very least we need YOU to help this year. It is just four nights during September for 4 or 5 hours a night. Call one of the three guys above and sign up now. Please!

The process includes:

1. Establishing the survey route, usually about 15 miles, and obtaining access on all weather roads.
2. Establishing visibilities and calculating the number of acres actually surveyed. This is done by traveling the route at night with spotlights and with observers and recorders and recording the distance that can be seen to the right and left of the truck every 1/10 mile. This data is run through a computer program to convert it to acres viewed.
3. Running the route at least three times, over three weeks, and counting the number of bucks, does and fawns seen, as well as incidental observations of other wildlife.
4. Having the data processed to convert it to animals per acre and broken down by sex and adult/fawn.

We like to have four people per survey/pickup truck. One driver, two spotters (right and left sides), and one recorder. It can be done with less but is easier and more accurate with four.

THE (TWO LEGGED) PIGS OF BEE COUNTY

Feral hogs are a problem in Bee County, but no more so than the two legged human hogs that inhabit, travel through, and trash our county. If you live on a public road you are already well aware of the unsightly mess these pigs leave in their wake. If you haven't noticed it at 70 miles an hour, just stop some time and take a short walk on the shoulder to see if you don't agree.

With only a third of a mile of State highway frontage I can always pick up three to five large bags of litter in any one to two month period. Fast food wrappers, beer and soda containers, whisky bottles, dirty diapers, and cigarette trash make up the bulk of the litter. I resent every piece of it, and I resent the mindless pigs that throw it out every time I clean it up.

What happened to the pride people used to have in themselves and in their surroundings? Is this lack of personal values a result of poor upbringing, ethnic background, age, or just part of the moral decline we see throughout the country and the world?

I will never forget traveling by train from Germany to Belgium, and how dramatic the change was when we crossed the border. The rails in Germany were glass smooth and the countryside was picture book clean. As we crossed a bridge over the river that formed the border, there was a sudden jolt and then a clack, clack, clack every time we hit a joint in the rails on the Belgium side, caused by crude joints in the rails. The river banks were another startling contrast, the German banks pristine and clean while the Belgium banks were covered with garbage that stretched as far as we could see. The contrast was striking and my very different impressions of the two countries and their people remains to this day.

A passenger train is creeping along, slowly. Finally it creaks to a halt. A passenger sees a conductor walking by outside.

"What's going on?" she yells out the window.

"Cow on the track!" replies the conductor.

Ten minutes later, the train resumes its slow pace.

Within five minutes, however, it stops again.

The woman sees the same conductor walk by again.

She leans out the window and yells, "What happened? Did we catch up with the cow again?"



Food for thought...

A man sees in the world what he carries in his heart.

Opening scene of "Faust"

You can't expect people to look eye to eye with you if you are looking down on them.

unknown

You can tell more about a person by what he says about others than you can by what others say about him. –

unknown

In my mind I pictured the United States as being far more like Germany than Belgium, but a trip to Boston soon after brought the reality home. The city streets carried a litter load that rivaled Belgium. When I arrived back home I realized that my town was not much better. I guess when you live surrounded by trash you accept it as normal, and a graphic comparison is the only way to see the reality.

In Beeville, like much of Texas, we live in a sea of trash. The road ways and the property on the down wind side are littered with the trash of a population without pride or personal values and who no longer care about themselves or their neighbors. People whose mothers and fathers failed to teach them even the basics of civilized life. When I see a person litter, I see a parent who did a miserable job and a pitiful excuse for a child.

The August issue of Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine carries a letter from Bodey Langford of Caldwell County. Mr. Langford addresses the impact of highway trash on livestock and wildlife and states "I recently lost an expensive registered Angus heifer to 'gastrointestinal problems.' Upon further inspection (an autopsy) we found a plastic Wal-Mart sack impacted in the animal's rumen...this was an expensive lesson for us...cattle and wildlife die randomly for unknown reasons." Langford's vet acknowledged that this is a very common occurrence and that many cattle have all kinds of garbage in their stomachs for years. Wildlife is seldom autopsied and we will never know the extent of the damage and the suffering inflicted.

We have all seen photos of animals and fish with plastic 6 pack retainers caught over their heads and around their necks, and the above letter had one accompanying it. Plastic lasts a long time and one has to wonder at the extent of the damage, not only to cattle but also to wildlife in general. And this damage would be totally avoidable if it weren't for the pigs among us.

So what can we do about it? For one thing, when we see a person littering, including those morons who don't regard cigarette butts as litter, we can report them. The Don't Mess With Texas folks actually have a form you can fill out that will get the culprit a letter from the state telling them to cut it out. Even though many of us would rather stop and confront the piggy, the reporting program is certainly the more rational and safer way to go.

The following comes from the Don't Mess With Texas website:

How to Report a Litterer

Did you see that? That man threw a cigarette out the car window! Hey! That woman threw out a soda can! So what can you do about it? Report them through the Texas Department of Transportation's Report a Litterer program.

The Report a Litterer program allows Texans to turn in any people they observe tossing things out of their vehicle or accidentally littering from an uncovered load. It's simple. All you need to do is write down a few things about the incident. You will need the license plate number (Texas plates only), make of the vehicle, time of day, location, date, who (driver, passenger or accidental) tossed the trash and the item littered.

After you've rounded up a handful of these pesky litterers, you can submit the information via the form below. Please be accurate and honest when submitting information about the littering incident you observed.

When TxDOT receives the information it is compared to our vehicle registration database and an exact match is located. A letter is mailed to the litterer along with a Don't Mess with Texas litterbag to remind them to put their trash where it belongs!

The actual reporting form is available at

http://dontmesswithtexas.org/report_a_litterer.php and it can be filed on the internet.

On the way to HEB about a year ago I stopped behind an expensive convertible on a Beeville street. The top was down and the "starchy" looking couple in the car both threw their cigarettes out on the street. I followed them into the HEB parking lot and watched as they parked in one of the handicapped places in front of the store. There was no evidence of a handicap, and there was no handicapped tag or other markings on their car. As bad as I wanted to confront the selfish couple, I didn't. However, when they failed to pickup the carton of cigarettes they paid for I made it a point not to remind them and as I watched

The only job where you start at the top is digging a hole.

Anonymous

Did you know...

...one in three Texans admits to littering?

...140 million cigarette butts get tossed on Texas highways each year?

...a cigarette butt can take up to 20 years to decompose due to plastic in the filter?

...37% of Texans think convicts pickup the litter on Texas highways?

...hired crews actually pick up 90% of Texas litter so your tax dollars are paying for it?

...in 2005 an estimated 827 million pieces of litter accumulated on Texas highways?

...cigarette butt litter is the most common type of trash?

...61% of litter is identifiable by brand name?

...of identified litter, 18% was Marlboro Light®, 13% was Marlboro®, and 3% was

them drive off I felt somewhat better. I wish those two oink-oinks were isolated examples of our population, but judging from our roadsides I am afraid they are not.

For a lot more interesting information on littering go to: <http://dontmesswithtexas.org>

BCWMA WEBSITE NOW ONLINE

Our new website, <http://www.bee-county-wildlife.org> is now up and running. It will be several more weeks before we get everything loaded up and like we want it, but it is usable now. Check it out and let us know what you think.

The site includes:

- Copies of all newsletters published since BCWMA was formed
- A reference library of technical articles
- Contact information for all Officers and Directors
- A calendar of events, including upcoming BCWMA meeting information
- Full time and live local, regional, and national weather, including radar and satellite
- Links to State agencies and wildlife related websites
- Beeville and Bee County resource and emergency listings with phone numbers
- Special notices of interest to members between newsletters
- Hunting lease and classified ad section
- A member photo page - you can upload personal photographs
- Information from the BCWMA brochure, BCWMA background, and applications
- Hunting Lease license applications and information

One of the many features of this site is the PHOTOGRAPHS section. People can upload their photographs to the website. Having a significant inventory of member photos available for viewing will assist us in achieving our goal of building more trust and better relationships among members. It also provides a world wide forum in which many of the excellent photographers in Bee County can showcase their work, and it will provide pictorial evidence of what Bee County has to offer potential visitors (and lease hunters) and perhaps entice them to visit the area and spend money here. The Photographs section is divided into albums, and individuals can create their own photo albums to contain their photographs. The ability to include comments with each photo is also included.

The uploading process is pretty simple, go to <http://www.bee-county-wildlife.org/photos/index.php> and give it a try. We need to get it loaded up with pictures as soon as possible. Don't worry about taking perfect pictures, some of our semi-pro local photographers will do that, just get as much of your own local color in there as you can. We appreciate you support and assistance.

We hope the convenience of the **real time weather** information, the **photo pages** and the other features of this very robust site will cause you to make this **your on-line home page**. Any suggestions you have should be forwarded to webmaster Larry Jones at webmaster@bee-county-wildlife.com.

BROWSE SURVEYS AND HOW THEY BENEFIT YOUR RANCH - By Macy Ledbetter

How do I know if there are too many deer for my land to support? How can I determine whether or not the heavy doe harvest over the last few years is helping the habitat? Is the deer herd healthy? When leasing or buying land, what can tell me whether or not the place is suitable for producing quality deer?

The Basics

The questions above and many more can be answered by conducting a browse survey. Browse, the leaves and twigs of woody plants, form the mainstay of a deer's diet. Although forbs (i.e. broad-leaved weeds) and mast (e.g. acorns, mesquite beans and fruits) are highly preferred and often nutritious, both are seasonal by nature. Since rainfall is normally heaviest in the spring and fall, forb growth is heavy at this time. However, once soil moisture levels become depleted, the small weeds will die out. Acorn crops usually occur in the fall, but are not dependable on a yearly basis. In contrast, woody plants are the most stable part of the habitat and can supply deer with nutrition when other food

McDonalds?

...33% of litter is tobacco-related, including snuff cans?

...29% of all litter is food related?

...since 1998 age has been the #1 predictor of who litters in Texas?

...Texans under 25 are the worst litterers?

...77% of Gen L admits to littering?

...young females are more inclined than males to litter?

...80% of young females admit to littering?

...75% of young males admit to littering?

...23% of smokers admit to tossing butts out the window?

...those least likely to litter are non-smoking, aging, minivan drivers?

...littering is slowly decreasing in Texas?

...roadside litter decreased from 1 billion pieces in 2001 to 827 million pieces in 2005?

sources are not available. Browse surveys are best conducted during these stress periods, often in late summer and late winter.

Browse Categories

It is vital to point out that not all browse plants are created equally. Deer are very selective when browsing woody plants. In South Texas, Granjeno is considered an "ice-cream" or first-choice plant. On the other hand, Agarito is rarely browsed when other woody plants are available. To simplify matters, browse plants are categorized using first, second, and third-choice classes. First-choice browse are comprised of plants that deer prefer over any other. These plants are sought after because they are the *most palatable and nutritious*. Second-choice browse are not as nutritious as first-choice species, but they make up for it in abundance on most ranges. Lastly, third choice plants are consumed only when first and second-choice plants are not available. It is important to note that some of the moderately preferred species can be utilized to a greater or lesser degree depending on season of growth, growth form, soil type, etc. However, these categories are an accurate simplification of browse preference as they pertain to white-tailed deer.

Methods

The first and most time-consuming step in conducting a browse survey is identifying the plants on your property. Field guides such as *A Field Guide to Common South Texas Shrubs* (Taylor et al. 1999) and *Trees of Central Texas* (Vines 1984) are very helpful. Other helpful resources are county extension agents and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department biologists. Diagnostic keys, such as Shinnery and Mahler's *Illustrated Flora of North Central Texas* (Diggs et al. 1999) can be of great value to the more taxonomy-minded person. A proper plant inventory and identification is critical and will increase your overall knowledge and appreciation of the ecosystem in which you are charged with managing.

There are many different browse survey techniques available. Some are best suited for particular situations and to attain exacting information while others involve more of a "wide" approach. For the purposes of this article, however, we will deal specifically with the cursory survey. As the Golden Rule of wildlife management states, "Quality habitat produces quality animals."

The cursory survey involves the "wide" approach where the observer is looking at the big picture as it pertains to habitat. One of the first steps in performing a cursory survey is to know the boundary, shape, and topography of the land. This can easily be gathered from an aerial photo, topo map, soil survey map, or have someone knowledgeable about the property draw you a relatively detailed map. Once in hand, consider the focal points of the property, i.e. rivers or major creek drainages, mountains/hills, food plots, supplemental feeding stations, permanent water sources, etc. Next, note the areas that are farthest away from such focal points. Look for large blocks of brush, slight slopes, meandering roads, and far reaches of the boundary fences. With map in hand, begin to drive the roads. As the survey begins, take special note to observe the soil type and the plant community growing on each different soil AND THE CONDITION of the plants growing there. There are specific plants that grow on specific soils for specific reasons. Take note of any mechanical manipulation of the habitat. Did you see the old re-growth from the 1940's root plow? Did you notice the brush community that now resides there? What condition is it in? Could you tell that the previous owner overstocked this property some years ago? The brush, and the condition thereof, tells a story. Reading the story is not difficult, but it does take some study.

Stop the vehicle often and get out. You want to select stops AWAY from the previously mentioned focal points so that the survey is not biased. These focal points serve and attract wildlife. Thus, the increased usage of those particular areas may show signs that are not particularly representative of the property. Avoiding the focal points and concentrating on the areas between them will give the Browse line from too many animals on the observer the "true story" of the condition of the habitat.

Noting the different soil types, brush communities, and condition of each, get out of **the truck and** take a shortwalk. Stepping away from the road and into the nearby brush,

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the observer will witness the true integrity of the brush there. Now, search out the individually identified plants as they pertain to deer's preference rating for your area (see below). Does the plant look healthy? Can you identify the current year's growth? If not, does the plant appear "hedged" or pruned in any way that is within the normal range of a feeding deer? What about the herbaceous ground cover? Any grass or forbs around? If so, what condition are they in? If not, ask yourself why not or what happened to them? After making notes, get back in the truck and continue down the road. Continue doing this for as long as it takes to uniformly cover the property. Small acreage may only require a couple of hours whereas large acreage may take a full day or more

Now What?

Now that you have thoroughly surveyed the property, walked through the brush, and learned about the history of the place, what do you think? Were you impressed with what you found? Did the amount of ground cover, lack of hedging, plant abundance and diversity catch your attention, or did you notice something else? What about the animals you saw during your survey? Did you see healthy animals or were they up feeding all day and still appeared thin and needy?

With notes and observations fresh at hand, now is the time to make some hard decisions. If your survey results did not impress you, then act now.

Habitat is where the animals live. They live there 365 days a year and 24 hours a day. If the habitat is in need of improvement, then so are the animals. By reducing the number of animals utilizing the habitat, you will create time and energy for it to recover. As the habitat improves, so will the animals that use it. Do you need to add additional cross-fences to compliment your grazing system? How many mouths can this range support?

Take this knowledge to the field. Do it right now before hunting season begins and while times are hard. Surveying your habitat under stressed conditions is the optimum time to do so. It will tell you the truth. You may or may not like it, but it will not lie. If you need to reduce numbers then now is the time to enact such measures. As stewards of the land and "keepers of the gate" take this experience into the field today and put it to work for you. You and all the animals on your property stand to benefit.

Below are some of the more common plants placed in their overall respective browse categories for South and Central Texas. Of course, with differing environmental conditions, soil types, and mechanical manipulation, some of these plants may be moved into slightly different categories.

South Texas Plains

First Choice

Cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*)
Coma (*Bumelia celastrina*)
Granjeno (*Celtis pallida*)
Guayacan (*Guajacum angustifolium*)
Southwest bernardia (*Bernardia myricifolia*)
Texas kidneywood (*Eysenhardtia texana*)

Second Choice

Blackbrush (*Acacia rigidula*)
Guajillo (*Acacia berlandieri*)
Huisache (*Acacia farnesiana*)
Live oak (*Quercus virginiana*)
Lime prickly-ash (*Zanthoxylum fagara*)
Lotebush (*Zizphus obtusifolia*)
Wolfberry (*Lycium berlandien*)

Third Choice

Agarito (*Mahonia Mfoliata*)
Cenizo (*Leucophyllum tutescens*)
Knifeleaf condalia (*Condalia spathulata*)
Lantana (*Lantana horrida*)

Bee Agricultural Co.



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Texas persimmon (*Diospyros texana*)

Brush Management Recommendations

Wildlife have a certain requirement for cover. Cover provides a sense of security from disturbance and protection from inclement weather and predators. The amount and type of cover varies with the animal species. A stand of herbaceous plants may provide adequate cover for some bird species and small mammals, while other animals require woody cover (trees and shrubs) in lieu of or in addition to herbaceous cover. The best cover for a large species such as white-tailed deer is a pattern or mosaic of woody brush and trees interspersed within open areas. Clumps or strips of brush should be wide enough so that an observer cannot see through them from one side to the other during the winter months when deciduous species are bare of leaves. Cover strips should be as continuous as possible to provide travel lanes. A habitat that provides several different types and arrays of cover benefits more species of wildlife than a habitat that has limited types, amounts, and distribution of cover. Management of vegetation, whether it is deciduous post oak woodlands, ashe juniper woodlands, mesquite brush land, or open grasslands, requires long-term planning. Any vegetation manipulation practice will have an impact on resident wildlife species, either good or bad, depending on the type of treatment used, the degree of use, and location. Before implementing vegetation control techniques, determine what the long-term effects will be for each concerned species and minimize the negative impacts. Consider the location and size of sensitive wildlife habitats that provide important nesting or roosting sites, feeding areas, desirable wildlife food producing plants, cover, water, and space needs. Wildlife can be displaced by disturbance from an area without adequate escape or security cover, especially on small properties.

The more "edge-effect" you can create, the more diversity you create. The more diversity you create, the higher quantity and quality of wildlife you will attract and hold. The old adage, "measure twice, cut once" is never more true than in brush manipulation practices. Roller chopping and/or aeration is currently the best method available to manipulate wildlife habitat. Using the machine in thick, tall, unproductive stands of brush will "open up" the area, increase utilization by both wildlife and cattle, increase palatability, increase grass production, increase nutrient content, increase water retention, and create more "edge-effect", thus making the area much more productive for all animals involved. Using the chopper/aerator in a strip or mosaic pattern will increase the visibility, hunting effectiveness, and overall productivity of the area manipulated. Concentrate the management in the larger, less productive areas of each pasture.

The chopper/aerator can be used around hunting blinds, senderos, and along roads to increase hunting visibility. Because the chopper/aerator increases weed production and increases individual plant nutrition and palatability, all wildlife species will be drawn to these areas in search of the more preferred forage, thus increasing overall animal health and, to a lesser degree, hunting success.

The root plow is a double-edged sword for wildlife: it can be utilized to create the best of wildlife environments or it can be used to completely destroy all wildlife habitat. Common sense and forethought should go into every decision-making process concerning the root plow. Using the root plow to reclaim old, re-grown fields or create new ones is very effective. Maintaining old, grown-up fields will add much more "edge-effect" to a property and make it much more attractive to a wide range of wildlife species, especially deer and quail.

Fundamental requirements that must be considered when managing wildlife habitat include food, cover, water and the proper distribution of these elements. Although land managers may have specific goals that are different for the agricultural operation and the wildlife management program, emphasis must be placed on habitat/range management for both. Wildlife and habitat management practices must be directed at maintaining a productive and healthy ecosystem, which consists of the plant and animal communities found in an area along with soil, air, water, and sunlight. All management activities should be aimed at conserving and improving the quantity and quality of soils, water, and vegetation.

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This article was written by Wildlife Biologist Macy Ledbetter while he was with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. Macy is now an independent, consulting Wildlife Biologist and owner of Spring Creek Outdoors, LLC. You can visit his website and contact him at <http://www.springcreekoutdoors.com>

WAL-MART IS OUR FIRST "SILVER LEVEL" SPONSOR

Wal-Mart has provided BCWMA with an \$800 Community Grant award and has become our first "Silver Level" Sponsor. Indications are this will be an annual grant and we sincerely thank all the good folks at our local Wal-Mart store for their support. The new store is scheduled to open sometime around October of this year and we know everyone welcomes the expansion and will support them with their business.

TODD'S WELDING & TROPHY BLINDS IS A NEW SPONSOR

David Todd, owner of Todd's Welding and the manufacturer of Trophy Blinds is our newest local business sponsor. We are delighted to have David and his crew supporting BCWMA and encourage you to use their services whenever you can.

HUNTING LEASE LICENSE SAVINGS FOR MEMBERS

Through BCWMA, you now have the option of paying \$10 per year for your Lease License instead of the normal fee of \$75 to \$240 depending on your acreage.

Anyone who leases land for hunting in Texas is required by law to have a state lease license as provided below:

Hunting Lease License (Types 132, 133 and 134)

Required of a landowner or landowner's agent who leases hunting rights to another person on property they own or control for pay or other consideration.

The license must be displayed on the property. License fee: \$75 for 1 through 499 acres; \$140 for 500 through 999 acres; or \$240 for 1,000 acres or more.

Bee County Wildlife Management Association members have a less expensive option. Members can buy a Wildlife Management Association Area Operator's license, which is issued under the BCWMA General license, for only \$10. Since a lifetime membership in BCWMA is only \$100 and an annual membership only \$20, this is a significant savings. \$5 of your \$10 lease license fee is for your license and \$5 is used to help offset the cost of the Association's license.

The terms of this special license specify that applicants must:

- 1) prepare a wildlife management plan
- 2) submit harvest data to our area TP&W biologist after the season closes
- 3) conduct wildlife management plan activities annually

There are at least three ways to meet the first requirement for a management plan; use your own plan, a plan prepared by our area TP&W biologist, or operate under the umbrella BCWMA plan prepared by our TP&W Biologist

Wildlife management activities for item 3) include items in the plan, attending BCWMA meetings, and complying with BCWMA area harvest recommendations as agreed to by the landowners in each area.

To participate in this program go to <http://www.bee-county-wildlife.org>, click the "Hunting Lease License" button, and **DOWNLOAD** and complete form # PWD 328C, and send it to the address below with your \$10 check (no cash) made out to BCWMA.

The form must be sent to BCWMA, P. O. Box 1967, Beeville, TX 78104, and not to TP&W. All BCWMA Area Operator applications must be submitted together and we must submit our BCWMA WMAA application at the same time.

The deadline for your application to be received by BCWMA is September 8, 2006.

If you do not have internet access contact Larry Jones at 361-362-0430 and a form will be mailed to you. If you have internet access PLEASE use the on-line form.

Note: At the time this notice was written the 2006-2007 State License fees and Regulations had not been published. If fees increase or regulations change it may be necessary to raise our fees or alter this program to comply with state law.

**OPERATION GAME
THIEF
1-800-792-GAME**

"There is no stronger deterrent to a poacher than the knowledge that his peers find his philosophy and actions unacceptable to the point that they will report him to the game warden."

* Buddy Turner -
OGT Program
Director *

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Our web site now
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"FIRE ANTS - TEXAS BORDER MASSACRE" AIRED AGAIN

The National Geographic Explorer Channel aired their fire ant program again in late July. It originally aired in June of this year. This program highlights the joint efforts of BCWMA and the University of Texas to establish imported phorid flies in South Texas as a biological control agent for fire ants. We also showed the program at our May BCWMA meeting.

TOWMA (Texas Organization Of Wildlife Management Associations) is promoting the Bee County program for use by other wildlife associations around the state. They want to sponsor a state wide effort and will provide funding for it. BCWMA-TOWMA has now made three regional presentations advising associations how they can become involved in the effort, and we will make one more at the TOWMA conference in College Station August 12. Following this we expect to begin regional hands-on training sessions for all interested association members.

COYOTE AND WILD HOG CONTESTS CONTINUE IN 2006

Don't forget to enter the BCWMA Wild Hog and Coyote Contests. Cut the last 6 inches off the tail of either animal and put in your freezer in a Zip-Loc bag. That may be easier if you kill it first. Then bring it to any BCWMA meeting and swap your predator tails for "drawing tickets". Drawings are held and prizes awarded at our annual meetings.

CEU CREDITS BEING AWARDED FOR MANY MEETINGS

You can obtain continuing education credits to maintain your Pesticide Applicators License by attending certain BCWMA meetings. Forms are available at meetings that qualify.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Property ownership is not required. Anyone interested in improving the quantity and quality of wildlife in Bee County is WELCOME.

Visit http://www.bee-county-wildlife.org/information.php?info_id=10 for details.

BCWMA MEETING SCHEDULE

- **September, 16, 2006 - Field Day - Welder Wildlife Refuge, Sinton**
"It's All About Habitat" - Dr. Lynn Drawe - 9:30 a.m. to noon
See the article elsewhere in this newsletter for details.
- **October 27, 2006 - Friday - 7:00pm - 9:00pm - Annual Whitetail Deer Workshop.** Spotlight survey results, harvest recommendations, aging on the hoof. Bee County Exposition Center
- **February 10, 2007 - Friday - Annual Meeting, Banquette and Election.** Live and silent auctions. Guest Speaker to be confirmed. Coastal Bend College

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

- **August 10, 11, & 12, 2006** - Thursday through Saturday - TOWM - "Wildlife Management 2006" College Station, Texas (361-362-0430)
- August 11 - 13, 2006, Texas Trophy Hunters Extravaganza - San Antonio
- **August 15 and 16, 2006** - Coastal Bend Prescribed Burn Association - **Summer Burn Workshop** - Victoria, starts at 9 AM each day - School on 15th and demo burn on the 16th - see the agenda enclosed with this newsletter for details - lunch included both days
- August 24-26, 2006 - Texas Deer Association Annual Convention - San Antonio - <http://www.texasdeerassociation.com/> or 210-767-8300
- August 26, 2006 - Quail Unlimited Banquette, Kingsville

SPOT LIGHT SURVEYS - All Routes

- September 7, Thursday - dark until???
- September 14, Thursday - dark until???
- September 21, Thursday - dark until???

The positive impact BCWMA has on Texas wildlife increases in direct proportion to the number of **your** neighbors that join BCWMA.

The more contiguous land mass we assemble the more we benefit wildlife and habitat. You can't do it alone, sign up your neighbors TODAY!

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SPONSORS

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1600 N. St. Mary's, Beeville, TX, 78104 - 358-4036

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BCWMA Officers

President: Pat True: 361-548-5059
Vice President, Tom Keller, 361-375-2924
Secretary-Treasurer, Bill Frank, 361-877-4831

BCWMA Directors

Joe Doreck, 361-456-1125
Larry Jones, 361-362-0430
Ken Langford, 361-643-8878
Ellis McKinney, 361-358-3137
Alvin Rubottom, 361-375-2108
Randy Walls, 361-287-3376
D. Montemayor, (ex-officio, non voting) 361-362-3280

BCWMA Member Application

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Cell #: _____
Address: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____
City/State/Zip: _____

Member's Cooperative Agreement

I own / manage (circle one) land on county/state road _____ containing _____ acres

(Note: This information is confidential. It is simply used to determine total acreage enrolled in the co-op)

I agree to cooperate with the goals and bylaws of the Bee County Wildlife Management Association.

This agreement does not give any unauthorized person the right to trespass on the above property.

I am in no way obligated to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department of BCWMA. I may or may not agree with the management practices recommended. The only thing I have agreed to is that I recognize the need for wildlife management in order to improve the wildlife on my property.

This agreement is valid as long as I am a dues paying member of the BCWMA.

Enclosed is (circle one) \$20 Member \$100 Life Member \$250 Sponsor

Signature: _____

Make checks payable to BCWMA and mail to P. O. Box 1967, Beeville, TX 78104 Date: _____

BCWMA
Bee County Wildlife Management Association
P. O. Box 447
Beeville, TX 78104

