

Bee County Wildlife Management Association

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



January 2009 Newsletter

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<http://www.Bee-County-Wildlife.org>

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BCWMA ANNUAL BANQUETTE FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2009

Our 2009 Annual Meeting, Banquette, Election and Fund Raiser will be held on a Friday evening this year. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and dinner is at 7:00. This is may be the largest wildlife oriented event in Bee County in years. In addition to a great fish dinner, we will have live and silent auctions for a large number of items. There will also be an "Arms Length Raffle" again this year for at least two guns. The drawings for our 10 GUN RAFFLE will also be held. Check out the separate item for details on this great deal.

BCWMA established an annual scholarship program in 2007 (with funds from the 2007 fundraiser) to provide financial assistance to Bee County students that pursue degrees in wildlife related programs. The fund grew substantially with funds from the 2008 event. In the two years since the scholarship program began we have donated \$6,000 in direct scholarships to students and we currently have \$8,053.73 in our endowed scholarship fund. When the endowed fund reaches \$25,000 it will be used to establish a permanent BCWMA Endowed Scholarship at Texas A & M Kingsville. Money earned by the fund will then be used to provide ongoing annual scholarships to Bee County area wildlife students at the school. Additional funds raised at these events support other ongoing BCWMA activities like the Hunter's Welcome event, the 4H Shooting Club, this newsletter, our web site, and other things.

To support our fundraisers we are rely on donations of cash or merchandise from our sponsors, area businesses and individuals. This is an excellent way to advertise your business or organization. Donations to the silent and live auctions and raffles will be accompanied by a sign recognizing the individual or business donating the item. Donors will also be listed in the event program. Wildlife related vendor booths are encouraged, and a number of vendors display their products each year.

Donations of items of any value are appreciated. Large items such as bird or deer hunts, fishing trips, guns, feeders and blinds will be used in the live auction and are especially needed.

BCWMA is an IRS 501(c)(3) tax exempt charitable organization. Part or all of donations may qualify as a deductible item on tax returns, donors should consult their CPA.

The banquette will be held in the main auditorium of the Bee County Exposition Center, 214 South FM 351, Beeville Texas. Tickets are \$12 for adults in advance and \$15 at the door. Children 12 and under are \$6 anytime. Tickets are available at the Bee County Extension office, 210 E. Corpus Christi Street. The board members listed at the end of this newsletter also have tickets for sale. To donate items or cash you can also call these numbers. This event is open to the public and anyone interested in wildlife is welcome and encouraged to attend.

We suggest you invite friends and neighboring property owners, and even pay for their tickets if necessary. It is an excellent way to introduce them to BCWMA and get them working with BCWMA and you to better manage our wildlife.

10 GUN RAFFLE

One \$20 raffle ticket gets you a chance to win one of 10 different guns. We are selling a relatively small number of tickets so your chances of winning are much better than in many raffles. You can buy tickets from any board member listed at the end of this newsletter. The drawing will be held at the BCWMA annual banquette January 30, and tickets will be sold that night, but you need not be present to win. The current list of guns (subject to change) includes:

Rifles

- 1) Weatherby Sporter .270 Win
- 2) Savage 93 .17 HMR
- 3) Savage Model 11 Package, Synthetic stock,.243

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- 4) Howa 1500 "Ranch Hand" Package .22-250
- 5) Thompson Center Encore Muzzle Loader

Shotguns

- 6) Benelli Auto M2 Field
- 7) Browning Gold Fusion Semi Auto
- 8) Benelli Nova 12 GA

Handguns

- 9) Springfield XD .40 S&W
- 10) Rock Island 1911 .45

BOARD MEMBER ELECTION NOMINEES

We need more active participants in BCWMA. If you are interested in running for the Board, or know someone who is, please notify Randy Walls ASAP at 361-287-3376. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the meeting.

BCWMA has nine directors. Three are elected each year and serve staggered three year terms. Larry Jones and Pat True were founding members/directors of BCWMA and both are completing their fifth year as directors. Neither is running again and both positions need to be filled. Bill Fox served a one year term in 2008, replacing a director that resigned early, and is expected to run for a new three year term. We need several interested people to run for these positions.

We also need people to serve on various committees. A tremendous amount of work is required to run an organization like BCWMA, and the board cannot do it alone anymore. We had many more events in the early years of BCMA, but the work load has caused a significant decline in activities. If you would be willing to serve on a committee please contact Randy Walls or Don Liska, phone numbers are listed at the end of this newsletter. We are especially in need of a newsletter editor since past editor Larry Jones is leaving the board.

BCWMA "HUNTER'S WELCOME" EVENT A SUCCESS

Well guess what, there really was a free lunch this year, and BCWMA provided it. We held our Second Annual Hunter's Welcome event at the Beeville Community Center at noon on the opening day of the 2008 gun hunting season and it was attended by about 100 people, many of whom were hunters but not members of BCWMA. All it took to get in was a 2008-2009 Texas hunting license. This event exposed a lot of people to the principles of quality deer management and the vital role WMAs play in benefiting wildlife. We also gained a few new members and two sponsors. A Savage 25.06 Accu-trigger rifle with 3 x 9 scope was awarded as a door prize. We will repeat this event again in 2010.

In addition to its educational benefits, we hold this event to show community appreciation for the positive impact local and visiting hunters have on the economy and wildlife of Bee County. Hunters inject significant dollars into the local economy in the form of motels, food, gasoline, hunting leases, vehicles, ammunition and supplies. Hunter knowledge and cooperation is critical to effective wildlife management, and in an increasing number of cases hunters are more informed, and more willing to participate in, responsible harvest practices than some landowners. Hunter license fees and taxes pay for the majority of all conservation programs in Texas and the US. We need and appreciate their presence and assistance and this event was a small way of saying thank you.

Our speaker was Dean Wiemers from Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Center who shared the latest information derived from years of ongoing white tailed deer research in South Texas. It is very interesting how continuing research keeps increasing our knowledge about whitetails, especially in light of the fact that so many of us think we already know everything there is to know. It really is true that none of us are as smart as all of us.

Nationally recognized wildlife expert Al Brothers was also on hand to add his insights on whitetail management. Our thanks once again for the continued support Al provides to BCWMA. We are very fortunate to have this great resource available to us.

ANIMAL DENSITY AND HABITAT by Macy Ledbetter, Spring Creek Outdoors

Density is defined as "the amount of something per unit of measure". The density of cattle and deer on a property are the primary factors influencing the overall production of the ranch. It is a balancing act to match the animals with the ever-changing food supply of the property. A



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progressive manager must react in an efficient manner if continued success is to be realized during the good and bad habitat times.

Cattle numbers are obviously much easier to manage than deer. In a wildlife-oriented operation, cattle should be stocked conservatively during all weather conditions. As they say, "We are one day closer to the next drought", so plan for such limitations and stock cattle lightly. Light stocking rates allow for fewer cattle to consume more grass per head and allow them to reach their full genetic potential. As their body condition and score improves, so does their reproductive capacity and performance. Rotate cattle often throughout the property and allow them to remove only half of the available grass, leaving the other half for ground protection and wildlife cover. Proper cattle management directly benefits wildlife production. A healthy habitat today creates healthy animals tomorrow.

Research has proven that approximately 7% of a deer's total diet is grass. The other 93% is a combination of forbs (weeds), mast (fruits, acorns, berries) and browse (leaves and twigs of brush). Forbs and mast are short-term delicacies available only when timely rains occur, while browse plants support the majority of a deer's diet throughout the year. Browse plants are not created equally, but are classified according to their preference by deer. The most highly preferred deer browse species are usually those most limited on a property so managing the foraging pressure put on those plants by deer is the astute manager's primary goal. In a healthy ecosystem, you should not notice an obvious browse line or hedging effect on preferred deer plants. If you do, reduce the total number of mouths on the range.... it is just that basic. Maintaining a deer population within the present food supply is critical for optimum production and remains one of the biggest challenges facing managers today.

Supplemental feeding of deer is a common practice throughout Texas and is most beneficial when used correctly. Supplemental feeding is not meant to be used to carry extra deer that the native habitat cannot support, but rather a supplement to the native forage and to provide additional trace minerals and additional protein when the deer require it most. Simply put, carrying too many deer on a ranch results in poor habitat, an escalating feed bill and a decline in antler growth. Supplemental feeding is not a replacement for good management; rather, it is a tool to be used to compliment good management. On average, one deer consumes \$0.25 of supplemental feed per day plus the native forage. On overstocked properties with poor habitat, the same deer consume much more feed per head with less favorable results and a higher feed bill.

For deer, selective harvesting is the best method to control numbers. Trapping and removal is another option, but is not practical in most situations. Selective harvest is the act of removing animals in a controlled and managed fashion. Selective harvesting is utilized to maintain the deer numbers within the food supply produced by the habitat at any given time; it can also be used to obtain a desired sex ratio and to achieve a desired age structure. Maintaining deer within the carrying capacity of the habitat will improve fawn production and survival, increase body weight, improve antler development, and prevent habitat deterioration.

Habitat is where the deer live every day, rain or shine. A healthy habitat produces healthy animals. Managing to protect the habitat is critical. Habitat that is overstocked with cattle or deer on a long-term basis will yield a decline in the total carrying capacity, animal nutrition, health and performance. Just because it rains today doesn't mean you can increase your animal densities tomorrow. It takes time, often months or even years, before the habitat recovers enough to support extra animals. Be mindful of the responding habitat and adjust management actions accordingly.

Editor's note: Macy Ledbetter was the TPWD biologist for Bee, Live Oak and McMullen counties before retiring and forming Spring Creek Outdoors, a private wildlife management consulting company. Macy can be contacted at 361-449-6376, or visit his website at www.SpringCreekOutdoors.com

EVENTS

January 30, 2009 - BCWMA Annual Meeting, Election and Fundraiser. 7:00 to 9:00 PM, Bee County Expo Center, Beeville. See separate item above for more information or visit our website at <http://www.bee-county-wildlife.org>

November 7, 2009 - BCWMA Annual Hunter's Welcome. 11:30 to 1:00 PM, Bee County Expo Center Ag Pavilion. Free lunch with 2009-2010 Texas hunting license.



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*"The magic bullet in deer management
is trigger restraint!"*

Macy Ledbetter

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@ <http://www.towma.org>

