

# BCWMC

## Bee County Wildlife Management Association

### February 2005 Newsletter

#### Did you know...

...Texas considers the Texas Horned Toad, Texas Tortoise and the Texas Indigo Snake to be threatened species?

...the Horned Toad's diet is 70% harvester ants? (not red ants and not cut ants)

...the Horned Toad's normal home range is about 75 feet?

...the female Horned Toad builds a nest around 400 meters from her home range, lays her eggs, and then never goes back?

...primary foods for the Texas Tortoise are Partridge Pea and Prickly Pear?

...in South Texas the Texas Tortoise suffers from a calcium deficiency that causes thin shell problems as they age?

...that the state record Texas Indigo Snake was 11' 8" long?

...Texas Indigo snakes are active hunters, eat rattle snakes, and have a home range of 300 to 400 acres?

#### **FEBRUARY ANNUAL MEETING REPORT**

Our first annual meeting was held February 4<sup>th</sup> with over 80 people attending. Three new directors were elected to replace the three directors whose terms expired. The new Board Members are Van Bruns, Joe Doreck and Randy Walls.

The dinner meeting featured a slide presentation and talk by Sally Crofutt about the extensive eco tourism program she manages for the Fennessey Ranch near Bayside. State and Federal Game Wardens, including TP&W Warden Chris McDonald of Beeville, spoke on Game Law enforcement in Bee County and emphasized their desire to work closely with Association members for the betterment of wildlife in the County. Many civic minded local merchants contributed door prizes. They include:

*Alamo Hardware, Bee Cleaning & Laundry, Bee Quick, Cakes by Judy, Dairy Queen, Hwy59 East, Elders Country Store & Market, Fuller Tractor Company, Fish-Game-Feeders.com, Mineral Mercantile, O'Reilly's Auto Parts, Pride Automotive, Rio Entertainment, Saenz Western Wear, Sonic Drive-In, Texas Hunter Products, TSC, Wal-Mart.*

When you have the chance, please thank these merchants for their support and support them in return

Individuals contributing door prizes include:

*Fox Ranch, Bill and Gail Frank, Larry & Sandra Jones, Tom & Mary Keller, and Pat & Kay True.*

The Association thanks all the contributors for their enthusiastic support.

#### **MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup> 2005 MEETING**

If you have an interest in quail you won't want to miss our next meeting on March 1. Our guest speaker will be Robert Perez from LaVernia, Texas. Robert is Quail Project Leader for the TP&W and is a biologist by education. He will address all aspects of managing for quail on your property and will be available for any questions you may have. This meeting will be held from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at the Bee County Coliseum, 214 S. FM 351, Beeville, TX.

#### **THREE BCWMA FOUNDING BOARD MEMBERS LEAVE BOARD**

Our sincere thanks to outgoing Board members R. W. Dirks, Charles Smith and W. T. Young for their assistance in our start up year of 2004. They were part of the original nine people who first saw the benefits of forming a wildlife association in Bee County, and they agreed to accept one year terms on our original board to get the organization up and running. Board terms are for three years, we have a nine member Board, and terms are staggered. Of the founding Board members, three had one year terms, three had two year terms and three had three year terms. We appreciate all the help these men provided this past year and are confident and hopeful that they will remain active in the Association for years to come.

#### **BOARD RE-ELECTS SAME OFFICERS FOR 2005**

Under BCWMA by-laws, the Board of Directors elects new officers each year following the board member election at the general meeting. The new 2005 Board met February 10 and re-elected the same officers we had in 2004.

<p>...rattle snakes are passive hunters, preferring to sit and wait to pick off passing prey, and have a home range of 4 to 6 acres?</p> <p>...Bull Mesquite trees are very beneficial because of nitrogen conversion and providing an attractive environment for plants and small animals beneath them?</p> <p>Bull Mesquites can have roots that go as deep as 170' in order to reach water and probably are not major surface water users?</p> <p>...if you shred or cut a single or double stemmed mesquite it will respond by sprouting dozens of new stems?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tidbits</b></p> <p>The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.</p> <p>If all the world is a stage, where is the audience sitting?</p> <p>Before they invented the drawing board, what did they go back to?</p> <p>If love is blind, why is so much lingerie sold?</p> <p>Why is there an expiration date on sour cream?</p> <p>If the #2 pencil is so popular, why is it still #2?</p> <p>What does Geronimo say when he jumps out of a plane?</p>	<p>Serving again in 2005 are Tom Keller, President, Ellis McKinney, Vice President, and Bill Frank, Secretary-Treasurer. In addition, Ellis McKinney is Program Chairman and is responsible for securing our speakers and making sure the meetings go off as planned by the Board. If you have ideas for meetings or speakers please contact Ellis at 361-358-3137.</p> <p><b><u>“MANAGING FOR WILDLIFE” WORKSHOP REPORT</u></b></p> <p>This all day workshop was held in San Antonio on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005. It was put on by TP&amp;W and the Alamo Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalist™</p> <p>Tom and Mary Keller and Larry and Sandy Jones attended and it was a day well spent. The focus was on habitat management in general with no specific bias toward either game or non-game species. As we have often heard before, when you manage your land properly for one species you are improving it for all species. You can certainly fine tune your program to a particular bird or animal, but many others are also going to benefit.</p> <p><b><u>MEXICO WARNING</u></b></p> <p>This is not wildlife related but it is important enough that I feel it needs to be reported. I have seen only two news articles on this issue, both buried deep in area newspapers, so I have assume our government is trying to keep a lid on it in order to placate President Fox of Mexico.</p> <p>Mexican drug cartels are reportedly conducting terrorist type raids in Mexican border cities in retaliation for the Mexico-US crackdown on drug trafficking. One of the newspapers reported that Mexico had their army and army tanks patrolling at least in Nuevo Laredo and Progreso. The druggies are said to be kidnapping US citizens and killing them execution style.</p> <p>One thing we know for sure is that a cousin of Tom Keller's (Tom used to live in Brownsville and has family and friends there) was attacked a couple of weeks ago. Tom's cousin, a Brownsville lawyer, and a friend of his went across the border for lunch. When they left the restaurant two cars raced in and blocked their car front and rear. Men jumped out with guns and ordered them out of their car. Instead of complying they rammed into the car in front, then the one in back, and pushed them back far enough to get their car out and drive away. Multiple shots were fired at them and they did not stop until they got to the US side of the bridge.</p> <p>The US consulate is reported to still be telling people that “there is no problem.” Apparently the US Government has decided “political correctness” is more important than a few American lives, several of which have already been lost according to the articles. As usual, the Mexican Police are reported to be involved with the cartel.</p> <p><b><u>COMMON QUESTIONS &amp; ANSWERS</u></b></p> <p>There are a number of questions that are commonly asked by new and prospective members. A few of those questions and at least one answer for each follows:</p> <p><b>Q</b> What is the Bee County Wildlife Management Association?  <b>A</b> It is a non-profit organization consisting of Bee County landowners and other interested parties with the stated goal of “Enhancing the Quality and Quantity of Wildlife Populations in Bee County.”</p> <p><b>Q</b> What's the point? Why have a wildlife association?  <b>A</b> One significant reason is to offset the negative effects of fragmentation and loss of rural land in Texas. One acre of Texas land is lost every 2 minutes to “development” of some type, often in the form of highways and shopping malls. In addition, 97% of the land in Texas is privately owned and much of it consists of large ranches and farms. Those properties are rapidly being sold</p>
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<p>Do vegetarians eat animal crackers?</p> <p>Why is a TV called a set when you get only one?</p> <p><b>Officers</b></p> <p>President: Tom Keller 361-375-2924</p> <p>Vice President Ellis McKinney 361-358-3137</p> <p>Secretary-Treasurer Bill Frank 361-877-4831</p> <p><b>Directors</b></p> <p>Adam Coronado 361-542-6485</p> <p>Van Bruns 361-358-2007</p> <p>Joe Doreck 361-456-1125</p> <p>Bill Frank 361-749-7763</p> <p>Larry Jones 361-362-0430</p> <p>Tom Keller 361-375-2924</p> <p>Ellis McKinney 361-358-3137</p> <p>Pat True 361-548-5059</p> <p>Randy Walls 361-287-3376</p> <p>D. Montemayor* *(ex-officio, non voting) 361-362-3280</p> <p><b>Newsletter</b></p> <p>Larry Jones 361-362-0430 <a href="mailto:ljones@hrbizmall.com">ljones@hrbizmall.com</a></p>	<p>and broken up into ever smaller tracts, with more roads and homes and related habitat destruction. In addition to the loss of vital habitat, hunting pressure on much of that land has increased and game populations have suffered accordingly. On small tracts a common attitude is “I better kill it before the neighbor does” which makes effective management impossible without a high fence. Associations like ours help landowners develop common goals and build trust between neighbors to offset this trend. By joining together we can effectively manage huge tracts for the benefit of all wildlife as well as for ourselves and future generations.</p> <p><b>Q</b> What do you do?</p> <p><b>A</b> We provide educational opportunities through this newsletter and through monthly meetings, seminars and field days, and we work to foster cooperation between members to achieve common goals. We work together and acquire census data on game populations on our properties, and we work with TP&amp;W biologists to come up with scientific management plans. We then take those plans and determine what we as landowners want to adopt from them, and then we implement them.</p> <p><b>Q</b> If I join is somebody going to try and tell me what to do on my land?</p> <p><b>A</b> No, of course not! Members <i>are</i> involved in developing county wide management recommendations and they <i>are</i> encouraged to implement them, but they are under no obligation to do so. It’s your land, you do as you want with it.</p> <p><b>Q</b> I lease my land to a group of hunters I’ve had for years, will my joining have any affect my on them?</p> <p><b>A</b> Only if you want it to. If you decide to adopt recommendations agreed to between you and your co-members you will probably want to have your hunters help carry out those recommendations. We are finding that many hunters, especially those who have had leases on a ranch for a long time, or want a lease for a long time, are extremely management oriented, often more so than the land owner. Intelligent management of our natural resources is an idea “whose time has come.” It enjoys wide spread support among a great many hunters today. We encourage landowners to have their hunters join the association so they can play an active part in management.</p> <p><b>Q</b> When was the Association formed and how many members do you have?</p> <p><b>A</b> It was officially formed by nine ranchers in May of 2004 when the by-laws were adopted. We had 67 members on February 7, 2005, ten months later. They own and manage about 60,000 acres in Bee County.</p> <p><b>Q</b> I have a lot of deer now, what good will a management plan do me?</p> <p><b>A</b> Well, first of all, BCWMA is not just about deer and about hunting. Proper management has a positive impact on all the birds, animals and plants on your property. Healthier animals, more diversity of animals, improved habitat, and in the case of deer, more plentiful bucks with larger antlers are all predictable results of good management plan implementation.</p> <p><b>Q</b> I have been managing my property just fine by myself, what do I need an Association for?</p> <p><b>A</b> You need the cooperation of your neighbors because the animals on your property, especially the deer, are not staying there unless you have a huge amount of acreage or a high fence. How neighbors manage or abuse their habitat, and how they hunt, directly impacts anything you try to do. Without close cooperation with your neighbors, or a high fence around your property, effective management is generally not possible.</p> <p><b>Q</b> How much land would I have to have to manage effectively without neighbor cooperation?</p> <p><b>A</b> Probably in the tens of thousands of acres. One multi-year study of two pastures of about 18,000 acres each, separated by two miles, shows extensive movement of deer, mostly bucks, between those two pastures. Trying to cull</p>
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*“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 \*

inferior deer in one of the pastures has proved to be very difficult because of cross-breeding between pastures. One buck in that study, equipped with a radio transmitter, was killed on highway 14 miles from his home pasture. A small low fence ranch of a few hundred or a few thousand acres doesn't stand a chance of making a meaningful difference in their deer herd.

**Q** Why don't I just put up a high fence?

**A** \$15,000 or more per mile of fence is the best reason I can think of. Depending on ranch size, genetic diversity, in-breeding, and disease problems may be others.

**WHAT DOES WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSIST OF?**

Habitat is a combination of **FOOD**, **WATER**, **SHELTER**, and **SPACE**.

- **FOOD** needs vary by wildlife species, from seeds and fruits required by some birds, to forbs (really just weeds), and shrubs preferred by deer.
- **WATER**, whether supplied by a pond, creek, or pipeline system with accessible watering points, it is vital for most wildlife.
- **SHELTER** is needed to provide protection from predators and from temperature extremes. It also provides travel corridors, birthing areas and nesting cover.
- **SPACE** is needed by wildlife to maintain preferred distances from members of the same species and between other species, and it provides for the growth of essential plants and/or prey.

**HABITAT MANAGEMENT TOOLS**

Aldo Leopold, considered the father of wildlife management, once stated: *“The central thesis of game management is this: Game can be **restored** by the creative use of the same tools that heretofore **destroyed** it - axe, plow, cow, fire, and gun”*

- **AXE** - Dense, invasive brush can be cleared selectively, or “sculpted.” The goal is optimum density, diversity, and interspersed brush plants. Shrubs for deer browse, fruits and seeds for dove, quail and other birds, and protection from predators and the elements.
- **PLOW** - Leave vegetation in fence rows and at field edges and strips in hay fields for cover and seed production. Create food plots simply by disking strips to stimulate native plants, or plant formal food plots.
- **COW** - Limit grazing to the number of animals the habitat can support without causing a downward trend in forage production, diversity, forage quality and soil stability. Practice rotational grazing. Cows and game can co-exist when the numbers of each are limited to the land's productive potential.
- **FIRE** - Prescribed burning imitates the once normal cycle of periodic range fires. It stimulates re-growth in browse and forbs, which increases palatability and nutritional quality, and it reduces brush density.
- **GUN** - Harvest management is an important tool in maintaining deer numbers at or below range carrying capacity. Spot light surveys help us monitor population trends and set harvest goals.

**INCIDENTAL OBSERVATION DATA BEING COLLECTED**

If you are a Hwy 202 spotlight survey participant, we need your incidental observation records. This information will be compared to the spotlight survey data to further fine tune our population and age class estimates. Forward the data to Larry Jones, P. O. Box 447, Beeville, TX 78102. He will get it to the Macy Ledbetter, the biologist assisting us.



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### “FOR SALE” AND “WANTED” CLASSIFIED ADS

This section of the newsletter is open to all BCWMA members. Listings are restricted to wildlife or ranch related items. If you want to include something contact Larry Jones at 361-362-0430 or [ljones@hrbizmall.com](mailto:ljones@hrbizmall.com).

- Wanted: Small seed drill suitable for food plot planting. Contact Pat True at 1-361-548-5059.
- Wanted: Mesquite burls 10” or larger in diameter. Prefer green wood. Mistletoe burls on mesquite trees are especially desirable. Will cut and haul. Contact Larry Jones, 361-362-0430
- Wanted: Information on deer hunting leases available in the Bee County area. Contact Van Bruns at 361-358-2007.
- Wanted: Information on quail hunting leases available in the area. Contact Tom Keller at 361-375-2924

### GAME WARDEN CONTACT INFORMATION

You have several options when you need to contact a Game Warden in Bee County.

For Texas game law violations and trespass you can call:

- Bee County Sheriff's Office - 361-362-3221. They will radio the local warden if he is available. On some types of calls like trespass the Sheriff's deputies can handle it.
- Game Warden Chris McDonald, Beeville, 361-358-3929. This is Chris's office and home phone, if he is out it will go to his answering machine. In that case leave a message or call the Sheriff's office for faster response.
- Operation Game Thief - 1-800-792-GAME (1-800-792-4263). When you use this option the call is logged and a formal response report has to be filed by a Game Warden to clear the call from the log. This may take longer to get a response if you have an emergency.

For Federal Game law violations you can call:

- USF&W Special Agent Tom Mason in Corpus Christi at 361-289-5037. Tom is the agent for the Beeville area.
- Gary L. Young, Resident Agent in Charge, in San Antonio at 210-681-8419. Gary is a supervisor over several regions, but if you can't contact Tom Mason, call Gary.

### ABOUT OPERATION GAME THIEF

This program was started in 1981. It provides monetary rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of game and fish law violators. The program is totally funded by private donations.

Operation Game Thief receives an average of 1,200 calls every year. Assessed fines now exceed \$900,000 and more than \$115,000 in rewards have been paid out.

### CEU CREDITS BEING AWARDED FOR SOME 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 for the credit (most of them).

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Property ownership is not required. Anyone interested in improving the quantity and quality of wildlife in Bee County is WELCOME. Annual dues are \$20 and Life Memberships are \$100. Sponsorships include a one year membership and are \$250 per year. All members receive a gate sign.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**BCWMA Regular Meeting Schedule** (General meetings are the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm except for December unless otherwise noted below)

- **March 1, 2005 - 7:00 - 8:30 PM - "Managing For Quail" presented by Robert Perez, Wildlife Biologist and Quail Project Leader for TP&W. BRING A GUEST! Location: Bee County Coliseum, 214 S. FM 351, Beeville, TX**
- **April 5, 2005 - "Predator Control, How Does It Fit In Your Management Plan?"**
- **May 7, 2005, SATURDAY, 10:00am - 1:00pm, "Pond Management Field Day and Electro Shocking Demo"**
- **June 7, 2005 - "Government Programs to Assist Game management" and "Wildlife Tax Appraisal" and "Legislative Update"**
- **July 5, 2005 - "Supplemental Feeding" and "Food Plots"**
- **August 6, 2005- SATURDAY, 9:00am - 4:30pm, "Whitetail Deer Management Workshop"**
- **September 6, 2005 - "Wildlife Management Overview"**
- **October 4, 2005 - "Revisiting Deer Surveys" and "Deer Aging"**
- **November 1, 2005 - "2005 Bee County Deer Census Results" and "Deer Harvest and Herd Culling Recommendations"**
- **December, 2005 - No Meeting**

### **Board of Directors Meeting Schedule CHANGE:**

The board now meets Friday of the week following every General Monthly Meeting. All members are invited. The next board meeting will be held at the Bee County Extension Service office:

- **March 11, 2005 - 3:00 - 4:30pm**

### **NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL**

If you receive this newsletter by USPS mail and have an email address please forward it to [ljones@hrbizmall.com](mailto:ljones@hrbizmall.com). We prefer sending newsletters by email due to the reduction in expense and labor. We can't email to AOL addresses because of file size limits.

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#### **In closing, a quote...**

"As I grow older I pay less attention to what people say. I just watch what they do."

Andrew Carnegie