

# Bee County Wildlife Management Association



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

## June 2005 Newsletter

### Did you know...

...mourning doves are smaller and quicker than white-wings?

...TP&W estimates there are 45 million mourning doves?

...the number of white-winged doves is increasing and TP&W thinks their population is around 9 million?

...mourning doves will nest up to 4 or 5 times a year?

...white-wings will only nest 2 or 3 times a year?

...white-wings tend to roost in cities and create great pass-shooting opportunities when they leave to find seeds every morning?

...mourning doves tend to roost in rural areas and the best shooting is usually around water holes?

...Texas is experiencing an influx of Eurasian collared doves which are

### JUNE MEETING REPORT

“Governmental Programs to Assist Game Management” was presented by Wayne Wernli, District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. He discussed the following currently available programs:

#### *Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)*

Through this program NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to develop upland, wetland, riparian and aquatic habitat areas. A wildlife habitat management plan is developed by the landowner and NRCS and this becomes the basis of the cost share agreement. Usually 5 to 10 years in duration, depending on the practices to be installed. Applications are accepted under a continuous sign-up process.

For more information visit <http://nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002>

#### *Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)*

A program for ranchers and farmers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality. Must be engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land. Cost share of 75/90%.

For more information visit <http://nrcs.usda.gov/programs/equip>

#### *Conservation Reserve Program*

Designed to help agricultural producers safeguard environmentally sensitive land. Must be cropland or land enrolled in the Water bank Program. Enrolled land is planted to resource-conserving vegetative covers to reduce runoff, protect ground water and improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds and streams.

For more information visit <http://fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/crp03.htm>

#### *Grassland Reserve Program*

Allows landowners to restore and protect grasslands, including rangeland, pastureland and shrublands, while maintaining them as grazing areas. Intended to restore and protect grasslands and provide biodiversity of plant and animal populations. Participants voluntarily limit the future use of the land under easements or rental agreements. There are permanent and 30 year easements, payments are made on the fair market value of the land less the grassland value of the land. Rental agreements are for 10, 15, 20 and 30 year terms and provide for annual payments that are not more than 75% of the grazing value of the land. Required restoration activities are incorporated in either plan and 75%/90% of the costs may be covered.

For more information visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/GRP/default.htm>

#### *Conservation Security Program*

This program supports the ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. Limited to

a little larger than white-wings?

...Eurasian doves are not covered by federal regulations and Texas considers them an exotic species and does not regulate them?

...since they are not covered by Texas or federal law Eurasian doves can be hunted year round and there is no bag limit?

... Eurasian doves have a prominent black band around the back of their necks and the middle feathers in their squared off tail are gray?

### Tidbits...

The Top 6 Church Bulletin Bloopers are:

1

Our next song is "Angels we have heard get High"

2

Weight watchers will meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church. Please use the large double doors at the side entrance.

3

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.

selected watershed areas.

For more information visit <http://nracs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002>

**"Wildlife Tax Appraisal"** was discussed by Mr. Bruce Martin, Chief Appraiser for the Bee County Appraisal District. This bill dates from 1995 and was called Proposition 11.

To qualify for a wildlife tax valuation you must:

- 1) already have an agricultural exemption (which for a rancher means you must have raised cattle at least 5 of the last 7 years)
- 2) Have a formal wildlife management plan, drawn up on the TP&W forms
- 3) The property must be 50 acres or larger.

In addition, normal wildlife for the area must be present, exotics do not qualify, and you must perform at least three of the seven established wildlife practices. Supplemental corn feeders do not qualify.

### **TUESDAY, JULY 5<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

"Supplemental Feeding" and "Food Plots" are the topics for this meeting. Pogue Agri Partners will put on the program.

### **WE HAVE FLIES!**

Phorid Flies have hatched at our release site in the Mineral area and are busy attacking fire ants! We are still monitoring the mounds at the Hwy 202 site and hope to see flies there as well.

We have completed five cycles of infecting Bee County Brazilian Fire Ants with Phorid Flies at UT in Austin. A total of 40 colonies from the two sites have been returned to their original mounds in Bee County after being exposed to the UT flies. We plan at least two more trips (16 more colonies) as part of the current cycle.

Having the flies hatch from the UT infected ants is our first hurdle. The next hurdle, and the most important one, is to see if those flies will now create a second hatch on their own. For us to be successful the flies have to create their own self sustaining population. Once we reach that milestone we can expect it to take up to a year before we will have a large enough population at the local source sites to start infecting additional area ants at those locations. Once we do, area landowners can bring ants from their properties to the source sites to be infected.

Dr. Gilbert is scheduled to speak to the TOWMA (Texas Organization of Wildlife Management Associations, of which we are a member) meeting in August. If our pilot project is successful other Wildlife Associations from around the state may take on the project as well.

### **BOARD MEMBERS OUT OF COMMISSION**

Several board members are incapacitated. Pat True will be having a double bypass operation Monday, 6-27, and will be out of commission for several weeks. Joe Doreck is scheduled for surgery as well, and Ellis McKinney is suffering from a leg problem. Our best wishes to all of these guys, please hurry up and get well, we have lots of work lined up for you!

### **PART 2 - "SPIKES, TO SHOOT OR NOT TO SHOOT, ONLY THE FACTS"**

By Macy Ledbetter, TP&W Department, Wildlife Biologist, South Texas District  
(Part one of this paper appeared in the May newsletter)

### **Management Implications**

There are three basic components to managing a deer herd: genetics, nutrition, and age. Having a nutritionally healthy deer herd at or below the carrying capacity of the land usually means a highly productive deer herd. This means that excess deer need to

4

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

5

Today...Christian Youth Fellowship Sexuality Course, 8:00 p.m. Please park in the rear parking lot for this activity.

6

Don't let worry kill you - let the church help.

#### **BCWMA Officers**

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Tom Keller  
361-375-2924

Vice President

Ellis McKinney  
361-358-3137

Secretary-Treasurer

Bill Frank  
361-877-4831

#### **BCWMA Directors**

Adam Coronado  
361-542-6485

Van Bruns  
361-358-2007

Joe Doreck  
361-456-1125

Bill Frank  
361-749-7763

Larry Jones  
361-362-0430

Tom Keller  
361-375-2924

Ellis McKinney  
361-358-3137

Pat True  
361-548-5059

Randy Walls  
361-287-3376

D. Montemayor\*  
\*(ex-officio, non voting)  
361-362-3280

be removed annually in order to maintain the herd at carrying capacity and in good nutritional health. One of the basic principles of habitat management is the balancing of proper animal numbers to available food supply. This insures that deer receive adequate variety and amounts of nutritious foods to reach their genetic antler potential. The number of deer on the range in relation to the quality of vegetation is the important factor. There are many ways to increase food supply and nutrition on ranges, and these include, but are not limited to, prescribed burning, rotational cattle grazing, brush management, and adjusting total number of animals on that range.

Each year, a deer herd will produce a given number of offspring, or fawns. This cohort of deer will be reared under a given set of environmental conditions. Some will produce good antlers at 1.5 years, some will not. In poor nutritional years, there will be fewer good quality yearlings and more poor quality yearling bucks. In good nutritional years, the reverse will be true. The point to understand is that all the yearlings within a cohort were grown under similar conditions. Each year the poor antlered portion of that cohort should be removed. This could be the bottom quarter, third, or even half, depending on the antler quality a manager wishes to achieve and how quickly he wishes to attain it.

As far as body growth is concerned, approximately 60% of deer growth takes place the first year of its life. Long bone growth in deer is essentially complete after three years. During the first three years of life, a great deal of nutrient resources are allocated to body growth. After that time, more resources can be channeled into antler growth.

The key to effective and efficient management is to remove those animals with the least amount of potential then manage the habitat to ensure that the remaining animals reach their genetic potential. Do not manage for individual animals, but manage for populations.

In conclusion, EACH AND EVERY hunter practices genetic selection when they pull the trigger or release the bowstring. When harvesting deer, why not select for higher quality antlers by removing poor quality bucks?

Now, the answer to the question that began this article: You first shoot the smaller spike and hope that you have time to reload and shoot the other one before he gets away! Happy hunting...

#### **GETTING READY**

With deer season just around the corner, here are a few more tips that might help the hunter and/or game manager in his daily travels:

- When removing female deer, in order to better balance the sex ratio and maintain proper densities, always select the largest and oldest female available. This harvest strategy accomplishes several things, but primarily it reduces the chances of accidentally removing a buck fawn and increases your chances of harvesting an older deer that is not contributing to the production of the herd, but is still occupying feed and space. In addition, it will help any and all management schemes to realize a faster genetic improvement in the herd. Harvesting a female deer during any open and legal deer season will not have any adverse health effects on the remaining fawn(s).
- If you and your neighbors are interested in producing a higher quality wildlife experience, consider the idea of joining together to produce a wildlife management association or a co-op. With land being sold off onto smaller parcels and an increase in hunting pressure, the quality of wildlife will only deteriorate. Co-ops are getting more popular and their results are quite impressive. It does take strong leadership, determination and long-term planning, but with a little effort, the quality outdoor experience can be enjoyed by more people for a longer period of time.
- If deer management is your plan, plan on doing it correctly. Deer management is

## Newsletter

Larry Jones  
361-362-0430  
[ljones@hrbizmall.com](mailto:ljones@hrbizmall.com)

### 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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not defined as placing corn in a spin feeder in September and shooting deer from under it during the season just to let it run dry after the season. Deer management is often misunderstood and misinterpreted. Corn does little for deer, short of giving them a quick boost of energy and carbohydrates for heat production and to satisfy the sweet tooth. Serious deer managers do feed corn, but combine it with protein feeds such as pellets or some other arrangement of supplementation. Supplemental feeding takes time, money and effort before any results are realized. Some will argue the order of those three, but time, money and effort are a basic minimum for success. Deer management is also a 12-month a year process. It is similar to managing a registered cattle operation. There are some long days and short nights involved in the process of producing top quality animals. If serious deer management is not for you, but you would like to do what you can, don't be alarmed. There are many steps you can take to provide the best habitat possible. At the minimum, anyone wanting to help the local deer herd could and should consider the following:

1. Inventory the population to assess your options. Discuss the options and the associated cost/benefits with a professional.
  2. Formulate a game plan with goals and objectives.
  3. Implement the plan in a correct and well-informed manner to reduce waste and redundancy.
  4. Look, listen and learn from your efforts to be better prepared in the future. The old adage "Measure twice, cut once" was never more true than in deer management.
- Placing your stands and feeders in a manner that takes full advantage of prevailing winds and sunrise and sunset is one simple tactic that will have a dramatic effect on hunter success. Some stand locations may be set up for strictly one specific time (a.m. or p.m.) to hunt. The majority of big bucks are harvested with mobile stands such as tripod stands. This technique keeps the deer guessing where you might be and does not allow them to pattern the hunter.
  - When designing a brush management plan, consider the requirements of the targeted wildlife species. Also take into consideration the lay of the land, rainfall runoff patterns, prevailing wind directions, types of soil, goals and objectives and the feasibility of the practice. A well planned brush management strategy can improve a wildlife management plan, but a poor one can easily ruin years of hard work.
  - When trying to age deer "on the hoof" there are a few simple things to look for. Keep in mind that deer age in the same way as humans: as they age, they develop a "pot belly." Young deer do not have a gut. Notice the loose skin on and around the face and neck area. See if you notice a "dewlap" or "jowls" that denotes a mature deer. In most cases, the back line will be swayed and even the legs will appear to be short. The deep, barrel chest cavity will give the appearance of short legs. Old deer even act arthritic at times and walk with a stiff limp. Look at the hair color around the eyes, ears and forehead. Most old deer are grayhaired in these areas. If given a profile of the head, the nose will be rounded off or called Roman nose. From the profile, notice how the brisket area flows smoothly into the chest below the front legs. Young deer have sharp and pointed facial features and the brisket is well defined between the front legs.
  - Another important facet of deer management is record keeping. It is often overlooked and misunderstood, but may well be the single most important part. It would be like running a business without keeping records of receipts and transactions. In order to track the progress (either positively or otherwise), accurate records must be kept. At a bare minimum, data such as number and sex of deer harvested, age and field dressed weights and some form of antler

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measurements should be recorded. You can get as detailed as you please, but these are the basic measurements needed to fairly and accurately judge whether your management plan is working or not. Detailed record keeping is informative over a series of years and can be graphed or charted to fully observe the direction of the management effort. Record keeping also helps the manager to recognize a potential problem long before it becomes apparent to the casual observer.

### GATE SIGNS

Members are entitled to one free sign with their initial membership. We encourage all members to display BCWMA signs on their gates, it provides much needed visibility/advertising for the Association and may encourage your neighbors to join. Signs are available at the County Extension office, at all regular meetings, and from Larry Jones.

### WILD HOG AND COYOTE CONTESTS REMINDER

Numerous entries have already been submitted, so if yours aren't among them don't get left behind. Go shoot/trap some hogs and coyotes and enter BCWMA's Wild Hog or Coyote Contests NOW. Prizes will be awarded at our 2006 annual meeting. The contest rules are:

- Both contests are open to any adult or child.
- Any hog or coyote legally taken is eligible for entry. This includes gun, snare and hog trap, among others.
- Professional trappers are not eligible.
- An entry consists of the hog's tail or the last 6" of a coyote's tail presented at any monthly meeting of the BCWMA. All entries are to be individually sealed in a Zip Loc-type clear plastic bag. A ticket will be exchanged for every tail presented. A drawing will be held for each contest at our annual meeting and a prize awarded to the two people whose number is drawn. There is no limit to the number of times a person may enter, and the more you enter the better your chance to win.

### 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 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.

**BCWMA REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE** (General meetings are the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm except for December unless otherwise noted)

- **July 5, 2005 - 7:00 - 8:30pm, "Supplemental Feeding" and "Food Plots"**
- July 17, 2005 - 3:00 - 4:30pm, Board of Directors Meeting
- **August - The meeting for August has been cancelled, there will be no general membership meeting.**
- **August 16, 2005 - Mineral Area Spot Light Survey Informational meeting - Mineral Mercantile Store**
- **September 3, 2005 - NOTE DATE CHANGE - Field Trip to Arrowhead 7 Whitetails, Board member Van Bruns' high fence commercial deer breeding operation.**



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and  
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Check-in Station

- **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

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**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**

