

# Bee County Wildlife Management Association



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

## May 2005 Newsletter

**Did you know (based on two Caesar Kleberg Institute whitetail studies from 1998 to 2002) that...**

...68% of yearling males dispersed an average of 2.8 miles?

...the other 32% did not disburse at all?

...yearling deer in the 1998 study had an average home range of 1,029 acres?

...those same deer at 5.5 years of age had an average home range of 450 acres?

...over a four year period the home ranges of those deer decreased by 57%?

...the second study showed mature (5.5 years old) bucks had an average home range of 535 acres?

...those same bucks spent 50% of their time on an average of 78 acres?

### MAY FIELD DAY REPORT

Members and guests were treated to a rare experience at our May 7<sup>th</sup> Pond Field Day when a 13 pound 4 ounce largemouth bass was taken. Several others got a lot of attention, including one that weighed 9 pound 4 ounces, two well over seven pounds, and several smaller ones. All bass were released unharmed back into the 10 acre lake.

Jon Herrmann, of Herrmann Fish Farms, collected the fish with his electro fishing boat while showing us how he evaluates the health of a pond and makes management recommendations in his role as a pond consultant. When Jon showed the group the big fish he commented on pond owner John Crumpler's earlier comments about having nine pound fish in the pond. "When people brag about nine pound fish, we usually don't find anything over six or so pounds. It is unusual to find fish bigger than people claim they have, and extremely unusual to find bass this big. Most fishermen never see a bass this size in their whole life. I've encountered only a couple in my whole career."

Approximately 50 people attended the Saturday event at the Crumpler Ranch. It lasted three hours and covered just about everything about ponds, including construction, renovation, management and stocking. Jon was assisted by pond builder and dirt contractor Tom Kocurek, and together they put on great field day.

Contact Jon at <http://www.herrmannfishfarm.com>, or 361-387-7819 and Tom at 361-387-7956. I've bought fish from Jon for many years and highly recommend him.

### TUESDAY, JUNE 7<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

"Governmental Programs to Assist Game Management" will be presented by Wayne Wernli, District Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. He will explain the various Government programs that are available for wildlife management initiatives. These are normally cost share programs and there may be several programs from roller chopping to pond building available.

Details of the relatively new "Wildlife Tax Appraisal" will be discussed by Mr. Bruce Martin, Chief Appraiser for the Bee County Appraisal District. He will review the requirements for getting property approved for a wildlife tax valuation. Some land owners may be able to qualify for a wildlife tax appraisal that is applied at the same rate as an agricultural appraisal, and would no longer have to raise cattle.

### FIRE ANT CONTROL PROJECT UNDERWAY BUT LABOR INTENSIVE

We have now completed two cycles of infecting (hopefully) Bee County Brazilian Fire Ants with Phorid Flies at UT in Austin. Pat True and Joe Dorek took the last batch to Austin on May 20 and 21, Larry & Sandy Jones made the first trip on May 13 and 14. Each trip carried ants from a total of 8 colonies, 4 colonies each from the Jones and True ranches. The 16 colonies have now all been returned to their original

...from year to year the home ranges shifted an average 369 yards, and 64% of those ranges overlapped?

...survival rates for mature bucks were 93% in one study and 84% in the other without hunting mortalities?

...more than 50% of yearling males survived to 6.5 years of age without hunting?

...letting these bucks mature increased the chances of seeing some trophy-class deer?

### **Tidbits...**

The Top Six Computer Viruses Are:

#### PBS Virus:

Your program stops running every few minutes to ask you for money.

Government Economist Virus:

Nothing works, but all your diagnostic software says everything is fine.

#### Politically Correct

##### Virus:

Never identifies itself as a "virus" but instead refers to itself as an "electronic micro-organism"

mounds and in 30 to 40 days we should be seeing flies near those mounds if, in fact, we were successful in getting them infected.

Ant processing sites are set up at Tom & Mary Keller's Ranch in Mineral, and at the Jones Ranch off Hwy 202. Each site has constructed a 12 outlet water drip system for separating ants from the mound dirt, acquired laboratory type metal sieve sets for size-sorting ants, large ice chests for transporting, multiple trays for sorting, and 12 buckets for digging ants and dirt from the mounds. All items are clearly color coded to identify individual mounds during the two day processing cycle, since mixing them up would result in their being killed if introduced into the wrong mound after being exposed to the flies.

Each individual mound is marked with a color coded stake and the individual group number of those four mounds. Two "groups" of four mounds each have been marked and processed so far at each ranch, a total of twenty mounds from five groups is expected to be processed at each location. Twenty five days after the return of the ants to their mounds they will be monitored daily for emerging flies. All data is logged into record books to record when (if) flies are sighted and how many there were. We will monitor fly populations and spread on a long term basis.

The process of working with the ants has turned out to be quite labor intensive. In addition to the time (and money) initially spent setting up the processing sites, the processing itself takes most of three days (at both ranches) and the trip to Austin requires two days and a night.

The better part of one day is spent getting ready, the second is spent digging ants and "dripping" them out, and the third is spent sieving and sorting ants by size, a process that takes 3 to 5 hours per colony.

Everything has to be coordinated between the two sites since we take turns carrying the ants to Austin. The ants have to be there early so we are on the road by 5:00 am. Drivers and/or workers involved so far include Larry & Sandy Jones, Pat True, Tom and Mary Keller, Joe Dorek, and Alvin Rubottom. We hope more people will volunteer to help, especially with the drive to Austin. Call Larry Jones, Pat True or Tom Keller if you want to assist.

The process would be easier if we limited the colonies we work with to only a couple. However, considering the time and expense of multiple two day overnight trips to Austin, we thought it made sense to take as many colonies as we could physically handle. If/when we get flies established we can change to one or two colonies and eliminate the trip to Austin by infecting ants at the True or Jones ranches. In addition, the ants can/may spread up to three miles a year by themselves.

In case you missed it, the May 7 Bee Picayune carried an above the fold, front page article, with color photograph, covering our fire ant initiative. Good publicity for our Association and the Board of Directors extends their sincere thanks to the good people at the newspaper. They have been very supportive of our efforts this first year.

### **2004 BEE COUNTY AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS ARE HERE!**

We now have the latest USDA aerial photographs of Bee County. This infrared photography is on CD and should allow us to print detailed aerial photographs of the entire county, with enlarged photos of any individual ranch. We plan to have a county wide map at future meetings so members can outline their properties on it. This map will then show the geographic coverage of BCWMA member ranches. We can also plan spotlight survey routes to maximize their effectiveness.

The previous imagery was from the early 1990's while this film was shot in 2004. It shows the changes in roads, tanks, fences and brush coverage that have occurred in recent years as a result of land fragmentation.

The only problem in getting the images into usable form is time. We have the special software required to view and process the images, but it looks like a steep learning curve to be able to use it. We will get it done as soon as we can.

Federal Bureaucrat  
Virus:

Divides your hard disk into hundreds of little units, each of which does nothing, but each claims to be the most important part of your computer.

Hillary Clinton Virus:  
Files disappear, only to reappear mysteriously a year later in another directory.

O. J. Simpson Virus:  
You know it is guilty of trashing your system, but you just can't prove it.

**BCWMA Officers**

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361-358-3137

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

**PART 1 - "SPIKES, TO SHOOT OR NOT TO SHOOT, ONLY THE FACTS"**

By Macy Ledbetter, TP&W Department, Wildlife Biologist, South Texas District

There, before you in the sendero or in your food plot, stand two spike-antlered yearling bucks. One has three-inch antlers and the other has "cow horn spikes" that are at least ten inches tall. Which one would you shoot?

In the mid 1920's, a game law was passed in Texas to protect spike-antlered deer. The belief at that time was that spike-antlered deer were young deer and would eventually grow into big deer. By the mid 1950's, biologists had learned to age deer using a tooth wear and replacement technique developed by Severnhouse in 1949. It soon became obvious that not all yearling deer were spikes and that not all spikes were yearlings. About the same time, a review of nutritional studies was published which strongly suggested that nutrition was a major determining factor in antler size. Poor range conditions throughout Texas were assumed to be the reason for spike-antlered deer. By the early 1970's, biologists had collected enough data from deer grown on the same range and under similar conditions to suspect that more than nutrition was influencing antler growth and that deer grown under similar range conditions exhibited a wide range of antler characteristics.

In an attempt to understand this relationship, a 16-acre research facility was constructed on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Kerr Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in 1974. Biologists began a long-term research program to understand why some deer produce big antlers and why some deer produce smaller antlers. Research was approached from two viewpoints: nutrition and genetics.

In order to study and isolate nutritional and genetic effects, the need to control diets, breeding, and objectively analyze results was paramount. This could only be done with penned deer. There are simply too many variables in the natural world to identify and isolate biological cause and effect. Biologists began gathering deer throughout the state and placing them into the research pens. Only native Texas deer were used in the study and since 1974, no new deer have been added. All deer used in research have been born in the pens and all deer born since 1974 have a pedigree record dating back to 1974.

"The Kerr Studies," as they are commonly referred to, include spike buck research topics such as: Spike vs. Forked Antlered Yearlings 1974-1994; Comparison of Spikes vs. Forked Antlered Deer Grown Under Field Conditions: 1983-1986; Effects of Nutrition on Antler Development: 1974-1977; Role of Genetics in Antler Development: 1974-1984; Spike Line Herd Research: 1974-2000; and Genetic/Environmental Interaction: 1992-2000, just to name a few. We are talking about thirty continuous years of penned deer research! No other individuals or states have this tenure or volume of statistically proven data to back up their results.

Since 1983, TPWD biologists have been collecting deer age, weight, and antler data from hunter-harvested deer throughout the state. Analysis of this data has demonstrated that in years with good nutritional range conditions, fewer spikes were in the harvest. They also indicated those years in which range conditions were poor, there were more spikes in the harvest. Range nutrition was affecting antler production. However, the same data also indicated that even under poor range conditions, there were some deer that produced good antlers. They also demonstrated that under good range conditions, there were always some spike-antlered deer.

Therefore, it was reasoned that there are three types of yearling deer on the range: (1) deer that always produce forked antlers, even under adverse conditions; (2) deer that always produce spike antlers, even under good conditions; and (3) deer that produce forked antlers in good years and spike antlers in poor years. Biologists named this third group of deer "swing deer." From a management point of view, swing deer slow management gains because poor genetic traits are masked in good years.

## Newsletter

Larry Jones  
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[ljones@hrbizmall.com](mailto:ljones@hrbizmall.com)

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\* Buddy Turner -  
OGT Program  
Director \*



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Researchers reasoned that if there was a genetic basis for these deer, then the frequency of "swing deer" in a population could be reduced through a selection program and more rapid antler improvement would result.

Let's examine some of the findings from the thirty continuous years of Kerr WMA deer pen data:

- Data indicates the best time to harvest spike-antlered yearlings and make genetic gain in a deer herd is during periods of nutritional stress, such as droughts, or when beginning a habitat management program before the range has had a chance to recover. Giving priority to removal of spikes during that time will help accelerate genetic gains.
- All antler growth is genetically based and environmentally influenced. Nutrition is an environmental influence. In order to grow deer with large antlers, a manager should manage for the best genetic deer possible, and simultaneously manage the habitat for the best nutrition possible. This will insure those deer reach their genetic potential.
- At four years of age, deer that were forked-antlered as yearlings produced three feet more gross Boone and Crockett inches than deer that were spike-antlered as yearlings.
- Of all deer classified as spike-antlered yearlings, NONE scored higher than 130 gross Boone and Crockett points at maturity.
- At maturity, spike-antlered yearlings averaged 17% less live body weight than yearlings with six or more points.
- The number of antler points at 1.5 years was closely correlated with the number of antler points at 2.5, 3.5, and 4.5 years of age.
- It was demonstrated that spike-antlered yearlings produced smaller antlers (points, tine length, mass, circumference, beam length and spread) than forked-antlered yearlings throughout their lifetime.
- Future antler quality and body weight can be predicted based on yearling antler characteristics.
- Improvement of gross Boone and Crockett scores within a herd could be accomplished by selectively culling spike-antlered yearling bucks.
- The degree of success is directly proportional to the intensity of selection placed on the herd.

Part two of this paper, Management Implications, will follow in the next newsletter

### **TRANS TEXAS CORRIDOR**

The Live Oak County Commissioner's Court has voted to send a Resolution of Disapproval of the Trans-Texas Corridor to our Governor, other lawmakers, and Tex-Dot. They are at least 26 other Counties in Texas that have done that, including McMullen County. If you are from Bee, Karnes, Goliad, or Nueces counties, you may want to check with your County Government to see if they are objecting, or ask them to if they haven't already.

The corridor plan seems to call for taking about 584,000 acres of Texas land, a lot of which is private property, and almost 6,000 acres of it will be from Bee County. Some of it may be your land. If you don't want to sell your land will be condemned and taken. The bill even includes a "Quick Take" provision so the state can avoid normal appeal processes. Here is a part of it as written: "...the department may file a declaration of taking with the clerk of the court, immediately serve a copy of the declaration on each person possessing an interest in the condemned property, file evidence of the service with the clerk of the court, and may thereupon take possession of the property pending the litigation. [Sec. 361.137(a)] If the condemned property is a homestead or a portion of a homestead the department may take possession of the

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property on the 91st day after the date of service. [Sec. 361.137(b)].” It seems they will take your land instantly but would give you 90 days to pack your bags and get out of your house, but only *if* you have a homestead extension filed. Scary, isn’t it?

If you think they aren’t serious about stealing this land, this is a quote from Coby Chase, TxDOT Legislative Affairs Director: “*The number of courts authorized to hear eminent domain cases should be expanded...*” and they are going to, which is a clear warning of what they plan to do to us.

A group called Cintra Zachary, LP is to develop the plan and corridor. The Cintra part is a public company from Spain, the Zachary part is a large contractor in San Antonio. It is a 7.2 billion dollar project with a likely 50 year life. Isn’t it interesting that we can’t find an all American outfit to participate in this rip off, assuming it has to be done at all? Texas politicians plan to extort/steal land from the legal owners and funnel much of the profit to Spain for fifty years.

Americans have grown to expect corruption and exceptionally stupid things from their politicians, but, in my personal opinion, this ranks among the worst and stupidest. Out of \$7.2 billion (and there will be much more) do you think any of it will (or has) ended up in our politician’s pockets in an effort to make this pig fly?

It is important to remember, as we listen to the hype about the limitless good this infusion of money and infrastructure is supposed to produce, that this is called a TOLL ROAD. They call it that because WE have to pay for it! The entire \$7.2 billion, and all the rest that follows, will come from our pockets, either in taxes, tolls, fees or profits from or to the *corridor controlled* concessions, increases in the cost of products and services we buy, or other ingenious ways the politicians can devise to suck us dry. Remember, governments have no money except what they take from us. The Cintra Zachary, LP group is a *for profit* outfit; they expect, plan and will make a huge profit on this deal, Tex-Dot bureaucrats will drag things out and sink more money into it for many years, and politicians will be “greased” (legally I’m sure). It’s a given that some heavy equipment and construction material companies are pushing this project and spreading their own “grease.” This will be the richest hog trough those fat cats have slopped at in 50 years.

Another significant negative of this project is land fragmentation, already one of the worst threats facing Texas wildlife today. This project may remove or destroy an additional half million acres.

The Texas Farm Bureau’s official position on the project follows: (the red emphasis is mine)

“We oppose the Trans Texas Corridor. We oppose **the acquiring of additional farm and ranch lands through the state powers of eminent domain** for the construction of the Trans Texas Corridor. Additional division of Texas farms, ranches, and rural communities by such projects as the Trans Texas Corridor **would put undue burdens on the rural economies such as additional cost and time related to moving equipment and animals from one side of a farm or ranch to another** because of a division in farm or ranch by the corridor, the **lack of adequate exits to small Texas towns and their economies**, and the **additional tax burden passed on to the local tax payers for property removed from the tax base**. The addition of new rights-of-way such as the Trans Texas Corridor will **negatively affect wildlife and hunting in many areas of the state in which hunting has become a major part of farm and ranch income**.”

We feel it would be appropriate to improve existing state and federal transportation rights-of-way to help move the Texas transportation system forward. We prefer no new rights-of-way for transportation corridors: however, if new rights-of-way are absolutely necessary, we would prefer additional space for corridors be located adjacent to existing rights-of-way. (Passed as amended)”

The 2004 State Republican Party Platform, adopted on Friday, June 4, 2004 includes the following:

■  
**ELDERS  
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& MARKET**  
1600 N. St. Mary's, Beeville  
358-4036  
**GAME PROCESSING**  
and  
BCWMA Official  
**Big Buck Contest**  
Check-in Station

"Trans-Texas Corridor — Because there are issues of **confiscation of private land, State and National sovereignty** and other similar concerns, the Party urges the repeal of HB 3588 authorizing the Trans-Texas Corridor. Further, we urge the removal of all authorization and powers granted the Texas Transportation Commission and the Texas Department of Transportation for the construction and operation of the Trans-Texas Corridor."

For more information about the corridor go to this website:

<http://www.corridorwatch.org/ttc/index.htm>

To see the full content of House Bill 3588 go to:

<http://www.corridorwatch.org/ttc/cw-hb3588-toc.htm>

To see the full 104 page agreement go to: (good luck in wading through it)

[http://www.txdot.state.tx.us/txdotnews/ttc-35/TTC-35cda\\_signed\\_version.pdf](http://www.txdot.state.tx.us/txdotnews/ttc-35/TTC-35cda_signed_version.pdf)

### **GATE SIGNS**

The new gate signs are here! Members are entitled to one free sign with their initial membership. Additional signs are available for a \$20 donation. 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)

- **June 7, 2005 - 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm** "Governmental Programs to Assist Game

- **Management” and “Wildlife Tax Appraisal”**
- **July 5, 2005** - “Supplemental Feeding” and “Food Plots”
- **August 6, 2005- SATURDAY, 9:00am - 4:30pm**, “Whitetail Deer Management Workshop”
- **August 16, 2005** - Mineral Area Spot Light Survey Informational meeting - Mineral Mercantile Store
- **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 MEETINGS**

Regular monthly board meetings are held on Friday of the week following each General Monthly Meeting. All members are invited and the Board wants to hear from you and encourages you to attend. The next board meeting will be held at the Bee County Extension Service office, **June 17, 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 don't email to AOL addresses.

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#### **Elders Country Store & Market**

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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**

