

BCWMMC

Bee County Wildlife Management Co-op

October 2004 Newsletter

Did you know...

- ...Habitat is paramount for quail management?
- ...timing and amount of rainfall may account for 70 -80% of the variation in quail production?
- ...the average home range of quail is from 10-80 acres?
- ...Bobwhites spend 75% of their time on an average of 22 acres?
- ...8 out of 10 quail die annually?
- ...Quail life expectancy is 8.5 months?
- ...62% of chicks die before reaching 20 days of age?
- ...chick survival equals adults after 2-4 months?
- ...coyotes, raccoons and feral hogs are the worst nest predators?
- ...skunks, armadillos and snakes are the next worst nest predators?
- ...annual quail harvest should not exceed 25-45% of the fall population?
- ...no more than 1-3 individuals should be taken from one covey?

OCTOBER 5TH MEETING REPORT

Gary Homerstad, TP&W Technical Guidance Biologist from Victoria, gave a great program on deer census techniques, data analyzing, and developing harvest recommendations. All are key factors in implementing effective management plans.



Some of the points made follow:

- The reproductive potential of a deer population is approximately 160% although that is far from normal.
- The first pregnancy of a doe normally yields a single fawn. Subsequent pregnancies usually result in twins. However, there are many contributing factors that lower the reproductive rate and/or cause fawn mortality. The long term average fawn production is only about 40% in South Texas. It is usually much better on a well managed property.
- Surprisingly, fawn production was not as good overall as we expected this year. Many area ranches reported poor fawn production of less than 25%, even with good grassy/weedy cover. The extra wet spring could have been a contributing factor, as well as abnormally high coyote numbers in some areas. Ranches practicing predator control had above average fawn production.
- Does bed their fawns in open areas for the first two months of their lives and they need 18" of standing ground cover to hide them and prevent devastation by predators, especially hogs and coyotes. Providing that cover during the birthing months should be a part of our habitat management efforts.
- The natural annual mortality of a deer population (all age classes) is approximately 25%. To maintain a level deer herd population (and keep it balanced with available habitat) you need to harvest the number of animals equal to 75% of the reproductive rate since natural mortality takes the other 25%. Never remove more than 20% of the bucks annually.
- On buck-doe ratios: Close to even ratios are desirable from a hunter opportunity stand point, but perhaps more important is the fact that it reduces predation. In situations with a lot of does per buck the breeding of all does can take up to three months. Fawns are then dropped over a similar time period which increases fawn exposure to predators. In a low ratio herd the majority of does are bred early and the fawns are born over a shorter time span.
- Harvest recommendations should be made using the average of the last three years fawn production, not just one year. This is the reason getting started with spot light surveys and hunting stand and incidental observation records is so critical. To manage effectively we have to build an accurate data bank on total deer, buck-doe ratios, age classes and annual fawn crops.
- For quality deer management, limit the buck harvest to 20% of the

Tidbits

“If you instill in your child a love of the outdoors and an appreciation of nature, you will have given him a treasure no one can take away.”

Ted Trueblood

“Nature never did betray the heart that loved her.”

William Wordsworth

“Nature is an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to us every hour--- if we will only tune in.”

George Washington Carver

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fork-antlered population (preferably mature, 5 ½ - 6 1/2 years and older animals) and cull spikes.

NOVEMBER 2nd DEER AGING MEETING AND WORKSHOP

This will be our last meeting of 2004 and one you shouldn't miss if you plan to hunt deer this season. Technical Guidance Biologist Macy Ledbetter will teach us to age deer by tooth wear as well as on the hoof. The rest of the session centers around an excellent training video that teaches live aging and Boone and Crockett scoring on the hoof. It concludes with video footage of a lot of different deer and gives us the opportunity to test our skills at aging and scoring. Selective harvest, essential to deer management, requires all hunters and landowners to be able to age deer in the field. Encourage your hunters and family to attend. From 7:00pm to 9:00pm at the First National Bank on Hwy 59 in Beeville.

WEST FEST

It was a long hot weekend for several BCWMA officers and directors at West Fest, October 15, 16, and 17. We arguably had the best looking and most professional booth there. Traffic was not all that great but we did get a chance to tell our story to a number of landowners and hunters. We expect to sign up several members as a result of the show. Thanks go out to Tom Keller, Adam Coronado, Pat True, and Bill Franks for planning and staffing the booth.

HWY 202 - HWY 59 SPOTLIGHT SURVEYS COMPLETED

Three spotlight surveys have been completed on numerous ranches between the Medio Creek and the prison on Hwy 202 and connecting all the way across to the Cobweb ranch on Hwy 59. The total route covers about 24 miles. The same survey was repeated three times over several weeks because conditions change and multiple surveys give a more accurate representation of deer populations. Members are now recording daylight observations of deer to better determine the percentage of does, bucks, and fawns that make up the deer population.

Biologist Macy Ledbetter is compiling the data and will have a report to us this week with harvest recommendations. The landowners and hunters in the survey area will meet October the 29th at 6:30 pm in Beeville to discuss the recommendations and try to come to an agreement on this years harvest that everyone can live with. Issues to be considered include how many animals should be harvested per 100 acres of land owned, how many and what age does should be taken, what our policy will be toward spikes and culling, and what age groups of bucks we want to protect as our “seed bucks”.

This exercise has been very helpful in getting members familiar with each other and in sharing concerns and goals and building trust. As the organization grows members will survey other areas of Bee County and develop recommendations for those areas. If you would like help in setting up your own survey just contact Larry Jones or Tom Keller. We both have the equipment you need and we will be glad to assist you in getting started.

BCWMA IS NOW ACCEPTING SPONSORS

As mentioned in the last newsletter the board has voted to accept sponsors. Sponsorships cost \$250 per year and provide the funds required to pay for quality speakers, field days, educational materials and the other costs associated with running a non profit association. Bee Agricultural Company and Fish-Game Feeders.com/Wildlife-Blinds.com are the first sponsors to sign up. We have a new sponsor information package available, if you know of a business or organization you think would be interested please let a board member or officer know. We encourage you to support our sponsors in return

Newsletter

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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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NEW BROCHURE AVAILABLE

We have a new informational brochure available. Three area photographers contributed photographs and we want to thank Alex Kibler, James Hunt, and Karen Savage for their help. These people do beautiful work and their generosity is truly appreciated.

Copies of the brochure will be available at the November meeting or you can call Larry Jones for a copy.

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

SPECIAL MEETINGS

- **October 29, 2004 - 6:30pm** - Hwy 202 and Hwy 59 Landowners and Hunters meeting. Gary Homerstad will answer technical questions. We will be discussing the results of the spotlight surveys we did in this area and reviewing the biologist's harvest recommendations for the 2004 - 2005 hunting season. We want to develop harvest recommendations acceptable to everyone in the area. Bee Co. Ext. Service office, 210 E. Corpus Christi St., Beeville. (Old library bldg.)

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

- **November 2, 2004** - Workshop - "Deer Aging Using Tooth Wear and On the Hoof Evaluation" - Macy Ledbetter, TP&W Biologist
- **December, 2004** - No Meeting
- **January 4, 2005** - "The Rio Grande Turkey" and "Turkey Calling" - Joe Herrera, TP&W Biologist
- **February 4, 2005 - (FRIDAY) 7:00pm - 9:30 pm** - BCWMA Annual Meeting, Election of Officers and Dinner - Guest Speaker will be Sally Crofutt of the Fennessey Ranch. The topic is Eco-tourism and the Fennessey Ranch program.
- **March 1, 2005** - "Managing For Quail"
- **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" - featuring Bill Armstrong, Manager of the Kerr WMA, and other noted speakers.

- **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:

The board meets the first Thursday following every General Monthly Meeting. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. Your input is valued.

- **November 11, 2004** - 3:00 - 4:30pm
- **January 13, 2005** - 3:00 - 4:30pm

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - State Wide

October 26, 2004 - 3:00 - 8:00 - Quality Deer Management Short Course - King Ranch Museum, Kingsville, Texas. Put on by the QDMA, TWA, and the King Ranch. \$15 per person, dinner included. Brothers and Richards will sign copies of their book "Observing & Evaluating Whitetails." Topics include "Observing & Evaluating Whitetails" "Genetic Insights into Buck Breeding Success and Implications for Management Harvest" "Scientific Horn Rattling" "Update on the Six County Antler Restriction Program" and "A Proactive Approach Toward Poaching." Call 1-800-209-3337 or click <http://www.QDMA.com> for more details and registration. We can car pool, if interested call Larry Jones.

NEWSLETTERS BY EMAIL

If you receive this newsletter by USPS mail and have an email address **PLEASE** forward it to ljones@hrbizmall.com. We prefer to send newsletters by email due to the substantial reduction in expense and labor. Newsletters are sent every month except December, if you don't get yours notify Larry Jones at 361-363-0430 or by email at the address above.

NEWSLETTER CONTENT SOLICITATED

Please submit information on coming events and topics of interest. Email Larry Jones at ljones@hrbizmall.com, FAX to 361-162-1309, or call 361-362-0430.

WEB LINKS OF INTEREST

Wildlife Fact Sheets: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/wild/>

Texas Youth Hunting Program: <http://www.texas-wildlife.org/tyhp.htm>

Boone & Crockett Club: <http://www.boone-crockett.org/>

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