



Oaks and Prairies Wildlifer

A newsletter for landowners in the Post Oak Savannah
and Coastal Prairies Regions of Texas

TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

July 2021

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Our Wildlife Biologists

District Field Notes

BY DAVID FORRESTER

It appears that we're coming out of the COVID 19 tunnel and into the light. However, the Delta variant is big in the news and there are spikes in cases across the country. Hopefully, you and yours have weathered the storm and are continuing to be safe.

Biologists are in the middle of dove trapping. Both mourning dove and white-winged dove are trapped and banded this time of year. The band data collected on mourning doves during dove season gives us a good estimate of population numbers and is used to contest any restrictions that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service might want to put on dove hunting, whether it be season lengths or bag limits. Additionally, biologists are getting ready to begin running Deer Management Unit (DMU) spotlight lines. Spotlighting begins the end of July and runs into September. Again, this year we're excited to see what sort of numbers we get back on these DMU lines. As many of you know, we implemented a four-day antlerless season two years ago around Thanksgiving. Look for the article in this newsletter for more specific information on harvest numbers.

We experienced a great spring with plenty of rain. June was average rainfall but unseasonably cool until the latter portion. July has been unseasonably cool and wet. Particularly in the southern portion of the district, the first part of July has been extremely wet. Habitat conditions overall are good, and wildlife has benefited. It looks like the fawn crop should be another good one.



only Colorado County.

With the initiation of MLDP fees, we've hired an additional biologist for the district. Jon McLeod will begin his tenure with Texas Parks and Wildlife August 1, 2021. Jon comes to us from the State Parks Division of TPWD where he's been working as a Habitat and Wildland Fuels Technician. Jon earned a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University. Jon will cover Fort Bend and Austin counties. This is going to free up Mark Lange to cover

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State of the District, continued

Additionally, we'll move Clint Faas to cover Wharton and Northern Jackson counties. Todd Pilcik will now cover Brazoria, Matagorda, and Southern Jackson counties. This will free up Brent Pierce to cover only Lavaca County.

The intent of this MLDP fee was to be able to hire additional "boots on the ground" to ease demand on some of our biologists with large numbers of cooperators. The plan is with the additional workforce we can reduce demand on certain individuals and then can provide greater quality service to our cooperators. I plan on seeing more landowner site visits, more landowner workshops, and more landowner field days. I want to see our guys out on the landscape more providing good habitat management recommendations to landowners and managers. This includes the stand-alone cooperators, as well as, our wildlife management association members.

This summer has been rather mild so far. It's been a surprise to be able to walk around in the middle of the afternoon and not be sweltering hot. Of course, we still have the humidity, but the heat for the most part has been unseasonably cool. Due to the moisture we've continued to receive, the habitat looks lush and vibrant. I urge you and yours to get out and enjoy the wildlife and habitat on your piece of Texas.

David Forrester is the District 7 Leader in La Grange. He has been with TPWD since 2001 when he started his career as the TPWD wildlife biologist for Fort Bend and Wharton counties. David has a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics and a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, both from Texas A&M University, and a Master of Science in Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University-Kingsville.



Winter Storm Uri

WRITTEN BY LAURA SHERROD

To say Texas was ill-prepared for Winter Storm Uri is probably an understatement. People lost power and water for days during the uncharacteristic freezing weather, all while still enduring the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. While it was hard on the human residents of Texas, perhaps it was even harder for those “native Texans” that had to try to survive outdoors during several days of freezing temperatures. While total impacts of some species are still unknown, the winter storm of 2021 definitely affected the wildlife around Texas.

One of the earliest indicators that wildlife species were having a hard time with the storm was the abundance of deceased songbirds. Biologists’ inboxes and voicemails were full of landowners reporting the many species of dead birds around their houses. As the snow melted, even more were discovered – purple martins, robins, bluebirds, doves, finches, the occasional hummingbird, and the list goes on and on. Insectivorous and nectivorous bird species likely suffered greater losses than other bird species due to lack of food both during and after the freeze. Several biologists received reports of Eastern bluebirds that perished in the nest boxes that many landowners have scattered around the landscape. Texas wildlife management areas along the coast experienced waterfowl mortality as the wetlands froze. Despite the sad fact that many birds perished, overall, the birds around Texas seem to still be in good numbers. Many nest boxes have been full of nestlings, and already there have been several reports of turkey poult around the state.

Wildlife biologists also discovered that many bats did not fare well through the freeze. As many as 4,000 deceased bats were counted under one bridge. Bats have already been on the radar as populations have taken hits by white-nosed syndrome, a fungal disease that affects bats. Normally bats are able to seek refuge from the winter weather in caves and areas out of the freezing weather, and many species even migrate to our region for the winter since we normally have mild winter weather. Those that found refuge under bridges and overpasses unfortunately did not fare well. Texas residents were urged to report fatalities in iNaturalist as biologists tried to determine just how bat populations were impacted by the freeze.

Perhaps the wildlife that suffered the most were those that did not escape the shallow water along the coast. An estimated minimum of 3.8 million fish perished in the frigid waters. At least 61 species of fish were affected, most of which were nonrecreational species. However, spotted seatrout were greatly affected, so much that fishing regulations were changed along the coast this year to help them repopulate. In addition to fish, sea turtles were also greatly affected in the gulf. As temperatures plummeted, the turtles became cold-stunned, leaving them unable to swim. Texas Parks and Wildlife staff and other partners rescued thousands of the cold-stunned sea turtles. Sea Turtle, Inc. looked after the thousands of turtles while waiting for waters to warm up again.



Powderhorn WMA. Photos©Dan Walker, TPWD

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Winter Storm Uri, continued

Unlike some of the other species, the sea turtles had a happy ending. Once waters were warm enough for the turtles to swim again, all were released back to the gulf waters!

Other species that were greatly affected were exotic animals that were brought into Texas. Axis deer, blackbuck antelope, and nilgai were some of those exotics most affected. Landowners in the hill country reported axis deer stacking into barns and garages to just try to escape the freezing weather. While less exotics on the landscape is not necessarily a bad thing in terms of Texas wildlife, it still caused great devastation for those landowners that depend on exotic species for food and revenue.

Winter Storm Uri definitely left its impact on Texas in February 2021. While we know that many species suffered losses, the true effect on some species may still be unknown. While migrating species such as monarchs did not directly suffer losses, it is unknown if milkweed production will impact the next generation of butterflies. Overall, it is predicted that most wildlife species will rebound within a couple of years. Winter Storm Uri was certainly an event that Texans will remember!



*Top: Redfish at Mad Island WMA.
Photo©Jerry Martin, TPWD.*

*Bottom: Alligator ‘snorkeling’ above the ice at the Powderhorn WMA.
Photo©Dan Walker, TPWD.*

Left Top: Bat casualties at a bridge in Victoria County. Photo© Clint Faas, TPWD

Left Bottom: Bat casualties at a bridge in Sugarland. Photo©Trey Barron, TPWD

Laura Sherrod is the Wildlife Biologist for Lee and Fayette counties. She grew up in Dripping Springs and graduated from Texas State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Wildlife Biology. Laura was hired by Texas Parks & Wildlife in 2008, where she worked with the Big Game Program until accepting her current biologist position in April 2014. Laura offices in Giddings, and she enjoys helping landowners and wildlife management associations achieve their habitat and wildlife management goals throughout Lee and Fayette counties.



SnK Wildlife Reserve and the Grassland Restoration Incentive Program

WRITTEN BY TY HIGGINBOTHAM

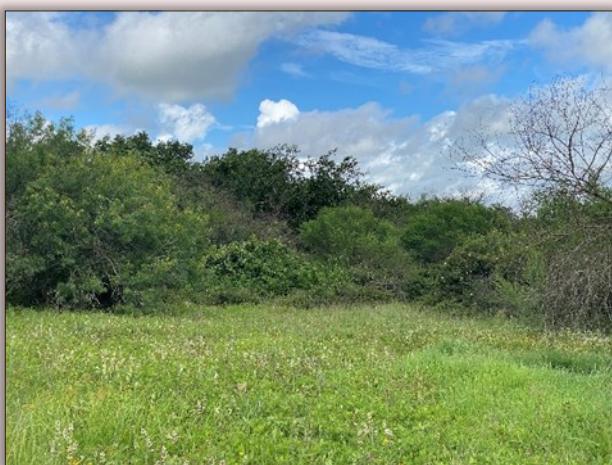
This quarter we wanted to spotlight a Grassland Restoration Incentives Program (GRIP) project that employed a well-rounded native grassland restoration project that included the use of brush management, range planting, and a maintenance treatment of prescribed fire. The SnK Wildlife Reserve is 408 acres located south of Cuero. The property is situated in a transition area between three ecoregions consisting of the Blackland Prairies, Post Oak Savannah, and Coastal Prairies providing elements of all three, adding to the diversity of the property.

The vegetation across the reserve consists of open native grasslands with patches of mesquite, yaupon, and oak trees scattered throughout. Historically, the property had been continuously heavily grazed.; but, under current management a holistic approach using prescribed fire and well distributed grazing has led to a diverse healthy grassland supporting deer, grassland birds, pollinators and more.

The overall goal of the project was to reduce brush canopy cover and restore the area back to native grasses and forbs. To accomplish brush management goals, we utilized a combination of hand cutting larger trees and chemical treatment via Individual Plant Treatment (IPT) with Reme-
dy , Triclopyr and diesel. Three herbicide treatments of Roundup (Glyphosate) were utilized to prepare the seed bed before a highly diverse native seed mix was planted.

The initial canopy of mixed trees was over 50% and was reduced to well below 10% post treatment. The final glyphosate treatment was completed in October of 2016 and the treatment area was seeded in the spring of 2017. Following vegetation establishment SnK worked with their local Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) biologist to conduct a prescribed fire on the treatment area in the spring of 2018. They have continued to maintain the project area with yearly IPT spraying and hand cutting.

The top photo represents the brush cover prior to any treatment, and the bottom photo represents the treatment 5 years after the range planting and 4 years post fire. Photos©Ty Higginbotham



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SnK Wildlife Reserve and the Grassland Restoration Incentive Program, continued

The Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture (OPJV) recently started our post-project monitoring for completed GRIP projects which included the Snk. While conducting monitoring earlier this spring (four years post treatment), the treatment area was phenomenal with an abundance of native grasses and forbs. While there, a large covey of quail was flushed in addition to observing countless grassland bird species and insect activity around us.

Through post-treatment maintenance utilizing prescribed fire with TPWD and IPT treatments and hand cutting Snk has done very well at keeping mesquite and huisache at bay. The landowners plan to conduct another prescribed burn this coming year to address encroaching mesquite and huisache with the intent to apply for another GRIP project. The landowners of SnK Wildlife Reserve also host educational events throughout the year and have worked with the Native Prairie Association of Texas to properly manage and continue to be use SnK for educational purposes well into the future!

You can learn more about the SnK Wildlife Reserve here <https://snkwildlife.org/>. To learn more about the OPJV and GRIP, visit <https://www.opjv.org/> or contact your local biologist or natural resource professional.



*Pictured above is the silo at the SnK gate showing all the programs they have utilized over the years.
Photo©<https://snkwildlife.org/>*



Ty Higginbotham is the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture Coordinating Wildlife Biologist covering the southern focal area. He grew up in east Texas, then graduated from Texas A&M University-Kingsville in 2016 with a B.S. in Wildlife Management. After college he worked as a contract range and soil conservationist for the NRCS in New Mexico before coming back to Texas in 2018 to work with Quail Forever as a Range and Wildlife Conservationist prior to his current position.

Species Spotlight: Common Nighthawk

WRITTEN BY MEAGAN LESAK

Have you ever noticed the buzzy “pzeent” sound in the sky late evening or early morning? You’re hearing the call of the common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*), a slender, long-winged bird that buzzes the sky looking for flying insects. These birds can be found almost everywhere in North America during the breeding season, except for the far northern areas of the continent and parts of southern California and Arizona.

The common nighthawk’s body size falls between a robin and crow. Their feathers create a well camouflaged pattern with hues of white, gray, buff, and black. Wings of these nighthawks are very long and dark with a stark white stripe placed close to the tip of their primary feathers. These birds appear to have a big head due to their short neck and very large eyes. Just a small tip of the bill is visible; the rest is covered with feathers.

This long-distance migrant flies one of the longest migration routes of any North American bird. During this time, they will fly at all hours of the day in large flocks to make it to their breeding grounds. The common nighthawk is one of the last migrants to return to their breeding areas in the spring. When I begin to hear their flight calls at dusk, the bird signals summertime to me. During migration to the breeding areas, they will only travel over land through Mexico and Central America. However, on the return to wintering grounds, several will pass through Florida, crossing the gulf to reach South America. During breeding season, common nighthawks can be found in a variety of rural and urban habitats. Examples include grasslands, open forests, prairies, plains, sagebrush, coastal sand dunes and beaches, etc. In urban areas, they are often found nesting on flat, gravel rooftops.

Food for these birds is almost exclusively flying insects. They hunt at dawn and dusk when the light is low, targeting prey by sight. They have structures on the eyes to reflect light back to the retina to improve night vision. Prey include wasps, queen ants, mayflies, crickets, grasshoppers, caddisflies, and moths, just to name a few. They often exploit the swarms of insects that congregate around streetlights. Watch for them the next time you are at a nighttime sporting event. As they are flying around hunting for food, they open their tiny beak to reveal a cavernous mouth which they then snap quickly as insects fly in.

The male’s courtship behavior is interesting. During breeding season, the males will dive through the air, creating a booming sound as air rushes over their wings. Eventually, the male will land in the vicinity of a female to display his white throat patch while waggling his tail. The female will incubate the eggs and young. The birds simply lay their eggs directly on the ground with no effort spent on building a nest structure. Clutch size is typically two eggs and the pair could raise 1-2 broods each breeding season. Incubation period last 16-20 days then the nestlings remain for another 17-18 days while they are cared for by parents. Both parents assist in raising the young by feeding them regurgitated insects and creating diversions to lure any intruders away from the nest.

As the summer rolls on, keep a look out for these acrobatic birds. They are certainly interesting to watch buzzing the sky looking for food.



Common nighthawk. Photo©Trey Barron, TPWD

Meagan Lesak is the wildlife biologist for DeWitt and Goliad Counties. She received her Bachelor of Science in Range & Wildlife Management and Master of Science in Animal Science from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. A Victoria County native, Meagan began her career with TPWD in January 2019.



2020 — 2021 Antlerless Deer Harvest Breakdown — District 7

WRITTEN BY BOBBY EICHLER

This past season marks the completion of the second season in which 'Thanksgiving Doe Days' was implemented across much of District 7. Before this regulation, antlerless deer could be taken only during archery season or with the use of Managed Lands Deer Permits (MLDP). The January 2021 Oaks and Prairies Wildlifer contained harvest data collected through November 29, 2020 so was not complete but did give a good indication of the archery and four-day season. Now that the season is complete, and MLDP data has been compiled, a better picture can be drawn from the season. If you want to compare apples to apples, the 2019-2020 completed data was published in the July 2020 newsletter. Since buck harvest does not fall under the mandatory reporting regulation, this article will focus on the antlerless harvest on low fence properties across the counties in District 7.

First, let's look at the harvest that occurred through hunters following county regulations. This would include archery, youth weekends, the four-day general antlerless season, and muzzleloader season (*Table 1*). The four-day season had a decrease between seasons with 2407 antlerless harvested this past season compared to 2537 for the 2019-2020 season, a difference of only 130 deer. Archery season, youth weekends (early and late), as well as muzzleloader season all had an increased antlerless harvest during the 2020-2021 season over the previous season. Overall, properties falling under county regulations accounted for 3,556 antlerless deer during the 2020-2021 season, accounting for 22% of the antlerless harvest across the 16 counties.

Table 1: Antlerless harvest by season and county for the 2020-2021 deer seasons. Data represents low fence acreage only.

County	Archery	Archery and Youth-Only	4 Doe Days	General*	Muzzleloader and Late Season Youth	Harvest Option MLD	Conservation Option MLD	Total Harvest	MLD Portion of Harvest	County Regulation Portion of Harvest
Austin	15	3	58	1	5	4	197	283	71%	29%
Bastrop	65	12	207	2	13	80	194	573	48%	52%
Caldwell	61	7	134	3	8	89	361	663	68%	32%
Colorado	46	9	150	4	24	46	1052	1331	82%	18%
Dewitt	81	17	371	0	23	116	1865	2473	80%	20%
Fayette	71	25	285	2	38	89	654	1164	64%	36%
Goliad	34	10	162	3	12	105	1136	1462**		
Gonzales	30	5	199	2	28	161	540	965	73%	27%
Guadalupe	44	13	157	1	22	28	493	758	69%	31%
Jackson	23	5	33	0	8	23	568	660**		
Lavaca	85	20	194	3	27	43	1433	1805	82%	18%
Lee	55	21	215	1	39	83	323	737	55%	45%
Victoria	23	5	91	2	5	104	1910	2140**		
Waller	15	2	20	3	5	60	8	113	60%	40%
Washington	22	15	110	0	13	71	185	416	62%	38%
Wharton	8	1	21	0	4	56	218	308**		
Total	678	170	2407	27	274	1158	11137	15851		

* Reported antlerless harvest during the general rifle season but outside the 4-day antlerless season (illegal).

** County is split by Hwy 59 so mandatory reporting not in effect south of Hwy 59, because of this 'Total Harvest' does not include harvest during 30-day antlerless season south of Hwy 59.

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2020 — 2021 Antlerless Deer Harvest Breakdown — District 7, continued

Second, properties receiving MLD permits accounted for the remaining 78% of the antlerless harvest (*Table 1*). Managed Lands Deer Permits can be further broken down by either Harvest Option or Conservation Option. Harvest Option MLD accounts for just over 7% of the overall antlerless harvest while Conservation Option MLD accounts for just over 70% of the antlerless harvest. For most of the 16 counties, not all, Wildlife Management Association (WMA) member properties fall under the Conservation Option and are responsible for much of the antlerless harvest.

Overall antlerless harvest (all methods) across 16 counties totaled 15,851 for an increase of 1,050 deer over the 2019–2020 season. It seems with the many tools available; hunters are having a positive effect on managing deer populations. When comparing and tracking harvest across the landscape, particularly across a county, acres per harvested deer changed very little between seasons and was mostly stable. As biologists, monitoring acres per harvested deer and comparing alongside annual census data, we should be able to pick up trends whether in a positive or negative direction. *Table 2* breaks down overall doe harvest by county across the last 2 seasons. Caution is advised in trying to compare between counties since several factors come into consideration. Some factors may be, 1) deer densities between counties, 2) hunting pressure between counties, and 3) number of MLD permitted properties.

Table 2: Total harvest and acres per harvested antlerless deer, by county.

County	Antlerless Deer Harvest		Acres per Harvested Antlerless Deer	
	2019-2020	2020-2021	2019-2020	2020-2021
Austin	285	283	1421	1431
Bastrop	559	573	1015	991
Caldwell	588	663	585	519
Colorado	1440	1331	419	453
Dewitt	2236	2473	254	229
Fayette	1202	1164	494	510
Gonzales	889	965	753	694
Guadalupe	705	758	635	591
Lavaca	1728	1805	335	321
Lee	657	737	605	539
Waller	102	113	3246	2930
Washington	368	416	1066	943



Bobby Eichler is the Technical Guidance Biologist for the Oak Prairie District. He has Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Forestry both with emphasis in Game Management, from Stephen F. Austin State University. A native of Giddings, Bobby started his TPWD career in East Texas before moving to La Grange in 2007.

A fee will now be charged for those receiving Managed Lands Deer Permits (MLD) beginning this hunting season (2021-2022).

General Information:

- **All payments are required to be submitted online ONLY through your LMA account.** Payment is not required at the time an enrollment is submitted, but payment must be received before you will be able to accept harvest recommendations and print tags.
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife staff CANNOT accept cash or checks to pay permit fees.** If this occurs, the payment will be returned, and this could hinder paying by the deadline.
- All fees are due by the day before MLDP season opens. For this coming season, that means **fees must be paid by 11:59 PM on Friday October 1, 2021.** Fee payments are non-refundable. MLDP enrollment will be automatically cancelled for those sites for which payment has not been received by the payment deadline date. Properties with a cancelled enrollment will not be able to participate in MLDP for the season and must instead hunt under normal county bag limits and hunting license tag requirements. Courtesy email reminders will be sent prior to the payment deadline.

Fee Payment Instructions

- 1) Log in to your LMA account at <https://lma.tpwd.state.tx.us>
- 2) Click on the My Payment Page option found in the upper right section of the screen.
- 3) Click the appropriate check-box to select the invoice(s) to pay.
- 4) Click Continue.
- 5) Review the Order Confirmation. Click Continue if all is correct.
- 6) The secure credit card payment processing screen will open. Provide the requested information.
- 7) Once successful payment has been submitted, you will return to LMA. Click on the Payment History option to print an itemized invoice.

Notice: If you are hesitant about using personal credit cards online, the LMA system will accept prepaid credit cards. There is a handling fee charged when paying for the MLD permits, so for the \$30 permit fee for Conservation Option WMA members and Harvest Option MLD, load \$31 on the card. For stand-alone Conservation Option (\$300) the total will be \$307.01. Only MasterCard, Visa, and Discover accepted.

Integrated Feral Pig Management

WRITTEN BY BRENT PIERCE

Domestic pigs were brought to America by European explorer's around the 1500s to be used as a food source. Some of these domesticated pigs escaped and became feral. Around the 1890'S, Eurasian wild boars were released on properties for hunting and bred with feral pigs creating most of the hybrids we see today, all 3 million of them, and that's just in Texas. Feral pig, wild hogs, Eurasian wild boars there all just pigs (*Sus scrofa*), living free and in the wild. No matter what name you use, they are anything but free.

Feral hogs are very destructive mainly due to behaviors of rooting for food and wallowing in mud to stay cool. Agricultural damage estimates exceed \$52 million annually in Texas and that's not including damage to our native wildlife and natural ecosystems. As hogs forage for food they can disturb the soil to a degree that it may alter the plant diversity and enable the establishment of invasive plants. This behavior can also cause erosion and decrease water quality along riparian areas. Feral pigs don't just damage plants. They will eat anything they can get in their mouth, including small mammals, insects, reptiles, and amphibians. With their voracious appetites they can cause extensive damage to our native wildlife and cause a decline in species richness.

Another major concern with the high density of feral pigs is that they can transmit over 30 different types of diseases, 24 of those can be contracted by humans. Swine Brucellosis and Tularemia are on top of the list due to the negative affects it can have on the livestock industry and infection of humans. Feral pigs can carry around 45 different types of parasites. Due to the possible human health impact, always cook pork to the proper temperatures and wear gloves when processing them.

How do we control 3 million feral pigs that have the greatest reproductive system of all the ungulates? Feral pigs can reproduce at an alarming rate especially if they have an abundant source of nutrition. They can have close to 2 litters a year with an average of 6 piglets per litter. They reach sexual maturity around eight months. Because of this, 70% of the population must be removed annually just to keep the population stable. A daunting task to say the least.

I get asked a lot of questions about contraceptives for pigs, but there has not been a feasible method of delivery to females discovered yet. However, a new product, HogStop, was released June 2021 in Texas by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) that is an all-natural contraceptive bait for male pigs using cottonseed oil as the active ingredient. The product is considered a 25 (b) pesticide by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which means it does not have to be registered by the TDA before use. Only time will tell the effectiveness of this product. Hopefully it will spur new discoveries and more products that can aid in lowering reproductive rates in feral pigs.

The use of toxicants has been under research for several years but so far there is not a toxicant product that can be used in Texas.



Litter of approximately 2-month old wild pigs.
Photo©Heather Stearling, TPWD

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Integrated Feral Pig Management, continued

The product Kaput, which is federally registered by the EPA, was released by the TDA several years ago in Texas but was quickly pulled due to concerns from various sources wanting additional testing. The active ingredient in Kaput is warfarin (0.005%). Additionally, the product HogGone has been under considerable testing in the United States since 2014 with hopes of eventually being certified by the EPA. The active ingredient in HogGone is sodium nitrite (5.0%). Both of these products have their advantages and disadvantages, but it seems both can be effective. From testing, the product HogGone shows to be very quick acting with only small amounts needing to be consumed, with death in as little as 2-3 hours.

Additionally, since sodium nitrite is metabolized very quickly, danger to scavengers seems to be minimal.

Using game cameras at bait sites will help in determining the correct type of trap to use. Your goal should be trapping the entire sounder or group of pigs that shows up to the bait site. Not trapping the whole sounder of pigs could mean educating more pigs than you catch, which makes them harder to trap next time. There are numerous traps to buy or make depending on your budget. Corral traps tend to be the most popular and have replaced most box traps. Some of the best capture results are coming from what I call smart traps, which use wireless remote cameras to activate traps from a smart device. This can be convenient and saves a lot of time and money. However, most landowners are discouraged at the initial purchase price. Getting together with other landowners and forming associations or clubs to purchase traps that can be used on multiple properties might be an avenue to reduce costs and help reduce damage from feral hogs on larger acreage.

There is not one tool that can reduce the population of feral pigs alone. Success will likely depend on the use of an integrated approach using the latest technology and proven techniques to tackle this problem. Trapping, shooting, and aerial gunning have impacted populations of feral hogs on properties. Learning when to use these different methods will aid in increasing the number of pigs controlled.

Texas, along with 38 other states are in the fight to save their native wildlife and precious ecosystems. The only way out of this problem is to adapt, and integrate proven techniques successfully used to remove feral hogs. Invasive feral pigs are very intelligent, and we must come together and use every tool we in our toolbox to reduce the hog population. If you are interested in more information on feral pig management, please click on the links below.

[Wild Pigs \(texas.gov\)](#)

[Coping with Feral Hogs \(tamu.edu\)](#)

[USDA APHIS | Feral Swine-Managing an Invasive Species](#)



Damage to soil and vegetation caused by wild pig rooting. Photo©TPWD



Brent Pierce is the wildlife biologist for Lavaca and Jackson County where he started in March 2016. He grew up in Galveston County in a town called Santa Fe, TX. He graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science in Rangeland Ecology and Management with a wildlife emphasis. Brent comes to us from the private sector where he has worked on private ranches managing habitat for deer and other wildlife species, as well as, guiding hunters and managing populations.

Summary Of Bills Relating To Wildlife

In the March issue of this *Bulletin* there was presented a digest of bills relating to wildlife which had been introduced, and in some cases acted upon, by the current Legislature. At that time five bills had been passed by both Houses and had become laws, 34 bills had been introduced in the House, and two in the Senate.

Since the appearance of the March *Bulletin* seven additional wildlife bills have passed both Houses and become laws, 31 additional game and fish bills have been introduced in the House, and 11 additional bills have been introduced in the Senate.

Thus since the beginning of the present Legislative session, 12 bills relating to wildlife have become laws, 65 have been introduced in the House, and 13 in the Senate.

There follows a brief summary of bills passed or introduced in one or the other of the two Houses since the appearance of the last *Bulletin*. As was explained in last month's issue, it is obviously impossible to present many features of some bills because of lack of space. Persons desiring to know the full contents of a bill are advised to obtain copies through their Representative or Senator.

The summary that follows includes all bills acted upon or introduced during the period from the publication of the March *Bulletin* up to and including March 20.

BILLS PASSED

H.B. 134—ALSUP. Prohibits for a period of two years setting of steel traps, snares, or deadfalls for taking of fur-bearing animals in Panola County, except that same may be set within 300 feet of any residence, barn or poultry house. Signed by Governor Feb. 21 and became effective that date.

H.B. 301—OLIVER. Prohibits taking of fur-bearing animals in Shelby County with steel traps. Signed by Governor Feb. 21 and became effective that date.

H.B. 432—SCHUENEMANN. Prohibits sale of bass, perch, crappie or catfish taken from fresh water streams of Wilson County. Signed by Governor Feb. 21 and became effective that date.

H.B. 351—READER OF ERATH. Reaffirms existing statutes providing that residents of Erath and Hood Counties may engage in pole-and-line fishing without licenses, but that artificial bait fishermen must have the proper licenses. In addition, this measure prohibits the taking of minnows in Erath and Hood Counties for commercial purposes. Signed by Governor March 3 and became effective that date.

H.B. 147—CLARK. Provides a four-year closed season on deer and turkey in Palo Pinto County, except that deer in the act of destroying crops or gardens might be killed by owner or person in charge. Signed by Governor March 3 and became effective that date.

H.B. 631—SKILES. Provides a year-round open season on sand bass in waters of Denton County. Bag limit during March and April, 10 per day; bag limit rest of year, 15 per day. Possession limit same as bag limits described. Minimum length limit is set at nine inches. The act says that in fishing for sand bass it shall not be unlawful "to use a rod and reel and any character of natural bait or pork strips which are not manufactured or prepared for sale as bait." Signed by Governor March 7 and became effective that date.

H.B. 272, as amended, COLEMAN. Provides a three-year closed season on wild turkeys in Madison, Guadalupe, and Houstont Counties. Signed by Governor March 15 and became effective that date.

HOUSE BILLS INTRODUCED

H.B. 624—THORNTON AND ROBINSON. Would prohibit hunting of wild deer in Galveston County for a period of five years.

H.B. 637—NICHOLSON. Would require that non-resident trappers purchase licenses costing \$200 each. The existing provision for \$1 licenses for resident trappers would not be disturbed. Resident trappers are defined in the bill as those who have been bona fide residents of the State for a period of two years prior to their application for licenses.

H.B. 648—HOLLAND. This bill would permit the taking or killing of wild foxes in Bell County by farmers and others who found these animals preying upon domestic fowls or animals. Fox trapping, however, would not be authorized except within a radius of 200 yards from residence premises. With these exceptions, the bill would make it unlawful to trap or kill wild foxes in Bell County for a period of two years following the date of enactment.

H.B. 654—BROWN OF NACOGDOCHES. This bill would extend for two years, beginning Aug. 22, 1939, the protection now afforded wild foxes in Bell and Nacogdoches Counties. Trapping of foxes and other predatory animals within 300 yards of residences would be permitted, however.

H.B. 666—HOWINGTON. This bill would give protection for four years after date of enactment to pheasants, blue quail and bobwhite quail in Comanche County, except that these species might be killed if found destroying crops or gardens.

H.B. 683—KINARD, NICHOLSON, ET AL. This bill would require non-resident commercial fishermen to obtain licenses before engaging in their business. The non-resident license fee would be the same as that charged in the applicant's home State. The bill also would define coastal waters over which Texas has jurisdiction.

H.B. 698—KING. Would provide a four-year closed season on deer and turkey in Parker County, effective immediately after enactment. Deer destroying crops, gardens or pastures might be shot, however.

H.B. 699—HARTZOG. This bill would place a closed season on shrimp (except those taken for bait) from June 20 to Aug. 20 and from Dec. 20 to March 20 of any year. It would apply only to shrimp in inland salt waters. Operation of shrimp trawls in inland salt waters during the proposed closed season would be forbidden. Legal bait trawls would be exempt from this latter provision.

H.B. 706—FUCHS. Would prohibit taking or marketing of bullfrogs during March, April and May; during other months of the year the legal size limit would be fixed at 4½ inches or more.

H.B. 726—GILMER. This is a local bill that presents for consideration of the House the universal hunting and fishing license features of the bill introduced in the Senate by Senator Weaver Moore, and which was summarized in the *Bulletin* last month (S. B. 155). The House bill, however, would require a \$1 instead of a \$2 fishing license.

H.B. 739—CORNELL. Would repeal the present law prohibiting use of seines or nets in Red River County.

H.B. 744—HARTZOG. This bill would close certain waters in Calhoun and Jackson Counties to commercial fishing because "there is an ever increasing demand for special reservations to be set aside for the exclusive use of sportsmen."

H.B. 750—RAGSDALE, CORY, FUCHS. This bill is similar to one introduced by Representative Cory Feb. 16, the principal difference being that instead of proposing the consolidation of 13 different agencies of the State Government, it would consolidate only six, namely, the Commissioner of Agriculture, the Board of Water Engineers, the State Reclamation Engineer, the Livestock Sanitary Commission, the Game, Fish and Oyster Commission, and the feed control service of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station at A. & M. The bill would abolish the agencies named, set up a Texas Agricultural Commission which in turn would create various Divisions, including a Division of Wildlife Conservation. The Commission until Jan. 1, 1941 would consist of three members, the present Commissioner of Agriculture, chairman of the Board of Water Engineers, and chairman of the Game, Fish and Oyster Commission, and they would receive salaries of \$5,000 per year each. After Jan. 1, 1941, the Commissioners would be chosen at the general election. At the 1940 general election one Commissioner would be elected for a term of two years, another for four years and a third for six years. Thereafter one Commissioner would be elected every two years for a term of six years. The Commission would be empowered to employ a secretary at a salary of not more than \$3,000 annually.

H.B. 782—READER OF ERATH, COCKRELL. This bill advocates the "complete annihilation" of rattlesnakes, jackrabbits and crows, makes it lawful to kill these species, and authorizes the County Clerk to pay a bounty of 10 cents for each set of jackrabbit ears, each crow head, and each rattle from a rattlesnake.

H.B. 783—WESTBROOK. Would declare a five-year closed season on wild deer in San Augustine and Sabine Counties, beginning immediately after passage of the bill.

H.B. 791—WOOD, TENNANT. Would repeal the existing year-round closed season on fur-bearing animals in Harris County by making it lawful to take such animals during the regular open season of December and January.

H.B. 800—MRS. COLSON. Would place closed season on deer and turkey in Grimes and Brazos Counties for a period of three years beginning immediately after passage.

H.B. 804—VOIGT. Would place closed season on wild turkey and chachalaca in Comal and Guadalupe Counties for a period of four years beginning immediately after passage.

H.B. 805—MRS. COLSON. Would abolish the present law which prohibits shooting of squirrels in Montgomery County except during an open season of Oct. 16 to Jan. 31. Should the bill pass the general squirrel law would then apply to Montgomery County, permitting shooting of squirrels during May, June and July, and October, November and December.

H.B. 813—LANGDON. Would place a closed season on deer for five years, effective on passage, in Somervell County.

H.B. 814—NEWELL. This bill is the same as H.B. 299, also introduced by Representative Newell, summarized in last month's *Bulletin*. It would close the season on deer and turkey for four years, beginning after passage, in Young and Jack Counties.

H.B. 838—BLANKENSHIP. Pertains to storage of wild game. Would provide,

Continued on page 14

MONTHLY BULLETIN

Summary—**(Continued from page 1)**

among other things, that it would be unlawful to keep game birds or animals on storage except during open season for taking of same and for three days thereafter.

H.B. 844—BOYER. Would repeal the present closed season on all fishing during the months of April and May in 24 Counties in the Panhandle region. Should this bill become law the general closed season on taking of bass and crappie during months of March and April would prevail in the counties affected. Counties affected are: Dallam, Sherman, Hansford, Ochiltree, Hartley, Lipscomb, Moore, Hutchinson, Roberts, Hemphill, Oldham, Potter, Carson, Gray, Wheeler, Deaf Smith, Randall, Armstrong, Donley, Farmer, Castro, Swisher, Briscoe, and Hall. (This bill has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Clint Small).

H.B. 845—NEWELL. Would forbid for two years taking of wild fox in Young and Jack Counties, except those destroying poultry or any other domestic stock.

H.B. 840—KENNEDY. Would prohibit setting of traps, snares or deadfalls for purpose of taking fur-bearing animals in Anderson County for two years, except that same might be set on one's own land, or on land of another from whom written permission to do so had been obtained.

H.B. 668—COLQUITT. Pertains to registration of firearms with County tax assessor-collector; every person possessing or purchasing a pistol, revolver or other weapon with barrel less than 12 inches in length would be required to pay annual registration fee of \$2; those possessing or purchasing shotguns, rifles, etc. (.22 targets exempted) would be required to pay \$1 annual registration fee; dealers in firearms would be required to pay occupational tax of \$10 annually; 10 per cent of funds collected would go to Department of Public Safety and County tax assessors for administration, etc., remainder being allocated one-half to general fund of State and one-half to general fund of counties.

H.B. 440—COLQUITT. Would impose taxes on cartridges and shells, as follows: shotgun or other shells, two cents for each five rounds or fraction thereof; cartridges .23 caliber or greater, same; cartridges .22 caliber or less, one cent for each 10 rounds or fraction thereof. Taxes would be paid by person making first sale, and payment would be evidenced by tax stamps provided by Board of Control and sold by State Treasurer. Bill would require wholesale and retail ammunition dealers to obtain permits at \$250 and \$1, respectively. Revenues raised by this bill would be collected by the State Comptroller and used to supplement the Old Age Assistance Fund.

H.B. 490—BROWN OF NACOGDOCHES. Would define the open season on squirrels in Nacogdoches County as the months of November and December. (The present open season is during the months of July, October, November and December).

H.B. 848—RHODES. Would make it unlawful to take any fish from fresh waters of Robertson County with seine or net, the square meshes of which are less than one and one-half inches.

H.B. 869—KING. Would prohibit liberation of wild fox in Parker County, and would make it unlawful to keep these animals in captivity in that County.

H.B. 238—HALE. This bill if passed would reorganize the structure of the State government. It proposes to consolidate present Departments, Commissions, etc. (now numbering approximately 132) into 18 administrative Departments. The Game, Fish and Oyster Commission as such would

be abolished, and its functions taken over by a Department of Conservation consisting of several bureaus. The head of the Department of Conservation would be appointed by the Governor. The Board of Conservation also would be appointed by the Governor for staggered six-year terms after the Board was first constituted.

SENATE BILLS INTRODUCED

S.B. 209—STONE OF WASHINGTON. Would amend H.B. 65, Third Called Session, 43rd Legislature, in such a manner as to permit the taking of wild foxes in Burleson County.

S.B. 213—SHIVERS. Would place the brown pelican on the protected list.

S.B. 215—REDDITT. This bill would entitle the State to receive its share of Federal funds now being allocated among the States for cooperative wildlife restoration projects. The Federal funds are derived from the excise tax on arms and ammunitions, and Texas, should the bill under consideration pass, would be entitled to receive a maximum of \$150,000 annually for restoration purposes. Temporary approval of acceptance of the Federal funds was granted by Gov. James V. Allred, and a program of wildlife management and restoration with the aid of Federal funds already is under way, having been started in August, 1938.

S.B. 240—BROWNLEE. Relates to fishing in Burnet, Llano, San Saba and Travis Counties; would make it unlawful to fish in Lake Buchanan, Inks Lake, Marble Falls Lake, Marshal Ford Lake or Tom Miller Lake during months of March and April, but would permit fishing during these months in any other waters in the four counties named; would fix minimum size limits, applicable to all waters of four counties named, as follows: black bass, 11 inches; white bass, 10 inches; crappie seven inches; catfish, nine inches. Would fix bag limits for four counties named, as follows: black bass, 10; white bass, 10; crappie, 10; catfish, 10; and not more than 20 of all such fish in aggregate. Bill would require 55 cent resident fishing license in four counties named, except of those under 17, or those fishing on lands they own or upon which they reside.

S.B. 261—NELSON. Would provide five-year closed season on quail in Gaines, Terry and Yoakum Counties.

S.B. 306—SMALL. Same as H.B. 844 summarized elsewhere in these columns.

S.B. 328—WINFIELD. Would prohibit sale of fresh-water fish taken in counties west of the Pecos River.

S.B. 334—KELLEY. Would authorize County Court of McMullen County to pay bounties on coyote scalps. Court would be expected to fix amount to be paid, which could not, under terms of this bill, exceed \$50 per scalp.

S.B. 337—METCALFE (By request). This is a general bill, applicable to the whole State, which would make it unlawful to take or possess any bream or sun perch less than five inches in length, or any catfish less than 14 inches in length.

S.B. 353—BECK. This bill would relieve the Livestock Sanitary Commission of predatory animal control duties it now performs in cooperation with the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey, and would transfer these duties to Texas A. & M. College, the Bureau of Biological Survey cooperating and directing. Rodent control work, now being carried on by the College in cooperation with the Biological Survey, would be maintained as before.

S.B. 381—SULAK. This bill would forbid (except in Brazoria, Matagorda, Wharton, Jackson and Fort Bend Counties) the use of "a dog or dogs" in the hunting of deer; a further qualifying clause would allow the use of one dog for the purpose of trailing

NEW HATCHERY DEDICATION HELD**Huge Crowd Attends Ceremony Opening Medina Lake Fish Unit**

The dream of the San Antonio Anglers' Club membership came true on Sunday, March 19, when the new Medina Lake Fish Hatchery, located near Natalia in Medina County, was dedicated before an enthusiastic crowd. Attendance at the ceremony was estimated by conservatives at about 3,000, but others, notably the San Antonio Evening News, declared "about 8,000 to 10,000 people" were present. At any rate, the crowd was a significant commentary on the tremendous interest the population now takes in the sport that so fascinated old Ike Walton that he had to write a book about it.

The Medina Lake Hatchery, which will be rushed to completion in the immediate future, is the tenth of a series of hatcheries now operated in strategic points over the State by the Game, Fish and Oyster Commission. Construction of the Medina Lake unit was made possible by the cooperation of the San Antonio Anglers' club, which year before last prevailed upon the Legislature to pass a special fishing license law applicable to those who fished in Medina Lake, the proceeds to be used for the construction of the hatchery and for other devices that might be worked out to improve Medina Lake fishing conditions. Without this additional revenue the Game Commission, because of lack of funds arising from an inadequate license system through the State as a whole, would have been unable to attempt the project.

The San Antonio Anglers' Club is given due credit for its cooperation in a plaque which was unveiled at the dedication ceremonies. Many speakers addressed the gathering, including A. E. Wood, Chairman, and Wm. J. Tucker, Executive Secretary, of the Game Commission.

FROM MRS. MURCHISON

Mrs. D. R. Murchison and children of Kingsville have requested that the following letter, addressed to the employees of the Game, Fish and Oyster Commission, be printed in the *Monthly Bulletin*. The letter reads:

"On March 9 we received a check contributed by the employees of the Game, Fish and Oyster Commission. We deeply appreciate your thoughtful kindness. This money will be used to a good advantage."

It should be explained for the benefit of those unaware of the circumstances, that Game Warden D. R. Murchison of Kingsville was shot to death in line of duty on the night of Dec. 20, 1938. He was attempting to arrest some persons hunting with headlights, in defiance of State laws, in Jim Wells County. The murderer has not yet been apprehended. After Mr. Murchison's death employees of the Commission contributed to a small fund for Mrs. Murchison and her children.

a wounded deer in the following Counties: Kimble, Sutton, Edwards, Medina, Dimmit, Uvalde, Zavala, Kerr, Mason, Gillespie, Tom Green, Shackelford, San Saba, Llano, Blanco, Burnet, Bandera, Comal, Real, Kendall, Wharton, Jones, Atascosa, Baylor, Bexar, Brewster, Caldwell, Denton, DeWitt, Frio, Gonzales, Haskell, Hays, Hidalgo, Jack, Kaufman, Cameron, Jefferson, Montgomery, Orange and Lavaca.



WILDLIFE DISTRICT 7 2021 WEBINAR SERIES

12:00PM - 1:00PM

Native “Foodplots” and Vegetation Manipulation for Wildlife

July 7 - Clinton Faas

Grassland Restoration Incentive Program & Coastal Grassland Restoration Incentive Program

July 14 - Shannon Grubbs

Waterfowl Habitat Management on the Coastal Prairie

July 21 - Mark Lange

Forest Management and Oak Wilt

July 28 - Trent Teinert

Filter Strips

July 30 - Robert Trudeau

Integrated Hog Management

August 4 - Brent Pierce

Living with Wildlife: How to Protect Your Backyard

August 1 - Meagan Lesak

Striving for Diversity through Habitat Enhancement

August 18 - Stephanie Damron

Herpetology Management

August 25 - Laura Sherrod

Aging and Scoring White-tailed Deer

August 27 - Todd Pilcik

To register please go to: https://bit.ly/D7_webinar_2021

For Questions Contact: clinton.faas@tpwd.texas.gov



Texas Parks and Wildlife Presents:



Prescribed Burning

Webinar



This workshop is designed to give landowners and managers a basic understanding of the use and application of prescribed burning to manage for quail, white-tailed deer, other wildlife species, and livestock management.

When? Friday, August 13th; 8:30 am to approximately 12 pm

Where? Register online [HERE](#)

Cost? Free

Presentation topics will include:

Historical perspectives on fire

*The role of fire in vegetation
management*

Fire weather and safety

Fire line preparation

Suppression equipment

Smoke management

Planning the burn

Presented by TPWD District 7 staff and Region 4 Fire Coordinator

Upcoming Events

JULY

24 **Gonzales Wildlife Management Association Meeting**
Elks Lodge #2413
1216 N Sarah Dewitt Dr. Gonzales, TX 78629
Begins at 4:30 p.m.
Contact Ty Tinsley at tytinsley@ymail.com

31 **Western DeWitt County Wildlife Management Association Annual Meeting**
Garfield Hall
Registration begins at 11:00 a.m.
Meal begins at 12:00 p.m.
Contact Larry Franke by email at frankedds@sbcglobal.net

AUGUST

13 **District 7 Prescribed Fire Workshop**
Web Event
Begins at 8:30 a.m.
Contact Trent Teinert at (830) 203-0896
For Registration Click [Here](#)

13 **Guadalupe County Wildlife Management Association Fall Meeting**
Big Red Barn
390 Cordova Rd., Seguin, TX 78155
Begins at 6:00 p.m.
Contact William Dwyer by email at treshermanosranchman99@gmail.com

28 **Central DeWitt County Wildlife Management Association Fall Meeting**
VFW Hall
934 US-183, Cuero, TX 77954
Doors open at 5:00 p.m.
Meal begins at 6:00 p.m.
Contact Karen Flip by email at cdcwma@gmail.com



Sunset at Powderhorn WMA. Photo©TPWD

*Upcoming events, continued***SEPTEMBER** —

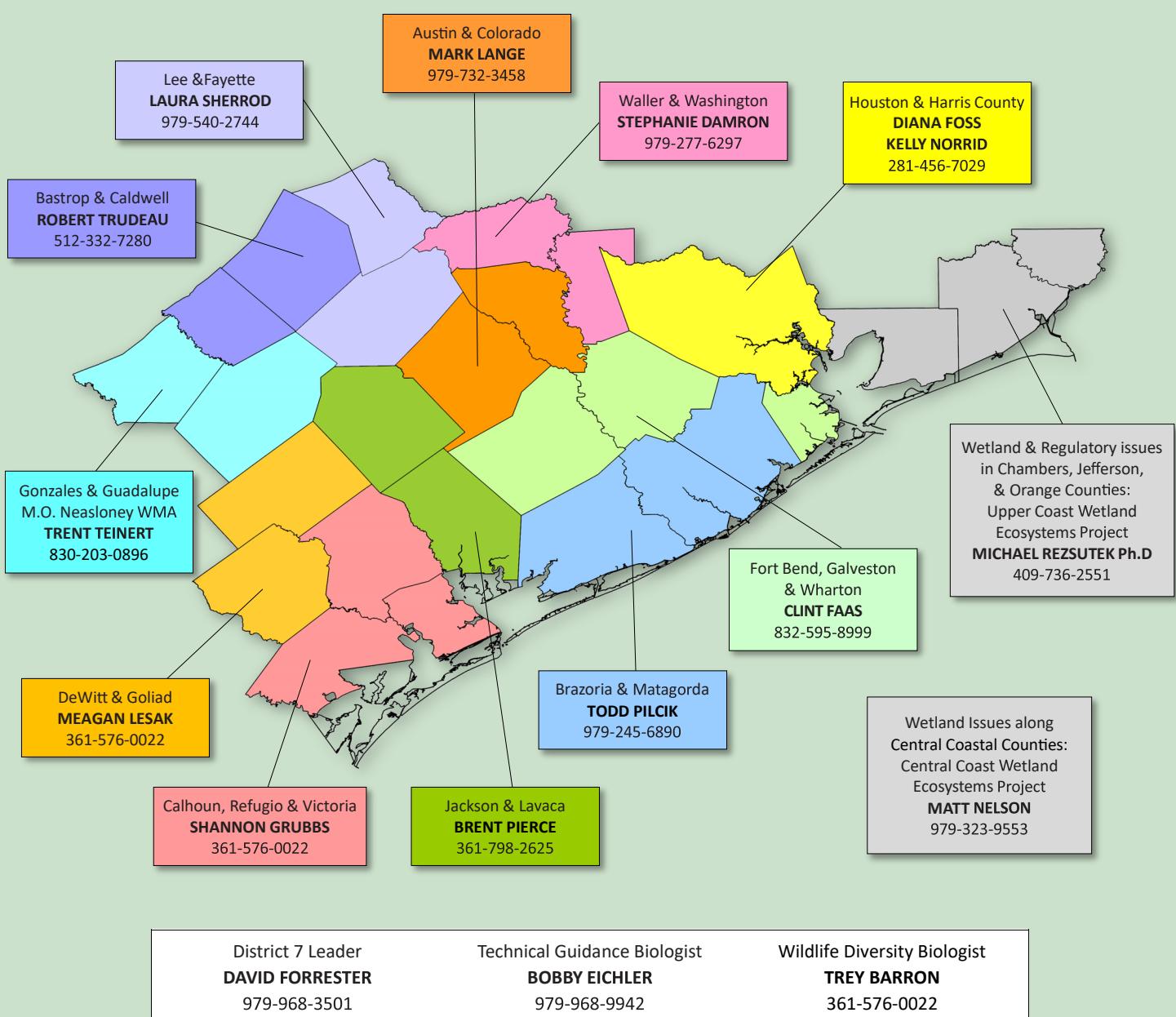
<p>4 North East Colorado County Wildlife Management Association Fall Meeting St Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Frelsburg 1031 Church Ln., New Ulm, 78950 Begins at 6:00 p.m. Contact Terrel Maertz at (979) 732-1727</p>	<p>18 Sandy Creek Wildlife Management Association Fall Meeting-Colorado County Weimar Civic Center 1754 IH-10, Weimar, 78962 Begins at 10:00 a.m. Contact Ronnie Stock at (979) 732-1004</p>
<p>10 Colorado River and Central Colorado County Wildlife Management Association Fall Meeting Schneider Hall 4351 State Highway 71, Columbus, 78934 Begins at 6:00 p.m. Contact Scott Beauchamp-Colorado River WMA at (979) 255-1740 or Ryan Beane-Central Colorado County WMA at (979) 732-7561</p>	<p>18 Meyersville Wildlife Management Association Fall Meeting Waskow Camp House 13052 South US HWY 183, Yorktown, TX 78164 Begins at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. with meeting to follow Contact Diane Chavez by email at mdafchavez@gmail.com</p>
<p>11 Oakridge Ranch Wildlife Management Association Fall Meeting Oakridge Community Center Begins at 9:00 a.m. Contact Earl Fly at (979) 484-9329</p>	<p>25 Goliad County Wildlife Management Association Fall Banquet Memorial Auditorium 935 South Jefferson St., Goliad, TX 77963 Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. Meeting begins at 8:30 a.m.— 1:00 p.m. Lunch is included Contact Brian Yanta or Alethea Albrecht at (361) 645-8204 or alethea.albrecht@ag.tamu.edu</p>

OCTOBER —

<p>2 Buckners Creek Wildlife Management Association Fall Meeting Plum Church Begins at 2:00 p.m. Contact Paula Thompson at (979) 549-5828</p>	
<p>9 North Central Fayette County Wildlife Management Association Fall Meeting Camp Kubena Begins at 4:00 p.m. Contact Lana Limmer at (979) 966-3477</p>	

Dove season is just around the corner! Photo©TPWD

Our Wildlife Biologists



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"To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

All inquiries: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744, telephone (800) 792-1112 toll free, or (512) 389-4800 or visit our website for detailed information about TPWD programs:

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