



Region IV Wildlifer

A newsletter for landowners that fall within the 33 counties of
Region IV, covering portions of Central and Coastal Texas

TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

July 2024



District 8 Field Notes

WRITTEN BY DERRICK WOLTER

Howdy! It's been a summer of green for the district thus far. Much of the district is still green, and habitat conditions are good, thanks to the abundance of rainfall received to date. Let's hope that no one stops the music! Some of our new, "green" staff within the district are picking up steam, making site visits, meeting landowners, working alongside our more-tenured staff, and getting comfortable in their new roles. I have been thoroughly impressed with our new biologists. I think you will be too once you've had a chance to meet with them.

On that note, I'd like to encourage you to invite your local biologist out to your land. I think this is especially important if you have not yet met with them on your property. One of the keys to successful habitat and wildlife management is that a good relationship exists between the biologist and the landowner. A good relationship stems from good communication. The biologist working with you must understand your goals to help you achieve them.

It's also important that he or she knows the current conditions of the property and wildlife populations. Without an understanding of where you are now and where you want to be, it's difficult for your biologist to provide meaningful guidance.

And all that brings me to deer surveys. Providing high-quality survey data is an important part of the communication between you and your biologist! Good information leads to better deer harvest recommendations. Trying to provide meaningful guidance when survey data is sparse, and goals are not clear, is kind of like going shooting skeet blindfolded. Our technical guidance program aims to provide you with specific recommendations that help you improve the plant communities and wildlife populations found on your land, and towards your goals.

Derrick Wolter began his career with TPWD in 2000 working as a wildlife biologist within the Upper Coast Wetlands Ecosystem Project, where he worked with wetlands, waterfowl, and on several Wildlife Management Areas. In 2004, Derrick moved to Central Texas to serve as a district biologist for Bell, Coryell, Lampasas, and Williamson Counties. In 2020, he became the Senior Wildlife Biologist for the Hill Country District. In November 2023, Derrick became the Wildlife District 8 Leader. He received a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Science and a Master of Science in Wildlife Ecology from Texas A&M University.

Continued on page 2

Page 4

Texas Parks and Wildlife
Commission Approves
Statewide Deer Carcass
Disposal Regulations

Page 5

Land Ethics: Your Big WHY

Page 8

Public Hunting
Opportunities in Texas

Page 11

Dove Hunting: Agency
Efforts, How Hunters
Can Help, and Additional
Opportunities

Page 14

Species Spotlight:
Distinguishing White-wing
Doves from Mourning
Doves

Page 15

Update: Texas Sportsman's
Association

Page 17

Upcoming Events

Page 20

Our Wildlife Biologists

District Field Notes, continued

I could have ended there, but I do have one last and important update that slid in under the deadline for this article. Lee Williamson, the biologist for DeWitt County for the past several years, is resigning from TPWD effective July 31. Lee plans to send out deer survey reminders to all his MLDP cooperators prior to his departure. However, he will not be the one crunching the numbers this year. Other District 8 staff will fill in and assist with deer tag issuance in DeWitt County, so please pay close attention to the instructions that Lee provides in his email. We do thank Lee for his time with the Wildlife Division and wish him the best of luck in the future!

District 9 Field Notes

WRITTEN BY BOBBY EICHLER



Administratively, District 9 has been working towards getting fully staffed due to the Wildlife Division reorganization. Our newest hire, Katie Edwards started as the Colorado County biologist on June 4. Katie is a graduate of Tarleton State University with a degree in Wildlife, Sustainability, and Ecosystem Sciences. While attending Tarleton Katie was an Interpretive Park Host at Dinosaur Valley State Park. Katie also has previous experience with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) working intern positions at both the Kerr Wildlife Management Area as well as for the Central Coast Wetlands Ecosystem Project.

We are currently in the process of filling the Fayette County position as well. This will be a new position only covering Fayette County. Interviews were held in mid-June and hopes are to have a biologist in place sometime in August. This position will be kept busy with the many Wildlife Management Associations, deer permitting, Wildlife Tax Valuation inquiries, and hopefully habitat restoration projects centered around native grasslands.

District 9 biologists have been busy lately with workshops and the usual landowner meetings. This time of year, biologists also conduct quite a bit of dove work, particularly with Urban Dove Surveys, Mourning Dove Breeding Surveys, and dove banding which includes both Mourning and White-winged Dove. This newsletter covers quite a bit about our work with dove, which is then used to support various hunting regulations across the state. Dove banding is one of the few practices in which our field biologists handle wildlife surprisingly. For anyone wanting to become a wildlife biologist, once you get into the field you will realize 95% of the work is with people.

Over the last few months, several staff have participated in training opportunities to further their abilities in prescribed burning. District 9 prides itself in staff experience and qualifications with prescribed fire. Our goals are to assist private landowners as well as burn our state Wildlife Management Areas safely and to improve habitat while also mitigating wildfire. We must not forget that historically the two driving forces across this part of the state were grazing and fire. We can either work with fire in a safe controlled setting or do nothing and let nature take care of it when conditions allow. The latter is often catastrophic and unfolds across news stations regularly in many parts of the United States.

On the opposite of fire, as I write this article our first hurricane for the season made landfall yesterday (July 8) near Matagorda County. Beryl came ashore as a Category 1 hurricane and while there was very strong winds and property destruction, it seems rain was the biggest event. Several of the counties near the eye received anywhere from 5 to 10+ inches.

Continued on page 3

District Field Notes, continued

Counties more west of the eye (Lavaca, Fayette, Lee) received minimal if any rainfall. Being only July, I guess we will see what the rest of the hurricane season may have to offer.

Range conditions so far this summer are excellent across the district. Even though some of the more western counties did not receive much rain from the hurricane, May and June rains were good throughout. Wildlife populations should fare well this year and fawning rates should be high this year. Good vegetation growth extending into July and hopefully August with these rains should fare well for antler development this year.

Wildlife staff will be starting to gather annual deer population data soon, with spotlight season starting July 15th and extending through September. As always, most of our deer surveys are run at night along county roads. Our surveys start 1 hour after sunset and may run past midnight. TPWD staff use agency trucks, and always have blinking hazard lights and sometimes additional emergency lights. If you see our folks conducting these counts, please let them do their jobs. If you have poaching concerns simply call the sheriff's department, we always notify the sheriff's department prior to every route, and they will know if it is TPWD. Every year on at least one of our routes our staff will get 'ran-down' by a concerned citizen, this is dangerous to all involved. If I had a concern about a possible poacher, the last thing I would do is run them down.

With the 'dog-days' of summer fast approaching, know that the first cool front is just around the corner sometime in late August or early September. While this may only reduce the temperature to the low 90's, it's still refreshing to know that fall is coming and that dove season will initiate the first of several seasons for the game of your choice. So, with that, enjoy the outdoors.



Spotlighting. Photo©TPWD

Bobby Eichler is the District 9 leader for the Oak Savannah and Prairies 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.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Approves Statewide Deer Carcass Disposal Regulations

June 13, 2024

Media Contact: [TPWD News](#), Business Hours, 512-389-8030

AUSTIN — The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission approved statewide deer carcass disposal regulations during its May meeting in an effort to reduce the risk of transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) across the state. For most hunters, these new regulations do not change how they currently care for their deer after harvest.

“Proper disposal of all potentially infectious material is critical for reducing the risk of disease transmission,” said Blaise Korzekwa, TPWD White-tailed Deer Program Leader. “These new regulations provide hunters more options when it comes to processing their deer to reduce that risk. If CWD is not managed and efforts are not made to mitigate potential spread of the disease, the implications for Texas and its multibillion-dollar ranching, hunting, wildlife management and real estate economies could be significant.”

The new regulations, which will take effect during the upcoming hunting season, will allow hunters to debone a carcass at the site of harvest, provided proof of sex and tags are maintained until the hunter reaches the final destination. By leaving the unused parts at the site of harvest, the chance of spreading CWD to other parts of the state is greatly reduced. Meat from each deboned carcass must remain in whole muscle groups (i.e. not chopped, sliced or ground) and maintained in a separate bag, package or container until reaching the final destination.

These disposal measures apply only to unused carcass parts from native deer (i.e. white-tailed deer and mule deer) harvested in Texas that are being transported from the property of harvest. If carcass parts from native deer species are not being transported from the property of harvest, these carcass disposal rules would not apply.

Since many hunters take their harvest to a commercial processor, it will be the processor who then properly disposes unused parts for them. For hunters processing deer at home, disposal in a commercial trash service is preferred, but other options are available.

Acceptable disposal options include:

- Directly or indirectly disposing of the remains at a landfill permitted by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to receive such wastes,
- Burying the carcass at a depth of no less than three feet below the natural surface of the ground and covered with at least three feet of earthen material, or
- Returned to the property where the animal was harvested.

For more information visit the [CWD page](#) or contact a [wildlife biologist](#).

Land Ethics: Your Big *WHY*

WRITTEN BY OLIVIA KOST

With a simple internet search, you will undoubtedly find numerous articles on the *how*, *when*, and *where* of land management. *Where* is the best place to plant a dove field? *How* can I attract more deer? *When* should I disk for winter forbs?

We live in a day and age where countless resources are available to aid you on your land stewardship journey, including us wildlife biologists at Texas Parks and Wildlife. We have dedicated our careers to helping Texans steward this wonderful land we share, providing technical guidance to those looking for it.

During my time as a wildlife biologist in north central Texas -- still learning the *how*, *when*, and *where* of land management in Brown and Mills counties -- I observed how the best land stewards in my area were always very intentional with the decisions they made on their property. It was evident through talking with them that they had a defined *why* behind their actions, one that demonstrated their land ethic and heart for their land. What values or ethics guide how these landowners make intentional decisions? How can other landowners gain clarity on their own values and formulate a land ethic for themselves?

I am no philosopher, nor am I qualified to do a deep dive into the complexity of ethics. Rather, the purpose of this article is to prompt your own exploration of your values and relationship to nature, not to dictate what those values should -- or should not -- be. Ethics are deeply personal, and while I can answer the *how/when/where* to many wildlife questions, exploration of the personal *why* of it all requires individual introspection. For a deep dive into land ethics, I will defer to the father of modern Wildlife Ecology...Aldo Leopold. Land ethics are a philosophical framework that guides our relationship with the natural world. Coined by Leopold in his seminal work, "A Sand County Almanac," it emphasizes the interconnectedness of all living and non-living elements within ecosystems. Land ethics go beyond traditional conservation, urging us to see land not merely as a commodity but as a community to which we belong. It challenges us to extend our sense of morality to the soil, water, plants, and animals, fostering a deeper respect and sense of responsibility for the natural environment.

Land ethics can vary from person to person and are shaped by one's raising, experiences, community, or family.



Figure 1: Brown Ranch, Leopold Conservation Award winners, 2023. Photo© TPWD

Land ethics can be passed down from generation to generation, where the legacy of their land management is deeply ingrained, while others may begin their land stewardship journey outside of this kind of history, formulating their own ethos around how they intend to care for their land. When we care for someone or something, our actions convey that care and respect. Ultimately, our ethics demonstrate the care we have for our land and each other.

Each of us practices our own land ethic based on how we relate to the ecological community around us. Some of us just haven't been asked intentional questions to gain clarity on our *why*.



Continued on page 6

Land Ethics: Your Big WHY, continued

Below, I have adapted questions from The Aldo Leopold Foundation's "The Guiding Virtues of the Land Ethic Discussion Guide" to help you explore your relationship with nature and the ecological community we are a part of. Ask you and your family members these questions, write them down, and perhaps you can develop your own family land ethic that helps guide how you care for this wonderful land us Texans are blessed to be a part of.

Your land ethic is predicated on your nature values, or how you relate to the natural world around us.

Questions for Exploration of Your Nature Values:

- **What are my earliest memories of nature?** - Early experiences often shape our values. Think back to childhood memories that involved nature and how they influenced your feelings toward it.
- **What natural places do I feel most connected to, and why?** - Identify specific locations that hold significance for you and explore the reasons behind this connection. **Do these places hold aesthetic, intrinsic, utilitarian, consumptive, or religious value to you?**
- **How do I respond to environmental issues?** - Consider your reactions to news about environmental degradation, climate change, and conservation efforts. What emotions do these topics evoke?
- **What aspects of nature resonate most deeply with me?** - Reflect on the elements of nature that bring you joy, peace, or inspiration. Is it the tranquility of a creek, the majesty of Texas sunsets, or the serenity of a lake?
- **How do I interact with the natural world in my daily life?** - Assess your everyday habits and practices. Do you spend time outdoors?
- **Have you ever witnessed the land recover from negative ecological impacts?** What virtues were required of the human community to make that happen?
- **What responsibilities do landowners have to the land (soil, plants, animals, water, air)?** Why do you believe they have those responsibilities?
- **Why do you think restoration of native communities is important?** What does "healthy" land look like to you?
- **What was it about your property that made you decide to invest in it?** There is no wrong answer, it is personal to you!



Figure 2: Llano Springs, Lone Star Land Steward Award Winners 2008. Photo© TPWD

Continued on page 7

Land Ethics: Your Big WHY, continued

- What value does your land have to you and your family?
- If you had to describe your land ethic, how would you do it? How do you plan to live that ethic every day?

Next Steps:

Look at your land ethic as your North Star whilst you embark on your land stewardship journey. Assess whether your goals and objectives for your land management reflect your land ethic and demonstrate you and your family's care and respect for your land. Whether you are at the beginning of your land stewardship journey or a part of a long legacy of stewards, clarity on your big why will help you and your family navigate your path forward as you continue to care for your land.

See Texas land stewards in action through our [TPWD Lone Star Land Steward Award YouTube Playlist](#).

Visit the [Aldo Leopold Foundation Website](#) for more information and inspiration.

Leopold, Aldo, 1886-1948. A Sand County Almanac. With Other Essays on Conservation from Round River. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

"Guiding Virtues of a Land Ethic Discussion Guide." Aldo Leopold Org, The Aldo Leopold Foundation, tinyurl.com/2n9kxb6s.



*Figure 3: Matthews Kids, Lone Star Land Steward Award Winners, 1998.
Photo© TPWD*



Olivia Kost currently serves as the TPWD biologist for Bexar, Comal, and Guadalupe counties, having transitioned to the San Antonio position in April 2024. She began her career with TPWD in 2018 as the biologist for Brown and Mills counties. Olivia holds a bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University and a master's degree from Texas Tech University. Passionate about landscape-scale conservation, she actively engages with wildlife management associations and cooperatives. Additionally, she enjoys guiding new landowners in her area as they embark on their land stewardship journeys.

Public Hunting Opportunities in Texas

WRITTEN BY JON MCLEOD

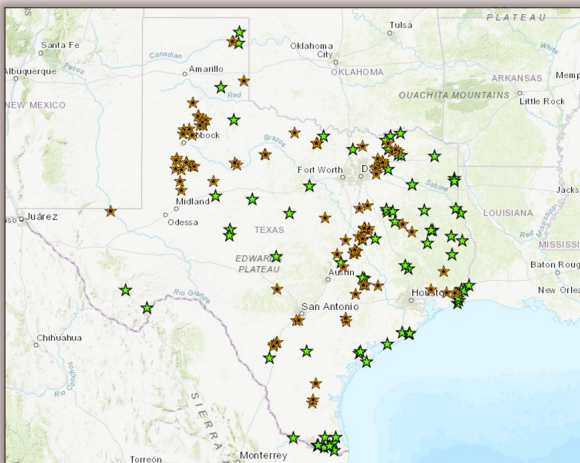


In Texas, more than a million hunters go afield each year with hopes of shooting a nice buck, or a limit of ducks or dove. Yet, one of the most daunting challenges in hunting often lies in securing a suitable location to pursue game, especially as the cost of hunting leases continues to rise. Thankfully, hunting isn't limited to landowners or those with expensive leases. With over 1 million acres of public hunting land available, outdoor men and women of all backgrounds can enjoy the thrill of the chase without the burden of ownership or high costs. These public hunting opportunities include walk-in hunting, drawn hunts, youth hunts, and adult learn-to-hunt programs, ensuring opportunity for everyone regardless of experience level.

Across Texas, hunters have access to many types of public lands, including state parks, wildlife management areas (WMAs), national forests, dove and small game leased areas, Army Corps of Engineers land, and federal wildlife refuges. These varied landscapes offer different hunting experiences, each with its own set of regulations and opportunities. Having all these different types of public land is great, but it can also be very confusing to find out how to legally hunt a specific piece of public land.

Let's start with our walk-in hunting opportunities. Walk-in hunting areas grant hunters access to designated areas without being selected. These hunts operate on a first-come, first-served basis, allowing individuals to plan their outings spontaneously. With no prior reservation required, hunters have the freedom to pursue game across diverse landscapes at their leisure, embracing the thrill of the chase without constraints. Walk-in public hunting fosters a sense of adventure and independence, inviting hunters to experience the thrill of the hunt on their own terms.

Now that you've been introduced to walk-in public hunting, let's explore how you can find more information about these opportunities on our website: [TPWD Public Hunting](https://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/public-hunting). Our website serves as a great starting guide to public hunting in Texas. Here, you'll find an interactive map (Fig. 1) feature that shows available walk-in hunting areas, making it easy to identify nearby locations for your next adventure. Once you find an area on the map you would like to explore/hunt, you can click on the star icon in the interactive map, which will open the official hunting map for the area (Fig. 2). In this detailed map, you'll find essential information such as the dates the area



is open for hunting, bag limits, the types of game animals you can hunt, and where you can park/access the property. It's important to note that to participate in these hunts, you'll need an annual public hunting (APH) permit, which costs \$48. This permit grants you access to about 1 million acres of public hunting lands throughout the state, ensuring that you're ready to embark on your hunting expeditions with all the necessary credentials.

Perhaps you've heard of walk-in hunts but prefer to avoid the hassle of other hunters or seek a more promising hunting experience. Now that we've explored walk-in public hunting, let's learn more about drawn hunts.

Figure 1: Public Hunting locations across Texas.
Photo© TPWD

Continued on page 9

Public Hunting Opportunities in Texas, continued

To apply for these hunts, simply navigate to the [Drawn Hunts section on our website](#). Here, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) provides comprehensive information about drawn hunts, covering application procedures, deadlines, and available species. These hunts offer the opportunity to pursue various game species, from whitetail deer, alligator, pronghorn, javelina, quail, turkey, dove, ducks, and even exotic species, all within premium hunting areas. Conducted through a lottery system, drawn hunts are held in specific areas with

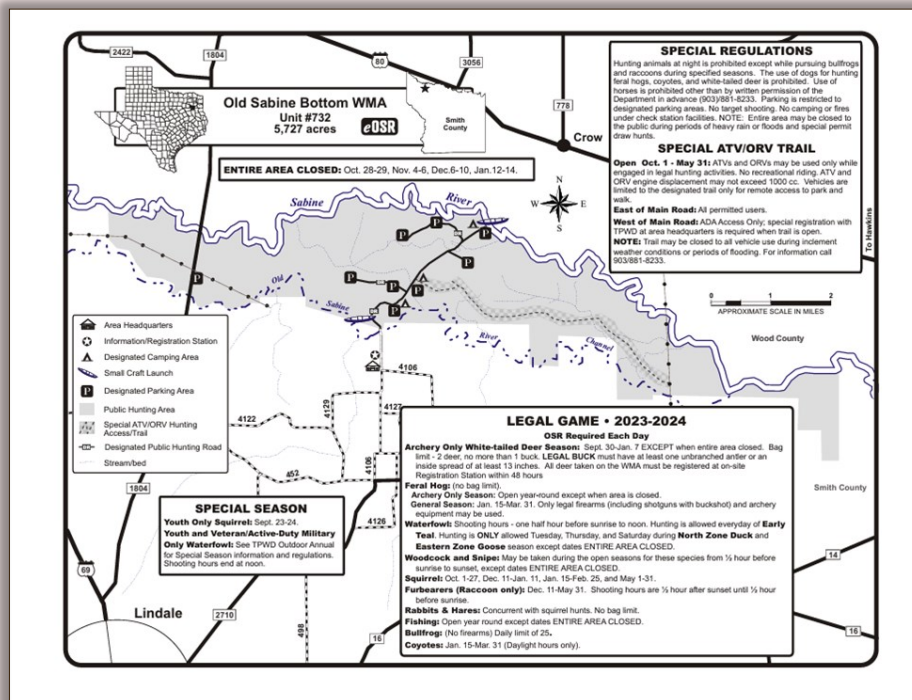


Figure 2: Example of public hunting area maps Photo© TPWD

predetermined dates and quotas, effectively managing wildlife populations and providing a great hunting opportunity for outdoorsmen. While these hunts demand advanced planning and a bit of luck in securing a permit, they grant access to controlled areas with potentially higher success rates.

For those who have yet to experience the thrill of hunting, TPWD offers an exceptional opportunity through our Mentored Hunt Workshops. Tailored specifically for adults new to hunting, these workshops provide hands-on instruction under the guidance of experienced hunters and instructors. Participants in our Mentored Hunt Workshop learn a comprehensive range of skills essential for a successful and responsible hunting experience. From firearm safety and marksmanship to proficiency in game cleaning techniques and developing woodsmanship skills, our workshops cover all the fundamentals. Additionally, participants gain valuable insights into hunting safety and etiquette. Beyond hunting techniques, they also instill a deep appreciation for the importance of hunting in wildlife conservation. Participants will learn about habitat management, ethical hunting practices, and the vital role hunters play in maintaining healthy wildlife populations and ecosystems. For more information and to sign up for notifications about upcoming hunts, visit [TPWD Workshops](#). Additionally, there are opportunities available through the Texas Wildlife Association and Stewards of the Wild, which can be found on our webpage. It's an opportunity to connect with nature, gain essential life skills, and contribute to the ongoing conservation efforts vital for the future of our wildlife heritage.

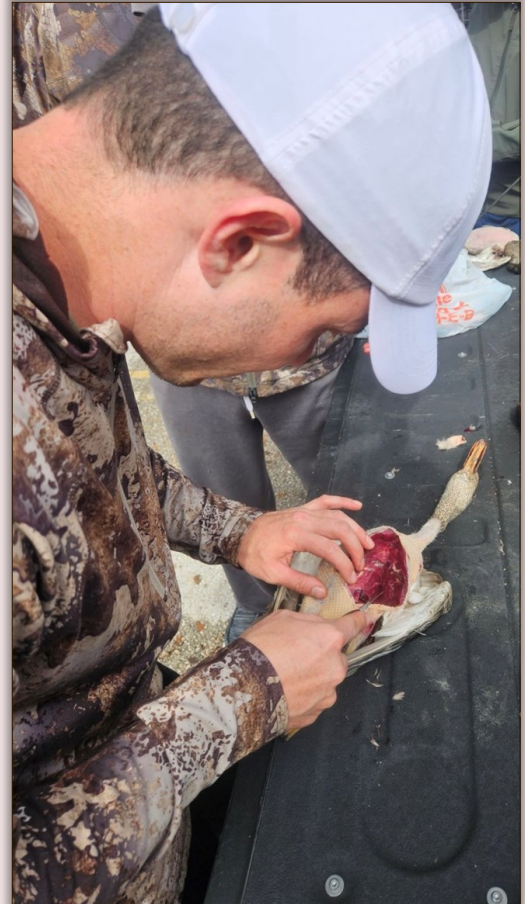
Continued on page 10

Public Hunting Opportunities in Texas, continued

In conclusion, hunting in Texas offers a myriad of opportunities for both seasoned hunters and newcomers alike. With over a million acres of public land accessible to hunters of all backgrounds, the thrill of the chase is within reach without the burden of ownership or high costs. From walk-in hunts to drawn hunts and Mentored Hunt Workshops, TPWD provides avenues for everyone to engage in hunting our great resources. These experiences not only cultivate essential hunting skills but also instill a deep appreciation for wildlife conservation. By participating in these programs, hunters contribute to the preservation of our natural habitats and wildlife populations, ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy the rich outdoor heritage of Texas. For those eager to embark on their next hunting journey or try their first hunt, TPWD's public hunting lands and learn to hunt programs are invaluable assets. If you would like more information about hunting public land in our great state, feel free to contact me at jon.mcleod@tpwd.texas.gov or call 832-595-8999 (office) or 832-451-2104 (cell)—I would be happy to help.



Photo©TPWD



*Duck harvested on mentored hunt.
Photo©Jon McLeod, TPWD*

Jon McLeod is the District 9 Biologist for Fort Bend and Austin Counties. He graduated from Texas A&M University in 2020 with a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences. Post-graduation, he started his career with Texas Parks and Wildlife as a Wildland Fuel and Habitat Technician where he assisted with prescribed fire and habitat improvement projects at various State Parks across Texas.

Dove Hunting: Agency Efforts, How Hunters Can Help, and Additional Opportunities

WRITTEN BY MARK LANGE



As the summer months come and go, signs of fall will start to emerge, and hunters start to prepare for what many have anticipated since the previous season closed...opening day of dove season. The start of a new season of pursuing game begins for many by testing their wing shooting ability on dove. Dove hunting is popular across Texas and the nation, so it is important to understand what all occurs well before the season opens to ensure proper management of these game species.

Dove hunting in Texas is a long-standing tradition and the popularity remains high. State agencies use a variety of methods to estimate both abundance of dove but also harvest rates. Methods of estimating harvest rates include mail-out surveys to hunting license holders, band returns, as well as the HIP (Harvest Information Program) certification hunters do at the time they purchase a hunting license. Using those results it was estimated 289,650 Texas dove hunters tested their wing-shooting skills during the 2023-2024 season. On average each of the hunters spent 4.5 days hunting dove for a total of 1,281,693 hunter days spent afield and a harvest of just over 7.2 million dove. While there are estimates as to how many shots per bird it took to harvest that many dove, it is widely believed hunters are reluctant to tell the full truth about all the dove that got away. It goes without saying that hunters in pursuit of dove is a major contributor to the local and state economies.

Many do not realize that all state wildlife agencies work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to set hunting dates and bag limits. Information gathered from all the states is taken into consideration which is in the best interest of both the species and hunters nationwide. As the interest in dove hunting has grown, so have the regulatory and research efforts. Every year population surveys in both urban and rural areas as well as dove banding efforts are conducted to monitor populations of dove. My goal for the rest of this article is to shed light on national and state monitoring and banding efforts as well as dove hunting opportunities available to Texas hunters.

Monitoring Efforts: Throughout the nation, state and federal wildlife agencies perform various annual surveys to monitor populations of dove. While data on all dove species is recorded in areas where they exist, the nationwide survey efforts are centered on mourning doves as they are the most widespread and heavily hunted species. The United States is divided into three dove management units, Texas is included in the Central Management Unit. The results of all these surveys play a vital role in season lengths, bag limits, and future planning for the management of dove.

Urban and Rural Dove Surveys: Urban surveys consist of biologists driving to predetermined points in urban areas and counting the number of individual dove of each species they see from those points during a set amount of time. It is a relatively simple sampling method that is repeated annually to determine either if the overall numbers of doves seen changed or if the composition of the dove species seen changed over time. Dove call counts are much the same except for the obvious difference that biologists are listening for calls. So if you see a Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) pickup in your neighborhood or on your rural county road making frequent stops in the early summer months, they are likely contributing data to this effort.

Dove Banding: TPWD biologists, as well as trained volunteers, spend much of the summer trapping and banding both White-winged and Mourning Doves. White-winged Dove trapping takes place from June through August 15th while Mourning Dove trapping is conducted from July through August 15th.

Continued on page 12

Dove Hunting: Agency Efforts, How Hunters Can Help, and Additional Opportunities, continued

A two-week period is allowed prior to the hunting season opening for bait to be removed from areas so there is no concern about hunters hunting over baited areas. Efforts begin by pre-baiting sites where the desired dove species seem to be frequenting. Most White-winged Dove trapping occurs in urban areas where birds are roosting. Mourning Dove trapping occurs in more rural areas typically on the edges of roads or any clearing where bait can easily be found by the birds. Once doves are frequenting the baited areas, funnel traps are set to capture them. Once we have captured doves, the data collection process begins.

The date and location of capture are recorded as well as the species of dove captured. The age of the individual is determined based on physical characteristics (plumage color, eye ring color, and leg color) and molt pattern. A bird lacking more colorful plumage or the brightly colored eye ring and legs would be classified as a hatch year



bird meaning a bird that hatched that year. A bird having the brighter color characteristics would be a bird that hatched earlier than the present year. Molt pattern is determined by counting down the primary wing feathers to see which feather is currently being replaced by molting as it will be shorter than the other feathers. The ten primary feathers are replaced in order starting from the inside (#1) and progressing to the last outside feather (#10). For example, this White-winged Dove is a hatch year bird as it lacks the bright eye ring colors and it is replacing the 7th primary feather making it a “hatch year 7” aged bird. After the age is determined, the band number is recorded, and the band is placed on the leg of the dove and the dove is released.

Ask any waterfowl hunter what the trophy of waterfowl hunting is and almost all will respond with harvesting a banded bird. Most waterfowl hunters, when they are retrieving downed game, will immediately look for a band on the leg. Unfortunately, that is not commonly the same for dove hunters. Nationwide banding data shows that 842,514 Mourning Doves were banded from 2003-2022 with only 44,804 (5%) of those bands being reported by hunters (Seamans 2023). While there are many potential reasons for the low number of bands being returned, it is also likely that some bands on harvested birds are overlooked by hunters. The data gathered from banding doves and returned bands helps biologists determine population estimates, harvest rates, and survival. So the next time you take to the field to test your wing-shooting ability on doves, take a split second to check for a band. If you are lucky enough to harvest a banded bird, please take the time to report it at www.reportband.gov.

*Top: Hatch year White-winged Dove. Middle: Molting feather. Bottom: Banded dove.
Photos©Mark Lange, TPWD*

Continued on page 13

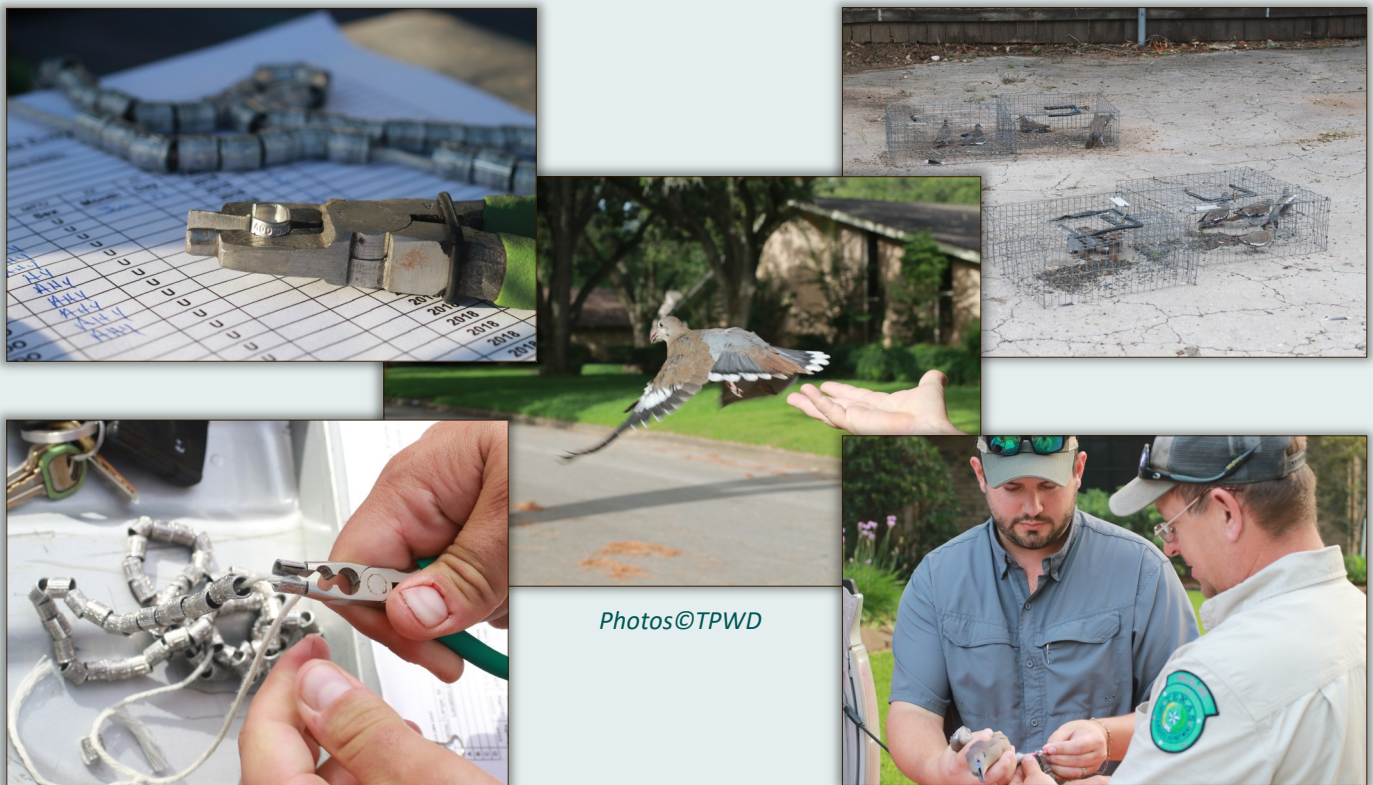
Dove Hunting: Agency Efforts, How Hunters Can Help, and Additional Opportunities, continued

Hunting Opportunity: As dove hunting grows in popularity and land gets divided, the opportunity to hunt dove becomes increasingly precious. Hunters looking for a productive dove hunting area that are in relatively short supply, has created a market for dove leases. TPWD has recognized this and manages a program to offer landowners the ability to lease their land to the state. Across Texas, approximately 120 properties are leased by TPWD for dove and small game hunting. As competition increases for good dove hunting locations, I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity. To legally hunt these areas, you must possess a valid Texas hunting license as well as an annual public hunting (APH) permit valued at \$48. Permits can be purchased at any location that sells hunting licenses and can be used to access any public hunting lands in the state. To learn more about public hunting lands and the opportunities available to you in your area visit [TPWD Public Hunt](#). If you are interested in leasing your land to TPWD, contact your local biologist or Kyle Thigpen at kyle.thigpen@tpwd.texas.gov or call at (979)696-4148 (office) / (979)255-2761(cell).

Reference citation and for more information on the status of Mourning Dove see:

Seamans, M. E. 2023. Mourning Dove population status, 2023. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Management, Washington, D.C.

<https://www.fws.gov/media/mourning-dove-population-status-2023>



Photos©TPWD

Mark Lange was the wildlife biologist for Colorado/Austin Counties where he started in June 2012 and is now the District 9 Senior Biologist. He grew up in the Texas panhandle in the small town of Nazareth. He attended West Texas A&M University where he completed his Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology/Wildlife Science in 2006 and his Masters of Science Degree in Biology in 2011. Mark offices out of the Columbus field office. Mark has diverse interests and enjoys working with landowners towards their management goals.

Species Spotlight: Distinguishing White-wing Doves from Mourning Doves

WRITTEN BY BRITTANY PERRY



The White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) and the Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) are two species of doves that are often confused with each other due to their similar appearance. However, they are distinct species with unique characteristics. Biologists and hunters need to be adept at recognizing these two species whether it be at a distance or in hand. Each year, dove surveys and dove banding takes place to gauge population numbers and provide data for these two popular game birds. In this article, we will explore the key differences between White-winged Doves and Mourning Doves, making it easier for you to identify them in the field.

Physical Characteristics:

Wing Pattern:

- White-winged Doves have a distinctive white wing patch that is visible when the bird is in flight or at rest.
- Mourning Doves have a more subdued, grayish-brown wing coloration with no white patch. Large black spots can be seen on the wing coverts.

Tail Feathers:

- White-winged Doves have a long, rounded tail.
- Mourning Doves have a long, pointed tail.

Size:

- White-winged Doves are slightly larger than Mourning Doves.

Behavioral Differences:

Habitat:

- White-winged Doves are found in urban and suburban areas, parks, and woodlands.
- Mourning Doves prefer open fields, grasslands, and agricultural areas.

Call:

- White-winged Doves produce a low, cooing call, often described as "who-who-who."
- Mourning Doves have a softer, more melancholic cooing call, often described as "ooo-ooo-ooo."



Top: White-wing Dove. Bottom: Mourning Dove. Photos@TPWD

While White-winged Doves and Mourning Doves share some similarities, their distinct physical and behavioral characteristics make them easy to tell apart. By paying attention to the wing pattern, tail feathers, size, and call, you can confidently identify these two species of doves.

Brittany Perry is the Wildlife Biologist for Burleson, Milam and Falls counties. She is from Lafayette, Louisiana and graduated from LSU. Brittany has worked in conservation through the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, National Wild Turkey Federation, and environmental consulting projects throughout the US. She joined TPWD in 2023 and offices in Rockdale, TX.

Update: Texas Sportsman's Association

WRITTEN BY JASON SMALLEY

Greetings to all,

At our last TSA business meeting held on March 3rd, 2024, board members and TSA members who were present voted to close the book on TSA. After years of trying to regain what once was a thriving association, there has been little success. A number of factors can be attributed; however, the fact remains that a sense of purpose for the association has gone by the wayside. There is no longer a means to attract new membership. We have tried over the past decade to do so, but have not been able to.

The group that attended our business meeting was relatively small. By a unanimous vote, all present agreed to donate the remaining funds of TSA to the Colorado County Wildlife Management Association (CCWMA) and the Austin County Wildlife Management Association (ACWMA). Both entities will be utilizing the donated funds to continue conservationism within their respective counties.

A cashier's check from Columbus State Bank was written for the amount of \$5,751.03 to CCWMA, and another cashier's check from Columbus State Bank was written in the amount of \$5,751.03 to ACWMA. A third cashier's check from Columbus State Bank was written in the amount of \$300 to the New Ulm Enterprise to print and send out this final letter. These three checks will close out the remaining funds for TSA.

Also, to be noted, three scholarships were awarded in May of 2023 on behalf of TSA to Kannyn Goehring, Cade Mathis, and Garrett Nedd. Each student received \$1500.

Thanks to all of you who supported TSA throughout the years, especially those that were members from the beginning. It has been a great run with many accomplishments, but times have changed, and the sustainability of this association is nonexistent at this point in time. We are sad to see it go, but we are proud of the accomplishments by the association throughout the years. It was only possible through dedicated and loyal members.

Respectfully,
Jason Smalley



Jason Smalley presenting Austin County Wildlife Management Association's check to Tommy Monk, President of the Association.



Walt Glasscock presenting Colorado County Wildlife Management Association's check to Chad Emmel, President of the Association.

South Texas Wildlife Conference

The Latest in Managing South Texas' Habitat and Wildlife



CAESAR KLEBERG
WILDLIFE
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-KINGSVILLE



- **Javelina Research Updates**
 - Dr. Stephen Webb - RWFM
- **Mottled Duck Research**
 - James Morel - TPWD
- **Mountain Lions & Bears (TBD)**
- **Hot Topics in Quail Research**
 - Dr. Fidel Hernandez - CKWRI
- **Ocelot Translocation**
 - Lindsay Martinez - East Foundation
- **Prescribed Fire**
 - Dr. Sandra Rideout-Hanzak - CKWRI
- **Brush Management in S. Texas**
 - Dr. Stacy Hines - AgriLife Extension
- **Exotic Wildlife in Texas**
 - Mark Mitchell - TPWD
- **Sustained Quail Harvest**
 - Dr. Abe Woodard - East Foundation
- **Deer Management and Research**
 - Dr. Mike Cherry - CKWRI

Date: September 13, 2024

Location: Pleasanton Civic Center
115 North Main St
Pleasanton, TX 78064

Price: Regular Registration:
\$80/\$100

Student Registration:
\$40

Tickets include complimentary
breakfast and lunch

Online registration ends 8/31
Tickets available at the door \$100

Hotels:

Holiday Inn: (830) 769-3323

Fairfield Inn: (830) 569-8656

Hotel room block group code:
South Texas Wildlife Conference

To register visit:

www.texas-wildlife.org/stwc/

For more information contact:
Jared Schlottman, (512) 350-5563
jschlottman@texas-wildlife.org

Register Today!

Or Scan the
QR code:



Thank you
to our
Sponsors

Upcoming Events

JULY

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>25 TPWD: Deer Survey Methods Webinar
 Registration required
 Begins at 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
 Contact Erin Wehland at
 Erin.Wehland@tpwd.texas.gov
 Weblink: https://tpwd.texas.gov/calendar/wildlife/deer-survey-methods-2024</p> | <p>26 Feather, Fur, and Farming Workshop: All About Grazing
 Weimar Civic Center
 1754 IH-10 Weimar, TX 78962
 Begins at 1:00 p.m.
 Contact Mark Lange at 979-732-3458 or
 mark.lange@tpwd.texas.gov</p> |
|---|--|

AUGUST

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>2 Lee County Wildlife Expo
 Giddings High School
 2335 N. Main St., Giddings, TX 78942
 Begins at 8:00 a.m.
 Contact Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service-Lee County at 979-542-2753</p> | <p>24 Cummins Creek WMA Fall Meeting
 Round Top Rifle Hall
 710 FM1457, Round Top, TX 78954
 Begins at 6:00 p.m.
 Contact Cary Halamicek at 979-249-7523</p> |
| <p>2 Hunter's Education Courses
 Texas Wildlife Association-David K. Langford Center
 6644 FM 1124, New Braunfels, TX 78132
 Begins at 9:00 to 3:00 p.m.
 Contact Paul Silva at paulssilva60@gmail.com
 https://tpwd.elementlms.com/course/hunter-education-classroom-course-10202/</p> | <p>24 Post Oak Savannah Prescribed Burn Association Meeting
 M O Neasloney WMA
 20700 SH 80 N., Gonzales, TX 78629
 Begins at 6:00 p.m.
 Contact Jon Mcleod at
 Contact pospba2023@gmail.com</p> |
| <p>3 Alum Creek WMA Meeting
 Bastrop Public Library
 1100 Church St., Bastrop, TX 78602
 Begins at 3:00 p.m.
 Contact Roxanne Hernandez at 512-718-2286
 https://www.alumcreekwma.org/members/</p> | <p>31 Sandy Creek WMA Fall Meeting
 RSVP Required
 Weimar Civic Center
 1754 IH-10 Weimar, TX 78962
 Begins at 10:30 a.m.
 Contact Ronnie Stock at 979-732-1004
 ronniestock@hotmail.com</p> |
| <p>16 Washington County Wildlife Society Fall Meeting
 Washington County Expo Event Center
 1305 E. Blue Bell Rd., Brenham, TX 77833
 Social begins at 5:30 p.m.
 Contact Stephanie Damron at 979-277-6297
 Or stephanie.damron@tpwd.texas.gov</p> | <p>31 Harvey Creek WMA Fall Meeting
 RSVP Required
 Weimar Civic Center
 1754 IH-10 Weimar, TX 78962
 Begins at 6:00 p.m.
 Contact Brian Emmel at 512-750-8777 or
 brian.emmel@ymail.com</p> |

Continued on page 18

*Upcoming Events, continued***SEPTEMBER**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>6 South Lee WMA Fall Meeting
Serbin Picnic Grounds
Begins at 6:30 p.m.
Contact Philip Walther at 713-817-3784</p> <p>6 Blue Branch/East Yegua WMA Fall Meeting
American Legion Hall
304 TX-123 Loop, Lexington, TX 78947
Social begins at 5:30 p.m.
Meal begins at 6:30 p.m.
Contact Alan Turner at 512-921-9860</p> <p>8 West Yegua/Two Creeks WMA Fall Meeting
Lincoln Community Center
1066 Main St, Lincoln, TX 78948
Social begins at 5:00 p.m.
Meal begins at 6:00 p.m.
Contact Greg Sherrod at 512-431-3558</p> <p>13 South Texas Wildlife Conference
Pleasanton Civic Center
115 N. Main St., Pleasanton, TX 78064
Begins 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
https://www.texas-wildlife.org/stwc/</p> <p>14 Oakridge WMA Fall Meeting
Oakridge Fire Station
1904 Oak Ridge Rd., Weimar, TX 78962
Begins at 9:00 a.m.
Contact Earl Fly at 979-484-9329 or fly5101@bellsouth.net</p> <p>15 Jackson County WMA Fall Meeting
Jackson County Service Center
1904 Oak Ridge Rd., Weimar, TX 78962
Begins at 4:00 p.m.
Contact Clinton Faas at 281.202.9212 or clinton.faas@tpwd.texas.gov</p> <p>15 East Navidad WMA Fall Meeting
Dubina Hall
3201 FM 1383, Schulenberg, TX 78956
Social begins at 6:30 p.m.
Meal begins at 7:00 p.m.
Contact Tommy Koenig at 512-567-7922</p> | <p>15 Lavaca County WMA Fall Meeting
Knights of Columbus Hall
321 US Hwy. 77 S., Hallettsville, TX, 77964
Begins at 10:00 a.m.
Contact Joel Wagner at 361-798-6506 or lavacacountywma@gmail.com</p> <p>20 Colorado River and Central Colorado County WMA Fall Meeting
Schneider Hall
4351 State Hwy. 71, Columbus, TX 78934
Begins at 6:00 p.m.
Contact Scott Beauchamp at 979-255-1740 or scottrbeauchamp@hotmail.com</p> <p>21 Hunter's Education Courses
Lockhart State Park Recreation Hall
2012 State Park Road Lockhart, TX 78644
Begins at 10:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Contact Paul Silva at paulssilva60@gmail.com
https://tpwd.elementlms.com/course/hunter-education-classroom-course-10201/</p> <p>21 North Central Fayette County WMA Fall Meeting
Camp Kubena
2001 Waldeck Rd., Ledbetter, TX 78946
Social begins at 4:00 p.m.
Meeting begins at 5:00 p.m.
Contact Luke Sternadel at 979-966-2085</p> <p>28 West Navidad WMA Fall Meeting
Rockin' W Barn
Krischke Rd., Schulenburg, TX 78956
Social begins at 5:00 p.m.
Contact Jessica Wick at 979-743-1903</p> |
|---|---|

Continued on page 19

*Upcoming Events, continued***OCTOBER****8 Clear Fork Creek WMA Meeting**

Ross Barn
380 Sunoco Rd., Lockhart, TX 78644
Begins at 6:30 p.m.
Contact Suzanne Gaddis at 512-995-0535

12 Wildlife Rehabilitation Workshop with Austin Wildlife Rescue

Bastrop Public Library
1100 Church St., Bastrop, TX 78602
Begins at 3:00 p.m.
Contact Roxanne Hernandez at 512-718-2286
<https://www.alumcreekwma.org/members/>

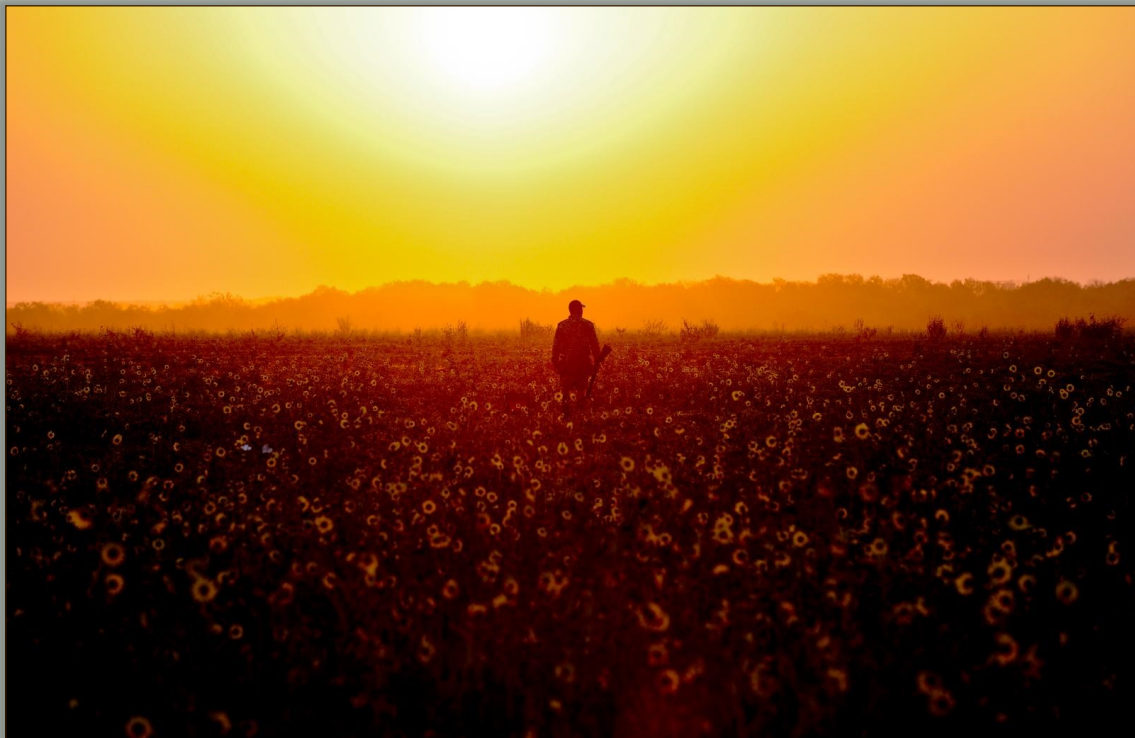
12 Red Rock WMA Meeting

Red Rock Community Center
114 Red Rock Rd., Red Rock, TX 78662
Begins at 6:30 p.m.
Contact Jim Russell at
99sanddollar@gmail.com
www.rrwma.org/events/

12 Hunter's Education Courses

M O Neasloney WMA
20700 SH 80 N., Gonzales, TX 78629
Begins at 10:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Contact Paul Silva at paulssilva60@gmail.com
<https://tpwd.elementlms.com/course/hunter-education-classroom-course-10213/>

Dove hunting in South Texas. Photo©Chase A. Fountain, TPWD



Our Wildlife Biologists

CLICK MAP FOR THE FIND YOUR BIOLOGIST LINK



Life's better outside.®

Region 4 - Wildlife

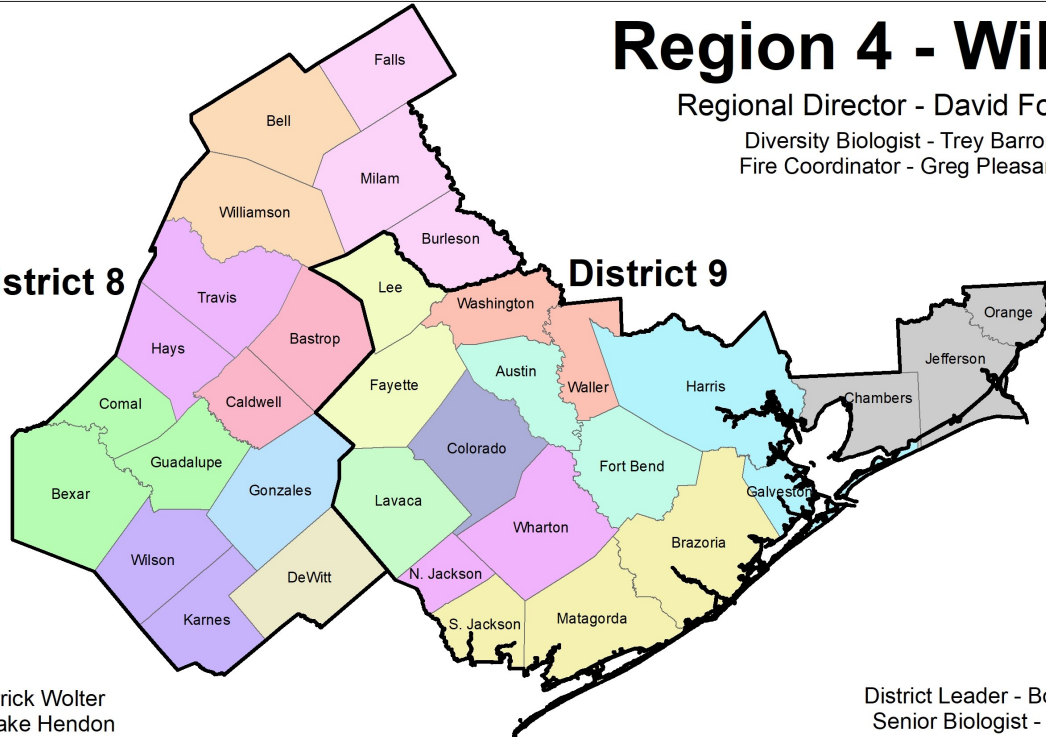
Regional Director - David Forrester

Diversity Biologist - Trey Barron

Fire Coordinator - Greg Pleasant

District 8

District 9



District 8

District Leader - Derrick Wolter
Senior Biologist - Blake Hendon

District 9

District Leader - Bobby Eichler
Senior Biologist - Mark Lange

	Brent Pierce (Lavaca)		Laura Sherrod (Fayette, Lee)		Stephanie Damron (Waller, Washington)
	Brittany Perry (Burleson, Falls, Milam)		Lee Williamson (DeWitt)		Tania Pena (Hays, Travis)
	Clinton Faas (N. Jackson, Wharton)		Olivia Kost (Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe)		Todd Pilcik (Brazoria, S. Jackson, Matagorda)
	Cullom Simpson (Bell, Williamson)		Rachel Hamilton (Karnes, Wilson)		District 9 Staff (Chambers, Jefferson, Orange)
	Jon McLeod (Austin, Fort Bend)		Rachel Patterson (Bastrop, Caldwell)		Urban - Addison Gaines & Kelly Norrid (Harris)
	Katie Edwards (Colorado)		Robert Conrad (Gonzales, MONWMA)		

CLICK MAP FOR THE FIND YOUR BIOLOGIST LINK

Executive Director
David Yoskowitz, Ph.D.

Editors
David Forrester
Bobby Eichler
Mark Lange
Stephanie Damron



Life's better outside.®

COMMISSION

Jeffery D. Hildebrand-Chairman
Houston
Oliver J. Bell, Vice-Chairman
Cleveland
James E. Abell-Kilgore
Wm. Leslie Doggett-Houston
Paul L. Foster-El Paso
Anna B. Galo-Laredo
Robert L. "Bobby" Patton, Jr.-Fort Worth
Travis B. "Blake" Rowling-Dallas
Dick Scott-Wimberly
Lee M. Bass, Chairman-Emeritus
Fort Worth
T. Dan Friedkin, Chairman-Emeritus
Houston

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

"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."

You may view this publication, as well as other newsletters created by the department, through the TPWD website. Please visit www.tpwd.texas.gov/newsletters/ for more information.

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:

www.tpwd.texas.gov

©2024 Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
PWD LF W7000-2068 (7/24)