



# LEE COUNTY WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION



January 2004

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979-542-2800

## It's Time For The Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will be at the Sons of Herman Hall on February the 6th. The social hour will get started at 5:00 p.m., with the meal around 6:30 p.m.

Come on out for some good barbecue and great fellowship. There will be plenty of door prizes, raffle prizes and silent auction items, so bring lots of money (the profits will help fund our scholarships). Door prizes will be given throughout the evening so come early. In an effort to expedite giving out **so many prizes** we will ask that each family member sign in at their co-op table to be eligible for door prizes.

Colonel Jim Stinebaugh, director of law enforcement for Texas Parks and Wildlife, will be the speaker for the evening. Greg Pleasant and Victor Gonzales will give brief updates on the progress of the antler regulation.

We will have a display wall so bring any deer mounts or antlers that you would like to share with the crowd. Mark it on your calendar and be sure to come out.



## Brown-headed Cowbird Trapping

The association will be getting a limited number of cowbird traps for this spring and we need a head count of who would like to participate in this program. Persons wishing to trap cowbirds must be certified through an approved training program. Everyone who attended the nongame-bird program at the Lincoln community center in August should be certified. Otherwise, Texas Parks and Wildlife offers training at no cost.

Traps are operated from March 1 through May 31 only. During this time they are checked preferably every day, and data is collected. Participants

will be provided self-addressed envelopes and data forms on a weekly basis. ALL information submitted to TPW is strictly confidential.

Traps should be located in areas that include the following:

- Close to where cattle or other livestock graze
- In open pasture, away from any brush, and in low grass
- The trap should be readily accessible to vehicles, even after heavy rain
- Water and some perching snag (dead trees) nearby

(Continued on page 2)

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## Cowbird Trapping *(Continued from page 1)*

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If you are interested in participating in this program please contact Greg Pleasant for more information. We will have a limited number of traps, but I have plans if anyone would be interested in constructing their own trap. Traps are being provided through the Texas Organization of Wildlife Management Associations (TOWMA). LCRA provided the materials and local high school students and ALCOA employees constructed the traps. If you are interested, more information on this program will be available at the annual meeting.

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## Proposed Changes

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There have been a few financial changes proposed that will be discussed at the annual meeting. The cost of doing business is going up. The annual spring meeting costs the association nearly \$3,000 to host. Sponsoring coyote contests, scholarships, holding fall meetings, postage and programs all cost money. Until now the meal at the annual meetings has been free for the whole family, but that is getting harder to do. The state budget problems kept Texas Parks and Wildlife from providing Co-op signs this past year so the association directors chose to purchase signs in the interim. The signs cost roughly \$18.00 each yet a new membership is only \$15.00. Well you don't have to be an accountant to figure out that that math doesn't work to well.

Changes that have already been made include not continuing the coyote contest, a savings of \$600.00 a year. Other proposed ideas include:

- (1) increasing a new membership fee from \$15.00 to \$25.00, which includes one sign, and increasing the annual membership from \$10.00 to \$15.00
- (2) Start charging for the meal beginning with the 2005 annual meeting

**This is your association.** Your president and directors need your input on what you would like done. Some of these issues will be voted on at the

annual meeting so please come and be a part of it. The next directors meeting will be held on January 14th, If you have other ideas or suggestions please contact your directors or president and let them know your opinions before then.

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## Help with Raffle Items

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The addition of raffle and silent auction items at the annual meeting has been very popular and the money raised helps offset the expense of the meeting.

In order for this to continue to be a success we need your help coming-up with door prizes, and raffle and silent auction items. If you have items, or a service (such as a hunt) that you could donate or money that could go towards the purchase of nice raffle or auction items please contact one of your directors or Mickey Wachsmann by February 1.

**We can purchase items tax exempt or provide a receipt/thank you through TOWMA so that the donor can get credit for a charitable contribution on their taxes.**

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## Time To Check Your Bird Boxes

*Greg Pleasant, Wildlife Biologist*

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Just a reminder of when paying attention to your bird boxes is most beneficial. February is the time to clean and repair your **bluebird and wood duck boxes** for the new nesting season.

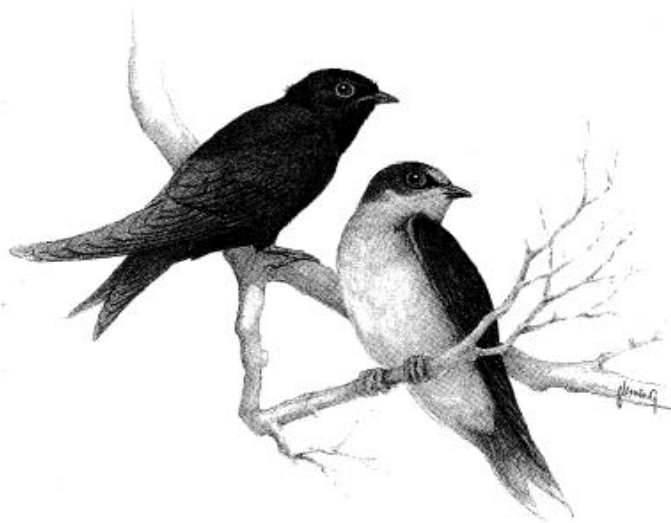
Starting in March, you can check bluebird boxes once a week and continue to do so through July. Just remember that when you see nest construction almost completed, do not disturb the box during the first three days of egg laying. After that you can check the box in the afternoon without bothering the female. The other critical period not to disturb the nest is just prior to the young leaving the box (when they are about 10 days old).

After the young birds leave, clean out the nest material so re-nesting can occur. Bluebirds will build new nests on top of old ones but this second

nest is higher in the box and can be more easily reached by a predator like a cat or raccoon. After the last brood leaves in late summer, leave nesting material in the box over the winter. This old material provides insulation for birds taking refuge in the box on cold winter nights.

Adult purple martins return to the same nest site each year and for this area, should arrive about the first week of March. Yearling birds (last year's young) begin arriving 4 to 6 weeks after the adults, and are the most likely to be looking for new and unoccupied houses. At new sites, don't open houses for three or four weeks after the adults arrive because house sparrows and starlings will have a month to claim the site before the yearlings arrive. Martin migration is drawn-out, with birds arriving over a span of 16-20 weeks. Martins can arrive and begin nesting as late as June, so keep your housing ready; don't close it up, or let other birds use it. Successful martin landlords do not tolerate non-native competitors.

You can find plans for many types of bird houses at [www.50birds.com](http://www.50birds.com). The Ducks Unlimited web site has a good information and a duck box plan ([www.duck.org/conservation/duck\\_box\\_plans.pdf](http://www.duck.org/conservation/duck_box_plans.pdf)). If you do not have internet access contact me and I will get you the plans you need.



## Update on the 3-Year Experimental Antler Restriction Regulation

*Greg Pleasant, Wildlife Biologist*

Some nice bucks have been taken around the county this season. The largest that I have scored from Lee County this season is a 14 point with a 15¼" inside spread that scored 147<sup>6</sup>/<sub>8</sub>.



I have been getting really positive feedback from hunters reporting that they are seeing more and larger bucks this year than in the past and are telling me they want the antler regulation to stay.

As of December 12th I have gotten data on a total of 70 bucks harvested in Lee County. Fifty of the bucks met the 13" inside spread requirement, only 2 bucks have had 6 points on one antler and been less than 13 inches inside. Only 17 of the bucks have been spikes or had at least one unbranched antler. Just remember spikes have the same chance of winning any of the prizes as a trophy buck. The winners will be drawn at the February 14th TOWMA meeting at LCRA's Cooper Farm.

Victor reports that only 2 citations have been issued for illegal bucks and one for an illegal doe so far this season. He said that he has received fewer calls this year for such things as trespassing or feeder theft than in the past. If you see something suspicious or have a problem the sooner you call with information the better chance he has of making a case.

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