



LEE COUNTY WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION



January 2005

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Lee County Wildlife Association Annual Meeting

Lee County Wildlife Association's Annual Meeting will be at the Sons of Herman Hall again this year which is south of Giddings off Hwy 77 and CR 223. The date is Friday, February 4th. Social hour will get started at 5:00 and the meal around 6:30 p.m.

Come on out for some good barbecue and fellowship. There will be plenty of door prizes and raffle items, so bring lots of money. 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. It was voted on during last

year's meeting that we would start charging for the meal this year. Don't panic meal, tickets are only \$5.00 for adults, and kids up through high school still eat free, so bring the whole family. Tickets can be purchased at time of registration.

With the addition of the wildlife photo contest, the oldest buck contest and a drawing from members who shot spike bucks, we will not have a main speaker this year.

Mark it on your calendar and be sure to attend. If you have a deer head you would like to share with the crowd bring it to be displayed.

Youth Shooting and Hunter Safety Event

In an effort to find new ways of keeping people interested in conservation and thinking about wildlife management, the directors asked if there was a way the association could help get kids involved.

Some ideas were kicked around and examples were brought-up of other youth programs. The idea of a youth shooting and hunter education event seemed to be a popular one.

Local high school kids involved in hunter education or related classes are brought out for a day and taught hunter

and boating safety and given the opportunity to shoot rifles, pistols, shotguns and archery equipment in a safe and educational setting.

We are currently working to make this event happen the 27th and 28th of September 2005. The manager at Nails Creek Park on Lake Somerville has made a tentative offer for use of the park facilities and manpower. This is a large undertaking and once we have the infrastructure in place the plan is that this will be an annual event that will include schools for several counties.

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Youth Shooting and Hunter Safety Event

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There is still a huge amount of work to be done to make this event happen. I am currently working on a proposal to solicit grant monies to help fund this program. A significant amount of equipment will be needed and there are still many details to work out, but we think this is a worthy undertaking.

If you would like to help with this program in any way or know of possible sources for contributions, please contact Greg Pleasant or one of your directors to see what you can do to help.

Wildlife Photo Contest

Get your cameras out and get snapping. More photos are needed for the contest. We are extending the deadline for entry. You now have until January 31st to have your photos in to Greg Pleasant or the Extension office. We have some nice photos that have been entered, but we want to make a contest out of it.

Oldest Buck Contest

I hope you didn't forget about the spike and oldest buck contest. To participate you needed to be a current member and your Lee County buck had to be checked by Greg Pleasant, TPWD Biologist. As of mid-December I haven't checked many spikes and I think two 5½ year-old bucks are in the lead for the oldest. If you have a buck you harvested in Lee County this year and I haven't checked it, it's not too late. Give me a call. I need to be able to see the deer's teeth to age it so it would need to be thawed.

The purpose of the current antler restriction is to allow more bucks to make it into older age classes by taking pressure off of the younger bucks. Hunters are encouraged to start learning to estimate the age of a buck by their physical characteristics and behavior before shooting them.

Cost Sharing for Food Plots

In the October newsletter it was announced that members purchasing seed for wildlife food plots could receive up to \$25.00 in reimbursement from the Wildlife Association in an effort to reward members for helping wildlife in Lee County and to possibly encourage others to do the same. The deadline to have receipts to the Extension office was December 1st. Twenty-one members took advantage of this offer, but that still left more than half of the \$1250.00 set aside for this program. So we are going to extend this offering for spring food plots. The same rules apply, but now the seeds purchased must be for spring plantings.

The deadline for having receipts to the Extension office will be May 1st. We hope to continue this or similar programs in the future. If you have any suggestions on other program ideas please share them with one of your directors.

Help with Raffle Items

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 and provides opportunities for other programs.

In order for this to continue to be a success we need your help coming up with door prizes, 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.

Time To Check Your Bird Boxes

February is the time to clean and repair your bluebird boxes for the new nesting season.

Starting in March, you can check 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.

Lee County Bucks


2004 was a good year for deer hunters. Lee county hunters harvested some beautiful bucks and had the opportunity to watch numerous bucks through out the season. Many hunters have told me they got to watch bucks fights for the first time, one hunter told me he raddled in 5 different bucks in a single morning.

The largest local bucks I got to see include a 4.5 year old, 12 point with a 22 ½ inch inside spread that scored 148 ¼, a 10 pointer that scored 138 1/4 that was only 3.5 years old, and an 8 pointer with an 18 7/8 inch inside spread that scores 136 ¼, that was 5.5 years old. These bucks are good examples of what our local deer can do with good nutrition if they are allowed to get a little older.

White tailed deer reach physical maturity at 4.5 years of age, until then they are still building their skeletal structure. It's not until after this age that a buck has excess minerals and calcium to put into antler production and have an opportunity to really show their genetic potential. Most whitetails in the wild will grow their largest antlers at age 6.5 or 7.5. The majority of bucks shot in Lee County this year were 3.5 years old. Remember that next time you are trying to decide if that buck you are looking at is 13 inches wide or not, if it's that close, how about letting him get another year older, next year he will be even bigger.



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