



# LEE COUNTY WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION



July 2008

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## Recent Programs

**SNAKE PROGRAM IN THE SCHOOLS:** The Lee County Wildlife Association sponsored Clint the Snake Guy from Texas Snakes and More to give presentations to intermediate students this past May. Between 600 and 700 students were able to enjoy his educational and entertaining presentations. All the schools in the county were invited to participate and the only one that was not able to schedule time during the two days of presentations was Immanuel Lutheran. We had Clint give programs last year and received such positive feedback it was decided to bring him back and reach a different age group of students this year. Programs were held in Dime Box, Lexington and Giddings with students from Serbin attending at the Lexington.

**TURKEY HABITAT PROGRAM:** On May 6th we had a program on wild turkey that covered their needs for food and cover. The program was held at the Lincoln Community Center and the

speaker was Bobby Eichler, a Technical Guidance Biologist for TPWD out of La Grange. Bobby presented research that indicated turkey prefer open wooded areas with tall grass for feeding, tall bunch grasses with structure such as fallen tree tops for nesting. The post-oak and yaupon woods that dominate Lee County are too thick for turkey to move through, find food and avoid predators. The mid and upper story of the canopy is just too thick. A turkey prefers woods that are open enough so they can fly to escape predators. Nesting cover is also missing from most properties in the county, with improved pastures offering little to no food or nesting cover as turkey nest in tall grass on the ground. Forage grasses such as Bermuda get too thick for chicks to move through and offer few seeds or insects which chicks need. Continual grazing and hay cutting only further hinder any nesting attempts. Weedy tall grasses with patches of bare ground and scattered trees are much more desirable.

## Ideas for Upcoming Programs

The idea was mentioned some time back that we have a firearm safety and shooting program for kids, so why don't we offer one for women? Well, other than a few of the guys having reservations about their wives being too handy with a gun, there really isn't a reason. So we would like to see if there is enough interest in a program like this. We have access to firearms and archery equipment and enough experienced people to put together a fun and

educational program. We would like to know if there are enough ladies interested in such a program? We can cater it to whatever your specific interests are, and as basic or advanced as you would like. Please let one of your directors know if this sounds like something you would be interested in, or if you have any other topic ideas, maybe fishing? We are always looking for program ideas. Please let us know what topics you would like to see.

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## Wildlife Photo Contest

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Don't forget to be photographing all that wildlife that you see all year long so that we will have some nice photos to share at the spring meeting in the photo contest. Fawns are on the ground and everyone thinks they are cute, but don't forget about the frogs, lizards, insects and birds.

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## Deer Anatomy Class September 24

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Have you ever wanted to know what all the parts are inside that deer as you are gutting it? Want to know how to tell when the rut is happening in your hunting area? If deer "don't eat grass", what are they eating out in that hay field, or what food source should you be hunting over? The answers to these questions are inside your deer, come learn how to identify them.

On Wednesday, September 24th at the Lincoln Community Center starting at 6:30 p.m. we will be **getting to know your deer**. We will go over the skeletal system, digestive system, rumen content and plant identification of what the deer are eating, and we'll take a look at the reproductive system and fetus development. We will also cover how to field dress, skin and quarter a deer. This is a very interesting program with qualified veterinarians that will answer all your questions. It will be an intense program with a lot of information covered that will probably last until dark. This will all be done with real deer, no fancy PowerPoint programs here. Everyone will learn something at this event. This will be just in time for you to use this information during hunting season. Mark it on your calendar.

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## Cost Sharing for Food Plots

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It has turned out a little too hot and dry for some around the county and summer food plots are suffering. That being said, this is a good time to put out protein pellets for the deer because there isn't much for them to eat right now, and does are nursing fawns and bucks are growing antlers. It's not too early to be thinking about fall food plots and possibly fire breaks if a prescribed fire might be on your mind for this winter. Planting oats, wheat or rye for a fall food plots in your fire breaks is a great way to kill two birds with one stone. Don't forget to take advantage of the food plot seed reimbursement program offered by the association. Take or mail your receipts to the extension office to receive up to \$25.00 reimbursement.

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## Hog Trap Gates Available

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We still have hog trap gates available at a discounted price to members. Back in May I trapped a 300 lb boar in a corral trap with one of these gates as a testimonial to their toughness and effectiveness. I am still getting calls from landowners that are having serious hog problems and are looking for some help. The best time to trap feral hogs is when they are hungry. If it continues to dry out all the animals will be looking for something to eat. Corral traps making accidental deer captures less of a problem as they can jump out without injuring themselves. Last fall when we had such an abundant acorn crop it became difficult to entice a pig to come to corn. Well, this time of year there isn't as much natural food available to compete with. I know the price of corn and gas are high but you can sell the hogs you catch to recover much of your expenses. If it gets too hot and dry, moving your traps close to water might improve success as they are less likely to travel far from it. Pigs as light as 60 pounds are being bought but the heavier they are the higher the price. Our closest buyer is Steve Tumlinson in Dime Box: 979-884-2410. If you are interested in purchasing a gate call Greg Pleasant to pick one up. The gates are available for \$100. If you are available to trap on other peoples property let me know and I will give out your name when I get calls for landowners looking for help trapping or hauling hogs.

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## Game Cameras Available

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Don't forget that Co-op members have free use of nice digital motion game/trail cameras for the asking. If you would like to see the pigs that are tearing up your property and want to know when they're coming out or see how the antlers are looking on that big one, then these cameras are the tool for the job. The directors keep track of and loan out the cameras for association members to use. The user simply has to provide their own batteries.

These cameras are easy to use and fun to see what is running around your land when your not looking, and also a great tool to survey your wildlife. This is a great opportunity that shouldn't be missed!

Contact your directors if you are interested in checking out one of the cameras.



We're on the web at  
[leecountywildlife.org](http://leecountywildlife.org)

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## What Can I Responsibly Harvest on My Land?

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Some landowners allow more bucks to be shot off their property than they should. Are you one of them? I suppose this is a matter of perception and a bit of a sticky subject but one that needs to be covered. Is it legal to shoot buck on a 10 acres tract? Of course it is, but is it very responsible? Deer density is measured in acres per deer. Let me give you an example, a good density is 15 acres per deer and let's say a sex ratio of 4 does per buck. In this situation you will have one buck per 75 acres. For a buck to reach a 13" inside spread he needs to make it to at least 3.5 years old on average. So we are now looking at 225 acres per each 3.5 year old buck. If you shoot a 13" or better buck per every 225 acres you will be killing all the bucks that made it to that age class and will not be leaving any to reach maturity. If you want to harvest a mature buck, even 5.5 years old then you should only shoot a buck to 375 acres. A good rule of thumb for this area would be to limit your take to one 13 inch or better buck per 300 acres per year. If you have 100 acres then harvest one every three years on average. Yes, you probably see more bucks than that on your property but just keep in mind that

those are the same bucks that your neighbor's land helped to produce. I hear all the time about properties that have too many hunters on it shooting too many bucks, or they're shooting bucks that are legal but too young. **DON'T BE THAT LANDOWNER!** If you don't have enough land to produce them yourself then you shouldn't be shooting more than your share. If you and your neighbors both hunt, talk to them and try to work out a fare way to utilize the deer resource so that everyone can benefit. People often shoot a buck because they are afraid the other guy will shoot it if they pass it up. Don't assume that, go introduce yourself now, before hunting season, and tell them what your harvest management plans are and see if you can't work together to produce more mature bucks. As the landowner you have the ability to restrict what may be harvested on your property. Place self-imposed restrictions on the number and age of bucks that can be taken. The antler regulation has brought us a long way, but landowners working together can accomplish even better management. I will be glad to work with you to identify responsible harvest recommendations for your area.

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## Collecting Herd Composition Data

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**Please help with this effort, even if you only record a few deer. With nearly 500 members it all adds up.** Herd composition data may be the most valuable data collected on a deer herd. When properly collected, herd composition data can reflect the overall health of a herd and help guide the manager in making proper harvest recommendations.

Herd composition data should be collected during August. The fawns have become a part of the herd by this time, yet they are small enough to be easily distinguished from adult deer. Observations outside this period may result in inaccurate data. Observations may be collected any time during the day. However, the first and last hours of daylight are often the most productive for deer seen per hour of effort. Observations should not be collected at night because it is too difficult to correctly identify sex and size.

All deer recorded must be viewed through binoculars or a spotting scope. Small antlers are easily overlooked without optical aids. Fawns whose spots have started to fade are also hard to distinguish when they are observed alone. Be sure to look at the hips of deer that you think could possibly be fawns because the hips are the last place to lose spots.

### Herd composition data should be collected...

- ➔ during August
- ➔ during the day
- ➔ using binoculars

When observing deer in herds, it is important that each deer be identified. If a herd of six deer is seen but only four are positively identified, do not record any of the deer. If there are two bucks, three does, and one fawn in a herd, you may easily identify the bucks but may not be sure of the other four unless they are all individually identified. When a herd is seen, quickly get a total head count, then go back and positively identify bucks first because they are easiest, then identify fawns, and finally identify the does making sure not to miss small-antlered bucks.

Observations can be made during routine ranch operations or as a special effort. Observing the same deer recorded on a previous count is not a concern. If a conscientious effort is made to record accurate data, a small amount of duplicate recording should not affect the ratio. All deer should be recorded as a buck, doe or fawn. Recording bucks according to number of antler points is also beneficial.

The occurrence of spikes versus multi-point animals is a good indication of the nutrition available.

Please return the completed form, included in this newsletter, by September 15th to Greg Pleasant, TPWD biologist.

**Dianna Noack**  
Senior Vice-President - Branch Manager



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