



LEE COUNTY WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION



January 2010

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It's Time For The Annual Meeting

It's hard to believe another year has come and gone and it is nearly time for the Wildlife Association's annual meeting. It will be held on Friday, February 5 at the Sons of Herman Hall south of Giddings off Highway 77 at County Road 223. The social hour will get started at 5:00 and the meal around 6:30 p.m.

Come on out for some good chicken fried steak and great fellowship. As always, there will be plenty of door prizes as well as many nice raffle items so bring plenty of money. Door prizes will be given throughout the evening so come early. In an effort to expedite giving out so many prizes we ask that each family member sign

in at their co-op table to be eligible for the door prizes.

Meal tickets are only \$5 for adults. Kids up through high school still eat free, so bring the whole family. Tickets can be purchased at the time of registration.

We will not have a guest speaker this year. We will have the annual photo contest and hopefully some nice bucks on display. If you have antlers or a mount you would like to share with the crowd, please bring it to be put on display.

Mark it on your calendar and be sure to attend!

What About Predator Control?

Habitat enhancement is the most "natural" way to minimize predation. This involves manipulating the habitat to favor the prey species. Generally, the more cover available to a prey species the better its odds of survival. Habitat enhancement ranges from strategic brush removal to subtle changes in grazing. The goal should not be to improve only isolated patches of the landscape, but rather to make the landscape uniformly habitable. This allows the prey species to use the entire site to escape from predators. Prey animals naturally concentrate along creek banks and in other special habitats (for example, isolated turkey roosts), but unnatural concentrations can occur near supplemental feeding areas. Any concentration of prey

attracts predators and may make it easier for them to catch a meal.

Before implementing a predator management program, you should have some idea of the density and the survival of the offspring of the prey species you want to protect. Let's use deer as an example: If your deer density is below carrying capacity (the number the habitat can support) and you have low fawn survival, then removing coyotes just prior to fawning season might be helpful, but if you have a 50% or greater fawn survival then it might not be worth the effort. Major predators for ground nesting birds such as turkey or quail are probably raccoons and bobcats. If you only remove the larger

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

predators you may allow a proliferation of smaller ones that can have unexpected impacts.

To determine if a predator management program is achieving its goals you should do annual surveys on the prey species and keep record of your trapping effort and success. All wildlife populations rise and fall. Predation may be a minor problem one year but a major one the next. Game populations may or may not respond to predator control as anticipated. Drought, disease, weather extremes and other environmental factors can affect the result of a control program.

Trapping and snaring are the most effective tools landowners have to remove predators but learning which are the most efficient and humane tools for the job and how to use them effectively takes time and experience. There are several trapping supply companies that sell books and videos on trapping that include trap and snare selection. The internet is the best source to find these stores. One good site is R-P Outdoors 1-800-762-2706 (www.rpoutdoors.com). It is a good idea to get a book or DVD on the subject and educate yourself before you purchase foot hold traps or snares. You will be more successful and probably save money in the long run.

You do not have to have a license to trap predators in Texas if you do not retain or sell the pelts. You will need a hunting license to shoot them and a trapper's license in order to keep or sell the pelts.



**Rocky Mountain
ELK FOUNDATION**

We would like to thank the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for another year of support and we look forward to working together in the future!



www.leecountywildlife.org

County Coyote Bounties Doubled for Members in 2010

The Lee County Commissioners voted to reduce the bounty for coyotes harvested in the county from \$20 dollars down to \$10 dollars effective October 1, due to budget constraints. Well, the Association directors voted at their November meeting to offer a \$10 dollar bounty for the first 100 pairs of ears turned in by Lee County Wildlife Association members.

To take advantage of this offer, request a copy of the county affidavit you sign when turning ears in to the county. Take this document to the Lee County AgriLife Extension Office to get registered.

If You Like Varmint Calling... This Might Interest You!

There will be Varmint Hunting Tournament hosted in Lexington beginning at noon on January 30. This is not a Wildlife Association sponsored event but I thought it was timely given the bounty offered. Teams of up to four can register. For more information or to register contact KNOCKS BOW REPAIR at 512-636-9488.

Oldest Buck Contest

If you shot a spike or an old buck this season in Lee County, and you are currently a member of one of the co-ops you are eligible for one of two prizes.

Since we didn't have check stations this year you need to get your deer to Greg Pleasant for aging. Make sure I know about any spikes you shot to be entered into the spike drawing. My deadline for getting you entered will be January 22nd .

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

Please bring your antlers and mounts to the annual meeting to be displayed for all to see. We will have the display walls on hand.

Wildlife Photo Contest

We would like to have more entries for this year's contest so please keep sending them in! Everyone enjoys looking at wildlife photos so please share yours with the rest of us. We'll be displaying the photos using a projection system again this year, so you can submit your digital photos electronically, saving printing cost and simplifying delivery. Email them to me at tpwbiologist@bluebon.net. Enter as many as you like, but please have your name in the title of each photo. We prefer jpeg for digital or unframed 8x10's, but 4x6's will be accepted. Printed photos will be scanned for the presentation.

Rules: the photos must be of a live animal taken in Lee County during 2009. There are two categories, general (hand held camera) and trail camera.

Deadline: You must have your photos in to Greg Pleasant's office by January 22nd.

The directors will be judging the photos and awards will be given at the annual meeting. Please have your name, which category (general or trail), and phone number on the back of each printed photo. The association will not be responsible for returning photos, but you can make arrangements to pick them up after they are digitized for the presentation.

Time To Check Bluebird Boxes

It is time to start cleaning, repairing and putting up new bluebird boxes for the new nesting season. Using predator guards and deterring fire ants are important steps in helping nesting success.

Most nesting won't start until March, but there are always some early nesters so check your 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).

For more information about bluebird and purple martin nest box care and maintenance, please read past articles posted on the Lee County Wildlife Association's website at leecountywildlife.org.

Recent Workshops

We strive to provide educational and informative programs for landowners and the community throughout the year. Here are some of our recent programs:

Youth Shooting and Hunter Education Event:

In October we held our 5th annual Youth Shooting and Hunter Education Event for middle and high school students. It continues to be a very worthwhile program reaching many youth that would otherwise not have the opportunity to receive training in hunter ethics and firearm safety training.

Waterfowl Program:

A Waterfowl Program was held at the Lincoln Community Center in September. Waterfowl identification, habitat needs, populations and flyway status information was provided.

Deer Anatomy Workshop:

A Deer Anatomy Workshop was held at the flying Z ranch in October. External and internal anatomy was covered including glands and how they are used in communication with other deer. This program was repeated due to popular demand.

Prescribed Burn Workshop:

The fourth annual Prescribed Burn Workshop was held in December to train landowners how to safely use fire as a habitat management tool. We covered the history of fire, the importance of weather before, during and after the fire, lighting techniques, establishing effective fire lines to contain the fire and tools that make the job easier and safer.

Cost Sharing for Food Plots


Mid-March is the time to plant spring food plots. Remember to take advantage of the food plot seed reimbursement program. Members purchasing seed for wildlife food plots can receive up to twenty-five dollars in reimbursement from the Lee County Wildlife Association in an effort to reward members for helping wildlife in Lee County and to possibly encourage others to do the same.

You can purchase the seed from any retailer but the seed must be planted in Lee County to qualify. The deadline to have receipts to the Extension office for spring food plot seed will be May 1.

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