

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Wildlife Society

1305 E. Blue Bell Rd., Brenham, Texas 77833
Telephone 979-277-6212 Fax 979-277-6223
www.wcwildlife.org



NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008

WCWS SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

August 22, 2008

Washington County Fair Grounds
Events Center

Social will begin at 6:30 pm with fried fish and chicken tenders
and all of the trimmings served at 7:00 pm.

Cost of the meal will be \$ 5 per person.

Please RSVP to the Texas AgriLife Extension Office
by August 18th—**(979) 277-6212**

A dessert table will be available if you would like to bring your favorite dessert.



Robert Lehmann releases a quail
early 2003

Robert Lehmann with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will be the guest speaker for the meeting. Robert will be retiring at the end of August after 30 years with the department.

He started his TPWD career at the age of 17 while he was still at Brenham High School. He began as a seasonal Park Ranger at Lake Somerville Nails Creek State Park. After graduating high school he continued to work as a Park Ranger for 9 years before transferring to the Wildlife division of TPWD. As a Wildlife Technician he was assigned to operate the 3800 acre Somerville Wildlife Management Area and assisted the biologist in charge of nine counties north and east of Lake Somerville. In 1992, Robert had the good fortune to move into the regulatory Wildlife Technician position for Washington, Lee and Bastrop counties and presently his counties of responsibility are Washington and Waller counties.

Robert's presentation will relay his views on the changes in habitat and wildlife populations over the last 30 yrs. He will give his advice on the future of wildlife in the county and surrounding area. Please mark your calendars for this informative and entertaining program.

WASHINGTON COUNTY Wildlife Society

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President's Remarks

It is certainly hot and dry outside now that summer is here and a burn ban will most likely be in effect soon. I hope you have watched for fawns on the ground as you have cut your hay-fields and listened for the calls of the Bob White quail. It is hot to be outside but nature is flourishing everywhere you look. Bluebirds are fledging, bright red Cardinals are everywhere and hummingbirds have come back to the feeders. Nature's beauty is all around us if we just take the time to look.



I want to thank those of you who have paid your 2008 WCWS dues. We had record numbers of people who made additional donations to the Wildlife Society and 2 new **Life Time Members**, (Virginia Elverson of Greenvine and Charles & Nancy Peterson of Mt. Vernon) and a corporate matching donation from IBM. These funds will allow WCWS to continue participation in wildlife related projects, field days, workshops, and other educational events as well as sponsorship of our local youth in wildlife camps, programs, and educational activities. Many thanks!

Our Semi-annual meeting is coming up on August 22 at the Washington County Event Center. Robert Lehmann, retiring TPW Biologist, will speak on the changes he has seen in wildlife and wildlife habitat over the past 30 years in Washington County.

You won't want to miss this one! We will be celebrating Robert's 30 years of service to our community.

I hope to see you there!

Sara Byman

President, Washington County Wildlife Society

Time to ID some Deer



Starting August 1st members should begin to log deer sightings within the county. See instructions on reverse side of enclosed form. Please take some time and go out and identify some deer, log them onto the form according to instructions.

Summer Vacation— Get Out and Enjoy Nature

Soaring gas prices are a great reason to vacation much closer to home this summer. If you do that, you'll also help with conservation.

Texas Parks are a wonderful way to enjoy the out of doors. With more than 90 Texas state parks and historical sites, there are many parks close to Washington County that offer swimming, fishing, hiking, canoeing, boating and camping. As a result of additional legislative funding for state parks in 2008-2009, park visitors might notice improvements to aging facilities, reopening of campgrounds, and in some cases, increased security thanks to the hiring of more than 200 new park staff.

State parks are one good, low-cost, nearby way that people can connect with nature and the outdoors and there are plenty of inexpensive ways to have fun with the kids that don't involve going too far from home.

Below are just a few of the spots around Washington County where you can enjoy yourself this summer.

Lake Somerville State Park & Trailway - Lake Somerville State Park and Trailway offers a multitude of recreational opportunities. The extensive Lake Somerville Trailway links the Birch Creek unit to the Nails Creek unit. More than 20 miles of trails are open to hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians. Water lovers can enjoy fishing, swimming, boating, and skiing on Lake Somerville.

Bastrop State Park - The park provides opportunities for backpacking, camping, picnicking, canoeing (park rents canoes), swimming (pool), golfing, wildlife viewing, hiking, and interpretive programs.

Cool off at one of Texas' Paddling Trails!

The Texas Paddling Trails is a program to develop public inland and coastal paddling trails throughout the state and support these trails with maps, signage and other information. These trails provide well-mapped accessible day trips in a variety of settings and for all levels of paddling experience. There are currently seven coastal paddling trails and five inland paddling trails, with several communities in the process of applying for participation in this program. Below are several paddling trails close to Washington County. *For more detailed info visit*

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fishboat/boat/paddlingtrails/>

Columbus Paddling Trail—Paddling the Colorado River through the town of Columbus you have the opportunity to see wildflowers, birds, turtles and more! This 6.5 mile trail can take anywhere from two to five hours to complete, and the peaceful waters and calm rapids will give you a wonderful day on the river.

Victoria Paddling Trail - Riverside Park—This 4.2 mile stretch of the Guadalupe River in the Coastal Region is a slower moving river that is bordered by scenic soft banks rather than the limestone bluffs of the Hill Country. This quiet reach can be paddled in 1-3 hours depending on flow rates.

Goliad Paddling Trail—Enjoy quiet pools and several small riffles on the first inland paddling trail to include a State Park. Located on the San Antonio River near the town of Goliad, this ~6.6-mile river trail can be floated in two and a half to four hours.

Lake Bastrop - Lake Bastrop is a high-quality bass lake. It has been heavily stocked with Florida largemouth bass. However, it is not noted for producing trophy-size bass; most of those caught range from 2 to 5 pounds. Channel, blue, and flathead catfish have also been stocked. Channel catfish are abundant, with best angling in the spring and early summer before the vegetation interferes with bottom fishing. A low-density crappie population is present.

Buescher State Park - The beautiful wooded setting, that includes a tranquil lake, makes an excellent area from which to observe the seasonal distribution of some 250 species of birds. Mammals include white-tailed deer, raccoons, opossums, bobcats and armadillos along with rabbits, squirrels and small rodents. Enjoy fishing for catfish, bass, crappie, perch and also rainbow trout in the winter. Activities are non-motorized boating permitted (no ramp/small lake); fishing in a stocked lake; nature study; hiking; and biking (The scenic, 12-mile-long, winding, and hilly, paved road between Buescher and Bastrop State Parks is ideal for biking, but should be used only by experienced cyclists.)

Stephen F. Austin State Park - Twelve acres of the park are set aside in honor of the area's past. Activities include picnicking, camping, fishing, hiking, golf, and nature and historical tours.

Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site - Visiting Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historic Site is an enjoyable experience. The expansive park grounds along the Brazos River provide a beautiful setting for picnicking, sightseeing and birdwatching.

Texas State Parks Pass

The new Texas State Parks Pass is an annual pass that offers many special benefits to its members. As a member, you and your guests can enjoy unlimited visits to State Parks, State Historic Sites, and State Natural Areas, without paying the daily entrance fee. Cards are \$60 and are valid for 12 months from time of purchase. The Texas State Parks Pass is available at most state parks and historic sites, as well as through the TPWD Customer Service Center in Austin, Texas (1-512-389-8900). Your membership fees will help Texas State Parks be well-maintained and conserved for the enjoyment of future generations. *For more info visit* <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/>

Feral Hog Symposium—Friday, July 11, 2008



Feral hogs have been a problem for many landowners throughout Texas for many years, but what exactly is a feral hog and how did they get here? The term feral is generally used to describe something that was once domesticated and is now wild, thus this is the case with

Feral Hogs. Our current feral hogs are most likely decedents of formerly domesticated swine herds that were allowed to roam free and graze. This is of course a far cry from the method that most use to raise hogs today, utilizing confinement pens, sterile environments and exceptional disease control precautions. Without man's intervention and controlled breeding, feral hogs have been able to adapt to the environment and multiply rapidly. This has lead to our current situation of feral hogs rooting up hay meadows and destroying property. Many landowners have tried various methods to control feral hogs. Everything from hunting, shooting, trapping and even exclusion, but nothing seems to have made a dent in their population.

If you are interested in learning more about managing feral

hogs, then please mark **Friday, July 11, 2008** on your calendar. Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the West End Wildlife Cooperative in Austin County will be cosponsoring a Feral Hog Symposium at the Cat Spring Ag Society Hall in Cat Spring. Specialists with Texas AgriLife Extension Service Wildlife Services and Wildlife Biologists will be speaking on feral hog biology, the best methods for managing feral hogs, the feral hog abatement project, and special considerations to utilize in dealing with feral hogs on your property. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. with registration and the program will follow around 1:30 p.m. and last until 6:30 p.m.

Five CEU's will be given to pesticide applicators. A \$20.00 registration fee will be charged at the door, which will include your meal, refreshments and handout materials for the meeting. Anyone interested in attending is asked to contact the Austin County office of Texas AgriLife Extension Service at (979) 865-5911 or the Washington County office at (979) 277-6212 to let us know you're coming. Participants requiring auxiliary aid are asked to call in advance of the program so that proper accommodations can be arranged. Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Valuable Web-site for Rainwater Harvest Information and Ideas

By Jim Cathey Ph.D., Certified Wildlife Biologist, Extension Wildlife Specialist, Texas Cooperative Extension
Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University

Back in April 2007, I wrote an article published in the Texas Wildlife Association Magazine called, "Enhancing Restoration and Stewardship in the Trinity River Basin". In that article, I made a prediction that we would frequently hear news items related to water shortages and the effects of drought on wildlife and ranching for summer 2007. My prediction failed and it has been raining ever since! I have never claimed to be a weatherman, but predicting hot, dry summers in Texas seemed like a safe bet.

I cannot remember a summer as mild or wet as this one and these factors have combined to leave wildlife resources in good shape as we head into the hunting season. Even though conditions are great right now, we all know that hot, dry weather is in our future. The Texan in most of us says, bring it on...we can handle it! To handle it well, it would be valuable have a plan in place for managing water resources for wildlife during future dry times.

Texas A&M University has a unique group within Texas Cooperative Extension. I serve as the wildlife member for a Rainwater Harvesting Taskforce. Our mission is to teach and train

people about the benefits of capturing rainfall and the methods for doing so. I have written before about a Texas Cooperative Extension publication called, "Rainwater Harvesting for Wildlife" (B-6182), but I wanted to alert you to the benefits of our Rainwater Harvesting web-site:

<http://rainwaterharvesting.tamu.edu>

which has many free resources to kick off your plans to make wise use of rainfall.

For those of you that have hauled water to a dry deer camp, or those who want to supply water to food plots, or attract wildlife for viewing, this site offers you many ideas to make use of captured rainfall.



Portions reprinted from **Jim Cathey's Outdoor Journal** which appears on www.texashuntfish.com dated 7/27/2007.