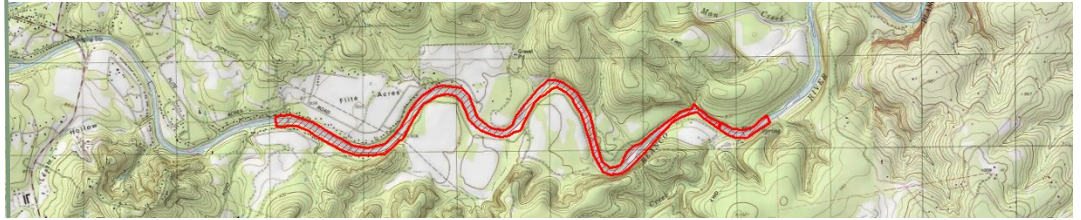


# The TXNDD Report



## TXNDD Cross-Divisional Training

Now that the TXNDD is cloud-based, special software is no longer required on personal computers to access TXNDD data, just a working internet connection. To maximize this new level of accessibility, the TXNDD staff hosted two training sessions in the past year, one in August 2015 and the other in February 2016, for TPWD staff from various divisions. The objective of the trainings was to provide current and potential data users with the skills and information needed for direct use (without having to put in an Information Request for data through TXNDD staff). These trainings showed attendees how to access and correctly interpret TXNDD data for use in their respective projects. Participants learned about what data are maintained, how data are mapped, and the methodology used which translates to the proper interpretation of TXNDD spatial data. Users also learned how to utilize some of the available functions most applicable to their respective positions: searching and viewing existing data, creating and archiving references, mapping data, using TXNDD data in ArcGIS, and updating species information. The trainings took place over one or two days and consisted of a combination of presentations and hands-on activity sessions. During these trainings, participants practiced the tasks learned while TXNDD staff were present to answer questions and address any issues.

The TXNDD staff also promoted data-sharing and collaboration among the TXNDD and the other programs/divisions that attended the trainings. In the two training sessions, representatives from programs within the Wildlife Division (Nongame and Rare Species Program, Wildlife Habitat Assessment Program, Wildlife Diversity field biologists, and the Landowner Incentive Program) along with staff from Inland Fisheries (Habitat Conservation Branch) and Coastal Fisheries (Water Resources Branch) attended. Having a variety of biologists together in the same room fostered discussions of how projects within the different programs have similar goals and how collaborating and/or sharing data among programs could help attain those goals.

Overall, the TXNDD received positive feedback from both of the training sessions. One of the most common responses from the participants in the post-training surveys was about how helpful the hands-on sessions were, with the recommendation for even more of them in future trainings. We found these positive comments, as well as remarks on issues that were experienced during the trainings, very useful, and they will all be considered when developing future training sessions. If you think that using TXNDD data would be beneficial in your day-to-day tasks or if you don't know much about TXNDD data but would like to find out more, please contact the TXNDD at [TexasNatural.DiversityDatabase@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:TexasNatural.DiversityDatabase@tpwd.texas.gov) for more information.

## Data Highlights: Data Submission Templates

The staff of the TXNDD are always looking for opportunities to increase productivity and to better serve TXNDD customers. Most of the time this means looking for opportunities to enter a large amount of data for a priority species or taxa quickly and accurately. With data sets coming from biologists all across Texas there is no shortage of data to enter. The challenge is: how can we enter data efficiently when it is submitted in innumerable formats so that it is available as quickly as possible? There is little that can be done with historical data, but what about current data that are being collected?

Communicating clearly with researchers and natural resource professionals about the information that is required to create a robust TXNDD record and providing a template for submitting the data gives the TXNDD an opportunity to streamline the data entry process; at the same time, the TXNDD staff are standardizing the type of data that are received. With all of the surveys and research conducted on freshwater mussels, this taxa was used as a pilot for the TXNDD Data Submission Template idea. (cont...)

Sandy Birnbaum, TXNDD lead for freshwater mussel data entry, coordinated with researchers from the Freshwater Mussel Working Group to discuss the data that are necessary for TXNDD records and to determine additional data valuable for the freshwater mussel research community. This information was compiled and an Excel® template, with an information page defining each of the fields, was developed. The template was then sent to the Working Group for review. A few rounds of edits later, and after the lead TPWD biologists for that taxa gave their approval, the TXNDD now has a template that is ready for distribution and use.

How does the TXNDD expect researchers to use the template? It is not the intention to create any additional work for researchers, especially if they already have an electronic data management strategy in place. If the electronic format that a researcher uses already contains the minimum required information for a TXNDD record, we will accept the data in that format. The template is for those researchers that are not presently managing their information electronically, or for new research projects that are funded by TPWD. Using the new template will assist in entering their data more quickly into the TXNDD and making that data available to policy and decision makers.

The TXNDD staff created additional templates for mammals, herptiles, specimens, and plant communities. Discussions are in progress with the TPWD Wildlife Diversity, Wildlife Permits Program to use the templates as the standard for annual reporting of permit-related data. To encourage use of the templates, they will also be available for download from the *TXNDD Submit Data* webpage: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/txndd/>. Time will tell if the templates are adopted by the research community. In the meantime, the TXNDD staff will continue to look for opportunities to improve communication and the flow of data between the TXNDD and the Texas natural resources community.

## TPWD Wildlife Diversity, Wildlife Permits Program

is a nexus between regulation, science, data collection, and customer service; as such, Wildlife Permits makes up an important section of the Wildlife Diversity Program. With just two staff members, Christopher Maldonado and Megan Nelson are responsible for 16 different permits. Their jobs require that they remain highly knowledgeable of the regulations that govern wildlife permits, and proficient in their administration. Having an understanding of the scientific method, species biology and ecology, and the endless nuances of each permit is vital. Chris and Megan receive an almost endless succession of phone calls from permit holders that require immediate assistance in interpreting the regulations for their permits. Because customer service is another important responsibility, in the best tradition of TPWD, they always professionally answer questions, and do all they can to assist the permit holders in a timely manner.

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### Permits Issued

#### Protected Wildlife Rehabilitation

For care of injured and orphaned wild animals. No fee, must renew annually.

#### Scientific Research

For scientific studies involving native Texas wildlife. \$53.00 (for 3 years)

#### Educational Display

For the collection and/or display of wildlife for educational purposes. \$53.00 (for 3 years)

#### Zoological Collection

For the collection, propagation, and/or public display of wildlife by zoos. \$158.00 (for 3 years)

#### Falconry

For practicing the sport of hunting by means of a trained bird of prey. Apprentice \$63.00 (cost differs with level)

#### Raptor Propagation

For raising birds of prey for use in the sport of falconry. \$63.00

#### Nonresident Raptor Trapper

For nonresident falconers who want to trap a hawk in Texas. \$378.00

#### Protected Nongame Sales

For the sale of coatimundis. \$210.00

#### Endangered Species Propagation

For the breeding and sale of native Texas wildlife listed as endangered. 1st year \$300.00; renewal \$550.00

#### Furbearing Animal Import

For the import of furbearing animals for any purpose not covered by a scientific, educational, rehab or zoo permit.

#### Furbearing Animal Export

Letter of Authorization Needed to export furbearers for commercial trade.

#### Nuisance Furbearing Animal Trap/Relocation

Letter of Authorization For trapping and relocating nuisance furbearers.

#### Protected Wildlife Transport

Letter of Authorization For transporting wildlife under certain circumstances not covered by a permit.

#### Bobcat Pelt Dealer and Bobcat Tags

For export out of Texas or the sale of bobcat pelts.

#### Nongame Dealer Permit

Required to buy and resell listed nongame species. Resident \$63.00 Non-resident \$252.00 (expires Aug. 31 following issuance date)

#### Nongame Collection License

For collecting and/or selling white list nongame wildlife, or for possession of 25 or more of a species of nongame wildlife in the aggregate. License holders may only sell to nongame dealers. Resident \$19.00 Non-resident \$83.00 (expires Aug. 31 following issuance date)

### More information on Wildlife Permits:

[http://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd\\_br\\_w7000\\_0637.pdf](http://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_br_w7000_0637.pdf)



Christopher Maldonado, Wildlife Permit Specialist.

**Christopher Maldonado** oversees the issuing of Scientific Research, Educational Display, and Zoological Collection permits. He finds enjoyment helping others to navigate through TPWD's rules in order to find the necessary state permitting authority to meet their goals. Currently, he is working on how to efficiently relay valuable biological data, acquired through various permitting programs, to the Texas Natural Diversity Database (TXNDD).

Chris is a combat veteran of our Armed Forces and has had the fortune of working in different educational settings. His experiences have helped to shape a deep appreciation for both cultural diversity and leadership. Recently, he's admitted to an unhealthy obsession with *iNaturalist* and the game of Go. He earned his B.S. in Biology at Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois.

## TPWD Wildlife Diversity, Wildlife Permits Program (cont.)

**Megan Nelson** comes to TPWD from the Private Lands and Public Hunting Program where she worked as a Customer Service Representative in the Wildlife Information Phone Bank. Her main duty was to assist the public in understanding hunting rules and regulations for public and private lands. She also helped to implement the Drawn Hunts online drawing. Her extensive customer service experience, along with knowledge of how to interpret rules and regulations, helped her transition into her new role as a Wildlife Permit Specialist.

She is now overseeing a wide range of permit programs: Falconry, Nongame Dealer, CITES tags for Otter and Bobcat, Wildlife Rehabilitation, and various Furbearing-related permits and regulations. Megan's attention to detail and her organizational skills are very well utilized in this position. She is diligently working with various Wildlife Diversity Program staff to implement electronic reporting for the permittees. This will help reduce resource waste, save on postage for TPWD and for permittees, and free up time for Megan to work with permittees to improve other aspects of the permit programs.

Megan was born and raised in Colorado Springs, CO where she attended high school and began volunteering for Colorado Parks and Wildlife. After graduating high school, she attended Colorado State University (CSU) where she obtained her B.S. in Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism with an emphasis in Parks and Protected Area Management. She completed her internship at Cheyenne Mountain State Park, CO. She helped to coordinate emergency response, attended meetings with the landscape architects, and worked with the park's volunteers to clear debris and eradicate invasive thistle. After graduation from CSU in 2002, she went to work for Vail Resorts in Beaver Creek, CO driving shuttle buses and then to their corporate office in Westminster, CO.

Upon moving to Austin, in 2013, Megan was exploring the Austin area and found herself driving right past the TPWD Headquarters sign on McKinney Falls Parkway. Right then, she knew she had to see if they were hiring. The first and only place she applied in Texas was at TPWD as a Clerk in the Land Conservation Program for a job assisting with the database that maintains all the contracts and leases TPWD has for our parks and wildlife management areas; she was hired, and three years later she is working as a TPWD Permit Specialist. When Megan is not working at TPWD, she enjoys touring Texas with her dog, working on her house, restoring unwanted furniture, gardening, going back to Colorado to visit family and friends, and taking her Jeep out on the Texas trails, rocks, ledges and mud.



**Megan Nelson, Wildlife Permit Specialist.**

*The last place I ever thought I would be is exactly where I belong.*

**Ally Sigg** was a contractor with the TXNDD this summer. She updated information on Tracked Species in the TXNDD to more accurately reflect their ranges and known locations at the county level. This county level information will be used to track each species (*Element*) distribution in Texas for the Wildlife Diversity Habitat Assessment Program as well as for requestors asking for information.

Currently a sophomore at Texas A&M University in Kingsville, Alexandra studies Range and Wildlife Science with a minor in Biology. She keeps herself busy by leading a research project and participating in the Plant Identification Team, Horticulture Club, and Wildlife Society at her college. A born Texan, she enjoys the outdoors and has a keen interest in understanding and preserving the world around her. In the rare hours of her free time, she can usually be found hiking, sailing, or fencing around Austin and Kingsville.

Executive Director  
**Carter P. Smith**

Editor, *TXNDD Report*  
**Stephanie L. Shelton**



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*"To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."*

For information on what we track, data requests, and data submission:  
<http://tpwd.texas.gov/txndd/>

**Bob.Gottfried@tpwd.texas.gov** 512-389-8744

**Sandy.Birnbaum@tpwd.texas.gov** 512-389-8729

**Stephanie.Shelton@tpwd.texas.gov** 512-389-8723

**Laura.Dugan@tpwd.texas.gov** 512-389-8731

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

All inquiries: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Rd., Austin, TX 78744, telephone (800) 792-1112 toll free, or (512) 389-4800 or visit our website for detailed information about TPWD programs:

**[www.tpwd.texas.gov](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov)**

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