



North Texas Wildlife Management News



June 2008 • Volume 1 • Issue 1

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Binary Bio

- 14** days at which quail chicks can make short flights
- 56** number of days sperm cells may remain potent in a turkey hen
- 74** days until dove season
- 200** gestation in days for white-tailed deer
- 1316** number of mourning doves banded in Texas in 2007

Welcome to the first issue...

I have been talking about producing a newsletter for a long time. So, as we used to say as kids before we jumped off into something new... "here goes nothing."



The North Texas Wildlife Management News will be published bi-monthly. On this timetable, the next issue should appear in August. I hope to have current events of interest and highlight a wildlife management practice in each issue. This issue talks about using a camera to monitor changes in habitat on your property and the proposed antler restrictions in some counties in north Texas.

Each issue will also have a few special sections each month. The first will be called "Spotlight on Plants." Each issue will feature a browse, forb, or grass that is important to wildlife. Each plant will have a picture or two and a short bio. See page 2 for this month's plant: **Skunkbush sumac**.

The next special section to be in each issue is called "At the Ranch." This will identify some general wildlife management practices you should be currently doing or thinking about on the property you manage.

The "Binary Bio" section is an informative look at some numbers in wildlife management that will be applicable to the current time of the year.

The "Candid Wildlife" section is one of my favorite toys available to wildlife managers — trail cameras. Each issue, I will post a unique trail camera photo. Hopefully, it will be yours. With this tool you can learn a lot about the composition of your deer population as well as other wildlife on your ranch.

Finally, each issue will identify **upcoming wildlife** and resource management **events** and important dates in north Texas. Please pass along comments or suggestions for future news items to my email at tbartoskewitz@gmail.com.



Antler Regulations Proposed for North Texas

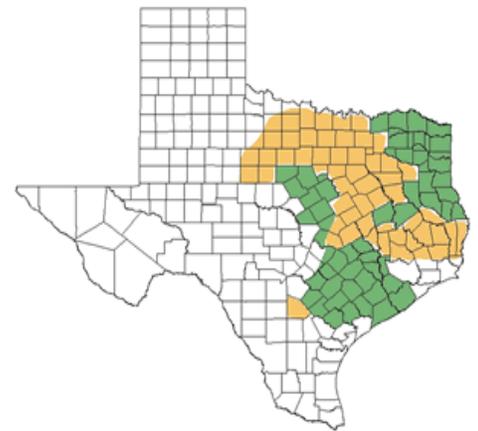
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologists are considering proposing a change to hunting regulations affecting white-tailed deer hunting in many counties throughout Texas. What started out in six Southeast Texas counties five years ago as an experimental "Antler Restriction" regulation has grown in popularity both with hunters and biologists. Due to its overall success in improving the numbers of older age bucks available to hunters, people in other areas of the state have begun asking for the regulation to come to their county. Under this new regulation, a lawful buck would be defined as any buck having at least one unbranched antler OR an inside antler spread of at least 13 inches. The bag limit in the affected counties will be two lawful bucks, no more than one of which may

have an inside spread of greater than 13 inches. In other words, a hunter under the new regulation could harvest two bucks with an unbranched antler (commonly referred to as spikes), or one spike and one buck with an inside antler spread of at least 13 inches.

In order to determine local support for this regulation, TPWD biologists are asking for your input on whether or not you would like to see this regulation passed in your county for the hunting season of 2009-10. If proposed, more opportunity for public comment on this regulation change proposal will be available during the normal regulations process this winter and the following spring, prior to any official change. This change will not affect those properties operating under a current Managed Lands Deer Permit. For

more detailed information about the new regulation please visit the following Web address:

http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/game_management/deer/antler_restrictions/



Current (green) and Proposed (yellow) counties for 2009-10

SPOTLIGHT ON PLANTS • Skunkbush Sumac

Skunkbush sumac, Fragrant sumac, Aromatic sumac (*Rhus aromatica*)



Photos by Jim Dillard

Skunkbush is a perennial, deciduous, low-growing, thicket-forming shrub. Height is variable in North Texas averaging 3 to 4 feet. The leaves are 3/4 to 2 inches long and three-lobed, with the terminal lobe larger than the others. Leaves turn bright red during the fall and have an odor when crushed. The fruits are red in color and covered with red to brown hairs. Fruits appear in early summer thru early fall and are eaten by a wide variety of songbirds and as mast by deer. The leaves are readily eaten by deer and it is a preferred browse species. Skunkbush also serves as good cover for quail and other upland song birds. It is found mostly on upland sites.

This month AT THE RANCH

- Monitor grazing to provide nesting and screening cover for ground nesting birds and fawns
- Leave an "edge" of unharvested winter crops for wildlife cover and food
- Clean hummingbird feeders every three to four days
- Be mindful of ground nesting birds when shredding or mowing areas on the ranch
- Monitor and ensure supplemental water sources are available
- Monitor supplemental food sources
- Be on the lookout for quail chicks, turkey poults and white-tailed deer fawns in the pasture
- Prepare seedbeds for fall food plots
- Monitor blue bird nest boxes

Photo Points

Photo points provide a method for owner/managers to monitor rangeland health with a minimum of time and expense. Photo points are periodic photographs of specific range sites or sensitive areas and can help you make better land management decisions.

By comparing photographs and detailed notes on the same location over time, managers can see what changes have occurred. These changes are not often visible to our eye. There are two types of photo monitoring situations:

- Annual photos for long-term monitoring of range condition and health over several years
- Seasonal photos for monitoring short-term management impacts such as stocking rates, change in forage, or response to brush control practices

Photographs should be taken at least once a year and at the same time each year. A good time for annual photos is in fall before the first killing frost. For seasonal monitoring, consider taking photos at later winter, spring green-up, mid summer, and early fall. For specific practices such as grazing or brush control, pictures should be taken before and at various intervals after the treatment.

The location and number of points depends upon the number of range sites or specific areas you would like to target. In most cases two to five points per range site is adequate. Select those points that represent the range site in general.

Locate your targeted points in areas of concern or recent management. Choose sites that are reasonably accessible because you will be returning year after year.

After selecting the location of a point, mark it permanently by driving a steel fence post into the ground. Spray the post with highly visible paint. Identify the locations of each point on a ranch map or by using a GPS. At each photo point, include a plot sign in the photo to identify point name, pasture name, date, etc.

Two types of photographs are generally used when taking the pictures: vertical and scene. Photos taken from a near-vertical position are best to show details of soil, litter, and vegetation. These photos over time will show changes in plant cover, litter, bare ground, and erosion. Detailed vertical pictures are very specific and less representative of the landscape than scene photos. Landscape or scene photographs also can be taken from the steel post or marker. Stand at the post and take one picture facing each of the cardinal directions. Try to show only a small amount of sky in the photo. This will ensure better pictures of the habitat you are interested in.

Equipment needed: steel fence posts, post driver, spray paint, 35 mm film or digital camera, ranch map / aerial photo, yellow pad and felt pen for ID site

Information taken from *Range Monitoring with Photo Points*, Allan McGinty and Larry White. Find the entire publication at <http://texnat.tamu.edu/publications/index.htm>.



July 2006



September 2006

Candid Wildlife

Send your best and most unique trail cam photo. I will post a new picture each month.

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Hidden Wells Ranch, Llano County



UPCOMING EVENTS in North Texas

June 21, 2008: Windmills Anyone? HRM of Texas Wind Farm Field Day, 69 Ranch, Maryneal, Texas (in Nolan County, south of Sweetwater). Register online at www.hrm-texas.org or with Jeanie Dreinhofer at jdreinhofer@hrm-texas.org or (325) 348-3014.

June 28, 2008: Statewide Texas Big Game Awards Banquet, Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort and Spa, San Antonio. For more information, call (800) 839-9453.

July 20-24, 2008: North Texas Buckskin Brigade, Albany. For more information, contact Helen Holdsworth at h_holdsworth@texas-wildlife.org or (800) 839-9453.

August 8-9, 2008: Wind and Wildlife Conference, Amarillo. For information, contact Kassi Scheffer at kscheffer@texas-wildlife.org or (800) 839-9453, or log on at www.texas-wildlife.org.

August 23, 2008: Region 2 Texas Big Game Awards Banquet, Childress, Fair Park Auditorium. For more information visit www.TexasBigGameAwards.com

September 1, 2008: Opening day of dove season in North Texas.

September 13, 2008: Texas Big Game Awards Region 3 Banquet, Abilene, Abilene Civic Center. For more information visit: www.TexasBigGameAwards.com

September 23-24, 2008: West Texas Deer Study Group, Albany. For information, contact Kassi Scheffer at kscheffer@texas-wildlife.org or (800) 839-9453, or log on at www.texas-wildlife.org.

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