



Region IV Wildlifer

A newsletter for landowners that fall within the 33 counties of Region IV, covering portions of Central and Coastal Texas

TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

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District 8 Field Notes

BY DERRICK WOLTER

Howdy! I hope this summer newsletter finds you well. While the heat has once again firmly established itself across Texas, there is plenty of good news to share from across the district.

Thanks to seasonally important spring rains, habitat conditions are generally excellent. In fact, the northern half of our district is celebrating its third consecutive great growing season. Because of this abundant forage and cover, we are anticipating strong production and high recruitment (survival) rates among young-of-the-year across all our native wildlife populations. Time will tell, but things are looking favorable.

To track these populations, our team has been incredibly active in the field. Staff recently wrapped up urban and rural dove surveys to monitor mourning and white-winged dove numbers, and dove banding efforts are well underway. Focusing on the south side of the district, our annual quail survey routes are just around the corner. We are also in the middle of hen-poult counts for wild turkeys, which are essential for estimating this year's reproductive success.

On the habitat front, we are leading by example at the M. O. Neasloney Wildlife Management Area in Gonzales County. Our staff is currently working on a prairie restoration project utilizing the same practices we recommend to you: mowing and treating invasive, non-native plants with herbicides. Early next spring, we plan to use a no-till drill to seed native grasses and forbs (wildflowers) into the enhancement area. Once complete, this will serve as a live demonstration site for visiting landowners to see these management practices in action.

Finally, a quick wildlife health and season reminder. Last summer, we mentioned the potential threat of the New World Screwworm. Unfortunately, this parasitic fly has made an appearance in Texas. While it has not yet been detected in our district or region (at the time of writing), our staff is closely

Derrick Wolter began his career with TPWD in 2000 working as a wildlife biologist within the Upper Coast Wetlands Ecosystem Project, where he worked with wetlands, waterfowl, and on several Wildlife Management Areas. In 2004, Derrick moved to Central Texas to serve as a district biologist for Bell, Coryell, Lampasas, and Williamson Counties. In 2020, he became the Senior Wildlife Biologist for the Hill Country District. In November 2023, Derrick became the Wildlife District 8 Leader. He received a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Science and a Master of Science in Wildlife Ecology from Texas A&M University.

District Field Notes, continued

monitoring the landscape, answering inquiries, and hand-delivering samples to the lab for inspection. Please stay vigilant and say something if you see something.

Lastly, deer season is right around the corner—deer survey season, that is! Expect to hear from your local biologist soon with survey forms and data deadlines. Thank you for your continued dedication to Texas conservation!

District 9 Field Notes

BY BOBBY EICHLER

District 9 staff are in the middle of summertime activities. Staff have been busy with annual dove regulatory type work consisting of both Urban Dove Surveys and the Modified Call-count Survey, as well as trapping and banding. This regulatory work is important for collecting data and is collected throughout the United States to assist in setting bag limits and season lengths for dove hunting. Staff will also start regulatory deer spotlight and herd composition surveys starting after July 15 and possibly running through September.

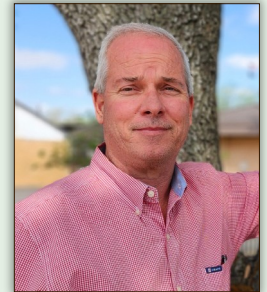
Managed Lands Deer Permit cooperators are also accustomed to this time of year and should be collecting deer population data as well to prepare for harvest recommendations and permit issuance. As always, your local Wildlife Management Association (WMA) will be conducting spotlight surveys and likely could use your assistance. WMA's should run at least 3 spotlight surveys to ensure good data collection and harvest recommendations for their part of the county. Ideally, 3 folks will assist per survey, 1 driver and 2 observers. If you are interested in assisting, contact your local WMA leaders, I am sure they would like to train additional folks.

Within this newsletter, you will find a news release concerning the detection of the New World Screwworm (NWS) in Texas. I will leave it mostly to the article to provide information, but I encourage you as a wildlife manager and/or livestock producer to educate yourself on NWS. Some of you may remember when screwworms were part of everyday ranching life prior to their eradication from the United States in the late 1960's. While the eradication was successful for the past 50-60 years or so, it is now up to both government agencies and the citizens to help drive the NWS back south to Panama. Be vigilant and report fresh wounds on animals with active maggot infestations.

Also, within this newsletter you will see that one of our District 9 staff members was presented the James "Randy" Fugate Memorial Wildlife Division Professional of the Year award. Todd Pilcik has exemplified all the qualities that this award is built upon. Todd has been with the agency for just over 30 years and is a great member of the district.

Lastly, as we enter the 'dog days' of summer, take care of yourself. Texas heat is nothing to take lightly. Let's hope and pray for a few of those rare rain events in August and September to hold us over until fall.

Bobby Eichler is the District 9 Leader for the Oak Savannah and Prairies District. He has Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Forestry both with emphasis in Game Management, from Stephen F. Austin State University. A native of Giddings, Bobby started his TPWD career in East Texas before moving to La Grange in 2007.



The Population Puzzle

WRITTEN BY CLINTON FAAS

In wildlife management, decisions are driven by several factors, including, but not limited to the species we manage, past and current habitat conditions, and an individual's goals for their property. Regardless of the tools used or the path taken to reach these goals, the result is an action that influences a population of animals (or a portion of a population). These management decisions function as a two-way street. Sound habitat management can make positive impacts on populations, while poor decisions or inaction can oftentimes result in negative impacts.

To understand how management decisions impact populations, it is important to first understand the factors responsible for potential changes. These can be summarized as Natality/Recruitment, Immigration, Emigration, and Mortality. Each plays a role in the health and trajectory of wildlife populations and is targeted in different ways, even if unknowingly, through our management actions.

Natality/Recruitment

Natality refers to the number of young produced each year – think of it as the birth rate. While natality is an important number and varies based on changes in habitat and environmental conditions, it does not tell the whole story. Natality rates help paint the picture for the health of a population; however, not all young survive, even in healthy populations. Long-term population trends are driven more by recruitment, or the number of young that survive long enough to join the breeding population. More animals reaching sexual maturity and subsequently breeding means additional young coming into the population in future years. Adequate cover, quality food sources, lower predation rates, and favorable weather can all result in increased recruitment.



Photo©Clinton Faas, TPWD

Immigration

Immigration occurs when animals enter a population from surrounding areas. Both immigration and recruitment result in an increase in the number of animals in a population; however, immigration is often driven by dispersal, population changes, or habitat changes. Many species naturally disperse at some point in their lives. This inflow from outside populations aids in maintaining genetic diversity in a population. In addition, immigration may help boost populations that have declined or repopulate areas after disturbance or natural disaster. The rate at which animals immigrate into a population can be influenced by many factors. Some movements are seasonally driven. Others may be the result of quality habitat management drawing animals to an area because conditions are better than where they were previously.

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The Population Puzzle, continued

Emigration

Emigration is the movement of animals out of a population. Think of it as the inverse of immigration. Subsequently, many of the same factors that cause animals to immigrate into a population work in the opposite way to make animals leave, such as natural dispersal of juveniles, poor habitat conditions, too many animals in an area, limited food or water, and more. Some of the examples listed are driven by problems in the habitat, while others are natural occurrences. Animals emigrating from a population is not a negative by itself, but large numbers leaving a population, or dispersals occurring at unusual times may indicate the need for habitat improvement.



Photo©Clinton Faas, TPWD

Mortality

Mortality is the loss of animals through death in a population. In the simplest terms, it is a broad category that includes predation, disease, exposure, inter-species conflict, or any other death that comes from natural causes. Mortality also includes human-related death caused by harvest, vehicle collisions, habitat destruction,



Photo©Clinton Faas, TPWD

contaminants, development, and many others. The rate at which human-related mortality affects a population depends largely on the ecology of the individual species. In some species, like white-tailed deer, arguably the most impactful component for mortality of populations results from people's harvest. In other species, like some game birds, natural mortality rates exceed 75% annually, so harvest rates have little impact on populations. It is important to remember that mortality is a natural part of the life cycles of all wildlife species. Monitoring mortality rates through population numbers can help wildlife managers make decisions on harvest, identify habitat changes, detect potential disease concerns, and monitor the overall health of the population.

Each of these factors plays a significant role in population dynamics. Just like the pieces of a puzzle, each is intertwined with others in a way that management decisions rarely impact only one piece. To illustrate that, consider the two oversimplified examples below.

- Landowner #1 decides to remove a few coyotes for predator control. The immediate action is the mortality of the coyotes that were removed.

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The Population Puzzle, continued

This mortality may result in immigration of other coyotes from surrounding areas as well as an increase in natality by the remaining portion of the population as a biological response to mortality.

- Landowner #2 implements a large-scale habitat improvement project. The result is a booming success, and habitat conditions have improved across the property. The quality habitat results in higher body conditions and healthier deer, which drives higher natality rates and increases recruitment because fawn mortality decreases. Immigration increases as animals are drawn to better habitat. Landowner #2 observes this change in the population and increases harvest (mortality) to balance the population and minimize potential overutilization of the habitat that was just created.



Photo©Clinton Faas, TPWD

Neither of these examples is intended to be seen as positive or negative, simply to show how changes to any of these factors can influence others.

It is also important to focus on these factors at the population level. It is easy to get caught up in decisions over an individual animal or to see a natural mortality event that has occurred and be spurred to action, but these are all part of the big picture. These individuals make up the population, but what drives population numbers is the collective group and ultimately what is happening to the whole. Data collection and long-term monitoring allow managers to see trends at the population level that may be overlooked or misinterpreted with too narrow of a focus. These trends can be used to make future management decisions that help each piece of the puzzle fit together. Understanding the habitat needs, natural life cycle, and dispersal of the managed population will help landowners understand each of these pieces and to become better informed when making these management decisions.

Clint Faas is the District 9 biologist for Wharton and Northern Jackson Counties. A Wharton County native, he graduated from Texas A&M University in 2005 with a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology and Management and a minor in Rangeland Ecology and Management. He went on to obtain a M.S. in Wildlife Ecology from Texas State University in 2008. Post-graduation, and prior to his hire in 2017, Faas worked as a private sector biologist and Director of Conservation Programs for a statewide non-profit.



Todd Pilcik Named James “Randy” Fugate Memorial Wildlife Division Professional of the Year

AUSTIN — The 2026 recipient of the James “Randy” Fugate Memorial Wildlife Division Professional of the Year award is Todd Pilcik, a district wildlife biologist in southeast Texas.

The award was established in 2021 to honor a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Wildlife Division staff member who exemplifies a positive attitude in all aspects of their work, delivers exceptional customer service, builds trusting relationships and consistently exceeds expectations in advancing the agency’s mission.



Photo@TPWD

Pilcik has been a part of the Wildlife Division since 1994 where he worked with the phone bank and Migratory Program at TPWD headquarters in Austin until 1997. He then transferred to San Marcos as a technician with the White-wing Dove program and in 2000, accepted a biologist position covering Lampasas, Coryell and Bell Counties as a natural resource specialist. Pilcik served in this position for nearly two years before transferring to Matagorda, Brazoria and southern Jackson Counties. He continues to work in those counties today conducting wildlife surveys and assisting private landowners with emphasis on wildlife management.

“Todd always has a positive attitude and loves his job,” said Alan Cain, TPWD Wildlife Division Director. “Like Randy Fugate, Todd maintains a lighthearted attitude, always has a smile on his face, and is always willing to assist staff when and where needed.”

Pilcik’s 30 years with the Department lends a hand to historical knowledge and a wealth of hands-on experience. He has provided and continues to provide mentorship to staff as they begin their careers at TPWD. He has been a mainstay in helping with prescribed fires on TPWD Wildlife Management Areas as well as carrying out public hunts

and providing expert wildlife technical guidance to private landowners.

“Todd makes the priorities of his co-workers and constituents his own,” said Cain. “He goes the extra mile to make staff feel welcomed and to get to know his constituents on a personal level. Todd is trusted by staff and constituents alike because they know he cares.”



Todd with District 9 staff. Photo@TPWD

Exciting Conservation News: Fayette Prairie Chapter Earns Lone Star Land Steward Recognition

SUBMITTED BY MARVELYN GRANGER



We are thrilled to share some fantastic news from the Fayette Prairie Chapter of the Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT)! The chapter has been honored as a 2026 Lone Star Land Steward. This prestigious recognition highlights the outstanding commitment of landowners, organizations, and community groups across Texas dedicated to land conservation, sustainable land use, and environmental stewardship. We especially celebrate the hard work and achievements of our members across the 11-county neighborhood that makes up our chapter.

As many of you may know, Texas prairies are among the most endangered ecosystems in America, with less than one percent of the original native prairie remaining. In response to this alarming decline, the Fayette Prairie Chapter works diligently to restore and protect these vital habitats and advocate for their preservation. Through hands-on restoration projects and educational programs, local landowners are challenged and empowered to embrace intentional stewardship and recognize the importance of conserving our natural landscapes.

This recent award symbolizes not only the chapter's efforts but also the collective dedication of landowners, volunteers, and partners committed to conservation, including the invaluable support from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and our county Wildlife Biologists. Their collaboration has been instrumental in helping us provide resources and guidance to our members as we work together to protect our native ecosystems.

At a celebratory event in Austin, TX, chapter leaders expressed their heartfelt gratitude to all supporters who contribute to making their mission possible. This gathering, which included over 300 fellow conservationists, reminded us that stewardship thrives through community collaboration.

During the event, we highlighted the invaluable role of native prairies and the individuals who care for them. The experience reaffirmed an essential principle: stewardship is an act of respect for the land, our communities, and future generations. The Fayette Prairie is more than just a landscape; it is a dynamic ecosystem characterized by resilient grasses, seasonal wildflowers, and a rich history. By nurturing these prairies, we can foster resilience and preserve their ecological integrity for generations to come.

This recognition not only enhances the visibility of the Fayette Prairie Chapter's ongoing efforts but also encourages all Texans to consider the critical importance of sustainable practices and habitat preservation. If you are interested in learning more about how to improve your land for wildlife, the Fayette Prairie Chapter invites you to get involved.



Do you want to learn more about the importance of prairies or share it with a friend? Watch a short video here at tinyurl.com/FayettePrairieChapter2026 and register for the upcoming 2026 Step-by-Step Guide to Prairie Restoration Symposium at texasprairie.org/event/fp-annual-symposium-aug2026/. Together, we can continue advancing the mission of conserving Texas's natural beauty while supporting the wildlife that count on us to protect and restore the prairies they call home.

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Exciting Conservation News: Fayette Prairie Chapter Earns Lone Star Land Steward Recognition, continued

Learn more about NPAT

texasprairie.org

Follow our chapter and join the newsletter

<https://texasprairie.org/fayette-prairie-chapter/>

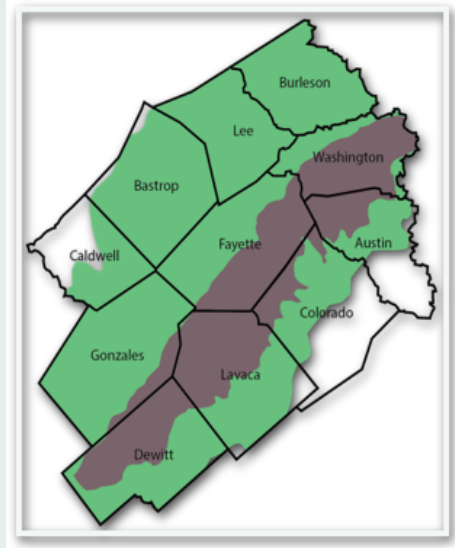
Become an NPAT member and join our chapter

<https://texasprairie.org/join/>

Restore smaller acreage under 25 acres

<https://texasprairie.org/sarp/>

Contact us for sponsorship opportunities to support this important work fayette@texasprairie.org



Back row L to R: Hon. Paul Foster (Chairman, TPW Commission), Mark Lange (TPWD), Bobby Eichler (TPWD), Andy Olson (NPAT Stewardship Specialist), Cheryl Brown (FPC-NPAT Chapter Founder), Mark Brown (FPC-NPAT Chapter Founder), Yolanda Cuellar (FPC-NPAT Chapter Secretary), Trey Granger (FPC-NPAT Chapter Vice President), Pat Merkord (NPAT Founder), Marvelyn Granger (FPC-NPAT Chapter President), David Yoskowitz, Ph.D (TPWD Executive Director).

Front row L to R: Will Newman (TPWD & NPAT Board of Directors), Julie Mattox (NETX-NPAT Chapter, Vice President), Rachel Rommel (NPAT Board of Directors), Rory Johnston (FPC-NPAT Chapter Founder), Virginia Doyle (FPC-NPAT Chapter Founder), Jesus Cuellar (FPC-NPAT Chapter Steering Committee), Erin Hatchet (NPAT President), Amber Arseneaux (NPAT Executive Director).

Not Pictured: Norbert Dittrich (FPC-NPAT Chapter Treasurer), Dianna Kocurek (FPC-NPAT Founder), Gary Kocurek (FPC-NPAT Founder, In Memoriam)

Plant Profile: Texas Lantana

WRITTEN BY SKYLER HICKMAN

As you drive across the grand state of Texas, you are often greeted by the fiery red and orange beauty of a well-known Texas native. *Lantana urticoides*, commonly known as Texas lantana or calico bush, is a resilient, flowering shrub native to the southern United States and parts of Mexico. Aside from its vibrant blooms, this species plays a key role in both natural ecosystems and cultivated landscapes.

Lantana urticoides thrives in dry, open areas such as grasslands, scrublands, roadsides, and rocky slopes. Its distribution ranges from East Texas to southern Arizona and into Mexico. Within Texas, lantana can be found throughout the diverse ecoregions in the state, excluding the northwestern part of the panhandle. While it can pop up anywhere, lantana should be planted in full sun or mostly sun (at least 6 hours a day) for the best blooms. This shrub tends to grow in a more wild, sprawling form that can be 3-6 ft tall and/or wide. Texas lantana is a native species well adapted to the hot, dry conditions of the south, making it more drought-tolerant than other lantana varieties.

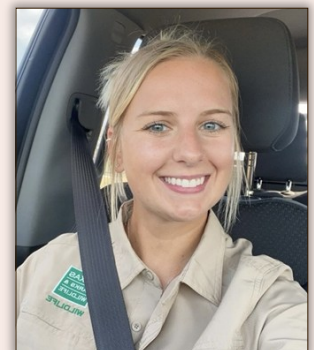
Gardeners and landscapers appreciate this flowering shrub for its low maintenance needs and long blooming season from April to October, sometimes lasting into November. Its nectar-rich flowers attract a wide variety of pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. The plant produces small, dark berries that are consumed by birds and other wildlife. These animals help disperse the seeds, promoting the plant's spread across suitable habitats.



For years, landscapers have admired tropical lantana (*Lantana camara*) for its showier flower colors, oftentimes pink and yellow, and a more compact, controlled appearance. Don't let this fool you, however. *Lantana camara* easily invades disturbed ecosystems, dominating the understory in forests and suppressing the growth of native plants. As a result, it is now classified as invasive by the Texas Invasive Species Institute. Although tropical lantana may still attract pollinators, Texas lantana is more beneficial to local ecosystems by appealing to native pollinators and wildlife, thus making it the optimal choice for your property.

If you are looking for the perfect "bullet-proof" native shrub for your pollinator garden, fenceline, or field, Texas lantana is your go-to! Its vibrant flowers, ecological benefits, and adaptability make it a valuable component of both wild landscapes and cultivated gardens.

Skyler Hickman is the Wildlife Biologist for DeWitt County. She graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences. She grew up in Weimar but now resides in Cuero and offices in Victoria. During 2024, Skyler was hired by Texas Parks & Wildlife in May as an intern for the Kerr and Mason Mountain WMAs in the Hill Country and migrated to a seasonal technician position along the central coast in July at the Justin Hurst WMA, before accepting her current biologist position in October. Skyler enjoys all things outdoors, including assisting landowners and wildlife management associations with their property goals.



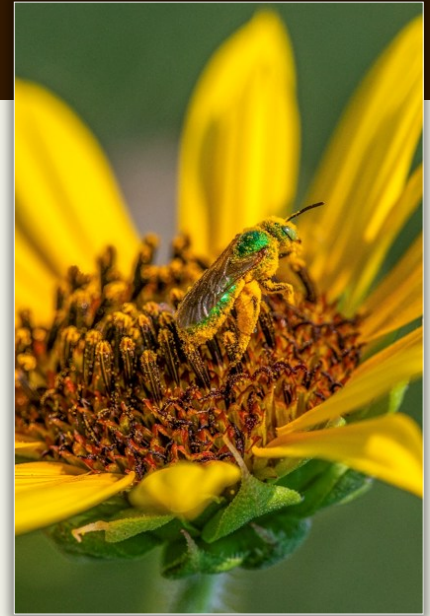
Beyond the Bee: The Science and Diversity of Animal Pollinators

WRITTEN BY KATIE EDWARDS

Pollination: How It Works

Pollination is evident in our everyday lives, as 1 out of 3 bites of food we consume was grown with the assistance of pollination. But who are the pollinators? To answer that question, let's take a step back, or should I say zoom in, on the flower anatomy that defines the term pollination.

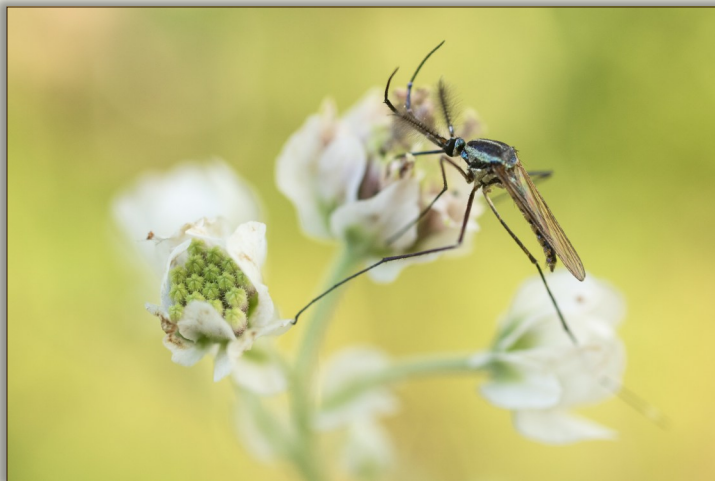
The center of the flower holds the pollen and nectar of the plant. Often used interchangeably when discussing pollination, the two are actually at opposite ends of the flower. Stamen, more specifically the anthers, houses the pollen. While the nectar is at the base of the flower. Both can be consumed by pollinators, but generally pollen provides the protein while nectar provides energy (a.k.a. sugar) and is the ultimate reward. To retrieve the pollen with ease for a higher chance of transfer from one plant to another, the flower has multiple stamen surrounding the flower's center, including the nectar. The female part of the plant, called the stigma, is coated with a sticky substance to trap pollen when a pollinator rubs against it. The stigma then transports the pollen into the ovary of the flower, where it will then be fertilized to form seeds. This is the act of pollination.



Sweat bee (Agapostemon sp.) covered in pollen. Photo©TPWD

Pollinators: Insects to Unexpected Species

Pollinators are those that visit flowers in search of food, mates, or nesting materials. While in their search, pollen is transferred to their body, and as they visit and stop at other flowers, pollen is then exchanged as the animals rub against the sticky stigma and pick up more pollen as they pass the anthers. And the cycle goes on and on... Nowadays, the term "pollinators" is used very broadly. More than just the bees, insects, or even hummingbirds and bats that commonly come to mind. For example, on the island of Madagascar, some lemur species have evolved longer snouts and tongues to consume the nectar of large treetop flowers and are classified as pollinators. Scientists have also recorded some reptiles, including skinks and geckos, drinking nectar and carrying



A variety of insects act as pollinators, even those we don't typically think of. Photo©Clinton Faas,TPWD

around pollen as they went from one flower to another. Some mice and shrews are other common non-insect pollinators that have been documented. More recently, biologists have added an amphibian to the list of pollinator species. The Brazilian treefrog (*Xenohyla truncata*) was recorded licking the nectar of flowers and, in the process, getting covered in the sticky pollen. Additionally, the world's largest pollinator – and the most surprising – was freshly added to the list: the Ethiopian wolf (*Canis simensis*). The medium-sized apex predator was documented licking succulent flowers for a snack in its dwindling habitat. Making it the first and only apex predator to be considered in the list of pollinators.

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Beyond the Bee: The Science and Diversity of Animal Pollinators, continued

Texas alone is home to over 800 bee species (Order Hymenoptera), 4,700 butterfly and moth species (Order Lepidoptera), 6,500 species of beetles (Order Coleoptera, the most diverse animal order in the world), and 5,000 species of flies (Order Diptera). Nearly a third of all insect species identified in the United States, which is around 100,000, are found in the Lone Star State. If you take a closer look at each Order, it can be easy to appreciate the diversity within it. In Lepidoptera alone, you can see species from the tiny skipper butterflies to the giant swallowtails and from the iconic monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) to the elusive sphinx moths. In Hymenoptera, species can range from bold hornets to the more delicate potter wasps to the iconic bumblebees (*Bombus spp.*). While Coleoptera brings in the blister beetles, soldier beetles, scarabs, and of course the lady beetles.

Like animals evolving unique characteristics, plants have also evolved strategies to attract pollinators. For example, the long-tubed flowers such as Cardinalflower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) and trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*) will attract hummingbirds, hawk moths, and bee flies that can hover and probe deep into narrow blooms. Short-tubed flowers like beebalm (*Monarda spp.*) and larkspur (*Delphinium spp.*) often serve butterflies and long-tongued bees. While the more open flowers, such as bitter sneezeweed (*Helenium amarum*) and other Asteraceae species, provide easy access for wasps, flies, and bees. The different colored flowers also lure different types of pollinators. For instance, bees are more drawn to blue and purple flowers, while hummingbirds respond strongly to red hues. Additionally, plants have evolved specific scents to attract certain species to increase the probability of pollination. Moths, which often fly at night, depend more on scent than color and use strong floral fragrances to find the night-blooming flowers. One of the more intriguing adaptations flowers have created is what we can't see. Unlike humans, many insects see in both ultraviolet and visible light. So, to further attract pollinators, flowers create UV nectar guides or patterns that point the way to the nectar or pollen. Similar to roadway markers we use every day, plants have created their own maps and landing pads to show insects the way to the delicious reward.

Flowers have evolved highly specialized shapes, sizes, and colors to maximize reproductive success through specific pollinators. Photos©Clinton Faas, TPWD



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Beyond the Bee: The Science and Diversity of Animal Pollinators, continued

Pollinators, both big and small, play a role in plant reproduction. Whether it's their main food source or for tasty snacks, more than 80% of flowering plant species rely on animals for pollination and reproduction. To do so, flowering plants pull out all the stops of scents, colors, and structures to entice a pollinator in and ultimately transfer pollen from one flower to another. A task so easy and small but it defines our world and ecosystems within it.

Managing For Pollinators

Many people are increasingly turning to nature for inspiration and incorporating natural elements into their landscapes and gardens. These pollinator-friendly spaces begin with abundant flowers, nesting sites, and shelter from the elements. Landowners and gardeners alike can make an impact by increasing the diversity of native flowering plants available from early spring through fall. While some native bees and insects are only active for a few weeks, others—like bumblebees—require reliable nectar and pollen throughout their entire season. Maintaining a range of native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees that flower at different times ensures that food resources remain available. Public resources, including seasonal bloom charts and regional plant lists, are useful guides for plant selection.

Where floral diversity is lacking, pollinator plots or reseeding with native seed mixes can give the area a floral boost. The seed mixes should include native species blooming in multiple seasons and can be effective at small scales. Including native bunchgrasses and other flowering plants also supports butterflies, bumblebees, many other non-pollinator wildlife species, and improves overall native habitat. Even small pocket prairies can provide high-quality resources when planted and maintained over time.

Protecting existing habitat is equally important. Areas with diverse wildflowers, flowering shrubs, patches of bare soil, brush piles, snags, and dead stems provide essential nesting and foraging opportunities for pollinators.



Field of pollinator rich plants. Photo©Clinton Faas, TPWD



*Field skipper (Atalopedes campestris).
Photo©Clinton Faas, TPWD*

Ground-nesting bees require open, well-drained soil, while tunnel-nesting bees rely on dead stems, hollow branches, or cavities created by beetles. Land management practices such as grazing, fallow disking, and prescribed burning can be beneficial when properly managed. Disturbing an entire area at once can remove flowers, destroy nests, and reduce overall diversity.

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Beyond the Bee: The Science and Diversity of Animal Pollinators, continued

To keep a mixture of habitats and plants, it is recommended to disturb no more than 30% of a site in a given year. If the main goal is managing for pollinators, mowing should be limited to outside peak bloom periods.

From tiny flies to beetles, and even shrews, the world of pollinators is far richer and more complex than the typical image of a bee on a flower. These animals anchor our ecosystems and support the plants that sustain us and our wildlife. By managing our lands with stewardship—protecting and restoring native habitat, planting native species, and reducing disturbance in prairies—we contribute to a much larger story of resilience. Every patch of habitat, no matter the size, can become part of the solution. When we care for the bottom of the food chain, we care for everything around us.



Reakirt's blue butterfly (Echinargus isola). Photo©Clinton Faas, TPWD

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Katie Edwards serves as the wildlife biologist for Colorado County. A hill country native, she earned her B.S. in Wildlife Science from Tarleton State University in 2022. While in college she interned with TPWD at the Kerr Wildlife Management Area and with the Central Coast Wetlands Ecosystem Project. Katie now offices in Columbus and enjoys assisting local landowners and wildlife management associations achieve their wildlife and habitat related goals.

Join TPWD in the Fight Against New World Screwworm

WRITTEN BY WHITNEY BISHOP, SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR



Photo©USDA

New World screwworm is a devastating pest that can kill infested animals. The first confirmed case hit in Texas in June. TPWD staffers are on the frontline monitoring wildlife, informing the public, and supporting operations to fight this menace. Every employee can help.

Small Fly, Big Problems

The New World screwworm fly lays eggs in live warm-blooded animals, settling in open wounds, genitalia or mucous membranes such as the nostrils, eyes or mouth. The larvae (maggots) burrow or “screw” into the host’s flesh, causing severe wounds and often death if untreated.



Photo©USDA

Native to the western hemisphere, New World screwworm was eradicated from the U.S. in the 1960s. It recently resurfaced in Central America, and a U.S. case in livestock was confirmed June 3 in a South Texas calf. Since then, over 35 cases have been reported, and the number is growing. The [USDA Confirmed Detections dashboard](#) is tracking cases.

New World screwworm (NWS) poses a serious threat to Texas’ livestock and wildlife populations. That’s why TPWD has joined forces with the Texas Animal Health Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Texas A&M Agrilife and other partners to stop its spread.

Continued on page 15

Join TPWD in the Fight Against New World Screwworm, continued

Texas Responds

On June 5, Governor Abbott issued a disaster declaration authorizing the use of all available resources of state government to respond to the NWS threat. He [activated the Texas State Emergency Operations Center](#) to coordinate NWS response activities and create a “1-stop shop” website screwworm.texas.gov.

TPWD and partners have been preparing for NWS for months. By the time the first case was detected in Texas, TPWD had logistics in place to hit the ground running. This includes:

Wildlife Monitoring

- We have nearly 400 game cameras on Wildlife Management Areas and State Parks for early detection of NWS infestation in wildlife.
- We’re investigating suspected cases of NWS around the state, with over 4,209 animals assessed to date.
- We’re assisting USDA with the use of drones to look for sick or injured wildlife. (Watch a [short video](#).)



Photo©USDA

Control Operations

- We’re working with the USDA to deploy sterile flies on state properties to prevent NWS from producing viable offspring. Sterile fly larvae are dyed a nontoxic fluorescent green for easy identification. (View more pictures of this operation [here](#).)

Continued on page 16

Join TPWD in the Fight Against New World Screwworm, continued*Photos©USDA***Public Outreach**

- We're contacting Texas landowners to ensure they're aware of NWS and know how to report suspected cases.
- We launched a dedicated TPWD [New World screwworm website](#).
- We're spreading the word via news, email, and social media, helping amplify our message to millions of people. (Check out our short social media videos in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).) Our Communications team is continuing to tell the story of our fight against NWS as it unfolds.

*Photos©USDA**Continued on page 17*

Join TPWD in the Fight Against New World Screwworm, continued

How You Can Help

Report suspected cases of NWS

If you see live animals with maggots, report it immediately. Early detection is key to managing and eradicating an NWS infestation. Signs of NWS infestation in animals may include:

- Open sores or wounds with live maggots
- Animals shaking heads or acting irritated
- Foul, rotted flesh odor

Our [NWS website](#) has details on how to report suspected cases.

Help spread the word

Our [NWS Wildnet](#) site has several resources in both English and Spanish to share, including:

- A NWS Fact Sheet
- NWS flyers for state park visitors
- NWS flyers for hunters, landowners, and wildlife permit holders
- Social media graphics

This site will be updated as new resources become available.

Texas eradicated NWS before and is ready to do it again.

Photo©USDA



Photo©USDA



Photo©USDA

Upcoming Events

July

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>24 Austin County Deer Management Workshop
Immaculate Conception Hall
15994 TX-159, Industry, TX 78944
Begins at 1:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.
Contact Matthew Johnson at
Matthew.johnson2@tpwd.texas.gov</p> | <p>31 Lee County Wildlife Expo
Giddings High School
2335 N Main St., Giddings, TX 78942
Begins at 8:00 a.m.
Contact Laura Sherrod at
Laura.sherrod@tpwd.texas.gov</p> |
| <p>25 Gonzales County WMA Fall Meeting
Elks Lodge
1222 E Sarah DeWitt Dr, Gonzales, TX 78629
Begins at 5:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m.
Please RSVP with Kiley Morrow at
kileywallen@gmail.com</p> | <p>31 Wildlife & Woodlands Workshop
Knights of Columbus Hall Annex
321 US Hwy 77 S, Hallettsville, TX, 77964
Begins at 9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.
Contact Paul Crump at 512-389-8722 or
Paul.Crump@tpwd.texas.gov
Landowner Workshop Lavaca County</p> |

August

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>8 Central DeWitt County WMA Fall Meeting
934 US-183, Cuero, TX 77954
Begins at 5:00 p.m.
Contact Karen Filip at 361-275-4502 or
cdcwma@gmail.com
https://www.cdcwma.com/</p> | <p>21 Austin & Colorado County Wildlife & Woodlands Workshop
Cat Spring Agricultural Society Hall
13035 Hall Rd., Cat Spring, TX 78933
Begins 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Contact Paul Crump at 512-389-8722 or
Paul.Crump@tpwd.texas.gov
https://www.fortworthzoo.org/landowner-workshop-austin-and-colorado-county</p> |
| <p>14 Milam & Burleson Counties Wildlife & Woodlands Workshop
Caldwell Civic Center
103 TX-21, Caldwell, TX 77836
Begins 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Contact Paul Crump at 512-389-8722 or
Paul.Crump@tpwd.texas.gov</p> | <p>21 Washington County Wildlife Society Banquet
Washington County Expo Event Center
1305 E. Blue Bell Rd., Brenham, TX 77833
Begins at 5:30 p.m.
Contact Stephanie Damron at 979-277-6297 or
stephanie.damron@tpwd.texas.gov</p> |
| <p>15 Western DeWitt WMA Fall Meeting
101 W 781410145, 9th St., Nordheim, TX 78141
Begins at 11:00 a.m.
Contact Kim Gaus at 361-243-8696 or
kr@dunnservices.net</p> | <p>29 Sandy Creek WMA Fall Meeting
Weimar Civic Center
I-10 1754, Weimar, TX 78962
Begins at 10:30 a.m.
RSVP required by August 21st
Contact Ronnie Stock at 979-732-1004
Ronniestock@hotmail.com</p> |
| <p>15 Texas Big Game Awards-Region 7
Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center
250 W. Fair Grounds Rd., La Grange, TX 78945
Begins at 11:00 a.m.
Contact Matt Hughes at
mhughes@texas-wildlife.org</p> | |

Continued on page 19

*Upcoming Events, continued***August**

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>29 Harvey Creek WMA Fall Meeting
 Weimar Civic Center
 I-10 1754 Weimar, TX 78962
 Begins at 6:00 p.m.
 RSVP required by August 21st
 Contact Chance Muehlstein at 830-377-1391
 Chance.muehlstein@hotmail.com</p> | <p>29 Jackson County WMA Fall Meeting
 Jackson County Services Building
 411 N. Wells, Edna, TX 77957
 Begins at 4:00 p.m.
 Contact Clinton Faas at 281-202-9212
 Clinton.Faas@tpwd.texas.gov</p> |
|--|---|

September

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>12 East Navidad WMA Fall Meeting
 Dubina Hall
 4148 FM 1383, Dubina, TX
 Begins at 6:00 p.m.
 Contact Tommy Koenig at tomwko@aol.com</p> | <p>19 Habitat Workshop
 Neasloney WMA
 20700 N SH 80, Gonzales, TX 78629
 Begins at 8:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
 Please RSVP with Robert Conrad at
 robert.conrad@tpwd.texas.gov</p> |
| <p>12 North Central Fayette County WMA Fall Meeting
 Round Top Rifle Hall
 710 FM 1457, Round Top, TX 78954
 Begins at 4:00 p.m.
 Contact Lana Limmer at Lanabs56@hotmail.com</p> | <p>20 Lavaca County WMA Fall Meeting
 Knights of Columbus Hall
 321 US HWY 77 S, Hallettsville, TX, 77964
 Begins at 10:00 a.m.
 Contact Joel Wagner at 361-798-6506 or
 lavacacountywma@gmail.com
 www.lcwma.org</p> |
| <p>19 Buckners Creek WMA Fall Meeting
 Plum Church
 126 Plum Church Rd., Plum, TX
 Begins at 10:00 a.m.
 Contact Greg Smith at gregsmith@cvctx.com</p> | <p>26 Meyersville WMA Fall Meeting
 13052 US HWY 183 South, Yorktown, TX 78164
 Begins 5:00 p.m.
 Contact Clay Haun at 361-243-6026
 clay.haun@dow.com</p> |
| <p>19 West Navidad WMA Fall Meeting
 Rockin' W Sale Barn
 2501 HWY 77, Schulenburg, TX 78956
 Begins at 5:00 p.m.
 Contact Jessica Wick at jmwick8@gmail.com</p> | <p>27 Two Creeks/West Yegua WMA Fall Meeting
 Lincoln Hall
 1066 Main St., Lincoln, TX 78948
 Social 5:00 p.m., Meeting begins at 6:00 p.m.
 Contact Chris Duncan at 817-691-1472</p> |

October

- 8 South Lee Fall WMA Meeting**
 Serbin Picnic Grounds
 1572 Co Rd. 211, Giddings, TX
 Social 5:00 p.m., Meeting begins at 6:00 p.m.
 Contact Chris Duncan at 817-691-1472



DEER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

July 24, 2026
1:00p-5:00p

Immaculate Conception Hall
15994 TX-159, Industry, TX 78944

TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

Topics of Discussion

- Habitat Management -
- Supplemental Feeding -
- Genetics & Nutrition -
- Wildlife Diseases -
- Cost-Share Programs -



AUSTIN COUNTY
WILDLIFEMANAGEMENT
ASSOCIATION

RSVP: Matthew Johnson | 832-595-8999 | matthew.johnson2@tpwd.texas.gov

Create Better Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife & Woodlands Workshop *Lavaca & Colorado Counties*

Friday, July 31st, 2026

9:00 am - 3:30 pm

KC Hall Annex

321 US-77, Hallettsville, TX 77964

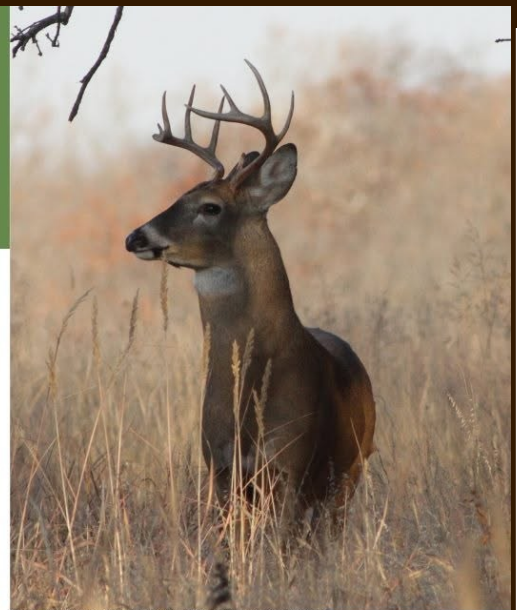


Topics & Information:

- Learn about the Post Oak Savannah
- Deer habitat management
- Brush management benefits for wildlife
- Native grassland restoration & management overview
- Using prescribed fire to manage wildlife habitat
- Habitat restoration & conservation cost-share opportunities for landowners
- Talk with wildlife biologists & land managers
- Get wildlife and habitat advice
- Meet local organizations—and a Houston Toad!

Registration Required:

\$15 Registration
lunch, drinks, and
snacks included



Questions? Contact:

Paul.Crump@tpwd.texas.gov
512-389-8722



Partners & Sponsors:



South Central Texas Prescribed Burn Association



Create Better Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife & Woodlands Workshop Milam & Burleson County

Friday, August 14th, 2026

9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Caldwell Civic Center

103 TX-21, Caldwell, TX 77836



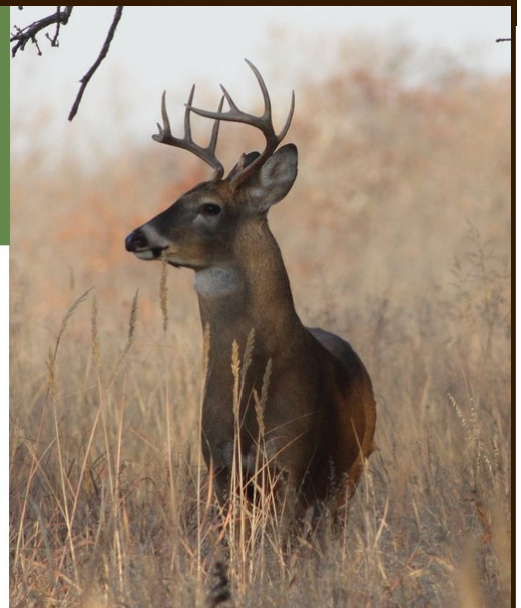
Topics & Information:

- Learn about the Post Oak Savannah
- Grassland bird conservation & habitat management
- Brush management benefits for wildlife
- Native grassland restoration & management overview
- Habitat restoration & conservation cost-share opportunities for landowners
- Land protection for private landowners
- Talk with wildlife biologists & land managers
- Meet local organizations—and a Houston Toad!
- Get wildlife and habitat advice

**REGISTRATION
REQUIRED
CLICK HERE**

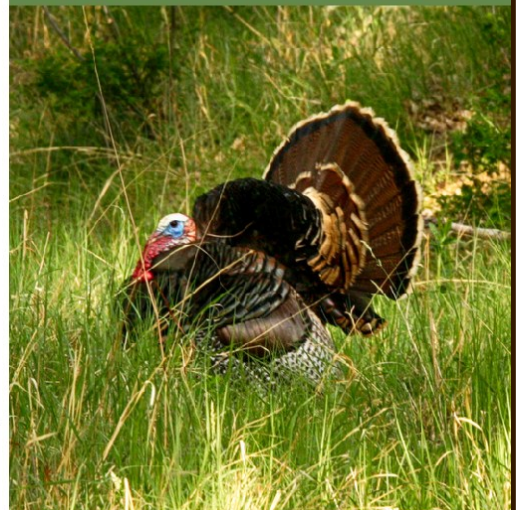
**\$15 Registration
lunch, drinks, and
snacks included**

Partners & Sponsors:



Questions? Contact:

Paul.Crump@tpwd.texas.gov
512-389-8722



Create Better Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife & Woodlands Workshop Austin & Colorado County

Friday, August 21st, 2026

9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Cat Spring Agricultural Society Hall
13035 Hall Rd, Cat Spring, TX 78933



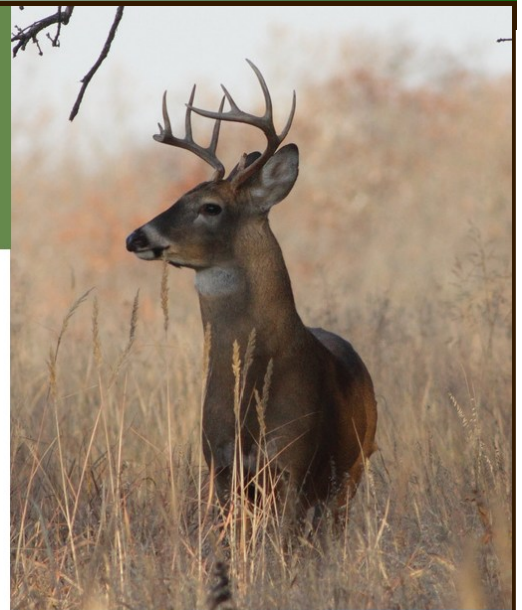
Topics & Information:

- Learn about the Post Oak Savannah
- Deer habitat management
- Conservation ranching for birds
- Brush management benefits for wildlife
- Native grassland restoration & management overview
- Using prescribed fire to manage wildlife habitat
- Habitat restoration & conservation cost-share opportunities for landowners
- Talk with wildlife biologists & land managers
- Meet local organizations—and a Houston Toad!
- Get wildlife and habitat advice

**REGISTRATION
REQUIRED
CLICK HERE**



**\$15 Registration
lunch, drinks, and
snacks included**



Questions? Contact:

Paul.Crump@tpwd.texas.gov
512-389-8722



Partners & Sponsors:



Our Wildlife Biologists

Click on the map for your biologists contact information



Region 4 - Wildlife

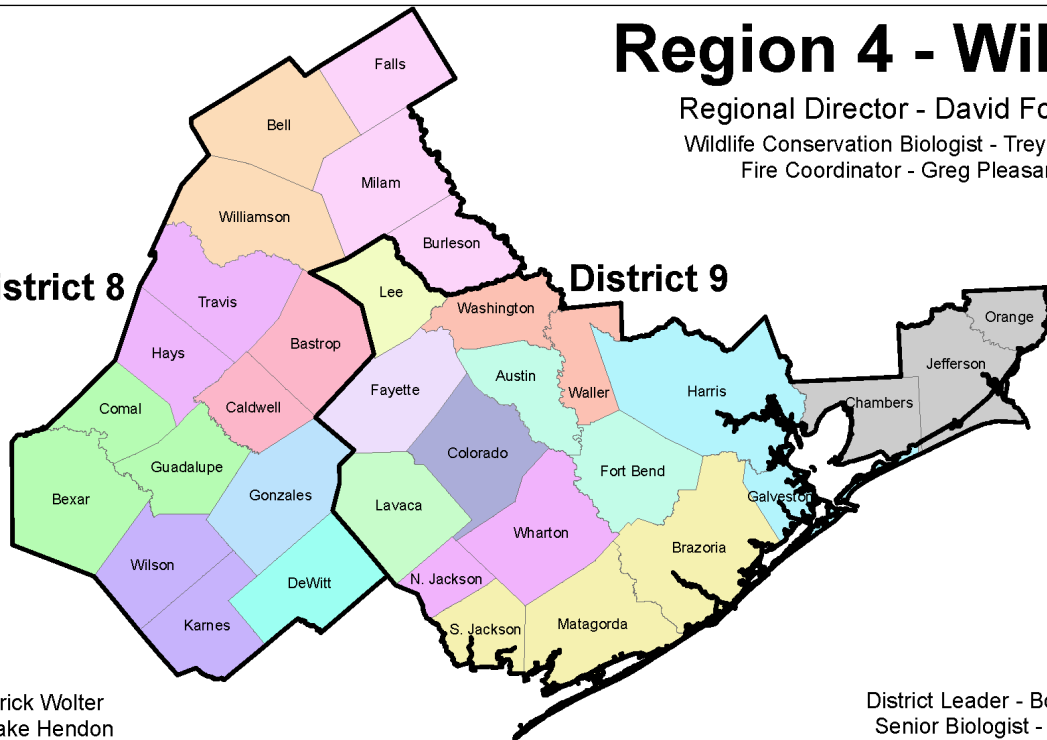
Regional Director - David Forrester

Wildlife Conservation Biologist - Trey Barron

Fire Coordinator - Greg Pleasant

District 8

District 9



District 8

District Leader - Derrick Wolter
Senior Biologist - Blake Hendon

District 9

District Leader - Bobby Eichler
Senior Biologist - Mark Lange

Audrey Naughton (Karnes, Wilson)	Katie Edwards (Colorado)	Skyler Hickman (DeWitt)
Brent Pierce (Lavaca)	Laura Sherrod (Lee)	Stephanie Damron (Waller, Washington)
Brittany Perry (Burleson, Falls, Milam)	Matthew Johnson (Austin, Fort Bend)	Tania Pena (Hays, Travis)
Clinton Faas (N. Jackson, Wharton)	Olivia Kost (Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe)	Todd Pilcik (Brazoria, S. Jackson, Matagorda)
Cullom Simpson (Bell, Williamson)	Rachel Patterson (Bastrop, Caldwell)	District 9 Staff (Chambers, Jefferson, Orange)
Drake Rangel (Fayette)	Robert Conrad (Gonzales, MONWMA)	Urban - Kelly Norrid (Harris)

Click on the map for your biologists contact information

Executive Director
David Yoskowitz, Ph.D.

Editors
David Forrester
Bobby Eichler
Mark Lange
Stephanie Damron



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TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

"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."

You may view this publication, as well as other newsletters created by the department, through the TPWD website. Please visit www.tpwd.texas.gov/newsletters/ for more information.

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

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