

TWA EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

SATURDAY, JULY 14, 2018

9:00-12:00

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

9:00-9:45- Role of Predator Management in Wildlife Management

What's is a Predator? When is predation from native wildlife counter to our wildlife management goals? What to do about exotic, invasive predators? Common wisdom of the early 20th Century held that all predators were bad for "wildlife management," and a general policy of eradication was best. In recent years, public sentiment, science, and political goals seem to conflict about which approach is best. Commonly, wildlife managers adhere to what they perceive to be problems, but often with little science or data to drive their management decisions. In order to maximize the benefit for the effort expended by landowners and managers, we present perspectives and models for management to reduce predation where necessary for positive management of native wildlife. We will address (1) the nature of predation and its potential impact on various wildlife species, (2) the latest science on the role of predators in the natural dynamics of various wildlife populations, and (3) techniques for applying control of predatory species in a way that benefits wildlife managers' goals. We will end with practical approaches for the landowner to incorporate sound predation management into their overall wildlife management plan.

Presenters: John M. Tomeček- AgriLife Extension and Michaelj. Bodenchuk- USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services

10:00-10:45 - Culling Bucks for Genetic Improvement: Fact of Fallacy?

In the fall of 2006 Comanche Ranch initiated the most aggressive selective harvest program ever subjugated to a wild population of white-tailed deer. We established 3 treatments to study the microevolutionary response to culling for antler traits: 1) intensive (3,500 ac), antlered males of all age classes were culled; 2) moderate (18,000 ac), males ≥ 3 years old were culled; and 3) control (5,000 ac), no culling. Each autumn during 2006–2016, we captured male deer, estimated age, and measured antler characteristics. Males that did not meet antler criteria were sacrificed during 2006-2012. We recorded 5,488 captures of 2,937 individual males, and sacrificed 1,333. We used genetic parentage to estimate breeding values and quantified heritability of antler points and B&C Score. Heritability of antler points and B&C score for 1- and 2-year-old males was low, and not statistically different from 0, whereas heritability estimates for antler points and B&C score for males ≥ 3 years old were low to moderate. Most offspring were sired by males that exceeded the culling criteria, yet culling intensities remained high in both treatments. It appears selective harvest of males is inefficient for changing genetic potential for antler size in wild populations of white-tailed deer.

Presenter: Don Draeger- Biologist, Comanche Ranch

11:00-11:45- Behavioral Snaring Technique for Feral Hog Control

Numerous practices are employed in feral hog control, however new techniques utilizing their behavior may be another tool to help aid in eradication. The behavior of feral hogs to utilize utility poles for insect control or scent marking, a snaring technique is discussed with snare building, equipment used, and placement of the snares. Non-target species and proper employment will also be discussed to limit the incidental take of those species.

Presenter: Ryan Schmidt- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

LANDOWNER/ AGENCY OPPORTUNITIES

9:00-9:45 - Managing Wildlife on Small Acreages

As fragmentation of Texas wildlands increases more and more landowners are struggling to managing wildlife on their small acreage property. During this seminar, I will discuss the several management techniques and activities that landowners can utilize to manage for several different wildlife species. Additionally, I will discuss the importance of wildlife management cooperatives and how they can benefit you management.

Presenter: David Riley- Biologist, Plateau Land & Wildlife Management

10:00-10:45- No Really, We Are Here to Help; Partnering with the US Fish and Wildlife Service

A panel of U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) biologists will provide an overview and then lead a discussion on how the Service places a high priority on working proactively with voluntary private landowners to recover rare plant and animal species. Ted Koch, Assistant Regional Director for the Ecological Services Division within the Southwest Region (which includes Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona) will lead the panel. The many "conservation tools" and programs available to private landowners to incentivize habitat improvement work on private lands will be discussed as well. Private landowners from Texas will provide their perspective on their experiences in working with the Service. The panel looks forward to receiving feedback from audience members on how to improve the implementation and delivery of conservation efforts in support of the recovery of rare species and the ecosystems upon which we all depend.

Presenters: Don R. Wilhelm- Regional Coordinator, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, USFWS and Tim Anderson- Technical Biologist, USFWS

11:00-11:45- Helping Private Landowners with Cost Share and Technical Guidance Assistance.

Representatives from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the US Fish and Wildlife Department will be presenting on cost share programs designed to assist private landowners with conservation habitat practices on their lands for the benefit of healthy terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. We'll be covering programs from the NRCS Farm Bill, TPW Programs & the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

Presenters: Arlene Kalmbach- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Tim Siegmund- Texas Parks and Wildlife, Chuck Kowaleski- Texas Parks and Wildlife, and Brendan Witt, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

EDUCATION/ OUTREACH

9:00-9:45- Hunting and Outdoor Ethics in a Social Media World

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department hunter education programs train new hunters in "hunting ethics" and aim to reinvigorate the topic of Hunting Ethics with new concepts, approaches and time-tested techniques. As the adage goes, "ethics are caught – not taught." Are we enhancing our public image and behaviors in the outdoors or are we succumbing to a new world order driven primarily by hand-held devices? Like TPWD's Hunting 101 the Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) offers another opportunity where hunters get a chance to see and be taught "hunting ethics". Private landowners will learn how to host a TYHP hunt and make their own contribution to furthering the understanding "hunting ethics" through a face-to-face experience. Come learn about efforts to enhance the hunting and outdoor heritage for generations to come!

Presenters: Steve Hall-Texas Parks and Wildlife and Chris Mitchell- Texas Wildlife Association

10:00-10:45- Growing Community-Based Conservation Education School Programs through Private Land Stewardship

With society becoming more urbanized and less connected to the land the challenges for the natural resources community to grow relevant community-based conservation education programs in schools is more and more important every day. Connecting young people, through classroom and field lessons, to local natural resources and private land stewardship practices helps to instill a value for land, water, and wildlife where they live, go to school and engage with nature. All leading to an awareness of the impact our individual and shared actions play in stewarding the land.

This session will articulate the value and challenge of tying public benefits of private land stewardship to school curricula. Suggestions will be offered for how communities members - private landowners, educators, community volunteers, NGO's, business owners, etc. can best learn about conservation education programs in their communities and how to get personally involved. We will highlight the collaborative partnership between the East Foundation and Texas Wildlife Association. Together they deploy conservation education programming throughout Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo, Starr, Zapata, Webb, Brooks, Jim Hogg, and Duval counties.

Presenters: Tina Buford - Director of Education, East Foundation, Masi Mejia - Educator, East Foundation and Lisa B. Flowers, Ph.D. - Director of Programs, Texas Wildlife Association

11:00-11:45- Drone Use and Private Lands

Drones, or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), have become popular for many purposes during the past few years, but what are potential uses for landowners? It can also be overwhelming when purchasing a drone because of all the options and drastic variation in prices. Knowing what features to look for will prevent owners from becoming discouraged by their complexity or from spending too much money on frivolous components. Additionally, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) sets the regulations and laws governing drone use, even on private properties because they oversee the airspace. Understanding your rights and how to go about drone use legally can save you from accidents, fines, and even jail time! Current UAV research in rangelands and pastures will be highlighted.

Presenter: Megan Clayton- AgriLife Extension

HABITAT MANAGEMENT

9:00-9:45- Practical Use of Soil Health Building Principals on South Texas Soils

Building soil health is a major part of our land management strategy. In the past 4 years, we have seen our soil rainfall infiltration rates above 7 per hour using a no-till strategy and integrating cover crops into our grazing lands. We host soil health clinics with field visits to show fellow landowners the many cost benefits of working with nature to build soil health. In this presentation I will share our land management story.

Presenter: Zack Yanta - Private Landowner, South Texas

10:00-10:45- Habitat Restoration and Enhancement using Native Seed Sources

Habitat restoration or enhancement using native seed sources is often used as a tool for benefiting wildlife and natural resources as a whole. Historically these efforts have been difficult due to a lack of seed sources, information on seeding practices, and equipment to properly conduct these plantings. In recent years there have been many advancements across all of these once limiting factors. We will examine a variety of recently completed large scale restoration efforts using native seed sources in south Texas. Key topics will be goals of the plantings, planning and implementation, and

the subsequent results of these projects. We will also discuss how these projects might be used to shape future native habitat restoration and enhancement across Texas.

Presenter: Keith Pawelek - Texas Native Seeds, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M University Kingsville

11:00-11:45- Benefits of Using Native Plants for game and Non-Game Wildlife

Many species of beneficial insects, birds and animals benefit from a great diversity of native plants they can utilize for food and cover. Ultimately, it is up to the individual landowners and managers to properly care for the habitat that is so critical to the health, safety and longevity of the species covered here.

Presenter: Ricky Linex, Zone 5 Wildlife Biologist, USDA-NRCS