TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

Texas Wetland News

AND WETLAND CONSERVATION PLAN UPDATE

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Texas Parks and Wildlife • 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744

Master Naturalist Program Seeks Applicants

Are you interested in wetlands management and conservation? Want to learn more about Texas' natural systems and help conserve the natural resources of your community? If so, the Texas Master Naturalist program is for you!

Each spring and fall, 18 chapters of the Texas Master Naturalist program accept applications for training classes across the state.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is dedicated to developing a corps of well-informed citizen volunteers who provide education, outreach and service toward the management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities.

Volunteers do not need extensive prior knowledge of natural resources, just an interest and the desire to become more involved.

To become a Certified Master Naturalist, volunteers receive at least 40 hours of in-depth training by educators and specialists from universities, agencies, nature centers, museums and other organizations. Training covers a wide array of interpretation and management of natural resources, ecological concepts, eco-regions of Texas and natural systems management. In return, volunteers annually contribute at least 40 hours of service through community education, demonstration and habitat enhancement projects while pursuing a minimum of eight hours of advanced training in areas of special interest to them – such as wetlands.

TEXAS Master Naturalist

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Efforts to Control Non-native Giant Salvinia in Texas

"You've got a bloody problem!" Those were the somber words of Australia's Dr. David Mitchell after a July 1999 tour of giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta* D.S. Mitchell) infestations in southeast Texas. Dr. Bill Haller of the University of Florida, who was also touring the infestations, concurred. Not that the state of Texas needed any more aquatic plant problems, but when gentlemen of the status and acumen of Dr.'s Mitchell and Haller pronounce your aquatic resources imminently threatened, one is wise to consider strongly the warning given.

You've got a bloody problem!

Giant salvinia, which is a floating aquatic fern native to southeastern Brazil, was first identified in Texas in April 1998. This was only the second U.S. record, the first being in South Carolina in 1995. Salvinia was eradicated from that 1.5-acre pond in South Carolina; however, eradication may never be a reality in Texas. In three years the infestation has spread at breakneck speed. Giant salvinia can take advantage of Texas' climate and productive waters to provide first-hand displays of the explosive growth rate (doubling every 5-7 days), for which the plant is famous.

Continued on the next page

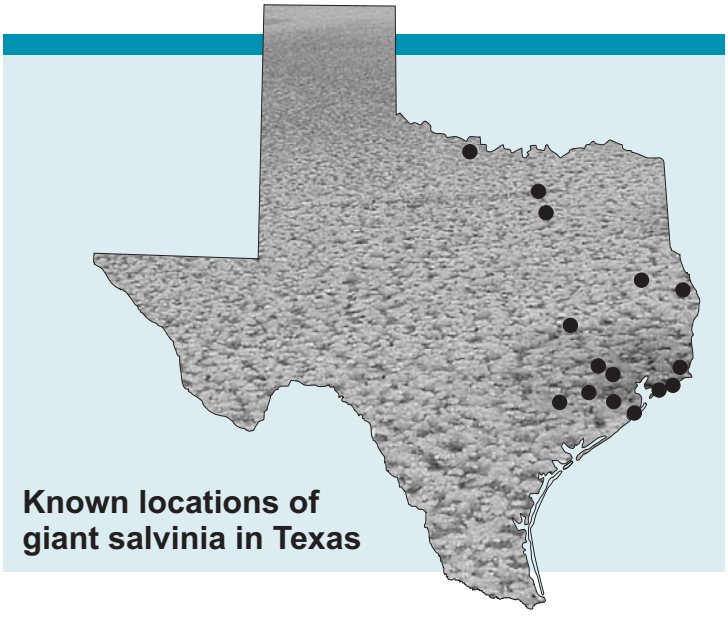
This photo demonstrates the thickness of a mat of salvinia that held up a cinder block for nearly a minute before sinking.

Efforts to Control Giant Salvina, continued

Oxygen levels of 2.0 ppm or lower and pH of 5 seem to be common in small lakes/ponds covered with giant salvinia. Resource managers within the state, at least those close to the situation, are aware that the presence of giant salvinia imperils desirable aquatic life in the waters they manage.

Why The Concern

Giant salvinia's considerable reputation as an invasive species of note has been established in New Guinea, Zimbabwe, Australia and India. Infestations in the Sepik River of Papua New Guinea reached a surface coverage of 96 square miles. In Kariba Reservoir (over 1,000,000 acres) of Zimbabwe the giant salvinia infestation reached nearly 250,000 acres in a little over three years time. Could infestations of that magnitude occur in Texas and the U.S? Word from those experienced with the plant was that we didn't want to find out.



The confirmation of giant salvinia in Toledo Bend, Texas' largest reservoir, in September 1998 dispelled any notion that this troublesome plant could be confined to a few small, isolated farm ponds. Toledo Bend covers 185,000 acres, has 1,200 miles of shoreline, and straddles much of the Texas-Louisiana border. The possibility that Toledo Bend could serve as a source of infestation to other areas, including a number of valuable public waterbodies in eastern Texas and western Louisiana, was very likely. The reservoir is an economic magnet for anglers and outdoor enthusiasts from Texas, Louisiana, and other midwestern states. Most of Toledo Bend is prime largemouth bass habitat with large timbered coves and backwater areas. However, the same timber-covered shorelines that provide habitat for largemouth bass can also harbor giant salvinia. All the desirable growth requirements for aquatic plants including nutrients, warm climate, and long growing season are present in abundance. Field observations on Toledo Bend during summer months indicate that giant salvinia is indeed doubling its coverage in as little as seven days.

Unfortunately, a little over two years after discovering giant salvinia in Toledo Bend, the plant has now been verified in three other public reservoirs in Texas, including Lake Texana near Victoria, Lake Conroe near Houston, and Sheldon Reservoir, which is also near Houston. Additionally, the plant has been confirmed in five streams, including the Sabine River below Toledo Bend dam. Ten commercial nurseries within the state have had to eradicate the plant from their property and 27 private lakes/ponds have confirmed identifications.

Waging War on Giant Salvinia Through Professional Planning and Public Education

The discovery of giant salvinia in Toledo Bend Reservoir spurred efforts to seriously consider the plant a national concern. A national Giant Salvinia Task Force (GSTF) was formed and first met in Houston in November 1998. The task force created an action plan to propose that affected agencies respond using public education, aquatic herbicides, biological control and mechanical removal where feasible. Since early detection of new infestations is critical, the U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resources Division had already prepared a fact sheet to aid in identification. To date, over 80,000 copies of the fact sheet have been printed and distributed nationwide.

The GSTF met again in Houston in April 2000 to consider the status of giant salvinia, which in two years had spread to eight other states. Early detection of giant salvinia was seen as paramount, especially in reservoir-type systems. The inspection of commercial nursery operations was discussed and stressed at length. The GSTF was essentially unanimous in agreement that new stakeholders needed to be a part of the process. These stakeholders might include environmental groups, nursery associations, lake homeowner and marina associations and organized fishing groups.

In Texas, the Lake Conroe Homeowners Association has been a perfect example of citizen participation to assist in the location and eradication of giant salvinia. A fact sheet specific to Lake Conroe was prepared and mailed to all residents around the lake. Residents were encouraged to "adopt-a-shoreline" in their areas and quickly notify the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) if plants were found. The SJRA has pursued giant salvinia with a "seek and destroy" mentality so there is the very real possibility that the plant may be eradicated from the lake in the near future. The local residents and the controlling authority have learned from hydrilla infestations in the late '70s and early '80s that exotic species populations can quickly get out of hand if prompt and decisive measures are not taken to prevent it.

Putting Plans Into Action

Aquatic Herbicides

The GSTF action plan to address the giant salvinia problem was completed by Spring 1999 and implementation began almost immediately. In Texas, the decision was made to begin aquatic herbicide applications on Toledo Bend as soon as possible. It was agreed that personnel from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) would apply the herbicides on their respective sides of the reservoir. The lake controlling authority, the Sabine River Authority, consented to purchase the herbicide/adjuvants to be used.

BEFORE

This 0.75-acre pond at Splendora, Texas, just north of Houston, was heavily infested with giant salvinia when this picture was taken on 6/28/01. The pond was treated with aquatic herbicide Sonar® A.S. on the same day.

AFTER

This picture of the same pond was taken on 9/7/01, or about 73 days after treatment with Sonar® A.S. Reports state that the pond is now 100% free of giant salvinia.

Diquat dibromide (Reward®) at .75% v/v or 3 quarts per acre has been employed since spraying began on Toledo Bend in May 1999. The adjuvants used in combination are: a non-ionic penetrant (either Aqua-King Plus® or Activate III®) at .25% v/v or 1 quart per acre and a non-ionic organo-silicone Thoroughbred at 12 ounces per acre. Initially, only 6 ounces of the organo-silicone were used, but field tests indicated a higher herbicide efficacy with the 12 ounces. Some applicators are now even using a full pint of the organo-silicone. The hairs or pubescence on the leaf surface of giant salvinia actually repels moisture so that the organo-silicone is a valuable and necessary component of the spray mix.

Aquatic herbicide applications on Toledo Bend have thus far been effective at forestalling a much more serious infestation. Since diquat is a contact herbicide, covering each plant is critical. Utilizing a larger orifice size on sprayguns (#5-#7) is advantageous because coarser droplets capable of crashing through leaf pubescence are produced. TPWD personnel consistently achieve 90% efficacy after a single application; however, 1 to 2 re-sprays are necessary through the season. Plants not sprayed can grow rapidly, even in a month's time, to re-infest a previously treated area. On Toledo Bend, most spraying is shoreline work generally in the back of coves where creeks enter the lake. Through three growing seasons since May 1999, the TPWD and LDWF have eradicated 1,625 acres of giant salvinia on Toledo Bend. In spite of intense efforts, however, salvinia continues to expand slowly and the infestation may approach a level at which aquatic herbicide applications (given current available manpower) will be unable to control and significantly reduce expansion.

Aquatic herbicide applications have made significant headway on infestations in Lakes Conroe, Texana, and Sheldon. The San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) reports excellent results using glyphosate (Rodeo®) at .75% v/v with the same adjuvants/rates as used with diquat. The SJRA is now using glyphosate exclusively on giant salvinia and are encouraged that they may be able to eradicate the plant from Lake Conroe. Giant salvinia was discovered early in Lake Texana and is now a significant infestation, with populations found all the way to the dam. Most of the salvinia plants are located in mats of heavy water hyacinth infestations, which makes aquatic herbicide applications for giant salvinia control difficult. The Lavaca-Navidad River Authority (LNRA) and the TPWD have worked together, using diquat and glyphosate to reduce the infestation. An oil pollution boom was utilized to restrict movement of giant salvinia from the creek channel into the main lake. Unfortunately, the LNRA reports that excessive rainfall in fall 2000 has now washed a small amount of giant salvinia into the lake proper. Sheldon Reservoir is a 1,200-acre lake almost within the Houston city limits that is heavily covered with American lotus. Giant salvinia was first identified in the lake in July 2000. Aquatic herbicide applications by TPWD personnel using diquat and glyphosate were initiated upon discovery, but finding the giant salvinia in 1,000 acres of Amercian lotus is a challenge.

Two other labeled herbicides have been used successfully on giant salvinia in Texas. Initial test plot data indicates that a chelated copper (Clearigate®) applied at 2.5% v/v as a foliar spray can produce results. Estimates of 85-90% efficacy were achieved in Summer 2000 on Toledo Bend with a single spraying. This is promising, since the label on chelated copper products allow treatment near potable water intakes. Fluridone (Sonar® A.S.) at 1 qt./ac. used in small lakes or farm ponds has produced excellent results. A 1-acre pond that was 50% covered with giant salvinia was treated in June 1999 and stayed free of the plant through October 2000. Nearby ponds were then treated at 1 pt./ac. with less favorable results, but when they were re-treated with an additional pint, eradication was achieved. Fluridone will work on giant salvinia where excessive water movement and subsequent dilution is not a factor. Fluridone should be considered for whole lake treatments to eradicate giant salvinia. In applications using fluridone, the herbicide was applied using a back-pack sprayer with a sub-surface injection from a canoe.

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Efforts to Control Giant Salvina, continued

Biological Control

Biological control methods have been developed on serious giant salvinia infestations elsewhere in the world. The salvinia weevil, *Cyrtobagous salviniae,* is host-specific to *Salvinia* species. Adult insects have an affinity for the leaf buds but the larvae also feed on other parts of the plant. In places such as India, South Africa, Papua New Guinea and Australia, infestations of giant salvinia have been reduced to 1% of their former size by the salvinia weevil. The Australian strain of the salvinia weevil has recently come out of quarantine, and a permit from USDA to allow release into the wild was received in September 2001.

Releases were made at four sites on October 10 and 11, and a total of 1100 insects were released at Toledo Bend Reservoir (220 insects on the Louisiana side of lake), private water sites in Liberty County (220 insects), private water sites in Chambers County (220 insects), and Lake Texana sites near Victoria (440 insects). Inspections were conducted the week of 12/3 and insects were collected at three of the four sites, which confirms insect survival for two months. Insect feeding damage was also noted at the Liberty County site. One concern is whether or not the insects will survive the winter in Texas, which remains to be seen.

Summary

TPWD considers giant salvinia infestations as Tier 1 response situations. Plants classified as such are targeted for immediate eradication using all available technology developed in the field of aquatic plant management. What happens and is learned in Texas may determine, to a large extent, what possible impacts lie in wait for other states now dealing with giant salvinia. The TPWD Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Division staffs and the resource professionals of the Giant Salvinia Task Force are firmly committed, with the cooperation of federal (USDA, USFWS), state and local government entities, to meet the challenge of this foreign invader to the aquatic resources of our state and nation.

Please visit the U.S. Geological Survey Web site at http://nas.er.usgs.gov/ferns for the current range of giant salvinia within the U.S. and to learn more about plant biology. An article in the Spring 1999 issue of *Aquatics* by C. Jacono also highlights identification and biology of giant salvinia.

This article is a revision of an article that appeared in *Aquatics* Vol. 23 No. 1 (Spring 2001) and was written by Rhandy J. Helton and Dr. Earl Chilton of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Receives Federal Funds for Habitat Protection

AUSTIN, Texas – On November 2nd, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that Texas Parks and Wildlife would receive $1.34 million in grant money from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Program (NCWC) for wetland protection and restoration efforts in the state.

The monies will support ongoing efforts to protect and restore an eroding island that is heavily utilized by coastal birds in West Galveston Bay in Brazoria County, in addition to protecting one of the few remaining stretches of riparian wetland habitat along Clear Creek in League City, Galveston County, TX.

Thirteen states submitted 29 project proposals with 20 of those being funded in this budget cycle. Texas submitted 5 grant proposals, with the 2 listed above chosen for this funding cycle. The Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) of 1990 established the NCWC grant program to provide federal funds to states for wetland acquisition, protection and restoration projects. Funds are derived from federal excise taxes on the sale of fishing equipment and motorboat and small engine fuels. For more information please contact Mike Berger at (512) 389-4858 or Jarrett (Woody) Woodrow at (281) 335-0798 ext. 22.

West Bay Bird Island Project. This project will involve the construction of a 1,000-foot long breakwater along the southern shore of Bird Island in West Galveston Bay. The breakwater will protect the remaining 34 acres of the island from erosion, which has removed over a third of its original area since 1956. In addition, thirty acres of wetland habitat will be created between the breakwater and the existing island.

A number of colonial waterbird and shorebird species use the island for breeding, nesting, and roosting habitat, including endangered and threatened species such as the brown pelican, piping plover, and reddish egret. Partnering with the Texas General Land Office's Coastal Erosion Protection and Response program, this project will enhance colonial nesting birds in Galveston Bay. Additional partners include the USFWS Coastal Program, Reliant Energy and the Texas Audubon Society. Additional contacts are: Ray Newby (TGLO) (512) 475-3624 or Cherie O'Brien at (281) 335-0798 ext. 26.

Clear Creek. The remaining $1 million will be used in the purchase of 146 acres of undeveloped streamside habitat along Clear Creek in League City, TX. The area represents one of the few remaining unchannelized stream sections in the entire Houston area and includes 21 acres of marsh, 35 acres of scrub/shrub wetland, and roughly 6 acres of prairie and forested wetlands. Plans are to use the area as a nature park with various low impact recreational and outdoor educational activities available to the public.

The area is also of high value for wildlife. It is used as a roosting and nesting habitat by a number of resident species of shorebirds and waterbirds as well as by migratory waterfowl and neotropical migrants. A number of fish, amphibian, reptile and mammal species utilize the area as well. The tract will play a key role in a plan to provide a continuous travel corridor for wildlife up and down Clear Creek. Partners include League City, the Galveston Bay Estuary Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Texas Parks and Wildlife. Additional contacts are: Rhonda Cyrus (League City) (281) 316-3451 or Jeff Dallarosa (Galveston Bay Estuary Program) (281) 316-3001.

The Southern Great Plains Riparian Initiative: An Evolving Partnership for Riparian Habitat Restoration

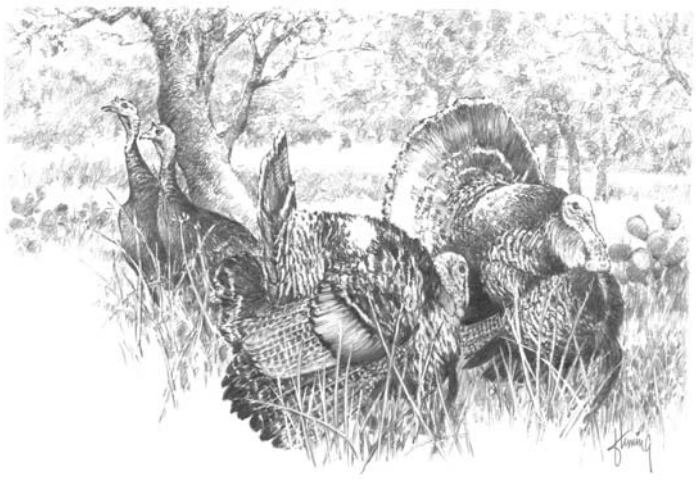
The Southern Great Plains Riparian Initiative (SGPRI) is a state, federal, and private partnership evolving within Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma, aimed at restoration and maintenance of properly-functioning riparian ecosystems in the region. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) is helping to facilitate assistance to landowners and communities wishing to conduct habitat management efforts for the benefit of a wide range of riparian-dependent species, including but not limited to, wild turkeys.

Since the spring of 2000, interested landowners, biologists, and turkey hunters in the region have collaborated to tie wildlife research being conducted by Texas Tech University and Kansas State University (with funding provided by NWTF, the Texas State NWTF Chapter, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks) to strategies for riparian enhancement on private and public lands. Current partners are the NWTF, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and Outdoor Life Foundation.

The Southern Great Plains consist of primarily prairie and agricultural habitats bisected with narrow riparian corridors. These "ribbons of green" serve as the primary wild turkey habitat in a region covering portions of six states, and are important habitats for other species as well, including neotropical migratory birds. Current primary land use is livestock and crop production, with most of the land in private ownership (~97%). Riparian habitat is shrinking and/or degrading at an alarming rate, experiencing direct losses of trees (primarily cottonwood gallery timber) through old age and drought stress, de-watering of aquifers, lack of seedling recruitment due to grazing regimes, and encroachment of exotic shrubs and trees. Many areas that were functioning riparian zones only ten years ago are now devoid of trees, and therefore contain less habitat for wild turkeys and other wildlife.

The SGPRI is a 10-year project that will seek to reverse the loss of these valuable ecosystems through three main practices: 1) planting trees to supplement existing stands or to re-vegetate areas which have lost timber, 2) fencing riparian zones to enable cattle grazing systems that promote regeneration of native timber, and 3) chemical and/or mechanical removal of exotic shrubs and trees from riparian zones by approved methods. There is a private and public land component to the SGPRI. Private land projects will be funded on a cost-share basis using existing federal and state cost share programs (CCRP, CRP, etc.), with up to 90% funding in some instances. The National Conservation Buffer Initiative, administered by NRCS, may provide incentives and cost share monies for practices 1 and 2 listed above. However, its implementation in the Southern Great Plains has been problematic due to lack of public awareness of the program, lack of manpower to get landowners signed up, and a lack of enough incentive money to get landowners more interested in deliberate conservation and management of valuable riparian lands. Also, existing programs do not always address exotic or noxious vegetation removal, which is a major problem in many areas of the region. Therefore, a SGPRI strategy is to help these efforts by supplying manpower and funds to address needs through voluntary cooperation of state and federal biologists in the region who work with willing landowners and funding sources. The hallmark of this program is voluntary participation.

Public lands, although comprising a small percentage of ownership (~3%), are being used as demonstration sites. The major public parcels are the National Grasslands and state-owned wildlife management areas. Projects on these sites are being funded outright with SGPRI funds on a priority basis in partnership with the landowning agency and other partners. NWTF is serving as the project administrator for the SGPRI. Funding for projects is coming from a wide variety of both public and private sources, including corporations, foundations, public resource agencies and individuals. Disbursement of funds for private landowners will be piggy-backed (where permissible) with NRCS and USFWS contracts at the county level. Public funds will be dispersed on a project-by-project basis from the NWTF national office. The NWTF is funding projects on selected public lands in 2001 to kick off the Initiative. Current (2001) pilot project sites are: Texas–Lake Meredith National Recreation Area/Canadian River; Kansas–Cimarron National Grasslands/ Cimarron River; Oklahoma–Black Kettle National Grasslands/ Washita River, and a private land site near Guymon/Beaver River; Nebraska–Harlan County Lake; Colorado–Comanche National Grasslands/Picketwire Canyon; and New Mexico–Kiowa National Grasslands/Mills Canyon.



For more information on this program or agency contacts, contact Robert (Bobby) Maddrey, Director of NWTF Partnership Programs at Edgefield, South Carolina, bmaddrey@nwtf.net or 1-800-THE-NWTF; or Brandon Houck, NWTF Regional Biologist at Allen, Kansas, bjhouck@hotmail.com or (316) 443-5906. ■

This article was written by: Robert Maddrey (NWTF, Edgefield, South Carolina), Brandon Houck (NWTF, Allen, Kansas), and Gene T. Miller (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Canyon, Texas).

Recent Central Coast Wetland Ecosystem Project Activities

Mad Island WMA

In June, July, and August of 2001, five moist-soil wetland projects were completed at Mad Island WMA, resulting in a combined total of approximately 200 acres. These sites will provide shallow freshwater feeding and loafing sites for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds. Use of these units by birds during late September when adjacent natural marsh areas were either dry or very salty, was extremely good. White-faced and glossy ibis, as well as migrating blue-winged teal began using these moist-soil wetland areas immediately after flooding.

In addition to the moist-soil wetland projects, construction was completed of an approximate 60-foot rock weir. This rock weir is intended to reduce the erosion of the marsh that occurs during periods of heavy tidal energy. Thus far, the weir appears to be functioning extremely well.

Herbicide was aerially applied to approximately 150 acres of marsh with serious overpopulations of cattail (*Typha* sp.) and common reed (*Phragmites australis*). Much of the cattail was eliminated as a result of this effort.

In August, CCWEP staff completed their 7th year of alligator mark/recapture studies at Mad Island WMA. Preliminary analysis indicates a growth rate of less than 6" per year.

Nannie M. Stringfellow WMA

At Nannie M. Stringfellow WMA, the construction of 4 moist soil units was completed, resulting in a total of 53 acres. These units were constructed as mitigation for bald eagle habitat, and had electric water wells installed on them.

Guadalupe Delta WMA

TXDOT initiated construction of an 8-acre moist-soil unit at Guadalupe Delta WMA in Calhoun County. This 8-acre unit is mitigation for highway construction near Victoria. CCWEP staff is also working with TXDOT on the construction of an additional 25-acre moist-soil unit.

In August, CCWEP staff completed their 5th year of mottled duck banding. Staff banded 750 mottled ducks in the mid-coast area. Over the 5-year period, TPW has banded over 5,000 mottled ducks, with most of them being banded in the mid-coast area. Habitat conditions at Mad Island and Peach Point WMAs for migrating and wintering waterfowl are excellent. Salinities in the marsh have been reduced by good rainfall, and there has been a tremendous growth of wigeon grass and sago pondweed in many marsh ponds.

East Texas Wetlands Project

Integrating Wetlands Restoration in East Texas with Habitat Management for Migratory Birds and other Wetland Wildlife

The East Texas Wetlands Project was initiated in the spring of 2001, with a goal to restore, enhance, or create wetlands on private lands in 46 East Texas counties. The project is a joint venture between Ducks Unlimited, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and is implemented in support of the Lower Mississippi Joint Venture and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). The program offers both technical and financial assistance to private landowners for the enhancement, restoration and creation of wetland habitat.

The focus of the East Texas Wetlands Project is to provide quality seasonal winter habitat for migratory waterfowl and other wetland dependent wildlife. The availability of this critical habitat enables migratory birds to return to their nesting grounds in the spring in peak physical condition, thereby increasing their reproductive potential. During the first six months, project biologists made contact with over 150 private landowners. Assistance to these landowners included technical guidance on how to manage their lands for wetland habitat, with the amount of land owned between the landowners exceeding 74,000 acres. Seventeen wetland proposals were developed between project biologists, Ducks Unlimited and Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel; 13 of which were approved for habitat improvement on 527 wetland-acres. There is very high interest in wetland development of private lands in East Texas, with over 25 additional sites, in excess of 1,500 acres, waiting for survey and wetland habitat design.

Before and after photos of a constructed wetland in Panola County.

The East Texas Wetlands Project is a component of Ducks Unlimited Texas CARE (Conservation of Agriculture, Resources and the Environment). The CARE program is a DU initiative to establish partnerships through fund raising and conservation delivery that includes private lands projects. In Texas, fundraising has begun through traditional sponsorships as well as the sale of automobile license plates depicting the DU theme. For more information about the East Texas Wetlands Program contact Bill Bartush, Ducks Unlimited East Texas Regional Biologist, at (903) 566-1626 (extension 206), or write East Texas Wetlands Program, 11942 FM 848, Tyler, Texas 75707.

Other Wetland News and Plan Updates

Wetlands Assistance Guide for Landowners Available from TPW

The Wetlands Assistance Guide for Landowners is a publication available from Texas Parks and Wildlife that outlines available federal, state, and private programs offering technical and/or financial assistance to private wetland owners in the state of Texas. In addition to providing information on sources of assistance, the Guide also has general information on wetlands in Texas and federal and state regulations concerning wetlands. The Guide can be viewed on-line at **www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wetlands/programs/landowner**. If you would like a Guide mailed to you, please e-mail your name and address to jennifer.key@tpwd.state.tx.us.

Wetland Project Site Registry Program

The Registry Program was designed to increase wetland conservation in the state of Texas by creating a method in which individuals, private consulting companies, and government agencies could more easily find private landowners interested in conserving wetlands on their property. The process begins when an interested private landowner adds their property information to the Registry. Non-confidential portions of those data such as county, riverbasin, and habitat type are available for viewing through the Registry Program search page on the TPW Web site at **www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wetlands/programs/registry/searchdata.htm**. An individual or entity looking for areas in which to do wetland restoration or enhancement can then search the private registry database by county or river basin. Confidential information, such as contact information and specific restoration goals of the landowner, is only disclosed to interested parties after the landowner has been contacted and has specifically approved the disclosure of such information.

If you are interested in learning more about the Wetland Project Site Registry Program, you can view the informational brochure at **www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wetlands/publications/brochure0101.pdf** or request one to be sent to you by e-mailing jennifer.key@tpwd.state.tx.us with your name and mailing address. The brochure contains information on the Program, and has a postage-paid form that landowners can fill out and mail to the Project Manager in order to get their property in the Registry Program. If you have questions about the Program or would like to request brochures to distribute, please e-mail Jennifer Key or call her at (512) 389-8521.

Master Naturalist Program, continued

Texas Master Naturalist Chapters offer the program in the following areas statewide:

Angleton – Cradle of Texas Chapter
Austin– Capital Area Chapter
Bastrop–Lost Pines Chapter
Brownwood–Brownwood Regional Chapter
Dallas –North Texas Chapter
Denton– Elm Fork Chapter
El Paso– Trans Pecos Chapter
Fort Worth –Cross Timbers Chapter
Galveston– Galveston County Chapter
Harlingen –Rio Grande Valley Chapter
Houston –Gulf Coast Chapter
Kerrville–Hill Country Chapter
New Braunfels– Lindheimer Chapter
San Antonio– Alamo Area Chapter
San Marcos–Hays County Chapter
Tyler– East Texas Chapter
Victoria– Mid Coast Chapter
Wichita Falls– Rolling Plains Chapter

Other chapters are in development in Amarillo, Bryan/College Station, Corpus Christi, Fort Davis, Waco, Washington County and other areas across Texas.

For more information on becoming involved as a volunteer, a program instructor or program partner, contact Michelle Haggerty, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Master Naturalist Program Coordinator, 111 Nagle Hall, 2258 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-2258. e-mail: mhaggerty@wfsc.tamu.edu; phone: (979) 458-2034; on the Web at http://masternaturalist.tamu.edu.

Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Texas Cooperative Extension co-sponsor the Master Naturalist Program statewide, with funding support from the ExxonMobil Corporation, Texas Utilities and the Wray Charitable Trust.

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WETLAND CONSERVATION PLAN UPDATE

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