

# Rolling Plains



# Wildlife News

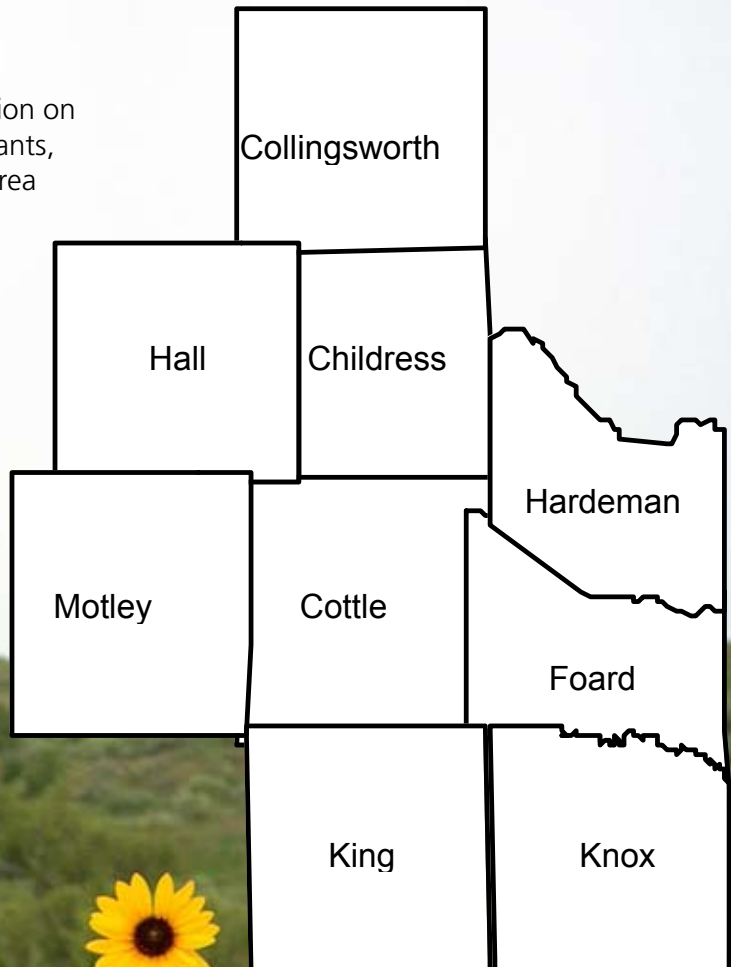
Summer 2010

## Welcome...

The *Rolling Plains Wildlife News* provides information on wildlife surveys, habitat management practices, plants, wildlife and events that occur in the nine county area that I cover as a regulatory wildlife biologist.

If you would like to be placed on the mailing list to receive this newsletter, please contact me at:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
Dana Wright  
2789 CR 410  
Paducah, TX 79248  
(806) 596-4016  
[dana.wright@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:dana.wright@tpwd.state.tx.us)



## ASK THE Game Warden

### QUESTION:

#### Do I need a hunting license to hunt feral hogs?

Yes, unless you are the landowner or the authorized agent for the property. A landowner on their own land or their authorized agent is not required to have a trapper's or hunting license if feral hogs are taken while causing loss or damage to agricultural crops, livestock, poultry or personal property. If a landowner takes money to lease out hog hunting rights, then the lessee must have a hunting license, since this would be considered sport hunting.

Game laws are not exactly black and white concerning when you can hunt feral hogs without a hunting license. If you are not sure and have a question, please contact a TPWD game warden.

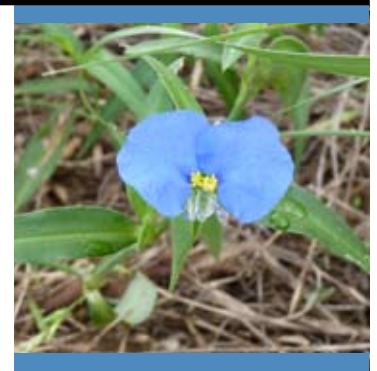
*The answer to this question was provided by game warden Jim Daniels, who covers King and Knox Counties. Mr. Daniels graduated from Texas*



*TPWD Game Warden Jim Daniels*

*A&M University in 2007 with a B.S. in Agriculture and graduated from the TPWD Game Warden Academy in May 2008. Mr. Daniels can be reached at (325) 668-9765.*

## Dayflower



The dayflower, also known as erect dayflower, or widow's tears, is a beautiful flower that is beneficial to all types of wildlife. The common name "dayflower" comes from the fact that the flower usually only blooms for one day and then shrivels up, unless they are shaded. The other common name, "widow's tears," comes from the fact that when you squeeze the spathe (bract) of this plant, it will produce a drop of liquid.

Dayflower is a warm-season perennial that can be found on a variety of soil types, sandy to clay soil and can be found throughout most of Texas. It starts blooming in March and continues through the spring and into the fall.

The flower is bright blue with two big petals. The stems and leaves are almost grass-like, elongated, soft and fleshy. The stems are jointed and break off easily, only growing upward if supported by another plant. Dayflower tends to grow along the ground and can reach about three feet long.

The plant is highly preferred by deer, and the seeds are eaten by bobwhite quail and doves. Livestock will also graze this plant.

## Managed Lands Deer Permit (MLDP) News

For those of you participating in the Managed Lands Deer Permit Program for mule deer or white-tailed deer, I have entered harvest data for your ranch into the Texas Wildlife Information Management Services (TWIMS) site. This is the site you where you accept harvest recommendations before permits can be mailed to you. You will now be able to see your harvest data, summarize harvest data, and compare your harvest data to other data from the county, ecoregion or state. You will need to log into the TWIMS site, go to the Report Page and select Compare Data. Results can be viewed as tables or graphs.

When deer harvest data is sent to me, I enter it into the TWIMS site, exactly as it is sent to me. I then have the option to verify the data. When I verify the data,

I'm saying that I believe the data is accurate and have confidence in the ability of the landowner/manager to age, weigh and record antler measurements correctly. If I see field-dressed weights and ages that don't look correct to me, then I don't verify the data so that you won't be comparing your harvest data to "bad" data. Entries that raise a red flag are deer that weigh 55 pounds or less that are not aged at ½ years old (fawn), white-tailed does that are reported weighing over 110 pounds, or bucks weighing over 200 pounds. If this sounds like your data, please consider buying a new set of scales.

Here is the link to TWIMS. If you have forgotten your password, please click the "Forgot Password" link under the Account Login button or call me.

<https://apps.tpwd.state.tx.us/privatelands/home.seam>

# DEER Surveys

Helicopter surveys for deer are conducted from September through January of each year, providing landowners with population trend data, sex ratios, fawn production estimates and deer density estimates. This data is used to make harvest recommendations each year.

The chart shows population estimates from helicopter surveys that I flew last year in my nine-county area. The majority of the properties I fly have only white-tails, and the highest mule deer density I observed was one mule deer/49 acres. If you figure that we flew at an average speed of 35 mph, that means I spent at least 57 hours in a helicopter last year. We fly slower or faster depending on the vegetative cover. We count everything within 100 yards on both sides of the helicopter so the 200-yard-wide pass is figured at to be approximately 72 acres/mile.

MULE DEER									
MILES	ACRES	BUCKS	DOES	FAWNS	TOTAL DEER	ACRES/ DEER	ACRES/ BUCK	DOES/ BUCK	FAWN SURVIVAL
1,990	144,713	74	329	116	519	278.83	1,955.58	4.45	35.26%
WHITE-TAILED DEER									
MILES	ACRES	BUCKS	DOES	FAWNS	TOTAL DEER	ACRES/ DEER	ACRES/ BUCK	DOES/ BUCK	FAWN SURVIVAL
1,990	144,713	418	1068	311	1797	80.53	346.20	2.56	29.12%
MULE & WHITE-TAILED DEER COMBINED									
MILES	ACRES	BUCKS	DOES	FAWNS	TOTAL DEER	ACRES/ DEER	ACRES/ BUCK	DOES/ BUCK	FAWN SURVIVAL
1,990	144,713	492	1397	427	2316	62.48	294.13	2.84	30.57%
OTHER									
MILES	ACRES	COYOTES	HOGS	ACRES/ COYOTE	ACRES/ HOG				
1,990	144,713	214	597	676.23	242.4				

## Mule Deer Movement

Two years ago I participated in a mule deer research project, a sightability study developing a model to better estimate mule deer densities using a helicopter survey method here in the Rolling Plains. We caught 36 mule deer on one study site and fitted them with GPS collars. The collars recorded their locations from mid-December through mid-March, only recording locations between 8-11 a.m. and 3-6 p.m. each day. The collars dropped off the deer around the middle of March. The average daily movement for a mule deer doe was 1.6 miles, and 2.3 miles for a mule deer buck.

## Texas Plant Information Database

The Texas Plant Information Database contains extensive information about native plants that have value for landscape restoration, especially erosion control and wildlife use.

The database is structured to allow the user the opportunity to query and select best-suited plant species based on specific site characteristics and management objectives. You are able to select the county, soil types, salinity tolerance, light tolerance, soil moisture, wildlife benefits, and a whole bunch of other things. From the information you selected, the site provides a list of plants by common name and scientific name that should do well on your site. The database also will tell you if the plants are beneficial to wildlife.

You can find the Texas Plant Information Database at the following Web site: <http://tpid.tpwd.state.tx.us/>

## REMOTE CAMERA Photos

Deer season is getting close, and you put your remote cameras out and get a picture of a buck. He looks good but do you wonder how big he really is? There is a Web site where you can upload your deer pictures and it will give you a Boone and Crockett Score.

The program works on white-tailed deer in velvet or with hardened antlers. The program uses a unique set of anatomical features and measurements to achieve B&C score estimates. Currently the program only works on white-tailed deer, but this year I will be collecting data and measurements on mule deer so that a program can be built that can be used on mule deer in Texas.

The program is free and was developed by Mississippi State University. It won't work on every deer photo; pictures need to be of good quality with the deer looking straight at camera. Check it out at [www.buckscore.com](http://www.buckscore.com)



## Texas Dove Hunter Opinion Survey Results

Dove season is just around the corner and I thought you might be interested in the results of a survey sent to Texas hunters concerning dove hunting in Texas. The survey questions and the percentage of hunters responding to possible answers are:

1. Which dove shooting hours do you prefer?
  - 15.2% – noon to sunset
  - 78.0% – 30 minutes before sunrise to sunset
  - 6.9% – other
2. Which dove zone do you hunt the most?
  - 27.6% – North Zone
  - 44.5% – Central Zone
  - 27.9% – South Zone
3. Within a 70-day season in the North Zone, which season structure would you prefer?
  - 43.3% – September 1 – November 9
  - 36.3% – September 1 – October 24 and December 26 – January 10
  - 20.4% – September 1 – October 10 and December 4 – January 2
4. The North Zone season should open on:
  - 60.8% – September 1
  - 30.2% – First Saturday in September
  - 9.0% – First Friday in September

# DOVE BANDING Project



I am banding both white-winged and mourning doves again this summer. This is about the fourth year I have been participating in this project. The purpose of banding is to determine harvest rates, mortality, longevity and movements of doves in Texas. Doves are trapped in funnel traps, aged and sexed; then a metal band is placed on the leg of the bird. The band has a unique number and information about how to report the band if found.

The Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center keeps a database on all banded wild birds. You can either call them or go to their Web site to report a band that you recover. They should be able to tell you when, where and who banded that bird.

According to the Bird Banding Laboratory, the first known metal leg band recovery occurred in 1595 when one of Henry IV's banded peregrine falcons was lost in France. The bird showed up 24 hours later in Malta, about 1,350 miles away, averaging 56 miles per hour.

The BBL also maintains longevity records on banded birds. The oldest bird ever banded is not necessarily of great value to those studying the age structure of a population, but it is of interest to many people. The lifespans of some wild birds as documented and verified by the BBL are quite amazing. Here are a few interesting band recoveries from their records.

- Mourning dove, banded in 1958 in Colorado, shot in Guatemala in 1977 (19 years).
- White-winged dove, banded in 1958 in Arizona, shot in Mexico in 1980.
- Red-tailed hawk, banded in 1976 in Maryland, found dead in New York in 2005.
- Bald eagle, banded in 1977 in Michigan, caught when it got hit by a vehicle in 2008 in Wisconsin; bird was released after being rehabilitated.
- Mallard duck, banded in 1981 in Louisiana, shot in Arkansas in 2008.
- Lesser snow goose, banded in 1952 in Nunavut, Canada, shot in 1978 in Texas.

To report a band you may either call or go to the following Web site: <http://www.reportband.gov/>  
**1-800-327-BAND (2263)**



B 2010  
Stacy Kunkin



Texas Parks & Wildlife Department  
Dana Wright  
2789 CR 410  
Paducah, TX 79248

Executive Director  
Carter P. Smith

Editor, Rolling Plains Wildlife News  
Dana Wright



COMMISSION

- Peter M. Holt, Chairman  
San Antonio
- T. Dan Friedkin, Vice-Chairman  
Houston
- Mark E. Bivins, Amarillo
- Ralph H. Duggins, Fort Worth
- Antonio Falcon, M.D., Rio Grande City
- Karen J. Hixon, San Antonio
- Dan Allen Hughes, Jr., Beeville
- Margaret Martin, Boerne
- S. Reed Morian, Houston
- Lee M. Bass, Chairman-Emeritus  
Fort Worth

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 through the TPWD Web site. Please notify us by completing a request form at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/enews/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/enews/). Once verified, we will notify you by e-mail when a new version of your selected newsletter is posted at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsletters/](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsletters/). Your name and address will be removed from the printed version mail distribution list.

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 Web site for detailed information about TPWD programs:

**[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)**

©2010 TPWD PWD LF W7000-1681 (07/10)

In accordance with Texas State Depository Law, this publication is available at the Texas State Publications Clearinghouse and/or Texas Depository Libraries.