

THE CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

Fall 2014 edition

Nature notes & news from the Lavaca County Wildlife Management Association

Donate your deer and alleviate hunger in Lavaca County

Hunger, known nowadays as “food insecurity,” still plagues a vast portion of the U.S. population. It is estimated that as many as 1 in 6 Americans, or >46 million people, don’t know where their next meal will come from. Every year, many LCWMA members are issued more doe permits than they have need for the meat. Some members give the permits to friends, family, or co-workers, but hectic lifestyles often interfere, and result in the permits going unutilized. This year, make sure those permits get utilized and donate your bounty to our neighbors in need. What better way to help the deer population, the habitat, and those in need than by donating your deer to a local charity? It’s a win, win, win situation.

The Lavaca Assistance Ministry Body (LAMB) in Lavaca County is once again asking for your assistance in alleviating hunger in Lavaca County, by donating your unwanted, freshly-harvested deer meat. Donated deer must be skinned, gutted, quartered, and packed on ice, with proof of sex attached, and delivered to one of the participating processors. The hunter may keep any portion of the meat they desire, and all donated meat must be edible. The processor will debone the meat, grind it into hamburger, package it, and deliver it to the LAMB, for distribution to those in need.

There is no cost to the hunter other than the time invested to skin, gut, quarter, and deliver the deer. Processing costs are covered by generous donations from the Dickson-Allen Foundation and Peoples State Bank of Hallettsville. Please help us reach our goal of 100 deer donated for the 2014-2015 hunting season.

Participating processors, where to find them and how to contact them.

Herbert Neubauer (Sublime) 361-798-4457 (home) or 361-772-5067 (cell)

Glen’s Packing Company (Hallettsville) 361-798-2601

Novosad’s BBQ and Sausage Market (Hallettsville) 361-798-2770

Janak’s Country Market (west of Hallettsville) 361-798-2985

Stay in the loop

Don’t let this be your last LCWMA newsletter. If you haven’t already paid your 2014 membership dues, please do so as soon as possible. Dues are still \$20 ,and checks or money orders should be made payable to LCWMA. Mail dues to:

LCWMA

P.O. Box 524

Hallettsville, TX 77964

Website update

Check out the new and improved LCWMA website at www.lcwma.org. Not all areas of the website are complete, and more information will be added as time allows.

Enrollment forms, newsletters, and harvest data sheets are all available on the new site. Now, if you lose your newsletter or misplace your harvest data sheet you can go to our website and download another one. You won’t ever miss another deadline, again.

Points on plants by Joel Wagner, wildlife ecologist and LCWMA chairman

Those who have known me for a while now know that I am adamant about wildlife habitat management. As the amount of open-space land continues to dwindle, the science of habitat management will grow in importance, as it becomes increasingly difficult to meet the needs of more wildlife species on a smaller area. Thus, understanding what constitutes good wildlife habitat is paramount to ensuring the survival of some wildlife species into the future.

To successfully manage wildlife habitats, there are many factors to consider (e.g., wildlife species, rainfall, historic land uses, current land use, historic plant community, current plant community), but the bare bones of habitat management can be summed up by 2 tenets: 1.) know your plants, and 2.) know how to manipulate them. Many newsletters have focused on tenet #2, but not much focus has been given to educating the membership on the plant community, other than the LCWMA Field Day and the plant ID contests at past meetings. So, I am starting a new series, one I hope to continue in each subsequent edition of *The Conservation Quarterly*, called "Points on plants." I think it is vitally important as land stewards to want to leave the land better than we found it. Plant species composition is 1 indicator of the success or shortcoming of our management efforts. I will try to include pictures of the plant with flower and fruit whenever possible, but this month's installment is an exception. I didn't have the idea for this column until after the plant had already flowered, so this month there is only the plant and its fruit/seed.



Have you seen this plant? If you answered yes, did the plant occur on your property or outside the fence in the ditch? If you answered in your pasture, give yourself a pat on the back because a majority of LCWMA members will never see this plant in their pasture. The plant in the photos is *Desmanthus illinoensis*, commonly referred to as Illinois bundleflower. Illinois bundleflower (hereafter, bundleflower) is a perennial legume, found most often on moderate soils, meaning it usually doesn't occur on very sandy soils or on very heavy clays. Bundleflower is often an indicator of good to excellent range condition, and is classified as a decreaser, or species that reduces in quantity as grazing intensity increases. Bundleflower forage is readily browsed by white-tailed deer, and its protein levels (30-38%) in both its forage and seeds rival those of alfalfa. Unlike alfalfa, though, bundleflower has a high lignin content, making its leaves and stems more woody in texture, and therefore harder to digest.

As mentioned, bundleflower seeds are high in protein, and are an excellent food source for grassland birds, especially northern bobwhites. Current research is exploring the cultivation of Illinois bundleflower as a protein source in the diets of humans and domestic livestock. It is also being studied in crop rotations as a way to restore nitrogen to depleted soils.

Being a native, Illinois bundleflower is naturally drought tolerant, but thrives in years of average-above average rainfall. Due to its inability to tolerate heavy grazing, Illinois bundleflower is most often found growing in areas beyond the reach of grazing livestock, that is, just outside the fence in the ditch. Like most other legumes, bundleflower does not like wet feet, and normally occurs in areas that are well-drained. Illinois bundleflower normally flowers in the late spring and early summer. The flowers will look like fuzzy, little cotton balls, composed of hundreds of strands of white stamens.

DATA COLLECTION 2014-2015

Harvest data is crucial for herd management and is also a requirement of the MLD process. In order to get a better idea on deer harvested this year I have modified the data sheet. Include ALL deer harvested. Please fill out this harvest log and return by the posted deadline.

Property name as indicated on permit: _____

Landowner or Agent as indicated on permit: _____

Wildlife Management Unit: _____

Date of Harvest	Sex	# Points	Inside spread

Date of Harvest	Sex	# Points	Inside spread

Failure to submit harvest data **by March 1, 2015** will jeopardize continued participation in the MLDP program for the 2015-16 season.

- Mail a copy of your harvest sheet to:
 - **Texas Parks & Wildlife, 412 N. Texana, Hallettsville, TX 77964**
- After sending a copy of your records, you may also enter the data directly into your TWIMS account. This is not mandatory but would be appreciated.
 - Please check one of the options.
 - _____ I *have* entered my harvest log into TWIMS.
 - _____ I *have not* entered my harvest log into TWIMS.
- Your username for TWIMS is simply your e-mail address.

HARVEST RECORDS DUE BY March 1, 2015

LCWMA
P.O. Box 524
Hallettsville, TX 77964

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Membership questions?

Call the Chairman at

361-798-6506 or

Email

lavacacountywma@gmail.com