

# THE CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

Fall 2015 edition

Nature notes & news from the Lavaca County Wildlife Management Association

## CWD voluntary drop-off and checkstation for Lavaca County

With the recent discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in two captive deer breeding facilities in Texas, one in Medina County and one in Lavaca County, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will be increasing efforts to sample hunter harvested deer during the 2015-16 hunting season.

As in the past, TPWD biologists will collect and submit samples to the Texas A&M Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. Tissue samples from the heads of harvested deer need to be collected within 24 hours of harvest, up to 48 hours if kept chilled. It is very important that the deer head not be frozen. Hunters that would like to assist with this monitoring effort can do so via a couple of methods.

A checkstation manned by TPWD biologists will be set-up at Hoffer's Drive-in Grocery (115 Fairwinds, Hallettsville) on November 7, 8, 14 and 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. to collect samples. Bring your animal (or head) by the checkstation during the listed times and a biologist will collect your sample and give you a CWD receipt. The receipt number will allow one to monitor the results of the test. Results should take 3 to 4 weeks.

Morton's (1603 N. Texana, Hallettsville) will be a drop-off location for heads only from 5:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., 7 days a week. This location will require the hunter to log harvest information, and provide contact information for each head submitted. Complete instructions will be provided inside the store. A TPWD biologist will frequently monitor the location, and make contact with each hunter regarding the sample at a later time. A valid phone number is essential for this method.

Additionally, hunters can contact their local wildlife biologist at 361-217-0907 and arrange for samples to be collected. Remember, a sample does not have to be collected immediately after harvest. If the head is kept cool (i.e. on ice) and not frozen, the sample can be collected up to 48 hours after harvest.

## Donate your deer and alleviate hunger in Lavaca County

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 2015-2016 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

# Hunters' help needed to advance Chagas disease research

Baylor College of Medicine, in cooperation with the Lavaca County Wildlife Management Association, is conducting a study to determine if white-tailed deer can carry the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi* (the causative agent of Chagas disease). We need your help! Hunters who harvest a deer (buck or doe) in Lavaca County on November 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> are asked to save the heart and bring it to Hoffer's Drive-In Grocery in Hallettsville (115 Fairwinds St). A drop-off station, manned by personnel from Baylor College of Medicine, will be set up on the east side of the parking lot between 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. both days. Simply place the heart in a plastic bag and keep it on ice until dropping it off. For questions please contact Joel Wagner at 361-798-6506 or Sarah Gunter at 713-298-7314.

Chagas disease is a parasitic infection spread by the kissing bug, a bloodsucking insect known for biting around the face and neck (pictured below). When the kissing bug bites it will simultaneously defecate, releasing the parasite, which then has to be scratched into the bite wound or mucous membrane to establish infection. Infection can also occur congenitally, from blood transfusion, organ transplant, or consumption of contaminated food and drink. Individuals with early stage Chagas disease typically show few or no symptoms. It is not until 20 to 30 years after initial infection that 30% will go on to develop cardiac disease or more rarely enlarged colon or esophagus. The treatments available are not FDA-approved and can cause adverse effects, which is why prevention is key.

Kissing bugs can be found throughout Texas, and the majority of them (>50%) are positive for the parasite. In addition to humans, other mammals such as dogs, raccoons, opossums, woodrats, and armadillos have been found to carry the parasite, but the burden of the disease in Texas wildlife is not fully understood. Our research indicates that Hallettsville is potentially a high risk area. There is compounding evidence that transmission is likely occurring, due to the findings of positive bugs, dogs, and possibly people.

Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine believe white-tailed deer may be a reservoir for Chagas disease, which could potentially transmit to hunters during the field dressing process. Thus, this project will collect and test hunter-harvested deer tissue, to determine if the hunting community could be at risk. Heart tissue collection, to test for the presence of Chagas disease, will occur across the state this hunting season. The support of the hunting community is paramount to the success of this project, and greatly appreciated.



Photo Credit: Gabe Hamer

## Email addresses needed

Upcoming changes in the permit issuance process will make it difficult for those not currently utilizing TWIMS to obtain and submit the data required to maintain MLD program participation. To get ahead of the curve, we are encouraging all who are not currently using the TWIMS system to submit their email address to the LCWMA and TPWD. If you receive MLD permits, you are in the TWIMS system, whether you utilize it or not. If you have an email address, and are NOT claiming your permits and submitting your harvest data via TWIMS, you are strongly encouraged to begin using the system. Once the new regulations take effect, TWIMS usage becomes mandatory. To begin using TWIMS online please email Doug Jobes with TPWD ([doug.jobes@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:doug.jobes@tpwd.texas.gov)) from the email address you wish to use. You will receive an email from TWIMS with instructions on how to set up your account.

We are working to determine what accommodations can be made for those without email. Fortunately, the regulations do not take effect until the 2016-2017 season, so we still have time to work on a solution. Look for more details in future newsletters.

# HARVEST DATA COLLECTION 2015-2016

In years past, harvest records included various records such as dressed weights, age, and antler measurements. This year, in an attempt to get a more accurate count of how many deer are harvested and to increase data return rates, we are simply asking for how many antlered and antlerless deer were harvested on the property and on what date. Please fill out this harvest log and return it to Doug Jobs 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

Please submit harvest data **by March 1, 2016**.

- Mail a copy of your harvest sheet to:
  - Doug Jobs
  - 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 email address.

**HARVEST RECORDS DUE BY March 1, 2016**

**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](mailto:lavacacountywma@gmail.com)**