



## **WCWS Semi-Annual Meeting**

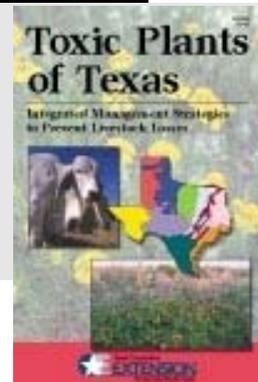
### **Toxic Plants of Texas**

Program Presented by

**Catherine Barr, PhD**

American Board of Toxicology

Veterinary Toxicologist



Please join us on **August 24, 2007** for a program on Toxic Plants of Texas. The program will be held at **Miracle Farm**, located at 10802 FM 2621. There will be a tour of the facility at Miracle Farm at 6 pm, meal at 6:30 and program at 7 pm. Catfish and chicken tenders with all the trimmings will be served. Cost of the meal will be \$5 per person. **A dessert table will be available if you would like to share your favorite dessert.**

Please RSVP to the Washington County Cooperative Extension Office  
by August 18th—**(979) 277-6212**

Catherine Barr, PhD, American Board of Toxicology Veterinary Toxicologist has worked at the Vet Diagnostic Lab (TVMDL) in College Station for the last 16 years, with Dr. John Reagor in Toxicology. Dr Barr co-authored TCE publication B-6105, Toxic Plants of Texas in 2001.

Miracle Farm is a 325-acre residential boys ranch steeped in western heritage and traditional values located in Brenham Texas. It is a unique place where they become responsible young men of integrity and character, a place where self-esteem and honor can be rebuilt. A dedicated staff, incredible setting, on-campus school, innovative horse program and on-site R.O.P.E.S. Challenge Course create a well-rounded program.



WASHINGTON COUNTY

# Wildlife Society

## OFFICERS:

Sara Byman, Society President, (979) 830-8555  
Ronald Perry, Society Vice President, (979) 289-2234  
Dave Redden, Society Treasurer, (936) 878-1988  
Jennifer Mohr, Society Secretary, (979) 278-3394

## WMA DIRECTORS:

### Greenvine WMA

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### New Years Creek WMA

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## RESOURCE CONTACTS:

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## President's Remarks

Summer is here.....

Well, half the year has flown by and it is really getting hot. The rain refilled our ponds this spring, food plots are growing nicely and many of you have reported seeing deer, quail, bluebirds and, unfortunately, hogs, on your property. Quite a few snakes, raccoons and coyote sightings were reported, too. I know this because the Wildlife Society has a great executive board made up of your elected Co-op representatives. We meet every other month and talk about what is going on in each area of Washington County that pertains to wildlife. This interaction is very important and attendance has been great. We discuss Co-op meetings coming up and get ideas from each other about programs, field days, seminars, field trips, semi-annual meetings, projects worthy of our donations, youth projects and scholarships, etc. Attend your spring and fall Co-op meetings and get to know your Director and Vice-Director. Tell them what you see on your property so others can hear about it, too.



We are always on the look out for interesting topics you might like to learn about in your quest to be a good manager of the wildlife on your property and are open to hearing from you. Contact your Co-op Director or the Extension Office at 979 277-6212 and talk to Larry Pierce or Robert Lehmann or leave me a message if you have contact information for an interesting speaker or an idea for a program for a Co-op meeting or one of our large semi-annual meetings. This organization is here to serve you the best way we can and we would love to hear from you.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome our two newest Lifetime Members, Mr. Randy Reddemann of New Years Creek and Mr. Ken English, in Rocky Creek Co-op. We deeply appreciate the support and contribution to the welfare and wildlife management in Washington County these members have made and will formally recognize them in August. Welcome and thank you!

Close at hand is our August Semi-annual Washington County Wildlife Society meeting for our members, so mark your calendars now. This meeting will be held at **Miracle Farm** on Friday evening, August 24th. We will be serving catfish and chicken tenders with all the trimmings and our program will be on Toxic Plants of Texas presented by Catherine Barr, Ph.D. The cost is \$5 per person. Please RSVP to the Extension Office at 979 277-6212 by August 18th. Of course, you will still get the brown postcard as a reminder...

I hope to see you all there for a great evening of eating and learning! Bring a neighbor who would like to become a member of our Washington County Wildlife Society.

*Sara Byman*  
President

# WEED SPRAYING DETRIMENTAL TO WILDLIFE FOOD SUPPLY

Robert Lehmann, Texas Parks & Wildlife Biologist

Each year many thousands of acres are sprayed with herbicides to control weeds (forbs) that compete with grass for moisture and nutrients. Many years ago weed control was not widespread and it was common to see most pastureland with a variety of weeds present. These pastures looked "shoddy" when compared to the more manicured pastures seen today. However, from a wildlife standpoint, these weedy pastures were much more productive as they provided tremendous amounts of food for wildlife.

Weeds play a key role in supporting wildlife populations. They are one of the most important parts of the white-tailed deer's diet. Deer prefer forbs to any other food source and forbs usually have the highest protein level of any plants on native range. Deer require a 15-16 percent protein diet to maintain good reproduction, antler development, and body condition. Weeds, although seasonal, play a key role in providing this protein. Weeds also provide cover and food for quail and other birds (both game and non-game species).

A landowner has the right to manage his pastures in any manner he desires. However, he should realize

that if he manages 100 percent for beef production, wildlife populations will suffer. If one is interested in increasing the carrying capacity for deer and/or other wildlife on his ranch, he cannot manage for maximum cattle production.

Slight modifications in current land use practices can often improve wildlife habitat without drastically affecting the livestock operation. For example, instead of spraying entire pastures, leave unsprayed strips next to the woods to increase the food supply for wildlife. Shredding is a good alternative to spraying by providing weed control without eliminating the weeds as a source of food for the wildlife.

A land manager must decide if he wants a management program totally directed toward livestock production, or if he wants to reduce the intensity of the livestock management to increase wildlife habitat. He cannot have maximum livestock and deer production simultaneously. The spraying of weeds is one of the most harmful things that a landowner can do for the wildlife on his property. Elimination of weeds has played a major role in reducing wildlife populations.~

## Time to I. D. some Deer



Starting August 1st members should begin to log deer sightings within the county. See instructions on reverse side of enclosed form. Please take some time and go out and identify some deer, log them onto the form according to instructions.

## Don't Forget to Renew Your Membership!

Most of you have renewed your membership in the Washington County Wildlife Society but it is not too late to renew if you have overlooked it. Your support of \$15 per year insures continued participation in wildlife related projects, field days, workshops, and other educational events. Your dues help support and sponsor our local youth in wildlife camps, programs, and educational activities. With your generous support, the Society is expanding many of these efforts to include more students and different age groups. Also, with a one-time donation of \$1,000 or more, the Society will honor and recognize your lifetime commitment to the Society. You may mail or drop off your check at the Washington County office of the Texas Cooperative Extension located at 1305 East Blue Bell Road, Suite 104 in Brenham.

# Washington County Bird Watch

By Darrell Vollert

## Why Band Birds?

Before we discuss why birds are banded I must first mention who can band birds. Before anyone can trap and band birds anywhere, he or she must obtain a special permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and their state parks and wildlife department. Not everyone can obtain a permit. Applicants must prove they have a thorough knowledge of birds. Applicants must know how to set out mist nets and fold up mist nets. They also need to know how to safely remove different kinds of birds from mist nets and how to place the band, gently but firmly, on a bird's leg. Applicants also need to know how to take measurements and know what information to record about each bird banded, all without harming a bird in any way. This requires great skill, care, and patience, especially if a bird has become badly entangled in a net. Applicants who are at least 18 years of age and are able to identify all of the common birds in their different seasonal plumages may apply for a bird banding permit.

Banders are a select group. There are currently only 2000 master banding permits and 3000 sub-permits in the United States. I have a sub-permit under Dr. Keith Arnold at Texas A&M in College Station.

Birds are banded for several reasons. Bird banding data are useful in both research and management projects. Individual identification of birds makes possible studies of dispersal and migration, behavior and social structure, life-span and survival rate, reproductive success and population growth. Through banding we have learned that migrating birds have a very strong site fidelity. That is, these migrants breed at the same location year after year throughout their life span. They also winter at the same location every year. To give you an example. I have banded at a location near Chappell Hill for a few years now. Several Painted Buntings have been recaptured at this location. These birds find their way back to this location to breed every year throughout their lives. Chipping Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows that winter in our area have been recaptured near Chappell Hill. So, much has been learned about the movements of migratory birds through banding.



Second year male Painted Bunting that was banded in Washington County. This bird was in its second calendar year at the time of the banding, meaning that he was born the previous year.

By banding birds we are able to determine the minimum length of time that an individual bird lives. Without an individual marker, there would be no way to determine if the Carolina Chickadee that is outside my window is the same bird that I saw last year or not. With a bird band, if I catch that Carolina Chickadee today and band it, I will know if that one bird is caught again in the future. I once recaptured a Painted Bunting that I banded three years prior.

The male bird was at least two years of age when I banded him. When the male Painted Bunting was recaptured he was at least 5 years of age!

Banding and marking birds can also be used to estimate the numbers of birds in a population using a mark-recapture technique. Birds are marked in one time period, and then recaptured or resighted in a later time period. The number of birds marked in the first period and the ratio of marked to un-

marked birds in the population in the second period allow the total population of birds to be estimated.

Birds are also caught and tested for diseases that can affect humans such as West Nile Virus, encephalitis, and Lyme disease. Sampling wild birds for serious disease helps determine the prevalence of the disease in the population. Banding allows for birds that have been sampled once to be avoided in the next sample--or to be resampled, depending on the study.~

*Darrell Vollert is a native of Washington County. He leads private birding tours in Texas, and assists with the coordination of birding field trips for the Texas Ornithological Society in southeast Texas. Look for more birding articles from Darrell in our future newsletters.*

On Saturday July 15th, Darrell will be leading a bird banding session near Chappell Hill. The target species for this workshop will be Painted Buntings, but other species will also be banded. The fee for the workshop is \$15.00. If you have any questions about the July 15th workshop, please contact Darrell via e-mail at [darrellv@computexas.net](mailto:darrellv@computexas.net), by phone at 979-251-4986, or visit his website at: [www.DarrellVollertNatureTours.com](http://www.DarrellVollertNatureTours.com).