

Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education



Photo by: Sarah Turner

**TEXAS CHAPTER OF
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
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EDITOR, ANDREA WILEY

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

by Romey Swanson

A Message from the President

I am impressed by the versatility and resiliency of our membership. Most of us are here because of a shared passion for the conservation of Texas' wild others. That's straightforward. What is less straightforward is the diverse array of skills and roles necessary for conservation to work in a world so connected, complex, and dynamic.

For the Texas Chapter, this past year will forever be remembered for this requisite versatility and resilience that culminated in a wildly successful virtual conference. The leadership of Dr. John Tomecek, Cristy Burch, Mary-Pearl Meuth, and many additional wildlifers were on full display during the conference and we all owe a debt of gratitude to all that contributed to this shared success.

I am eager to work with our newly elected slate of officers - John Kinsey (president-elect), Dr. Blake Grisham (vice president), Dr. Jessica Glasscock (Secretary), and Masi Serna (Member-at-Large).

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Working with a full complement of Board Members, we'll aim to continue down the good path struck by our predecessors and maintain the Chapter's favorable standing while advancing strategic objectives in support of wildlife management and research.

During the conference, I shared my wildlife "origin story" and how the Texas Chapter helped shape my academic and professional career. My aim was to illustrate one of many non-traditional paths to leadership while also noting the Chapter's commitment to the cultivation of professional success at all stages. I truly believe our's is a society that endeavors to pave broad avenues of opportunity and it is incumbent upon all of us to assure that this truth is understood and known by all communities that care for and benefit from the management of our shared wildlife resources.

Like many of you, I am excited to welcome Penny Wilkinson and Dr. Lalo Gonzalez as Co-chairs of the newly formed Diversity and Inclusion Committee. I look forward to their insight and input as we continue to reflect on our responsibility to affirm the tenants of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation - namely, that we manage wildlife on behalf of all citizens and assure the democratic principles of wildlife access regardless of background, color, or orientation.

I'll also share my enthusiasm for the continued work of the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Cohort as they continue to grapple with two important issues - Relevancy of the Wildlife Profession and Texas' Wildlife Management Property Tax Valuation. The Chapter will deeply benefit from your work and we appreciate your effort and leadership.

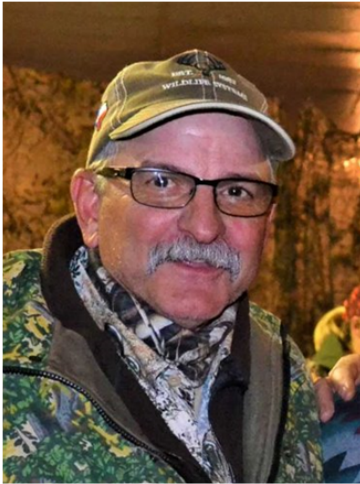
I'll conclude with a note to all the student chapters. The officers and I are looking forward to hearing from and engaging with you over the course of this year. If you aren't already, please feel emboldened to participate, serve, and network within your Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. And always remember to "dare mighty things".



Kindest Personal Regards,
Romey Swanson

President, Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society

ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS



Outstanding Achievement Award
- Dr. Robert (Bob) Dittmar
(Posthumous)



Honorary Life Membership Award
- Dr. Tim Fulbright



Educator of the Year
- Dr. Daniel Scognamillo



1st Place Cottam Award
- Levi Heffelfli



2nd Place Cottam Award
- Matthew Buchholz



3rd Place Cottam Award
- Kristyn Stewart

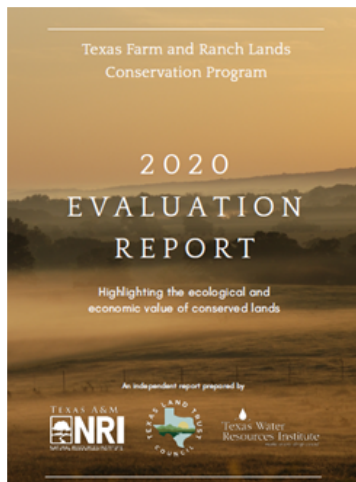
COMMENTARY This article was originally published in *The Wildlife Professional*, an exclusive benefit for members of The Wildlife Society. Learn about more membership benefits and become a member at wildlife.org/join.

The Hidden Heroes of North American Conservation

EXPLORING PIONEERING WOMEN LEFT OUT OF WILDLIFE HISTORY
By Winifred Kessler and Selma Glasscock



Outstanding Popular Article
- Winifred Kessler and Selma Glasscock



Outstanding Technical Publication
- Alison Lund, Garrett Powers, Roel Lopez, Addie Smith, Lori Olson, and Lucas Gregory

Wildlife Monographs 202-5-63, 2019, DOI: 10.1002/wmon.1040

Linking White-Tailed Deer Density, Nutrition, and Vegetation in a Stochastic Environment

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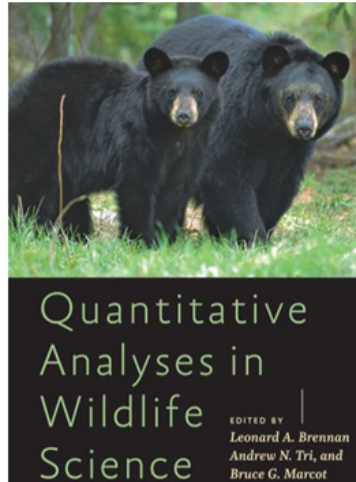
ABSTRACT Density-dependent behavior underpins white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) theory and management application in North America, but strength or frequency of the phenomenon has varied across the geographic range of the species. The modifying effect of stochastic environments and poor-quality habitats on density-dependent behavior has been recognized for ungulate populations around the world, including white-tailed deer populations in South Texas, USA. Despite the importance of understanding mechanisms influencing density dependence, researchers have concentrated on demographic and morphological implications of deer

Outstanding Scientific Article
- Charles DeYoung, Timothy Fulbright, David Hewitt, David Wester, and Don Draeger

ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS



Outstanding Electronic Media
-Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research
Institute Publications



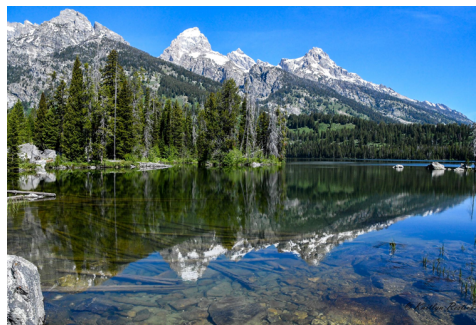
Outstanding Book
-Leonard Brennan, Andrew Tri,
and Bruce Marcot



Student Chapter of the Year
- Stephen F. Austin University



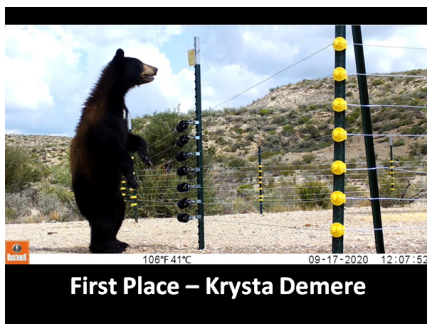
Land Stewardship Award
- Tarrant Regional Water District



Judges Choice Photo and 1st
Place Scenery
- Kaitlyn Restivo



1st Place Conservation Photo
- Krysta Demere



1st Place Humor Photo
- Krysta Demere



1st Place Remote Camera Photo
- Gary Mizer



Peoples Choice and 1st Place
Work Related
- Jake Hill

ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS



1st Place Wildlife
- Kaitlyn Restivo



1st Place Plants
- Joseph Richards



1st Place Art
- Sara Boggan



Dan Boone Memorial
Scholarship - Olivia Gray



Colin Caruthers Memorial
Scholarship - Sophie Morris



Charly McTee Memorial
Scholarship - Eve Schrader



Sam Beason Memorial
Scholarship - Daniel Wilcox



Carl D. Shoemaker Memorial
Scholarship - Jake Hill

ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS

Outstanding Student Posters:

1st Place Undergraduate Poster:
Dakota Moberg

1st Place Graduate Poster:
Jacquelyn Tleimat

2nd Place Undergraduate Poster.:
Tenley Housler

2nd Place Graduate Poster.:
Sean Collins

3rd Place Undergraduate Poste:
Lori Massey

3rd Place Graduate Poste:
Meghan Mahurin

Outstanding Students in Wildlife:

Stephen F. Austin Univ.:
Justin Carpenter

Texas A&M Univ. - Commerce:
Savannah Seeley

Sul Ross State Univ.:
Christopher Hernandez

Texas A&M Univ. - Kingsville:
John Herschberger

Tartleton State University:
Emily Vincik

Texas State University:
Kate Underwood

Texas A&M University:
Jeremiah Wright

Texas Tech University:
Ariana Rivera

JTCLI Early Career Professionals



Nicole Alonso-Leach, Ursula Alvarado-Miller, Wendy Anderson, Kasey Clarke, Mallory Eastland, Tony Henehan, Reuben Gay, Amanda Gobel, Lalo Gonzalez, Tiffany Lane, Grant Lawrence, Alison Lund, Anna Matthews, Heather Sterling

Botany Briefs

Check out our new recurring column, 'Botany Briefs.' Here we will share information about plants that are important to wildlife, whether beneficial or harmful. If you would like to contribute an article, please contact us at newsletter@tctws.org.

Widow's Tears/White-mouth Dayflower (*Commelina erecta* L.)

By Sarah Turner

If you're walking around Texas in spring and fall (anytime from March through November really), you'd be hard pressed to not find a purple flower who looks an awful lot like a grass. This plant is distinctive, you notice, because it's only in-bloom for a short time period (a single day), has parallel leaf venation, and the flower has 2 distinct purple petals and one small white petal (Image 1).



Photo 1: The distinct inflorescence of *C. erecta*. Photographed by S.J. Turner.

This unique and well-known plant goes by the common name of White-mouth dayflower or widow's tears (*Commelina erecta* L.) and can be found in all of Gould's ecoregions of Texas (albeit it is less prevalent in the Rolling Plains and Edwards Plateau). This perennial spiderwort species can be decumbent (ground trailing) or erect (upright growing) and can attain a vertical height of up to 18 inches. Vegetatively, this monocot has 1 to many somewhat succulent/fleshy stems enclosed by a pubescent leaf sheath and alternately arranged leaves that are linear to lanceolate shaped (Image 2). *C. erecta* has a terminal cyme inflorescence that are enclosed in prominent, leaflike spathes (a covering enclosing the inflorescence; Image 3), and a flower with 2 large blue to lavender petals (resembling mouse ears to me) and one proximal smaller whiteish petal. The flowers are bisexual and unisexual with 6 stamen (of which 3 are fertile and 3 are sterile) and ovaries that are 3-loculed, and produces a 2-valved, 3-loculed capsule fruit upon maturation.



Photo 2: The linear/lanceolate leaves of *C. erecta*. Retrieved and used with permission from <http://southwestdesertflora.com/>

White-mouth dayflower can easily establish in meadows, wooded areas, or other moisture rich locations (as it can be propagated from seeds and/or tubers) but can become invasive under optimal growth conditions. Wildlife value of the species include browsing of foliage by deer and lagomorphs and seed consumption by a variety of bird species including bob-white and mourning dove. Likewise, the showy flower attracts a plethora of pollinating insects.

Fun fact 1: the Spanish name of the species means "herb of the chicken".

Fun fact 2: the specific epithet *erecta* describes the plant's tendency for upright growing stems (isn't Latin fun?!?).

Literature Cited:

https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=COER
<https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=COER>
<http://floraofalabama.org/Plant.aspx?id=3845>
Powell, A.M. and R.D. Worthington. 2018. Flowering plants of the Trans-Pecos Texas and adjacent areas. Sida, Bot. Misc. 49. Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.



Photo 3: The spathe of *C. erecta*. Retrieved and used with permission from <http://southwestdesertflora.com/>

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

by Jim Ramakka

Not surprisingly, the first quarter of 2021 has been filled with Zoom calls and webinars. The Chapters of the Southwest Section of The Wildlife Society held very impressive virtual meetings that highlighted the great work that students and our professional members are continuing to do while facing the restrictions imposed by the pandemics. The work of TWS Council has continued as well.

I presented a summary of Council activities at the Arizona and New Mexico Chapter Meetings. I was disappointed that a Council Position Statement Committee Meeting scheduled at the same time prevented me from doing same for the Texas Chapter Members Meeting.

In addition to various committee meetings, the full Council has met twice via Zoom since the beginning of the year. During a Special Council Meeting on January 25th, we reviewed a report of the Policy Priorities Committee that included an analysis of input from Chapters and Sections. Based on that input, we approved the following Policy Priorities for 2021-22:

- Continue efforts toward passage of Recovering America's Wildlife Act.
- Support funding for U.S. federal cooperative science programs (Coop Fish and Wildlife Research Units, Climate Adaptation Science Centers, and other similar programs).
- Support adequate funding for U.S. federal land management agencies (USWS Refuges, BLM, FS)
- Support efforts to restore previous interpretation of "take" under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- Encourage and support Chapter, Section, working groups to continue engagement in Policy issues through the Conservation Affairs Network

The Spring Council Meeting was held on March 6 and 7. Section and Chapter Presidents and President-Elects, Student Chapter Presidents, Working Group Chairs and Chair-Elects were invited to sit in and observe the meeting.

Key topics on the agenda were:

- Initial discussion of staffing priorities for the future (1-3 years out) based on recent and potential enhancement of member programs and support services and current staff's knowledge and talents. Additional

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

use of contractors is one possible alternative. All alternatives depend on future budget status.

-Status of FY 21 Budget – income from sponsors is down, but so are expenses resulting in a basically stable budget situation at the present time.

-Discussions of Operations Plan Progress – Staff is on track to meet all Ops Plan goals and has provided additional support for a number of tasks that were not delineated in the original plan including:

- International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- TWS Bylaws
- Office of Ombuds
- Paycheck Protection Program
- Efforts to inform and influence the incoming administration of the new U.S. President
- Virtual Student Conclaves
- Establishment of a Mexico Chapter
- Professional development webinar series
- Preparation of agendas, backup materials, and meeting minutes for more frequent Council meetings

-Operation Plan Highlights:

- The Virtual Annual Conferences attracted 2,534 attendees and generated a net profit of \$202K
 - Membership has grown to a record level of 11,698.
 - A Diverstiy/Equity/Inclusion (DEI) Plan was drafted for Council review.
 - Staff continues working to support initiation of a Mexican Chapter (pending incorporation under Mexican Law).
 - Banking and Accounting Services support for Working Groups continues to be initiated.
 - All Federal Partners have renewed their participation in TWS Partners Program.
 - TWS received a Payroll Protection Plan Loan which has since been forgiven (a second PPP loan was applied for and received in March).
 - Planning and for the 2021 Virtual Annual Conference is proceeding well
- Additional Topics discussed included:
- Future Conference Structure – an ad hoc committee was established to evaluate how to enhance conference efforts by creating a combination in-person/virtual event.

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

- The FY22 Operations Plan was discussed as were TWS Committee Charges.
- The Financial and Investment Policy was reviewed. TWS will continue a conservative approach to budgeting and remain cautious about new expenditures while monitoring the changing economic situation.
- Proposed revisions to the Bylaws and General Operation Procedures - The Bylaws Subcommittee has been working on revisions for the past 2 years. Input from TWS Past Presidents, Aldo Leopold Award Winners, TWS Sections and Chapters, and TWS Working Groups highlighted two problem areas that needed to be addressed:
 - 1.The definition of Sections (membership area vs voting district) - i.e. individuals can join a membership Section without joining TWS, but only TWS members may vote for Section Representative to Council. Clarification needed as to when or how Council may alter the boundaries of to ensure equitable representation of the membership on Council.
 - 2.Clarification of the legal identity of Working Groups to TWS to comply with tax laws and TWS articles of incorporation.
- Council voted to approve the publication of the proposed Bylaw revisions for distribution to the general membership for review and a vote.
- Council agreed to a request from the TWP Editorial Advisory Board to provide a small honorarium to the lead authors of contributed articles and to the establishment of an award for best contributed article.
- The International Involvement Liaison Committee is exploring opportunities for further TWS engagement at the international level. – How should TWS make best use of its newly granted membership to IUCN? How much funding should be allocated for participation at IUCN meetings and the IUGB meeting proposed for Budapest in September?
- The prioritization of climate change efforts was discussed as a topic for continued analysis and planning to determine how to integrate meaningful and implementable actions into TWS planning and programs.

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

- Council voted to approve the recipients nominated to receive this year's Group Achievement Award and TWS Fellows Awards. An announcement of the recipients will be made at a future date.

The above is only a brief summary of the Spring Council meeting. Full minutes of the meeting will be posted on the TWS website.

The bottom line is that TWS has been able to weather the pandemic in good shape. Reduced revenue has been compensated in large part by reduced expenses and use of the Payroll Protection Plan program. TWS staff have done a great job of working to support the subunits and

membership has increased. Council will continue to take a cautious approach to TWS finances and activities as we continue to work through these turbulent times.

Stay safe and please contact me with any questions you might have.



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This is *your* newsletter.

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tctws.org



Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society Newsletter is published electronically in January, April, July, and October. Contributions on any topic pertaining to wildlife, announcements of interest to members, or Chapter business are welcome and should be submitted to the Editors (Andrea Wiley and Maureen Frank, newsletter@tctws.org) by the 15th of the preceding month. Change of email address should be submitted online through the Address Change Form. Membership in the Chapter is \$15/year for students and \$25/year for regular members.