

Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education



Photo by: A. Richards

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THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S NOTE.....1
OFFICER NOMINATION BIOS..4
TCTWS COMMITTEE NEWS...8
BOTANY BREIFS.....12
SOUTHWEST SECTION
TRACKS.....14

EDITOR, ANDREA WILEY

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

by Romey Swanson

A Message from the President

Dear Wildlifers –

As this newsletter hits your inbox, we are just weeks away from returning to our first in-person Annual Conference. Let me confirm the rumor: we are limiting registration to 500 this year. I made this decision in the face of the lingering pandemic and the logistical realities surrounding a smaller venue. I'll remind the membership that we make venue decisions over two years in advance of our meeting, and no one was thinking about global pandemics at the time I signed off on Marble Falls. Horseshoe Bay Resort is a fine conference space and will provide us with an abundance of outdoor amenities and opportunities. Although this conference won't bring us back to complete normalcy, we'll respond the way any good wildlife biologist or researcher would - we'll make do with the circumstances we face. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that this year's conference will be enjoyable, memorable, and informative.

Let us dive in a bit on the realities associated with conducting this year's conference. First, we all recognize that the annual conference is the primary platform to seek out and receive the most current scholarship concerning Texas wildlife management and research. Therefore, TCTWS is assuring that all oral and poster presenters have a secured registration spot and that these presentations will be recorded to assure all members will have access to them

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

after the conference. Next, let us acknowledge that we are all adults and, together, a relatively close-knit community. Although we may have differing worldviews or levels of comfort navigating public spaces, I expect all our members to show respect towards one another. Further, I hope we will all make personal choices that keep ourselves safe while also being thoughtful about the safety of others - particularly our older and/or potentially susceptible members. The Executive Committee is working on protocols that should make these decisions easy - including expectations around testing before the conference, providing TWS branded face shields as part of registration perk, and offering registration rebates to any member exhibiting symptoms of Covid before or during the conference. We are currently working with the Burnet County medical community to arrange for free volunteer on-site testing.

The theme of our conference is Celebrating Our Diversity: the wildlife and the people. My goal with this theme seeks to reconcile two priority issues with which our profession continues to grapple - exploring the ongoing needs and unique tools we use to conserve Texas' incredible diversity of wildlife while promoting and assuring relevancy within our membership and among all the communities who care for or benefit from our work. I've had the privilege of working with our Teer Conservation Leadership Cohort who will put on an impressive plenary session that will dig in on these concepts.

While I have you here, let me share a couple of TCTWS accomplishments from 2021. Our intrepid Past President, Dr. John Tomeček, made lemonade out of lemons by hosting an extremely successful first all virtual TCTWS Annual Conference. With underwriting from the Dr. Douglas Slack Memorial Fund, TCTWS has conceived and will develop an annual Student Leadership Assembly with an aim to further unify and develop leadership skills within our student chapters. We have made significant contributions to the ongoing conversation around Chronic Wasting Disease and TPWD's responsibility to make management decisions based on science and best management practices. TCTWS established an ad hoc Diversity and Inclusion Committee chaired by Penny Wilkinson and Dr. Lalo Gonzalez. Penny and Lalo have made significant contributions outlining a draft charter for the committee while integrating within the national TWS network. TCTWS will soon be voting to adopt Diversity and Inclusion as a formal standing committee.

There remains a lot of uncertainty in the world and even some within TCTWS. Planning for our annual conference is certainly one example. But we can all bank on at least one thing - we will be welcoming a stellar slate of officers at the conclusion of the upcoming conference. I will be passing the gavel to John Kinsey as he begins his term as President, Dr. Blake Grisham will ascend ranks as President-Elect, and we will find out who will serve as our new Vice President, Secretary, and Member-at-Large from a slate of excellent candidates. I know each of these folks personally and have worked with all of them in some capacity or another. However, it turns out, we'll be in excellent hands.

I'll close with a few parting thoughts. I'm sitting in my favorite rocking chair watching as the setting sun casts long shadows over the canyon country surrounding Leakey, Texas. I'm ending 2021 the same way it began, by enjoying a long restive weekend at Moonfire Ranch. One major difference between 2021's beginning and its end is that the year's first sunrise was met with snow on the ground whereas today's high breeched 80 degrees making blue hole swimming not just possible but enjoyable. I don't know if there is really a metaphor here, but I'll try. Through the past two years, the Texas Chapter, like Moonfire Ranch, remains a familiar landscape. The Chapter continues to represent the wildlife profession in Texas while cultivating the growth and professional advancement of our members and students. But we undoubtedly see the landscape of our profession taking on a new patina in response to the realities of our time. We are exploring new technologies and advancing

PRESIDENTS NOTE

our understandings and roles in assuring that the profession is representative and inclusive of all people and communities that have a stake in the management of our most cherished natural resources. I am proud of this. I am proud of our Chapter. And I am proud of the tireless work of our members and leaders.

Be well. Be safe. And never forget to “dare mighty things”.



Kindest Personal Regards,
Romey Swanson

President, Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society



Annual Meeting Information:

Registration for the 2022 Annual Meeting is Open!
Register online today! <https://tctws.org/annual-meeting-2/registration/>

Book a hotel room here or for those that prefer to call, the phone number for reservations is 877-611-0112. <https://bookings.travelclick.com/103027?groupID=3217358...>

This year's meeting theme is: Celebrating Our Diversity – the people and the wildlife

2022 Annual Meeting, Tx Chapter TWS
February 24 - 26

JOIN US IN
Marble Falls, Texas
Horseshoe Bay Resort

RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY
Register Now

TCTWS COMMITTEE NEWS

Officer Nominations Bios

Vice-President



Mary Pearl Meuth:

Mary Pearl is the Assistant State Coordinator of the Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) Program. A partnership program established in 1998, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department proudly administer the program with the mission to develop a

corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas. The TMN Program today has 48 chapters established statewide with 13,000 volunteers trained to date - with two new chapters in development bringing the total to 50 chapters by the end of 2022!

Mary Pearl was a lead editor for the TMN Statewide Curriculum published in 2016 which encompasses 24 units of material covering instruction that range from geology to ornithology to wetland ecology—all written by the state's top scientists and experts. Mary Pearl also organizes the Texas Master Naturalist Program's Annual Meeting each fall with three full days of professional training sessions, hands on workshops, field based events and evenings filled with food, fun and fellowship.

Mary Pearl serves on the Executive Committee and as co-chair for the Conservation Legacy Advisory Committee for Texas Wildlife Association, a statewide membership organization that serves Texas wildlife and its habitat, while protecting property rights, hunting heritage, and the conservation efforts of those who value and steward wildlife resources. She currently serves as Local Arrangements Chair for Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society, organizing the facility accommodations and contracted services for the TCTWS Annual Conference.

Mary Pearl is an avid environmentalist and educator. She is always eager to learn and eager to pass that knowledge on. Her greatest joy at the end of the day comes from watching her two sons and young daughter enjoy the outdoors, enjoy discovering the little nuances and creatures, and delight in recognizing something that they have learned about the world around them. She resides in Giddings, Texas with her three children and husband.



Dr. Daniel Scognamillo:

Daniel is an Associate Professor for Research with the Feline Research Program in the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University - Kingsville. He is originally from Argentina where after graduating from the Universidad Nacional de Mar del

Plata with a BSc. in Biology, started studying puma ecology and predation behavior in western Argentina. He continued his research on wild cats in the Iguazú National Park (Argentina) and Iguazu National Park (Brazil) studying the ecology of ocelots, jaguars, and pumas.

Following his research in Argentina and Brazil, Daniel completed his MSc. at the University of Florida studying the coexistence of jaguars and pumas in the Venezuelan Llanos, and his Ph.D. at Louisiana State University developing harvest models for river otters.

After completing his postdoc at Mississippi State University in 2006, Daniel joined the Wildlife Faculty in the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture at Stephen F. Austin State University (Nacogdoches, Texas). In March 2021, he joined the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute bringing almost 30 years of research experience on wild cats to the Feline Research Program.

Daniel joined The Wildlife Society in 2004 and the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society in 2005. He has co-chaired the Conservation Affairs Committee of the TCTWS during 2020 and 2021 Daniel served as Student Chapter Advisor at Stephen F. Austin State University for several years and was recognized in 2021 as Educator of the Year by the TCTWS. Daniel is also active at the national level as the Associate Editor for the Journal of Wildlife Management (2019-present) and is part of the board of the International Wildlife Management Working Group of The Wildlife Society where he is the current editor of the newsletter. In the past, Daniel was active in other conservation organizations in Texas as a board member of the Texas Black Bear Alliance and the Native Prairies Association of Texas.

Officer Nominations Bios

Secretary



Dr. Lalo Gonzales
Carlos “Lalo” Gonzalez is the Nau Endowed Professor of Habitat Research and Management at Borderlands Research Institute (BRI) and is an Assistant Professor in the Natural Resource Management Department at Sul Ross State University. He was born and

raised in Northern Mexico, where his family heritage kept him in contact with ranching activities from a young age. Before his position with BRI, he graduated in 2011 with a BS in Wildlife and Range Management from Texas A&M-Kingsville. During his undergraduate career, Lalo was employed by the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute as a research technician, primarily focused on white-tailed deer and habitat interactions. In 2015 he earned his MS degree from Sul Ross State University in Natural Resource Management. His thesis research focused on the survival and nesting ecology of scaled quail in the Chihuahuan Desert. After receiving his MS, he worked on his Ph.D. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University. He focused his dissertation on desert bighorn sheep restoration in Texas, specifically studying survival, population dynamics, and habitat use and distribution. Lalo is only the second student from Sul Ross State University – Natural Resource Management Department to partake in a cooperative doctoral program with Texas A&M University. During his studies with the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute, he assisted with ecological monitoring of military lands in the Chihuahuan Desert, conducting baseline biological surveys, and ensuring compliance with environmental policies. His current duties at Sul Ross State University and BRI include teaching 8 different courses related to Range and Wildlife Ecology and Habitat Restoration. Additionally, he chairs/co-chairs 10 graduate students focused on research including habitat management, livestock grazing, big game, and grassland birds. Currently, Lalo serves the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society as a Co-Chair for the Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Committee and is currently part of the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute.



Maria F. “Masi” Mejia-Serna
Masi currently serves as the Manger of Education Programs for East Foundation. I deliver project management support through formal and informal venues. I deliver natural resource education to underserved communities of south Texas. I deploy educationa

programs on East Foundation lands, which include the San Antonio Viejo ranch (148,000 acres) and El Sauz Ranch (26,000 acres). My educational programs have impacted over 12,000 students. I take Texas Wildlife Association’s proven L.A.N.D.S. curriculum into classrooms and have reached over 33,000 students. Additionally, I have directly instructed over 500 teachers through teacher workshops. Lastly, I work in partnership with other organizations like The Witte Museum to inspire the next generation of land stewards where we have reached 60 students through our Land Stewardship Ambassador program, of which 20 students plan to pursue a degree or career in an agricultural or natural resource field. Three of our Land Stewardship Ambassadors has continued through the natural resource pipeline and are pursuing degrees in the field.

Prior to working at East Foundation, I was a PhD student at the University of Idaho. I was the graduate student mentor for undergraduate students in the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program Collaborative. As a graduate student mentor, I mentored 15 students who had undergraduate research projects, internships with state wildlife agencies, and recruited new students to enter the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program.

I started as a student member with the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society in the spring of 2010. I was a member of the Texas Tech University Range, Wildlife, and Fisheries club, and we drove down from Lubbock to San Antonio for the annual meeting. While there, I realized the importance of being a member of a professional society, as well as, taking advantage of mentoring and networking opportunities with professionals. As a professional member in recent years, I have made myself available to mentor undergraduate students, judge posters, and moderate

Officer Nominations Bios

Secretary Cont.

Maria F. "Masi" Mejia-Serna cont.:

sessions at annual meetings. I have expanded my membership into other working groups within The Wildlife Society like Conservation Education and Outreach, Early Career Professional, Ethnic & Gender Diversity and Human Dimensions, along with helping the Biological Diversity Working Group with social media. Additionally, I have become more involved with other organizations with like minds and missions such as Texas Association for Environmental Education and Laredo Environmental Summit to continue to educate others about land and wildlife stewardship.

In 2021, I served TCTWS as Board Member at Large and represented membership with the Executive Board. As secretary I hope that we continue the momentum as we gear back to in-person events across the state. The success of our organization is dependent on volunteers like myself, and others who care immensely about wildlife and wildlife issues within the state of Texas. As secretary, I plan to be efficient in this roll by recording minutes, maintaining membership records and issuing minutes for the Executive Board. Additionally, I plan to continue to: inspire undergraduate students to become members of our prestigious organization and to seek opportunities to increase their skills for potential internships/ job opportunities and motivate early career professionals to achieve leadership positions at the local, state and national level. As a chapter we can continue to promote excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. I hope that all members will feel comfortable to reach out to me through whatever medium works best. I will be proactive in addressing concerns and ideas that members have so that we can truly promote excellence as an organization.



Tucker Slack:

Since 2018, I have worked with Plateau Land & Wildlife Management as a Senior Wildlife Biologist in The Pines & Prairies Region of eastern Texas. I was born and raised in Orange County, TX, and graduated with honors from Texas A&M University with a B.S. Degree in Wildlife Fisheries and Sciences in 2001. After a 3 yr. stint with the U.S. Forest Service in South Carolina, I moved home to Texas and joined TPWD. From 2004 - 2016, I worked for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as a Natural Resource Specialist at both the J.D. Murphree and the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Areas. I have been a member of the TCTWS for the majority of the last 20 years, and am a Fellow of the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute Early Career Professional Program's inaugural cohort of 2015. Over the last several years, I have been actively seeking opportunities to serve the Texas Chapter, and will chair the 2023 cohort of the JGTCLI Early Career Professional Program. I consider myself blessed to be a husband, father, and wildlife biologist, and appreciate to the opportunity to serve in any capacity

TCTWS COMMITTEE NEWS

Officer Nominations Bios

Member at Large



Richard Heilbrun:

Richard Heilbrun holds a BS and MS from Texas A&M University in wildlife ecology and is a Rob & Bessie Welder Fellow. He has worked for Texas Parks & Wildlife Department since 2002. He is proud to have worked with

landowners, urban residents, volunteers, conservation organizations, and the general public to advance stewardship of Texas's natural resources. He has worked throughout the state on projects that conserve wildlife, manage habitat, and help people connect with natural resources on a deeply personal level. He has worked with Bighorn sheep, ducks, Whooping Cranes, songbirds, raptors, quail, deer, dove, and bobcats.

His work with TPWD in the Conservation Outreach and Urban Wildlife Programs aim to connect Texans with the outdoors, improve wildlife habitat throughout the state, and manage the state's most sensitive wildlife populations. He has served the Texas Chapter in several committee chair positions and as a Board Member at-large. He is a Certified Wildlife Biologist®, and lives in San Antonio with his wife and daughter.



Matt Riedy:

I am a born and raised Texan and have spent the vast majority of my life living and working in Texas. I received a Bachelors of Science degree in Wildlife Ecology and Management in 2004 from Texas A&M University. I furthered my

education with a Masters of Science degree in Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University-Kingsville in 2007. My Master's Thesis was titled "Electric fencing and population estimates of feral pigs". Immediately after graduate school I was hired as a regulatory wildlife biologist for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) in South Texas. I have been working for TPWD for 14 years as a Regulatory Wildlife Biologist in several counties in South Texas. I am currently the Assistant District Leader for the South Texas District and work closely with private landowners on wildlife and habitat management. I am also heavily involved in Chronic Wasting Disease management for TPWD. My interests and hobbies include all aspects of wildlife habitat management as well as upland and migratory bird hunting. I am a licensed master falconer and have a strong passion for the sport. I have been a member of the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society since 2005. I have served various appointed roles within the Chapter to include Finance Co-Chair, Activities Chair for several years, Publications Co-Chair, Judge for the Cottam Awards, as well as assisted with other aspects of the annual meeting. The Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society (TCTWS) has been a great organization to be a part of and work with. I look forward continuing to assist TCTWS wherever I am best suited.

Wildlife Conservation Camp

The 2021 Wildlife Conservation Camp was another great success and we are grateful for the continued support from the TCTWS, volunteers, and donors who make this program possible each year. We would like to recognize and thank Angie Arrendondo for her leadership, hard work, and dedication as she served as Camp Director for two years. We are also excited to welcome Masi Mejia and Nicole Alonso-Leach to the committee as Co-Incoming Directors. Both Masi and Nicole are valued members of TCTWS and we are thrilled they have volunteered. We are grateful for their commitment and their insight as we plan out future camps.

Regarding future camps, our 2022 camp location and date have been finalized. Camp will be held at The Big Woods on the Trinity from July 9th–13th. Located near Tennessee Colony, The Big Woods offers 7,500 acres of well managed bottomland hardwood habitat along the Trinity River. This should make for an excellent classroom for our campers and staff. It has been a while since camp has been held in the eastern portion of our state, so we are excited to bring camp to the Post Oak Savannah.

With our location set, we now ask for members to think about supporting camp. College mentors, professional mentors, and professional presenters will all be needed to make camp the best it can be. Also, donations are necessary to help fund crucial aspects of camp, including meals, scholarships, and camper awards. I am excited to serve as your 2022 Camp Director and welcome you to contact me for more information on how to become involved.

Bobby Allcorn
Wildlife Biologist
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Phone: (979) 571-9304
Robert.allcorn@tpwd.texas.gov



Presented by the
Texas Chapter of
The Wildlife Society

TCTWS COMMITTEE NEWS

PHOTO, ART, AND VIDEO CONTEST

Call for Photo & Art Submissions

The TCTWS Photo & Art Committee is pleased to announce the return of the Annual Conference Photo & Art Contest. The contest will be held in person at the Horseshoe Bay Resort in Marble Falls, Texas.

General contest rules are as follows:

- Contestants must be members of the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. If you have registered for the conference, you are a member of TCTWS.
- Contestants will submit physical copies of photos and art from between noon on Thursday to 10:00 a.m. on Friday.
- Contest winners will be selected by ballot. Paper ballots can be cast on Friday from 10:30 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. by members attending the conference.
- Contest winners will be announced at the Awards Banquet on Friday evening.
- Contestants must submit a digital copy of their art or photo(s) by noon on Friday, February 25th to be used in the slideshow at the Awards Banquet. If you do not submit a digital copy of your work, it may not be displayed in the awards slideshow. Submission portal info will be announced soon. Email photo.art@tctws.org with questions in the meantime.
- To defray cost of awards, a \$1.00 fee will be required for each entry. Details of fee submission will be announced soon.

Photo entries:

- Physical prints of photos will be displayed at conference. The contestant is responsible for bringing their own printed photos.
- Photographs should be a standard size (3" x 5" up to 11" x 14"), unmatted, and unframed. Carboard backing is permitted.
- Contestants can submit up to one entry per photo category (7 total).
- The 7 categories are:
 - 1) Wildlife (not including captive animals)
 - 2) Plants (and plant-like organisms)
 - 3) Scenery
 - 4) Humor
 - 5) Work-related
 - 6) Wildlife conservation (may include captive animals of conservation concern)
 - 7) Remote camera (not including captive animals)
- Provided there are at least 5 entries in a category, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places will be awarded.
- If there are fewer than 5 entries in any category, only 1st place will be awarded for that category.
- There will be a Best of Show and Judge's Choice Award.
- A professional photographer may be present to judge and critique photo submissions.

TCTWS COMMITTEE NEWS

Call for Photo & Art Submissions cont.

Art entries:

- All art entries compete in one category.
- Art may include original sketches, paintings, carvings, sculptures, poetry, etc.
- Contestants may submit up to 5 total entries.

Some components of the 2022 conference may be accessible virtually but will not be live-streamed. Updates regarding how this relates to the Photo & Art Contest will be announced in the near future.



TCTWS COMMITTEE NEWS - OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

TCTWS is excited to announce a new lunchbox webinar series, kicking off this coming Spring. The series will follow a quarterly schedule and rotate themes throughout the year, giving listeners a peek into topics such as emerging technologies, career skill-building, partner highlights, and knowledge deep-dive. Stay tuned for more information on the TCTWS webinar series event updates and reminders. We look forward to listening, learning, and engaging with everyone!

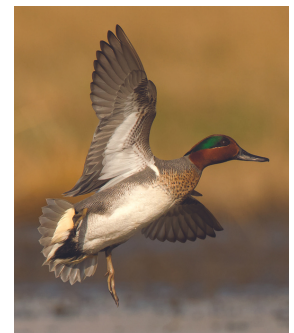
JGTCLI Early Career Professional Training

The 5th Installment of James Teer Conservation Leadership Institute's Early Career Professional Training will begin February 2023.

Applications will be accepted in fall 2022.

The mission for the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute is to ensure a future legacy of well-trained conservation leaders by providing professional training in leadership skills and contemporary conservation issues for today's wildlife biologists and conservation professionals. The Early Career Professional Training seeks early-career professionals 1 to 10 years out of college who are working full time in a natural resource-related field and have demonstrated leadership potential. Professionals from diverse natural resource fields are welcome to apply. These fields include federal and state natural resource agencies, environmental and conservation organizations, educational institutions, natural resource policy development, private consultants and individuals from other natural resource programs.

Stay tuned for news and announcements! Contact: Michelle Haggerty or Tucker Slack early.career.program@tctws.org



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.

***Cylindropuntia leptocaulis* (D.C.) F.M. Knuth; (Tasajillo/Christmas Cactus/Pencil Cholla)**

By Sarah Turner



Photo 1: *Cylindropuntia leptocaulis* plant, taken by Max Licher and used with permission from <https://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/imgdetails.php?imgid=257007>.

Few plants are eye-catching in the desert during winter, as most are some shade of brown, gray, or dark green. That's why an unusual looking shrub with pencil-like branches and bright red fruits might immediately catch your eye if you stumble upon it. This "shrub" is actually a widely-distributed cactus species known as *Cylindropuntia leptocaulis* (commonly known as tasajillo, Christmas cactus, pencil cholla, and by many other names). *C. leptocaulis* most frequently grows in an upright habit ranging between 0.6-2.1 meters (2-7 feet) tall across a variety of conditions between 300-1,500 meters (1,000-5,000 feet) in all soil types, though it prefers sandy and heavier soils found in bottomlands or desert flats. The greenish-gray stems of this plant are very slender and jointed with an internal woody core, and regularly grow into adjacent vegetation to form thickets. The species flowers in summer, exhibit-

ing blooms that are green or yellow in color followed by bright red, oval-shaped fleshy fruits that persist through winter. *C. leptocaulis* exhibits 1-3 spines per areole that can reach lengths of up to 5 centimeters (2 inches), and the entire plant (including the fruit) is covered in short hair-like spines known as glochids. This inconspicuous cactus typically grows under other taller plants and is hidden from sight until surrounding vegetation senesces during winter and exposes its vibrantly colored vegetation and fruit.

C. leptocaulis is a valuable plant for wildlife and humans alike. It can serve as nesting cover for birds (specifically cactus wrens) and its fruits are selected for



Photo 2: The inflorescence of *C. leptocaulis*, taken by G. A. Cooper and used with permission from <https://plants.usda.gov/home/plantProfile?symbol=CYLE8>.

by white-tailed deer, bobwhite, turkey, and other berry-eating species. This xerophytic plant is commonly used in xeriscaping due to its heat/water tolerances and its color retention during winter. The fruits are supposedly suitable for human consumption* and the Pima people were known to make a tea from the plant's root to remedy gastrointestinal issues.



Photo 2: The inflorescence of *C. leptocaulis*, taken by G. A. Cooper and used with permission from <https://plants.usda.gov/home/plantProfile?symbol=CYLE8>.

Fun fact 1: The specific epithet "leptocaulis" means "slender-stemmed".

Fun fact 2: *C. leptocaulis* is the most widespread cholla species in North America.

*Note: Consume at your own risk. I'm no doctor.

Literature Cited:

- 1) <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/nativeshrubs/opuntialeptocaul.htm>
- 2) <https://swbiodiversity.org/seinet/taxa/index.php?taxon=61&clid=3056>
- 3) <http://johnwagman.com/rgvnp/Christmas%20Cactus%20%20Cylindropuntia%-20leptocaulis/>
- 4) Hrdlička, Aleš. 1908. "Physiological and medical observations among the Indians of southwestern United States and northern Mexico." Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin. 34:1-460.

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.

***Quercus macrocarpa* Michx. (Bur Oak)**

By Andrea Wiley

Oaks are a very common sight across most of Texas. There are more than 60 varieties in North America with about 50 varieties being native to Texas. Oak trees fall into two main categories: white and red oaks. The bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) falls into the white oak category. The bur oak (sometimes spelled burr oak) is best identified by its large acorns, and large leaves.

Q. macrocarpa is found in rich bottomlands along streams and hillsides and banks in Central and West Texas. However, it can be adapted other areas and is planted as a landscape tree throughout Texas. They can reach more than 80 feet in height



Photo 2: Bur oak acorn and leaves.
Photo by Sally and Andy Wasowski.
https://www.wildflower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image=24061

with a trunk up to 5 feet in diameter. The leaves grow from 6" to 12" long with 5 to 9 variable lobes with the bottom of the leaf being more deeply lobed. They are alternately attached.

These trees are monoecious with male and female flowers on the same tree. The male flower is a yellowish colored catkin while the female flowers are inconspicuous and reddish in color. The most recognizable feature is the large acorn fruit. The acorn is deeply set into a fringed cup (giving this species its common name).

Fun fact: The acorns are eaten by wildlife and can be made into a coarse flour. The wood can be used for lumber and fuelwood.



Photo 1: Bur oak. Photo by Sally and Andy Wasowski
https://www.wildflower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image=24059



Photo 3: Acorn of *Q. macrocarpa*. Photo by Damon E Waitt.
https://www.wildflower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image=20134

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<http://texastreeid.tamu.edu/content/TreeDetails/?id=98>

<https://www.abchomeandcommercial.com/blog/texas-oak-trees/#:~:text=Texas%20is%20famous%20for%20its,shelter%20within%20their%20huge%20branches.>

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

by Kathy Granillo, Southwest Section Representative to Council

I am honored to be the new Southwest Section Representative. Thank you for electing me to serve as your representative on The Wildlife Society Council. This is a three-year term, and I look forward to interacting with you over the next few years.

I am recently retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a long-time member of TWS. For the past almost 12 years I was the Refuge Manager at Sevilleta NWR in central New Mexico. Prior to that I worked in the Regional Office of the Southwest Region for many years as the Regional Refuge Biologist. This position allowed me to get out in the Region (AZ, NM, OK, TX) quite a bit and I made frequent trips to Texas refuges and surrounding areas. I have some familiarity with many parts of Texas and with the conservation issues. I look forward to learning more about these issues and your concerns as I serve you on Council.

I also chair the Women of Wildlife Community Team, within the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Awareness Working Group of TWS. We have recently created a structure for this team, and are actively recruiting members. If interested, please contact me via email and/or talk with me at the TX Chapter Annual Conference. We are already planning some events for the 2022 Annual Conference and as well as other events throughout the year.

The biggest news for Council is the transition to a new CEO. Ed Thompson resigned last summer and the new CEO, Ed Arnett started in November 2021. He brings a wealth of experience to the position and Council looks forward to working with him as we strive to make TWS the best that it can be in serving its members and meeting its mission.

TWS Council adopted an Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Vision in 2021 and putting it into practice it is a top priority for 2022. To read more about this vision and how TWS is incorporating it into our Strategic Plan and other guiding documents, please visit wildlife.org, click on “engage” in the top bar of the webpage, and then on the DEI link. Other top priorities include international conservation, and expanding partnerships.

Council is also revising 5 Position Statements in 2022. We are forming teams to work on these documents and soliciting help and comments from

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

the Working Groups. The 5 are:

- Global Climate Change and Wildlife
- The U.S. Endangered Species Act
- Firearms
- Lead in Ammunition and Fishing Tackle
- Livestock Grazing on Rangelands in the Western U.S.

The next Council meeting will be in March in conjunction with the North American Wildlife and Natural Resource Conference in Spokane, WA. Prior to that meeting I plan to attend the virtual Joint Annual Meeting of the Arizona and New Mexico Chapters and the Texas Chapter Annual Meeting and look forward to reconnecting with old friends and making new ones. I especially want to hear what thoughts folks might have regarding the current direction of The Wildlife Society and any suggestions for ways to ensure the Society is responsive to the needs of the membership.

TWS 2022 Annual Conference will be in-person! November 6-10 in Spokane, WA. I hope to see many of you there.

Until then, Best Wishes For The New Year!



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HAPPY TRAILS!

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