



# Texas Chapter Tails

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## of Wildlife and Stewardship

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### President's Note

Is it Fall yet, or just the classic Texas tease that arrives a few weeks before the real cool-down? Either way, the temperatures are finally starting to drop, and we'll soon see more Texans enjoying the outdoors. This season reminds me of how important it is to immerse ourselves in the natural world we work so hard to conserve. Whether it's a crisp morning walk or gearing up for hunting season, now is the perfect time to reconnect with nature. I encourage each of you to take full advantage of this opportunity—whether for recreation, reflection, or simply to enjoy the beauty of Texas' diverse landscapes. Our connection to the land fuels our passion for wildlife conservation, and there's no better time to tap into that connection.



Scaled quail on the lookout.  
*Photo provided by A. Taulli*

### TCTWS Updates: Working for You

Your TCTWS leadership has been busy this summer, working on behalf of our Chapter both internally and externally.

At the **August 22 TPWD Commission Meeting**, the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society expressed strong support for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's proposed **surveillance zones to detect Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)**. In my testimony, I emphasized the importance of these zones for early detection and containment, calling them a necessary step forward. However, despite our support, the Commission decided

# President's Note

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against establishing surveillance zones in several key counties. This decision contradicts the CWD Management Plan and raises concerns about reduced testing and increased disease spread, as the focus shifted to perceived impacts on landowners near breeder facilities.

TCTWS remains committed to collaborating with TPWD and continues to urge the Commission to prioritize science-based management strategies to protect Texas's wildlife. For more information about CWD in Texas, its management plan, and actions supported by TCTWS, visit <http://www.cwdintexas.com>.

## Updating the Chapter Bylaws

Internally, TCTWS Officers have been working on updating the Chapter's Bylaws to better guide our organization. These updates will be reviewed by Committee Chairs and key committee members over the coming months. In November and December, the Officer task force will consolidate feedback and prepare a final revision of the Bylaws, which will be presented to the membership for a vote in January. The parent society will also review the final document to ensure consistency with national bylaws. Please keep an eye on your emails in January for the Bylaws vote. This is a great opportunity to engage in the governance of our Chapter and see how we operate.

## 2025 TCTWS Annual Meeting: Save the Date!

Looking ahead, I'm thrilled to highlight our upcoming **2025 TCTWS Annual Meeting**, scheduled for **February 19-21 in Denton, Texas**. This year, we're introducing an exciting plenary session titled "**Conservation Conflict - Working It Out**". We'll dive deep into some of the most pressing conservation challenges facing Texas today, including **Endangered Species Management, Chronic Wasting Disease**, and more. The plenary will explore how we can collaboratively address these conflicts while maintaining our shared commitment to wildlife and habitat conservation.

In addition to the engaging plenary, expect a few modifications to the meeting agenda. We'll be expanding opportunities for networking, adding interactive workshops, and offering more space for graduate students and early-career professionals to showcase their work. Keep an eye out for updates on these exciting changes – stay tuned!

# President's Note

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## Important Deadlines

As always, please mark your calendars for these key deadlines:

- **Scholarships and Awards Applications:** Due **November 30, 2024**
- **Abstract Submissions** for oral and poster presentations: Due **November 30, 2024**
- **Early Bird Registration:** (Hopefully) opens **November 1, 2024**, so make sure to register early to take advantage of the discounted rates.

## Final Thoughts

Thank you all for your continued dedication to the Texas Chapter and to the future of wildlife conservation in our state. I look forward to seeing many of you in Denton in February!

Warm regards,



Mary Pearl Meuth  
President, Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society



# 2025 Annual Meeting

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Save the Date!

The **Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2025 Annual Meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 19th through Friday February 21st 2025** at the **Embassy Suites by Hilton in Denton, Texas**.

The local arrangements committee has been coordinating with the hotel, TCTWS board, and committees to plan the 2025 Annual Meeting. This year's meeting will be held February 19th – 21st at the Embassy Suites in Denton. We are excited about what this year's location will offer our members! The hotel boasts over 57,000 sq. ft. of event space so there will be plenty of room for all our activities. The reservation link for booking your rooms is available and linked below under the group rate tab. Please go ahead and book your room early!

## Hotel Reservations!

### Embassy Suites Hotel Group Rate

[Click here for Embassy Suites Group Rate](#)

Guests can book rooms by calling the hotel directly at (940) 243-3799 and referencing the **Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society – Annual Meeting 2025** or by using the link above.

Rate is \$110/night plus tax.

Self-parking at the hotel is included.

**Cut off date is January 18, 2025. No exceptions.**



## Updated Agenda

The Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society holds its annual meeting each year about the third week of February. The location changes, as we try to move it around so that members in all regions of the state have a chance to attend.

In 2024, a survey was sent to all registrants post-event to inquire about the event timeline and the possibility of extending the conference schedule by half a day to accommodate all the activities hosted at the event. An overwhelming 72% responded in favor of adding a half day to the schedule to allow for more time to participate in technical sessions and membership events. To accommodate this, the Local Arrangements Committee has been working with all committee chairs and members to determine the best flow for this extended three day event. A final agenda plan is outlined on the next page. Please make plans for staying all three days to engage in technical sessions, networking and awards.

# 2025 Annual Meeting - tentative agenda

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## **Day 1 (Wednesday, Feb. 19th)**

ALL DAY - 8am-5pm: Student Poster Set-up; Photo Art Submission; Plant ID Set-up

6:00-9:00am: Breakfast included with hotel stay

8:00am-12:00pm: Workshops

12:00-1:00pm: Lunch on your own

1:00-3:00pm: Exec Board Meeting

3:00pm: Hotel Check-In

3:00 – 4:30 pm: Plant ID – students

4:30-5:30 pm: Student Posters

5:30-7:00 pm: Evening reception hosted by hotel

6:00-8:00pm: Plenary & Welcome Dinner

## **Day 2 (Thursday, Feb. 20th)**

8:00am-5:00pm: Voting for Photo & Art Open

8:00am – 5:00pm: Naturalist Contest

6:00-9:00am: Breakfast included with hotel stay

7:00-8:00am: Student Breakfast (provided by hotel)

8:00-10:00am: Membership Meeting

10:30am-12:30pm: Cottam Awards Presentations

12:30-1:30pm: Past Presidents Luncheon

12:30-1:30pm: Lunch on your own

1:30-4:30pm: Technical Sessions (3 Hours x 2-4 rooms)

4:30-5:30pm: Women of Wildlife Reception

4:30-6:00pm: Noncompetitive/Professional posters

5:30-7:00 pm: Evening reception hosted by hotel

6:00-8:00pm: Professional Awards (Dinner provided)

## **Day 3 (Friday Feb. 21st)**

7:00-8:00am: Fellowship of Christian Conservationists

6:00-9:00am: Breakfast included with hotel stay

8:00am-10:00am: Conservation Affairs

9:00am-12:00pm: Technical Sessions (3 Hours x 2-4 rooms)

12:00pm-1:00pm: Lunch on your own

12:00pm-1:00pm: Student Leadership Lunch

1:00pm: Photo & Art Voting ends

1:00-3:00pm: Technical Sessions (2 Hours x 2-4 rooms)

2:30-4:00pm: Exec Board Meeting (Incoming 2025-2026)

4:00 – 6:00pm: Quiz Bowl

5:30-7:00 pm: Evening reception hosted by hotel

6:00-9:00pm: Student & Photo/Art Awards (Dinner provided)

## **Day 4 (Saturday Feb. 22nd)**

6:00-9:00am: Breakfast included with hotel stay

8:00am-10:00am: Break down and move out

**Final Registration Prices  
will be announced soon!**

# Editor's Note

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Hi everyone!

Due to the quantity of Committee News, below is an expanded table of contents for this edition. Happy reading!

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## Conservation Affairs

### Legislative Meetings

Committee members attended the House Culture, Recreation, and Tourism Committee on July 15. On the agenda was invited testimony regarding TPWD's Farm and Ranch Conservation Program and an update on TPWD's Centennial Parks Conservation Fund for state park acquisition.

Additionally, the Senate Agriculture, Water, and Urban Affairs Committee met September 3 to hear testimony regarding numerous water related matters as well as an update on SB 1648 which created the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund.

CAC members met with Senator Perry's Office, Senator Flores Office, and Representative Troxclair's Office to introduce the Texas Chapter and discuss current and upcoming natural resource issues. Deer breeding and CWD, as well as land and water conservation will be topics addressed during the upcoming session. The limited appropriation of TPWD's hunting and fishing license revenue (Fund 9) was also mentioned during the meetings.

Ms. Carrie Simmons will again be hired to help the Chapter track bills and set up meetings with key legislators as the session ramps up. Her contract will run from November 1, 2024 to May 31, 2025.

### Chronic Wasting Disease

Texas Chapter members provided testimony at the August TPWD commission meeting in support of TPWD's proposals to establish five new surveillance zones around new CWD-positive deer breeding facilities. Unfortunately, the proposed zones failed to pass due to a split commission decision. Commissioners voting in favor of the zones included Abell, Galo, Patton, and Rowling. Those against the zones were Chairman Hildebrand, Vice Chair Bell, Doggett, and Scott. Commissioner Foster was not present for a final vote. Several students from Stephen F. Austin and Sul Ross state universities attended the Thursday meeting and were recognized by the commission. The Texas Chapter will continue to advocate for sound disease management in the face of a very active deer breeding business.

## Conservation Affairs

A CWD Summit was hosted by the National Deer Association, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and the Texas Wildlife Association on September 5 at the TWA headquarters. The Texas Chapter attended, along with about 30 other invitees to discuss management strategies and share information. Organizations from Oklahoma briefed the group on HB 3264 the “Genetic Improvement Act” which will allow “CWD resistant” deer to be released into the wild beginning in 2026. Could a similar bill be headed for Texas?

Two journal articles have summarized the costs of CWD management by state. Texas is one of the highest states identified in both reports. Please contact Matt Wagner for copies of the articles.

## CAC Bylaw Modifications

CAC member Jake Hill made draft revisions to the Texas Chapter bylaws to provide more guidance to members on submitting proposed position statements, resolutions and public statements. This will more clearly define the review and decision making process by the CAC of such proposals.

## Farm Bill

Texas Chapter signed on to a letter from conservation organizations from around the country in support of re-authorization of the Farm Bill during the current year.

## Texas Renewable Energy and Wildlife Subcommittee

The Texas Chapter has formed a new subcommittee to address wind and solar energy development in the state. Sara Weaver is leading this subcommittee, and with members Amanda Hale, Andrew Earl, and Tim Siegmund, met with the CAC in August. Initial goals for TREWS are to draft a position statement for the Texas Chapter, provide recommendations on best management practices (BMPs) related to renewable energy development impacts to wildlife in Texas, and to serve in an advisory role when requested.



## Conservation Affairs

### **Black-Spotted Newt Undergoing Species Status Assessment (SSA)**

In accordance with the US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Listing Work Plan, the service's Corpus Christi Office is leading an SSA to determine if the Black-spotted newt is warranted for listing as Threatened or Endangered. This amphibian is currently listed as state-threatened. Information should be submitted to Cynthia Rubio at [cynthia\\_rubio@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_rubio@fws.gov). All data and information submitted, including names and addresses, would become part of the administrative record. Additional information about the black-spotted newt can be found by visiting <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1834>

### **Webinar on "TPWD 101"**

A Texas Chapter webinar was hosted by Matt Wagner to inform participants on the process of creating regulations and how stakeholders can get involved. The basics of providing testimony at the commission and legislative level was presented. Approximately 50 people attended the webinar.

### **Game, Fish, and Water Safety Account (Fund 9)**

The Texas Chapter signed on to a letter to TPWD Executive Director David Yoskowitz in support of full appropriation of Fund 9 to TPWD for the intended purposes of science-based wildlife and fisheries management. This fund, also known as the Game, Fish and Water Safety Account, supports TPWD's wildlife and fishery conservation mission. Most of the funds come from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, and are matched with federal grants from the Pittman-Robertson and Dingel-Johnson Acts. Over the last decade or so, the Texas Legislature has not appropriated the full amount to the agency on an annual basis.

### **Florida Right to Hunt Law**

The TWS Conservation Affairs Network (CAN) reached out to the Texas Chapter for input regarding Florida's consideration of a Right to Hunt law. Texas passed such a law in November 2015, which is a constitutional amendment. It passed overwhelmingly with very little input from the Texas Chapter.

## Conservation Affairs

### Upcoming Meetings:

- October 19-23, Baltimore Maryland - TWS Annual Meeting
- October 24-27, San Marcos – Texas Master Naturalists Annual Meeting
- November 6-7, Corpus Christi – TPW Commission Meeting
- February 18-22, Denton – TCTWS Annual Meeting
- February 26-28, Austin – Texas Land Conservation Conference



Texas Chapter members with TPWD Executive Director and Commission leadership at the Commission Meeting on August 22, 2024. Read about the students attending on Pg 30.

\*If you are interested in participating in TCTWS policy discussion activities or attending Commission Meeting(s), legislative hearings or more alongside TCTWS, please reach out to the Conservation Affairs Committee ([conservation.affairs@tctws.org](mailto:conservation.affairs@tctws.org)) Please reach out to Conservation Affairs Chairs for further information or to get involved. TCTWS members are always encouraged to participate in these activities.

## Excellence in Wildlife Conservation

Help us honor and recognize the educators, landowners, and wildlife professionals that inspire you! Please nominate an individual for one or more of the following award categories to recognize exceptional wildlife conservation efforts in Texas.

### **Educator of the Year Award**

The Educator of the Year Award recognizes wildlife professionals for outstanding achievements in wildlife conservation education. Since 1992, this award has honored the best wildlife educators in Texas, including 2023 recipient Dr. Clint Boal of Texas Tech University. Nominees should be current or past members of TCTWS. Please submit a 5-point bulleted statement explaining why your nominee is deserving of the award, along with a curriculum vitae of the nominee.

### **Land Stewardship Award**

The Land Stewardship Award recognizes landowners who have been instrumental in the development, application, and promotion of sound wildlife management principles on their land. There are no property size restrictions or TCTWS membership requirements for this award (nominees do not need to be current or past members of TCTWS). The 2024 award went to Julie Mattox for her excellent management of the Mattox Prairie Farms. Please submit a ½ to 1 page letter of nomination explaining why your nominee is deserving of the award.

### **Outstanding Achievement Award**

The Outstanding Achievement Award recognizes wildlife professionals for their outstanding achievements during the course of their involvement with natural resource management and conservation. Honoring remarkable individuals and groups for their contributions to conservation in Texas since 1966, this is the oldest recorded TCTWS award. Nominees should be current or past members of TCTWS. Please submit a 5-point bulleted statement explaining why your nominee is deserving of the award, along with a curriculum vitae of the nominee (if possible).

All nominations should be submitted to: Joseph Plappert at [Joseph.Plappert@tctws.org](mailto:Joseph.Plappert@tctws.org) with the subject "Nomination for 2025 TCTWS Excellence in Wildlife Conservation Awards." The deadline for nominations is **November 30, 2024**.

## Nominations

We are happy to introduce our nominees for our 2025 Vice President, Secretary, and Board Member at Large positions! We will publish candidate bios in both the October and January editions of *The Tails* along with highlighting candidates on our social platforms. Our online voting system will go live in early 2025, so please read up on our candidates and vote. Every member's voice matters!

### 2025 Vice President

- Sarah Fritts, Ph.D.
- Maria Florentina Mejia

### 2025 Secretary

- Olivia Gray
- Cody Samek

### 2025 Board Member at Large

- Dale James, Ph.D.
- Daniel Price, CWB®



Pollinators and Milkweed  
*Photo provided by J. Perez*

## Nominations

### 2025 Vice President Candidate- Sarah Fritts, Ph.D.



Sarah Fritts, a Certified Wildlife Biologist®, Associate Professor, and Director of the Wildlife Ecology Program at Texas State University, has been actively involved in TCTWS since she moved to Texas in 2014. Currently, Sarah serves as the TCTWS Certification Committee Chair. She previously served countless roles for TCTWS and the annual conferences including being a plenary speaker in 2024, serving on the Honorary Life Membership Award Committee, judging Cottom Award abstracts and research posters, and leading workshops that offer certification guidance.

Beyond TCTWS, Sarah has been very involved with TWS since first becoming a member 20 years ago. Sarah is an alumnus of the TWS Leadership Institute (class of 2015), the Southwestern Representative and Co-Chair of the Certification Review Board, and Secretary of the Renewable Energy Working Group (REWG). She has served as the Subchair of the Submitted Poster Abstract Committee, and as a member of the Program Committee, Contributed Papers Subcommittee, Abstract Review Committee, and the Leadership Institute Application Review Committee. She also has been an invited speaker three times for the Women of Wildlife symposium and organized a symposium on renewable energy ecology.

Sarah is a strong advocate of supporting professional development through student chapters. As an undergraduate, she was an active member of the University of Georgia Student Chapter. As a master's student, she served as the graduate representative and the education and outreach coordinator for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Student Chapter. Presently, she serves as the co-faculty advisor for the Texas State Student Chapter where she promotes hands-on experiences for students,

## Nominations

### 2025 Vice President Candidate- Sarah Fritts, Ph.D.



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such as organizing annual duck hunts, participating in deer capture events, and mentoring undergraduates conducting various research projects. She regularly takes students to TCTWS conferences to network, compete in the Quiz Bowl, and present posters.

If elected, Sarah would be excited to learn, leverage, and serve TCTWS while supporting the three pillars of TWS as they apply to TCTWS: Building Community, Supporting Professionals, and Exercising External Influence. She is also excited to be more heavily involved in current Conservation Affairs issues facing our state, fundraising to support our missions, and engaging and supporting our membership.

## Nominations

### 2025 Vice President Candidate- Maria Florentina Mejia



My name is Maria Florentina Mejia, but everyone knows me as Masi. I serve as Manager of Education Programs at East Foundation. East Foundation's mission is to promote the advancement of land stewardship through ranching, science, and education. I have reached over 42,000 students in the classroom, hosted over 13,000 students on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch, educated over 23,000 students through virtual field lessons, and educated close to 900 teachers through teacher workshops. Additionally, since 2019 I have helped mentor 221 high school students through the Land Stewardship Ambassador program where 69% of alumni continue to provide life updates.

I have been a member of TCTWS since 2009 and attended my first meeting in 2010. I received a B.S. in Environmental Conservation of Natural Resources and an M.S. in Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlands Science and Management from Texas Tech University. My research focused on what motivations professionals and students had to pursue a career or degree within the field. I am also a current participant of the 5th cohort of The University of Texas – Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs – Women's Campaign School. I have received support from the Jane Nelson Institute for Women's Leadership at Texas Woman's University to participate in this program and I am scheduled for graduation November of 2024. Women's Campaign School empowers women with skills needed to succeed in the political arena. My goal is to use the skills learned within campaign school to further the mission and vision of TCTWS and work towards influencing policy.

My involvement with TCTWS includes being on TTU's Quizbowl Team as an undergraduate

## Nominations

### 2025 Vice President Candidate- Maria Florentina Mejia



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student. I have served TCTWS as Secretary and Board Member-at-Large. In 2023, I served as Co-Director of Wildlife Conservation Camp where 23 high school students participated, and I raised over \$12,000 to support Wildlife Conservation Camp.

I am committed to furthering the mission and vision of TCTWS. We are extremely fortunate to have members who are experts in the field, and we need to capitalize on their expertise for the sustained biodiversity within Texas.



## Nominations

### 2025 Secretary Nominee- Olivia Gray



I am currently the wildlife biologist of Jeff Davis and Reeves counties for Texas Parks and Wildlife in far west Texas. I conduct wildlife surveys of multiple species such as pronghorn, mule deer, quail, dove, and bighorn sheep. As a biologist, I assist landowners in managing habitat by formulating recommendations they can utilize to positively impact multiple wildlife species. Within both counties, I provide guidance on over 900,000 acres of land and work to gain productive relationships with each landowner.

I hold a B.S. in Natural Resources Management from Texas Tech University and am currently working to obtain my M.S. in Range and Wildlife Management from Sul Ross State University. My thesis focus is on potential competitive interactions of non-native aoudad with native desert bighorn sheep and mule deer in the Trans-Pecos.

I serve on the Female Employee R3 Leadership Team representing the Big Bend Region for Texas Parks and Wildlife, with the goal of engaging more women in hunting activities. I have been actively involved in the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society for the past 8 years and currently serve as the Program Committee chair. Additionally, I am a hunters education instructor, a hunt master, and guide for the Texas Youth Hunting Program. I am very passionate about this activity and feel every hunt is a way to empower and educate the next generation to understand ecosystems and the impact of management through conservation.

## Nominations

### 2025 Secretary Nominee- Cody Samek



Cody Samek has been working as a Wildlife Biologist and Intern Manager at MT7 Ranch in Breckenridge, TX, for the past five years. In this role, he has had the opportunity to oversee and teach 46 interns from various schools across Texas and the U.S. Along with managing the daily tasks for interns he helps implement habitat management practices and assists with ranch duties ranging from cattle work to wildlife data collection. His efforts have assisted with MT7 Ranch receiving the 2024 Leopold Conservation Award from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). While managing interns can be challenging at times, Cody finds it fulfilling to see their growth and development into capable wildlife biologists.

Outside of his work at the ranch, Cody remains connected with his alma mater, Tarleton State University, and is involved with the Scholarship Committee for the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TCTWS). As Co-Chair of the scholarship committee, he helped increase the number of applications from an average of 10 to over 30. Now serving as Chair, Cody is eager to continue this progress and hopes to expand both the number of applications and the scholarships available to students for this up coming year.

Cody understands the significance of early involvement in the society. The connections, experiences, and relationships gained through participation are invaluable after college, contributing greatly to his growth as a wildlife biologist and manager. He is committed to sharing this knowledge and fostering similar growth with not only his interns at the ranch but with every student across the state. Cody believes that branching out beyond one's university is crucial, whether pursuing a career in the private or public sector. His goal is to bridge the gap between students and professionals, enhancing opportunities for all involved.

## Nominations

### 2025 Board Member At Large Nominee- Dale James, Ph.D.



Dale James is Chief Executive Officer for the Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation in Sinton, TX, where he is responsible for leading the Foundation's staff and volunteers in achieving a mission of cultivating the future of wildlife conservation through programs in conservation research, education, and land management.

Prior to joining the Welder Wildlife Foundation, Dale was employed by Duck Unlimited for 18 years providing conservation services throughout the southeastern U.S. in various roles, including regional biologist, land conservation manager and director of science and planning. His primary conservation focus has been in the areas of wetland and waterfowl conservation, land protection and ecosystem service science.

Dale holds a Ph.D. in Wildlife Science through a joint program between Texas A&M-College Station and Texas A&M-Kingsville, an M.Sc. in Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University and is a TWS Certified Wildlife Biologist®. Throughout his career, Dale has had the opportunity to serve in various committee capacities with three Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, the Southeastern Association of Wildlife Agencies, and several state and regional advisory groups. After being away from Texas and the TCTWS for some time, Dale is looking forward to reengaging and helping contribute to the success of TCTWS. He most recently assisted the Clarence Cottam Awards committee in 2024.

Dale lives at the Welder Wildlife Foundation with his wife Michelle.

## Nominations

### 2025 Board Member At Large Nominee- Daniel Price



Daniel Price is the Pineywoods Ecosystem Project Leader with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in Nacogdoches, Texas. He oversees 8 Wildlife Management Areas and 7 staff, managing roughly 250,000 acres throughout East Texas partnering with multiple different agencies. Daniel is always looking for opportunities for himself and staff to grow professionally, while improving habitats throughout the WMAs to benefit native flora and fauna. The team provides quality hunting opportunities for all hunters and are passionate about educating the public through outreach and research/demonstration.

Prior to this position, Daniel has worked through several different stages of his life both professionally and personally. Growing up on a small farm outside of Ennis, TX where hunting, fishing and roaming the country was common, he knew a career outdoors was necessary. With the help of his horticulture teacher from high school, Daniel applied for and was accepted to Tarleton State University where he received a B.S. Degree in Wildlife Management May of 2009. His passion to lead and be involved with TWS started in college where he held multiple officer positions, ultimately serving as the Tarleton Student Chapter president his senior year. Daniel attended his first Texas Chapter meeting in 2007 and has only missed a couple since. As a professional, he has held numerous committee chair/co-chair positions (finance, student activities, awards, scholarships) and has assisted with numerous committees (student activities, publications, awards, and currently program). In 2018, Daniel participated in the Early Career Professional James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute. Most recently he served one year as the Secretary-Treasurer for the TWS Habitat Restoration and Conservation Working Group and was honored to be guest speaker for the Skill Building Webinar last April. Daniel is a TWS Certified Wildlife Biologist and stays active at the state level, always willing to step in and assist where needed.

## Nominations

### 2025 Board Member At Large Nominee- Daniel Price



*Continued from page 20.*

Daniel started his career with TPWD as a maintenance park ranger at Huntsville State Park where he is fully convinced the Lord put him there to meet his wife, Chrissy. Cleaning bathrooms and picking up trash in the day use area is not what a degree in Wildlife Management was intended for but it was a place to start. Just shy of a year, Daniel accepted a position as a County Wildlife Biologist, moving to Rusk, TX and started his family. In 2016, he moved to Fort Worth, TX becoming the Natural Resource Manager at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. This was a great opportunity to grow as a leader preparing him for his current role as Project Leader with TPWD.

Daniel still enjoys being outdoors hunting and fishing as he did as a young man, but now enjoys even more to provide those opportunities to his wife and kids. Daniel and Chrissy have been married for 12 years and have three kids, Willow (11), Wren (9) and Reed (6). He has had the opportunity to enter both his wife and oldest daughter into the Texas Big Game Awards for their First Big Game Harvest and looking forward to when his youngest two harvest their first big game animal. Outside of work, Daniel spends many hours on the ball fields or in the bleachers coaching/watching his girls play softball and his son play baseball and football. Their family vacations typically involve a camping trip or a place to enjoy being outdoors hiking, fishing and quality family time.

## Photo/Art Contest

The Photo and Art Committee is responsible for arranging the contest and for soliciting qualified entries for the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TCTWS) Annual Meeting. In 2025, the Photo and Art Contest will be conducted in the hybrid format described below.

- **Digital copies (JPEGs, etc.) must be submitted by 12 PM (noon) on Monday, February 17th, 2025.**
- **To submit entries:**
  - **Go to the TCTWS membership portal (<https://www.xcdsystem.com/tctws>).**  
**\* YOU WILL NOT LOGIN TO THE TCTWS.ORG WEBSITE AS IN YEARS PAST\***
  - **Log-in to your TCTWS membership profile**
  - **Click on “Photo Contest Entry” and follow on-page instructions**
- **You must bring your art submissions and the physical prints of your photo submissions to the Photo & Art table between 8 AM and 1 PM on Wednesday, February 19th, 2025.**

All contestants must be members of the TCTWS. (If you have registered for the TCTWS Annual Meeting you are a member).

Contestants will be limited to 1 entry per photography category.

Photography categories will be:

- 1) Texas Wildlife (not including captive animals)
- 2) Non-Texas Wildlife, Plants, and Scenery
- 3) Wildlife Conservation (may include captive animal or species of conservation concern)
- 4) Texas Plants (includes plant-like organisms such as fungi)
- 5) Humor
- 6) Texas Scenery
- 7) Work Related
- 8) Remote Camera (not including captive animals)

The Art category may include original drawings, paintings, carvings, sculpture, poetry, etc. Art submissions are limited to 5 entries per person.

## Photo/Art Contest

Contestants are **required** to submit a digital copy of photographs and/or art via the TCTWS membership portal (<https://www.xcdsystem.com/tctws>) to be used at the Awards Banquet. Email [photo.art@tctws.org](mailto:photo.art@tctws.org) with questions on submitting. If you do not provide digital copies of your submissions by Wednesday, February 19th by 1 pm, your work will not be displayed at the Awards Banquet.

To help defray the cost of awards, there will be an entry fee of \$1.00 per item, which can be paid online at the time of submission.

Photographs should be a standard size (3" x 5" up to 11" x 14"), unmatted, and unframed; however, cardboard backing is permitted.

An electronic voting platform will be available within the TCTWS 2025 Annual Meeting application from 8 am on Thursday, February 20th until 3 PM on Friday, February 21st.

Instructions to vote are as follows:

- Open "TCTWS 2025 Annual Meeting" application
- Click "Menu" button in bottom left corner
- Click Rubiks Cube icon labelled "Photo Contest Voting".
- Select the category of interest.
- To vote on an image, simply touch the image and tap the "Vote For This Photo" button.
- Scroll to the very bottom of the page to go to a different category.
- For the "Best of Show" category, find your favorite entry then make note of the category and last 4 digits of the image name (ex: TCTWS2025-XXXX). You will vote by selecting the image name from a list rather than viewing the image.

You may pick up your entries between 8 AM and 10 AM on Saturday, February 22nd, 2025. The committee is not responsible for photos & art left after the close of the conference.

Winners will be announced during the Awards Banquet on Friday evening, February 21st. Provided there are at least 5 entries in a category, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places will be awarded in each category. If there are < 5 entries in a category, only 1st place will be awarded. There will also be a "Best of Show" award for the most popular entry.

# TCTWS Committee News

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## Program

### Call for Abstracts

Presented Paper and Poster Presentation Abstract submission deadline: November 30, 2024 by 11:59 p.m.

Submit abstracts at <https://www.xcdsystem.com/tctws/member/index.cfm>.

See a sample abstract here: <https://tctws.org/annual-meeting-2/annual-meeting/>:

The meeting will offer technical paper sessions and an expanded poster presentation session for students (undergraduate or graduate) and wildlife professionals. Best poster presentation by an undergraduate and graduate will be awarded as in previous years and judged on significance of research, scientific procedures, quality of abstract and display, presentation of results, accuracy of conclusions, and response to questions from judges.

Posters selected for the competition will be identified based on the submitted abstract and its conveyance of these criteria. Students with incomplete studies or proposals are encouraged to submit but will not be considered for the competition. However, space is limited, so quality of abstract may prioritize acceptance. Only one poster will be judged per student presenter, though students may present more than 1 poster. Maximum poster size is 4ft wide x 3ft tall.

Papers presenting the results of wildlife field investigations and analyses as well as topic reviews of interest to wildlife students and professionals in Texas are encouraged. Paper (oral) presentations should present results or outcomes. Abstracts reporting preliminary or no data should be submitted as a poster. Abstracts should be submitted digitally via the abstract submission website that will be linked on the TCTWS Annual Meeting website.

During submission, please indicate your preference for presentation format (i.e., paper, poster, or no preference) and session (i.e., General Sessions, Clarence Cottam Award, or whether you would like to be included in the judging for the best poster presentation awards). Again, only one poster will be judged per student presenter, though students may present more than 1 poster. For those entering no preference, a decision will be made by the Program Committee and presenter notified via email. Any questions pertaining to paper abstract submission should be directed to Program Co-Chairs: [program@tctws.org](mailto:program@tctws.org).

Contributed papers will be scheduled at 15-minute intervals to include time (2–3 minutes) for questions and comments. All presenters will be notified of the day, time, and location of their presentations, and provided with instructions on how to prepare for the sessions.



## Program

### Clarence Cottam Award

Students must be the senior author of the abstract and oral presentation. Research projects should be nearing completion so that results and their interpretations can be included.

Eligibility: 1) students affiliated with a Texas college or university at the time of research, or 2) students with a non-Texas based college or university but where fieldwork/research were conducted in Texas. Students who have graduated since the last meeting are also eligible if they are current members of the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

Cottam Award participants are required to submit two abstracts: one abbreviated abstract and one extended abstract. The deadline for submission of both abstracts is November 30, 2024.

The abbreviated and extended abstracts should follow instructions outlined in the general call for abstract submission from the program committee. The extended abstract must be submitted online at the same time as the abbreviated abstract, be less than or equal to 3 pages, and in the style and format of the Journal of Wildlife Management (JWM). Abstracts should include a statement of objectives, brief description of methods, concise presentation of results, and a summary of conclusions and inferences drawn. Do not include tables, appendices, or a literature cited section.

Clarence Cottam Award presentations will be judged on originality of topic, scientific procedures, quality of display, accuracy of conclusions, and response to questions from judges. Full Clarence Cottam Award instructions can be found at: <https://tctws.org/student-menu/scholarship-opportunities/clarence-cottam-award/>. Any questions can be submitted to the Cottam Award chair (Stephen Webb) at: [cottam.awards@tctws.org](mailto:cottam.awards@tctws.org).

## Publication Awards CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

**Don't forget to submit your nominations for The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2025 Wildlife Publication Awards!**

The Society's Wildlife Publication Awards recognize excellence in scientific literature of wildlife biology and management issued within the last three years. The publications selected are characterized by originality of research or thought and a high scholastic standard in the manner of presentation.

Works published in 2022, 2023, and 2024 are eligible in the following categories:

- Books
- Electronic Media (i.e., websites, DVDs, listservs, social media accounts, podcasts, or similar)
- Peer-Reviewed Scientific Articles (journal or peer-reviewed proceedings)
- Popular Article (published in magazines, newspapers, newsletters, or similar)
- Technical Publications (reports, factsheets, or similar)

To nominate a publication, submit:

- 1) A cover letter stating which category the publication is being submitted under.
- 2) Why the publication should be considered for the award.
- 3) A digital pdf or six (6) hard copies.

Categories with  $\geq 3$  nominations will be considered for an award.

**Please send nominations to [trey.johnson@tctws.org](mailto:trey.johnson@tctws.org) by 5 PM on November 30, 2024.**



Hauling west  
Photo provided by A. Taulli

## Student Affairs

Howdy student chapter members and advisors!

The Student Activities committee would like to let you know of some great upcoming opportunities for personal and professional development at the 2025 TCTWS Annual Meeting. Please contact us at [student.activities@tctws.org](mailto:student.activities@tctws.org) with any questions!

- Undergraduate and Graduate Student Poster Sessions: Every year we host 2 poster sessions (one competitive and one non-competitive) where students may share the great research activities they've been conducting. It is a great opportunity to network with other students and professionals and showcase your ability to share scientific research to a wide array of audiences. See the "Call for Abstracts" on page 24 in this newsletter for more information.
- Texas Chapter Quiz Bowl: Do you know a lot of wildlife and natural resources knowledge? Do you love playing trivia? Then the Texas Chapter Quiz Bowl is for you! Each university or student chapter may form a 4-person team to compete in the Quiz Bowl competition held every year at the annual meeting. Teams engage in head-to-head trivia battle in a single-elimination style contest, with the questions in each round increasing in difficulty. The winner of the final round will earn the title of the Texas Chapter Quiz Bowl champion and will get to showcase the quiz bowl trophy at their university until the next conference (not to mention the great bragging rights that go with it).
- Student Plant ID Competition: Are animals not really your thing? Do you know the characteristics and scientific names of a variety of Texas plants? Then the Student Plant ID Competition may be your thing! Each university or student chapter may form up to 3 teams with 3 to 4 people per team, or students may compete individually. Contestants will individually identify 50 Texas plants and will have to correctly write the longevity, family/tribe, genus, specific epithet, and origin of each plant species. Forty-four of the 50 plants will be from a previously distributed list, and 6 will be "wild card plants" that are scored on identifying the correct scientific and common name. The top 3 individuals and top 3 teams will receive an award.

## Student Affairs

- Student Breakfast: Do you want to meet other student members and talk with Texas Chapter committee and executive board members? Want to make your chapter's voice heard? Each meeting, we host a student breakfast specifically for this purpose! The goal of the Student Breakfast is to facilitate collaboration across student chapter members and to allow students to meet and interact with the folks who are coordinating state chapter activities. Don't miss this opportunity to build your professional network AND get an awesome free breakfast!
- Student Chapter of the Year Award: All Texas universities with a wildlife program and at least 10 students who are TCTWS members are invited to apply for the Student Chapter of the Year award. This prestigious award showcases the student chapter that has made outstanding contributions to their university, TCTWS, and the broader wildlife profession. Interested universities must submit their application packet to the Student Activities committee before January 31, 2025, and the winning chapter will be announced at the Student Awards Banquet at the 2025 Annual Meeting. Application packets and guidelines will be distributed to student chapters and Texas universities by November 1, 2024.
- Student Volunteer Opportunities: Each conference takes a massive army of volunteers to ensure all activities go smoothly, and our student members answer this call of duty in astounding numbers. Volunteering at the conference can provide an opportunity to meet and interact with Texas Chapter student and professional members and is also a great way to earn service credits for your chapter and your personal resumé! Volunteer opportunities include assisting at the registration desk, helping with technical sessions and plenary events, set up and break down of conference rooms, promoting raffle items, and much more. The Student Activities committee will reach out to student members who are registered for the annual meeting in February 2025 to seek volunteers, but feel free to contact us if you already know you will be attending and would like to volunteer!

## Scholarship Application Period for Graduate and Undergraduate Students: October 15th - November 30th, 2024

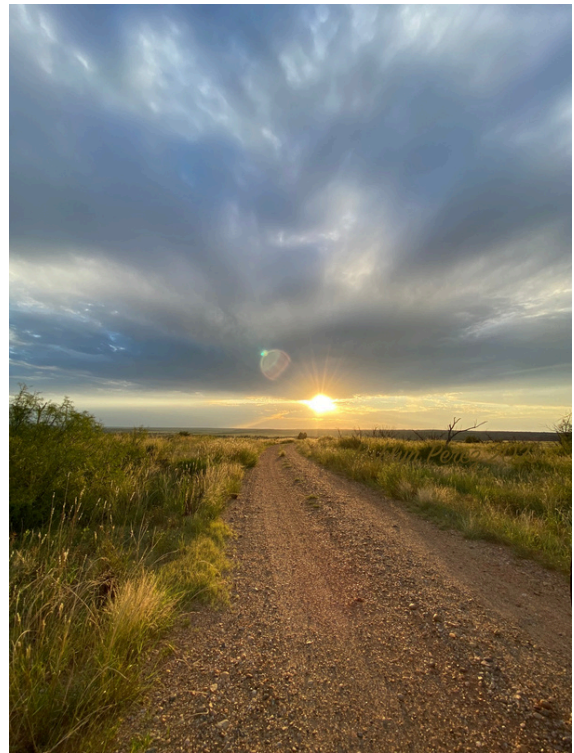
We are excited to announce that the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society will be accepting scholarship applications from October 15th, 2024, through November 30th, 2024. Awarded in Denton in February 2025.

Applications will be available on our website under the \*Students\* tab. This year, we're thrilled to introduce new questions and several new scholarships, alongside some of our longstanding awards. This means more opportunities for you to secure financial support for your education! All applications will be sent to [Cody.Samek@tctws.org](mailto:Cody.Samek@tctws.org) and [Matt.Reidy@tctws.org](mailto:Matt.Reidy@tctws.org). If you have any questions during the application period please email them to answer these questions.

Stay tuned for more information as the application date approaches. We look forward to receiving your applications and supporting your academic and professional journeys. **APPLY! APPLY! APPLY!**



Captured baby Texas Horned Lizard  
*Photo provided by L. Massey*



Roads  
*Photo provided by J. Perez*

## Early Career Professional Training to Realign with Legislative Schedule

The TCTWS Board has accepted a proposal from the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute (JGTCLI) Committee to delay the next Early Career Professional Program (ECPP) training so that it will start in 2026 rather than 2025.

The first ECPP training was designed so that cohorts would conclude their programs in February of odd years, when Texas holds legislative sessions. This allowed TCTWS to create projects and deliverables for the cohorts that could help the Chapter pursue its legislative agenda. Examples of past projects that contributed to the TCTWS agenda include work on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and external identification of captive-bred deer.

During the COVID pandemic, the 2020-2021 cohort was extended for 12 months, concluding in 2022. While this decision allowed that cohort to complete their projects and then share them in a more typical setting, the JGTCLI Committee has realized that it is now much harder for the TCTWS Board and Executive Director to create projects for ECPP cohorts that give them legislative experience.

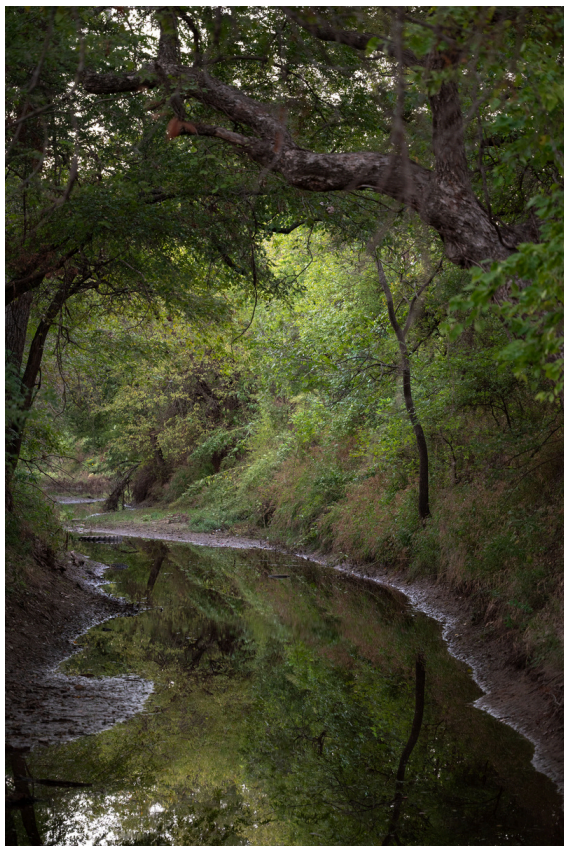
As the Executive Board discussed this proposal, two main concerns were considered: first, that the ECPP would lose momentum if the program is not highlighted at every meeting, and second, that some potential candidates would "age out" during the extended time and become ineligible for the next cohort.

To address the first concern, the current ECPP Committee Chair has developed a "where are they now" campaign on social media to advertise the impact that the ECPP training had on past participants. Program updates will be given regularly during board and business meetings to maintain membership awareness of the ECPP. The Chair will also submit an article about the program to The Wildlife Professional to provide more widespread recognition throughout TWS, and to serve as a model for other chapters and sections. To address the second concern, the "years after graduation" requirement will be extended by two years for the 2026-2027 cohort.

## Early Career Professional Training to Realign with Legislative Schedule

In addition to the benefit of realigning with the legislature schedule, other benefits to the ECPP were considered. The Chair will submit an application this fall to participate in Texan by Nature's Conservation Wrangler program. If the ECPP is accepted, the program will benefit from administrative and financial guidance, a widespread marketing campaign, and recognition at the Texan by Nature 2025 Summit. The delay in starting the next cohort gives the Chair more time to dedicate to this effort. Another benefit of the delay will be time to develop and implement a plan to establish an endowment for the JGTCLI. Improved fundraising and financial stability will allow the program to take on more participants in each cohort – thus improving opportunity, eligibility, and participation – while retaining the advantages of smaller cohorts.

If you are interested in the ECPP, please keep watching for updates in the newsletters, via email, and at the annual meeting. We look forward to considering applications for the 2026-2027 cohort.



River

*Photo provided by I. Szebelledy*



Black-capped Vireo Mason Mountain

*Photo provided by K. Irvin*

# Student Spotlight

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## Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Meeting

*By: Abby Buckner*

In August, TCTWS President Mary Pearl Meuth and Executive Director Dr. Matt Wagner attended the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Meeting and Annual Public Hearing to present testimony in support of science-based management and regulations for Texas public land, wildlife, and natural resources. They were joined by chapter members from across Texas including students from Stephen F. Austin State University and the Sul Ross State University/Borderlands Research Institute, expanding the Chapter's physical representation at the meeting.

During the two-day long meeting, students were immersed in the policy making process alongside landowners, commercial stakeholders, environmental groups, and public officials. The meeting consisted of staff presentation of data, public testimony, and commission discussion and voting. Students witnessed how factors ranging from ongoing research to countless interest groups and economics to demographics influence the complex balance in responsible policy making regarding our state's land and wildlife.

Attending a Commission Meeting for the first time can be an enlightening experience as recent student attendees have voiced.

"Having seen a TPWD Commission Meeting in action now, I think every biologist should watch a Commission Meeting at least once. Being at the meeting gave me a new appreciation for the processes that put major wildlife policy in place, and the role of stakeholders – biologists, landowners, and other members of the public – in affecting those policy decisions."

– Emily Blumentritt  
Borderlands Research Institute, Sul Ross State University

"It was great to see the process in action. I feel like I better understand how policies get enacted, and am better prepared to make a difference when I am finally able to begin my own career."

– Bill Koehler  
Stephen F. Austin State University



# Student Spotlight

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## Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Meeting

*By: Abby Buckner*

“Before this meeting, I never knew how actions and policies get brought up and handled in the wildlife field. From this meeting I got to watch and learn from our Commissions how they handle approving and/or trying to make an action more detailed to attempt to fit everyone’s needs. It opened my eyes getting to see different sides of people, like private landowners vs wildlife professionals telling their stories and issues related to a topic to either push towards or improve an action. I think that this experience has helped broaden my perspective on how policies are discussed in the wildlife field and gave me a sense of why we should care about these policies.”

– Paige Sumner  
Stephen F. Austin State University

The next TPW Commission Meeting will be held November 6-7, 2024 in Corpus Christi and we encourage students to join us in attending! Information regarding the meeting and agenda can be found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife website on the Commission Meetings page as the date approaches.

*See Pg. 8 for a photo of students and other TCTWS members at the Commission Meeting.*



Gulf cordgrass feeling the heat of South Texas  
*Photo provided by F. Fay*

## *Callicarpa americana* (American beautyberry)

By: Sarah Turner

A commonly encountered plant of the Pineywoods and Post Oak Savannah, the distinctive bluish-purple berries of *Callicarpa americana* are an obvious sign you've found a good food source for wildlife. While their flowers are mostly inconspicuous, their fruits are vibrantly colored and attractive to many species. In fact, the roots of the genus name *Callicarpa* is beauty ("callos") and fruit ("carpos"). The moisture and nutrient rich berries are a vital food source for over 40 species of songbirds and many small mammals. In addition, the foliage is browsed on by white-tailed deer due to the relatively high protein content. Wildlife species aren't the only ones who utilize *C. americana*-indigenous tribes were known to harvest and prepare various plant parts for medicinal purposes and farmers would use crushed leaves to repel biting insects.

American beautyberry is a native perennial shrub that can grow upwards of 8 feet tall. Their ovate or elliptical leaves have a serrate (sawtooth like) margin and are arranged oppositely along the stem. Sometimes the leaf underside is covered in dense, wooly hairs. The woody stems are gray, red, or brown, and can either be four-sided or terete (like a distorted circle). The plant blooms in late spring and early summer, with clusters of flowers occurring on the stems between the leaves. These clusters will then mature into the berries that are so highly sought after by wildlife species.

### Fun Facts:

- 1) *C. americana* is highly fire tolerant but is shade intolerant.
- 2) You can make jam from beautyberry fruits. Check out this recipe from Southern Living (<https://www.southernliving.com/recipes/beautyberry-jelly>).

### Literature Cited:

- 1) [https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/factsheet/pdf/fs\\_caam2.pdf](https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/factsheet/pdf/fs_caam2.pdf)
- 2) [https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=caam2](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=caam2)



The opposite leaf arrangement and berry clusters between leaves on a *Callicarpa americana* branch. Photograph taken by Sally and Andy Wasowski and used with permission from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center database.



The inconspicuous inflorescence of *C. americana*. Photograph taken by Ray Mathews and used with permission from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center database.

# Southwest Section Tracks

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*By: Kathy Granillo, Southwest Section Representative*

The Annual Conference is upon us! I hope that many of you can join us October 19-23, 2024 for the 31st Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. Please feel free to find me at the conference for one-on-one discussions about TWS, wildlife conservation, or whatever else you'd like to talk about. You can message me via the meeting app or by email to arrange to meet. Keep in mind that Council will be having the Fall Council meeting October 17-18 and anyone can stop by and watch us in action. We will also have a Council meeting the afternoon of October 23 to thank Council members leaving our team, to welcome new members to the team and to transition leadership of Council. This meeting is also open to anyone to attend.

For those attending the conference, please take care of yourself, physically, socially and mentally. There will be approximately 2,000 attendees and events and talks from sunup to well after sundown for the duration of the conference. Prepare for the conference as you would for a multiple-day field work project. Plan your schedule ahead of time but be prepared for change. Think about how to stay hydrated and nourished and well-rested. Prioritize how to expend your energy. Have a safety plan. This safety plan should include traveling to and from the conference, as well as your time at the conference. Remember Baltimore is a huge city, and while the waterfront area is well-patrolled by the police, other parts of town can be risky places to be in for the unprepared. TWS is urging all participants to stay in groups while out and about, and to make sure someone knows your plans and whereabouts.

I recently participated in a TWS webinar aimed at those attending the conference for the first time and realized that the advice and recommendations we gave are relevant to all attendees. The webinar is posted on [wildlife.org](https://wildlife.org).

<https://wildlife.org/events/event/safety-professional-behavior-and-networking-attending-your-first-annual-conference/>

The four main topic we covered and key take-aways from the webinar:

- Appropriate attire – Be you
- Picking sessions/events to attend – Make priorities, don't try to attend everything; take breaks, get outside
- How to meet attendees, potential employers, or potential graduate advisors – be bold, be adventurous; team up
- Staying safe physically and socially – be smart, be aware; know that there are many allies to help

# Southwest Section Tracks

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*By: Kathy Granillo, Southwest Section Representative*

The Conference will have an Ombudsperson, Jen Sims, available the entire conference. TWS staff are there to help you, as are all Council members. If you have an issue or concern, please reach out to these folks. We want everyone to have the best experience possible at the Annual Conference.

Whether or not you are attending the conference, I hope you have a great fall! Please feel free to contact me at [KGBirder55@gmail.com](mailto:KGBirder55@gmail.com).



Kathy Granillo - TWS  
Southwest Section Representative



King Ranch Norias Division Whitetail Buck.  
*Photo provided by N. Talkington*

# So long and happy "tails"!

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Texas Chapter Tails of Wildlife and Stewardship 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 Editor (Emily Blumentritt, [newsletter@tctws.org](mailto:newsletter@tctws.org)) by the 15th of the preceding month. Change of email address should be submitted online through the Address Change Form.



Pay dues, read previous newsletters, and find more information online: [tctws.org](http://tctws.org)

## TCTWS 2024/2025 Executive Board

President, Mary Pearl Meuth  
Pres. Elect, Jessica Glasscock  
Vice President, Bill Adams  
Secretary, Mikayla Killiam  
Board Member at Large, Chris Farrell

Executive Director, Matt Wagner  
Treasurer, Jon Purvis  
Archivist, Maureen Frank  
Past President, Blake Grisham