



Texas Chapter Tails

of Wildlife and Stewardship

Inside this Edition

President’s Note	1
Editor’s Note - Expanded	
Table of Contents	3
Annual Meeting	4
TCTWS Committee News ...	5
Contributed Articles	29
Botany Brief	31
Southwest Section Tracks...	32

President's Note

As we settle into the rhythms of fall, the season brings with it not only cooler weather and shorter days, but also a renewed sense of momentum as we look ahead to the year to come. Planning is already well underway for our 2026 Annual Meeting, to be held at the Moody Gardens Hotel and Convention Center in Galveston. The room block is now open, and I encourage you to make your reservations early to take advantage of the conference rate. This venue offers a unique setting for us to gather, learn, and celebrate the meaningful work we do across the state.



Photo by E. Weber

This year’s plenary theme, “Margins Matter: Wildlife on the Edge in a Changing Texas,” underscores our mission by drawing attention to the ecological and conservation significance of species living at the margins, both geographically and environmentally. It sets the stage for important conversations about the unique challenges and opportunities of protecting wildlife on the edge particularly as Texas undergoes rapid environmental and land-use changes. These species are often rare or fringe populations, making their conservation more vital than ever for sustaining Texas's biodiversity.

I’m also pleased to share that we have an excellent slate of nominees for our next leadership team. These individuals bring a wealth of experience and a strong track record of service to their candidacy. Please be sure to read their bios included in this

President's Note

edition of the newsletter, and don't forget to cast your vote when the time comes. While you're reading, please also consider nominating a well-deserving peer for one of our Chapter awards. These recognitions are a meaningful way to highlight the outstanding contributions being made by professionals and students in our community.

I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to all of our committees for the time and effort they continue to invest in strengthening our Chapter. The Communications Committee, including the social media, newsletter, and webinar teams, keeps our membership informed, connected, and engaged throughout the year. Meanwhile, the Workshop Committee is developing a dynamic slate of professional development opportunities for the upcoming meeting. The Finance, Exhibits, and Scholarship Committees have worked together to create a great new sponsorship brochure, please see the link in their write-up to learn how you can support these efforts. And the Local Arrangements Committee is working diligently to ensure a seamless and enjoyable experience at our 2026 venue. The behind-the-scenes work of all of our committees is vital to our success and deeply appreciated.

Lastly, I'd like to take a moment to recognize and congratulate Dr. Fidel Hernández on his recent appointment as President of The Wildlife Society, announced at the TWS Annual Conference. Dr. Hernández's leadership and dedication are a source of pride for our Chapter, and we extend our best wishes as he takes on this distinguished role. In addition, congratulations to Tarleton State University for being named The Wildlife Society's 2025 Student Chapter of the Year! An outstanding recognition of their hard work, commitment, and exceptional achievements.

Thank you all for your continued support, engagement, and passion for wildlife conservation.



Jessica L. Glasscock, PhD
President, Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society



Editor's Note

Dear readers,

Because this issue is jam-packed with committee news, updates on wildlife and natural resource conservation at state and federal levels, new nominees for leadership, and highlights on fauna and flora. an expanded table of contents is provided below!

- President's Note Pg. 1-2
- Editor's Note Pg. 3
- TCTWS Annual Meeting: Save the Date + Group Rate Link Pg. 4
- TCTWS Committee News
 - Call for Meeting Sponsorships and Raffle Donations Pg. 5
 - Program: Call for Abstracts Pgs. 6-8
 - Student Activities Pgs. 9-10
 - Scholarship Application Period for Students Pg. 11.
 - Conservation Affairs Pgs. 12-17
 - Nominations Pgs. 16-22
 - Vice President Pgs. 17-18
 - Secretary Pgs. 19-20
 - Board Member at Large Pgs. 21-11
 - Photo/Art Contest Pg. 23
 - Publication Awards: Call for Nominees: Pg. 24
 - Honorary Life Member Award: Seeking Nominees..... Pg. 25
 - Excellence in Wildlife Conservation: Seeking Nominees..... Pgs. 26-27
 - Tommy Lee Caruthers 1939-2025 Pg. 28
- Contributed Article:
 - Federal Judge Vacates Lesser Prairie Chicken Listing Pgs. 29-30
- Botany Brief Pg. 31
- Southwest Section Tracks Pgs. 32-33

TCTWS 2026 Annual Meeting

Save the Date

A note from the Local Arrangements Committee:

Save the Date!

The **Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2026 Annual Meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 18th – Friday, February 20th** at the **Moody Gardens Hotel, Spa & Convention Center on Galveston Island.**



This venue has so much to offer our members with roughly 80,000 square feet of event space at our disposal, ample onsite parking, and multiple restaurants onsite and close by! 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!

Moody Gardens Hotel Group Rate

[Click Here for Moody Gardens Group Rate](#)

Rate is \$111/night plus taxes and fees.

Self-Parking at the hotel is included.

Cut off date is January 27, 2026. No exceptions.

The TCTWS Annual Meeting each year offers opportunities to hear from leading experts in the natural resource community, get updates on breaking research from wildlife and conservation students, and meet professionals from across the state.



Call for 2026 Annual Meeting Sponsorships & Raffle Donations

The Finance Committee is officially accepting sponsorships and raffle donations for the 2026 Annual Meeting. In partnership with the Exhibits and Scholarship Committees, we've developed a new Master Sponsorship Packet that highlights the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society's accomplishments and community impact. The packet covers the James G. Teer Leadership Institute including the early career professional program and conservation camp, it highlights student participation in our chapter, and covers the policy work we accomplish throughout the year. Our hope is that this document will help potential donors have a better understanding of who we are and what options they have to help support our mission.

Sponsorships play a vital role in helping us host a successful annual meeting where we share new research, strengthen professional connections, and support members at all stages of their careers. They also allow us to keep the cost of registration as low as possible and to provide discounted registration to student members. These contributions also enable the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society to remain active in policy discussions that shape wildlife management at both the state and national levels.



The new sponsorship packet outlines updated sponsorship levels designed to better reflect the structure of our annual meeting. This year, we are also excited to introduce event sponsorships for groups who wish to support the chapter but will not be attending the meeting (and therefore will not need complimentary registrations).

Please feel free to share the sponsorship packet with anyone who may be interested in supporting the chapter through sponsorships, exhibits, scholarships, or raffle donations. For questions or suggestions, contact the Finance Committee at finance@tctws.org.

*-Finance Committee
Mikayla Killam, Austin Killam, and Tamara Wood*

TCTWS Committee News

Program: Call for Abstracts



Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2026 Annual Conference

Call for Abstracts

Deadline: November 30, 2025 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

**Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2026 Annual Conference
February 18-20, 2026**

The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society will hold its 2026 Annual Conference in Galveston, Texas, from February 18-20, 2026. The program committee will begin accepting abstracts for oral presentations and poster presentations beginning October 1st through November 30th. Abstracts meeting criteria related to all aspects of wildlife ecology, management, policy, human dimensions, and conservation are invited.

Oral Presentations will be presented live and in-person at the conference. Each oral presentation will be allotted 15 minutes, which includes 12 minutes for the presentation and three minutes for questions. Oral presentations 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. **Oral presentations should present results or outcomes.** Abstracts reporting preliminary or no data should be submitted as a poster.

Clarence Cottam Award – Students with excellent completed research are encouraged to submit abstracts for consideration for the Clarence Cottam Award. The Clarence Cottam Award is the most prestigious student award given by the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society to recognize and promote student research excellence in wildlife biology, conservation, and management. Selected participants will have the opportunity to present their research to the entire membership during the annual conference. The winners are recognized for their outstanding research contributions, awarded a scholarship, and become part of the more than 30-year history of the Clarence Cottam Award.

Clarence Cottam Award information continued on next page.

TCTWS Committee News

Program: Call for Abstracts, cont.

Eligibility includes students affiliated with a Texas college or university at the time of research or 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 and one extended abstract. The submission deadline for abstracts is November 30, 2025. The abbreviated and extended abstracts should follow the same instructions outlined in the general call for abstract submissions. The extended abstract should 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. Abstract submissions that are not accepted to participate in the Cottam Award presentation session will be considered for oral presentations during the general sessions.

Clarence Cottam Award presentations will be allotted 20 minutes, which includes 15 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for questions. 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 at cottam.awards@tctws.org.

Poster Presentations – Abstracts for poster presentations may be submitted by students or professionals. Undergraduate, M.S., and Ph.D. students may elect to enter the student poster competition, while professionals and students not wishing to compete may submit under the non-competitive category. Posters in the student competition will be judged on the significance of the research, soundness of scientific procedures, quality of the abstract and display, clarity of results, accuracy of conclusions, and responses to judges' questions. Students with incomplete studies or proposals are welcome to submit posters, but these will not be eligible for competition.

All poster presenters will prepare a printed poster for live, in-person presentations at the conference. In addition, presenters are encouraged to upload a PDF version of their poster for asynchronous viewing through the conference mobile app and website. **The maximum poster size is 4 ft wide × 3 ft tall.**

Program: Call for Abstracts

Instructions for Submitting Abstracts

The submission site will lead you through the submission steps; guidelines for submissions are summarized below. **The submission deadline is Sunday, November 30, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.** Abstracts that miss this deadline will not be considered. During submission, please indicate your preference for presentation format (i.e., oral or poster presentation) 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). Please note: **only one poster will be judged per student presenter, though students may present more than 1 poster.**

Abstracts should be no longer than 250 words and follow The Journal of Wildlife Management format. Abstracts should be concise and include general problem statement, brief review of methods/experimental design, results, and management implications. For needed statistical significance statements, report P-values only (no need for exact statistical test results). Please follow formatting instructions on abstract submission website. Do not use scientific names on the abstract submission website.

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

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

Abstract Evaluation: Abstracts will be evaluated based on technical merit, contribution to scientific knowledge and relevance to the field, creativity and soundness in study design, validity of results and conclusions, and general quality and adherence to formatting guidelines. Because space is limited for both oral and poster presentations, acceptance will be determined by the evaluation of each submitted abstract. In cases where the number of submissions exceeds available slots, not all abstracts may be accepted. Notice of decision will be made on or about January 15, 2026 via email.

Registration: All presenters MUST register and pay the appropriate conference registration fee. Registration information will be posted on TCTWS' conference website, <https://tctws.org/annual-meeting-2/annual-meeting/>. We expect registration to open in December 2025. Early Bird registration is strongly encouraged and will be available through at least January 31st.

Questions? Questions about the conference program and abstracts may be directed to Program Committee at program@tctws.org.

Student Activities

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 2026 TCTWS Annual Conference. Please contact us at student.activities@tctws.org with any questions.

- Competitive and Non-Competitive Poster Sessions: Every year we host 2 poster sessions where students and professionals may share the great research activities they've been conducting. Undergraduate and graduate students who wish to compete in the competitive session will have their posters evaluated by a panel of judges, and first through third place will be awarded to the top undergraduate and graduate students. 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 6 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 conference. Teams engage in head-to-head trivia battle in a single-elimination style contest, with each round's questions 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). The rules for the quiz bowl contest will be distributed to student chapters by November 1, 2025.
- 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 for you! 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. The rules and plant list for the competition will be distributed to student chapters by November 1, 2025.

Student Activities, cont.

- **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 members and to allow students to meet and interact with the folks who are coordinating state chapter activities. Don't miss this early morning opportunity to build your professional network before the day's activities start!

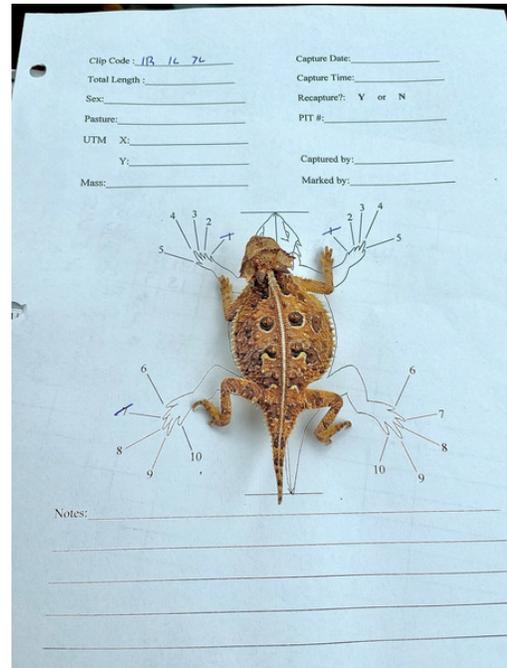


Photo by S. Green

- **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, 2026, and the winning chapter will be announced at the Student Awards Banquet at the 2026 Annual Meeting. Application packets and guidelines will be distributed to student chapters and Texas universities by November 1, 2025.
- **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 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 2026 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 15 - November 30, 2025

We are excited to announce that the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society will be accepting scholarship applications from October 15, 2025, through November 30, 2025. Scholarship recipients will be announced at the TCTWS annual meeting in Galveston in February 2026. Applications will be available on our website under the *Students* tab. There are several scholarships available which means more opportunities for you to secure financial support for your education! All applications will be sent to Robert.Allcorn@tctws.org and Angie.Arredondo@tctws.org. For questions or more information, please email Bobby or Angie. Stay tuned for updates and reminders as the application deadline approaches. We look forward to receiving your applications and supporting your academic and professional journeys. APPLY! APPLY! APPLY!



Photo by AFA



Photo by J. Dale James

Conservation Affairs

By Matt Wagner, Executive Director, and Mary Pearl Meuth, Past President

New World Screwworm

At the current time, the New World Screwworm (NWS) Fly has been documented just 350 miles south of the Texas border in Mexico and advancing northward. We are continuing to monitor this progress and support efforts to educate ranchers and wildlife managers in how this challenge will be met. In August, USDA Secretary Rollins announced \$750 million in federal funding for a sterile fly production facility at Moore Airfield Base in Edinburg, Texas, as well as additional dollars for research. It is estimated that the facility would take at least two years to be built, but once completed, approximately 300 million flies will be produced per week. Texas House Bills 237, 238 and 239 by Chairman Guillen address the threat of NWS Texas to create more cooperation among agriculture organizations and provide landowner education. For the latest developments on NWS, go to the Screwworm Coalition of Texas website: <https://screwwormtx.org/>.

TPWD Commission Meeting

At the August commission meeting, Matt Wagner gave oral comments during the Public Hearing regarding transparency in CWD rule implementation and the need for enhanced recharge into our aquifers as more groundwater is extracted. This can be accomplished by strategic brush control in recharge zones while also improving wildlife habitat. Eight students from Texas State University, Tarleton and Texas A&M also attended the commission meeting, with Ben Torres of Texas State providing public comments on urbanization's impact on wildlife.



Students with TPWD Executive Director, Dr. Yoskowitz, at the August commission meeting.

Conservation Affairs, cont.

Roadless Area Rule Proposal

Changes in National Forest Service roadless areas are being proposed by the USDA. The proposal will rescind the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, first implemented in 2001 for soil and watershed protection, recreational opportunities, and un-fragmented wildlife habitat. Today, 44.7 million acres are designated under this rule. While better access is needed in some national forests for timber management and wildfire suppression, much of the roadless acreage is non-forested or of sparse tree cover. The remaining roadless areas are often steep and remote, subject to erosion and high cost of construction. Roadless areas in Texas are all within the Sam Houston National Forest and include: Little Lake Creek (596 acres, Montgomery County), Big Woods (1,320 acres, San Jacinto County), Big Creek (1,447 acres, San Jacinto County) and Winters Bayou (730 acres, San Jacinto County). Comments on rescinding the Roadless Area Conservation Rule were due on September 19.

Chronic Wasting Disease

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) passed new rules reducing their involvement in CWD management in white-tailed deer breeding facilities. Now, hold orders on positive facilities may be optional rather than mandatory. Concern with this change was expressed during the TAHC public hearing on August 26. Testimony from Matt Wagner, TWA, and others, opposed the new rules, and asked for a delay, only to go unheeded. TAHC and TPWD are currently discussing the situation to determine how CWD will be managed going forward. It appears that all responsibility will fall on TPWD without additional resources.



Photo by L. Heffelfinger



Photo by E. Tomassetti

Conservation Affairs, cont.

Texas Mountain Lion Management Plan

The third draft of TPWD's Mountain Lion Management Plan is being produced after review by multiple stakeholders. Matt Wagner submitted comments and edits for consideration. At the November commission meeting, staff are proposing to present a final draft.



Photo by A. Patrick

Groundwater Management

An East Texas groundwater project is creating controversy with local landowners concerned about impacts to their wells. Representative Cody Harris, Chair of the House Natural Resource Committee has filed legislation concerning the project. At a hearing of the committee on July 15, TCTWS member and TPWD biologist Matt Symmank was invited to give testimony on the success of constructed wetlands at the Richland Chambers WMA in providing additional water supplies while providing wildlife habitat. The groundwater controversy surrounds the rule of capture which is the basis of groundwater policy in Texas. Interestingly, the rule of capture originated in wildlife law designed to create a property right for the possession of "deer in the woods". Without a way to determine a quantified and defensible property right in groundwater, the controversy will continue. In 2014-15, the first cohort of the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Program addressed groundwater management in Texas. Their work products remain very relevant today.

Western Conservation Leadership Development Program

The Texas Chapter's conservation leadership program includes Wildlife Summer Camp for high school students, and the James G Teer Conservation Leadership Institute for early career professionals – which is now accepting applications (<https://tctws.org/conservation-institute-menu/jgtcli-early-career-professional-training/>). For mid to late career professionals, the Western Conservation Leadership Development Program (<https://www.westernconservationldp.com/>) offers advanced instruction in adaptive leadership skills to face the challenges of the future. Check it out!

TCTWS Committee News

Conservation Affairs, cont.

Renewable Energy

TWA's Private Land Summit focused on wind and solar development on private lands. Excellent speakers presented current and future considerations for private landowners as well as the big picture of energy demand in Texas. In addition, the Texas Conservation Alliance conducted listening sessions for invited stakeholder's input on renewable energy projects in different parts of the state. Matt Wagner provided input for the East Texas region.

Upcoming Meetings:

September 26-27, Canyon of The Eagles – Texas Conservation Alliance Annual Meeting

October 5-9, Edmonton, Alberta – TWS Annual Conference

October 7-9, Alpine – Texas Section Society for Range Management Annual Meeting

November 5-6, El Paso – TPWD Commission Meeting

November 13-14, Lake Jackson – Texas Waterbird Society Meeting

January 21-22 2026, Austin – TPWD Commission Meeting

February 7-11, 2026, Monterey, California – Society for Range Management Annual Meeting

February 18-20 2026, Galveston – TCTWS Annual Meeting

February 25-27 2026, Austin – Land Conservation Conference

March 25-26 2026, Austin – TPWD Commission Meeting



Photo by A. Mendiola

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). TCTWS members are always encouraged to participate in these activities.

Nominations

We are pleased to introduce the nominees for our 2026 Vice President, Secretary, and Board Member at Large positions. These individuals have stepped forward in service to the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society, committing their time and talents to help guide and strengthen our membership society. Service is the foundation of our Chapter—our leaders and volunteers alike make it possible for us to carry out our mission.

Candidate bios will be featured in the October and January editions of The Tails and highlighted across our social platforms. **Our online voting system will open in early 2026**, and we encourage every member to learn more about the nominees and cast a ballot.

Your vote is your voice, and together, through service, we shape the future of our Chapter.

Vice President

- Grant Lawrence
- Matt Reidy

Secretary

- Andrew Earl
- Benjamin Olsen

Board Member at Large

- Bobby Allcorn
- Adam Terry

*in alphabetical order

Nominations

2026 Vice President Candidate - Grant Lawrence

I am Grant Lawrence and I serve as the Land Steward and Operations Manager at Shield Ranch Barton Creek and Shield Ranch Camp Wood. Over the past 8 years my role has transitioned, but the focus remains on careful conservation planning, executing wildlife and habitat management objectives, overseeing property and infrastructure management, and supervising the day-to-day operations of full-time staff, seasonal employees, and volunteer groups.

I obtained a B.S. in Range and Wildlife Management from Abilene Christian University (ACU) and a M.S. in Natural Resource Management from Sul Ross State University. I was first introduced to the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TCTWS) at the 2012 meeting in Ft. Worth. Recognizing the value of the organization, I helped charter a new student chapter at ACU and served as Vice President. Throughout undergrad and graduate school, I was fully immersed in TCTWS activities including oral and poster presentations, leading teams in student competitions, and forming invaluable networking connections. My collegiate career concluded with a 2nd place finish for the Cottam Award in 2017.



I am blessed to have attended annual meetings for 14 consecutive years. The intricate, interconnected professional networking web of TCTWS has played a pivotal role in my career. Continued involvement led to graduation from the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute (JGTCLI). As a member of the two-year COVID cohort (2020-2022), I learned leadership and communication skills that have translated well into my career endeavors and service roles.

I have served two terms as a Scholarship Committee member (2020 and 2021) and two terms with the Finance Committee (2021 member and 2023 co-chair). I currently serve as fundraising chair of the Early Career Professional Program committee and will aid as a Peer Mentor for the 2026-27 JGTCLI cohort.

I'm honored for the opportunity to serve the chapter in this capacity. If elected as Vice President, I plan to engage and support the efforts of our membership while representing the organization with pride. I am committed to furthering the mission and vision of TCTWS by leveraging the unique skillsets and experience of our diverse membership.

In my personal life, you can find me pursuing outdoor adventures with my wife, two boys, and trusty labrador retriever.

Nominations

2026 Vice President Candidate - Matt Reidy

I am happy to be nominated for Vice President of Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society (TCTWS). I have been a member since 2006. I received my B.S. in Wildlife Ecology and Management from Texas A&M University in 2004 and completed my M.S. in Range and Wildlife Sciences from Texas A&M University-Kingsville in 2007. My research focused on population estimates and electric fencing for feral hogs.

In my professional career, I am the Assistant District Leader for The Brush Country District in South Texas for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. I provide technical guidance to private landowners in South Texas as well as assist with district operations. My additional duties with Texas Parks and Wildlife include serving on Migratory Gamebird Technical Committee, Upland Gamebird Advisory Committee, and Falconry and Raptor Council.



I have attended the TCTWS Annual Meeting every year since 2006 first as a graduate student and then as a young professional and now I guess as a mid-career professional. I was elected and served as Board Member at Large in 2022. I have also been volunteering for committees with TCTWS since 2011. I have served on the Finance, Cottam Awards, Activities, Scholarships, Publications, and Program Committees. I also have enjoyed poster judging and helping the chapter where I can.

In my personal time I am very active in the sport of falconry and serve as the Director at Large for the Texas Hawking Association. I also enjoy rock climbing, playing and hunting with my German shorthair pointer, and native grass restoration on my little piece of property in South Texas.

I agreed to be nominated for Vice President of TCTWS because it has been very important to me in my professional and personal growth. The contacts I have made and the development I have earned from volunteering and being involved mean a lot to me both personally and professionally. I hope to continue to provide my energy, passion, and time to TCTWS so that the next generation of wildlife professionals can gain same kind of knowledge, benefits, and support I have.

Nominations

2026 Secretary Candidate - Andrew Earl

Andrew Earl serves as the Director of Conservation for the Texas Wildlife Association.

At TWA, Andrew bridges the organization's issues & advocacy and landowner education programs. He serves as liaison to the organization's Wildlife Conservation and Land & Water committees, responsible for developing and advancing priorities before the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission and state legislature. He works closely with the TWA education team to ensure that workshop curriculum reflects the emerging issues facing Texas landowners—and vice versa—that the needs and concerns of landowners are accounted for in the organization's advocacy work.



Andrew joined TWA in 2023, bringing a decade of experience in coalition building and collaborative policymaking. Most recently, he served as the Director of Private Lands Conservation and then Director of Government Relations at the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. There, his work focused primarily on building a shared platform for sportsmen on topics like working lands conservation, wildlife disease, and hunting & fishing access on federal lands.

Prior to that, Andrew worked in the U.S. Senate overseeing Senator Mike Crapo's agriculture and natural resource legislative portfolios. He began his career in the Ducks Unlimited Washington, DC office.

An adult-onset hunter, Andrew's connection to the outdoors was nurtured by clam digging and striper fishing off the south shore of Long Island. Fortunately for him, he met a girl from North Texas and eagerly followed her back to the Lone Star State.

Andrew serves on the TCTWS Conservation Affairs Subcommittee on renewable energy. He is a TYHP Huntmaster and on the Steering Committee of the American Wildlife Conservation Partnership, a coalition of 53 national hunt & fish organizations organized to amplify the collective voices of sportsmen and women in federal wildlife and natural resource policymaking.

Andrew lives in Buda with his wife and son.

Nominations

2026 Secretary Candidate - Benjamin Olsen

Ben Olsen is a Wildlife Health Specialist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). He received his B.S. in Wildlife Conservation and Management from Missouri Western State University and went on to earn his M.S. in Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, where he conducted research with the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute. After graduate school, Ben worked as a Wildlife Biologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources before joining TPWD, first serving as a District Wildlife Biologist in New Braunfels and later promoting to his current position as Wildlife Health Specialist. In this role, he provides advanced technical assistance on wildlife health issues, with a primary focus on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). He leads a team of wildlife technicians that help ensure TPWD's CWD surveillance and management efforts are successful.



Ben has been an active member of The Wildlife Society (TWS) since 2011, when he joined as a freshman in college. He became involved with the Texas Chapter in 2015 during his graduate studies. Over the years, Ben has held several leadership roles within TWS, including Student Chapter President, Secretary of the Student Development Working Group, and Board Member of the Early Career Professionals Working Group. He has served on multiple award committees, volunteered as a poster judge at conferences, and most recently contributed to the Texas Chapter as a Program Committee member in 2024 and currently serves as Chair of the Program Committee.

In addition, Ben was selected as a Fellow of the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute (2023-2024 Cohort), further strengthening his leadership skills and professional network in wildlife conservation.

Ben credits TWS with helping to shape his career and providing invaluable opportunities for growth and mentorship. He is committed to giving back to the Texas Chapter, continuing advocacy to ensure it remains relevant and valuable to all members, students, early career professionals, and established professionals alike. Serving as Secretary would be an honor and an opportunity to help the Chapter continue to grow, support its members, and advance the profession of wildlife conservation.

Nominations

2026 Board Member at Large Candidate - Bobby Allcorn

Bobby Allcorn is the South Texas Ecosystem Project Leader with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He oversees 8 staff at the Chaparral and the James E. Daughtrey Wildlife Management Areas where the goal is to promote healthy native ecosystems and to encourage research, public outreach, and public hunting opportunities.

Bobby holds an M.S. in Range and Wildlife Management from Sul Ross State University and a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University. Before his current position, he worked as a Natural Resource Specialist and then as a Regional Wildlife Health Specialist during his 9-year career with TPWD. With TCTWS, he has served as the director for the 2022 Wildlife Conservation Camp and currently co-chairs the scholarships committee.



He has regularly attended the TCTWS annual meeting since 2013 and started volunteering during the 2014 Wildlife Conservation Camp. Bobby credits his involvement in TCTWS with helping to grow his career and broaden his view of what it means to be a professional in the field of wildlife management. He continues to serve the chapter and pushes for the involvement of young professionals.

Bobby lives at the Chaparral WMA with his wife, Allie. He enjoys experiencing the outdoors through hiking, fishing, photography, and hunting as often as possible.

Nominations

2026 Board Member at Large Candidate - Adam Terry

Adam Terry is the owner of Terry Forestry & Land Management LLC, a Texas based consulting firm providing turnkey forest, wildlife, and land-management services including forest and wildlife planning, prescribed fire, and habitat restoration. Adam holds many certifications including Certified Forester®, Certified Wildlife Biologist®, and Texas Certified and Insured Prescribed Burn Manager. He holds a B.S. in Forest Wildlife Management with a minor in Biology from Stephen F. Austin State University.



Prior to launching his firm full-time, Adam served as a Forest Wildlife Biologist with the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (NFGT) where he led threatened, endangered, and sensitive species programs, coordinated complex partnerships, and managed the largest WMA program in the state. His work regularly bridged agencies, NGOs, private landowners, and industry. He collaborated with partners such as Texas A&M Forest Service, NRCS, The Nature Conservancy, the Texas Longleaf Team, Northeast Texas Conservation Delivery Network and others to deliver science-based, on-the-ground results. Prior to working with the NFGT Adam was a wildlife biologist for over 8 years with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Adam has been an active member of TCTWS as well as an attendee of The Wildlife Society national conferences since 2013. He has also served on a variety of committees including activities, program, student chapter of the year, scholarship, and publications, as well as poster judge.

As Board Member-at-Large, Adam will focus on being a responsive liaison between the general membership and the Executive Board—listening to member needs across Texas’s diverse ecoregions, elevating professional and student voices, and serving the Executive Board where needed.

Photo/Art Contest

Contestants will be limited to 1 entry per photography category.



Gabrielle Hargrove - 2025 contest

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 (including plant-like organisms such as fungi)
5. Humor
6. Texas Scenery
7. Work Related
8. Remote Camera (not including captive animals)

Art:

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

Digital copies (JPEGs, etc.) must be submitted no later than 12 PM (noon) on Tuesday, February 17th, 2026 (the day before the conference). Please keep digital files under 10mb.

- 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.

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 or photo prints to the conference to be viewed by everyone!

- Photographs should be a standard size (3" x 5" up to 11" x 14"), unmatted, and unframed; however, cardboard backing is permitted. **PLEASE ADHERE TO THE SIZE RESTRICTIONS.** Oversized prints will not be accepted!



Julie Myers - 2025 contest

Email photo.art@tctws.org with questions on submitting.

Publication Awards: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Don't forget to submit your nominations for The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2026 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 2023, 2024, and 2025 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 ≥ 3 nominations will be considered for an award.

Please send nominations to cord.eversole@tctws.org by 5 PM on November 30, 2025.



Some 2025 Publication Award winners. Left: Outstanding Popular Article - Amber Brown.

Middle: Outstanding Technical Pub - Shraddha Hegde, Alison Lund, Jacob Dykes, Tammi Johnson, Angelica Lopez, Roel Lopez, and Kevin Skow.

Right: Outstanding Scientific Article - Samarth Mathur, John. M. Tomeček, Luis A. Tarango-Arámbula, Robert M. Perez, and J. Andrew DeWoody.

Honorary Life Membership: SEEKING NOMINEES

The Honorary Life Membership Committee is seeking nominees for this honor. The Committee will continue the policy of seeking and considering nominees submitted from the membership. Certainly, the Texas Chapter is blessed with numerous members who have made outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation on a state, national and/or international scale. These individuals deserve the recognition of their peers for their outstanding long-term service to the wildlife resource.



2025 Honorary Life Membership Award: Jon Purvis

To be eligible a nominee should have been (1) active for 20 or more years in the wildlife profession as an employee of a natural resource agency, academia, or a private organization as a wildlife biologist or consultant; or an effective non-professional activist. (2) He/she should have made significant contributions to the Chapter and/or the Profession and/or wildlife conservation of Texas.

To act on a nomination, the Committee needs:

1. A reasonably complete vitae for the nominee which should contain his/her full name (present position, organizational affiliation, address, phone number), and a reasonably complete history of professional accomplishments.
2. One or more letters of nomination from close friends or associates.

Nominations should be kept confidential, especially from the nominee, but you can enlist the assistance of your co-workers. Many people have vitae that they use for various purposes. Surreptitiously obtain one. If there isn't one available, patch something together, with the help of their own websites, social media, friends, associates, and spouses. From those nominations that we receive, the committee can select one or more recipients to be honored at the annual meeting. Dossiers of people not selected this year will be filed for future consideration. Please take a moment right now and consider who among your coworkers qualifies and deserves this honor? Set some time aside on your calendar to gather the data to support his or her nomination.

Deadline: The last business day of November, but act now!!!
YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO DESERVES TO BE HONORED THIS WAY!!!

Send material to: Megan.Clayton@tctws.org

Excellence in Wildlife Conservation: SEEKING NOMINEES

REMINDER - DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS 10/31/2025

The Excellence in Wildlife Conservation Committee is seeking nominees for the 2026 awards. The Committee will grant the following awards in the 2026 TCTWS banquet: Outstanding Achievement, Early Career Professional, Mid-Career Professional, Educator of the Year, and Land Stewardship. The Committee will continue the policy of seeking and considering nominees submitted from the membership. Certainly, the Texas Chapter is blessed with numerous members who have made outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation on a state, national and/or international scale. These individuals deserve the recognition of their peers for their outstanding long-term service to our shared wildlife resources.

To submit a nomination for one of the following awards, please send the required documents to: excellence@tctws.org during the application period of July 1st - October 31st.



Two 2025 awardees. Left: Land Stewardship - East Foundation. Right: Educator of the Year - Helen Holdsworth.

Early Career Professional award:

- Nominees for this award should be an active natural resource (or related field) professional within 1-10 years out of college who are working full time. They should be actively engaged in the wildlife profession, either in a natural resource agency, academia, or as a private wildlife biologist or consultant, or even as a non-professional activist with significant contributions. The nomination process will entail the submission of a biography of the nominee, a comprehensive vita, letter(s) of nomination, and maintenance of confidentiality throughout the process.

Mid-Career Professional award:

- Nominees for this award should be within 10-20 years out of college who are working full-time and meet the professional activity requirements as the Early Career award. Their contributions should be significant and appropriate to their career timeline. The nomination process is identical to that of the Early Career award, with an emphasis on two letters of nomination to provide a broader perspective on the nominee's impact.

Excellence in Wildlife: SEEKING NOMINEES, cont.

Outstanding Achievement award:

- Nominees for this award should be individuals or teams who have made outstanding contributions to the interests of the Texas Chapter. These contributions might include noteworthy research, development of outstanding outreach programs, or application of conservation principals. Recipients of this award should be current or past members of the Texas Chapter. If the award is given to a group, then the key individual(s) should be members of the Texas Chapter, but it is not necessary for the entire team to be members. The nomination process mirrors that of the above, with a biography of the nominee, a comprehensive vita, and a minimum of two (2) letters of nomination.

Educator of the Year award:

- Nominees should be individuals for excellence in developing and disseminating natural resource information to students, landowners, and others. Examples include, but are not limited to, university professors, extension personnel, and agency personnel. Recipients of this award should be current or past members of the Texas Chapter. To nominate a candidate for the Educator of the Year award, please provide a biography of the nominee, a comprehensive vita, and a minimum of two (2) letters of nomination.

Land Stewardship award:

- This award recognizes landowners who have been instrumental in the development, application, and promotion of sound wildlife management principles on their land. Special consideration is given to those individuals who, through their leadership, have set an example of hard work and dedication to the wildlife resource. Preference will be given to those who are members of the Texas Chapter, but membership in the Texas Chapter is NOT mandatory to receive this award.

All awards will culminate in the selection of recipients by the committee, to be honored at the annual meeting. In order for any given honor to be awarded, there must be at least one submission in the respective category. **If you would like further information for any award or have any questions, please email: excellence@tctws.org**

Tommy Lee Caruthers 1939 - 2025



Tommy Lee Caruthers, 85 of Denton, Texas, passed away Monday, September 1, 2025. He was born on October 2, 1939, in Denton to TL and Pauline Caruthers. He attended Denton local schools and North Texas State University, now University of North Texas.

He married Patricia Ann Bickley on May 5, 1963. They have been members of St. David's Episcopal Church in Denton for the past 56 years.

Tommy operated Caruthers Oil Company in Denton. He and Pat were active in many community organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, several City of Denton Committees, Denton Benefit League, and St. David's Episcopal Church.

Hunting was his passion and conservation his avocation. He was a life member of the Dallas Safari Club where he served as director, convention chairman and co-chairman, and was active with conventions for many years. The Dallas Ecological Foundation was a favorite organization of Tommy's, where he served as president several times, as well as treasurer, secretary, vice-chairman, and chairman. Tommy was a founding member of the Texas Bighorn Society, which started in 1981. He served various roles within the foundation and sat on the Board of Directors. Tommy was also a lifetime member of The Foundation of North American Wild Sheep with which he was deeply involved in the direction of conventions in various states. Lastly, he was active in The Boone and Crockett Club, which he had been a member of since 1989, and served various roles during his membership.

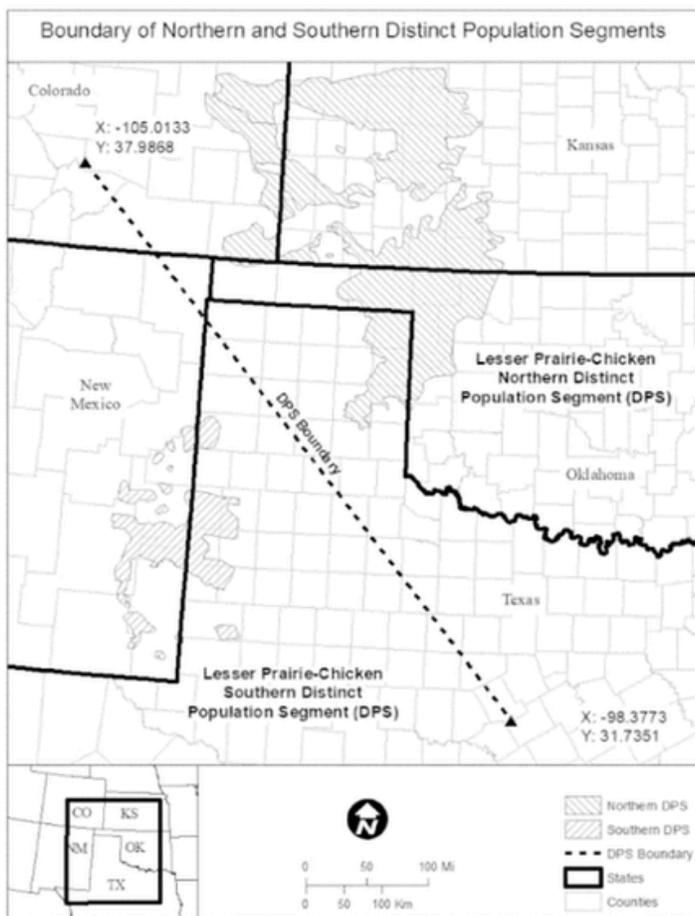
For the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Tommy established the Colin Caruthers Memorial Scholarship to honor the memory of his son and all young conservationists.

Federal Judge Vacates Lesser Prairie Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) Listing Under the Endangered Species Act

By Jake Hill, AWB[®], CCF

On August 12th, 2025, a federal judge in the Western District of Texas vacated the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) 2022 decision to list the Southern and Northern Distinct Population Segments (DPS) of the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).¹ This is now the second time a decision to list the LPC has been vacated by the federal court in Western Texas. The bird was first listed in 2014 as "threatened" but that decision was also vacated in 2015.²

In 2016, the USFWS received a petition to list the LPC again after the original listing was vacated. After conducting its 90-day and 12-month findings, the USFWS proposed to list the LPC into a Southern and Northern DPS. The proposal was finalized in November 2022 and the Southern DPS was listed as "endangered" while the Northern DPS was listed as "threatened."³



In conjunction with the threatened listing of the Northern DPS, the USFWS promulgated a concurrent "4(d) rule" within the same decision. Section 4(d) of the ESA requires the Department of the Interior, acting through the USFWS, to issue protective regulations for all threatened species that are "necessary and advisable to provide for the conservation of such species."⁴ Shortly after the listing decision was finalized, the State of Texas, the oil and gas industry, and private landowners filed suit challenging the USFWS's listing of the LPC.

The 4(d) rule created no small stir in itself. Particularly for those affected by the Northern DPS, the chief complaint raised was that the 4(d) rule did not take into consideration the economic costs of complying with the regulations.

Federal Judge Vacates LPC Listing, cont.

The USFWS believed that it was not obligated to consider economic costs, reasoning that as it was not allowed to factor economic costs in the listing decision, neither was it allowed to factor such when promulgating the 4(d) rule.⁵

Nonetheless, the court vacated the LPC's 4(d) rule in March 2025 for its failure to consider economic costs.⁶ The court reasoned that "nothing in the [ESA] tethers a 4(d) Rule to the same prohibition against economic cost consideration that a listing decision is afforded." The only requirement in section 4(d) is that the rules be "necessary and advisable." The court went on to hold that "[w]hile, as here, data supplying the listing decision supports the Secretary's choice of necessary prohibitions, that data does not check the advisability box. Such a determination requires consideration of costs." The court accordingly vacated and remanded the 4(d) rule.

Following the decision in March, the court released its order vacating and remanding the LPC's listing under the ESA after the USFWS filed a motion requesting voluntary vacatur stating that it "erred in applying the DPS Policy and did not provide a sufficient justification that the two population segments of the lesser prairie-chicken are significant for the purpose of identifying a DPS." Having conceded their error thus rendering the contested issue moot, the court granted the USFWS's motion for voluntary vacatur.

The USFWS is now in the process of completing new findings on the 2016 petition that lead to the 2022 listing. It expects to have these new findings completed as early as November 30, 2026. The decisions in this case have important ramifications for conservation in two main ways. First, the LPC is no longer listed under the ESA. For better or worse, the decades long battle over the conservation of LPC continues with no end in sight. Regardless of the USFWS's decision in 2026 (to list/not to list), suits will be filed challenging the decision. The second important ramification is that the court's opinion sets valuable precedent for future ESA listings in Texas in that regulations for threatened species must factor economic costs. This new development bodes well for the private landowners of Texas by requiring the USFWS to factor economics into endangered species conservation—a point which has been sorely missed until now.

Footnotes:

[1] Read the full order [here](#).

[2] *Permian Basin Petroleum Ass'n v. Dep't of Interior*, 127 F. Supp. 3d 700 (W.D. Tex. 2015).

[3] 87 Fed. Reg 72674 (Nov. 25, 2022). (The image is also from this source).

[4] 16 U.S.C. § 1533(d).

[5] The USFWS's decision to list a species must be "solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available." See 16 U.S.C § 1533(b)(1)(A).

[6] Read the full order [here](#).

Botany Brief

***Lantana urticoides* (Texas Lantana)**

By Asia Cornelius

Interested in highlighting your favorite species? Email newsletter@tctws.org

Commonly found on rocky limestone mesas, canyons and brushy flats throughout Texas, *Lantana urticoides* is widely recognized for its bright clusters of red, orange, and yellow flowers. The fruit of *L. urticoides* are small, dark purple to black drupe that are readily eaten by birds, helping disperse seeds. Its opposite, coarsely toothed leaves emit a strong aroma when crushed and its branches can sometimes be covered in recurved spines. The fruits and foliage contain compounds called triterpenoids, which can be toxic to livestock and humans if ingested in large quantities. Although mature lantana are deer-resistant, deer will opportunistically browse new growth.

L. urticoides is a hardy native, perennial shrub that can grow from 0.6 to 2 meters tall, often spreading into dense mounds that are 1 to 2 meters wide. Flowering begins in early spring and can continue into fall, with the fruit ripening in late summer to fall. Often confused with non-native ornamental lantanas, it is distinguished by its adaptation to Texas' arid and semi-arid regions. Its ability to tolerate drought, poor soils, and high heat allows it to thrive in native Texas gardens. Ecologically, it plays a role in providing a long season of nectar for butterflies, hummingbirds, and insects, while also stabilizing soils in rocky or sandy sites.

Fun facts:

1. In Mexico, the shrub's leaves have been used to treat snake bites.
2. The specific epithet combines *urtica*, meaning nettle, and *-oides*, meaning similar to, signifying that *L. urticoides* is similar to the nettle genus.



Top photo by [Joseph A. Marcus](#)

Left photo by [Sonnja Hill](#)

Citations:

Powell, A. M. 1998. Trees & Shrubs of the Trans-Pecos and Adjacent Areas. University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, USA.

Powell, A. M., R. D. Worthington. 2018. Flowering Plants of the Trans-Pecos Texas and Adjacent Areas. Brit Press, Fort Worth, Texas, USA.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas, Austin, TX. Native Plant Information Network [NPIN]. 2013.

Southwest Section Tracks

By Kathy Granillo, Southwest Section Representative

Fall is upon us although it might not quite feel like it yet. But tree leaves are starting to change (at least at higher elevations), many species of birds are migrating south, and the Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society is only days away (or perhaps already over, depending on when you are reading this newsletter). I'm looking forward to the conference and to the Fall Meeting of TWS Council. We meet twice per year in person, and the Annual Conference is one of those occasions. As the Southwest Representative, I try to represent the interests of all members of TWS throughout our Section (AZ, NM, TX and now Mexico). That's a tall order – please feel free to email me with any issues or topics that I should be aware of as I do my best to represent you.

Returning to the topic of migrating birds, the fall is often when birds go astray and find themselves way out of range. As I write this, a Double-striped Thick-Knee (a non-migratory bird whose closest populations to the US are in southern Mexico) has made an appearance on a ranch near San Antonio, Texas. Birders call such out-of-range birds “vagrants.” It is a bird of grasslands and savannahs and hopefully can find food and cover for however long it visits West Texas.

As in most wildlife topics, we are continually learning why animals do what they do, or at least continually speculating since we cannot ask them directly. The term vagrant has been used to refer to birds that wander far off course. Scientists and birders speculated that these vagrants have a flawed internal navigation system, or that they have been “blown off course” by weather events like hurricanes. They were often deemed inconsequential outliers, with little relevance in the outcome of the total population.



Photo by J. Rogers

Southwest Section Tracks

A recent book, “Vagrancy in Birds” by Alexander Lees and James Gilroy, Princeton University Press, 2022, explores vagrancy in detail through a thorough review of scientific literature. They show that recent studies have debunked the oversimplified notion that vagrancy is most often weather-related. While there are certainly cases where severe storms or anomalous weather events can cause birds to be pushed far afield, there are a host of other factors that play a role in how birds move in sometimes unexpected directions. The authors find that vagrancy is a “powerful biological phenomenon” that in many instances serves a purpose in the survival of species. They also delve into why some otherwise sedentary and non-migratory species (such as the Double-striped Thick-Knee) will occasionally move long distances, which has generally been the most perplexing form of vagrancy. These vagrants may actually be paradigm pioneers, contributing to range expansions as the warming planet opens up new habitat possibilities. If this piqued your interest, I urge you to check out this book.

I bring this all up to illustrate why there is value in holding our beliefs loosely, and to be open to revising said beliefs. This also illustrates the value of science and the scientific method. Every data point is potentially useful to improve our knowledge and understanding of the biological world, and therefore, how we might better live in harmony on our planet. Staying up to date on the scientific literature, visiting with colleagues at conferences, and embracing the concept that learning is a life-long endeavor will make us all better biologists.

I hope to see many of you at the 2026 Annual Conference of the Texas Chapter of TWS, where we may continue to learn together! I’m sure there is more information about the conference in this newsletter, and I’m excited to visit one of my favorite parts of Texas, the Upper Gulf Coast. Perhaps an interesting vagrant will make an appearance during the conference.

As always, please feel free to email me at KGBirder55@gmail.com.



Kathy Granillo
TWS Southwest Section
Representative

So long and happy "tails"!

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 always welcome and should be submitted to the Editor (Emily Blumentritt, 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

TCTWS 2025/2026 Executive Board

President, Jessica Glasscock
Pres. Elect, Bill Adams
Vice President, Masi Mejia
Secretary, Olivia Gray
Board Member at Large, Dale James

Executive Director, Matt Wagner
Treasurer, Jon Purvis
Archivist, Maureen Frank
Past President, Mary Pearl Meuth