

CASTELL AREA WMA

Helping property owners enhance the quality of white-tail deer through proven wildlife and habitat management practices.

Minutes of October 14, 2020 – Virtual Meeting

Present: Jim Banner, Carol Birmingham, Iva Galindo, Chris Gary, Clyde Haley, Mona & Wayne Parrish, Mike & Tina Phillips, Brian Schneider, Nancy Stratta, Sam Wilson, and Lynn Wolheim

Excused: Terry and Candy Obermiller

Absent: Drucilla Banner, Ray & Nancy Bearden, Charles Birk, Barry & Judy Box, Ranae Rode Dameron Knust, Martin Dye, Bill George, Rick Grinnan, Rick & Brandy Hadley, Alan Sterling Howry, Frank Krenek, Ella Lang, Victor Lang, Jason Martin, Mark Medley, Stanley Miller, Rich Munson, Derek Naiser, Larry Otto, Art and Shirleyan Patterson, Roger Randall, Becki & Gregg Russell, Brad and Mary Stone, and Rick Vint.

Guests: Lindsey Marr

Hunters: Addison Ptomey, Scott Fletcher

Board Members: Leatrice Haley, Dale Haner, and Joyce Lucas

Advisor: Chris Mostyn, TPWD Biologist

1. Opening Remarks

Ms. Lucas welcomed attendees to the WMA's first virtual meeting using Zoom. Likewise, she thanked all who had participated in the night surveys and daily observations.

2. Minutes and Financial Report

- By email members had approved the minutes of last year's October meeting.
- As of September 30, 2020, total funds in WMA account are \$911.19: \$233.01 in checking; \$678.18, savings. Approximately \$12 is owed Ms. Lucas for postage.

3. Harvest History – Dale Haner

- Mr. Haner presented age data for bucks harvested during the last two years (see attached chart). Two areas stood out: 36% of the bucks harvested in 2018-2019 aged 2.5 years and in 2019-2020, 40% aged 4.5, the more desirable harvest age.
- Does harvested last season increased from 52% the previous season to 66%; bucks from 48% to 34%. This reflects a trend in the needed direction. Doe harvest should be three to five times more than bucks.
- Overall, the WMA doubled the ratio of does to bucks harvested and shifted the age of bucks harvested from mostly 2.5 or younger to mostly 4.5 or older. Both are positive changes.

- During the meeting a comment was made that the large number of younger bucks could be the result of harvesting bucks with less desirable antler characteristics. More discussion about antler restriction is addressed below.
- To gather additional information for evaluation we will return to using the MLDP Harvest Log. You can download a copy from the TPWD website: https://tpwd.texas.gov/business/permits/land/wildlife_management/mldp/docs

4. Harvest Recommendations – Chris Mostyn

- Throughout the 10-year history of the WMA, deer density continues to be too high as well as the doe/buck ratio. Results of the data collected this year reflect:
 - Acres per deer: 4.7
 - Does per buck: 5.6
 - Fawns per does: 36% (.36)

We continue to need to harvest a high number of deer as well as fewer bucks and more does.

- Harvest Recommendations: This year the harvest recommendations are for the entire WMA rather than individual recommendations by survey routes. The recommendations are:

- Per 200 acres 1 buck **and** 24 does

If you choose to harvest more bucks, you would also need to increase the number of does accordingly.

- Following the harvest recommendation remains critical. By achieving this goal, we could:
 - Reduce density
 - Balance herd composition
 - Improve deer health and, subsequently, deer antler growth
 - Most of, all improve land health.

The result:

- Acres per deer: 11.11
- Does per buck: 1

5. Harvest restrictions: In the past the WMA has used an “age” restriction relying on the hunter to accurately “age on the hoof”. Now we have the option of using an “antler” restriction. Antler restrictions allows harvesting the less desirable genetic characteristics from each age group. The criteria are:

- Harvest deer having 5 points or less regardless of age. These bucks will usually not develop into a buck with desirable antler characteristics at an older age.
- Harvest Deer having 6 to 9 points with inside main beam spread at the ear tips (13 inches or greater). This will protect a percentage (possibly all) younger age (with emphasis on yearlings) 6 to 9-point bucks.

- Harvest deer with 10 points or more having an inside main beam spread outside the ear tips (16+ inches). This will protect younger age class higher quality deer.
- EFFECTIVE DEER MANAGEMENT IS HARVESTING BUCKS WITH UNDESIREABLE ANTLER CHARACTERISTICS AS YOUNG AS POSSIBLE AND HARVESTING TROPHY DEER AS OLD AS POSSIBLE.

6. Discussion: Attendees brought up a variety of issues including the difficulty of harvesting the recommended number of does, the need to harvest bucks with less desirable antler characteristics resulting in the harvest of younger bucks, and the average life span of a deer. Mr. Mostyn addressed the issues and encouraged landowners to consider what was good management for their property. By the way, the average life span of a deer is approximately 8 years.

Each hunter is limited to three doe permits. If a landowner enrolled in the Managed Lands Deer Program (MLDP), the owner would be given more doe permits permitting the hunter to harvest more does. For example: A landowner may be given 11 doe permits, 3x more than the total of three hunters hunting on the property. Two of our members are currently enrolled.

Strategies for harvesting high level of deer:

- Have friends and other family members harvest deer
- Require lease hunters to harvest all does prior to any bucks
- Allow lease holders to have authorized friends and family to harvest deer
- Public day hunts
- Texas Youth Hunting Program
- MLDP
- Donate deer meat

7. New Business

- **Board Members:** Ms. Lucas announced that Mr. Haner was willing to serve a new four-year term; Mr. Schneider, a three-year term, and Mona/Wayne Parrish, the remaining two years of Mr. Haner's current term. Ms. Lucas stressed the importance of involving more members to increase the corporate knowledge.

8. Wrap-up: The following remains to be determined:

- Next meeting date: the week of April 11, 2021
- Type of meeting: virtual or in-person
- How to: collect jawbones and harvest logs

Joyce S Lucas

Presiding Governing Board Member

Remember what we do on our property **does** make a difference.