

# 2023 WLLPOA Annual Meeting Wildlife Report

## Biologist

Observations from our dedicated Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist, Blake Hendon, are found on the WLLPOA website under the Documents tab and Wildlife Management folder. In a series of interviews with Blake and other local experts, habitat depletion was described as more of a danger to our animals than any other factor. WLLPOA does not currently employ a whitetail herd management plan that includes harvest and removal; we rely on natural mortality to keep a population balance. Whitetail and exotic deer populations remain a contentious issue with no consensus among property owners regarding their ongoing care and maintenance. It is difficult to legally remove whitetail and many of our property owners enjoy tax exemptions on a portion of their acreage based on our exotic herd management activities, which include maintaining a closed environment with fencing. We will continue our voluntary feed program and implement herd management best practices for the exotic population. As of this report, we will not change anything involving the whitetail. Please consider supplemental feeding and watering the deer as well as planting and protecting new trees and grasses. Resource links below under "Environment/Habitat".

Our activities can impact the animals in ways we may not realize, e.g.:

- Cedar (Juniper) removal takes away shelter from the elements that help the deer survive freezing weather
- Old tall dead grasses should be mowed so that young grasses can grow for the deer
- Supplemental feeding has a side effect of more whitetail offspring

## Deer

Deer counts are one of the qualifying activities for the tax exemption and help us create management plans. We conducted two counts, one at dusk and one with spotlights at night, with the following totals:

	November	December
Whitetail	54	81
Blackbuck	48	14
Fallow	13	15

### Notes:

- For assistance with wounded whitetail, please it is advised to let nature take its course or contact our Hays County Game Warden or the Sheriff's office for assistance in dispatching a suffering deer. For assistance with wounded blackbuck or fallow, contact your Wildlife committee.
- Blackbuck are known for putting pressure on grasses.
- Fallow populations are typically low but have 3x the appetite of whitetail.

## **Trapping Exotics**

Following the direction from last year's annual meeting, the Board voted to work with Sisco D Trapping & Exotics, a company specializing in exotic species like fallow and blackbuck. Sisco D will provide end-to-end services leveraging technology and traditional methods to survey, track, and trap to help fulfill our annual tax exemption activity requirements in a transparent, explainable, and repeatable way. As is standard practice, their business model is to split profits 50/50 with the neighborhood POA and cut a check to us according to the exotic animal market prices before they ever leave the neighborhood with the animal(s). Funds from the sale of animals will be used to subsidize feed and pay for new exotic males when deemed necessary for the health and vitality of the herds.

## **Environment/Habitat**

Our wildlife needs natural "groceries". For the health of the neighborhood ecology, our biologist has recommended we implement herd management for the exotic deer and begin a native species planting program. Many of our trees that provide necessary insect and bird habitat, animal shelter, leaves, and acorns are aging and dying without being replaced. Trees and saplings are regularly removed or damaged by new building, mowing, severe weather, and grazing activities, so our property owners may want to consider planting and protecting native species trees as well as grasses. Recommended trees listed by the biologist include Spanish Oak, Lacey Oak, Live Oak, Cedar Elm, Madrone (or Madrona).

### **Native tree resources**

In addition to local nurseries, you may want to consider these resources for bulk seedlings and/or larger potted native trees appropriate for our growing zone.

[www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org) [[arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)]

[www.westtexasnursery.com](http://www.westtexasnursery.com) [[westtexasnursery.com](http://www.westtexasnursery.com)]

### **For more information about habitat and environmental renewal**

[Hays County Native Plants](http://wildflower.org) [[wildflower.org](http://wildflower.org)]

[Hays County Resources and Organizations](http://beautifulhayscounty.org) [[beautifulhayscounty.org](http://beautifulhayscounty.org)]

### **Food plots for deer**

Food plots can be expensive and time consuming according to Texas experts, but for those who have space and time to experiment, this document provide insights, pro tips, and potential benefits:

[Food Plots for White-tailed Deer in Central Texas](http://tpwd.texas.gov) [[tpwd.texas.gov](http://tpwd.texas.gov)]

For our area, the biologist recommends winter wheat and oats for cool weather and alfalfa for summer.

## **AG/Wildlife Exemption for property taxes**

The board is now facilitating the legal paperwork for the WLLPOA managed exemption process, which involves a limited leasing agreement for part of your acreage to WLLPOA for the purposes of wildlife management activities. With this paperwork and the completion of qualifying activities, you may receive a reduction in taxes on those acres. The Wildlife Committee will ensure these activities are conducted and reported every year.

Note: Pest animals are NOT managed wildlife. Individual property owners may do what they need for pest issues, within deed restriction guidelines. WLLPOA has a feral hog trap that may be used by property owners. Ask the board for more information.

### **Ag/Wildlife exemption links**

[Agriculture Property Tax Conversion for Wildlife Management \[tpwd.texas.gov\]](http://tpwd.texas.gov)

1-D-1 Wildlife application: <http://bisfiles.co/sites/shared/forms/50-129.pdf> [bisfiles.co]

Guidelines for qualification: <http://bisfiles.co/sites/shared/forms/96-354.pdf> [bisfiles.co]

## **Helpful contacts**

### **Texas Parks and Wildlife:**

[Hays County Wildlife Contacts \[tpwd.texas.gov\]](http://tpwd.texas.gov)

### **Wildlife Rehabilitators of Hays County (for wounded animals)**

[Rehab contacts and specialties \[tpwd.texas.gov\]](http://tpwd.texas.gov)

### **Game Warden:**

Adam Alvarez  
469-797-5192

Kally Marbach  
512-915-7818  
[kally.marbarch@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:kally.marbarch@tpwd.texas.gov)

### **Sheriff's Office:**

512-393-7808