



Louisiana Wildlife Insider



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WILDLIFE FOOD PLOTS

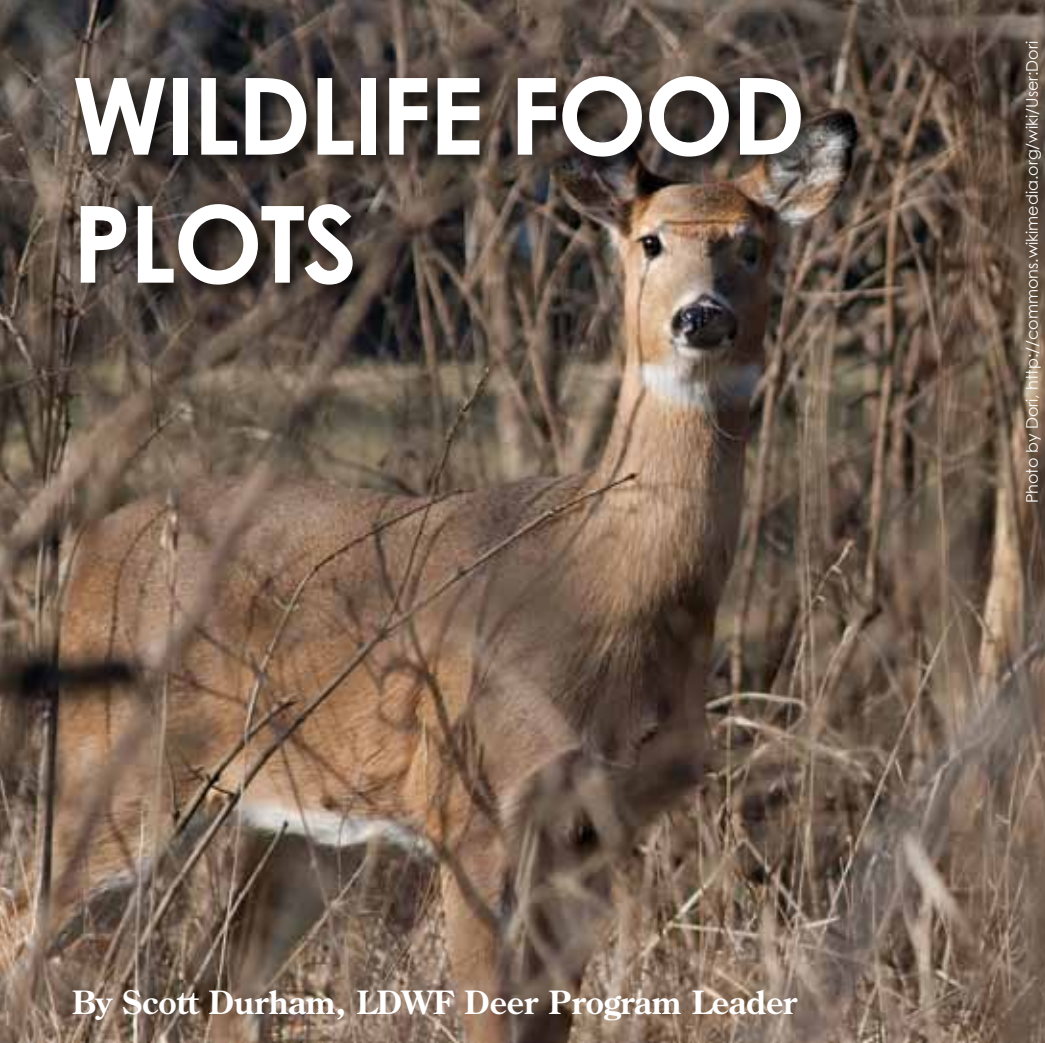


Photo by Dori, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Dori>

By Scott Durham, LDWF Deer Program Leader

As someone that has helped manage wildlife habitat on their family property for 25 years, I have had my share of successes and failures when planting wildlife food plots. During most of those years, we experimented by planting different types of food plots, focusing the majority of our efforts on establishing and maintaining permanent clover plots and a few seed mixtures for winter “green” plots. Hoping to stretch the duration of the green plots into early summer, we always added a couple of different clover species to the seed mixtures. Early in our food plot activity, we also experimented with summer food plots. We had great success planting field corn, but this usually required a healthy dose of herbicide applications. Herbicides were needed to reduce the competition with warm season weeds. The most common nemesis that occurred in soils previously used to grow soybeans was sicklepod (*Cassia obtusifolia*). Everything we planted in spring or summer required us to deal with this weed, which greatly added to the expense of our food plots.

Planting and maintaining good food plots will cost money; the question comes down to how much time and money you want to invest. Cost will vary according to

soil fertility and management intensity. We try to minimize costs by applying good forest management practices, maintaining diverse habitat, and planting only a few food plots.

Permanent food plots established for the purpose of providing supplemental forage for wildlife should be large, up to 10 or more acres if possible. Their shape and location should offer wildlife the abil-

ity to utilize the entire food plot in comfort while allowing quick access to escape cover. Winter “green” plots that are planted with mixtures of cool season forages such as wheat, oats, crimson clover etc., can be smaller, .5 to two acres. In my experience, plots less than .5 acres can be consumed by wildlife, especial deer, fairly rapidly. These plots should probably be considered more as hunting plots vs. plots that are affording any substantial supplemental forage.

SOIL PREPARATION

A soil test is one of the most important steps when establishing food plots. Soil lab technicians will make recommendations on the amount of primary and secondary nutrients needed to raise specific crops. The pH level will be reported, along with the recommended liming rate to get the soil to the proper pH level of 7 which is generally required for most crops. A soil test is a wise investment since it will help you avoid the mistakes of over- or under-fertilizing your food plots.

Sub soiling is a practice not often mentioned in food plot articles. I am convinced that many years of planting food plots in the same location causes compaction of the soil, affecting its condition and ability to hold moisture and produce good crops. In high school agriculture classes, we were lectured about “hard pans” caused either by equipment use or hooved livestock. To reverse this condition, a deep shank plow must be pulled through the ground every three to five years. It takes a tractor with plenty of horsepower to pull a subsoil plow with as few as one to three shanks 18 inches long, but this activity will greatly improve “hard pan” soils.



Established food plot.

Photo by Cody Cedotal, LDWF



Photo by John Robinette, LDWF

Disking.



Photo by Thomas D. Landis, USDA Forest Service, forestryimages.org

Subsoiling.



Photo by Howard F. Schwartz, Colorado State University, forestryimages.org

Seed Drill.

Seed bed preparation and removal of residual vegetation is an important step. Traditionally, managers either mow, disk or perform a combination of these several times prior to planting. Sometimes it works well to mow, then burn off the residue before disking. Another option is to apply herbicides once or twice to kill grasses, and then perform the required work that is needed to prepare the soil. As we become more “organic minded,” we try to use as little herbicide as possible in our food plots. Grasses such as Bermuda grass can become so firmly established that an approved herbicide may be the only option to effectively prepare an area. The weight of your plow, age and sharpness of the disks, and the amount of moisture in the soil will determine how your plow cuts and turns the ground over, thus dictating the number of passes it will take prepare the field. The better you prepare your seed bed, the better your germination rate will be. Cutting corners or not fully preparing seed bed will increase costs in the long-run.

PLANTING

One of the most common problems with broadcast planting is covering the seed at the right depth. Many people try to lightly disk the seed after broadcasting. This does a fairly good job on larger seeded crops if the seed bed is well prepared and level and the soil moisture is just right. If it is too wet, the soil clods up, sticks to the tires and disks, and will not cover the seed properly. If there are unlevel spots, some seed may be covered too deeply, too shallowly or not at all. A harrow may do a better job, especially on small seeds such as clovers. Some budget minded managers may attach a “drag log” or section of chain link fence behind their tractor to help cover seeds. Others may simply plant clovers and just let the next rain cover the seed.

Neither light disking or harrowing works as well as a cultipacker. You may have noticed the first or most dense plants to come up after broadcast planting a food plot are usually the ones that were run over by the tractor or implement tires. Those tires are packing the soil around the seeds. Cultipackers not only cover the seed better, but they lightly pack the soil around the seed, smooth the soil, and remove air spaces next to the seeds, increasing germination. Managers that are serious about producing quality food plots and intend to broadcast their seed should seriously consider using a cultipacker.

Perhaps the best way to plant a food plot is to consider using a seed drill. Seed drills plant seeds uniformly and fertilizes evenly in one pass. There are even “no-till” seed drills that will plant several different seeds and spread fertilizer at the same time while requiring no disking of the ground. This conserves soil moisture and reduces fuel costs and tractor wear. One must consider the cost of the seed drill, but it is probably the most efficient way to plant. This eliminates the need to broadcast the seed and cover it correctly. Usually no-till seeding is done after an herbicide application to kill the vegetation on the plot. Again, managers must consider the cost of herbicide and a seed drill when planning and budgeting for food plots.



Photo by Tom Manuel

Timber loading deck.



Photo by James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, forestryimages.org

Herbicide being applied with an ATV.

AVOID TIMBER LOADING DECKS

I have read many articles that suggest using the site where logs are loaded on trucks in timber harvest operations (loading decks) for food plots. However, the heavy equipment and 40-ton log trucks can quickly compact the soil and make the surface akin to concrete. Additionally, all of the bark, needles and small limbs or branches produced during loading operations accumulate into thick piles of debris which can make the site impossible to plant. This debris may take several years to decompose. Even if this debris is removed, no matter how good the operator, there may be gouges and holes left and some of your top soil removed, reducing the productivity of your food plot. If you are hunting a lease where pine plantations dominate the landscape, these sites may be your only location to develop food plots, but you may want to allow native plants to grow on to these sites until the debris has decomposed. Mowing and disking these sites will help produce wildlife forage and keep trees from growing while the debris is decomposing. Once the debris has rotted, then you can prepare the site and plant your food plot.

EQUIPMENT SIZE

Many individuals that plant food plots try to get by with the smallest tractors or equipment possible. Magazines are loaded with advertisements for small implements that can even be pulled behind ATVs. Although this may seem economical to start with, consider your time in the equation. Is it more practical to go over an area once or twice covering a wide swath or going over it 10 times covering a small strip? It really depends on how many acres you are going to plant or maintain.

Some questions to consider are:

- Are you going to plant two acres or 200 acres?
- Can you get by with an ATV or do you need a large farm tractor?
- In addition to your food plot work, are you going to mow grass trails or roadside areas that require cutting through 2-inch saplings?
- Are your soils heavy clay or sandy loam?
- Are you going to have to trailer your equipment?
- If so, how large and heavy of a trailer will you need and is your pickup rated to tow such a load?
- Can you do most of your own service?
- Are you working alone?
- Can several people work together preparing and planting all food plots on the property?

As with any management decision, consideration should be given to what is already available on the ground before clearing areas for food plots. Management of native plants is often overlooked and can greatly improve habitat conditions. Native plant management is easy on the budget and requires minimal time and equipment.

Simply fertilizing native plants such as honeysuckle, blackberries, dewberries and other forbs and vines that are often found growing in open timber stands will greatly enhance the food and cover for wildlife. Prescribed burns every two to three years is also a quick and easy way to improve wildlife habitat conditions and is one of the best wildlife management techniques that a land manager can implement.

FOOD PLOTS ATTRACT INSECTS

Food plots not only provide forage that is consumed by wildlife, they also attract insects which provide food for many birds. Bobwhites and wild turkeys will use food plots as feeding areas for their broods because of the large numbers of insects that provide high protein food for their chicks and poults.

LDWF has 13 private lands biologists ready to offer technical assistance to landowners across the state. Contact one of these professional biologists to help you improve your wildlife habitats, today. Offices are located in Monroe, Minden, Pineville, Lake Charles, Opelousas, New Iberia, New Orleans and Baton Rouge.



Photo by Paul Bolstad, University of Minnesota, forestryimages.org

COMMON PLANTS FOR FOOD PLOTS



CORN

Planting Dates:
April 1 – May 1
Corn is a high carbohydrate food item that wildlife will readily use upon maturity. It has the

added benefit of providing cover for wildlife in late summer and fall. Plant at 10 to 12 pounds per acre in 36-inch rows or broadcast at the rate of 12 to 15 pounds per acre on well prepared seedbed. A balanced blend of fertilizer such as 13-13-13 is recommended on poorer soils; liming should be performed to bring soil pH between 6.5 and 7.



SUBTERRANEAN CLOVER

Planting Dates:
Sept. 1 - Oct. 15
Subterranean clover is a cool season annual legume that can tolerate shade quite well, making it an ideal choice for

planting on narrow logging roads and small loading decks in thin timber stands. Fertilize at the rate of 200 pounds per acre of 0-20-20 (or according to soil test recommendations) and maintain soil pH between 6.5 and 7. Inoculated seed should be drill planted at the rate of 8 pounds per acre or broadcast at 15 pounds per acre.



ALYCE CLOVER

Planting Dates: May 1-June 15
Alyce clover is a warm season legume that is used by deer in the summer and early fall. It holds up well to browsing pressure, unlike most other warm season forages. Alyce clover provides supplemental nutrients to improve lactation, fawn production and antler development. It can be drilled at 16 pounds per acre or broadcast at a rate of 15-20 pounds per acre. Fertilize at the rate of 200 pounds per acre with 0-14-14 (or according to soil test recommendations) after planting is established. For best results, soil pH should range from neutral to 6.5.



SOYBEANS AND COWPEAS

Planting Dates: May 10- July 15
Soybeans and cowpeas are among the most preferred foods for deer. Their high use is evident by the fact that small plantings rarely become established in areas with high deer densities. Seeds can be row planted or broadcast at the rate of 15-25 pounds per acre for cowpeas and 30-50 pounds per acre for soybeans. Maturity dates are not important, since most will be consumed in the vegetative stage. Fertilization requirements should be based on soil analysis: liming is required when pH falls below 6.



AMERICAN JOINTVETCH

Planting Dates: April 1 - June 1
Jointvetch is a reseeding legume that will grow on sites too wet to support most other food plot items. Plant at a rate of 10 to 20 pounds of seed per acre on a well prepared seedbed. Jointvetch requires fertilization at the rate of 200-300 pounds per acre of 0-10-20, and soils should be limed if pH is 5 or lower. Plots produce quality food from June to November.



WHITE OR LADINO CLOVER

Planting Dates:
Sept. 1 - Nov. 15
White or Ladino Clovers are another popular cool season annual legume that provide excellent high protein deer forage. Stands can be established by seeding as little as 4 pounds per acre when drill planting and 5-6 pounds per acre when broadcast planting. Fertilize with 400 pounds per acre of 0-20-20 (or according to soil test recommendations maintain soil pH between 6.5 and 7. Ladino clover varieties include Osceola, Tillman, Regal, Louisiana S1 and California.



CRIMSON CLOVER

Planting Dates: Sept. 1 – Nov. 15
Crimson Clover is one of several clovers that can be planted in Louisiana for deer to provide a high protein forage in the winter. Clovers are generally planted in a mix with other cool season annuals. Seed is rather expensive on a per-pound basis, but this cost can usually be justified by the small amount of seed required to cover an area. Clovers are one of the items land managers can save money on by mixing selected varieties themselves rather than buying premixed bags of seed. In planting any variety, take care to maintain pH at recommended levels. Most clovers are

very pH specific. The advantage of crimson clover is its tolerance of acidic soils. With any variety of clover, reseeding can be enhanced by disking or mowing in the fall after initial establishment. After soil disturbance, apply 0-20-20 fertilizer at the rate of 300 pounds per acre (or according to soil test recommendations) and maintain soil pH between 6.5 and 7.5. Seed should be inoculated and drilled at 15 pounds per acre or broadcast at 20 pounds per acre.



WHEAT

Planting Dates: Sept. 1 - Nov. 1
Wheat is a cool season annual small grain that is widely used by deer in the early stages of growth. Wheat will grow through the spring and mature in early summer. Landowners can mow, burn or disk standing wheat to expose the seeds to quail and turkeys. Establish plantings by broadcasting seed at the rate of 80 pounds per acre. Fertilize at planting with 200 pounds per acre of 13-13-13 and top dress later in the year with 150-200 pounds per acre of 34-0-0 (or according to soil test recommendations). Soil pH should be maintained between 5.5 and 6.5.

Hunting Season Starts With...

DOVE

Photo by Dori, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Dori>

By Fred Kimmel and Jeffery Duguay

In late August, as the traditional Labor Day opening of dove season approaching, hunters begin thinking about finding a place to hunt doves. Hunters that have access to harvested grain fields or hayfields have a ready-made dove hunting field. Invariably, many hunters without access to farms or pastureland contact LDWF each August to inquire about preparing a dove field on their hunting lease or other piece of property. Unfortunately, by the fall it's too late to begin planning a dove field, the ideal time being the spring.

Though a wide array of crops and native vegetation can be used as a dove field, all successful dove fields have a few things in common. First of all, they contain an abundance of seeds. Doves are primarily seed-eaters and consume very little insect matter or green forage. Grass seeds and grains are among the more important foods eaten by doves. Secondly, these seeds must be readily available. Doves prefer to feed on the ground in open cover where they can watch for approaching predators. Doves are not strong scratchers so they avoid areas with dense ground cover and rough vegetation. Finally, the field must be located in an area traditionally used by doves, a flyway. A well-prepared dove field may draw few doves simply because it is located in the wrong area.

DOVE HUNTING

In the United States, it is estimated that 974,400 hunters harvested over 17 million mourning doves during the 2009-2010 season. A survey of resident license holders indicates that approximately 32,800 Louisiana hunters harvested approximately 604,500 doves during the 2009-2010 hunting season. The future of dove hunting in Louisiana looks very promising.

Every year biologists conduct a survey of breeding doves in the state during May

and June. Based on these surveys, mourning dove populations increased in Louisiana from 2009 to 2010, and the long-term breeding data that have been collected indicates population increases (over the past 10-40 years) in Louisiana as well.

MOURNING DOVES

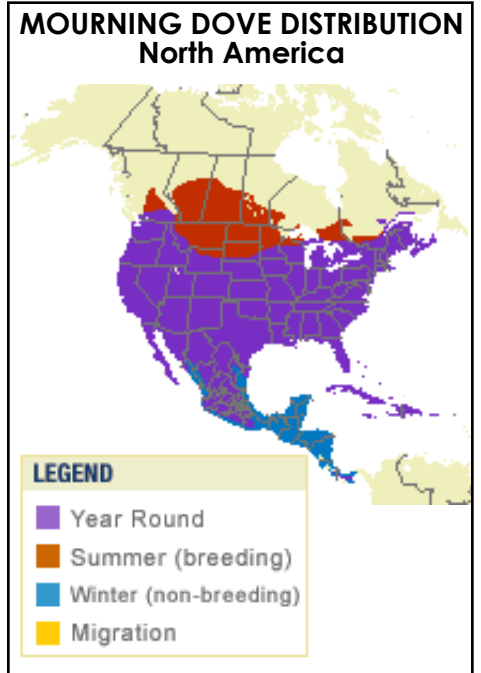
Abundance and Distribution

The mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*) is one of the most abundant bird species in North America; the fall population of mourning doves was recently estimated to be approximately 350 million birds. Mourning doves breed from southern Canada, throughout the United States into Mexico, Bermuda, the Bahamas and Greater Antilles, and in scattered locations in Central America. The majority of mourning doves winter in the southern United States, Mexico, and south through Central America to western Panama

Life History of Mourning Doves

Nesting: In Louisiana, mourning doves may raise four to six broods during a breeding season that lasts from early February through September. Mourning doves lay two eggs in a platform-like nest constructed of sticks. The young birds, known as squabs, grow rapidly and leave the nest by 12-15 days of age. Soon after the young leave the nest, adults begin preparation for a second brood.

Food Needs: Mourning doves feed on seeds found on the bare ground. They feed on both agricultural crops and weed seeds. Like most seed-eating birds, doves need grit to help grind their food. Grit is normally comprised of small bits of sand or gravel, but may also include small snail shells and hard insect parts. In addition to food and grit, doves also require fresh water daily, as a rule they seek water twice each day.



Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range date by NatureServe



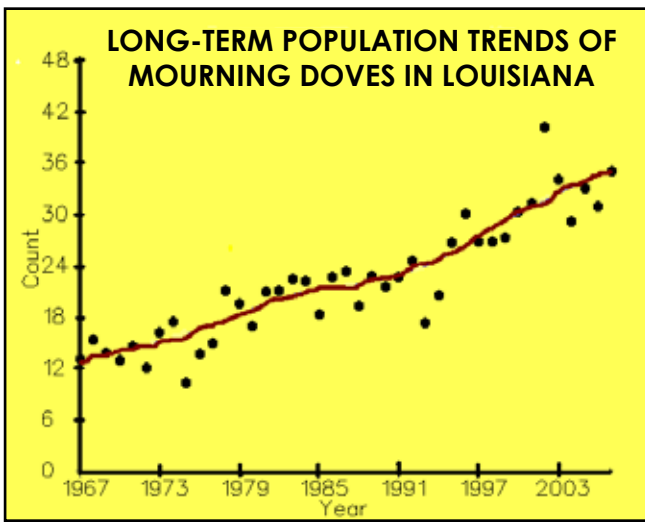
Above: Mourning dove eggs.
Below: Mourning dove squabs.



Photos by Terry L. Spivey, Terry Spivey Photography, forestryimages.org

WHITE-WINGED DOVE

The white-winged dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) is a dove whose native range extends from south-western United States, through Mexico and Central America. A breeding population has been introduced in Florida. The white-winged dove is expanding outside of its historic range and can be found across much of south Louisiana. They prefer habitats including open country with dense thickets of shrubs and low trees as well as suburban and agricultural areas.



Sauer et. al. 2008



Photo by Joseph Berger, forestryimages.org

Mourning Dove.



Photo by Dick Daniels, carolinabirds.org, Wikimedia Commons

White-winged Dove.



Photo by Joy Viola, Northeastern University, forestryimages.org

Eurasian Collared Dove.

White-winged doves may be harvested in Louisiana during the dove hunting seasons, but hunters must include harvested birds in their daily bag limit of doves.

COLLARED-DOVES

Eurasian collared-doves and African collared-doves (formerly called ringed turtle-doves) are both non-native species that are visiting feeders across North America with increasing frequency. Eurasian collared-doves are rapidly expanding their range since establishing a population in Florida several decades ago. African collared-doves are a popular caged bird that can be found in the wild after escaping or being released from captivity. Telling the two apart can be very difficult. To further complicate matters, hybrids do occur. Collared-doves may be harvested in Louisiana during the dove hunting seasons. As long as hunters do not pluck or clean them in the field while hunting, there is no limit on the number that can be harvested daily. If hunters pluck or clean the bird in the field, then it must be counted in their daily bag limit of doves.



Tractor mowing.
Photo by David J. Moorhead, University of Georgia, forestryimages.org

PLANTING RECOMMENDATIONS

There are numerous crops that can be established to attract doves to a field. No matter what you plant, proper field preparation after the seeds have matured is critical. Remember, doves like to feed on clean ground, and a heavy accumulation of litter will discourage them from using your field.

Mowing, haying, disking or burning are some common farming practices used to expose seeds and create the clean ground that doves prefer. Haying or raking are preferred methods since this removes dead plant material, leaving seeds exposed on the ground. If haying or raking is not possible, an alternative method is to disk shallow strips through the field. Mowing may be the simplest method, but may require a controlled burn to remove the dead leaves and stalks. The method you select will be determined by your equipment, abilities and needs of your field.

Once seeds have matured, doves will be attracted to the field, especially if you have prepared the field by mowing or disking a few strips two to three weeks prior to the opening of the dove season. Avoid major disturbance the last week before the season opens. Continue cutting or disking strips weekly, until most of the field is cut. Freshly mowed or disked strips provide a new seed source that will continue to attract doves. If you plan to hunt the later dove season hunting splits, save some of the crop to be cut immediately prior to those opening dates. To provide cover to help conceal hunters, consider leaving some areas of vegetation or crops uncut.

Weeds are usually not a problem in dove fields, and many weed seeds are excellent dove food. However, after several years of planting the same field, weeds such as Johnson grass may begin competing with the planted crop. Thick stands of weeds produce excessive ground litter that detracts from the quality of the field. If this occurs, disk the field early in the year to encourage the growth of weeds. Once the weed seeds germinate, spray with a non-selective herbicide, and plant the field shortly after the weeds die. Some weeds will re-sprout, but this procedure should reduce weed growth densities in your fields.

When discussing how to prepare a dove field, the subject of baiting can be very important. This document is not intended to fully discuss the issue of baiting, nor does it cover all possible baiting scenarios. A simple guideline to remember is that it is legal to grow crops and then manipulate these crops so that seeds which were grown on that particular field are available to doves. It is not legal to add additional seed to a dove field, nor is it legal to harvest seeds and later return the seeds to the field. Unusual seed concentrations are suspicious. Always check with LDWF Enforcement for specific regulations regarding dove field baiting.

COMMON LOUISIANA DOVE FIELD CROPS



Photo by Wendell Smith, LDWF

BROWN TOP MILLET

Brown top millet is one of the easiest plants to establish and manage for a successful dove field. Brown top millet matures in 60-90 days, so calculate your planting time to produce a mature crop of seeds for the September dove season opening. Backdating from this opening date produces planting dates between mid May to early June. If your plan includes hunting the later dove season splits you can also delay planting parts of your field until later dates. Brown top millet seeds will persist on the seed head after ripening, so if necessary, you may plant all your fields simultaneously. You can then delay cutting or mowing until just prior to the second and third dove hunting splits.

Brown top millet should be planted on a well-disked seedbed at a rate of 10-15 pounds per acre. Heavier rates will produce dense stands of millet, often choking out the clean, open ground that doves prefer. Cover the seeds lightly after planting. Fertilizer type and application rate should be made in accordance with a soil test.



Photo courtesy of USDA APHIS PPQ Archive, forestryimages.org

PEREDOVIC SUNFLOWER

Sunflower is a preferred crop for attracting doves, but it also requires more management effort than other crops. Weed control is very important in sunflower farming. Both herbicides and soil cultivation can be used to control weeds until the sunflower crop is dense enough to shade out weeds. If these methods are not practical, broadcast planting seeds at a higher rate will shade out most weeds.

Sunflowers require about 100 days maturing, so an April planting date produces a ripe crop immediately prior to dove season. Sunflowers can be drill planted at a rate of 10-15 pounds per acre or broadcast at a rate of 30-40 pounds per acre. Once the seed heads are mature and dry, mowing is the preferred method to cut their heavy stalks and break open seed heads, scattering individual seeds on the ground for doves.

One drawback to planting sunflower in some areas is deer depredation. Small fields of sunflowers may be completely eaten by a hungry deer herd, especially during sprouting and early plant growth.



Photo by Howard F. Schwartz, Colorado State University, forestryimages.org

WHEAT

Wheat is often overlooked but can be a good crop for a dove field. Since wheat is planted in the fall, the crop needs to be established the year before in order to provide good dove hunting. Wheat should be planted in late September or October. Broadcast 90-120 pounds per acre over a well disked seedbed and cover lightly. In many areas, deer will browse the wheat through the winter, but browsing will usually end in spring. Wheat will grow through the spring and mature in early summer. Landowners can mow, burn or disk standing wheat prior to the dove season to expose the seeds. Many hunters plant wheat for deer food plots, and cultivating wheat as described is an excellent deer management tool, as well as providing additional recreation from dove hunting.

Freshly planted wheat fields will also sometimes attract doves. If you choose to hunt doves over a freshly planted wheat field, it is important that the field is planted in accordance with LA Cooperative Extension planting recommendations. Otherwise, dove hunting over a freshly planted wheat field may be considered hunting over bait. As a general rule, LDWF recommends that dove hunters avoid freshly planted wheat fields. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website (www.fws.gov) provides more specific information relative to baiting.



Barnyard Grass
Photo by Howard F. Schwartz, Colorado State University, forestryimages.org



Crabgrass
Photo by Ted Bodner, Southern Weed Science Society, forestryimages.org

NATIVE VEGETATION

Native vegetation such as goat weed, crabgrass, barnyard grass and bird-eye should not be overlooked, as these native plants can be easily managed to create excellent dove fields. Native grass fields can be cut and manipulated just like planted fields. Haying, mowing and burning work best on grass fields. Goat weed fields can be managed simply by mowing. Goat weed may grow in sparse stands, so mowing may not be required.

DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL

By Mike Carloss, LDWF Biologist Director - CNR Division

Following the April 20 explosion on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig and subsequent oil spill (the largest offshore oil spill in U.S. history), the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), Office of Wildlife (Wildlife and Coastal and Nongame Resources Divisions) staff manned the Incident Command Center (ICC) in Houma and seven wildlife response forward operating bases. Office of Wildlife staff assisted with organizing wildlife response, coordinating logistics, scheduling personnel rotations, determining and fulfilling equipment needs, suggesting and prioritizing boom deployment, mapping response data, dispatching hotline reports, creating daily reports of activities, and serving as a consultant to ICC concerning natural resource issues across coastal Louisiana. Staff also provided full time consultation to the BP staging areas command posts. Under guidance from Houma, field staff spent countless hours responding to reports and/or sightings of distressed wildlife, documenting oil impacts, transporting oiled birds, monitoring nesting colonies, overseeing boom operations, conducting post-nesting colony searches, and other response obligations.

Approximately 60 personnel with the Office of Wildlife participated in the wildlife response for this spill. This endeavor required a tremendous amount of communication within and between agencies, as well joint command coordination, along with many long hours and hard work. The list of agencies, both federal and state, as well as non-governmental organizations, with whom these staff were engaged on a daily basis is lengthy. The joint activities ranged from sharing a search vessel, attending various meetings from daylight to dark, phone calls and radio communications, and media tours/events. Temporary staff were hired and subsequently trained, substantial emergency purchases were made, response protocols were developed with experienced biological staff input, wildlife and habitat surveys and patrols were performed daily with recovered wildlife transported, and rehabilitated birds were released and monitored for the spill duration. Extensive press interaction, media coverage and presentations to various groups were coordinated and completed on this highly visible "Crisis in the Gulf."

Wildlife numbers as of Feb. 14, 2011 are 8,204 total birds collected for the entire spill area (i.e., Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Texas). Of these, 1,551 were captured alive and oiled, 1,514 were collected dead and oiled, for a total of 3,056 total collected in Louisiana. Of the birds captured in Louisiana, 1,252 have been successfully rehabilitated and released. Field and ICC staff remained in constant communication to ensure that field observations of new oil, displaced boom, habitat impacts and distressed wildlife were reported in real time to Incident Commanders (e.g. Coast Guard, BP) and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness. Additionally, there were literally tens of thousands of miles of boom, protection structures and devices, skimming equipment, work crews, oil (in a variety of forms), and oiled habitat which were commented on, inspected, monitored and reported on daily through situation reports. The ability to cooperate and respond as a team with so many different agencies was very difficult, but due to the fact that our staff had institutional knowledge, experience on the water, and an efficient communication network, our team was able to assume leadership roles during this crisis. LDWF Office of Wildlife staff is presently involved with the Gulf Coast Incident Management Team in New Orleans and continues to be involved in the ongoing cleanup, as well as with the Natural Resources Damage Assessment effort.



Incident Command Center.



Rescuing oiled wildlife.



Releasing a rehabilitated roseate spoonbill.



Photo by Carrie Salyers, LDWF

Two of the 10 juvenile whooping cranes reintroduced to Louisiana in February 2011.

DANCE FOR JOY!

Whooping Cranes Return to Louisiana

By Carrie Salyers, LDWF Biologist

“When you watch an adult ‘whooper’ stride close by you, his head high and proud, his bearing arrogant and imposing, you feel the presence of a strength and of a stubborn will to survive. We have a strong conviction that the whooping crane will keep his part of the bargain and will fight for survival every inch of the way. What are we going to do to help?”

- Robert P. Allen, 1950

Southwest Louisiana was the last home in the United States for a resident (non-migratory) colony of whooping cranes. This corner of Louisiana not only supported a resident population, but was an important wintering range for migrating “whoopers” until the mid-twentieth century. Due to their historic presence in Louisiana, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has re-established a self-sustaining whooping crane population in southwest Louisiana. The area selected for this project is located around the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WLWCA) located in Vermilion Parish, which is the exact location of the last resident whooping crane to be found in the United States.

Fifteen species of cranes occur throughout the world, with only two of the 15 species, sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis*) and whooping cranes (*Grus americana*), occurring in North America. Today, sandhill cranes are prevalent, but whooping cranes are in great peril, having suffered severe population declines over the past 50 years. Due to these declines, whooping cranes

were placed on the federal endangered species status list on March 11, 1967. There were approximately 565 individual whoopers remaining in North America as of Jan. 31, 2011.

HISTORY

Whooping cranes historically used the marsh and ridge habitats that are found within southwest Louisiana’s Chenier Plain, as well as the upland prairie terrace habitats found just to the north. Louisiana once supported both resident and migratory crane populations which favored different habitats. Migratory cranes wintered on the tallgrass prairies and in the brackish and salt marshes near the coast. An extensive non-migratory resident colony was located primarily around the fresh water marshes in the Vermilion Parish area known as White Lake.

The last population of resident whooping cranes occurred in the remote marshes north of White lake. This population was found by biologist John Lynch in May 1939 while conducting an aerial survey of the area. Lynch’s aerial survey discovered 13 whooping cranes, two of which were

“young of the year, about one-third grown.” The 13 cranes that existed when Lynch surveyed the area in 1939 were scattered by a hurricane on Aug. 7, 1940. Only six cranes returned to the White Lake marshes after the storm. The White Lake flock continued to decline by one bird each year until 1945, when only two birds remained. By 1947, one whooping crane survived in the White Lake area. On March 11, 1950, a small party that included John Lynch and Robert Allen chased and captured the lone crane by helicopter. Naming the male whooper “Mac” in honor of the helicopter pilot, Louisiana’s last wild resident whooping crane was taken to Aransas NWR in Texas. Unfortunately, Mac died six months later. Whooping cranes had disappeared and no longer inhabited the marshes of Louisiana.

THE PLAN

Both natural and human factors contributed to the decline of whooping crane populations in the wetlands of southwest Louisiana. The return of a high-profile species like the whooping crane that depends on the health of our marsh and prairie ecosystems will help focus attention on efforts to restore wetland and native prairie habitats. Hopefully, the whooping crane can stand tall once again as our ambassador species representing wetland and prairie habitat recovery in Louisiana.

The goal of this reintroduction project is to establish a self-sustaining whooping crane population on and around WLWCA which contains about 70,000 acres of freshwater marsh. A self-sustaining population is defined as a flock of 130 individuals with 30 nesting pairs surviving for a 10-year period without additional restocking. The long-term goal of this reintroduction is to move these cranes from endangered species status to threatened status.

Ten juvenile birds were released within a special enclosure on WLWCA in February 2011. Once the young whoopers became acclimated to the area, they were allowed to move into an open top enclosure which allows freedom of flight. Contingent upon the first year’s success, one to two cohorts (six to eight birds) will be released in the same manner over the next 10 years. Birds will be monitored closely by biologists throughout the duration of the project.

Despite being the rarest species of crane in the world, the newly established Louisiana population of whooping cranes is designated as a “nonessential experimental population (NEP)” under the provisions contained within section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act. The population is considered experimental because it is being (re)introduced into suitable habitat that is outside of the whooping crane’s current



Juvenile whooping crane being released on WLWCA by Wildlife staff.

Photo by Brac Salyers, LDWF



One of the cranes catches her first crawfish after being released on WLWCA.

Photo by Sarah Zimorski, LDWF



Photo by Brac Salyers, LDWF

range, but within its historic range. It is designated nonessential because the likelihood of survival of the whooping crane, as a species, would not be reduced if this entire population was not successful and was lost. The experimental nonessential population status will protect this whooping crane population as appropriate to conserve the population, while still allowing the presence of the cranes to be compatible with routine human activities in the reintroduction area. Examples of such activities include recreation (hunting, trapping), agricultural practices (plowing, planting, application of pesticides, etc.), construction or water management.

Despite being designated as an NEP population, the whooping cranes are still protected under law. Because of the experimental non-essential designation in this rule, if the shooting of a whooping crane is determined to be accidental and occurred incidentally to an otherwise lawful activity that was being carried out in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, no prosecution under the Endangered Species Act would occur. In the case of an intentional shooting, the full protection of the Endangered Species Act could apply. In addition, the birds are protected under applicable state laws for non-game species and the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which protects all birds that migrate such as herons, egrets and songbirds

THE FUTURE

Although whooping cranes have been absent from the state of Louisiana for more than half a century, LDWF, collaborative agencies and local supporters have been anxiously anticipating their return home. As Gay Gomez, associate professor at McNeese State University and Louisiana whooping crane historian, states, "It will be a historic day when whooping cranes return to their native Louisiana marshes. It will be a triumph for the species, the wetlands and our state." The future of the whooping crane will depend on us.

HISTORY OF LOUISIANA WHOOPING CRANES

- 1890s: Records indicate "large numbers" of both whooping cranes and sandhill cranes on wet prairies year-round, and whooping cranes also used coastal locations in winter.
- 1890s-1920: Conversion of prairies to mechanized agriculture leads to both whooping and sandhill crane numbers declining in the prairie region.
- 1918: 12 whooping cranes shot north of Sweet Lake. Last official record of whooping cranes on the Louisiana prairies.
- 1930s: Trappers report whooping crane nesting activity and young in the freshwater marshes north of White Lake.
- May 1939: Biologist John J. Lynch (U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey [pre US-FWS]) sights 13 whooping cranes north of White Lake. Two of the cranes are "young-of-the-year." This record confirms a resident colony of breeding whooping cranes in Louisiana. This is the last record of the species breeding in the wild in the United States prior to experimental and captive-raised whooping cranes hatching several eggs and fledging chicks starting in 2000 and 2002, respectively.
- Late 1930s-early 1940s: Last records of wintering whooping cranes on southwest Louisiana's chenier ridges and in brackish and saltwater marshes near the coast.
- August 1940: Hurricane and flood from associated rainfall scatters the resident White Lake whooping cranes. Only six cranes return.
- November 1941: One of the "lost" cranes of White Lake is found in Evangeline Parish after the storm. She is captured and donated to the Audubon Park Zoo in New Orleans. The bird is named "Josephine;" for many years, she was the only breeding female whooping crane in captivity.
- 1941-1945: White Lake whooping crane flock loses one bird each year; only two cranes remain in 1945.
- 1947: Only one whooping crane remains at White Lake.
- March 1950: John J Lynch and others chase and capture the lone White Lake crane, which is transported to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, Texas.
- Feb. 16, 2011: Ten juvenile whooping cranes return to SW Louisiana in an attempt to re-establish a non-migratory Louisiana population.

* Based on Louisiana whooping crane chronology compiled by Dr. Gay Gomez, McNeese State University



Photo courtesy of USDA Agricultural Research Service

Baseball, Apple Pie and BOBWHITE QUAIL

By Jimmy Stafford, LDWF Resident Small Game & Wild Turkey Program Leader

Baseball, apple pie and bobwhite quail are American icons for those of us blessed to grow up just a few years back. It was a time when kids played outside from morning until dark all summer long. Sunday afternoons were reserved for cow pasture baseball. Some days our games would be postponed if the herd bull was slow to move off the infield. Mrs. Dot Arthur's house was just behind our barbed wire backstop where the aroma of home cooked meals seemed to always emanate. I am quite certain the smell of apple pie was sometimes intermingled in that pleasant sensation. In this rural southeast Louisiana community, pointers and setters were more common as pets than labs are today.

During the summer, bobwhite males greet each day with their "bobwhite" whistle. These once common whistles were

taken for granted, but are relished today, like an old favorite tune. During the hay day for quail, I, like so many others, had no idea that these days of plenty would not last forever. To illustrate this change, the 1982-83 Louisiana Game Harvest Survey estimated 42,000 quail hunters harvested 660,000 quail. In comparison, a mere 1,100 Louisiana quail hunters harvested some 5,100 wild quail during the 2009-10 season.

When quail hunters first noticed declining numbers of bobwhites, some blamed fire ants, coyotes and hawks. Yet, each of these were present during the 1982-83 season. The truth however pointed to changing habitat as the primary cause of quail population to declines. Those with an attention for detail noticed changes in the vegetation at ground level - where the quail lived. The stands of native "bunch" grasses and associated seed producing native "weeds" were slowly disappearing. In addition to the diversity of foods that were present, these native grass stands provided an important structural element. As the name implies, native "bunch" grasses typically grow in clumps or bunches with bare ground between the clumps. This open structure allows other seed producing plants to grow within the stand and allows quail to readily move and feed within the stand.



The author kneeling left with favorite setter "Jack", brother Bill standing with quail, and Dad, James holding quail and pointer "Lady" in Washington Parish 1972.) Photo by (Mom) Lillian Stafford

As a young hunter, I focused my quail hunting efforts in areas where I observed the golden grass - the color of these native grasses in the fall and winter.

Yet with each succeeding hunting season, the stands of golden grass became harder and harder to find. Changes in land use and management were affecting the habitat of the birds we once took for granted. Periodic disturbance such as prescribed burning is necessary to maintain the native vegetation quail require. Yet, the use of prescribed burning has been dramatically reduced. Forest management has changed and the open stands of longleaf pine that once dominated portions of Louisiana are largely gone. Replacing them are dense stands of loblolly pine that are grown in comparatively short rotations and offer little opportunity for the stands of native vegetation that quail



Photo by BS Thurner Hof, Wikimedia Commons

require to become established. Pastures that once contained native grasses are now planted with Bahia grass or Bermuda grass. These sod forming grasses grow in dense mats that offer little habitat for quail. And finally, much of the agricultural land in the upland regions of the state has been converted to pine plantations or pasture. Where agricultural land occurs, clean farming practices have eliminated the quail habitat once found in turn rows, ditch banks and fence rows.

The loss of regularly maintained native grassland habitat is the single greatest reason for the decline of bobwhite quail and other grassland wildlife throughout the southern states.

So how do we fix such a massive multi-state problem? This is the focus of quail biologists from across the nation when they meet annually with the National Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC). Much of the NBTC effort is directed toward USDA Farm Bill programs that provide incentives to landowners to install quail friendly practices through programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NBTC works to insure that quail management concerns are considered at the highest federal decision-making levels. NBTC recognized in its earliest years that only large-scale landscape changes would result in significant improvements in quail numbers. That being said, large landscape changes still come at the local level, one landowner at a time.

Many of today's quail enthusiasts and yesterday's quail hunters may have forgotten what critical vegetative components make up good quality quail habitats. The

truth is, not every grassy area or brushy spot is good for quail. Good quail habitat requires open ground allowing ease of movement for quail while insuring sufficient overhead cover of 6 inches to 2 feet above ground. Such areas must be connected and large enough to sustain quail year-round. Regular maintenance is a must. If habitats are left unmanaged by fire, grazing or plowing, native grasses and forbs will lose their value to quail and will eventually be replaced by trees and woody vegetation. To determine a grassland's structural suitability for quail, one can use the "baseball test." If a baseball can roll freely through the vegetation while having abundant 6 inches to 2 feet overhead vegetation cover, it likely provides good habitat structure.

Annual quail production can be influenced by weather, but well-maintained quality grassland habitat will insure a maximum hatch when conditions are favorable. Habitat structure is especially important to brood habitat. Quail chicks leave the nest shortly after hatching and begin to feed on insects. The ability to move and feed effectively is crucial to survival of young quail. Prescribed burns and fallow disking create bare ground that is soon invaded with tender sprigs of grasses and forbs that attract a variety of insects that are eaten by quail chicks. This type of early plant succession offers freedom of movement for both adult and juvenile quail, as well as cover from predators. Having plenty of early successional habitat with brushy escape cover scattered throughout cannot be over-emphasized. Such habitat can also be created in agricultural areas by allowing native grasses and forbs to grow at a minimum width of 30 feet along fence rows, field edges and interior field ditches. Even

wider fallow areas will enhance predator avoidance. Connecting these fallow areas to adjacent habitat will help provide for the needs of quail throughout the year.

Good quail habitat requires persistence and planning. Disturbance and diversity are the keys to good habitat. Disturbance such as prescribed burning, fallow disking, flash grazing or timber harvests must occur regularly and frequently to create the early successional habitat that quail require. Fallow disking and prescribed burning should be performed on a rotational basis so that areas are burned or disked every two to three years. Burning or disking units should be relatively small and scattered across the property to increase habitat diversity. Land managers should avoid treating all the property at the same time. Ideally, burning or disking should occur in a checkerboard or strip pattern so that a variety of cover stages are available to quail. Flash grazing with cattle can be used to introduce disturbance and set back plant succession as long as average grass heights do not drop below 18 inches. Forestland owners can maintain forest grassland habitat by heavy thinning coupled with prescribed burning. On suitable sites, replanting with longleaf pine after a timber harvest will enhance quail habitat.

Despite low numbers, quail still persist throughout Louisiana and are poised to respond to significant improvements in habitat. The LDWF Landowners for Wildlife Program offers landowners free technical assistance to help them manage habitat for bobwhite quail and other wildlife. For more information, contact a private land biologist at the nearest LDWF office or jstafford@wlf.la.gov.



Photos by Jimmy Stafford, LDWF

Left: This fallow-disked site allows the ball to roll freely and would provide quail excellent ease of movement and adequate cover while feeding on insects. (Note the visible bare ground.)

Right: Bermuda grass does not allow the ball to roll freely making it poor quail habitat.

WHY VALIDATE THAT TURKEY?

By Jimmy Stafford, LDWF Resident Small Game & Wild Turkey Program Leader

You've just bagged the gobbler responsible for your alarm clock ringing every morning at 4 a.m. for the last week and a half. Your heart races as you admire one of Louisiana's great game birds. You ponder your good hunting fortune and pause to honor this fallen foe. After a period of reflection, you reach to pick up your well-earned prize and it hits you, "I've got to tag him."

In 2009, turkey tagging and validation became law in Louisiana. This law got its origin and support from hunters across the state that wanted a better way of monitoring turkey harvests. Biologists were excited at the prospect of receiving real-time harvest numbers for each parish. However, more than two years into the tag and validation program, harvest reporting rates remain below expectations.

During the last two years, LDWF enforcement agents have kept records of turkey hunter tagging compliance rates. LDWF officials were pleased to find that more than 96 percent of hunters checked in the field were in possession of turkey tags. Agents also found that only 10 percent of turkeys were untagged during the 2010 season which was a great improvement over the 30 percent non-compliance rate in 2009. Although tagging compliance has improved, validation or harvest reporting continues to lag behind expectations. Exactly how far behind is difficult to pinpoint, but an examination of data indicates needs for improvement. Self-clearing daily permit records on wildlife management areas (WMA) from the 2009 turkey season were compared to validation reports, and biologists were pleased to find a 91 percent validation compliance rate. Unfortunately, that rate dropped to only 78 percent for known WMA turkey harvests in 2010. Checking of reported harvest data during WMA youth turkey hunts indicated even lower validation rates. It is estimated that some 80 percent of the Louisiana turkey harvest occurs on private land where validation rates may be even lower.

So if practically all hunters are in possession of tags, then why are harvested gobblers still going unreported? My first thought is that no self-respecting turkey hunter would ever think of depriving the

agency responsible for managing turkeys this critical information. However, having hunted turkey since I was old enough to walk; I have noticed that turkey hunters are as secretive as the gobblers they pursue. Some have even been known to hide the location of an old gobbler from their best friends and even family members. This tendency might tempt some turkey hunters to not report a harvest for fear of divulging sensitive harvest location information. However, the validation process only requests the parish of harvest for turkeys taken on private lands.

Another misconception is that biologists will recommend reducing hunting days in parishes that report high harvest rates. On the contrary, biologists look with more concern at those parishes reporting low harvest numbers.

One more reason hunters fail to report harvests is they simply miss the 72 hour reporting deadline. Louisiana hunters are generously allowed up to three days to call or e-mail harvest information. This extended period is great for convenience, but can sometimes lull successful hunters into a sense of unlimited time. Missing this reporting deadline puts errant hunters in jeopardy of citation if found minus a tag without the corresponding confirmation number.

Last and I truly hope least, there are some individuals who might seek to subvert the tagging and validation process in an attempt to take more than their fair share. Unfortunately, they care nothing about conservation, game laws or the future of wild turkeys.

So, is reporting your harvest information really that important? Absolutely! Would you want your doctor making decisions regarding your health based on 25 or 30 percent of your test results? I don't think so. The only way to get a complete picture of the status of wild turkeys in your hunting area is to give biologists complete harvest information. Conscientious hunters should quickly report each harvest and insist that their hunting partners do likewise. Complete harvest information ultimately means sound wildlife management decisions which produce better turkey hunting for everyone.



TO VALIDATE



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HOGS

Photo by Josh Gaskamp, The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation

PROBLEM PORKERS

Prolific as cockroaches, destructive as rats and surly as gators.

By Fred Kimmel, LDWF Wildlife Education & Technical Services Director

Feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*), including European wild hogs, Russian boars and hybrids, are quickly becoming the most serious problem facing land managers across the United States. Pigs, which are not native animals of North America, were originally introduced in the 1500s by the Spanish in Florida as livestock. Through escape and release, pigs quickly adapted to life in the wild, becoming one of the most successful non-indigenous species introduced into North America. Wild “feral” hogs are omnivorous, meaning they can eat anything from vegetation to carrion, though vegetation constitutes the largest portion of their diet. It would be shorter to list what hogs do not eat than what they do eat. They have a very tough nose which allows them to “root” for invertebrates, tubers or any other subterranean food.

In Louisiana, feral hogs have roamed the woodlands and marshes for years, but in recent years the population has dramatically increased. As many landowners, farmers and wildlife managers know, feral hogs can be very destructive. They destroy crops, root up young trees, damage wildlife habi-

tats, compete with wildlife for food, prey on wildlife, and carry diseases that can infect wildlife, livestock and people. To make matters worse, they are highly prolific, capable of breeding twice a year with sows producing an average of 10-12 young per year. Females can reach sexual maturity in as little as six months.

Many landowners and managers across Louisiana are now faced with the prospect of having to control feral hogs on their property. Controlling feral hogs is easier said than done. Trapping, shooting and hunting with dogs are the most common control measures. They are very intelligent animals and become extremely wary when subject to hunting and trapping pressure.

In Louisiana, feral hogs are classified as “outlaw quadrupeds,” meaning they can be harvested throughout the year during daylight hours by properly licensed hunters. (Note: regulations for taking feral hogs on public lands such as wildlife management areas, national forests and national wildlife refuges may be more restrictive, so consult hunting regulations pertaining to these areas.) To aid landowners in their efforts to control pigs, the laws and regulations concerning hogs and the methods in which they may be taken or harvested were amended in 2010. This included hunting hogs and other nuisance animals at night under certain conditions. The new regulation allows the taking of feral hogs, coyotes, armadillos, beavers and nutria on private lands at night

without a permit from LDWF under the following conditions:

1. Person(s), other than the actual landowner, while engaged in the nighttime shooting activity, must have written permission from the landowner in their possession, including the landowner’s contact information. Hunting clubs that lease land from a corporate landowner must obtain permission from the corporate landowner. In this instance, the person(s) engaged in nighttime shooting must have written permission from the corporate landowner’s authorized representative and the hunting club’s president. Each authorized person’s name must be specifically listed on this letter of permission.
2. Nighttime shooting may only be conducted from ½ hour after official sunset on the last day of February to ½ hour after official sunset on the last day of August of the same year. In simple terms, persons shooting nuisance animals at night, such as hogs, from March 1 to Aug. 30 will be within the prescribed season.
3. Only .22 rimfire firearms (this includes .22 rimfire magnum) and 10 gauge or smaller shotguns with buckshot or smaller shot may be used for nighttime shooting.
4. Spot lights, infrared or laser sighting devices, or other night vision devices may be used.

As every responsible hunter knows, positive target identification and being mindful of what lies beyond your target is critical. These basic rules are even more important to remember when engaged in nighttime shooting activities.



Photo by Billy Higginbotham, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, forestryimages.org

Residential damage by feral hogs.

Story continued on page 19...

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COASTAL OPERATIONS

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Hogs: Problem Porkers ...continued from page 15



Photo by Maria Davidson, LDWF



Photo by Rodney Barnhart, www.workinonfranch.com

Left: A black bear's eyes will brightly reflect light at night.
Right: A feral hog's eyes will have little or no reflected shine.

Bears and feral hogs have similar body size and shape, so positive target identification is particularly important when hunting in areas where bears occur. One simple rule to keep in mind is that when illuminated by a spotlight at night, bears eyes will usually brightly reflect light or glow gold to green. In contrast, feral hog eyes will have little or no reflected shine. Regardless, be positive before you pull that trigger.

There have been recent documented instances of persons attempting to poison feral hogs or other wildlife perceived to be a nuisance. Poisoning of wildlife, including feral hogs and other outlaw quadrupeds is dangerous and illegal. Poisons can kill non-targeted wildlife, livestock, pets and even humans, therefore any persons poisoning or attempting to use poisons to control nuisance animals are subject to severe penalties.

Nighttime shooting will not be the cure-all that solves landowners' feral hog problems, since hogs will eventually adapt their behavior to night shooting activities. However, it is one more tool available to landowners and managers working to control feral hog populations. Effective feral hog controls will probably require a multifaceted approach that includes day and night time hunting, hunting with dogs, and trapping. Contact the LDWF Enforcement Division or a Private Lands biologist for additional information regarding the regulations for controlling hogs or other nuisance animals. Private Lands biologists are also available to assist landowners in the management of wildlife or wildlife habitats on their property.



Photo by Dan Clark, USDI National Park Service, forestryimages.org



LANDOWNERS FOR WILDLIFE BROCHURES

"Landowners for Wildlife" brochures have recently been developed by LDWF Private Lands Staff. The brochures include:

- Benefits of Prescribed Burning
- Common Plants of the Louisiana Gulf Coastal Plain
- Common Plants of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley and Their Use by Wildlife
- Coping with Feral Hogs
- Dove Fields
- Forest Management in Bottomland Hardwoods
- Invasive Plants
- Living with Coyotes
- Moist-soil Management
- Native Grassland
- Wildlife Habitat Corridors
- Wood Duck Nest Boxes

Electronic versions are being made available throughout this spring on the new LDWF website: www.wlf.la.gov.
Printed versions will be available this summer at your local LDWF Field Office.