

# Prairie Ponderings

## The Wildlife Society at Texas Tech

Issue 7 | December 2019

Photo by Justin Dawsey

### Semester Review

This fall was filled with events and opportunities for TTU-TWS members. The Fifth Wild Annual Game Dinner was a success thanks to our alumni, students, and supporters. Over 100 guests attended the Game Dinner this year and a total of \$1,735 was raised. We host our Game Dinner to fundraise and send our members to conferences such as TCTWS, research trips, and provide them with other meaningful professional opportunities. Thank you to all who donated and prepared food for this event, to all who donated raffle baskets and silent auction items, and to the National Ranching Heritage Center for hosting TTU-TWS. After the Game Dinner, our members were able to participate in a trip to camp at the Three Rivers Campground in the Lincoln National Park, New Mexico. Members who attended the camping trip were able to get to know one another, observe wildlife, and most importantly, have fun. This trip consisted of birding, photography, and a 16-mile hike. This November, the chapter website was also launched, thanks to Frey Creative Media, who donated and designed the website. This will help promote the chapter across campus and at club sponsored events. Members, alumni, and supporters can view the website at <http://ttutws.org/>. Additionally, thank you to all those who came to speak at our chapter meetings about their research, careers, and their experiences!

### Mule Deer Capture

Members attended a week of mule deer captures, where a total of 40 deer were captured. This mule deer capture was fifth and final year of a long-term research project examining mule deer's use of rangeland habitats. This research project was being led by past TCTWS Presidents Dr. Dave Hewitt and Dr. Louis Harveson. TWS members volunteered for these captures with the chapter advisor Dr. Conway, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, staff and volunteers from the Mule Deer Foundation, the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University Kingsville, and the Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross State University. In the capture, students had the opportunity to work with biologists and professionals from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. This included the Mule Deer and Pronghorn Program Leader Shawn Gray, who was also a club speaker this semester, as well as faculty and graduate students from CKWRI.

### Texas Youth Hunting Program

Over the past couple of years, TTU-TWS has been developing our relationship with the Texas Youth Hunting Program. The goal of this program is to provide opportunities for youth to participate in hunting activities safely, legally, and ethically, while learning about the valuable role landowners and hunters play in wildlife conservation under the guidance of an experienced and certified volunteer, also known as Huntmasters. This program gives an opportunity for youth to bond with their family and other youth while being out in the Texas wilderness. The outreach coordinator, Brandon Sagraves, contacted Mr. Bob Barnett of the TYHP association and was able to plan a certification course at the Texas Tech campus. There was 12 members who were able to get certified to become TYHP Huntmasters during this two day program. Brandon has been in regular contact with Mr. Barnett making plans on continuing to do a certification class each year at the Texas Tech campus. The chapter plans on growing the numbers each year and increasing the member participation with local youth hunts.



**Top Left:** Attendees at the 5th Annual Game Dinner  
**Top Right:** Brandon and Cameron goofing around on the Camping Trip  
**Bottom:** TTU-TWS members after graduating from the TYHP Huntmaster Training with instructor Mr. Bob Barnett

## Alumni Spotlight

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### Taylor Daily

TTU Graduate: Fall 2017 | Sul Ross Grad Student / Research Assistant  
Borderlands Research Institute

#### Education Experience

As an undergraduate student, I was able to volunteer for many different opportunities such as mule deer captures, chronic wasting disease sample collections, Mule Deer Foundation banquets, water guzzler installations, and many others. As a Junior, I worked as an undergraduate technician on a graduate project focusing on pronghorn in New Mexico. As a senior, I was an undergraduate research assistant, in collaboration with Sul Ross State University, where I conducted my own research on mule deer nutrition in the panhandle of Texas.

The classes I took at TTU have given me the knowledge I need to continue my education as a graduate student, and all the research and volunteer opportunities gave me a better understanding of wildlife outside the classroom.

I will never forget my first deer capture with TTU. I didn't really know any other students and I wasn't sure how a deer capture worked, but after spending those few days in the field I knew I was in the right place and had developed friendships that still last today.

#### Current job

While at TTU I had decided I wanted to go to graduate school, but I didn't know where. It wasn't until my senior year working as an undergraduate researcher with TTU and SRSU that I had decided to pursue their graduate program. I read up on different professors at SRSU and found Dr. Harveson, a professor who conducted research with my similar interests. I waited until the annual Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society meeting to introduce myself to him and explain my interest to work underneath him as a graduate student. I left him that meeting with a business card and followed up the next week with an email. Shortly after, he contacted me and spoke of a thesis project that would start January after my graduation at TTU, so I did whatever I could to ensure my acceptance into their graduate program and started with them in January of 2018.

It is hard to describe a 'typical day' as a graduate student because every day seems to be slightly different. I do work on school work and my thesis on a regular day to day basis, but I get to do a lot of other cool stuff on the side. I get to do radio telemetry in the mountains on desert bighorn sheep for my thesis, sometimes I get to fly around in a helicopter to help TPWD locate them. I also have many opportunities to help other grad students with their projects and volunteer with professionals in our field.

#### Future plans?

I plan on graduating with my M.S. in Natural Resource Management from SRSU in May of 2020 and then apply for wildlife biologist jobs throughout Texas and its surrounding states.

#### Advice to current students?

I would advise students to take advantage of volunteer opportunities and to not be afraid to introduce yourself to professionals you don't know. Our field is very small and getting to know professionals can help you go a long ways. A was told a quote once, "It's partly the grades you make but always the hands you shake." So do your best in school, and make sure to network with professionals when you have the chance.

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