

# TOWA

The Official Publication of the **Texas Outdoor Writers Association**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### TOWA Board Establishes Business Plan to Rejuvenate Our Organization

**G**reetings, TOWA members! In this newsletter you'll see an outline of our business plan. Your board and I have been working to bring this plan to life. Please, take a look and offer your thoughts.

The mission statement sums it up. This business plan model is designed to give TOWA direction and define where we're going over the next few years.

The objectives are pretty simple. TOWA wants education and social events. Along the way, we want to educate our members via craft improvement, critiquing, networking and marketing our skills. Our writers want to be better writers, our editors want to be better editors and network with writers. Our photographers want to learn and teach. Our diversity of membership is to be shared, learned and taught.

One avenue is to continue improving our educational programs, both at the conference and through seminars and opportunities beyond. The board wants to involve our supporting members more deeply into this process. Supporting members want to be involved in the conference via "Learn it, Do it" practices. But, some of our media folks suggest we get away from many of the traditional ways of doing business together. So, as you'll see in the outline, we're working creatively to bring our supporting members together with those who can supply what they want — ink —without compromising the journalistic integrity of our professionals. We all have some common bond.

This business plan also calls for time to socialize. This next conference will bring time set aside for socializing: some planned, and some surely spontaneous. Some of the best stories ideas and relationships have been built around campfires, with guitars. We're planning fun things.

Another huge topic of discussion has been outreach. Almost every board member has shown passionately that we need to be involved more closely with kid events, well beyond what goes on at the conference. Look for outreach



TOWA President Bob Lusk

## CALENDAR

**Aug. 11-14** – Annual Professional Outdoor Media Association conference in LaPorte, IN. Further information is available from Brandon Butler at (812) 322-9851 or at [bbutler@driftwoodoutdoors.com](mailto:bbutler@driftwoodoutdoors.com).

**Aug. 13-15** – First annual Texas Hunting and Outdoor Classic, billed as the ultimate outdoor experience, covers 150,000 square feet of air-conditioned space inside and over 100,000 outside including an ATV test track, archery range, turkey and predator calling, Boone and Crockett Scoring, hunting safety, a rock wall, fish tank and more at the Freeman Coliseum and Grounds in San Antonio. For more information, visit [www.huntersclassic.com](http://www.huntersclassic.com).

**Aug. 20-21** – The Texas AgriLife Extension Service will hold its first ever Texas Wildlife Short Course at the Brazos County Exposition Center, followed by the Texas Wildlife Association's Regions 5, 6, 7 (Post Oak Savannah, Pineywoods, and Coastal Prairies) annual Texas Big Game Awards Sportsmen's Celebration. For more information contact Kristi Smith at (979) 845-7471 or email her at [kjsmith@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:kjsmith@ag.tamu.edu).

**Feb. 24-26, 2011** -- The 53rd annual TOWA conference will be held at Lake Jackson, with the Swiss Cherotel Hotel Lake Jackson serving as the host hotel. Hotel information is available at (800) 544-2119 or at <http://cherotel.com>.

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*TOWA was formed in 1958 as a professional/social organization for those who communicate about hunting, fishing and other outdoor pursuits, as well as those in business and industry connected with the outdoors.*



The TOWA Newsletter is proudly sponsored by Gulf States Toyota. For information, go to [www.buyatoyota.com](http://www.buyatoyota.com).



## TEXAS OUTDOOR NEWS

# Dallas Safari Club Seeks Nominees for Annual Hunting Heritage Award

DALLAS – NOMINATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED THROUGH AUG. 15 for a prestigious award that recognizes significant contributions to wildlife and habitat conservation, as well as sustained commitment to the heritage of hunting.

The Peter Hathaway Capstick Hunting Heritage Award is the top conservation and service award given by the Dallas Safari Club and Dallas Ecological Foundation.

The Capstick Award is named for the well-known American author whose defense of hunting and conservation made him a household name. Capstick's widow, Fiona Claire, remains a DSC life member and is involved in award presentations.

Recipients are selected based on their involvement in education, hunting, conservation organizations, humanitarian causes, research, permanent endowments and/or charitable giving.

Criteria are summarized as follows:

"The objective of this award is to bring honor and recognition to an individual, organization or group whose achievements reveal a sustained and significant contribution to the conservation of wildlife and its habitat. Additionally, the winner will have shown long-term commitment to our hunting heritage by pursuing that goal for the benefit of future generations."

Nominations can be made via mail or e-mail. Send to Dallas Safari Club, 6390 LBJ Freeway, Suite 108, Dallas, TX 75240-6414, USA, or [info@biggame.org](mailto:info@biggame.org).

"Hunting and conservation are inseparable, so if you're an avid hunter, you probably know a conservationist who is deserving of this recognition. They're the men, women, clubs and organizations whose efforts are making our world a richer, more diverse place," said Ben Carter, DSC executive director.

In 2010, the Capstick Award was presented to Hubert Thummler of Mexico City. Thummler, active in many international conservation issues, is credited with facilitating vital changes in Mexico's model of conservation. Hunted wildlife once was owned by the government but now is owned by landowners. This system, which gives wildlife real value in a developing nation, has spawned new private interest in conservation and has led to vastly improved protection and management of big game species across the country.

Previous recipients include Harry Tennison of Fort Worth, Texas; the late Baron Bertrand des Clers of France; President Theodore Roosevelt (posthumously); Dr. Ian Player of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa; and Boone and Crockett Club.

An independent organization since 1982, DSC has become an international leader in conserving wildlife and wilderness lands, educating youth and the general public, and promoting and protecting the rights and interests of hunters worldwide.

For more information, visit [www.biggame.org](http://www.biggame.org).

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opportunities, soon. Part of our outreach program will extend a hand to local media well before our conference and we intend to toot our own horns with press releases about TOWA and what we are doing throughout the year. That will add fodder for all of us to extend our words to help the TOWA with substantive story lines, too.

We've also had some intriguing discussions about social media. Facebook, Twitter, websites ... like it or not, here they come.

So, what does all this talk have to do with you?

I'll tell you.

Without YOU...all it is...is talk.

Every single member of this organization is gifted. That means you "can." My mission is to motivate everyone to "want".

This business plan is designed to engage every member to become more involved. As most organizations will attest, much of the work is done by few. That's been true of the TOWA. Setting aside old qualms, personal issues and "reasons" to NOT be involved is no longer a valid reason to say "no".

This is the "new" TOWA, refreshed and energized with a focused mission.

As you peruse the business plan outline, pick a spot where you can, and want to, participate. The more of us who engage in some specific segment, the more we can get done and the better our group becomes, faster. Soon, with some measurement of success, we can become significant. When we become significant, we can have an impact on society.

I truly believe that.

I promise to give it all I can.

Will you?

— Bob Lusk

## TOWA MASTER PLAN 2010

**The professional communicators of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association are dedicated to maintaining and improving skills in the written and spoken word, photography, illustration and electronic media. TOWA fosters fellowship among members and enlightens audiences on the importance of our natural heritage while promoting its appreciation, enjoyment and conservation.**

### I. EDUCATE

- a. Members (at Conference)
  - i. Craft Improvement
    1. EIC improvements
    2. Optional critiquing from seasoned editors and writers
  - ii. Networking
  - iii. Marketing our skills
- b. Members (not at Conference)
  - i. Seminars throughout the year
  - ii. Special events throughout the year
- c. Supporting members (at Conference)
  - i. "Learn it, do it"
  - ii. How to get ink-roundtable education with publishers/editors
  - iii. What supporting members expect from TOWA
  - iv. Work them more into formal sessions
  - v. Drawing for members who visit every supporting member's booth at breakouts; have rep sign card or something
  - vi. A document to supporting members that outlines things they can do to maximize their impact:
    1. If you have Pro Staff in Texas, get us a list so we can fish/hunt with them and your wares.
    2. How-to stories are outdated. Opportunity stories are in.
    3. Youth interactions with products in use are in.
    4. "Big check" photos are out.
    5. Blatant "use this bait or bullet" stories are out in almost all cases.
    6. Call writers and talk about ideas or make yourself available to writers for story ideas. Give them an idea of what they can expect. Press packages are mostly out – but good with quality images (high res) online. Etc. ....
- d. Outreach
  - i. Kid events (not at conference)
  - ii. Local media, editors, writers (at conference site) - TOWA press releases,

special invitations to all local media from ED

iii. Scholarship program

iv. Supporting members (some may want to participate)...plus, this could draw new supporting members?

1. Be sure the liaison is on board to help communicate

v. Communicators who are not members but are prospects; entice them to join

vi. Spread the word on kids, scholarships, good deeds to create public awareness of TOWA

### II. SOCIAL ASPECTS AT CONFERENCE

- a. Contests: casting, shooting, other ideas? Archery? Program chair will consider adding this kind of stuff. ...
- b. "Liar's Contest"—was a hit... something else for entertainment after dinners?
- c. Music : Program chair team will put this together
  - i. Talent—have a dance, bring in a band
  - ii. Something more informal, but planned, like Larry Bozka and Kendal Hemphill with their guitars in a comfortable environment with plenty of room.
- d. Spouse programs at conference—needs to be planned

### III. OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS AT CONFERENCE

- a. Networking—shaking hands
  - i. Face time with peers
  - ii. One-on-one with supporting members. Reception?
- b. Media releases, publicity: EIC winners, award winners should be emailed on Sunday. Other releases should go out throughout the year. Target conference site media as conference approaches.
- c. Social media, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- d. Improve website and make it current and relevant.

# TOWA MEMBERS URGED TO GET READY FOR LAKE JACKSON

By Jonette Childs  
Site Selection Chairwoman

**M**ark the last weekend in February, that's Thursday the 24th through Saturday the 26th, to attend the 53rd Annual TOWA conference to be held in Lake Jackson. The area is referred to as Brazosport and includes quite a few small and not so small communities such as Clute, Freeport, Oyster Creek, Surfside and more.

The gulf beach at Surfside has recovered significantly since Hurricanes Ike and Rita tore into it. The area offers jetties for fishing, several good marinas scattered about and charter boats for hire both bay and offshore. Birding is another activity that is flourishing in the area.

There are two National Wildlife Refuges close by—Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge and San Barnard National Wildlife Refuge. The Quintana Bird Sanctuary near Quintana Beach and the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory also offer excellent opportunities for those hoping to add species to their lists.

A major attraction to the area is Sea Center Texas. If you haven't already been there, get ready to be impressed. This facility is the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department's major hatchery. The high-tech life support systems housed there are tailored for hatching and raising both red drum and trout for release back into the gulf. A large brood stock is maintained for spawning, with larvae stocked into 36 acres of culture ponds on the grounds.

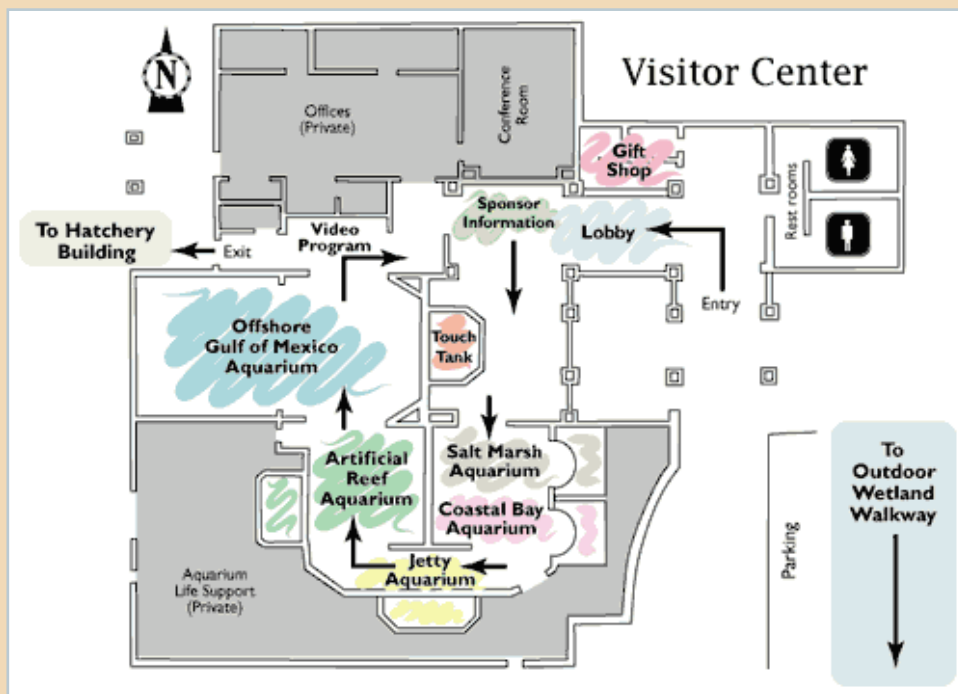
The centerpiece of the exhibits inside Sea Center is a 50,000-gallon Gulf of Mexico aquarium where many different offshore species slowly circle the sand bottom. Other exhibits include a walk-through salt marsh, coastal bays display, jetty and artificial reef aquariums, the outdoor culture ponds, a wetland walkway and replicas of Texas state record saltwater fish. I think you will also be impressed with the art exhibited on the walls of Sea Center.

On TOWA's last visit to Lake Jackson in 2003, we were pressed upon by the Sea Center Texas staff to help catch new brood stock from the stock ponds. I can tell you that I have never had so much fun fishing from the bank. We used old Zebco push button reels (without much of a drag system). Our members pulled in big redfish one after another. There was much laughter and excitement plus an opportunity to shoot some great photos.

We will be staying at the Swiss Cherotel Hotel Lake Jackson. It proved perfect for our needs on our last visit and has been updated since 2003. Internet access in the hotel is good. A fine restaurant and bar with an international menu, heated pool, state-of-the-art fitness center and plenty of meeting space make this a great place to stage our meeting. And, the price is right.

More information on the hotel at 925 Highway 332, is available at <http://cherotel.com> or by calling (800) 544-2119.

There are great opportunities for fun and work (gathering material for stories, photography, etc) in and around the area. Make plans to be there; Brazosport is gearing up for our arrival.



The Sea Center in Lake Jackson centers around a 50,000-gallon Gulf of Mexico aquarium, and includes a walk-through salt marsh, a coastal bays display, a wetlands walkway and other informative attractions.

# Trivial Intelligence

By Kendal Hemphill

As Ron White likes to say, you can't fix stupid. Jay Leno has proven that for almost twenty years with the 'Jaywalking' segment of the Tonight Show. In case you're not familiar with the Tonight Show, or Jaywalking, or stupid people, I'll explain.

Leno goes out on the streets of Los Angeles, armed with nothing but a cameraman and a list of incredibly easy questions, and causes people to present themselves as absolutely the most ignorant life forms in the universe. He asks them questions like, "Who was the first president?" He gets answers like, "Benjamin Franklin," or "Ronald Reagan," or "President of what?"

The people Leno finds seem far too dumb for the segments not to have been staged. Leno claims they are all random people who are actually trying to answer the questions correctly. If you've ever seen one of these Jaywalking bits, you probably find that hard to believe.

So do I. So I decided to find out for myself if there were really people in the world, specifically in Texas, who were as intellectually challenged as those on Jaywalking. I went to San Antonio, to a mall, where people seem to waste a lot of time, and looked for folks who didn't appear to be in a big hurry, and asked them basic outdoor questions. I figured, at a mall, with lots of witnesses around, I might not get killed too often.

Since this was Texas, I expected most people to know something about hunting and fishing. So I started with deer. I asked several random people what a baby deer is

called. Simple, right? Wrong.

The answers I got ranged from 'kid' to 'papoose.' One lady said a baby deer was called a calf. One guy said 'herd.' I'm not sure he was from Texas, though, since he was wearing a shirt that said, "If you don't know where you're going, go faster."

Next I asked people what is going on when you see bucks chasing does. Mostly what I got was, "What?" No one seemed to have heard of the rut. Almost every person I explained it to seemed fascinated, but skeptical. The concept of deer mating only for a month or two of the year sounded unreasonable to them, obviously. They seemed to think I had my facts wrong.

So I went to fishing. I asked, "What do they fish for at the Bassmaster's Classic?" Only one person I talked to had heard of the event, and he didn't know what they fished for. One lady said, "Tuna." One guy told me, "Oh, I never get in a boat." When I told him it was a contest for professional anglers, he looked at me strangely and said, "Yeah, right," and walked away.

I decided the questions were too hard, and I needed to tone things down a little. I asked some people, "If you're an angler, what do you do?" One lady said you're a welder. I guess she'd heard of angle iron. One girl said you're a carpenter. One just started laughing and walked off. One guy said, "A hang glider?" I said, "No, an angler." He shook his head and said, "Oh, man, are you a cop?"

Fishing was evidently not commonly understood in San Antonio, so I moved on to bowhunting. I asked, "If you practice ar-

chery, what do you do?" Two people said, "You shoot a bow and arrow." They looked at me like I was an idiot. One guy said an archer runs a fish farm. I guess he got it mixed up with 'hatchery.' One lady said you were a Satanist. I think she thought I said 'witchery.' Or something. She also told me it was illegal, and I should be ashamed of myself. Another lady said someone who practices archery is an engineer. I believe she figured it must have something to do with arches.

I decided to switch to camping. Just about everyone knows something about camping. I asked people, "What do you do call it when you put up a tent?" One lady said, "Throw . . . no, toss . . . right?" At least she had the general verb category. Most everyone else had no idea.

I moved on to guns. I asked what 'semiautomatic' means. Everyone thought it was the same as automatic. I figured I was dreaming if I expected anyone to know anything about bolt actions or lever actions. Gave up on that.

Then I decided to ask people what the NRA is. Phhhh. One woman said, "Oh, they're those bad lobbyists." Another said, "I don't like them. They want to give guns to kids." Where she got that I have no idea. Shows what the liberal media has been up to, I guess. One woman said, "The NRA? My kids' school has one of those. I had to make a lot of punch one time." I think she thought I was asking about the PTA.

So, for your information, Jaywalking is probably real and unrehearsed. Our country has no idea where it's going. Which is probably why it's going faster . . .

## Hemphill Humor Piece Tops EIC Category 19 Contest

Taking his second top honor in the 2010 TOWA Excellence in Craft contest, Kendal Hemphill penned the following piece that was selected by the judges as the first place winner in Category 19: Outdoor Humor.

The award-winning piece is being offered to our members as an example of some of our best works of the past year and to give everyone an incentive to submit their most creative achievements in the 2011 contest. Winners will be honored during our annual awards banquet, which will be held Feb. 26, 2011, at Lake Jackson.

The judges had these comments about Hemphill's piece entitled "Trivial Intelligence" that was published in the June 3, 2009, edition of the Mason County News:

"Yes, Kendal, we are going too fast to nowhere. Nice column doing the Jay Leno Jaywalking line. But, it points something few of us realize. The job of outdoors writer, columnist, TV-radio commentator and photographer is terribly important as we strive to keep a way of American life intact and in focus, at least a little bit, with the people."

## National Shooting Sports Foundation Upgrades Annual SHOT Show Logo

NEWTOWN, CT –

The SHOT Show’s venerable symbol of hunter, dog and bull’s-eye target, which has served the show well for four decades, will give way to a new, more inclusive logo that welcomes and supports all segments of the world’s largest shooting, hunting and outdoor trade show.



The National Shooting Sports Foundation, owner of the SHOT Show, has unveiled the new SHOT Show logo and will begin using it immediately in all advertising and communications related to the 2011 show in Las Vegas and beyond. The show will be held Jan. 18-21.

“Times change and trade shows change, reflecting current buying and selling trends,” said Chris Dolnack, senior vice president of NSSF, the trade association for the firearms, ammunition, hunting and shooting industry. “When the SHOT Show began in 1979, hunting was the dominant activity in our industry and our logo reflected that. Today’s SHOT Show requires a strong, clean logo that reminds all attendees, whether their business is shooting, hunting or law enforcement, that they are valued. The new SHOT Show logo does this.”

A unique mark for a unique trade show, the new SHOT Show logo is contemporary in design, providing a versatile symbol suitable for use in today’s multi-media communications, working equally well on large signage at the show venue, on Web pages and in e-mail marketing, magazine ads and videos. The new logo features the name “SHOT Show” emblazoned over a bull’s-eye target. This clean, uncluttered approach emphasizes the SHOT Show brand without distraction.

“The target is the evolutionary element we carried over from the past logo,” said Dolnack. “The font is san-serif, which is more readable and modern. By eliminating the hunter and the dog, the logo now better reflects the diverse audiences of today’s SHOT Show. We have used the green found in NSSF’s logo in the target element as a reminder that the SHOT Show and NSSF are strongly connected.”

The new logo arose from input provided by NSSF members through SHOT Show surveys that are conducted each year. While the old logo had strong historical ties, survey respondents considered it dated and encouraged that it be changed. That was easier said than done, however.

During an 18-month process, two award-winning design firms and NSSF’s in-house creative services department provided hundreds of new logo treatments. The logo ultimately selected was one developed by NSSF’s in-house team.

“We’re very proud that the first new logo for the SHOT Show in 34 years was produced in-house by our talented graphic artists,” said Mark Thomas, NSSF’s managing director of marketing-communications. “We are very proud of that and of them.”

NSSF reminds SHOT Show exhibitors, media and other companies who use the logo to do so in accordance with the NSSF guidelines for this registered trademark and to replace the old logo with this new mark as soon as possible. Contact Mark Thomas at (203) 426-1320 or [mthomas@nssf.org](mailto:mthomas@nssf.org) for images appropriate to your graphics needs.

## Magazines Primary Information Source for Hunters and Anglers, Online Gaining Ground

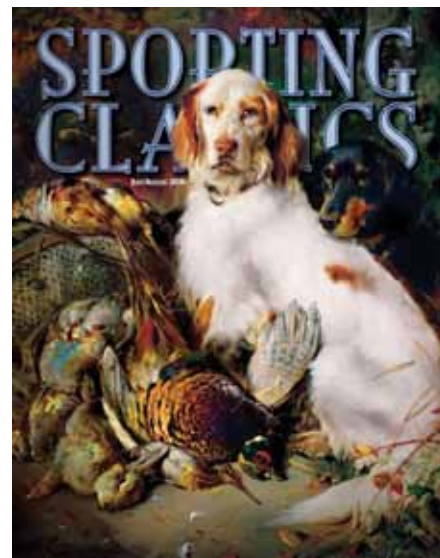
FERNANDINA BEACH, FL – Magazines are still the media source of choice for hunters and anglers, according to the June 2010 HunterSurvey.com and AnglerSurvey.com polls, which showed 44 percent of hunters and 33 percent of anglers use magazines most for information and entertainment.

The second most important media source for anglers are websites, with 25 percent indicating they use websites as a primary source of information. Television is still a mainstay for hunters with more than 15 percent reporting they rely most on television for information and entertainment.

Only 15 percent of hunters said they use websites the most to learn about hunting or to be entertained. Email was cited as a principal source of information by more than 5 percent of anglers and hunters while state wildlife agency websites were the most important media source for 4 percent of hunters and 3 percent of anglers.

Other sources of information used by a small percentage of hunters and anglers included books, newsletters, newspapers, social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc) and radio. However, 4 percent of hunters and more than 5 percent of anglers indicated they used all available media sources for learning and entertainment.

“With hunters and anglers using such a wide range of media



Forty-four percent of hunters and 33 percent of anglers choose magazines for information and entertainment.

sources for learning and entertainment, agencies, organizations and businesses should consider adding new media to their traditional outreach platforms to ensure their messages are getting out there. Hunters and anglers do not rely on just one source. Multiple information sources work together to help shape their interests and opinions.” said Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates.

Those who hunt, fish and target shoot are invited to participate in [www.huntersurvey.com](http://www.huntersurvey.com) and [www.anglersurvey.com](http://www.anglersurvey.com). By completing the survey, you will be entered in a monthly drawing for one of five \$100 gift certificates to the sporting goods retailer of your choice.

More information on the survey is available by emailing [Donna@southwickassociates.com](mailto:Donna@southwickassociates.com).



## Study Shows That Women Are Outpacing Men as New Hunters

SPRINGFIELD, MO – More women than men took up hunting last year, according to new net figures from the National Sporting Goods Association.

While total hunters in the U.S. decreased slightly (.05 percent) between 2008 and 2009, the number of female hunters increased by 5.4 percent, netting 163,000 new participants. Growth areas for women included muzzleloading (up 134.6 percent), bowhunting (up 30.7 percent) and hunting with firearms (up 3.5 percent).

Data also show women outpaced men among net newcomers to target shooting with a rifle, where female participation grew by 4.1 percent.

New hunters and shooters are cause for celebration because more participation helps with funding for conservation, according to officials with National Hunting and Fishing Day. Congress established NHF Day, set for Sept. 25, to recognize America’s sportsmen and women for their leading role in fish, wildlife and habitat conservation.

“New hunters, shooters and anglers are a good thing for



In 2009, participation in bowhunting surged by 30.7 percent among women over the 2008 tally.

everyone who loves the outdoors,” said Denise Wagner of Wonders of Wildlife museum in Springfield, MO, the official home of NHF Day. “Hunting and fishing license sales, combined with special taxes on firearms and ammunition, bows and arrows, and rods and reels generate about \$100,000 every 30 minutes, totaling more than \$1.75 billion per year, for conservation. When it comes to funding for wildlife and wild places, more is definitely better.”

The growth in new participation among women, perhaps counterintuitive to traditionalists, is no surprise to Steve Sanetti, president of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the trade association for the shooting, hunting and outdoor industry.

“Over the past several years, our industry has worked hard to help build this segment of our market,” Sanetti said. “We’ve developed shooting and hunting products especially for women, reached out with welcoming and instructional workshops for women, and encouraged existing hunters and shooters to introduce their spouses, daughters and other newcomers to shooting sports and outdoor lifestyles. I believe these efforts are paying off, which is a bright spot for our industry as well as for conservation.”

Also unsurprised at the increasing number of female hunters and shooters are the women Olympians of the USA Shooting Team, whose ever-increasing visibility has made them effective ambassadors, role models and recruiters of women to traditional outdoor sports.

“Shooting is one of the most fun and empowering things you can teach a young girl or a grown woman,” said Corey Cogdell, 23, a lifelong hunter and 2008 Olympic bronze medalist in trap shooting. “Most men are surprised to find out that I am an avid outdoors woman and are often intrigued to learn how they can get females in their own lives involved in hunting and shooting.”

Connie Smotek, 45, a two-time Olympic skeet shooter, bronze medalist in the 2009 World Cup, and avid bird and big-game hunter, added, “Shooting and hunting are activities which a woman can enjoy for a lifetime.”

Cogdell and Smotek are among the many USA Shooting Team members who parlayed early interests in hunting into international success in shooting sports—an opportunity that didn’t exist for women until comparatively recently. Women’s shooting wasn’t officially added as an Olympic sport until 1984 (although U.S. rifle shooter Margaret Murdock won a medal competing against men in the 1976 games). Since then, U.S. women have won 10 Olympic medals in shooting, which is a growing source of pride.

Four of those 10 medals were won in the past four Olympics by Kim Rhode, a double-trap and skeet shooter now among the most elite and enduring athletes in all of sports.

The entire USA Shooting Team is serving as honorary chair for NHF Day 2010.

Sponsors for NHF Day 2010 include Wonders of Wildlife, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Bass Pro Shops, Smith & Wesson, Sportsman Channel, Realtree, Cabela’s, GunBroker.com, Yamaha, Pope and Young Club and Izaak Walton League of America.

For more information about NHF Day, visit [www.nhfdays.org](http://www.nhfdays.org).

# TPWD Optimistic about Dove Season Prospects

**AUSTIN— TEXAS HUNTERS CAN ANTICIPATE GOOD NUMBERS OF DOVE AS AMPLE RAINFALL ACROSS MOST OF THE STATE** has set the stage for the upcoming Sept. 1 season opener, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Timely rainfall usually equates to above average dove production, and by all field accounts from TPWD wildlife biologists, this year is shaping up to produce a boom crop of birds.

"Above-average rainfall across most of the state has created ideal habitat conditions for doves," said Corey Mason, TPWD dove program leader. "I expect above-average production this year and hunt success should be high provided doves are not dispersed."

Mason explained that the abundant seed production, predominately sunflower and croton will help recently fledged birds to rapidly put on weight. But, quality range conditions could also cause doves to disperse as native food sources become readily available and make managed fields less attractive early in the season.

"What it means for us is we're going to have food available throughout the summer and early fall, body conditions will be better and all in all it's just a good thing," Mason pointed out. "There may be more surface water available which could distribute birds more in afternoon hunts. Those who focus more on limited water sources in the past may not see as much shooting as during dry years."

Mason said although birds may not be as concentrated this year, the traditional hotspots should remain active. "Those birds go to the traditional hotspots for a reason, so I wouldn't discount them," he said.

Texas dove season in the North and Central Dove Zones will run from Wednesday, Sept. 1 through Sunday, Oct. 24 and reopen Saturday, Dec. 25 through Sunday, Jan. 9, with a 15-bird daily bag and not more than two white-tipped doves.

The South Zone dove season will run Friday, Sept. 17 through Sunday, Oct. 31, reopening Saturday, Dec. 25 through Tuesday, Jan. 18 with a 15-bird daily bag and not more than two white-tipped doves.

The possession limit is twice the daily bag.

The Special White-winged Dove Area will open to white-winged dove afternoon-only (noon to sunset) hunting the first two full weekends in September running from Sept. 4-5 and 11-12 and reopen when the regular South Zone season begins on Friday, Sept. 17 through Sunday, Oct. 31 and again from Saturday, Dec. 25 through Friday, Jan. 14. The Special White-winged Dove Area season takes four of the allowable 70 days, so when the regular season opens, this area must close four days earlier than the rest of the South Zone. During the early two weekends, the daily bag limit is 15 birds, to include not more than four mourning doves and two white-tipped doves. Once the general season opens, the aggregate bag limit will be 15, with not more than two white-tipped doves.

Texas boasts fall dove populations in excess of 40 million birds and its 300,000 dove hunters harvest about 6 million birds annually or roughly 30 percent of all doves taken in the United States. Dove hunting also has a major economic impact, annually contributing more than \$300 million to the state economy.

Dove hunting provides an entry into the sport of hunting because it is relatively economical and accessible. Through its Public Hunting Program, TPWD offers affordable access to quality hunting experiences with the purchase of a \$48 Annual Public Hunting Permit.

This year, TPWD has leased nearly 50,000 acres of public dove hunting fields in 46 counties; more than 70 percent are located near major urban areas.

"Since the public dove lease program began in 1994, one of our top priorities has been to offer urban Texans affordable access to hunting within close proximity to home," said Linda Campbell, TPWD public hunting program director. "By setting up dove fields for youth and adult only, we hope families will take advantage of the opportunity to get outdoors and take part in our state's dove hunting tradition."

Hunters are reminded that in addition to a valid Texas hunting license, certification in the Harvest Information Program (HIP) is required. HIP certification is offered when you buy your license and involves responding to a few simple questions about your migratory game bird harvest during the previous season. Hunting licenses expire annually on Aug. 31 and licenses for the 2010-2011 year go on sale Aug. 15.

TPWD is also conducting ongoing dove banding research and asks hunters to please report leg bands recovered on harvested birds by calling 1-800-327-BAND or [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov). TPWD bands about 20,000 dove a year across the state.