

Our purpose is to document and publicize the values and conservation needs of horned lizards, to promote horned lizard conservation projects, and to assist with horned lizard management initiatives throughout their ranges.

Volume 16, Issue No. 3

NOVEMBER 2011

## Matador Wildlife Management Area

by *Lee Ann Linam*

Mule deer and Mississippi kites greeted HLCS members as they drove into the Matador Wildlife Management Area just north of Paducah on Sunday afternoon after having spent the morning at the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch. The Matador WMA is located in the central Rolling Plains of Cottle County, Texas. The 28,183-acre WMA was purchased by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1959 for the purposes of wildlife research, wildlife management, and public use. According to the TPWD webpage, habitat types include mesquite uplands, shinnery oak rangeland and gravelly hills consisting of red berry juniper and mesquite mix, and bottomland. Average annual rainfall is 22 inches; however, like the rest of Texas, the Matador was showing the effects of the drought during our visit.

Inside the simple refuge headquarters, area manager Chip Ruthven and a prairie kingsnake greeted the HLCS members. Chip, a 16-year veteran of TPWD, has a long history with horned lizard research and conservation in the state, first



*Don Connell overlooks some of the rolling plains of the Matador WMA. "Where are you horned lizards?" Photo by Abby Linam.*

being involved in much of the research work published on horned lizards at the Chaparral Wildlife Management Area (site of our Memorial Day survey in 2010), and now developing a strong herp research program at the Matador. He's also a great ambassador for horned lizards in Texas, being a gracious host to researchers, visitors, and members of the media at the Matador.

Chip described the data being collected on horned lizards and box turtles on the WMA. Over the course of Chip's seven and one-half years at the Matador, over 2600 horned lizards and nearly 500 box turtles have been marked. Much of the information is basic mark-recapture information leading to information on survival and growth rates; however, portions of the WMA are set up in experimental plots to test the effects of different burning and grazing programs on herps and other wildlife species. This data is then shared with landowners who want to manage for wildlife species.

Temperatures were still in the upper 90s and

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winds were high as we arrived at the Matador, so we had plenty of time to learn about the research programs and grab some dinner in nearby Childress as we waited for temperatures to moderate a bit. About 7:00 p.m. we finally headed into the field as a caravan with Chip leading the way to show us around the area. We enjoyed some great evening light on the rolling hills of the WMA, with sightings of mule and whitetail deer and wild turkey and managed to spot a couple of horned lizards along the roadside. Beth Moeller Bendik demonstrated that the lizard-catching skills



Beth Bendik shows the lizard she captured to Gary Freeman, Lee Ann Linam, Gordon Linam, and Euner Johnson. Clare Freeman and Don Connell search for lizards in the background. Photo by Abby Linam.



Close-up of a lizard in Beth Bendik's hand. Photo by Abby Linam.

she honed as a graduate student on the Chaparral WMA haven't diminished over time, as she caught both lizards!

We reconvened the next morning on the Matador to unexpectedly pleasant cool weather at 8:30 a.m. Though we split into three groups to cover more of the WMA, results were still a bit slow due to the cooler temperatures, and, after two hours, our tally for the morning was only five lizards. Chip offered to

stay in the field a bit longer for those who could stay and led us on a tour through the experimental management units. As the ground finally heated up, so did the lizard encounters, and it seemed that a horned lizard was showing up every  $\frac{1}{10}$  mile or so! The group had great fun helping Chip take length, weight, and marking data, and Nathan Bendik and Abby Linam had the chance to grab some great horned lizard photos.

Continued on page 4

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**HORNED  
LIZARD  
CONSERVATION SOCIETY**

Finally about noon we called it quits for the day, satisfied that horned lizards were indeed still doing well in the Rolling Plains of Cottle County.

Thanks again to Chip Ruthven for hosting HLCS throughout our visit and for his graciousness in sharing the horned lizards of Matador WMA with many visitors from around the world.

*Postscript* – Just after HLCS’s visit to the Matador, the area was hit with several lightning strikes, burning over 12,000 acres. Despite the drought and fire, the WMA still captured 216 horned lizards this year, including 143 new individuals.



Nate Bendik, Beth Bendik, and Chip Ruthven with one of the lizards captured on the Matador WMA. Photo by Abby Linam.



One of the lizards found in the experimental management area. Photo by Abby Linam.



One of the many Texas Horned Lizards found on the Matador Wildlife Management Area. Photo by Abby Linam.



Chip Ruthven, Nate Bendik, Beth Bendik, Clare Freeman, Jill Heatley, Gary Freeman, Lee Ann Linam, Ann Connell, and Don Connell talk over plans for the next day’s survey. Photo by Abby Linam.



**Please renew your annual HLCS membership!!!**  
**HLCS depends on its membership for its conservation and educational presence in the community.**

Categories for *annual* memberships include:

- Regular ..... \$25
- Student or Senior ..... \$10
- Family ..... \$25      Each additional family member ..... \$10
- Contributing ..... \$50
- Corporate ..... \$250

*Lifetime* membership ..... \$300

The HLCS welcomes contributions in any amount you wish to submit and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

# Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch Horned Lizard Survey

By Leslie Nossaman

On Saturday, March 28, starting in the late afternoon the survey began at the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch located between Sweetwater and Snyder (near Roby). The group assisted the Dallas Zoo with some ongoing horned lizard research. Many horned lizards were found, and were subsequently weighed, measured and had chips inserted. Searches and research continued on Sunday morning and wrapped up just before noon.



A Texas Horned lizard is being weighed and measured. Photo by Ann Connell.



A Texas Horned Lizard in camouflage. Can you see him?  
Photo by Ann Connell.



A Texas Horned lizard is getting a pit tag inserted. Photo by Ann Connell.



A beautiful Texas Horned Lizard enjoying getting his picture taken. Photo by Ann Connell.



A Texas Horned Lizard that is running away. Maybe he did not enjoy getting his picture taken after all. Photo by Ann Connell.



# Horned Lizard Research Grant 2012 Applications

The Horned Lizard Conservation Society is dedicated to protecting horned lizards by documenting and publicizing the values and conservation needs of horned lizards, promoting horned lizard conservation projects, and assisting with horned lizard management initiatives. Towards those ends, the HLCS periodically sponsors research that has direct conservation applications. To learn more about the society and past grants, go to <http://www.hornedlizards.org/>.

We will be offering two \$500 grants in 2012. These are in-

tended to encourage the participation of both researchers and non-academics in conservation. Preference in one will be given to people not associated with academic institutions; for the other, preference will be given to undergraduate or graduate students. For both, projects that have direct conservation implications, including public education, will receive a higher priority.

To apply, send a proposal detailing the goal of the study, the rationale for it including relevance to conservation of

horned lizards, and how your work would benefit from this opportunity. The proposal may not exceed 1000 words, excluding up to ten references. Also include a preliminary budget with any other funding sources available or received. In addition, send a resume or CV (up to 3 pages) and have a single letter of reference sent to Danny Martin. Submission by e-mail to [dannym77@lamar.colostate.edu](mailto:dannym77@lamar.colostate.edu) is greatly preferred. The deadline is December 16, 2011. The decision will be announced by January 20, 2012.



# Horned Lizard Translocation and Conservation

*By 2009 HLCS Grant Recipient  
– Vic Bogosian III*

The conservation practice of translocation involves moving a group of animals from one location to another. Usually, this is done when a population is occupying habitat that is at risk for some reason, be it development, disease, or poaching. Many common game species like deer, turkey, and black bear have been successfully reintroduced using translocations in the past century by state wildlife agencies. More recently, translocations have become a common project for reptiles and amphibians, but have typically been less successful than with birds and mammals.

During 2006-2009, researchers at Tinker Air Force Base (TAFB) and Southern Illinois University Carbondale studied the potential for translocation of a population of Texas horned lizards. Funded in part by the Horned Lizard Conservation Society, this project sought to use lizard locations on TAFB from previously studied animals to help build a habitat suitability model that would then be used to select ideal translocation sites based on animal's preferences.

This translocation project was desirable due to unavoidable habitat loss near a population of horned lizards that biologists have been tracking since 2003, and allowed managers

and researchers to investigate the potential of translocations of Texas horned lizards as a possible option when faced with loss of populations.

A total of approximately 4,000 data locations representing nearly 300 individual lizards over the course of eight years helped develop a model that suggested lizards primarily focused on habitat components like bare ground and native grass vegetation. Less important were more complex habitat features like prey biomass (ants) and thermal suitability (time within preferred temperature ranges). These models were intended to be applied to a pre-selected translocation site



Figure 1



Figure 2

before lizards were released, but changes in construction scheduling required translocation of lizards prior to model development.

During May – July 2008, 17 individual lizards were translocated and followed via radiotelemetry (Figure 1). Unfortunately these releases experienced high mortality and 100% of the released individuals were predated within two years of release (several of them within two weeks, see Figure 2). These results are somewhat consistent with reptile

and amphibian translocations, but these data do offer suggestions for future research and conservation attempts.

Lizards were released in what is called a ‘hard release’ – they were placed on the ground and allowed to move wherever they wished. In contrast, a ‘soft release’ requires animals to be held in a particular area for a period of time before they are allowed to wander unrestricted. Soft releases have been shown to be effective at increasing survival in some reptiles.

While this particular translocation was not successful and experienced high mortality, researchers continue to investigate its potential as a management tool for horned lizards at TAFB.

Current research is focusing on shorter-distance translocations (50-100 meters currently, as compared to > 1 km in 2008). Hopefully, this conservation tool will become an available option to assist in the management of Texas horned lizards.



## Word Scramble

Can you unscramble the words below? All the words can be found in this issue. The numbers after each word is at least one page on which the word can be found. Answers on page 11.

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. darzil (5) _____        | 9. dramasleans (9) _____    |
| 2. laqui (5) _____         | 10. chrareesa (3) _____     |
| 3. travonescion (1) _____  | 11. dreamotylerte (7) _____ |
| 4. dramato (1) _____       | 12. thibata (6) _____       |
| 5. thropolegiale (8) _____ | 13. yogholyitch (9) _____   |
| 6. sconnatrila (6) _____   | 14. knases (8) _____        |
| 7. pletire (8) _____       | 15. slammm (6) _____        |
| 8. ibaminaph (8) _____     |                             |

Puzzle by Fannie Messec



# Member Spotlight: David Wojnowski

By David Wojnowski

My first introduction to the Horned Lizard Conservation Society (HLCS) was during the Horned Lizard Working Group/ Joint Meeting with Southwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation and the Texas Herpetological Society in Austin, TX, June of 2008. But my interest in horned lizards started over 40 years ago. Reptiles and amphibians have entranced me as long as I can remember. You could almost say I was a born herper. During a family trip to Tucson to visit my grandparents from my home in Anaheim I caught my first horned lizard near Yuma, a Flat-tailed (*Phrynosoma mcallii*), at the young age of eight. After moving to Tucson the following year I became familiar with the Regal Horned Lizard (*P. solare*).

While growing up in Tucson my fascination with herps also grew. Back in the '70s Regals were very common. I can remember waking up one bright summer morning and deciding to see just how many Regals I could catch in one day. Back in 1971, there was a large vacant lot on the corner of Alvernon Way and Grant Rd., located just a short pedaling distance from my house. Heck, I could even collect horned lizards in the alleyways right in our neighborhood back then, but preferred to wander about the large vacant lot where I could also find Sonoran Gopher

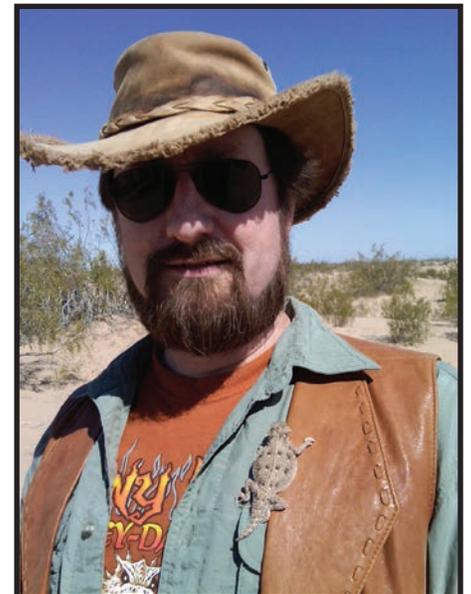


David holding a Texas Horned Lizard and a Round-tailed Horned Lizard. Photo was taken in Post, TX by Emily Henry, one of Gad Perry's graduate students at Texas Tech University.

Snakes (*Pituophis catenifer affinis*), Western Patch-nosed Snakes (*Salvadora hexalepis*), Desert Spiny Lizards (*Sceloporus magister*) just to name a few. That particular day I managed to find thirteen Regal Horned Lizards. I kept them all for a few days but quickly realized taking care of that many lizards was just not practical and I felt sorry for them all. I did figure out an ingenious way of feeding them, which turned out to be very successful. I would place several of the horned lizards in a birdcage (their large spiny heads prevented their escape) and, after removing the bottom of the cage, place them near an anthill allowing the ants to stroll in and the lizards to feed at will. I can still remember the warm summer mornings just watching the little guys lap up dozens of ants at a sitting. Eventually I returned all the Regals to the 'wild'. Northgate Shopping Center now covers the vacant lot where I

spent much of my youth. One will now find it is very difficult to locate a horned lizard within the Tucson city limits... "They paved paradise to put up a parking lot" (Mitchell, 1970).

Back in the '70s, during hikes just north of Tucson in the Catalina Mountains, I found my first Greater Short-horned Lizard (*P. hernandes*). Some 25 years later, while attending my 20 yr. High School Reunion in Tucson, I took my wife Brenda to visit Mount Lemmon, location of the southernmost ski destination in the continental United States. It was during the summer and as I got out of the car I nearly stepped on a Greater Short-horned Lizard warming itself in the parking lot. I was relieved that we did not run over it! I quickly snatched it up and showed it to my wife,



David is wearing a Temple, TX Horny Toad Harley Davidson T-shirt. You can just make it out under his vest. He has a Flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*) on his vest. Photo was taken by Danny Martin in May of 2011 in southeast California.

who had never seen a horned lizard before. While visiting Sabino Canyon later that same week, I had the pleasure of catching a Regal and sharing another species with my understanding wife.

When I was 24 years old I moved to North Carolina to pursue my degree in education. Prior to my move to NC, I had been taking courses at the University of Arizona while working full time at two pet stores, Tropical Gardens and then managing Odyssey Pets. I also ran my own aquarium cleaning business on the side, and on weekends worked as a SCUBA dive master for The Dive Shop. As you can see, I was not very focused on academia at the time. However, I learned a great deal about ichthyology and herpetology during those years. Working in the pet stores allowed me to learn about exotic herps and The Dive Shop trips to Mexico gave me the opportunity to explore our southern neighbor. Curiously, although I spent much of my surface intervals herping the coast of Baja, from San Carlos to Cabo San Lucas, and the mainland, from Puerto Penasco to Los Mochis, I never did find any horned lizards in Mexico. Something I hope to change in the near future! One of my dreams is to visit Oaxaca and surrounding environs, where I would hope to find the Bull Horned Lizard, a.k.a. the Mexican Horned Lizard (*P. taurus*), the Giant Horned Lizard (*P. asio*), and the Mexican Plateau Horned Lizard (*P. orbiculare*).

After receiving my B.S. in education from the UNC–Greensboro in 1987 I continued my quest for knowledge at NCSU where I got my master's in education in 2002. During this time I was focused on salamanders, writing a curriculum for Earth/Environmental science teachers in North Carolina. Following my time at NC State I was fortunate to work with rural teachers in Kenya while collecting data for my dissertation entitled, *Traditional and Scientific Conceptions of Snakes in Kenya: Alternative Perspectives for Teaching* and received my Ph.D. from Kent State University in 2008.



David with a Black Mamba in Uganda. Photo was taken in 2010 by Ekwaro Noah.



David is posing with Dr. Patrick Malonza, Head of the Herpetology Section of the National Museums of Kenya. P. Malonza is showing David the Pancake Tortoise. The guard is there in case of lions. Photo was taken in 2005 in the Kenyan Tsavo National Park.

Since joining HLCS I have assisted with the acquisition and subsequent display of Texas Horned Lizards (*P. cornutum*) at the El Paso Zoo, interviewed Texas Tech graduate students working with horned lizards in West Texas, assisted with surveys for Round-tailed Horned Lizards (*P. modestum*) in Colorado and biomonitor training workshops on Flat-tailed Horned Lizards (*P. mcallii*) for environmental consultants in southeastern California. Currently I am President Elect of HLCS and have enjoyed all the people I have met who advocate for this most interesting and unusual group of lizards.



# HLCS Informal Board Meeting in Conjunction with Memorial Day Field Trip May 29, 2011

by Beth Bendik

A brief board meeting of the Horned Lizard Conservation Society was held on May 29, 2011, at the Silver Star Café in Roby, TX. The meeting was held after completing a field survey at the nearby Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch before continuing on to the Matador Wildlife Management Area near Paducah, TX, for further surveys.

HLCS President Jill Heatley called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m. Those in attendance included board members Jill Heatley and Beth Bendik and HLCS members and guests Ann Connell, Don Connell, Clare S. Freeman, Gary Freeman, and Nathan Bendik.

## HLCS Meeting Minutes

The following items were discussed:

### 1. Executive Director

- HLCS is on the cusp of getting an executive director. An announcement was sent out in the last newsletter. No formal applications have been received and none have been asked for but we have received five informal statements of interest.

### Goals for the Executive Director

- provide continuity
- market HLCS better
- attend events (at least 2 per year)
- manage inventory and website
- main role is as business and marketing manager

The salary discussed for the first year is \$3000 - \$4000. After that the executive director's pay would be based on a portion of the income from the HLCS website and sales of merchandise.

The plan is to put out a detailed description

for formal applications by June 15th and put it out on the website and send emails to members. The deadline for applications will tentatively be mid-July. The board could then meet at the end of July to discuss the applications.

### 2. Billing Issues through the website

There have been issues with check-processing and with getting merchandise quickly. Maybe HLCS will go to all PayPal. This could be decided after the Executive Director is hired.

### 3. Problem with newsletter

Claire has a problem opening the e-newsletter. We may want to add "Please respond to \_\_\_\_\_ if you cannot open the emailed version" to the distribution emails.

We still have 57 people who cannot get the newsletter electronically. Beth is mailing newsletters to them.

### 4. The website has been updated with new products, and things are selling well.

### 5. Jill suggests putting a schedule of routine events on the website including the following:

- 2 Field trips – Memorial Day and Labor Day
  - 5 regularly planned outreach events
- The quarterly newsletter sometimes does not come out in time to announce these events, so having a standard schedule will help.

### 6. Jill suggests information should be sent to the master naturalist chapters and herpetological societies about the outreach events (Note: Ask Lee Ann about inviting others on field trips.) Maybe we should reserve spots. Perhaps limit it to the first 20 people to sign up/respond.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:30 pm.



# Horned Lizard Conservation Society Invites Applications for Executive Director

The HLCS is pleased to announce the creation of an executive director position. This position is intended to provide a more streamlined approach of daily management of HLCS business and a more user friendly interface between the public and HLCS.

This position will require a highly motivated, outgoing individual familiar with multiple media communication, management as well as grant administration, and structure and administration of nonprofit NGOs. Experience in media, communication, web site design, public education, governmental relations and advertising are welcome additions to the applicants portfolio. In addition, a familiarity with horned lizard (*Phrynosoma spp.*) biology, history, and culture is highly desirable. Additionally, this individual must be able to schedule, attend, and participate in organizing multiple HLCS meetings per year and facilitate newsletter publications and distribution.

Initially, this position will be given a three year tenure with annual review by the board to allow for individual input into the powers and responsibilities of the executive director. Application and inquiries will be accepted until January 1, 2012 or until a suitable candidate is determined. Job description and application details follow.

## Job Description

Salary: \$2,500 per annum plus \$250 per organized activity (up to 4/year)

This is a three year position, with annual renewal by the board. After three years, the position will be converted to a commission basis: 25% of the profit of HLCS will be given as salary. HLCS generally has a biennial meeting, two field surveys each year, at least one board meeting and two outreach events yearly, and maintains a website and quarterly newsletter.

## Responsibilities:

- Respond to all requests for information. Pass along those requests to appropriate experts when needed.
- Secure a contract to upgrade the HLCS website, to include web marketing of goods (existing HLCS funds will be used to pay for the contract). Update and maintain the website once it is upgraded.
- Maintain and distribute all current HLCS goods and publications, including the merchandise brochure.
- Identify and secure opportunities for HLCS member recruitment.
- Identify and secure other contract services needed by HLCS, such as distribution of the newsletter.
- Write a column for each newsletter and attend and organize board meetings.
- Attend and organize HLCS events for outreach such as field surveys and local festivals

## To apply:

Please send a resume and cover letter to the HLCS secretary: Beth Bendik at [bethmoellerbendik@yahoo.com](mailto:bethmoellerbendik@yahoo.com). Include your vision for the HLCS, membership status, and previous experience in website management, NGO promotions and marketing. Deadline for applications is January 1, 2012.



1. lizard
2. quail
3. conservation
4. matador
5. herpetological
6. translocation
7. reptile
8. amphibian
9. salamanders
10. research
11. radiotelemetry
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14. snakes
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