

For Immediate Release
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Axis Deer Project Wraps Up

Fredericksburg, Texas – Hill Country Alliance, Texas Tech University’s Department of Natural Resources Management, Bandera River Authority and Groundwater District, and partners are grateful to the land stewards that supported the Axis Deer Control Project. Tissue samples will be used to understand the ecology and population dynamics of free-range Axis deer in the Hill Country.

Axis deer are an exotic species that were introduced from India to the Texas Hill Country in the 1930s. Since their introduction, Axis deer have proliferated, adversely impacting agricultural production, native wildlife, and creek-side habitat in several Hill Country river basins.

Matthew Buchholz, a Ph.D. Student at Texas Tech University’s Department of Natural Resources Management, is studying the exotic deer and has found reports of free-ranging populations of Axis deer in more than 30 counties across Central Texas.

Based on field data of life expectancy, fertility, and fawn survival rates, Buchholz estimates that a single Axis doe could raise up to 12 fawns to adulthood. “Each female fawn has the same potential, allowing for the Axis deer population to increase substantially over a short time span,” he notes.

Tissue samples provided by hunters will be used to isolate DNA from the individual, which in turn will be used to assess population structure and potential susceptibility to disease. To learn more about Buchholz’s research, contact him at Matthew.Buchholz@ttu.edu.

The winners of this year’s prize drawing have all been notified. Thanks to the participating hunters as well as to Plateau Land & Wildlife Management, Boos Quality Deer Processing, Hohmann General Store, Gillespie County Soil & Water Conservation District, Old 300 BBQ, and Andalusia Whiskey for donating prizes.

The goals of the Axis Deer Control Project are to raise awareness about the impacts of free-ranging Axis deer, support research that will improve management, and recognize land stewards for their efforts to control this exotic deer.

Project collaborators include the Hill Country Alliance, Texas Tech University’s Department of Natural Resources Management, Gillespie and Blanco County AgriLife Extension Offices, Texas

Parks & Wildlife Department, Llano River Watershed Alliance, Bandera County River Authority and Groundwater District, and Cibolo Center for Conservation.

The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to raise public awareness and build community support around the need to preserve the natural resources and heritage of the Central Texas Hill Country. Visit us at www.hillcountryalliance.org.

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