Ernesto Garcia-Ortega, M.S. Thesis Candidate

My name is Ernesto Garcia-Ortega and I am from Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mx. Since I was child, I developed an interest and love for outdoor activities, spending most of my vacations working cattle at my grandfather's ranch and enjoying the beauty of nature. I did my B.S in Environmental and Safety Engineering at the Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas, Tamaulipas, Mexico in 2013. While I was a student there, I worked as a vegetation field technician for the Centro de Proyectos Estrategicos para el Desarrollo Sustentable (CEPRODES). After having worked as a volunteer, I was granted the opportunity to be a part of the Desert Scaled Quail Project at the Borderlands Research Institute in July 2013, and currently I am working as a Graduate Student Research Assistant to get my M.S. degree in Range and Wildlife Management under the guidance of Dr. Ryan Luna.

Thesis Project: Effects of Weather Conditions on a Scaled Quail Population During the Nesting Season in the Trans-Pecos Region

In the last decades, scaled quail (*Callipepla squamata*) populations have experienced severe declines in numbers through the Trans-Pecos region, as well as habitat disturbances, due to anthropogenic factors. Though not considered as important as bobwhites (*Colinus virginianus*), scaled quail is the next most common quail and also an upland game bird of the highest degree. The Trans-Pecos region is well known for its extreme weather conditions, with an annual precipitation ranging from 7 inches in the lower elevations to 18 inches in the higher elevations of the Davis Mountains. Peak rainfalls occur during July and August, often as torrential thunderstorms. However, despite knowing meteorological conditions of this eco-region, little has been investigated about its effects on nesting season success and movements. Using a micro-weather station and mortality-sensitive VHF collars, we are going to be able to infer about the effects of weather on scaled quail before, during and after the nesting season.

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