

# Ronald Jankowiak, M.S. Thesis Candidate

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My name is Ronald Jankowiak and I am from the quaint little community of Chappell Hill, Texas. I was exposed to the great outdoors and it's wildlife at a very early age. My admiration for all things wild was sparked from the many fishing adventures my Grandpa and I enjoyed together on the Brazos River and from the hunting outings I shared with my Dad as a child. I attended Texas A&M University-Kingsville and graduated in 2011 with a B.S. in Range and Wildlife Management. While at TAMUK I worked for the world-renowned Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute as an undergraduate research technician working with Northern Bobwhite Quail. Upon graduating I worked several jobs, including a technician at a deer breeding facility, and most recently as an Environmental Specialist for SWCA Environmental Consultants out of Houston, TX. While at SWCA, I traveled the southeastern U.S. conducting preliminary environmental surveys, such as habitat assessments and endangered species surveys for petroleum companies. In the latter part of the summer of 2013 I contemplated returning to school to continue my collegiate career and

broaden my horizons in wildlife management/biology. After much consideration and persistence I was presented with the opportunity to pursue my M.S. in Range and Wildlife Management at Sul Ross State University with the Borderlands Research Institute working for the Desert Quail Program.

## **Thesis Project: Comparative Ecology of Scaled and Gambel's Quail in the Trans-Pecos eco-region of Texas**

Scaled Quail (*Callipepla squamata*) and Gambel's Quail (*Callipepla gambelii*) both inhabit the desert landscapes of far West Texas, which is encompassed by the vast expansions of the Chihuahuan Desert. The habitat preferences of these two upland gamebird species differ slightly from one to the other. Scaled quail, also known as Blue Quail, desire more open, sparsely-vegetated areas such as creosote flats, whereas Gambel's quail typically occupy heavily-vegetated riparian areas such as draws, arroyos, streams and creeks. But, periodically, their home ranges do overlap and they frequent the same areas. My main objective is to determine chief variations and comparisons of the two species regarding habitat selection, nesting site preferences, clutch size, slope and aspect preferences, movements, recruitment, survivability, and other ecological/biological aspects. These goals will be attained by placing radio transmitters on the quail and tracking them via radio telemetry. Vegetation transects will also be conducted to determine the abundance and availability of suitable habitat. I will also be carrying out a camera study to monitor nest predation and the main culprits in the depredation of these nests/eggs. Also, I plan to incorporate a comparative study on nesting success between juvenile/first year hens and adult/mature hens by observing nesting site selection, clutch size and brood survival.

