



MAYA RESSLER

MS Thesis Candidate
Game Bird, Desert Quail
Grapevine, TX

STUDENT PROFILE

Maya grew up immersed in the outdoors. Through her time spent hiking, camping, and traveling, she built an incredible respect for conservation and wildlife. She was drawn to the West Texas high deserts after she backpacked the Chisos Mountains at 16 years old. After that, she was hooked on the conservation of the natural world. Maya attended Texas State University to study wildlife biology. During the summer of her junior year, she was given the opportunity to work as a summer intern at Davis Mountains State Park. There she learned more about the unique desert ecology and the animals who inhabit it. After completing her B.S. in Wildlife Biology in 2020, she moved to Alpine and is now pursuing her Master's degree at Sul Ross State University studying Montezuma Quail under Dr. Ryan Luna.

PROJECT PROFILE

Montezuma quail (*Cyrtonyx montezumae*) occur in the southwestern United States and Mexico. Montezuma quail are a cryptic species, staying hidden within pine-oak woodland habitats. Texas Parks and Wildlife has classified them as a game bird with no open season in Texas. In 2003, it was proposed to have an open hunting season for Montezuma quail in Texas, but was withdrawn due to a lack of scientific data. Although our understanding of Montezuma quail ecology and management have increased, more information about their populations is needed. Maya's objectives are to obtain a rough population estimate in Texas through various models which will incorporate data from transects, detection probabilities through capture and satellite telemetry, and habitat. Ideally this model will result in a suitable method for surveying Montezuma quail.

