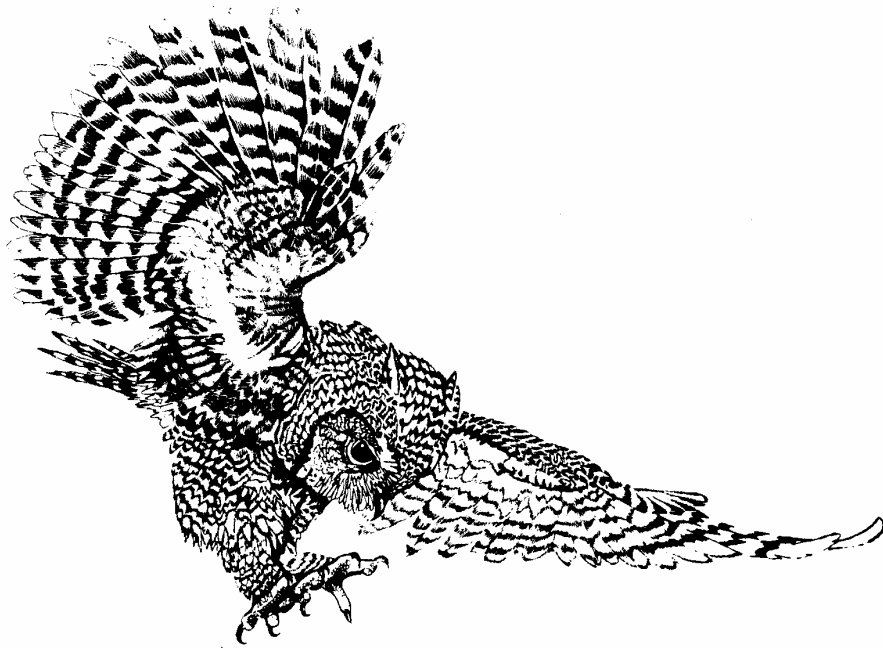


APPENDICES

STANDARD WILDLIFE HABITAT AND POPULATION MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

For the

SOUTH TEXAS PLAINS
ECOLOGICAL REGION



Appendix A

General Habitat Management Considerations, Recommendations, and Intensity Levels

Fundamental requirements which must be considered when managing wildlife habitat include food, cover, water and the proper distribution of these elements.

Wildlife and habitat management should be directed at maintaining a productive and healthy ecosystem. The ecosystem consists of the plant and animal communities found in an area along with soil, air, water and sunlight. All management activities should be aimed at conserving and improving the quantity and quality of soils, water and vegetation.

Managing for plant diversity is essential. A diverse habitat has a good mixture of various species of grasses, forbs (weeds), and browse (woody) plants. Many of these plants will be at various stages of growth, which adds another element of diversity. The diversity of vegetation increases the availability of food and cover for wildlife species. A greater diversity of plants results in more food being made available during different periods of the year. The volume and diversity of plants protects the soil from erosion. Also, the decomposition of vegetation helps restore needed minerals to the soil to sustain plant life. Vegetation improves the water cycle by increasing water infiltration into the soil and reducing surface runoff.

An ecologically based habitat management program serves to improve water cycling, mineral cycling, and energy flow and manipulate plant succession. These processes enhance vegetative quantity, quality and diversity. A greater diversity of all life forms, including microorganisms, insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals may be achieved under sound management. The land's long term health is improved and conserved for future generations to utilize as a source of income, recreation and for aesthetic enjoyment.

Plant communities with a diversity of grasses and native broad-leaved weeds (called forbs) are more productive than those comprised primarily of grasses. The climax plant community of most rangelands is comprised primarily of perennial grasses with a relatively low forb component. While this may be suitable for livestock and some grassland wildlife, most species are dependent on the seeds and foliage of forbs. Periodic disturbances such as fire, soil disturbance, livestock grazing, and mowing can set back plant succession and maintain a diverse plant community, simulating conditions under which plants and animals evolved within ecosystems in Texas.

Below is an example of a plan format that many landowners in the South Texas Plains may find applicable to their property, depending on their particular goals and objectives. A fill-in-the-blank plan following this format is attached in Appendix U. This is presented to help landowners develop a Wildlife and Habitat Management Plan. To meet the requirements of the wildlife management tax valuation, a landowner must annually implement and complete at least one management ACTIVITY from at least three of the

seven wildlife management PRACTICES (i.e. Habitat Control, Erosion Control, Predator Control, Providing Supplemental Supplies of Water, Providing Supplemental Supplies of Food, Providing Shelter, and Making Census Counts to Determine Population). Again, a complete plan will likely include more than three activities, and may include several practices under each activity.

It is important for the landowner to be able to document the wildlife management activities that have taken place during the tax year. Receipts, photographs, and maps are some of the types of documentation a landowner might want to consider using for this purpose. If requested to do so by the county, the landowner may have to file an annual report, including documentation, on management activities undertaken during the year. The required fill-in-the-blank report form is attached in **Appendix U**.

Wildlife and Habitat Management Plan

General Information

Tract Name: _____ County: _____

Owner: _____ Manager: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

Phone: _____ Phone: _____

Individual Preparing the Plan: _____

Date: _____

Is property leased for hunting? Yes No
Consultation is with: Owner Lessee Manager

Location of Property: Distance and direction from nearest town

Is acreage under high fence? Yes No

Acreage:

Cropland:

Native Grass Pasture:

Bottomland Woods:

Ponds/Lakes:

Non-native Pasture:

Upland Woods:

Wetlands(optional):

Other(specify):

Total Acres:

Current Habitat Description:

Describe vegetation association or type (e.g.; Mesquite-Granjeno, Cenizo-Blackbrush, Mesquite-Lotebush Elm-Hackberry; Crops; Native or Introduced Grasses, etc.). State dominant plants occurring and/or crops grown on the property. The description can include the soil types and vegetation associated with the various soil types. Describe livestock and wildlife water sources (eg. permanent or seasonal streams, springs, stock tanks, water troughs) that are present. Documentation may include any SCS (now NRCS), TPWD, or other plan, map or aerial photo that may exist for the tract to identify soils, vegetation, and water sources. The plant list should include browse plants utilized by deer, if deer management is a goal (see Appendix F). Also, state the degree of use on key browse plants utilized by livestock and deer.

Past History of Land Use and Wildlife:

Describe past land use practices that have been implemented such as prescribed burns, range or pasture reseeding, brush management, etc. Describe past history of cropping, livestock, and wildlife management (census, harvest, etc.). Present other biological information such as the presence of unique cover types, turkey roosts, feral hogs or other exotic big game that compete with native wildlife, et cetera.

Goals and Objectives:

A discussion and outline of landowner (also family if desired) goals and objectives for the property is necessary to define direction and to realistically assess the set of activities and practices that should be incorporated to integrate wildlife and habitat enhancement.

(Select one or more to guide the wildlife and habitat planning process)

1. Improve habitat for native game species (as designated in the Texas Hunting Guide.)
2. Improve habitat for native nongame species (those species not listed as game species, e.g. songbirds).
3. Manage for habitat and wildlife diversity.

4. Restore, maintain or improve native habitats for wildlife diversity.

5. Generate revenue from native wildlife resources.

6. Improve habitat for rare native species.

7. Protect sensitive habitats or critical species.

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

