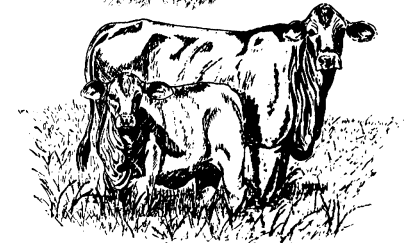
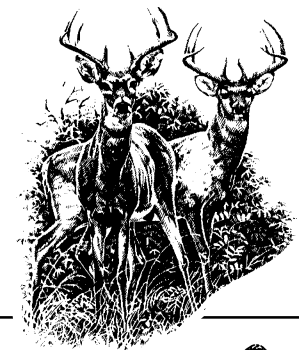


Integrating Deer and Cattle Management in the Post Oak Savannah



by David W. Rideout, Wildlife Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife

1. Do not try to carry more cattle than the land can support over the long term. Graze native pastures on a rotating basis wherever possible, resting pastures for at least as long they are grazed. Consider using stocker operation from March through August instead of continuous cow/calf operation.
2. Fence off or exclude wooded areas from cattle wherever possible from mid August through February, especially bottomlands to prevent competition with deer for browse. Include in fenced-off areas, one or more acres of native pasture to provide protected fawn nursery areas, preventing cattle disturbance and keeping fawns out of sight of predators.
3. Prescribe burn, from October through February or until green-up begins, the undergrowth of 15-20% of upland woods. Burn each tract about every 5-6 years to promote new vegetative growth. Do not burn bottomland hardwoods. Prescribe burn about one-third of native pastures/openings every year during late summer, burning each site about every three years to control woody growth and encourage new growth of grasses, weeds, and wildflowers. Keep open area burns under 40 acres.
4. Overseed existing coastal bermuda and native pastures with yuchi arrowleaf clover and ryegrass to benefit cattle and deer.
5. Minimize use of herbicides in pastures. Mowing or spot treatment of undesirable weeds with 2-4D (1 pt./acre) is preferred over broadcast spraying.
6. In May, plant 1-5% of acreage in summer supplemental food plots fenced-off/excluded from cattle. Plots should be long and narrow, and at least five acres due to usually heavy use by deer. Bottomland plots, not subjected to standing water, are more productive. A combination of iron and clay cowpeas, alyce clover or soybeans will provide 20% protein from June through September. Lime and fertilize as soil tests recommend.
7. In October, plant 1-5% of acreage in winter supplemental food plots, fenced-off/excluded from cattle. Plots should be 1-10 acres, long and narrow, and limed and fertilized as soil tests recommend. A combination of oats, elbon rye, and ryegrass plus plots with yuchi arrowleaf clover and ryegrass will provide 15-20% protein from November through May.
8. To permit mobility of deer, the bottom wire of fences should be at least 18 inches from the ground and top and second wire should be at least 12 inches apart. All hog wire should be removed.
9. Control feral (wild) hogs by shooting or trapping whenever possible. Winter months are most effective to control these direct competitors of deer.
10. Do not try to carry more deer than the land can support over the long term. Generally, one deer/10 acres in bottomland and one deer/25 acres in upland is the recommended carrying capacity in the Post Oak Savannah, depending on cattle stocking rates. Higher populations can be maintained under intensive habitat and population management. For quality bucks, harvest no more than 20% of total antlered bucks, allowing bucks to reach 4¹/₂ years of age or more to develop heavy beamed antlers with a wide spread. For maximum use, harvest no more than 50% of bucks each year. Develop buck and antlerless deer harvest quotas by observing vegetation use and from results of August and September spotlight and daytime deer counts, not by the number of hunters hunting the property!

**Combine adjoining landowner tracts to develop a Landowner Wildlife Management Association. A minimum of 3,500 acres is usually required to begin effective deer management.

Some Important White-tailed Deer Food Plants in the Post Oak Savannah

(Provide leaves, stems, buds, fruit, and/or soft/hard mast.)

TREES

hackberry
sassafras
farkleberry
hawthorn
red maple
persimmon
dogwoods
box elder
Hercules-club
live oak
white oak
red oak
post oak
water oak
willow oak
bluejack oak
blackjack oak
yaupon
possum-haw
cedar elm
winged elm
Osage orange
bumelia

SHRUBS

American beautyberry
American elderberry

smooth sumac
fragrant sumac
flameleaf sumac
coralberry
plums

VINES

greenbriers
rattan-vine
Carolina jessamine
honeysuckles
post oak grape
muscadine grape
mustang grape
Virginia creeper
blackberries
dewberries
poison oak/ivy
wild beans

FORBS

(Weeds/Wildflowers)
spiderwort
sunflowers
tick clovers
cutleaf primrose
chickweed
three-seeded mercury

ragweeds
woolly-white
vetches
erect dayflower
bur clover
sweet clovers
wood sorrel
brown-eyed Susan
smartweeds
wine-cup
lespedezas
beggar-ticks
partridge pea
sensitive brier

CULTIVATED CROPS

(Summer)

forage cowpeas
alyce clover
joint vetch
soybeans

(Winter)

elbon rye
oats
wheat
yuchi arrowleaf clover
ryegrass
Austrian winterpeas

NOTE: The degree of use by deer of different plant species often varies in different localities, depending on the amount of deer and livestock present, soil types, new growth versus old growth, and the availability of other plants.



4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744
1-800-792-1112
www.tpwd.state.tx.us