



Figure 2. Location of the ecologically significant Nueces River Segment (TNRCC segment 2103) upstream of Lake Corpus Christi (Scale 0.26": 1 mile; Base map source: TxDOT county files⁶).

Nueces River (upstream of Lake Corpus Christi)

This segment of the Nueces River (TNRCC stream segment 2103) begins at the US 59 bridge east of George West, Texas, and runs downstream for about 12 miles to the headwaters of Lake Corpus Christi (Fig. 2). The ecological significance of this segment is based upon the following criteria:

1. Biological function- The Nueces River constitutes the southern limit of the range of a number of freshwater fishes⁴. The forested riparian habitats along this segment (dominated by sugarberry/hackberry, cedar elm, ash, and black willow⁴) provide important wildlife habitat for resident and migrating birds as well as a variety of other animals (See Figs 3, 4, & 5).
2. Hydrologic function - The riparian forest on the floodplain performs a host of important hydrologic functions such as: downstream flood control and mitigation of storm damage; regulation of baseflows and protection of fisheries habitat; protection of public and private water supplies through pollution filtration; and regulation and protection of groundwater and baseflows in the river.
3. Riparian conservation areas - None identified.
4. High water quality/exceptional aquatic life/high aesthetic value - High aesthetic and economic value for outdoor recreation associated with fishing, boating and homesites on this segment and the headwaters of Lake Corpus Christi.
5. Threatened (T) or endangered (E) species/unique communities - The following rare species associated with aquatic or riparian habitats occur in or along this segment: wood stork (St.T), interior least tern (Fed.&St. E), and indigo snake (St. T)⁹. One of only four known remaining populations of the endemic golden orb mussel^{2,3}.



Figure 3. Extensive forested riparian habitat along the Nueces River near George West, Texas. Source: George West DOQ; Jan. 14, 1995; 1m, CIR.⁸



Figure 4 Nueces River at US 59 bridge near George West, Texas.



Figure 5 Nueces River near FM 799 upstream of Lake Corpus Christi, Texas.