

Wildlife Management Planning Guidelines for the South Texas Plains Ecoregion

Habitat Control		
Practices	Required Intensity	Description
Grazing Management	The planned manipulation of livestock numbers and grazing intensities to increase food, cover, or improve structure in the habitat of selected species.	The planned manipulation of livestock numbers and grazing intensities to increase food, cover, or improve structure in the habitat of selected species.
Prescribed Burning	At least 3% of total acreage should be burned annually.	The planned application of fire to enhance habitat and plant diversity, increase food, manipulates cover, or improves structure in the habitat of selected species.
Range Enhancement (Range Reseeding)	A documented plan to affect a pre-determined area, with annual activities affecting no less than 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or at least 10% annually, whichever is smaller, until the project is completed.	Active and ongoing work to establish native herbaceous plants (grasses and forbs) that provide food and cover for wildlife or erosion control benefits.
Brush Management	A documented plan to affect a pre-determined area, with annual activities affecting no less than 10% of the area designated in the plan or 10 acres, whichever is smaller, until the project is completed. Can also include the planting of a minimum of 150 native tree and shrub species per acre per year.	The removal or establishment of woody plants in a manner that will enhance the habitat of target wildlife species.
Riparian Management and Enhancement	At least one Riparian Management and Enhancement project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years to qualify.	Active and ongoing work to protect the vegetation and soils in riparian areas from degradation.
Wetland Enhancement	Construction and maintenance of at least one new project every 10 years.	Active and ongoing work to provide seasonal or permanent water for roosting, feeding, or nesting habitat for wetland wildlife.
Habitat Protection for Species of Concern	Implementation of at least one new project every 10 years.	Active and ongoing work to protect and manage the land, or a portion of the land, to provide habitat for an endangered, threatened, or rare species.
Prescribed Control of Exotic, Feral, or Native Wildlife Species	A documented plan to control populations of exotics, feral animals, and wildlife. The removal or control of exotic vegetation or the conversion of tame grass pastures must affect at least 10% of the area designated in the plan, or 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller.	The use of legal means to control the number of grazing and browsing animals, native wildlife, exotics, and feral species.
Wildlife Restoration	A detailed plan outlining restoration activities to be undertaken and demonstrable progress made toward achieving that plan.	Active and ongoing work to restore or enhance the habitat of target species as well as reintroduction and population management of TPWD-approved native species.

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Erosion Control		
Practice	Required Intensity	Description
Pond Construction and Major Repair	At least one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years to qualify.	Construction or major repair of a permanent water pond for the purpose of preventing, stopping, or controlling erosion as part of an approved NRCS erosion control structure.
Gully Shaping	A minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years to qualify.	Reducing erosion rates on severely eroded areas by smoothing with top soil to acceptable grades and reestablishing vegetation in a manner conducive to wildlife management.
Streamside, Pond, and Wetland Revegetation	At least one project must be completed and maintained every 5 years affecting at least 5 acres per project.	Re-vegetating areas along creeks, streams, ponds, and wetlands to reduce erosion and sedimentation, stabilize stream banks, improve plant diversity, and improve wildlife value of sensitive areas.
Plant Establishment on Critical Areas	A minimum of 150 seedlings per acre must be planted annually on 10 acres or a minimum of 10%, whichever is smaller, of the total designated area treated annually.	The establishment of native woody or herbaceous vegetation in areas subject to erosion.
Dike / Levee Construction / Management	At least one project must be completed and maintained every 10 years.	Active and ongoing work to establish/maintain wetlands or slow runoff to control or prevent erosion and to provide habitat for wetland-dependent wildlife.
Establish Water Diversion	At least one project must be completed and maintained every 10 years.	Installation of water diversion systems that will protect erodible soils and divert water into wetlands to provide habitat for resident and migratory water birds and wetland-dependent species.

Predator Control		
Practice	Required Intensity	Description
Predator Management	A predator control plan prepared or approved by a competent professional which includes the list, duration, and intensity of methods to remove the target species and documentation showing the number of animals taken in accordance with the plan.	Active and ongoing work to manage predator populations to increase survival of target species.
Imported Red Fire Ant Control	Proper treatment of at least 10 acres or 10% of infested area per year, whichever is greater.	Active and ongoing work to restrict the spread of imported fire ants.
Control Cow Birds	Removal of at least 30 cowbirds annually is required to qualify.	Active work to reduce populations of cowbirds.
Grackle / Starling / House Sparrow Control	Removal of at least 30 grackles/starlings/house sparrows annually is required to qualify.	Active work to reduce populations of these birds.

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Providing Supplemental Water		
Practice	Required Intensity	Description
Marsh / Wetland Restoration or Development	A minimum requirement of one marsh/wetland restored or developed per 10 years. Or annual water management of project or existing wetland qualifies.	Active and ongoing work to provide supplemental water in the form of shallow wetlands for wetland dependent wildlife.
Well / Trough / Windmill Overflow/Other (Roof Rainwater Harvesting) Wildlife Watering Facilities	A minimum of one project per 10 years must be completed to qualify. Consistent water management for wildlife at sites qualifies.	Designing and implementing water systems that provide supplemental water for wildlife and provide habitat for wetland plants.
Spring Development and/or Enhancement	A minimum of one project per 10 years must be completed to qualify. Existing or restored springs consistently managed to prevent degradation qualifies.	Active and ongoing work designed to protect the immediate area surrounding a spring.

Providing Supplemental Food		
Practice	Required Intensity	Description
Grazing Management	The planned manipulation of livestock numbers and grazing intensities to increase food, cover, or improve structure in the habitat of selected species.	The planned manipulation of livestock numbers and grazing intensities to increase food, cover, or improve structure in the habitat of selected species.
Prescribed Burning	At least 3% of total acreage should be burned annually to qualify.	The planned application of fire to enhance habitat and plant diversity, increase food, manipulates cover, or improves structure in the habitat of selected species.
Range Enhancement (Range Reseeding)	A documented plan to affect a pre-determined area, with annual activities affecting no less than 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or at least 10% annually, whichever is smaller, until the project is completed.	Active and ongoing work to establish native herbaceous plants (grasses and forbs) that provide food and cover for wildlife or erosion control benefits.
Food Plots	A minimum of 1% of the acreage should be planted in both winter and summer food plots.	The establishment of locally adapted annual (spring and fall) or perennial forages on suitable soils to provide suitable supplemental food and cover for target species during critical periods of the year. (Generally, livestock must be excluded from small food plots.)
Feeders and Mineral Supplementation	A minimum of one free-choice feeder per 320 acres in use during the recommended time period, with a minimum of 16% crude protein feed, required to qualify.	Dispensing supplemental foods from artificial devices to meet the dietary requirements of selected wildlife species during critical periods of the year.
Managing Tame Pasture, Old Fields and Croplands	A minimum of 5 percent of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.	Active and ongoing work to establish supplemental sources of food for wildlife in pastures, pipeline easements, or range land.
Transition Management of Tame Grass Monocultures	A minimum of 25 percent of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.	The annual over seeding of improved grass pastures with locally adapted legumes to increase the plant diversity, provide supplemental wildlife foods, and gradually convert the tame pastures to native vegetation as per wildlife and habitat plan.

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Providing Supplemental Shelter		
Practice	Required Intensity	Description
Nest Boxes, Bat Boxes	Song Bird Nest Box: 1 per 5 acres. Bat House: 1 per 10 acres. Purple Martin House: 1 per 10 acres, 8 cavities per site. Owl Nest Box: 1 per 10 acres. Duck Nest Box: 1 per 8 acres. Woodpecker Nest Box: 1 per 10 acres.	The installation and maintenance of artificial boxes or cavities to provide nesting or denning habitat for selected species in an area with an identifiable limiting factor on such habitats.
Brush Piles and Slash Retention	A minimum of 3 percent of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.	The planned placement and/or retention of brush piles to provide additional wildlife cover in habitats where cover is a limiting factor for the selected species. This practice also includes slash retention or leaving dead brush on the ground where it was cut for the purpose of providing shelter for wildlife or seedlings of desirable plant species.
Fence Line Management	A minimum length of 100 yards of Fence Line Management per 1/4 mile of fence is required annually to qualify.	Maintaining, establishing, or allowing the establishment of trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses on fence lines to provide wildlife food and cover a minimum of 30 yards wide.
Hay Meadow, Pasture and Cropland Management for Wildlife	Annually mow/shred 1/3 of open areas per year, preferably in strips or mosaic types of patterns, to create "edge" and structural diversity.	Mowing/shredding of selected portions of open land to create "edge" and provide structural diversity.
Half Cutting Trees and Shrubs	A minimum of one clump of trees/shrubs per 50 yards on at least 10% of acreage or 10 acres, whichever is smaller, annually to qualify.	Partially cutting branches of a live tree or shrub to encourage horizontal, living cover near the ground, providing supplemental cover in habitats where cover is lacking.
Woody Plant / Shrub Establishment	A minimum of 500 seedlings annually or 4 rows in a 120' wide x a ¼ mile length.	Planting and protecting native seedlings to establish wind rows and shrub thickets, or to restore wooded habitats within former croplands, tame pastures, or CRP land.
Natural Cavity / Snag Development	A minimum of 5 snags per acre, on 5% of the total acreage, must be retained / created annually to qualify.	Active and ongoing work to retain and create snags for cavity dwelling species.

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Census		
Practice	Required Intensity	Description
Spotlight Counts	A minimum of three counts, or a minimum of 15 surveyed miles, must be completed annually.	Counting animals at night along a predetermined route using a spotlight.
Aerial Counts	Documentation of counts made following acceptable methodology and performed by a trained individual on an annual basis.	Use of aircraft to count animals.
Daylight Deer Herd / Wildlife Composition Counts / Photo	Documentation of counts conducted on standardized transects along 5-mile minimum lines and run at least 3 times (if shorter lines are used, a total of at least 15 miles must be surveyed), or through other standardized methodology to obtain at least 100 observations. On smaller tracts, at least five separate, two hour counts during early morning or late afternoon from deer stands (blinds) may be used.	Counts used to census deer in daylight hours to enhance information of sex/age structure as well as determine annual trends in populations through dove, quail, and turkey sightings.
Harvest Data Collection / Record Keeping	Documentation of information gathered on an ongoing basis.	Ongoing collection of important information about age, weight, sex, etc. from harvested animals.
Browse Utilization Surveys	Documentation of information gathered on an ongoing basis using accepted methodology applicable to the target species.	Examination of deer browse species during the winter to determine degree of utilization and estimate population.
Census of Endangered, Threatened, or Protected Wildlife	Documentation of information gathered on an ongoing basis using accepted methodology applicable to the target species.	Performing regular, periodic counts of the target species in order to enhance management or increase knowledge of local, regional, or state status.
Census and Monitoring of Nongame Wildlife Species	Documentation of information gathered on an ongoing basis using accepted methodology applicable to the target species.	Regular, periodic counts of nongame wildlife species in order to enhance management or increase knowledge of local, regional, or state status.
Miscellaneous Counts	Documentation of information gathered on an ongoing basis using accepted methodology applicable to the target species.	Regular, periodic counts using special methodologies specific to individual target species, such as time/area counts, roost counts, etc.