

Specific Habitat Management Practices, By Activity

HABITAT CONTROL

GRAZING MANAGEMENT

(Refer to Appendix D - Livestock Recommendations, for information to help prepare a specific grazing proposal for the plan.)



Grazing management, which may include deferral, is the planned manipulation of livestock numbers and grazing intensities to increase food, cover, or improve structure in the habitat of selected species. Grazing management includes: 1) kind and class of livestock grazed, 2) determination and adjustment of stocking rates, 3) implementation of a grazing system that provides planned periodic rest for pastures by

controlling grazing intensity and duration, and/or 4) excluding livestock from sensitive areas to prevent trampling, allow for vegetative recovery, or eliminate competition for food and cover. Planned deferrals can be short or long term up to 2 years. Extended rest from grazing (two years or more, if necessary) may be required on some ranges. Seasonal stocker operations may be appropriate to manipulate habitat. Supplemental livestock water (earthen tanks, troughs, wells, piping) to facilitate deferred-rotation grazing of livestock and disperse grazing pressure may be incorporated into planning to improve wildlife habitat. Similarly, it is important to plan and design fence construction to facilitate deferred-rotation grazing of livestock. Fencing can also be used to enhance or protect sensitive areas, woodlands, wetlands, riparian areas and spring sites as designated in plan. Activities should be reviewed annually.

Grazing management systems might include:

- 1 Herd / 3 Pasture (preferably as a step in moving toward a 1 herd / multiple pasture {4+} grazing system)
- 1 Herd / 4 Pasture
- 1 Herd / multiple pasture multiple herd / multiple pasture (goal is to move toward always resting 75% of area)
- High intensity/low frequency (HILF)
- Short duration system

- Other type of grazing system (ex. a short-term stocker system):
- Planned Deferment (e.g., number of years livestock will be deferred from the property, etc.):

PRESCRIBED BURNING

(Refer to Appendix E - Vegetation Management Recommendations, for information to help prepare a specific burning proposal for the plan.)

Prescribed burning is the planned application of fire to enhance habitat and plant diversity, increase food, manipulate cover, or improve structure in the habitat of selected species. Plans should indicate a minimum percent of acreage and general burning cycle (**eg. for big game, a minimum of 20% of acreage annually burned over 5 years in the High Plains and Rolling Plains; for upland game birds and songbirds, a minimum of 25% of acreage annually burned over 4 years**).



Attach a written burning plan as an addendum to the Wildlife and Habitat Management Plan (burn plans and prescribed burning should only be attempted with aid of professionals). The plan should include a map that shows the areas to be burned and the planned dates (month and year) that each area will be burned during the burning cycle. It should also designate areas to be protected from burning, and should incorporate flexibility during periods/ years when conditions are not favorable. Specific areas (i. e. sensitive sites) to be protected from burning should be briefly described and shown on a map.

RANGE ENHANCEMENT (Range Reseeding)

Establish native herbaceous plants (grasses and forbs) that provide food and cover for wildlife or erosion control benefits. Plant species selected and methods for establishment should be applicable to the county. Seeding mixtures providing maximum native plant diversity are recommended. Many herbaceous broadleaf plants (known as forbs, weeds, or wildflowers) are beneficial to wildlife for forage and/or seed production. Key species adapted to the High Plains and Rolling Plains are Eldorado engelmanndaisy (warm season forb), Illinois bundleflower (warm season legume), and Maxmilian sunflower (warm season forb). See appendix entitled *A Strategy for Management of Wildlife Openings in the Rolling Plains*. Encourage "weed and wildflower" species by selective application of chemical, biological (eg., grazing management) and/or mechanical means on native rangelands, Conservation Reserve

Program lands, and improved grass pastures. Some periodic weed control may be needed in fields converted to native rangeland to assist in the establishment of desirable vegetation. This practice must be a part of an overall habitat management plan and designed to reestablish native habitats within a specified time frame. **Range Enhancement should annually affect a minimum of 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or a minimum of 10 acres annually, whichever is less, until the project is completed.**



BRUSH MANAGEMENT

(Refer to Appendix E - Vegetation Management Recommendations, for information to help prepare a specific brush management proposal for the plan.)



Removal of salt cedar through precision aerial application of herbicide can increase plant diversity, enhance habitat for wildlife and help restore instream water flow.

Brush management may be the removal or establishment of woody plants.

It can be the selective removal or suppression of target woody species, including exotics, to allow the increased production of desirable trees, shrubs, grasses, and forbs for forage and nesting or protective cover for selected species. **Brush Management practices should annually affect a minimum of 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or a minimum of 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller.** This practice includes retaining the proper kind, amount, and distribution of

woody cover for selected species. Brush management planning must consider wildlife cover requirements, soil types, slope angle and direction, soil loss and erosion factors, and subsequent planning to control re-invasion. This practice also includes retention of snags to provide cover and nesting sites for cavity nesting animals. When used, herbicides should be applied in strict accordance with label directions.

This practice can include the planting of native trees and/or shrubs species to provide food, corridors and/or shelter using species and methods as described by Texas Forest Service at Lubbock or in appendices entitled *Native Brush Establishment on Rangeland for Wildlife* or *Establishing Shelterbelts for Wildlife*.

RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Annually and seasonally protect the vegetation and soils in riparian areas (low areas on either side of stream courses) from mismanagement, such as that caused by excessive, long-term livestock trampling. Riparian management and enhancement can include providing livestock with alternate watering sites, deferring livestock grazing in pastures with riparian areas during critical periods of the year, total exclusion of livestock from pastures with riparian areas, and fencing riparian areas to exclude or provide short duration grazing by livestock. Restore important forested habitats including bottomland hardwoods and turkey roost sites. **A minimum of one Riparian Management and Enhancement project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years to qualify.** See appendix entitled *Managing Riparian Habitat for Wildlife in Northwest Texas*.

Proposed riparian management and enhancement projects might include:

- Fencing
 - complete fencing of riparian areas
 - partial fencing of riparian areas
- Deferment from livestock grazing
 - complete deferment
 - partial deferment.
- Establish vegetation
 - trees
 - shrubs
 - herbaceous
 - both sides of stream
 - one side only

WETLAND ENHANCEMENT

Annually provide seasonal or permanent water for roosting, feeding, or nesting habitat for wetland wildlife. This practice involves shallow wetland management, creation or restoration, greentree reservoir creation or management, playa lake management, and other moist soil management. Playa lake management could include protection from modification, no grazing of playa basin for specified time period, pumping water in winter, moist soil management, seeding grass/legume buffer, and fencing. Grazing management and seeding/fencing buffer could also apply to saline lakes and entrenched draws. Annual management as described in management plan, such as water level manipulation



Over 50% of Texas' wetlands have disappeared. Wetland management, restoration or creation is extremely important for wetland dependent wildlife.

qualifies. **Construction and maintenance of a new project will qualify for 10 years.**

HABITAT PROTECTION FOR SPECIES OF CONCERN

(Refer to Appendix K for information on the management of shortgrass and midgrass prairie habitat for species such as swift fox, black-tailed prairie dogs, burrowing owls, and lesser prairie-chickens which occur in portions of the High Plains and Rolling Plains.



Planned protection and management of land or a portion of land to provide habitat for an endangered, threatened or rare species, such as fencing off critical areas, managing vegetation structure and diversity within species parameters, establishing and maintaining firebreaks to protect critical overstory vegetation, and annually monitoring the species of concern. This practice includes the management/protection of nesting sites, feeding areas, and other critical habitat limiting factors, and the development of additional areas.

The broad-scale management of habitat for migrating/wintering/ breeding neotropical birds (primarily songbirds) should follow guidelines in appendix for zones of importance. **A minimum of one project must be implemented every 10 years to qualify.**

Proposed projects for habitat protection for species of concerns might include:

- Planned protection/management projects:
- fencing
- firebreaks
- prescribed burning
- habitat manipulation (e.g. thinning, etc.)
- control of nest parasites
- native/exotic ungulate control
- other_____

PRESCRIBED CONTROL OF NATIVE, EXOTIC AND FERAL SPECIES

Use legal means to control the number of grazing and browsing animals. Maintain the population density of native wildlife (particularly white-tailed deer and exotics) at the carrying capacity of the habitat to prevent overuse of desirable plant species and enhance habitat for native wildlife species. Populations of exotics, feral animals, and wildlife should be strictly controlled to minimize negative impact on native wildlife and

habitat. **This should incorporate harvest and vegetative monitoring over time to assess control intensity and impact on habitat to meet plan objectives.**



Removal of salt cedar helps increase plant diversity, enhance habitat for wildlife and help restore instream water flow.

Remove or control exotic vegetation impacting native habitats and wildlife populations (eg., large stands of naturalized saltcedar, weeping lovegrass etc.). Convert non-native grass pastures (such as old world bluestem) to native vegetation. **The removal or control of exotic vegetation or the conversion of tame grass pastures must affect a minimum of 10% of the area designated in the plan, or 10 acres**

annually, whichever is smaller, until the project is completed.

WILDLIFE RESTORATION

Restoration or enhancement of habitat to good condition for target species, and reintroduction and population management of TPWD approved native species within the carrying capacity of the habitat as part of an approved restoration area at a scale capable of supporting a sustainable population (eg., Eastern turkey).

