



## MCAD WILDLIFE GUIDELINES



THE FIRST REQUIREMENT FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT USE QUALIFICATION IS PURELY TECHNICAL AND IS NOT RELATED TO THE LAND'S ACTUAL USE FOR MANAGING WILDLIFE. THE LAW RESTRICTS WHICH LAND MAY QUALIFY FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT USE TO LAND THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN QUALIFIED FOR AGRICULTURAL APPRAISAL UNDER CHAPTER 23, SUBCHAPTER D OR E OF THE TEXAS PROPERTY TAX CODE AT THE TIME THAT THE OWNER CHANGES THE LAND'S USE TO WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, AN OWNER WHO WISHES TO QUALIFY LAND FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN THE CURRENT YEAR MUST SHOW THAT IT QUALIFIED FOR AND WAS APPRAISED AS AGRICULTURAL USE OR TIMBER PRODUCTIVITY USE IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR(S).

THE SECOND REQUIREMENT FOR QUALIFIED WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT USE IS THAT THE OWNER MUST USE THE LAND TO PROPOGATE AND SUSTAIN A BREEDING, MIGRATING, OR WINTERING POPULATION OF INDIGENOUS WILD ANIMALS. THE ANIMALS NEED NOT LIVE ON THE LAND PERMANENTLY, PROVIDED THEY REGULARLY MIGRATE ACROSS THE LAND OR SEASONALLY LIVE THERE. A SUSTAINING BREEDING POPULATION IS A GROUP OF WILD ANIMALS LARGE ENOUGH TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY OVER SEVERAL GENERATIONS. THE LAW REQUIRES AN OWNER TO PROPOGATE THE WILDLIFE FOR HUMAN USE. HUMAN USE MAY INCLUDE FOOD, MEDICINE, OR RECREATION. FOR MORE IN-DEPTH INFORMATION ON MAINTAINING WILDLIFE POPULATIONS, CONSULT WITH TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DOES NOT REQUIRE AN ANNUAL APPLICATION, BUT THE INITIAL APPLICATION AND NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL OR TIMBER PRODUCTIVITY USE TO WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SHOULD BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO MAY 1 OF THE YEAR IN WHICH THE PROPERTY OWNER WISHES TO QUALIFY FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT USE.

JUST LIKE ANY SPECIAL VALUATION (AG OR TIMBER), WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT MUST BE THE PRIMARY USE OF THE LAND. LAND DEVOTED TO WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT CAN BE USED AS A RESIDENCE FOR THE OWNER, BUT THE LAND WILL NOT QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL VALUATION IF RESIDENTIAL USE, RATHER THAN WILDLIFE MANAGMENT, IS THE LAND'S PRIMARY USE.

includes the removal of exotic of feral wildlife such as the trapping or shooting of feral hogs.

**UNDER THE LAW, A PROPERTY OWNER MUST PERFORM AT LEAST THREE OF SEVEN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES ON THE LAND. AN OWNER MAY QUALIFY BY ENGAGING IN MORE THAN THREE, BUT NOT LESS THAN THREE. BELOW IS A SHORT SUMMARY OF EACH MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY LISTED IN THE LAW:**

**1. HABITAT CONTROL**

- a. **Grazing Management:** Select a type of grazing system to be implemented, and attach an initial grazing schedule to the plan. **(Not common for area)**
- b. **Prescribed Burning:** A minimum of 33% of acreage annually burned in coastal marches, 15% in wooded uplands, and 20% in rangeland. **(Not common for area)**
- c. **Range Enhancement:** A minimum of 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or a minimum of 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller, until the property is complete. **(Not common for area)**
- d. **Brush Management, Enhancement or Removal:** A minimum of 10% of the total area designated in the plan, or a minimum of 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller. Every 3 to 4 years entire property should be mowed. Can also include the planting of 150 native tree and shrub species per acre per year for the area designated in the plan.
- e. **Fence Modification:** **(Not common for area)**
- f. **Riparian Management and Enhancement:** a minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years to qualify. Example would be protecting Wetlands from cattle. **(Not common for area)**
- g. **Wetland Enhancement:** Construction of a new project will qualify for 10 years. Example would be creating a conservation, manipulating water. **( Not common for area cost is very expensive)**
- h. **Habitat Protection for Species of Concern:** A minimum of one project must be implemented every 10 years to qualify. Example would creating a conservation for an endangered animals.
- i. **Prescribed Control of Native, Exotic, and Feral Species:** 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, or 10 acres annually, whichever is smaller. Also

- j. **Wildlife Restoration:** A TPWD approved restoration plan at a scale capable of supporting a sustainable population.

**2. EROSION CONTROL**

- a. **Pond Construction and Repair:** A minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years. Example would be reshaping, cleaning or digging of a new pond a minimum of an half acre is required.
- b. **Gully Shaping:** A minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years. Example would be re slopping, reseeding or implementing brush dams to help with erosion.
- c. **Streamside, Pond, and Wetland Revegetation:** A minimum of one project must be completed and maintained every 5 years, affecting a minimum of 5 acres per project. **(Not common for area)**
- d. **Herbaceous and/ or Woody Plant Establishment on Critical Areas (erodible):** A minimum of 150 seedlings per acres must be planted annually on 10 acres or a minimum of 10%, whichever is smaller, of the total designated area annually. **( Not common for area more for West Texas area to prevent dust bowls)**
- e. **Dike/Levee Construction and Management:** A minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years. **(Not common for area)**
- f. **Establishing Water Diversion:** A minimum of one project must be implemented and maintained every 10 years. **(Not common for area)**

### 3. PREDATOR CONTROL

- a. **Imported Red Fire Ants:** Proper treatment of at least 10 acres or 10% of the infested area per year, whichever is more.
- b. **Brown-headed Cowbirds:** Removal of at least 30 cowbirds annually is required to qualify. **(Must provide pics of the removal)**
- c. **Grackle, Starling, and House Sparrow Control:** Removal of at least 30 grackles/ starlings/ house sparrows annually is required to qualify. **(Must provide pics of the removal)**
- d. **Miscellaneous:** Feral hogs, raccoons, coyotes, feral cats/dogs. **( Most common is removal of feral hogs you must provide pics of baited traps and of animals trapped or shot)**

### 4. SUPPLEMENT WATER

- a. **Mash and 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. **(Not common for area)**
- b. **Well, Troughs, Windmill Overflows, and Other Watering Facilities:** A minimum of one project per 10 years must be completed to qualify. Consistent water management for wildlife at sites qualifies.
- c. **Spring Development and/ or Enhancement:** A minimum of one project per 10 years must be completed to qualify; or existing or restored springs consistently managed to prevent degradation.

### 5. SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD

- a. **Grazing Management:** Not common for area.

- b. **Prescribe Burning:** Not common for area.

- c. **Range Enhancement:** Not common for area.

- d. **Food Plots:** A minimum of 1% of the acreage or no less than 1 acre should be planted in both winter and summer food plots.

- e. **Feeders and Mineral Supplementation:** A minimum of one 350lb time feeder (Deer Feeder) per 50 acres set to throw twice a day, with a minimum of 16% crude protein feed required to qualify. Bird feeders will require 3 30lb feeders.

- f. **Managing Tame Pasture; Old Fields and Croplands:** A minimum of 5% of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.

- g. **Transition Management of Tame Grass Monocultures:** A minimum of 25% of the designated area must be treated annually to qualify.

### 6. SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER

- a. **Nest boxes:** Number and location of nest boxes should be consistent with habitat needs and territorial requirements of the target species and sufficient over the area to provide a real supplement to the target population and address an identified severe limiting factor as part of a comprehensive wildlife management plan. Must have one per every two acres.

- b. **Brush Piles and Slash Retention:** Must have one per every two acres.

- c. **Fence-line Management:** A minimum width of 30 yards and length of 100 yards of fence line management per ¼ mile of fence is required annually to qualify. Not common for the area.

- d. **Hay Meadow, Pasture, and Cropland Management for Wildlife:** Mowing/Swathing of hay fields should be postponed until after the peak of nesting/rearing period of ground-nesting birds and mammals (July 15). Annually mow/shred 25% of open areas per year, preferable in strips of mosaic types of patterns, to create edge and structural diversity.
- e. **Half-Cutting Trees or Shrubs:** A minimum of one clump of trees/shrubs per 100 yards on at least 10% of acreage or 10 acres, whichever is smaller, annually to qualify.
- f. **Woods Plant/Shrub Establishment:** Plant a minimum of 500 seedlings annually, or four rows in a 120-foot width by a ¼ mile in length.
- g. **Natural Cavity/Snag Development:** A minimum of five snags per acre, on 5% of acreage, must be retained/created annually to qualify.

- c. **Stand Counts:** One stand is required every 100 acres (i.e. 150 acres required two stands). Five counts are conducted at each stand. One hour of observation is required during each count (i.e. one hour after sunrise or one hour before sunset).
- d. **Aerial Counts:** Counts should employ accepted methodology for the region and be performed by a trained individual annually.
- e. **Track Counts:** Counts made on three consecutive days, minimum, using accepted methodology.
- f. **Daylight Deer Herd/Wildlife Composition Counts/Photo Stations:** Counts should be conducted on standardized transects along five mile minimum lines and run at least three 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 separates, two hour counts during early morning or late afternoon from deer stands (blinds) may be used.
- g. **Harvest Data Collect/Record Keeping:** Collect all age, weight and antler development data from harvested deer. Age and sex information should be obtained from game birds and waterfowl to determine sex ratios and annual production.
- h. **Browse Utilization Surveys:** Annually examine deer browse species for degree of utilization on each major vegetative site on the property through vegetation analysis and stem counts.
- i. **Census of Endangered, Threatened, or Protected Wildlife:** Regular, periodic counts of the target species.
- j. **Census and Monitoring of Nongame Wildlife Species:** Regular, periodic counts of nongame wildlife species. This practice also includes developing checklists of wildlife diversity for the property.
- k. **Miscellaneous Counts:** Specific species may require special survey techniques.

1. Time/Area counts
2. Roost Counts
3. Song bird transects and counts
4. Quail call and covey county
5. Point counts
6. Drift fences and pitfall traps
7. Small mammal traps
8. Bat census
9. Nest box surveys between February 15 and July 15.

## 7. MAKING CENSUS COUNTS TO DETERMINE POPULATIONS:

For census activity to qualify for deer, a combination of methods must be used to obtain a reasonable assessment of the deer herd for habitat and harvest management. For most properties, this will require spotlight surveys, daylight or incidental observations, and harvest data for all deer (age, weight, and antler measurements). Similar intensity should be applied for other species to qualify in this activity.

- a. **Spotlight Counts:** A minimum of three counts, or a minimum of 15 surveyed miles, must be completed annually.
- b. **Standardized Incidental Observations:** Observations may be from feeder's food plots, blinds, or vehicles. A minimum of 100 observations of adult deer plus fawns required.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

It is important for the land owner 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 land owner might want to consider using for this purpose. The land owner must file an annual report, including documentation, on management activities undertaken during the year. The annual report form will be sent to the property owner every January. There will be a late-file penalty assessed if the annual report is not submitted on or before April 30.

For all state information go to  
[www.TPWD.TEXAS.GOV](http://www.TPWD.TEXAS.GOV)

Click on Wildlife

Click on Game Management

Click on Agricultural Land Tax conversion for  
Wildlife Management

Click on Guidelines for qualifications of  
Agricultural Land in Wildlife Management Use.