

available for producers and your local veterinarian is an excellent source of information and help.

Wildlife

One reason people purchase land and move to the country is **to enjoy the wildlife**. The first thing new landowners must realize about these animals is that they are wild. Second, they roam freely and may or may not stay on your place, depending on their home range size. The size of a wild animal's home range varies greatly. For instance, a whitetail deer's home range size ranges from 60-800 acres; whereas a fox squirrel's may only be ½ acre.

There are four essential elements all animals require: water, food, cover, and space. Many species can co-exist in the same environment if managed properly. One must understand the **habitat needs** of all desired species. In addition, realize nature is never standing still. Therefore, the caretaker must manage the land using various tools to reach goals or objectives.

The basic tools used in wildlife management have changed only slightly in the last 150 years, and have become a bit more sophisticated. **If used improperly, these tools can destroy a habitat.**

With many wildlife species' home range covering a number of landowners, it is difficult to manage for a particular species. As a result, groups of small acreage landowners may join together to manage their properties as one. The cooperative management efforts can return great rewards. These so-called **"wildlife co-ops"** have sprung up everywhere and encompass hundreds thousands of acreage today. If you don't have a co-op in your area (or subdivision), talk to your neighbors, county

agent, and/or your area Texas Parks and Wildlife biologist about starting one.

The State of Texas in 1995 passed proposition 11 and H.B.1358 which made wildlife management a land use that qualifies the land for Ad Valorem tax evaluation. Land currently appraised agricultural can be managed for indigenous wildlife species and keep the same tax structure as managing for any other commodity. A brochure is available from the appraisal office that discusses this plan more thoroughly.

"We of the industrial age boast of our control over nature...there is no force in earth or sky which we will not shortly harness to build 'the good life' for ourselves. But what is the good life?...We stand guard over works of art, but species representing the work of aeons are stolen from under our noses...game can be restored by the creative use of the same tools which have heretofore destroyed it - axe, plow, cow, fire and gun." - Aldo Leopold 1933.

White-tailed Deer: Texas has a wide variety of wildlife. One of the most popular is the whitetail deer. Water is the most crucial nutrient for deer. A good deer habitat contains accessible, well-distributed, reliable, clean sources of water.

Deer eat mostly browse (leaves, twigs, young shoots of woody plants and vines) and forbs (weeds and other broad-leafed flowering plants). They eat some grass, but only when it is green and succulent. Implement a grazing system that provides spring rest to all pastures over a period of several years or reserve certain pastures for wildlife only.

Deer need cover where they can hide and escape from predators and be protected from the elements. Fortunately, the same browse species that provide deer with a stable food supply can also serve as cover. **Hiding**