

Reducing Wildlife Damage through RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Challenges

- Texas is a diverse mix of urban, suburban, agricultural, forest and desert environments — and it is home to more than 30 million people and a wide range of wildlife species.
- Wildlife is essential to the aesthetics and health of the state's environment and economy. But wild animals and birds also cause millions of dollars in damage to Texas agriculture, natural resources and property, and their activities can threaten public health and safety.



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AgriLife Extension Response

Texas Wildlife Services is a cooperative program between the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and private and public partners. Its mission is to use research-based methods and education to protect Texas agriculture and other industries, natural resources, property and public health and safety from damage caused by wildlife.

- Provides services on 4,700 properties, covering 17.5 million acres. It educates property owners and residents about wildlife damage management in both rural and urban areas.
- Mitigates wildlife attractants at and around airports to protect the flying public and military aircraft. Through cooperative agreements, it has full-time wildlife biologists at nine Department of Defense airfields and three commercial airports and provides wildlife training to personnel at commercial and general aviation airports across the state.
- Works with Texas livestock industries to help protect beef cows, calves, sheep and goats from predation losses to coyotes, bobcats, feral hogs and other predators.
- Responds to emerging issues, such as rabies threats that affect human health-including canine and bat vectored rabies. In 2021, Wildlife Services dropped over 1 million oral rabies baits along the international border to prevent the reemergence of canine and gray fox rabies, and is testing a new vaccine against coyote rabies in the Texas Panhandle. It continued its public outreach campaign to alert livestock owners and veterinarians about the risks of vampire bat rabies due to the imminent range expansion of this species into Texas.

Economic Impacts

Economic impacts are measured by the reduction in property damage caused by feral hogs and other wildlife, the value of livestock and wildlife saved from predation and property protected from beaver damage.

- Directly assisted landowners in removing 47,890 feral hogs from more than 7.4 million acres, saving landowners an estimated **\$14.4 million** in avoided crop and property losses.
- Beaver damage management protected flood-control structures, roads, bridges, timber, crops and pastures valued at **\$6.9 million**.
- Predation management efforts saved an estimated **\$55.4 million** in livestock and wildlife losses.