

# Texas Wildlife Action Plan

## From Vision to On-the-Ground Action

**T**exas' planning approach was developed around current and potential partnerships with multiple organizations. From local area governments and landowners to state agencies to conservation organizations, the only viable option Texas habitats and wildlife have is to work through partnerships. The Texas Wildlife Action Plan incorporated existing plans in order to facilitate the alignment of conservation of resources and initiatives in Texas.

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### *Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas* **Conserving Lesser Prairie-Chickens and their Grassland Habitat**

Texas' wildlife action plan aims to keep common species common. Due to the loss, fragmentation, and conversion of the native prairies they rely upon, lesser prairie-chicken populations have

sharply declined in Texas. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has partnered with 15 other conservation groups to implement the Texas Lesser Prairie-Chicken Conservation Initiative. Through the Landowner Incentive Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program, biologists work with private landowners to conserve good prairie chicken habitat by controlling non-native weeds.

Several projects are underway that will provide vital prairie chicken information to guide good management actions. These collaborations are proactive ways to conserve the prairie chicken and its habitat before they become more rare and more costly to protect.



Ornate box turtle/Steve Kozlowski, U.S. Forest Service



Lesser prairie chicken/Tom Harvey, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

### *Proactive Efforts that Benefit Wildlife and People*

## **Protecting Turtles, Snakes, and other Wildlife**

Texas' wildlife action plan focuses on conserving all wildlife diversity in the state. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department recently banned commercial collection of all wild turtles from public waters and land in Texas. The change will protect at least 15 turtle species and more than 200 other wildlife species that were increasingly imperiled by commercial collection and sale. Three turtle varieties can still be collected on private property, including ranch stock tanks and farm ponds. A new collaboration between the Department and Texas A&M University will continue to gather information and develop long-term recommendations

about these policies. These efforts will conserve Texas' wildlife for future generations.

***Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife***

**Creating Important Reef Habitat for Aquatic Wildlife**

Coral reefs and their associated wildlife are conservation priorities in the Texas Wildlife Action Plan. Naturally occurring reefs in the Gulf of Mexico are limited in number and receive tremendous fishing pressure. The Artificial Reefs program recycles obsolete petroleum rigs and sinks decommissioned ships to provide ocean floor foundations for growing coral reef habitat. These underwater manmade havens provide hard surfaces required for attachment by invertebrates, animals that are the beginnings of an interactive food web that supports a host of reef fishes. By providing food and shelter, artificial reefs have enhanced overfished populations

of resident reef fish such as snapper and grouper, as well as the mackerel, shark, and billfish that feed on them. These proactive efforts conserve vital habitat for reef wildlife and provide recreational diving opportunities for citizens and tourists, contributing to local economies.

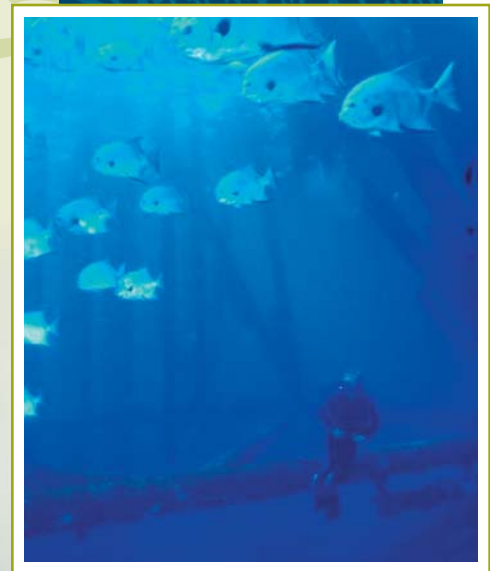
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Diver observing fish near an oil platform/Jackie Reid



Sinking the decommissioned Clipper/Lauren Murphy, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department