

CALL FOR HABITAT MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

TARGET: Conservation and enhancement of wetland habitats for waterfowl in portions of Texas.

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Purpose: Texas provides important wintering habitat for waterfowl produced in the U.S. and Canadian prairies. It is estimated that greater than 75 percent of duck populations and large concentrations of Canada, white-fronted, and light geese found in the Central Flyway spend a portion of the winter in coastal regions and adjacent agricultural lands. Rice fields, prairie wetlands, and associated coastal marshes provide important habitat for hundreds of thousands of white-fronted geese, several species of diving ducks, other species of puddle ducks, and mottled ducks. In recent years, surveys and research has indicated mottled ducks numbers are declining due to loss of nesting cover and species like the northern pintail are returning to the breeding grounds in worse condition than when they arrived in Texas. In addition, the Gulf Coast Joint Venture’s biological planning results indicate there are significant winter waterfowl habitat foraging deficits from a variety of reasons in the Chenier Plain and especially the mid-coast regions of Texas.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) recognizes the importance of wetlands and associated agricultural lands for wintering waterfowl in Texas. The objectives for these funds are two: (1) utilize Migratory Game Bird Stamp Funds to protect, enhance, and restore wintering habitats to meet the needs of wintering waterfowl; TPWD is soliciting projects to ensure that waterfowl that winter along the Texas coast are in optimal condition when they arrive on the breeding grounds. And, (2) TPWD will support habitat projects that restore and/or enhance Mottled Duck breeding habitat inclusive of wetlands that support brood rearing habitat and associated upland nesting cover. TPWD will give the highest priority to projects that maximize the use of these funds for conservation work in this important region of the state.

Specific Objectives

1. Projects should focus on harvested croplands, moist-soil areas, emergent wetlands, and other created or natural wetlands on private lands to increase biodiversity for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species, including breeding habitat for mottled ducks.
2. During an average year, shallow surface water (10-18 inches) from precipitation, run-off, wells, or irrigation provider must be present for at least 4 months between September 1 and April 30.

3. Provide financial cost-share assistance to private landowners for habitat enhancement such as levee construction, soil redistribution (e.g., mottle duck nesting “islands”), water control structure installation(s), and water delivery systems.
4. Provide technical assistance (biological and engineering) and a detailed management plan to landowners.
5. Establish a multi-year agreement with landowners to manage breeding habitat for mottled ducks.
6. Improve and/or restore mottled duck breeding habitat to include wetlands and associated upland cover.
7. Projects on public land will be considered.

The guidelines for migratory game bird management habitat proposals are located here: [Guidelines](#).

Ranking Criteria: The goals and objectives of TPWD's Waterfowl Strategic Plan will be the basis for ranking all proposals submitted through this process. The criteria used to evaluate proposals are provided below to assist each applicant develop a quality proposal.

- Does the project applicant have a history of completing habitat projects beneficial migratory game birds?
- Is there a sufficient and useful monitoring component of the proposed project?
- Does the project have the resources (e.g., equipment, funding, manpower, staff/volunteers) to continue the project into the future without additional TPWD funding?
- Is the project site located:
 - within the Migratory Game Bird Focus Area?
 - on a TPWD Wildlife Management Area?
 - within 5 miles of a public property actively managed for waterfowl and other migratory game birds?
 - outside of a TPWD Focus Area, but within the Lower Mississippi Valley or Playa Lake Joint Ventures?
- What is the amount of match funds the applicant is providing (direct and in-kind)?
- What benefits will this project provide to waterfowl in Texas?
 - Will the project provide nesting cover for Mottled Ducks?
 - Will the project provide foraging habitat for wintering ducks and geese?
 - Will the project provide post hunting season habitat for waterfowl prior to migration?
 - Will the project provide habitat for Mottled Duck nesting and brood, molting, and survival cover?
- Will the project provide habitat for other migratory game birds such as cranes, rails, doves, snipe, or other webless species?
- Is there alternative water supply other than rainfall for the project?