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Protected Wildlife Species in Texas

According to [Texas Parks and Wildlife Code Chapter 43.021](#), "protected wildlife" means all indigenous mammals, indigenous birds, indigenous reptiles, indigenous amphibians, indigenous fish, and other indigenous aquatic life the taking, collecting, holding, possession, propagation, release, display, or transport of which is governed by a provision of this code other than this subchapter or by a commission rule adopted under any provision of this code other than this subchapter and includes endangered species.

1. General

1. Threatened and Endangered species: Current listing maintained on file with the Secretary of State. Copies may be acquired by contacting TPWD's Wildlife Diversity Program at Austin headquarters. Restrictions apply to the possession of legally acquired specimens of species listed as threatened or endangered in Texas.

2. Birds

1. Wild Birds: All wild birds that migrate through or are indigenous to Texas, along with their plumage or other parts, eggs, nests and young are protected from harming, killing and/or possession by state and federal law except that European starlings, English sparrows, and feral pigeons may be killed at any time and their nests and eggs may be destroyed. A permit is not required to control grackles; cowbirds; yellow-headed, red-winged, rusty or Brewer's blackbirds; crows or magpies when these birds are considered a nuisance or causing a public health hazard. No birds may be controlled by any means considered illegal by local city or county ordinance.

2. Wild Game Birds: (as defined in §§64.001 and 64.021, Parks and Wildlife Code). License required to take, possess, propagate or sell the animal. Some species may not be possessed live.

Nonmigratory Game Birds

Wild Turkeys
Lesser Prairie Chickens

Migratory Game Birds

White-fronted Doves
White-winged Doves

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Pheasants (all varieties)

Gambel's Quail

Bobwhite Quail

Scaled Quail

Chachalacas

טוֹרְפוֹת יַבֵּשׁוֹת וְטוֹרְפוֹת יַמָּוּת

Mourning Doves

Rails (Sora, Virginia, King, Clapper)

Sandhill Cranes

Woodcock

Ducks (all varieties)

Snipe (all varieties)

Gallinules (all varieties)

Coots

Geese (all varieties)

3. Mammals Classified as Game or Furbearers

- 1. Wild Game Animals:** (as defined in § 63.001, Parks and Wildlife Code) License or permit required to take, trap, transport, possess, propagate or sell the animal.
Deer, collared peccary (javelina), pronghorn antelope, gray or cat; fox or red squirrels, desert bighorn sheep
- 2. Wild Fur-Bearing Animals:** (as defined in § 71.001, Parks and Wildlife Code) License or permit required to take, trap, possess or sell the animal or its pelt.
Beaver, ring-tailed cats, otters, opossums, red and gray foxes, badgers, mink, skunks, or civet cats, nutria, raccoons, muskrats, weasels

4. Fish

- 1. Game & Commercial Fish:** (as defined in Chapter 66, Parks and Wildlife Code). Subject to license requirements, possession limits, restrictions as to means and methods for taking and size restrictions.
Bass (largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, striped, white, yellow, Guadalupe) catfish (blue, channel, flathead), cobia, spearfish, longbill, crappie (black, white) swordfish, broadbill, mackerel (king, Spanish) trout (rainbow, brown), marlin (blue, white) mullet, pickerel, jewfish, red drum or redfish, sheepshead, black drum flounder, sailfish, wahoo, sauger, walleye, spotted seatrout, tarpon, snapper (lane, red,vermillion,) shark, amberjack snook and any hybrids or subspecies thereof.

or release.

5. Invertebrates

- Oyster, shrimp, clams mussels and some crabs subject to license requirements, possessions limits, means and methods of take and size restrictions. Insects and spiders, including those listed federally as threatened or endangered, are not protected under state law.

6. All Other Wildlife

- **Nongame Animals:** Those species of vertebrate and invertebrate wildlife indigenous to Texas that are **not** classified as game animals, game birds, game fish, fur-bearing animals, endangered species, alligators, marine penaeid shrimp or oysters. A special group of nongame animals are listed with the Secretary of State as "threatened," and are therefore afforded greater protection than other species classified as "nongame." Unless state-listed as threatened or endangered, these animals are not protected, except under certain circumstances. If more than 25 specimens in the aggregate are possessed (dead or alive), or if the animals are collected from the wild and sold, permits must be obtained for commercial use. This regulation does not apply to fish or aquatic invertebrates, as well as a few others. Animals sold as bait must be possessed under a bait dealer's license.

7. Special Rules

- **Alligators** - Permits required for possession, transport, import, propagating, sale, etc.
- **Bobcat** - only pelts and mounts regulated.
- **Mountain lion** - not protected in this state.
- **Coyote** - may be taken, possessed or sold at any time.
- **Armadillo** - live armadillos may not be sold.
- **Coatimundi** - live animals may be possessed, propagated and sold; permit required for sale.

Contact Information

• Texas Department of State Health Services, Infectious Disease Control Section

• Transporting Wild Animals

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