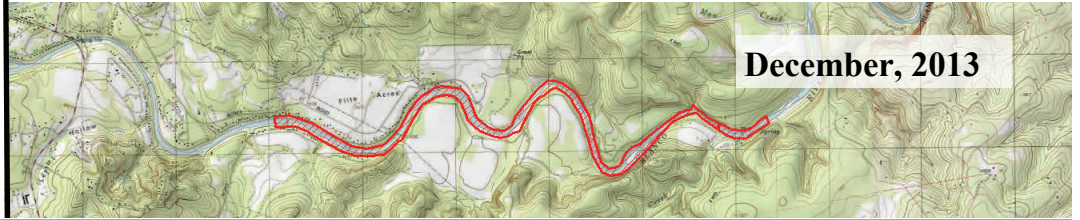


# The TXNDD Report

December, 2013



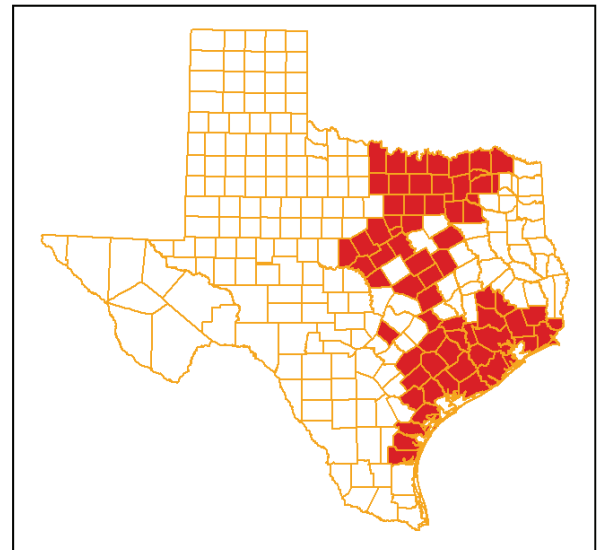
## Data Highlight: Native Prairies

The TXNDD is in the process of adding a significant new dataset from the Native Prairies Association of Texas (NPAT). NPAT is a non-profit conservation organization that seeks out remnant native prairie for future protection and restoration. The NPAT dataset is the result of multiple projects to map remnant prairie vegetation in 78 counties. The surveys were conducted from 2000 to 2011. In addition, TPWD botanist Jason Singhurst and NPAT are compiling data from at least ten more counties. When completed, this will constitute the most comprehensive dataset for native prairies in Texas.

To date, a total of 1,061 prairie remnants (source feature polygons) have been added to the TXNDD, representing 30 different prairie community types. For some of these rare prairie communities, this will be the first time they have been documented in the TXNDD. With data from eight counties of the original 78 yet to be added, the total number of prairie remnants in this dataset could be over 1,300.

Data collection was conducted from roadsides, documenting the point of observation using GPS, verifying the vegetation visually, and digitizing the boundaries of the prairie remnants in ArcGIS using aerial imagery as the digitizing base. This methodology resulted in very precise boundaries for each remnant with no more than 25 meters of error for each polygon boundary.

The NPAT data will be a valuable tool for TPWD and our conservation partners alike. Potential uses can include, but are not limited to: 1) conservation and protection of land where remnant prairies are found; 2) seed collection to propagate prairies at other locations; 3) studying and modeling prairie restoration and management for implementation at future sites; and 4) genetic research on prairie plant species. If you want to see NPAT data in your area, please submit a data request to the TXNDD.

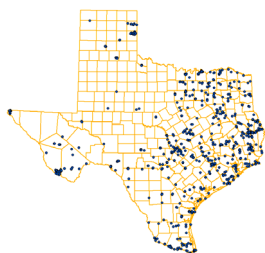


Counties with data from the NPAT project

## TXNDD Patterns: Ecological Communities

Ecological community EOs in the TXNDD are intended to represent the best remaining examples of Texas native vegetation, highlighting where private and public landowners have demonstrated good land stewardship and management. Unfortunately, the ecological community data has fallen out of date. Not including the NPAT data discussed in the article above, less than 1% of the 852 ecological community EOs have been surveyed or had the results reported to the TXNDD in the last 15 years. Less than 50% of the EOs have been surveyed or had the results reported to the TXNDD in the last 25 years.

The result of having only older ecological community information in the TXNDD is that there is no way to assess the current conservation status of the ecological communities native to Texas and no way to document the results of private landowners practicing good land management. Ecological communities are a priority in the Texas Conservation Action Plan and for the Wildlife Diversity Program. If you work with a landowner that is doing a good job managing his property our community ecologist, Jason Singhurst, would be interested in documenting the results.



Ecological Community EOs

**Element:** Element of biodiversity, an element can be a species, a native plant community, or an animal aggregation such as a colonial waterbird rookery or a bat roost.

**Element Occurrence (EO):** an area of land or water where an element is or was present and has practical conservation value.

## TXNDD's Most Wanted

The TXNDD tracks over 700 elements. An element is a species, animal aggregation (e.g. bat cave), or native plant community. Here are three species of birds that are high priority species that can be detected in winter or early spring.



Photo by USFWS

### Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

Red Knot is not currently documented in the TXNDD.

Region: Red Knot can be found on the coast during migration and winter. There are rare observations of this species inland during migration.

Habitat: Beaches and mudflats.

Tips: This is a large bulky sandpiper; most winter birds lack the reddish breeding plumage. If you see a bird with a flag, please report the flag code and color combination.

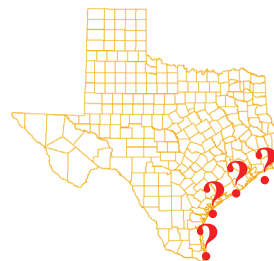


Photo by BJ Stacey

### Sprague's Pipit (*Anthus spragueii*)

Sprague's Pipit is not currently documented in the TXNDD.

Region: Winters in southern two thirds of Texas.

Habitat: Open grassland without shrubs or trees.

Tips: Similar to Vesper Sparrow and very similar to American Pipit, best differentiated by behavior, buffy upper parts with strong streaks, and unstreaked flanks. Note the white tail feathers and pale face. When flushed, they tend to fly up at a 45 degree angle and then dive bomb back to the ground.



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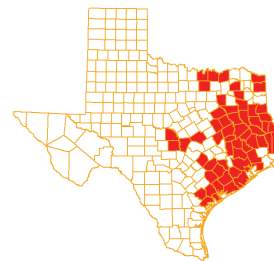
### Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - nesting pairs

There are currently 127 EOs, 98 have observations since 2000.

Region: Breeds in the eastern half of Texas, there are no recent breeding records from West Texas.

Habitat: Rivers and reservoirs.

Tips: Juveniles do not attain adult plumage (all white head and tail) until about five years. The TXNDD only tracks nesting pairs and significant wintering aggregations.



## TXNDD Profile: Jason Singhurst

Jason Singhurst is a botanist and community ecologist for the Wildlife Diversity Program with 19 years of experience conducting field-oriented research on plant communities and rare species of Texas. He has described five plant species new to science that

are endemic to Texas. He has authored over 80 scientific publications on the flora and plant ecology of Texas and in 2008 co-authored a book, Rare Plants of Texas. Most recently he has focused on tallgrass prairie conservation with an emphasis on

coastal prairies. Jason is not only a critical source of data on rare species and ecological communities; he also plays an important role in the compilation, synthesis, and mapping of data that is added to the TXNDD.

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