

Ecology and Deer Habitat Management

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- Fundamental requirements that must be considered when managing wildlife habitat include food, cover, water, and the proper distribution of these elements.
- Agricultural operations and deer management programs may have different goals, but emphasis for both must be on habitat and range management.
- Habitat management must be directed at maintaining a productive and healthy ecosystem.
- All management activities should be aimed at conserving and improving the quantity and quality of soils, water and vegetation.
- Good plant diversity will include a good mix of various species of grasses, forb, and browse plants such as trees, shrubs, and vines.
- As the diversity of vegetation increases, so does the availability of food and cover for deer and other wildlife.
- Diversity of range plants results in more food being made available during different times of the year.
- The plant community can be managed for diversity through manipulation of the livestock operation and, in many instances, through deer population management.
- The stocking rate of livestock and the use of a deferred rotation system of grazing are very important wildlife habitat management tools.
- Livestock numbers in balance with the carrying capacity of the range and grazed in a deferred rotation system will increase the quantity, quality, and diversity of range plants.
- Overgrazing reduces the carrying capacity for livestock, deer, and other wildlife species.
- Deer numbers, whether high or low, must be within the habitat's ability to properly support them.
- Knowing the deer population level and its effect on the vegetation is important.
- In many areas of Texas, the management of white-tailed deer populations may be accomplished by harvesting proper numbers of deer to prevent the continued overuse of browse plants, including trees, shrubs, and vines.
- To attain a proper deer harvest, consideration must be given to the sex ratio of the deer population.
- Rangelands over-populated with deer will have a decreased carrying capacity not only for deer, but also livestock and most other wildlife.
- Overuse of preferred plants, whether by livestock or by deer will result in a reduction of plant diversity, quality, and quantity.
- An ecologically based livestock and deer management program will not only provide income, but will serve to improve the plant community, conserve and enhance soil, and improve water quality.
- Sound management practices assures that future generations will also be able to utilize and enjoy the land.