



The Texas Wildlife Damage Management Service

The Texas Wildlife Damage Management Service (TWDMS) is a state agency created to help alleviate damage or other problems caused by or related to the presence of wildlife. Wildlife is important to the economy and to the aesthetics and health of our environment. Yet, some types of wildlife do sometimes cause problems that must be dealt with. These problems, which include damage to agricultural crops and to property, human safety hazards, and predation of livestock, cause millions of dollars in losses each year. Sometimes the presence of wildlife is simply a nuisance. Since wildlife is a publicly owned resource, government has a responsibility to respond to the problems it causes, while at the same time protecting this resource.

Conflicts between wildlife and human interests require wildlife damage management expertise. Just as wildlife species vary greatly in their needs and behavior, so, too, do human populations.

Wildlife damage management is an integral component of professional wildlife management. The mission of TWDMS is to provide statewide leadership in the science, education and practice of wildlife damage management to protect the state's agricultural, industrial and natural resources as well as the public's health, safety and property. The agency accomplishes its mission through the protection of:

- **Human health and safety** from wildlife-related diseases such as rabies and plague, and wildlife-related hazards such as bird-aircraft strikes;
- **Facilities, structures and other property** from damage caused by rats, mice, raccoons, skunks, opossums, squirrels, beavers, birds, and other wildlife;
- **Crops, timber and rangeland** from damage caused by gophers, prairie dogs, feral hogs, raccoons, rabbits, coyotes, grackles, beavers and other wildlife;
- **Livestock** from depredation caused by coyotes, bobcats, feral hogs, mountain lions, raccoons, birds and other wildlife; and
- **Wildlife and other natural resources** such as endangered species and game animals as well as soil, water and flora from damage or predation by wildlife.

TWDMS provides both technical and direct control assistance. Technical assistance involves helping people solve their own problems by providing advice, recommendations, information or materials for use in managing wildlife conflicts. Direct control assistance by agency personnel is provided when a high degree of professional skill and coordinated effort are required.

Wildlife damage can be alleviated by: (1) managing the resource being damaged, (2) managing the wildlife responsible for the damage, (3) physically separating the two, or 4) a combination of these actions. Resource management includes altering cultural practices such as animal husbandry or crop selection, modifying habitat, and altering human behavior. Managing wildlife includes altering

behavior through harassment or scaring, as well as relocating animals or lethal removal of problem individuals. Physical separation may consist of fencing, netting or other barriers.

Those who request assistance from TWDMS need help protecting themselves, their animals or their property from wildlife damage. TWDMS receives requests for assistance from individuals, groups, counties, and state or federal agencies. If direct control is required, it is conducted according to a written agreement. Usually some level of local funding is required.

The TWDMS is a component of the Texas Wildlife Damage Management Program. This cooperative federal, state and private program includes

the Wildlife Services program of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; the Texas Wildlife Damage Management Service under the administrative purview of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service of The Texas A&M University System; and the Texas Wildlife Damage Management Association. Funding support for these cooperative wildlife damage management activities comes from state and federal appropriations as well as from individuals, rancher associations, and counties.

For additional information contact the nearest office of the Texas Wildlife Damage Management Service.

Programs conducted by the Texas Wildlife Damage Management Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age or national origin.

The Texas Wildlife Damage Management Service is a cooperative program involving the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture—Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service—Wildlife Services.