

Texas Ecoregions

Descriptions and List of Endangered, Threatened and Species of Concern for each Ecoregion

East Texas Piney Woods (1): Trees found in this ecoregion include pines, oaks, hickory, elm, Eastern redbud, magnolia, beauty berry, sweetgum, tupelo, ash, palmetto and dogwood. Swamps & bogs are common. Long leaf, short leaf and loblolly pines are dominant species. Some flowers are lady slipper, iris, meadowbeauty, beebalm, lyre-leaf sage, and spider lily. Tree frogs, fox, squirrel, salamanders are common animals. Birds: of forests include warblers, thrushes, woodpeckers and chickadees. Red shouldered hawks roam the riparian areas of the rivers and streams. This region gets 36 to 50 inches of rain per year which gives this region the highest rainfall per year. The geography of the region is hilly to gently rolling plains.

Endangered Species: Red Cockaded Woodpecker

Endangered Species: Red Wolf

Endangered Species: Texas Trailing Phlox

Endangered Species: White Bladderpod

Endangered Species: Louisiana Black Bear

Threatened Species (State): Bachman's Sparrow

Threatened Species (State): Swallow-tailed Kite

Threatened Species (State): Rafinesque's Big Eared Bat

Threatened Species (State): Northern Scarlet Snake

Threatened Species (State): Timber Canebrake Rattlesnake

Threatened Species (State): Alligator Snapping Turtle

Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes (2): This region is a narrow band of 13 million acres of nearly flat land bordering the Gulf of Mexico. It is a region of rich sandy or clay loam soils and once was covered with tall grass prairies. Marshes and woodlands dot the prairies. Barrier islands protect the mainland prairie region. Some coastal grasses are seascoast bluestem, Eastern gama grass, little bluestem, gulf muhly, bushy bluestem and cordgrass. Trees and shrubs include mesquite, acacias, elms, hackberry, prickly pear, yaupon and live oak. Wildflowers include beach morning glory, coral bean, goldenrod, black-eyed susan, tall coneflower, gulf coast Penstemon, meadow pink, rattlesnake master, prairie plantain. Rushes, sedges and cattails are common. Ducks, herons, egrets, cranes, wading birds & seagulls are common bird species. Representative vertebrates are alligators, toads, frogs.

Endangered Species: Texas Prairie Dawn

Endangered Species: South Texas Ambrosia

Endangered Species: Black Lace Cactus

Endangered Species: Slender Rushpea

Endangered Species: Attwater's Prairie Chicken

Endangered Species: Piping Plover

Endangered Species: Whooping Crane

Endangered Species: Eskimo Curlew

Endangered Species: White-tailed Hawk

Threatened Species: White-faced Ibis

Threatened Species (State): Texas Scarlet Snake

Threatened Species (State): Smooth Green Snake

Post Oak Savannah (3): Approximately 8.5 million acres of Post Oak Savannah are inland from the gulf coast ecoregion. This ecoregion is covered with Post oak & Blackjack oak, tall grasses and prairie wildflowers. Other trees are sugar hackberry, Eastern red cedar, pecan, cedar elm, and black hickory. Shrubs are yaupon holly, wax myrtle, American beautyberry and gum bumelia. Wildflowers include snow on the mountain, Maximillian sunflower, common sunflower, wine cup, basket flower, prairie verbena, Indian blanket, beard tongue, phlox and coreopsis. The rainfall is 35 to 45 inches per year. The terrain is gently rolling hills covered with grasses and mottes of woodlands giving the area a park like appearance. Common species are black and turkey vulture, red-bellied woodpecker, Northern flicker, Northern mockingbird (state bird of Texas), Northern Cardinal, gray and green treefrogs, many species of snakes, bobcats, skunks, opossums, and squirrels.

Endangered Species: Houston Toad

Endangered Species: Navasota Ladies' Tresses

Endangered Species: Large-fruited Sand Verbena

Endangered Species: American Burying Beetle

Endangered Species: Ouachita Rock Pocketbook

Blackland Prairies (4): A gently rolling to level region in the north central part of Texas that covers 12 million acres. This region was once covered with tall grass prairie with dominant tall grasses including big bluestem, little bluestem, Indian grass and switchgrass. The black clay soils are some of the richest and deepest in the world. Today this is a major farming region of the state and most of the native prairies are now gone. Wildflowers like blazing star, prairie larkspur, basketflower, ironweed, goldenrod, purple coneflower, bluebell, azure blue sage, prairie parsley, compass plant, brown-eyed susan, indian paintbrush and Texas bluebonnet are a few of the many species that grow in these rich prairie soils. Rainfall averages 30 to 40 inches per year. Common animals are skunks, rabbits, foxes, coyotes, eastern kingbird, many butterfly species, lark buntings, meadowlarks, American kestrel and bobwhite quail.

Species of Concern: Plains Spotted Skunk – preferred habitat tall grass prairies:

Endangered Species: Eskimo Curlew

Threatened Species: Piping Plover

Cross Timbers & Prairies (5): This 17 million acre area is a region of alternating bands of prairie and oak woods with prairies the predominant habitat. Typical trees and shrubs are blackjack oak, Eastern red cedar, cedar elm, plateau live oak, cottonwood, pecan, walnut, green briar, lance leaf sumac, trumpet creeper and red yucca. Prairie plants of the region are big bluestem, sideoats grama, big muhly, little bluestem, pink evening primrose, prickly poppy, common sunflower, Texas thistle, standing cypress and Engelmann's daisy. Animals frequently seen include Eastern bluebird, American kestrel, red-tailed hawk, opossums, deer, squirrel and snakes such as the Texas rat snake. This ecoregion receives 25 to 35 inches per year.

Species of Concern: Glen Rose Yucca
Species of Concern: Mountain Plover
Endangered Species: Gray Wolf
Threatened Species: Piping Plover
Threatened Species (State): Texas Kangaroo Rat
Threatened Species (State): Brazos Water Snake

South Texas Plains (6): This region is also known as the South Texas Brush Country. This region of low hills and flat plains receives 16 to 30 inches of rain per year. Low growing thorny vegetation dominates the area. Trees include huisache, mesquite, anaqua, Montezuma cypress, sabal palm, ebony and brasil. Shrubs include agarita, Lotebush, acacia (thorny) shrubs, prickly pear cactus, Turk's cap, rose Pavonia and Texas lantana.

Wildflowers that are common include scarlet sage, blue mist flower, purple Phacelia, heartleaf hibiscus, and mallow species. Animal species of the south Texas plains include Mexican eagle or caracara, white-tailed hawk, Harris hawk, vermilion flycatcher, chachalaca, green jay, kiskadee flycatcher, Texas spiny lizard, javelina, ocelot, jagaurundi and indigo snake.

Endangered Species: Ocelot
Endangered Species: Jaguarundi
Endangered Species: Star Cactus
Endangered Species: Texas ayenia
Endangered Species: Johnston's Frankenia
Endangered Species: Walker's Manioc
Endangered Species: Zapata Bladderpod
Endangered Species: Ashy Dogweed
Endangered Species: Jaguar
Threatened Species (State): South Texas Siren
Threatened Species (State): Sheep Frog
Threatened Species (State): White-nosed Coati
Threatened Species (State): Coues' Rice Rat
Threatened Species (State): Reticulate Collared Lizard
Threatened Species (State): Indigo Snake
Threatened Species (State): Texas Tortoise

Edward's Plateau(7): This is a region of 24 million acres of rugged hill country dominated by savannahs of live oak, Ashe juniper, mesquite, Texas persimmon, Texas redbud, shin oak and Texas oak trees. Riparian areas have bald cypress, sycamore and pecan, black walnut and elm. The dominant grasses are little bluestem, silver bluestem and sideoats grama. Common shrub species are mountain laurel, elbow bush and fragrant sumac. Wildflowers include old man's beard (vine) Texas bluebonnet, coneflower, milkweed (antelope horns), lemon horsemint, Engelmann's daisy, Indian paintbrush and greenthread, plains blackfoot daisy and mealy blue sage. This ecoregions receives 15 to 33 inches of rain per year. Typical animal species are armadillo, white-tailed deer, ring-tailed cat, wild turkey, black-crested titmouse as well as endangered species like golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo.

Endangered Species: Golden-cheeked Warbler

Endangered Species: Black-capped Vireo
Endangered Species: Tobusch Fishhook Cactus
Endangered Species: Texas Wild Rice
Endangered Species: Texas Blind Salamander
Endangered Species: Barton Springs Salamander
Endangered Species: Texas Snowbells
Endangered Species: Fountain Darter
Endangered Species: Leon Springs Pupfish
Endangered Species: Comanche Springs Pupfish
Threatened Species: Devil's River Minnow
Endangered Species: Peck's Cave Amphipod
Endangered Species: San Marcos Gambusia
Endangered Species: Clear Creek Gambusia
Endangered Species: Coffin Cave Mold Beetle
Endangered Species: Helotes Mold Beetle
Endangered Species: Comal Springs Riffle Beetle

Rolling Plains (8): A region of rolling hills and mixed grass prairies receiving 22 to 30 inches per year of rain. This is the southern extension of the Great Plains of North America. Little bluestem, blue grama, side oats grama, buffalo grass, curly mesquite, cane bluestem are important grasses. Trees found along rivers and streams in narrow riparian zones are willow, pecan and western soapberry. Common wildflowers are curly cup gumweed, Missouri evening primrose, tall winecup, white sage, Illinois bundleflower, western ragweed, square bud evening primrose, yellow plainsman and Tahoka daisy. Typical animal species are coyote, prairie dog, Texas horned lizard, porcupine, bobwhite quail, grasshopper and lark sparrows, scissor-tailed flycatcher, ash-throated flycatcher, meadowlarks and Bewick's wren. American Bison or buffalo once roamed these plains in vast herds but are no longer found in the wild in the rolling plains or other prairie regions of Texas.

Endangered Species: Texas Poppy Mallow
Threatened Species (State): Texas Horned Lizard
Species of Concern: Ferruginous Hawk
Pending Listing Threatened (Federal): Mountain Plover
Species of Concern: Western Burrowing Owl
Endangered Species: Interior Least Tern
Species of Concern: Black-tailed Prairie Dog

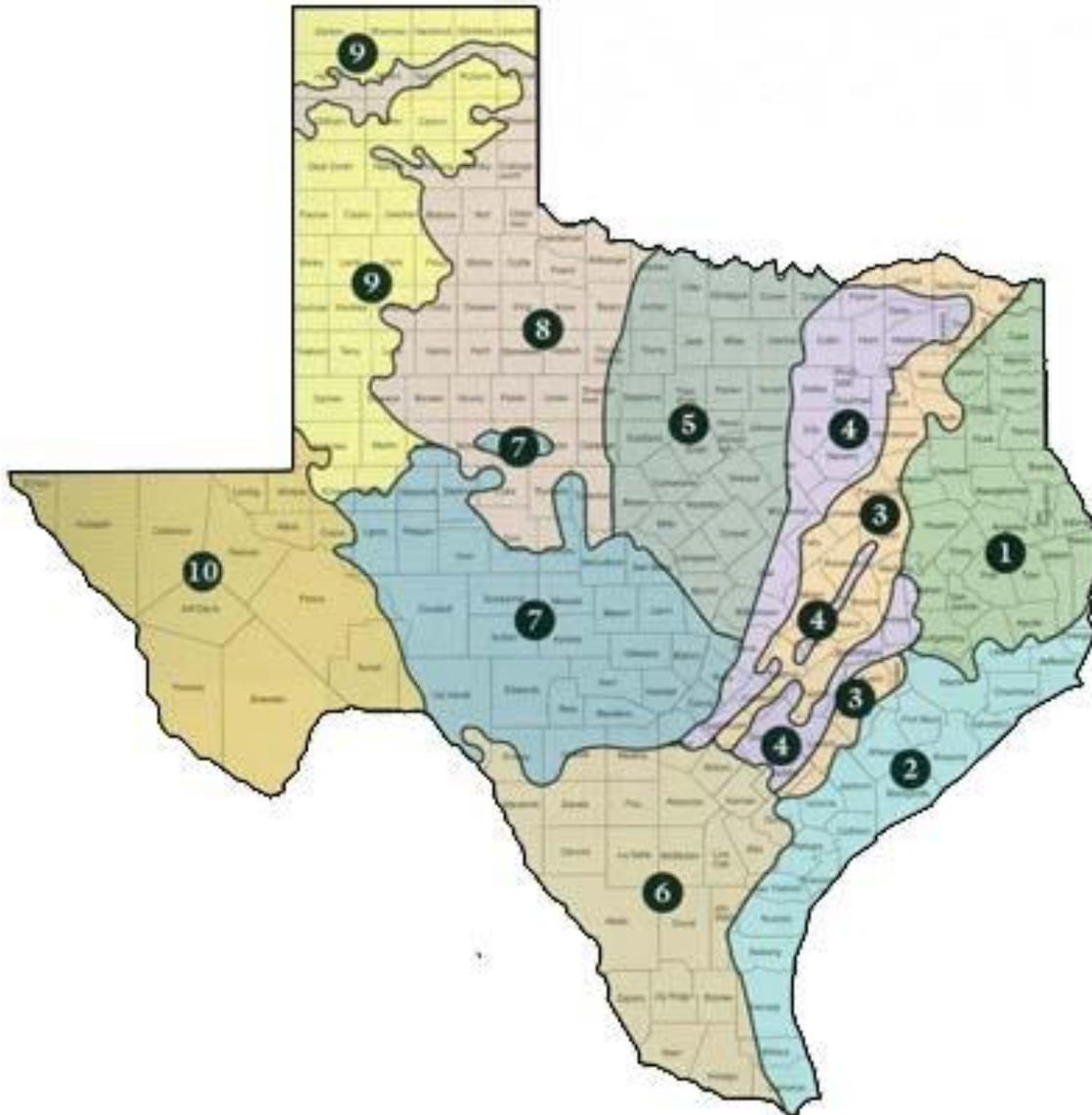
High Plains (9): This high level plateau area occupies the more western parts of the Panhandle Grama. This region is also called the "llano estacado" or staked plains because the early Spanish explorers needed stakes to keep from getting lost in the seas of grass. It is a waving sea of short grasses composed of species like curly mesquite, buffalo grass, cane bluestem, ear muhly, sideoats grama and western wheatgrass. Cottonwood trees lined the streams and some smaller oaks occur in some sandy soil areas. Gray wolf, bison, mountain lion and elk once roamed freely here but are now gone from the region. Prairie dogs, rabbits, swift and gray foxes still inhabit the region. Sparrows and flycatcher species are common birds. Butterflies are abundant when there is enough rain to bring forth the beautiful plains wildflowers such as yellow flax, scarlet musk

flower, western paintbrush and sleepy daisy. This drier ecoregion receives only 12 to 21 inches per year.

Endangered Species: Black Footed Ferret
Species of Concern: Black-tailed Prairie Dog
Threatened Species (State): Palo Duro Mouse
Pending Endangered: Dune Sagebrush Lizard
Species of Concern: Swift Fox
Species of Concern: Lesser Prairie Chicken
Species of Concern: Pronghorn Antelope

Trans Pecos (10): A large 19 million acre area of rugged mountains, Chihuahuan desert, short grasslands and steep canyons. Trees along the canyons, rivers and mountains include desert willow, Mexican buckeye, Texas madrone, cottonwood, aspen, emory oak, alligator juniper and Mexican pinyon pine. Common shrubs and small trees are mesquite, creosote, kidneywood, lotebush, guayacan, catclaw mimosa, catclaw acacia, purple sage, yucca, century plant, ocotillo, lechuguilla, sotol and candellilla. Common grasses are chino grama, side oats grama, blue grama, hairy tridons, alkali sacaton and California cottontop. Cactus of many kinds is abundant like prickly pear, Christmas cactus, cholla, fishhook cactus, dog cactus and strawberry cactus. Wildflowers carpet the desert after desert rains and may include wooly paper flower, desert marigold, yellow trumpet flower, purple ground cherry, blue gilia, bladderpod, skeleton leaf goldeneye, yellow rocknettle, and big bend lupine. This is the driest ecoregion of Texas receiving only 8 to 12 inches of rain per year.

Endangered Species: Mexican Long-nosed Bat
Endangered Species: Chisos Mts Hedgehog Cactus
Endangered Species: Bunched Cory Cactus
Endangered Species: Lloyd's Mariposa Cactus
Threatened Species: Pecos Sunflower
Endangered Species: Davis's Green Pitaya Cactus
Endangered Species: Nellie Cory Cactus
Endangered Species: Sneed's Pincushion Cactus
Endangered Species: Little Ajuga Pondweed
Endangered Species: Terlingua Creek Catseye
Endangered Species: Pecos Assiminea Snail
Endangered Species: Rio Grande Silvery Minnow
Endangered Species: Leon Springs Pupfish
Endangered Species: Comanche Springs Pupfish
Endangered Species: Big Bend Gambusia
Endangered Species: Pecos Gambusia
Endangered Species: Mexican Spotted Owl
Endangered Species: Northern Aplomado Falcon
Endangered Species: Southwester Willow Flycatcher
Threatened Species (State): Black Hawk



Map of Texas Ecoregions (from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department)

- 1 – East Texas Pineywoods**
- 2 – Gulf Coast Prairies & Marshes**
- 3 – Post Oak Savannah**
- 4 – Blackland Prairie**
- 5 – Cross Timbers & Prairies**
- 6 – South Texas Plains**
- 7 – Edward’s Plateau**
- 8 – Rolling Plains**
- 9 – High Plains**
- 10 – Trans Pecos**

(Map from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department)