

State Parks - Region 3

Feral, Exotic and Nuisance Animal Control Plan Approval Process Implemented October 2012

I. **Purpose and Background** –

Exotic and feral wildlife and their effects on native plant and animal communities have been studied extensively in Texas and elsewhere. Due to previous land uses, fencing and/or management activities adjacent to park land, many parks contain populations of exotics and/or feral animals. The overriding concern regarding these species is their negative and often disastrous impact on native plant and animal habitats and natural communities.

In keeping with the mission of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to conserve and manage State Park natural resources the State Park Division goal is to eliminate all species of exotic and feral wildlife in parks to the greatest extent practicable. Nuisance animals on parks should be removed or relocated as soon as environmental or population problems become evident or when visitor safety is threatened and shall be consistent with management objectives for specific park unit. Consequently, parks shall not be used as relocation sites for potentially nuisance animals such as raccoons, squirrels or skunks removed from other properties.

Implementation of this Procedure is intended to reduce, eliminate or relocate specifically identified feral, exotic and/or wildlife species. The primary objective is the conservation of a park's natural resources and to ensure visitor safety.

- II. Park Superintendent should discuss need for feral, exotic and/or nuisance animal control with Regional Natural Resources Coordinator to ensure the need for control/removal exists. Goals and objectives will be developed to address specific means of control and/or removal. If lethal means are utilized, then the park superintendent should coordinate with the Regional Law Enforcement Lieutenant for certification and reporting.
- III. Review the TPWD Policy - [Control of Exotic, Feral and Nuisance Terrestrial and Aquatic Animals on Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Lands \(OP-08-01\)](#)
- IV. Review the TPWD State Parks Procedure – [Exotic, Feral and Nuisance Animal Control \(SP-PRO-4.B.3\)](#)
- V. Complete and submit the site's Feral, Exotic and Nuisance Animal Control Plan to regional office (Natural Resource Coordinator, Law Enforcement Coordinator and Regional Director) for review/approval. The site's plan should include, at minimum:
 - a. Public Health issues/concerns;
 - b. Resource concerns;
 - c. Targeted species;
 - d. Visitor safety concerns;
 - e. Method of removal;
 - f. Logging & reporting

VI. Lethal Control by TPWD Staff:

- a. Follow established procedures listed in above TPWD policy and State Park Procedures.
- b. Each park should have two employees designated/certified for lethal control of feral, exotic & nuisance animals. All non-law enforcement employees must be approved by the Division Director or Deputy Division Director.
 - i. For parks with 2 or more officers – only Park Police Officers (PPO) shall be certified;
 - ii. For parks with only 1 officer - 1 Park Police Officer & 1 non-LE (preferable resource specialists);
 - iii. For parks with no officers – preferably 1 resource specialist & 1 other non-LE

VII. Park Superintendents will submit on an annual basis (Due by September 30th) their exotic, feral and nuisance animal control plan along with a report to include a summary report of the previous years' records. The annual summary report should include:

- a. Number of animals removed from site;
- b. Number of species (broken out);
- c. Different means/methods utilized;
- d. Any issues/concerns from park visitors, adjacent landowners or interest groups.