

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE



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REGIONAL DESCRIPTION

Rolling terrain covered with pines and oaks, and wet bottomlands rich with tall hardwoods such as elm, mesquite and ash characterize the forests of the East Texas Pineywoods. In early spring, understory trees such as the dogwood and redbud proudly display their attractive blossoms. This woodland is part of a larger forest that extends into Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. The Pineywoods receives the highest average rainfall in the state and is one of the state's most diverse and threatened ecosystems.

Wetlands are common and include forested wetlands, swamps, marshes and seeps. Swamps are forested wetland ecosystems that contain standing water for all or most of the year, and in Texas, are often characterized by the presence of bald cypress trees. Forested wetlands are the most threatened wetland type in the United States.

Slow-moving rivers drift under stands of moss-draped cypress trees. Streams wander between the hills and across the plains, through banks lined with pines, hardwoods and brush. Leaf litter and muddy bottoms cause the water to be cloudy, but they also add vital nutrients, providing for a healthy ecosystem. The seasonal flooding of rivers and streams shape the bottomlands and affect the number and types of plants found in these areas.

Bottomland hardwood forests play an important role in controlling soil erosion, maintaining water quality, recharging groundwater, and preventing flood damage. Bottomland hardwood forests are considered among the most important habitats for wildlife and are rich in plant and animal species diversity.

Much of the area previously occupied by bottomland hardwood forests has been converted to other uses. Many thousands of acres of bottomland hardwood forest have been lost due to reservoir construction. Timber and cattle production are important industries in the region. Farms and ranches are relatively small in size compared to the state average.

Learn more about the [Pineywoods](#) region, its [history](#), [wildlife](#), [water issues](#) and [state parks](#).

Topography and Characteristics

The topography of the region consists of relatively flat valleys formed by the major streams with rolling to hilly terrain between these valleys. There is a general slope from north to south, and the elevation ranges from about 600 feet above sea level in the north to about 200 feet in the south. The highly productive soils of the region are generally acidic and mostly pale to dark gray sands or sandy loams. Therefore, thousands of acres of bottomland hardwood forests have been lost due to conversion to agricultural production.

Major Rivers: Sabine, Cypress, Sulphur, Red.

Major Aquifer: Carrizo-Wilcox

Size: 23,500 sq. mi.

Learn more about the [rivers](#) and [lakes](#) in this region.

Major Cities / Rainfall / Elevation

Average Net Evaporation rate: 16-28 inches

CITY	AVERAGE ANNUAL PRECIPITATION	ELEVATION
Alto	45.63 in.	433 ft.
Atlanta	48.83 in.	264 ft.
Canton	44.56 in.	540 ft.
Carthage	51.51 in.	302 ft.
Jacksonville	46.05 in.	560 ft.
Longview	49.06 in.	330 ft.
Marshall	51.22 in.	352 ft.
Nacogdoches	48.36 in.	283 ft.
San Augustine	53.92 in.	304 ft.
Texarkana	51.24 in.	390 ft.
Tyler	45.27 in.	558 ft.
Woodville	55.70 in.	232 ft.

Source: National Climate Data Center, U.S. Dept of Commerce, www.ncdc.noaa.gov

Common Vegetation

Red maple	Red mulberry	Bald cypress
American beech	Eastern redbud	American beautyberry
White ash	Flowering dogwood	Buttonbush
Sweetgum	Southern magnolia	Loblolly pine
Southern red oak	Eastern red cedar	
Water oak	Long-leaf pine	

Learn more on our Wildscapes page: [Plant Guidance for the Pineywoods](#)

Rare Plants & Habitats

Texas trailing phlox	White bladderpod
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Learn more about [Endangered and Threatened Plants](#).

Common Wildlife

Attwater's pocket gopher	Marsh rice rat
Bobcat	Prairie vole
Bullfrog	Ringtail
Chain pickerel	River otter
Common gray fox	Southern short-tailed shrew
Cotton mouse	Seminole bat
Eastern cottontail	Spotted gar
Eastern flying squirrel	Striped skunk
Eastern gray squirrel	Swamp rabbit
Eastern harvest mouse	Virginia opossum
Lampreys	White-tailed deer

Learn more about these animals on our [Wildlife Fact Sheets](#).

Rare Animals

Bald eagle	Red-cockaded woodpecker
Louisiana black bear	Rafinesque's big-eared bat
Paddlefish	

Learn more about [Endangered and Threatened Species](#).

ISSUES AND TOPICS OF CONCERNS

To become environmentally literate, we first have to consider these core concepts:

1. Fish and wildlife resources are a public trust.

Did you know that ownership of land does not convey ownership of wildlife? For example, a deer inhabiting Joe's ranch does not belong to Joe—the deer belongs to all of us.

2. Conservation and management of terrestrial and water resources are essential to sustaining fish and wildlife, the outdoor landscape, and the quality of our lives.

Would you agree that we all enjoy looking at a beautiful and healthy scenic landscape?

3. Understanding and active participation in the stewardship and support of our natural resources is key.

Would you agree that when one participates in a service project such as a tree planting, that they take pride and ownership in that habitat now and in the future?

These are the first three of five core concepts endorsed by Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). Learn more about the [AFWA Core Concepts](#).

With the above concepts in mind, TPWD held a series of focus meetings with leading biologists across the state. They were asked: *“What issues in your area are most important for people to know or understand?”*

Terrestrial Issues:

- Habitat Loss
- Loss of Native Ecosystems
- Loss of Diversity

Aquatic Issues:

- Water Quality / Quantity
- Reservoirs Impacts and Biological Costs
- Fish Kills (non-point source pollution)

Explore the [Wildlife Management Areas \(WMA\) of the Pineywoods](#). Learn more about the [state of water in the Pineywoods](#) region.

Project WILD Activities Relative to Regional Issues

- Ecosystem Facelift (biodiversity)
- Rainfall and the Forest (native ecosystems)
- Riparian Retreat (reservoirs)
- To Dam or Not to Dam (impacts of reservoirs)
- What's in the Water? (fish kills)

Project WILD Activities with Texas Adaptations

- Checks and Balances
- Here Today, Gone Tomorrow
- Watershed (Aquatic)
- World Travelers

TPWD Resources

People:

- Find your local [Game Warden](#)
- Find your local Wildlife [Biologist](#)

Student Publications and Activities:

- [Coloring pages](#) for the Pineywoods
- [Teacher activities](#) for the Pineywoods

Maps:

- Pineywoods Ecoregion [Map](#)
- Major Aquifers [map](#)
- Minor Aquifers [map](#)
- Additional [maps](#) (rainfall, vegetation, river basins, etc)

Media, Videos and Web Casts:

- [Videos](#) about the state parks of the Pineywoods region
- [Webcasts](#) for the Pineywoods region
- Search the [TPW Magazine](#) for articles about the Pineywoods region

Habitat and Wildlife Publications:

Habitat:

- [Land Fragmentation in Texas: Meeting the Challenge](#)
- [An Analysis of Texas Waterways](#): A Report on the Physical Characteristics of Rivers, Streams, and Bayous in Texas
 - [Cypress](#)
 - [Sabine River](#)
 - [Sulphur River](#)

Wetlands:

- [Texas Wetlands Conservation Plan](#)
- [Wetlands Assistance Guide for Landowners](#)
- [Texas Treasures: Wetlands](#)

Wildlife:

- [Birds of the Pineywoods](#)
- [Migratory Birds of Texas](#)
- [East Texas Black Bear Conservation and Management](#)
- [Managing for Wood Ducks in East Texas](#)
- [Non-game fish](#)
- [Red-cockaded woodpecker](#)
- [White-tailed deer](#)
- [Woodpeckers of East Texas](#)



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