



Range Management: Wildlife on Rangeland

Fact Sheet

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What is it? Many kinds of birds and animals live on rangeland. A management plan should consider practices that improve conditions for wildlife. Different kinds of wildlife have different needs. Your local Soil Conservation Service can assist in identifying these needs and selecting the kinds of management necessary.

Kinds of Wildlife Identifying the kinds of wildlife is necessary because management will differ for different species. Deer, for example, need browse, forbs, and grasses for food and timber or brushy areas for cover. Quail feed on weed seed, nuts such as acorns, and seeds of certain grasses and shrubs. They prefer a mixture of wooded and open areas with small plots of low shrubs or vines for cover. Normally management will be for several different kinds of birds and animals and the needs of each will have to be met.

Management

Grazing Systems. For proper use of vegetation, develop a grazing system that allows livestock and wildlife to harvest the forage without overgrazing. This protects the quality of the forages, provides wildlife cover, and prevents erosion. Grazing systems where livestock are concentrated and rotated between pastures reduces some of the competition with wildlife.

Revegetation. Some grasslands do not have adequate plants to meet the needs of livestock, wildlife, or erosion control. These areas need to be reseeded. When reseeding, consider including plants that have special value for wildlife.

Water. Water is as important to wildlife as it is to livestock. Reliable and well distributed supplies of water should be provided and maintained.

Brush Management. Controlling brush can help improve grasslands for livestock and wildlife. But it must be done properly and in harmony with other conservation practices. If poorly planned and not followed with good grassland management, it can harm the habitat for wildlife. One method of brush control is prescribed burning. If this method is used, a burning plan should be developed, to meet the objectives of the rancher. Patterned brush control or leaving strips or mottes of brush in pastures increases the edge effect and enhances wildlife habitat for many species.

Summary. Wildlife can exist in harmony with livestock operations on rangelands if wildlife needs and species are inventoried and included in the management plan.

Where To Get Help For more information on range management, contact the local office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

All programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis.