



Mammals

At least 55 species of mammals have been recorded in the Blanco River Basin including coyotes and foxes¹. Common names for other species of mammal include the following:

- Swamp rabbit
- Common raccoon
- Pocket gopher
- Nine-banded armadillo
- Ring-tail or ring-tailed cat
- Bobcat
- Rock squirrel
- Javelina
- Striped skunk
- White-tailed deer

Land Management and Deer Populations

Out of all mammals found in the basin, white-tailed deer have historically required the most management. Just over a decade ago, the white-tailed deer population in Central Texas reached 40% of the total number of white-tailed deer in the entire state². The greatest challenge deer herds in the Hill Country encounter is severe competition for food resources. The deer must compete not only amongst themselves but with livestock (cattle, sheep, and goats) and other native wildlife³.

Several varieties of oak, elm, hackberry, and Texas kidneywood comprise the majority of deer forage, while evergreen Live oak, greenbriar and sumac are important winter forage². Vegetation diversity is important for maintaining healthy deer populations that do not cause detriment to cattle grazing areas or suburban environments.

As development increases, deer will face increased grazing range availability and fragmentation issues. In recent years, large portions of the basin have been subdivided and utilized as smaller tract ranches. Land use and ranching activities on smaller tracts (without best management practices employed) are responsible for decreased vegetative variety and increases in invasive and non-native plants. These not only decrease deer preferred habitat but also increase erosion and decrease localized water quality.

¹ Odell, E.A., D.M. Theobald, and R.L. Knight. 2003. Incorporating Ecology into Land Use Planning: The Songbirds' Case for Clustered Development. *Journal of the American Planning Association*: Vol 69, No 1.

² Young, E. L. and M. Traweck. 1997. White-tailed Deer Age, Weight and Antler Development Survey. Federal Aid in Wildl. Rest. W-127-R-5. Project No. 14. Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. Austin, TX.

³ Armstrong, W. E. and E. L. Young. 2000. White-tailed Deer Management in the Texas Hill Country. Texas Parks and Wildlife. Austin, TX.



Additionally Threatened Species

Other mammals (typically smaller in size than deer) face the same habitat fragmentation issues related to urban development and reduced resource availability caused by poor land management techniques associated with ranching or mismanagement of undeveloped land (including clear cutting).

The Myotis cave bat is found in dwindling numbers as development increases and black bears have essentially been completely removed due to human activity. Their habitat requirements and basin locations are shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Threatened, Endangered and Rare Mammals (TPWD).

Common Name	Habitat Description	Location within Basin
Cave Myotis Bat	colonial and cave-dwelling; also roosts in rock crevices, old buildings, carports, under bridges, and even in abandoned Cliff Swallow (<i>Hirundo pyrhoneota</i>) nests; roosts in clusters of up to thousands of individuals; hibernates in limestone caves of Edwards Plateau and gypsum cave of Panhandle during winter; opportunistic insectivore	Blanco, Comal, Hays, Kendall
Black bear	bottomland hardwoods and large tracts of inaccessible forested areas; due to field characteristics similar to Louisiana Black Bear (LT, T), treat all east Texas black bears as federal and state listed Threatened	Blanco, Comal, Kendall