

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Houston Toad Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement

Purpose

The purpose of the Safe Harbor Agreement is to encourage non-federal landowners to implement conservation activities to benefit Houston toad survival.

What is it?

An agreement between Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that authorizes TPWD to enter into cooperative agreements with non-federal landowners to facilitate participation in Houston toad recovery efforts on private lands. Enrolled landowners conduct conservation activities to benefit the Houston toad, which are covered under TPWD's federally issued endangered species enhancement of survival permit.

Who can enroll?

Non-federal landowners within Austin, Bastrop, Burleson,



Houston toad in the Houston Zoo Captive Assurance Colony. Paige Najvar / USFWS

Colorado, Lavaca, Lee, Leon, Milam, and Robertson Counties in potential Houston toad habitat.

How to enroll

Contact your local Texas Parks and Wildlife Biologist for your County. To find your biologist, visit https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/technical_guidance/biologists/.

How it works

- Baseline habitat conditions are documented on properties to be enrolled.
- Landowners work with TPWD to develop a site-specific Conservation Agreement to determine the best conservation practices and goals for the property.
- TPWD submits the Cooperative Agreement to USFWS for approval. Once approved, TPWD issues a Certificate of Inclusion to the cooperating landowner.
- Landowners submit annual reports, and provide access with notice for TPWD and partners to conduct follow-up monitoring to measure habitat changes and monitor Houston toad populations.



Houston toad in the wild. Paige Najvar / USFWS

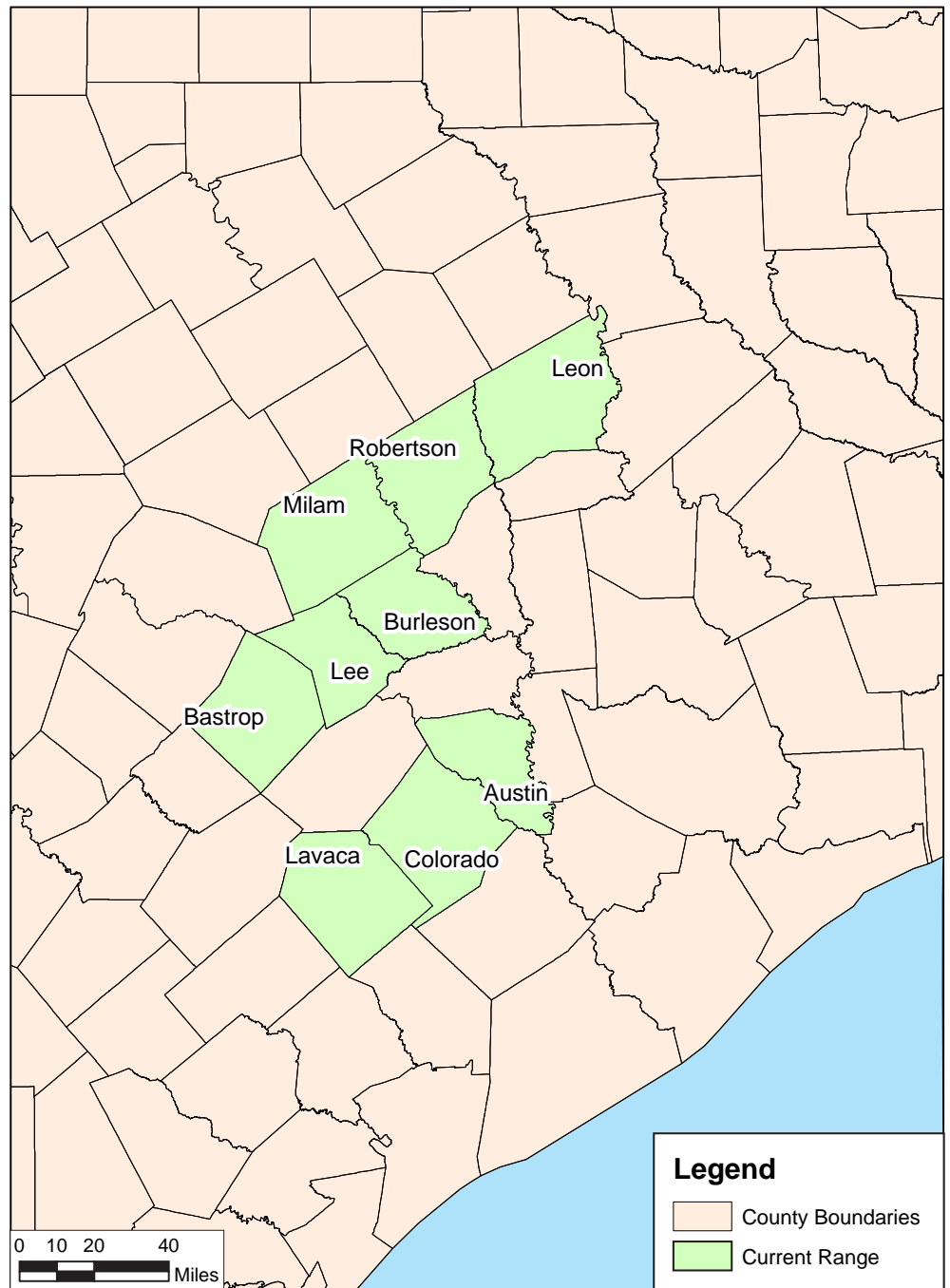
Conservation Activities

- Reduce the density of understory woody plants
- Maintain, create, or restore favorable forest canopy conditions and native herbaceous groundcover
- Maintain, create, or restore suitable breeding sites
- Enhance connectivity among patches of Houston toad habitat
- Sustain the Houston toad's invertebrate prey base
- Reduce or ameliorate specific threats (i.e., red-imported fire ants and feral hogs)
- Establish or augment Houston toad population(s) through reintroductions of captive-bred toads.

Forms of incidental take covered by enrollment in the Safe Harbor Agreement:

- Implementing the conservation activities outlined in the property-specific Cooperative Agreement
- Carrying out routine and approved land use activities
- Returning the property to baseline conditions

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Houston toad habitat in Bastrop County.

Paige Najvar / USFWS