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Service Announces Attwater's Prairie-Chicken Recovery Plan, Second Revision Now Available

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today the availability of the Attwater's Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido attwateri*) Recovery Plan, Second Revision. A recovery plan was originally completed for the Attwater's prairie-chicken in 1983 and revised in 1993.

The Attwater's prairie-chicken (APC) was listed as endangered with extinction in 1967. This listing was "grandfathered" into the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The APC represents the southernmost subspecies of *Tympanuchus cupido* (Greater prairie-chicken) and currently occurs in the wild at only three locations: the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge (Colorado County, Texas), the Texas City Prairie Preserve (Galveston County, Texas), and a private ranch in Goliad County, Texas.

Approximately 90 birds remained in these 3 populations as of March 2009. In addition, approximately 157 individuals were held in captivity at the Abilene Zoo (Abilene, Texas), Caldwell Zoo (Tyler, Texas), Fossil Rim Wildlife Center (Glen Rose, Texas), Houston Zoo (Houston, Texas), San Antonio Zoo (San Antonio, Texas), Sea World of Texas (San Antonio, Texas), and Texas A&M University (College Station, Texas) as of December 31, 2009.

A captive breeding program was initiated for the APC in 1992. This program had two primary goals: (1) preserve as much genetic variability as possible, and (2) provide birds for supplementation of remaining populations and the re-establishment of extirpated populations. From 1995–2008, a total of 1,471 captive-reared birds have been released in an effort to buoy failing populations.

Habitat destruction and degradation were the primary factors contributing to historic population declines. Current threats include extremely small populations, habitat and population fragmentation resulting in genetic isolation, diseases and parasites in both the wild and captive setting, inability of captive-reared birds that are capable of survival and reproduction in wild habitats, and poor brood survival in wild populations. The Attwater's prairie-chicken recovery must be focused on three primary areas: (1) habitat management, (2) captive and wild population management, and (3) public outreach.

For a copy of this revised recovery plan visit our web site at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/Library/>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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