

Techniques and Strategies for Managing Fish Habitat in Texas Reservoirs

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Abstract: Fish habitat constitutes one of the three interacting components of fisheries management, along with aquatic organisms and people. Historically, fisheries managers have focused on the public when enhancing aquatic resources. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Inland Fisheries Division recognizes the important role habitat serves in the fisheries management process and has continually refined techniques and strategies for habitat sampling, nuisance aquatic vegetation control, and native aquatic plant enhancement. These techniques are primarily employed to address degraded or absent fish habitat in aging reservoirs and to control the growth and spread of invasive exotic aquatic plants. Structural and vegetative habitat types are surveyed according to a suite of approved methods each appropriate to certain sampling objectives and reservoir characteristics. Nuisance aquatic vegetation control is accomplished through integrated pest management (IPM) plans governed by a host of interested stakeholders. Native aquatic plant enhancement techniques are employed as a component of IPM plans or separately through applied management projects. Details and examples of techniques and strategies for sampling, manipulating, and enhancing fish habitat in Texas reservoirs were presented.

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