

WILDLIFE HABITAT EVALUATION GUIDE
MAMMALIAN PREDATORS

Date of Survey _____ Time Start _____ Time End
Observer/Recorder _____ Weather _____
Name of landowner _____ Location _____
Current land-use practice/irrigation method _____
Project-related changes _____

GROUP MODEL

Representative Species: Badger, Raccoon, Red fox, and Striped skunk

Habitat: Badgers prefer open grass-forb habitats. The other species prefer good interspersion of open grassland and shrubs although a wide variety of habitats are used.

Special Habitat Requirements: Badgers require open areas with friable soils for burrowing. The remaining predators require suitable den sites (e.g., rock piles, hollow trees, snags, downed logs).

Food Habits: Badgers feed mainly on burrowing small mammals but will also take ground nesting birds and their eggs, lizards, and snakes. The raccoon is omnivorous feeding on crayfish, frogs, fish, small mammals, fruits, seeds, acorns, and insects; typically forages near water. Red fox eat a variety of small mammals, birds, insects, and berries. The striped skunk feeds primarily on large insects and small rodents, but eats some carrion, birds, eggs, and plant matter.

HABITAT INVENTORY

RATING

a. Cropland Quantity and Quality

a. ____

Percent of area in cropland:

11-30%	=1.0
0-10% or 31-50%	= 0.5
51-80%	= 0.3
81-100%	= 0.1

Deduct 0.3 - 0.5 points for any heavy (e.g., moldboard plow) tillage, burning, grazing, or other destruction of crop residue, or pesticide application that would reduce cover and food supply.

Add 0.2 - 0.5 if suitable den sites are present.

Rationale: Members of this group prefer open areas with a mix of herbaceous and shrub cover. Small amounts of cropland are acceptable if adequate cover is available to facilitate hunting and if farming practices support a healthy prey population.

b. Herbaceous Vegetation Quantity and Quality

b. __

Percent of area with uncultivated herbaceous vegetation:

51-70%	= 1.0
31-50% or 71-90%	= 0.5
11-30% or 81-100%	= 0.3
0-10%	= 0.1

Deduct 0.3 -0.5 points for any heavy (e.g., moldboard plow) tillage, burning, grazing, or other loss of herbaceous cover that would reduce cover and food supply.

Add 0.2 -0.5 if suitable den sites are present.

Rationale: Members of this group prefer open areas with a mix of herbaceous and shrub cover that supports large numbers of potential prey.

c. Woody Vegetation Quantity and Quality c. ____

Percent of area with woody vegetation (shrubs and trees):

31-50%	= 1.0
11-30% or 51-70%	= 0.5
71-90%	= 0.3
0-10% or 91-100%	= 0.1

Rationale: Members of this group prefer open habitats with some interspersion of woody vegetation for cover.

d. Interspersion of Vegetation Types d. ____

Avg. distance between vegetation types <200 feet	= 1.0
Avg. distance between vegetation types 200-500 feet	= 0.5
Avg. distance between vegetation types > 500 feet	= 0.3

Rationale: Increasing interspersion will increase the amount of habitat edge with a commensurate increase in potential prey.

e. Human Disturbance e. ____

Infrequently used roads; no occupied dwellings in study area; urban development at least 1/2 mile away;	= 1.0
Occasionally used roads; 1 occupied dwelling per 40 acres; urban development 1/4 - 1/2 mile away;	= 0.5
Study area <40 acres; contains 2 or more occupied dwellings or frequently used roads; within 1/4 mile of urban development;	= 0.3

Rationale: Human activity and harassment can sometimes deter members of this group from otherwise suitable habitat.

f. Lakes, Ponds, Wetlands, Streams f. ____

Avg. distance from any point in study area to perennial lake, pond, stream or other wetland is <1/4 mile.	= 1.0
Avg. distance from any point in study area to perennial Stream or wetland is 1/4 - 1/2 mile or average distance	

from any point in study area to seasonal stream or wetland is < 1/4 mile. = 0.5

Avg. distance from any point in study area to perennial wetland is 1/2 - 1 mile or average distance from any point in study area to intermittent lake, pond, stream, or wetland is 1/4 - 1/2 mile. = 0.3

Avg. distance from any point in study area to a perennial wetland is greater than 1 mile or average distance from any point in study area to intermittent wetland is 1/2 - 1 mile. = 0.1

Deduct 0.2-0.5 points for any grazing, cultivation, burning, vegetation removal or pesticide use within 1/4 mile of lake, pond, wetland or stream.

Rationale: Wetland habitats support substantial numbers of prey and are used extensively by many members of this group, including raccoons.

HABITAT VALUE

Habitat value = Total Rating/No. of inventory factors rated

LIMITING FACTORS

ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES