



Houston Toad Conservation

Texas boasts the most toad species of any state, but the Houston toad is our only "endemic" toad—found in the Lone Star State and nowhere else on earth. They're also one of the most endangered amphibians in North America.

Due to urban development, the Houston toad was lost from its namesake city (Houston) in the 1970's. Today, there could be less than a thousand toads left in the wild.

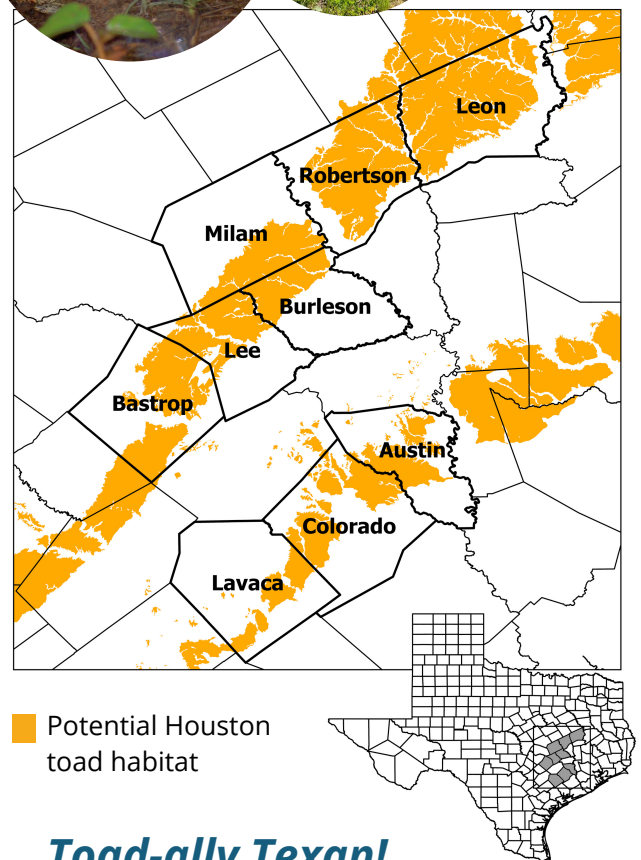
To aid in Houston toad recovery, there are ongoing partner conservation efforts including captive breeding at Texas zoos and aquatic centers, reintroductions, and habitat management and restoration work in the imperiled Post Oak Savannah ecoregion of Texas.

Habitat Restoration on Private Lands: Boots-on-the-ground Conservation

The Houston toad's current potential range includes the following counties in the Post Oak Savannah ecoregion—parts of Austin, Bastrop, Burleson, Colorado, Lee, Leon, Lavaca, Milam, and Robertson (see map to the right).

Funding from state and federal programs has helped provide technical assistance and cost-share opportunities for voluntary habitat restoration projects on private lands in these counties.

Activities include mulching, herbicide, native seed planting, prescribed fire, and grazing to open up savannah understory from woody brush overgrowth. These projects not only benefit the Houston toad and other wildlife, but also help reduce wildfire risk, and improve water quality.



Toad-ally Texan!

The Houston toad is only found in Texas.

Their current potential range includes the following counties in the **Post Oak Savannah ecoregion—parts of Austin, Bastrop, Burleson, Colorado, Lee, Leon, Lavaca, Milam, and Robertson. ©TPWD.**



Restoring Post Oak Savannah, one of Texas's most imperiled ecoregions

The Post Oak Savannah ecoregion is a uniquely Texan landscape, stretching across east-central Texas and forming a transitional zone between the Pineywoods and the Blackland Prairies. Defined by open grasslands dotted with oak and other native trees, this region once supported a rich diversity of native plants and wildlife. Today, however, it stands as one of Texas's most threatened ecoregions.

Alongside pressures from land conversion and development, one of the most serious threats is brush encroachment—particularly the spread of invasive woody species like yaupon holly and eastern red cedar that once would have been controlled through fire. These aggressive plants outcompete light and space for native grasses and forbs, degrading habitat quality. Native bunch grasses and forbs are critical for struggling wildlife as they support healthy insect populations, provide forage, shelter, and navigable cover from predators.

Without targeted restoration and land management efforts, including brush control, this once-vast savannah could be lost to dense thickets. Today, voluntary conservation efforts in collaboration with private landowners are crucial to protect what remains of this distinctive and increasingly rare Texas landscape.

Habitat restoration projects can help support population recovery of the Houston toad by restoring ecological and hydrologic function to degraded Post Oak Savannah habitat in Texas.

A restored healthy Post Oak Savannah habitat is not only good for the Houston toad—but for Bobwhite quail, Wild turkey, Monarch butterfly, songbirds, and other wildlife.

These projects also provide numerous benefits to human communities by supporting sustainable land management, increasing outdoor recreation opportunity, improving aquifer recharge, and mitigating wildfire risk.

Are you a landowner in a Post Oak Savannah county? Contact Paul.Crump@tpwd.texas.gov to learn more.



Above: Overgrown thicket before a restoration project. This landscape supports very little wildlife.

Below: After a restoration project, light has opened up and native grasses and forbs can grow.

Since 2021, similar projects have impacted a total of 2,700 acres on 34 separate projects focused on brush management and prescribed fire on private lands.