



Wildlife MYTHBUSTERS



Farmer John
Says

Other
Wildlife

Ecology

Game
Species

Habitat
Management

100

100

100

100

100

200

200

200

200

200

300

300

300

300

300

400

400

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Habitat Management 100

All grasses and forbs are early successional species.

While many are first to establish after disturbance, there are late successional species that live in grasslands, shrubland, savannas, etc.

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Habitat Management 200

Moist soil units are a cultivated crop.

Moist soil is a composition of multiple native annual plants that can survive both dry and wet conditions.

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Habitat Management 300

The best habitat for forest-dwelling wildlife is high-density hardwood stands with a closed canopy.

Wildlife depend on diverse sources of cover including grasses, forbs and shrubs in the understory, which requires sufficient sunlight exposure on the forest floor.

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Habitat Management 400

Habitat management for one species provides benefit to all priority species in the habitat.

While restoration or ecosystem management generally provides better habitat for most of the species, it does not always benefit all niches in an ecosystem. Maximizing benefit to wildlife requires a more strategic approach.

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Habitat Management 500

By enacting a management plan for priority species, landowners can expect to see that species present within a year or two.

There is no guarantee that target species will return to an area even after restoration has begun.

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Game Species 100

Deer only eat acorns.

While deer eat acorns for part of the year, they have a varied diet of herbaceous forage for much of the year.

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Game Species 200

Removing cull bucks increases genetic potential of the herd, improving buck size overall.

Because does breed with multiple bucks during the breeding season, and does provide half the genetic diversity, removing cull bucks does not have this effect.

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Game Species 300

Turkeys are “gobbled out” by April when the hunting season begins in Arkansas.

While activity does decrease during the season, gobble counts increase after the season closes. The timing of the hunting season is intended to increase brood success.

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Game Species 400

Daily Double

Fire ants are the reason for
quail decline in Arkansas.

**Habitat degradation is the
leading cause of quail decline.**

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Game Species 500

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) has never killed a deer.

AGFC research in the Ozarks indicates that...

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Ecology 100

Lack of fur trapping has led to an overabundance of predators has caused quail declines in Arkansas.

Studies have clearly shown that removing apex predators like coyotes and bobcats results in a decrease in quail numbers, due to a release of mesopredators like raccoons and possums that are more efficient nest predators. If predation is a problem, it's most likely habitat driven. Trap and predator hunt if you want to, but don't pull any resources away from habitat work to do so.

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Ecology 200

Cool-season burns are the only suitable way to implement prescribed fire in Arkansas.

Growing season burns, when implemented correctly, also provide benefit to wildlife habitat.

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Ecology 300

My forester says burning will cat face all my red oaks and decrease their value.

It might, if you burn wrong. For red oak species invading a drier site that should be dominated by white, post or chinkapin oaks, these red oaks have crept up slope. For a proper restoration, they should be harvested out, if possible, before burning. For more mesic north and east slope stands that should be red oak dominated, these areas should only see low intensity fire every 5-10 years. In that case, you won't harm them.

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Ecology 400

Burning during the nesting season is bad for turkey.

Turkey nesting starts in late March and peaks in April, which does overlap when most acreage is burned in hardwood leaf litter stands. Research shows that turkeys preferentially choose to nest in 1-2 year rough and very few (single digit percentage) nests in 3+ year rough are successful. So yes, you are burning during nesting season, but you and the turkeys are picking different units. They are nesting where you burned last year. Any nests you do disturb had a very low chance of survival. Research has shown that the potential, short-term impact is outweighed by the guaranteed, long-term benefit.

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Ecology 500

Ducks and other waterfowl are monogamous.

Many mating pairs “divorce” at the end of the mating season, and “cheating” is common.

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Other Wildlife 100

Venomous snakes in Arkansas are deadly.

While venomous snakes in Arkansas are medically significant, there have been zero deaths from snake bites in the state since the late 1800's.

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Other Wildlife 200

Alligators, bear and cougars are dangerous and prone to attack people.

Wild animal attacks are exceptionally rare in Arkansas, and these species do not pose a threat unless provoked.

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Other Wildlife 300

If you see a bat out during the day it probably has rabies.

Less than 1/2 of 1% of bats carry rabies; still, it is best to leave bats alone.

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Other Wildlife 400

Cottonmouths are aggressive and will chase you if provoked.

Cottonmouths do not chase people. Rather, if a snake is moving towards you it is more likely that it is seeking cover nearby.

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Other Wildlife 500

Daily Double

Black bears hibernate all winter.

Black bears in Arkansas do not enter into a true hibernation. Instead, they experience torpor.

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100

“I don’t need to plant all these wildflowers for quail ‘cause I can just disk my field instead.”

Best practice for improving quail habitat is to avoid soil disturbance and providing suitable plant diversity.

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200

“I found a baby fawn in my yard the other day. Poor thing must have been abandoned by its mother.”

The mother has not abandoned the fawn. Instead, she “hides” it while out foraging and will return eventually.

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300

“I swear I saw a wild black panther at the edge of my field a few years ago!”

Mountain lions do not exhibit melanism, so this sighting is likely incorrect.

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400

“I can’t restore my cattle pasture to native wildflowers because my cows won’t have anything to eat.”

Native forbs can provide quality nutritious forage for cattle.

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500

“I was told y’all would do all this for me for free!”

Although conservation planning is a free resource, and financial assistance for conservation projects is available, implementation of the plan is not a free service.

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