

Devils River Conservation Area Executive Summary

The Devils River conservation area encompasses 275,755 hectares (537,271 acres) in West Texas. The Devils River, recognized as one of the most pristine remaining aquatic systems in the state, flows through an arid landscape dominated by mesas, steep cliffs and canyons. The river drains an area of about 11,150 square kilometers (4,305 square miles), and the surface water of the Devils River runs approximately 90 kilometers (60 miles) from its spring-fed headwaters to Lake Amistad. The Devils River conservation area is remarkable for its biodiversity, occurring in an ecological transition zone at the confluence of three ecoregions: the Edwards Plateau, Tamaulipan Thornscrub, and Chihuahuan Desert (Figure 1). Integral to the wildlife and natural resources here is the persistence of flow and water quality in the river.

The Nature Conservancy began working in this area in 1991, upon the acquisition of the Dolan Falls Preserve, located along the Devils River. Since then we have expanded our work and protected another 59,000 hectares (146,000 acres) along the river. Most of this additional land has been or will be sold to private conservation buyers, with easements that protect the river and the life that it supports. In addition, the Conservancy will partner with public and private interests to:

- Enhance endangered black-capped vireo populations to aid in recovering the species,
- Increase the number of Texas snowbells to aid in recovering the species,
- Balance the relative abundance of native and non-native fish species,
- Maintain or enhance the condition and beauty of riparian gallery woodlands, and
- Promote public recreation that protects natural resources and quality of life for residents.

Figure 1. Edwards Plateau Ecoregion



Figure 2. Devils River Conservation Area



