



Selecting the Right Tractor for Wildlife Habitat Work:

Based on many years of tractor ownership and working with the nation's largest tractor manufacturers here are some general guidelines on features and benefits of a compact tractor (45 to 60 HP). Some manufacturers charge a premium for their name but others have equal quality for a lower price.

Buy locally if at all possible, service will be a factor in keeping you running for years.

- Proven wildlife habitat performance lies with diesel tractors in the 45 to 60HP range, this is what is called a Category 1 tractor for implements and parts.
 - 4 wheel drive is recommended, this feature provides great power when you need it
 - Get a loader to match the tractor, 1500 to 2,000 pound lift is average, don't get an oversized bucket as the tractor may not have adequate pump capacity. Get the quick detach bucket so you can use front forks and change quickly.
 - If an option, get a front grill guard to protect the front end and the radiator
 - Hydrostatic shuttle shift (forward/reverse) makes the operation very easy, versus manual gear shift
 - Rear work lights, hooking or unhooking implements or backing at night is a challenge
 - Rear electrical hook up for sprayers, wagons, trailers and general use. Have the standard commercial 7 point connection installed.
 - Rear hydraulic connections (quick connects) allow use of three point implements with hydraulic options like a backhoe, mower, small seed drill or planter, wood splitter etc.
 - The tractor may or may not come with a straight drawbar and a sway bar, get both.
- 3 Point: Depending on the model, make sure the 3 point has a lift capability at the end of the arms to match all the implements you want to use, and can lift high enough. For the compact tractors about 1500 pounds is average, some going to 2300 pounds.
- Tires-we recommend AG tires with the front tires filled with puncture prevention liquids and the rear tires turned out (wider stance) for stability and filled with calcium to provide weight to compensate for loader use. AG tires provide very good traction in pastures and woods work.



4 WD and loader



Front grill guard



Shuttle shift



Rear hydraulics



Ag tire



Rear lights



Rotary mower



Roll cage

- PTO: the power take off rating should be close to the HP of the tractor, you may lose a few HP at the PTO but not much. The PTO rating must match implements you intend to use.
- Roll cages come with all tractors, use them. We do not recommend cabs if you have a lot of work in the woods, chances are very high you will put a limb through the cab, or damage it from overhanging limbs.
- First implements: the most popular implements for woods and pasture work are a rotary mower harrows, and a set of forks. The forks are a huge asset moving trees, brush piles (all at once) and limbs. The rotary mower is recommended for road maintenance or crop height not for recreational mowing of fields and pastures
- Service: have the tractor serviced at an authorized dealer in accordance with the owner's manual, do not skimp here. If taken care of properly, tractors last for family generations. Learn what you can service regularly and do it.

For more information on Compact Tractors and their use in wildlife habitat work, contact Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, Inc. at ADMIN@quwf.net or call 417-345-5960.



3-point hitch and electrical



Front forks