



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Southeast Region

SOUTHEASTERN CURRENTS

MARCH 2008 NEWSLETTER

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Hunters sentenced for Attempted Take of Black Bear on Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

On Monday, January 28, 2008, United States District Court Judge Terrence Boyle of the Eastern District of North Carolina sentenced Benjamin N. York (59) of Manns Harbor, North Carolina, to a \$10,000 fine and five years of probation for the Attempted Take of Black Bear on Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. York's son, Clarence T. York (23), also of Manns Harbor, was given a sentence of a \$1,000 fine and three years of probation for the same charges. For the duration of their probations, both men have had their hunting privileges cancelled and have been banned from Pocosin Lakes and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuges.



Walkway from hunt club land to refuge land by which they gained access. Photo by Mark Cagle, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

In early December, 2005, officers with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission discovered walkways, tree stands, and baited sites on Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. Subsequently, Clarence York and another individual were apprehended hunting for bear on the refuge at night. Further investigation determined that Benjamin York, a member of the adjacent hunting club, had coordinated and fully participated in the illegal activities on the refuge.



Tree stand from which the men hunted for bear over bait on the refuge. Photo by Mark Cagle, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

The third party involved pled guilty and will be sentenced this month.

The case was handled jointly by Refuge Officers at Mattamuskeet and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuges and Conservation Officers with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. and was prosecuted by the Assistant United States Attorney Barbara Kocher.

Submitted by Chris Smith, Mattamuskeet NWR, Swanquarter, NC

Snakes, turtles, alligators and great blue herons

After seeing these species at the Miami Port of Entry and the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, six congressional committee staff from the Senate and House pondered the possibility of spending the August congressional recess on an RV tour of Service facilities across the Southeast Region.

The tour began in Miami where they learned about the Service's Law Enforcement program and the coordination that takes place between the Service, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol and USDA as wildlife shipments move through the Miami airport. Miami is known as the Gateway to Latin America, and the airport has more international flights than any other airport in the U.S. In Florida, there are more than 5,000 pet dealers licensed by the State, and 957 businesses currently hold Service licenses for the international trade in fish and wildlife resources. In FY 2007, Miami was the fifth largest port of entry for wildlife trade with more than 10,000



Committee staff tour Lox NWR by airboat. Photo by: Kristi Watkins

declared wildlife shipments. "Snakes on a plane" was a common phrase uttered by the committee staff as they anxiously watched wildlife inspectors check out a shipment of boa constrictors and turtles. They also saw illegal items that had been seized such as coral, polar bear skins, and reptilian leathers.

From Miami the group headed north to Boynton Beach for an airboat tour of Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. This was the first visit to a national wildlife refuge for several who were excited to have their Blue Goose Passport book stamped. Located on the northern end of the Everglades, the refuge is nearly 144,000 acres and hosts roughly 300,000 visitors annually. With nearly 80,000 acres infested with invasive exotics, the group saw lots of lygodium and melaleuca including several treated areas. There was much excitement and anticipation as the first alligator was spotted lurking just below the water's surface. As everyone reached for their cameras, the gator plunged below. Not to worry. Upon returning to the boat dock, an eight-foot gator posed for pictures at the water's edge.

It was a successful trip, and the committee staff was appreciative of the information received and the employees they met. "When can we schedule our next trip to the Southeast Region?" was the one parting question they all asked. That's quite a compliment on how they view the Service's mission and the people who carry it out each day.



Resident Agent-in-Charge Eddie McKissick and Wildlife Inspector Carlos Pages hold a boa while answering questions. Photo by: Kristi Watkins



Committee staff listen as Wildlife Inspector Bruce Walker explains procedure for checking shipments. Photo by: Kristi Watkins

Submitted by Kristi Watkins, External Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia

Behind the Scenes--

A Far Eastern Pintail: The story behind that Japanese duck



Pintail Duck. NCTC photo library.

Last Saturday's article by Al Jones drew a "Wow!" right out of me as soon as I saw the headline - Japanese Duck Killed in Delta.

What followed was the story of how a Northern Pintail that had been banded on Hyoko Lake in Niigata Prefecture, Japan, had been shot by Georgia duck hunter Freddie Scott near Ruleville. The duck was at least 8 years old.

Now, a duck flying the 6,700 miles from Japan to the Mississippi Delta is pretty impressive, but several questions popped into my mind.

What is a Northern Pintail doing in Japan? Just where is this Lake Hyoko? Who banded this bird? How does one catch a Northern Pintail to band him? How does a wild duck get to be 8 years old? What is the best way to cook an 8-year-old duck?

Thanks to the Internet, I was able to answer most of my questions. With apologies to Paul Harvey, here is "the rest of the story."

To start with, this duck was no more Japanese than he was Mississippian. Northern Pintails do not nest in either place. They do, however, nest all across the upper half of the Northern Hemisphere wherever they can find their preferred habitat of short grass near fresh water.

The Dakotas are an important breeding area in the United States, and Siberia is considered the species' Asian stronghold and probably where our bird hatched. Many Siberian waterfowl winter in Japan and some fly to the west coast of the U.S.

It turns out that Hyoko Lake is a famous Japanese birding spot, a small man-made lake that has been key in the recovery of both Tundra and Whooper Swans in Japan. In 1950 four swans wintered at Hyoko Lake; now 5,000 swans are joined at their daily feedings by thousands of ducks, including pintails.

Ryuhei Honma, a scientist who specializes in studying the Northern Pintails at Lake Hyoko, banded the bird. On Feb. 12, 2000, he put a band reading 10A75422 on an adult bird that would fly deep into another continent before meeting up with Freddie Scott on the third of January. Honma reports that he and his team catch ducks by using a handmade net or simply by hand. Although Northern Pintails are notoriously skittish and quick to flush, a picture of the Hyoko feeding frenzy shows how it can be done.

So, how does a duck get to be 8 years old? Luck. Although just about everything out there with a tooth, claw, or firearm likes to eat duck, there is no reason that a healthy pintail couldn't live well into its teens. In fact, the longevity record for a captive Northern Pintail is 22 years and 2 months.

Through license fees and conservation organizations like Ducks Unlimited, hunters have spent billions of dollars in habitat restoration, but pintail numbers have fallen for the last 30 years. They are now third on the National Audubon Society's Common Birds in Decline list.

Duck hunters aren't the pintail's major enemy, the loss of nesting habitat is. The short-grass pothole prairies that these birds depend upon are being plowed under for row crops faster than ever.

I'm no hunter, but I'll buy a Federal Duck Stamp in memory of old 10A75422. And you'll never guess what duck is on the stamp this year.

Oh, I almost forgot - how do you cook an old duck?

Well, I didn't have to look that one up. I would make a slow-simmered pintail gumbo with some good andouille sausage and plenty of fresh jalapenos.

This article was first published in the Sun Herald (Gulfport, Mississippi) on February 2, 2008. It is reprinted here by permission of the author Ronnie Blackwell, a writer and bird-watcher living in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Bragging Rights --



A successful hunt! Pictured along with the happy hunter and his friend is Christine Willis, FWS, Earl Brown and Bill Ridener, KDFWR. Photo by John Watkins.

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' Elk Restoration Program an overwhelming success

Ten years ago, former Governor Paul Patton opened a door of a livestock trailer and released seven elk in eastern Kentucky. An additional 1,542 elk, approximately two-thirds of them from Utah, would follow over the next few years. Today, the herd numbers approximately 6,500 animals.

On October 6, 2001, Kentucky's long dormant elk hunting heritage returned. The restoration of elk to eastern Kentucky has provided sportsmen a unique hunting opportunity for each of the last six years, and participation and interest in elk watching continues to increase. More than 31,000 hunters from 48 states applied for one of the 350 elk permits made available for the 2007 elk hunt.

KDWR's Elk Restoration Program is supported by federal funding from the Wildlife Restoration Program administered by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region, Division of Federal Assistance. For information on the 2008-2009 elk season visit <http://www.fw.ky.gov>.

Submitted by John Watkins, Federal Assistance, Atlanta, Georgia

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge adds Sunday morning bird walks for winter and spring

For many years, volunteers Pat and Neal Moore have led public Bird Walks year round on Friday mornings on Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. During the spring, summer, and fall, Wednesday and Thursday Bird Walks are added to the schedule to accommodate larger numbers of visitors. Since winter brings "week-end warriors" to the Outer Banks during the colder months, the refuge will be offering both Friday and Sunday morning Bird Walks beginning mid-February and extending through April, 2008. Like the other walks, the Sunday Bird Walk will begin at 8 a.m. and meet on the front porch of the Visitor Center. These walks will be led by volunteer Ron Marchand.



Ron Marchand and Pat Moore.
Photo by Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy, Times Printing Company.

Submitted by Bonnie Strawser, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Manteo, North Carolina



Hatchery Entrance Sign – Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery is a popular destination for tourists visiting the Cumberland Plateau region. Photo by Andrew Currie.

Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery chosen for inclusion in nature viewing trail

Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery has been selected for inclusion in the Cumberland Plateau Nature Viewing Trail. A total of 78 sites were nominated and assessed by Fermata, Inc., a nature tourism consulting firm hired to assess the sites and help create the Trail. Forty-eight sites, within the 25-county Cumberland Plateau region, were selected for inclusion in the Trail. Sites were judged based on 23 characteristics including aesthetics, appeal, significance, safety, and presence of cultural and historic assets.

The Alliance for the Cumberlands is a non-profit coalition of over 50 member groups dedicated to the ecological and economic sustainability of the Cumberland Plateau region. The Alliance, with funding from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation RTP Education Fund, hired Fermata and began the process of planning and designing the Trail a year ago. Creation of the Trail is part of a larger effort to achieve federal designation of the Cumberland Plateau as a National Heritage Corridor. The Trail extends from the Alabama border to the Kentucky border and is intended to increase local economic development through increased tourism and greater awareness of the region's unique natural, cultural, and historic identity. To learn more about the Alliance, go to their web site at www.allianceforthecumberlands. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Andrew Currie, Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery, Celina, Tennessee

Wonderful Workamping at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

What do the states of Vermont, California, and Texas have in common? Well, when it comes to raising fish, particularly trout, they all have Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery as a unique trait. Wolf Creek currently hosts three volunteer couples. Known as Workampers, these volunteers live full-time in their personal motor home or RV on a free campsite provided by the hatchery. In exchange for the site and other amenities, the volunteers give of their time and talents by helping to fulfill the hatchery mission. Whether it is a day spent helping to clean raceways and grade fish or serving at the Visitor/Environmental Education Center front desk, Wolf Creek would not be able to function as well as it does without the help of these dedicated volunteers!



These full-time volunteers stop to enjoy a moment of camaraderie to celebrate a fellow volunteer's birthday during their time as staff members and neighbors at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery. Photo by Kat Lynn.

Currently in residence at the hatchery are Rich and Sherry Moesch of Orwell, Vermont; Ralph and Karen Parrish of Corpus Christi, Texas; and Stew and Sue Nash of Moreno Valley, California. The photo shows all three couples and also includes Terry and Lynne Sammon of Goshen, Indiana, who plan to volunteer at the hatchery starting October 2008. Popularity and interest in Wolf Creek's volunteer program is rapidly growing, and it is with much gratitude that the hatchery looks forward to working with these volunteers and others to follow! Last year alone the hatchery saved \$208,403.31 through volunteer efforts.

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky



NERR Biologist Jennifer Buchanan talks about carnivorous plants and their role in the savanna. Photo by Emily Neidigh.

Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge hosts sparrow sweep

On Saturday afternoon, February 2, Grand Bay National Wildlife Refuge co-hosted a Sparrow Sweep with the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (GNDNERR), and the Mississippi Coast Audubon Society. The Sparrow Sweep took visitors through the Pine Savanna Wetlands of the refuge in honor of World Wetlands Day. The theme of the event was Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People.

During this activity, participants, led by ornithologists Mark Woodrey and Jake Walker of the GNDNERR, scampered throughout the wet pine savanna habitats of the refuge flushing up rare Henslow's and LeConte's Sparrows, Yellow Rails and other secretive grassland birds in order to temporarily net and collect data on them. The visitors also went on a carnivorous plant walk

to learn about the unique plants and the ecology of the savanna. Through this event, the participants learned about the importance of conserving our coastal wetland habitats and their inhabitants. Approximately 70 people attended, including two Girl Scout troops.



NERR Biologist Mark Woodrey explains how to work together to 'sweep' sparrows into a mist net. Photo by Emily Neidigh.

Submitted by Emily Neidigh, Gulf Coast Refuge Complex, Gautier, Mississippi



Russ Webb uses the endangered gopher tortoise to talk about how things are connected in the natural world. Photo by Amy Ochoa.

Russ Webb visits local elementary school in celebration of Georgia Day

In celebration of the founding of the State of Georgia on February 12, 1778, Carver Elementary in Richmond Hill hosted Georgia Day. Russ Webb, biologist from Savannah National Wildlife Refuge, participated in the educational opportunity by talking about the variety of natural resources of Georgia. Five groups of students spent 30 minutes learning about resource conservation. Webb brought along several live props. The gopher tortoise, Georgia's official state reptile, provided a perfect segue for Webb to discuss how one resource can affect many. The use of tortoise burrows by other species in peril such as the eastern indigo snake and more than 360 other species of animals demonstrated how natural resources are linked.

Submitted by Amy Ochoa, Savannah National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Savannah, Georgia

Trumpeter swans migrate to Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge

Most birds have to fly hundreds of miles south to find wintering grounds. But 13 young trumpeter swans from Iowa hitchhiked down the interstate highway on a trailer pulled by a mini-van destined for Holla Bend NWR. Their arrival on January 24 began a three-year program to reintroduce trumpeter swans to Arkansas, historically winter habitat for these large birds.

These young swans are the first participants in an effort to restore the migrating instinct lost from most trumpeter swans restored to the upper Midwest. The process behind the release is called "reverse migration imprinting." The idea is to bring south young birds that have never migrated and let them use their instincts to return to Iowa. The effort is a joint venture between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Trumpeter Swan Society, and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.



The young Iowa trumpeter swans in their new winter home at Holla Bend NWR. Photo by Carla Mitchell.

Submitted by Carla Mitchell, Holla Bend/Logan Cave National Wildlife Refuges, Dardanelle, Arkansas



A wood duck box, blue bird house, and purple martin rack system.
Photo by Rosla Plant.

Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery makes enhancements to attract birds

Friends of Warm Springs Hatchery, Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center employees and Student Conservation Associates worked together to install purple martin house rack systems, wood duck boxes, bird feeders, and blue bird boxes on hatchery ground for Audubon's Great Backyard Bird Count, February 15-18, 2008. Tourism in the Warm Springs area has steadily grown with people from all walks of life enjoying the natural beauty and history of the area. Birders can now make a designated stop at the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery as the natural setting has been enhanced for our feathered

friends.

Submitted by Rosla Plant, Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center, Warm Springs, Georgia

Groundhog Day at Warm Springs Regional Fish Center

For several hours during a February day, biologists at the Warm Springs Regional Fish Center (WSRFC) felt they were seeing their shadows, somewhat like a groundhog does at the end of winter. Three students from Greenville High School participated in an experimental program allowing students from the local high school to spend several hours of the day following and assisting biologists with some of their daily duties. Each unit of the WSRFC (Fish Technology Center, Fish Health Center, and National Fish Hatchery) participated in the project. The biologists talked about some of the career opportunities the Service offers and what type of high school and college classes prepare them for careers as biologists. Both the students and the biologists enjoyed the experience.



Danielle Grevious, a student, determines development of sturgeon eggs. Photo by Bill Bouthillier.

Submitted by Bill Bouthillier, Warm Springs Fish Technology Center, Warm Springs, Georgia



Stakeholders examine areas of future growth in Haywood County.
Photo by North Carolina State University.

Haywood County, North Carolina leaders address growth, protect natural resources

In February, biologists from the Asheville, North Carolina, Ecological Services Field Office helped Haywood County leaders chart a course for future development. The Service's involvement was part of a Growth Readiness Roundtable, facilitated by North Carolina State University's Watershed Education for Communities and Organizations program. Through the program, community leaders from across the professional spectrum came together to look at where and how future growth should be managed to protect the county's natural resources. The Service, North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission provided input on development impacts to wildlife and how to avoid them. Haywood County is home to the endangered Appalachian elktoe mussel as well as several

listed terrestrial species.

Submitted by Gary Peeples, Asheville, North Carolina, Ecological Services Field Office

Endangered bat numbers rise, but mysterious illness poses threat

The endangered Indiana bat saw a 9.4 percent population increase between 2005 and 2007, continuing a 12-year rise in bat numbers. However, a mysterious illness in the Northeast poses a threat to this success. Biologists in New York documented the death of thousands of bats, including several hundred Indiana bats, apparently infected by a fungus which often forms white tufts on the bats' muzzles, giving the name white nose syndrome, or WNS. Researchers are trying to determine if the fungus itself is responsible for the deaths or if its presence is symptomatic of another problem. Thus far, WNS has been documented in New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Until they have a better understanding of the nature of the disease and how it's transmitted, biologists urge cavers to help prevent its potential spread. To that end, the Service provides caving guidelines at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/inba/BatAilment.html>



Bats infected with White Nose Syndrome. Photo by: Al Hicks, New York Department of Environmental Conservation.

Submitted by Gary Peeples, Asheville, North Carolina, Ecological Services Field Office



Lora Zimmerman of the Charleston Ecological Services Field Office being photographed by a photographer from Columbia, South Carolina's The State newspaper. Photo by: Jennifer Koches.

Helping media understand drought's wildlife impacts

Public Affairs Officers from the Charleston, South Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina, and Asheville, North Carolina, Ecological Services Field Offices have teamed with state wildlife agencies, North Carolina State University, and others in a media campaign to focus on the plight of aquatic wildlife in the Southeast's current drought. Their efforts have gotten several journalists in the field with biologists to see the impacted streams and has resulted in articles in The State, the largest newspaper in South Carolina; as well as The Charlotte Observer and The Raleigh News & Observer, the two largest newspapers in North Carolina. The issue has also been covered on WUNC, North Carolina's public television station, as well as a host of smaller media outlets.

Submitted by Gary Peeples, Asheville, North Carolina, Ecological Services Field Office

Development agreement results in improved and protected habitat

Concern over the possible destruction of wetlands and migratory bird habitat led wildlife enthusiasts to contact the Asheville, North Carolina Ecological Services Field Office about a proposed assisted living facility in Hendersonville. Although the development did not require a federal permit (all construction was upland) and used no federal money, biologist Bryan Tompkins facilitated a compromise with the city, the developer, and wildlife conservationists resulting in the restoration of 50 acres of wetlands previously drained for agriculture. In addition, more than 70 acres of the 137-acre site will be protected. The protected acreage connects with three other protected wetlands in an area well known in the birding community as a stopping point for scores of eastern migratory bird species.



Agricultural land to be converted back to wetland. Photo by Bryan Tompkins,

Submitted by Gary Peeples, Asheville, North Carolina, Ecological Services Field Office



Dr. Mike Gangloff of Appalachian State University discussing the fine art of opening mussels. FWS Photo.

Genetics and mussels

The Conservation Genetics Lab of the Warm Springs Fish Technology Center recently conducted two genetic work shops for Service biologists. The first was held at the Ecological Services/ Fisheries Resource Office in Panama City, Florida, and was a one and half day conservation genetics primer. This workshop included such topics as genetic terminology, genetic variation, microsatellites, population genetics, drift, effective population size, demography/ extinction, hybridization, and captive breeding. Seventeen staff biologists from several Ecological Services and Fisheries offices attended. The second workshop was held at the Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center in Warm Springs, Georgia.

The second workshop showed participants a non-invasive technique to sample tissue from threatened and endangered freshwater mussels for genetic analysis. Eleven Service people, a visiting professor from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, and a biologist from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources attended. Biologists swabbed mussels to collect cells from the viscera and foot of the mussels. This technique and several others are being tested by the Fish Technology Center to evaluate DNA extraction techniques and mussel mortality rates. Results from this study will help determine which sampling technique is the most efficient in providing high quality DNA for applications in conservation genetics of threatened and endangered freshwater mussels.

Submitted by Bill Bouthillier, Fish Biologist, Warm Springs Fish Technology Center, Warm Springs, GA

Division of Fire Management holds annual workshop

From February 4 -7, 2008, the Southeast Region Division of Fire Management held the 2008 Annual Fire Management Officer Workshop in Kittyhawk, North Carolina. Presentations and discussions centered on specific topics including safety, budget, policy, and prescribed fire planning and implementation. Other topics included wildland fire operations, aviation management, strategic habitat conservation, and high reliability organization concepts. Participants enjoyed networking with cohorts, catching up on current events, and having a good time.



Participants from the 2008 Annual Fire Management Officer Workshop. Photo by Josh O'Connor.

Submitted by Rick Struhar, Division of Fire Management, Atlanta, Georgia



Undercover Volunteer cap. Photo by Matt Conner.

White River National Wildlife Refuge initiates Undercover Volunteer program

Ask any modern child development expert, recent author of successful leadership development book, or even a dog trainer and they will all tell you the same thing. The key to developing desired behaviors is by accentuating the positive. With this in mind, White River National Wildlife Refuge has begun encouraging positive behaviors on the refuge.

The refuge has begun its Undercover Volunteer program to reward those who take care of the refuge without being told or are otherwise part of a formal refuge clean-up campaign. Last year the refuge worked with its friends groups to sponsor the first Earth Day refuge clean-up. Volunteers were assigned sections of the refuge to pick up trash along their designated routes. The event was well received, and the refuge and its Friends Group are promoting continued stewardship through Undercover Volunteer.

Refuge officers write tickets for littering violations, but refuge officers and staff also will be armed with tools for positive reinforcement. The Friends of White River National Wildlife Refuge have purchased several custom made hats with embroidered wildlife refuge logo, and the title Undercover Volunteer. These hats will be given to individuals that are caught in the act of performing positive civic duties such as picking up litter, returning broken signs to the refuge, and reporting vandalism.

The goal for this initiative is for the local communities to recognize the hats as a special award for those doing the right thing and to encourage positive behavior. And as the number of Undercover Volunteers increases, pollution will decrease because potential litterbugs will know that they could be in the presence of an Undercover Volunteer.

Submitted by Matt Conner, White River National Wildlife Refuge, St. Charles, Arkansas

25 years of cooperative conservation for Gulf striped Bass

For 25 years, representatives from Alabama, Florida, Georgia and the Service have worked for the protection and restoration of Gulf striped bass in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River System. The genetically unique Gulf strain of striped bass was once common to rivers of the Gulf of Mexico, but its population declined significantly due to poor water quality and habitat loss. Twenty-five years ago, representatives gathered to formulate a plan for Gulf striped bass restoration in the ACF. The group has met every year since and has just celebrated its 25th year! As a result, knowledge of the life history has improved and essential coolwater habitats have been protected or rehabilitated. A large cooperative stocking program was implemented, and anglers have set new records. This work has been a catalyst for striped bass restoration throughout the Gulf region.



Left to right: Jason Feinsod, Asset Group superintendent; Jeanna Sellmeyer, CEO Asset Group, Inc.; Delano Jenkins, Government Construction Representative (retired after this job following 30 years of government service!); Margo Stahl, Refuge Manager; and Tony Pardini, Engineering, Regional Office. Photo by: Jackie Isaacs.

Submitted by Karen Herrington, Panama City Ecological Services/Fisheries Field Office, Panama City, Florida



Baited impoundment next to the refuge. Photo by Chris Smith.

Hunters sentenced for illegal waterfowl hunting on Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge

On Monday, January 28, 2008, United States District Judge Terrence Boyle of the Eastern District of North Carolina sentenced Christopher Windley of Cary, North Carolina to a \$2,000 fine and two years of probation for the Attempted Take of Migratory Waterfowl Without Authorization on Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge and the Take of Migratory Waterfowl with the aid/use of bait, adjacent to the refuge. Malcolm Avis, of Pittsboro, North Carolina was given a sentence of a \$1,000 fine and 6 months of probation for the same charges. Both men had their hunting privileges cancelled for the duration of their probation.

In early January, 2007, officers with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission discovered corn and wheat in a slough on the refuge and corn in an adjacent impoundment. In addition, wounded and dead birds and empty shotgun shells were found on the refuge. The investigation of the baiting and trespassing led to the apprehension of Windley and Avis by Refuge Officers on January 20, 2007. Both hunters were observed hunting on the refuge and over bait placed on the refuge and in the impoundment where they killed waterfowl.

The case was handled jointly by Refuge Officers at Mattamuskeet, Pee Dee and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuges and by Conservation Officers with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The case was prosecuted by the Assistant United States Attorney Barbara Kocher. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Chris Smith, Mattamuskeet NWR, Swan Quarter, NC

Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge completes duplex quarters

In February, the Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge has completed its last storm damage facilities project - the renovation of the duplex quarters! After two years, the refuge's biologist and park ranger both can be housed on the refuge once again. Asset Group, Inc. was the contractor for this design and build contract renovating the duplex quarters, originally a 1954 motel operator's house. We really did turn a sow's ear into a silk purse!



Left to right: Jason Feinsod, Asset Group superintendent; Jeanna Sellmeyer, CEO Asset Group, Inc.; Delano Jenkins, Government Construction Representative (retired after this job following 30 years of government service!); Margo Stahl, Refuge Manager; and Tony Pardinias, Engineering, Regional Office. Photo by: Jackie Isaacs.

Submitted by Margo Stahl, Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge, Hobe Sound, Florida

Hats Off --



Harris is presented with a Regional Star Award by Scott Lanier, deputy manager of Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Cory Waters.

Harris receives award for work with National Fire Training Program

Donnie Harris, fire control officer at Alligator Alligator River National Wildlife, has received Regional recognition for his work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Fire Training Program. Tom Crews, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge fire management officer, applauded the hard work and dedication Harris exhibited in developing taskbooks for various Service equipment operator certifications, coordinating with equipment operators and their supervisors from across the Southeast Region.

"Donnie has been a part of the Equipment Operator Certification and Training Program for more than five years and has helped teach numerous courses during this time. Development of the new Equipment Operator Proficiency Taskbooks is a step in the right direction in providing a higher level of safety and ensuring our equipment operators receive the appropriate level of standardized training for their jobs,"

said Crews.

Submitted by Bonnie Strawser, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Manteo North Carolina



Mr. and Mrs. Moore with plaque.
Photo by Greg Harper.

Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge honors volunteer E. V. "Tiny" Moore

On Wednesday, February 13, 2008, the staff of Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge honored volunteer E.V. "Tiny" Moore for contributing more than 3,000 hours of service during more than 15 years at the refuge. Moore retired in 1984, and on June 9, 1992, at age 72, he began his second career as a volunteer at the refuge. He conducts weekly bird surveys and compiles this information in a database, participates in wood duck banding activities, and coordinates the Christmas Bird Count on the refuge and the surrounding area. He also leads birding trips on the refuge, builds wood duck nesting boxes, and shares the photos he takes on the refuge. In April 2003, Moore received the Regional Director's Honor Award for Volunteers in Atlanta, Georgia.

Moore served in World War II, attended Louisiana State University and earned a degree in accounting, joined an accounting firm, married, and raised nine children before he retired..

Submitted by Kim Randall, Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge, Rhinehart, Louisiana



Moore is ready to begin counting for a Christmas Bird Count. Photo by Kim Randall.



Chris Moorman presents award to Kelley Van Druten. Photo by North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council.

Kelley Van Druten receives North Carolina outreach award for prescribed fire communications

Recently, Kelley Van Druten, wildland-urban interface specialist of Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, was named "Prescribed Burner of the Year - 2007" by the North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council. The Prescribed Fire Council is a statewide coalition of agencies and organizations promoting fire safety and management through the use of prescribed fire in North Carolina. Van Druten's award was "for service to the Council and outstanding support for the continued use of prescribe fire as a land management tool in North Carolina." The recognition was for Van Druten's work on the Education and Outreach Subcommittee. Chris Moorman, North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council chairman, presented the award at a Council meeting in late January.

"Kelley always goes above and beyond the call of duty," said Tom Crews, district fire management officer. She's a first rate biologist, a first rate firefighter, and - more importantly in this case - a first rate communicator."

Submitted by Bonnie Strawer, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Manteo North Carolina

Paul Hartfield named Conservationist of the Year by Mississippi Wildlife Federation

Colorful, passionate, energetic, outspoken, inspiring, dedicated, tenacious and effective advocate are some of the words used to describe Paul Hartfield. From his years at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science to his move to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mississippi Field Office, no one is a greater champion for Mississippi's waterways and the creatures they hold.

Paul established the largest collection of freshwater mussels in the State, described mussels with natural fishing lures and he was the first to recognize the adverse effects of headcutting in Mississippi streams and the habitat loss that followed.

Paul was instrumental in the formation of the Mobile River Basin Coalition, a group of agencies, landowners and non-profits committed to promoting proper management of the Basin's streams and rivers. Paul worked with the Coalition to develop the Mobile River Basin Aquatic Ecosystem Recovery Plan, which supports community based watershed stewardship planning and action. The plan serves as the recovery plan for 22 listed species and complements recovery plans for another 17 listed species. Paul received national recognition for this plan, a first of its kind, and the plan is now touted as the model for drafting recovery plans.

As a vocal advocate for habitat restoration in the Lower Mississippi, he helped bring biologist and engineers together on restoration projects benefiting pallid sturgeon, other large river fish and mussel species. He led efforts to implement an interstate pallid sturgeon telemetry study, and his research will help inspire a new vision of the Mississippi River as a globally important resource.

Paul was the first to develop a captive propagation plan for endangered mollusks in the Southeast, serving as a template for subsequent plans. Through his efforts, successful reintroduction of two mussel species has occurred. Paul also coordinated multiple partners to draft a Candidate Conservation Agreement for the Camp Shelby burrowing crayfish, the first plan of its kind in the state.

Paul has authored regulations listing 21 aquatic species under the Endangered Species Act, designating 1,100 miles of streams and rivers as critical habitat, and prepared five recovery plans addressing the biological needs of 41 federal and state-listed species.

Paul is known as a trusted friend, valued colleague and respected biologist. He is a champion of the unsung, forgotten wildlife, and he truly embodies Rachel Carson's "reverence for life".



Paul Hartfield (center), Jackson, Mississippi Ecological Services Field Office biologist, holds his "2007 Conservationist of the Year" award given to him by the Mississippi Wildlife Federation during the MWF's Annual Achievement Awards Banquet on February 23, 2008. Regional Director Sam Hamilton (left) was the keynote speaker for the banquet and MWF President Jimmy Bullock (right) presented the award. Photo by Deborah A. Logan.

Contributed by the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, Jackson, Mississippi



Keith Penrose, Wildland Urban Interface Specialist, Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex. Photo by Jane Griess.

Keith Penrose receives 2007 Regional Fire Award for excellence in Wildland Urban Interface

On February 13, 2008, Keith Penrose, wildland urban interface specialist for Savannah Coastal Refuges, was recognized for his outstanding contributions in the areas of wildland fire mitigation, urban interface coordination, fire prevention and education. Keith has constantly worked to better the fire environment within Region 4 Fire District 2 - comprised of refuge lands in South Carolina, central and western North Carolina, and the coastal zone of Georgia.

In winning this award, Keith was cited as the primary catalyst in the successful effort to acquire a mobile FIREWISE exhibit, a state of the art interactive fire exhibit shared by all federal agencies and the South Carolina Forestry Commission. It is the only such exhibit within the Southeast Region, and is the only interagency FIREWISE trailer in the nation. Keith was largely responsible for working with sister federal agencies to acquire more than \$100,000 in funding to make this important educational tool available to the public.

Keith's work with rural fire departments in Fire District 2's area of responsibility also received recognition. Establishing contacts with 30 fire departments within the three-state area, he has successfully established Rural Fire Assistance, then Ready Reserve grants, for many of these departments. Through Keith's efforts approximately 150 structure firefighters have been cross trained in wildland fire. Today, the Service is assisted in prescribed burn projects, wildfire suppression, fire education and urban interface mitigation projects with these newly trained personnel.

Keith currently serves on the South Carolina State Fire Education Team, and is activated during periods of high fire potential to inform and educate the public, specifically school children, about the potential dangers of wildfire.

Keith also has been largely responsible for the development of the South Carolina Lowcountry Wildland Urban Interface Council, a group consisting of state, private, and local leaders dedicated to the education of, and assistance to communities in wildland urban interface situations. The Council has routinely provided programs to the general public as well as housing developers to create an environment which is fire defensible. The Council has also aided in the installation of dry hydrant systems in areas identified as high risk.

Keith has played a critical role in the overall refuge fire management program. Serving at Savannah Coastal Refuges his entire Service career since coming over from the U.S. Forest Service, Keith is universally respected and liked. His easygoing demeanor and willingness to "get the job done" are often mentioned by cooperators as to why they enjoy working with Keith.

Submitted by Amy Ochoa, Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex, Savannah, Georgia

Photo Album --

Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery chosen for Inclusion in nature viewing trail -- more photos (All photos by Andrew Currie)



The adjacent Obey River is stocked on a regular basis with trout produced at the Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery. Photo by Andrew Currie.



Group Fishing – The hatchery provides public fishing opportunities on hatchery grounds as well as a paved walking trail.



Hatchery Building – The aquarium/visitor center, located in the Hatchery Building is the focal point of the hatchery public use program.



Warm Season Grasses – A native warm season grasses/riparian buffer demonstration plot is located on hatchery grounds. This plot and adjacent forested area allow visitors the opportunity to view native plants and wildlife year-round.

Hunters sentenced for illegal waterfowl hunting on Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge --



Baited area hunted on the refuge.
Photo by Chris Smith.

Visitor Services --

Biologist-in-Training curriculum for Service Partners held at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery



Environmental Education/Outreach Specialist Amanda Patrick and participants work together to "build a fish". Photo by Kat Lynn.

Building upon the October 2007 launch of an exciting, fun, and engaging aquatic education-based curriculum, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery organized and hosted a facilitator training for the Biologist-in-Training (BiT) Program. The program centers on a booklet including five activities geared towards teaching kids to use their observation skills while in the outdoors. Completion of the activities in the booklet also is flexible because the activities can be completed at the hatchery, at home, or at other locations.

For teachers looking to incorporate the program into their classroom needs, BiT also includes supplemental curriculum binders full of additional activities that support the booklet's five main activities. These activities also meet Kentucky's educational curriculum guidelines. Home school groups, Scouts, 4-H leaders, and others will find the activity binders helpful and useful when completing the BiT booklets.

The facilitator training was held at the hatchery on Tuesday, February 19, and included a myriad of non-formal and formal educators from around the state representing a wide mix of non-Service staff and personnel. All had a common interest, however, and that was to learn more about how they could incorporate and teach their own BiT programs and events. During their training, all in participants learned about the Department of the Interior, the U.S. Fish and



Participants sit to enjoy an activity showing the interdependence of all living plants and animals through an extension activity known as "Aquatic Food Web" Environmental Education/Outreach Intern Kat Lynn leads the hands on learning. Photo by Amanda Patrick.

Wildlife Service, the Fisheries Program, and the hatchery.



Training participants smile for a group photo as they end their day of learning and fun. Photo by Johnna Stearns, Friends of Wolf Creek NFH, Inc.

The training benefited the Service and the organizations, such as the Kentuckiana Girl Scouts and 4-H, that attended. The newly graduated facilitators will not only serve as ambassadors for their own programs, they will also serve as volunteers for the Service in their efforts to promote and lead BiT all over Kentucky.

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown Kentucky

Wage Grade Profile --

Don Brevelle: One of Central Louisiana Refuges' greatest assets



Don Brevelle checks a wood duck box. Photo by Richard Dupuy.

"I love working for the Service," says Don Brevelle, engineering equipment operator at Central Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Marksville, Louisiana. "I like doing the work, seeing it completed, and watching the visitors enjoying the refuges because of what I helped accomplish."

Brevelle helped build a fish pond, located at the Refuge Headquarters on Grand Cote NWR. The pond will be used to hold youth fishing tournaments this spring. He keeps busy constructing ATV trails, cleaning the silt out of drainage ditches, and erecting water control structures to hold water in the refuge reservoirs for wintering waterfowl. He also helps manage water levels in the moist soil impoundments on the refuges and provides food for the wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Brevelle participates in the wood duck banding program in which he helps check wood duck boxes, and he also uses a rocket net to catch ducks and then band them.

He joined the Service in 1990, and has spent his entire 18-year Service career at Central Louisiana NWR Complex. Prior to the Service, Brevelle served full-time in the Louisiana Army National Guard for six and a half years. He then became a reservist for 15 years, retiring from the Guard as a First Sergeant/E8 in 2002. Brevelle served in Desert Storm as a reservist.

In his spare time, Brevelle enjoys hunting and fishing and flying his experimental aircraft, a powered parachute.

“At 400 or 500 feet, you can cruise above the ground and see what is going on and it is so beautiful” he says. “I like going as high as 1,500 feet every now and then.”

Brevelle and his wife Janice have two sons, Blake, aged 16, and Donovan, aged 20.

Submitted by Elsie Davis, External Affairs, Atlanta, Georgia



Don Brevelle spreads soil on an ATV trail. Photo by Richard Dupuy.

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