

Arkansas

Ecological Services Field Office



photo: Jim Rathert



photo: AETech Unit/Luke Medina



photo: USFWS/AFO



photo: USFWS/Lindsey Lewis

Photos (top to bottom)

Ozark Hellbender.

Interior least tern.

Middle Fork Little Red River

Cave entrance in Arkansas' karst region.

Station Facts

- Established: 1997.
- Staff: 16.

Station Goals

- Conserve, protect, and enhance Service trust resources such as migratory birds and endangered species, and their habitats.
- Work with private landowners to help restore degraded wetlands, roads and stream banks
- Partner with organizations and agencies to improve water quality for fish and mussels and for human use and consumption in Arkansas
- Implement recovery activities for 38 federally listed endangered and threatened species in Arkansas

Services Provided to

- Private citizens
- Federal and state agencies
- Local governments and community groups
- Other USFWS divisions

Activity Highlights

- Annually review over 200 federally funded, licensed, or permitted projects for impacts on fish and wildlife
- Annually conduct over 1,000 technical assistance, informal, and formal endangered species consultations
- Assist other agencies in project planning to minimize effects of pollutants on fish, wildlife, and their habitats

- Consult on Farm Bill interests and work with landowners through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
- Represent fish and wildlife interests in wetland and stream projects, navigation, hydropower, natural gas extraction, and gravel mining
- Partner with other agencies and landowners to restore wetlands, streams, prairies and woodlands for the recovery (or conservation) of listed species
- Work with partners to preclude the need to list "at-risk" fish, wildlife, and plant species
- Work toward the conservation of caves and springs, and the unique fish and wildlife they support

Arkansas Delta and Ozark Sub-Offices

The Arkansas Delta Sub-Office, co-located at the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, was created in 1999 to allow staff to work closely with our national wildlife refuges, agencies, organizations and landowners on many significant natural resource issues in the lower White, St. Francis, Arkansas, and Mississippi River basins.

The Ozark Sub-Office is co-located with U.S. Forest Service Sylamore Ranger District in Mountain View. The sub-office position was created to serve the karst region of Arkansas, across the northern one-third of the state, that supports a variety of federally listed and sensitive species. Karst consists of landscapes featuring unique habitats that include caves, springs, sink holes and sinking streams in terrains that are generally underlain by limestone or dolomite rock. Karst conservation efforts focus on groundwater protection and maintaining healthy, self-sustaining terrestrial habitats that benefit animals and humans alike.

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Questions and Answers

What are the USFWS goals in Arkansas?

The USFWS seeks to conserve, protect, and enhance the trust resources in Arkansas such as migratory birds, endangered species, and their habitats.

The USFWS recognizes that other users of the state's natural resources such as navigation, agriculture, and hydropower have interests in conserving and using these resources. The Service seeks to understand the needs of these users and make recommendations that protect natural resources while allowing for economic development. In addition, the Service works to protect habitat for endangered and threatened species that may be affected by resource development.

The Service reviews and comments on over 200 Clean Water Act permits for wetlands and streams each year. During these permit reviews, the Service seeks to make recommendations for modifications to projects that would first avoid, then minimize, rectify, or reduce impacts, and finally compensate for wetland or waterway losses. The Service seeks to avoid loss of wetlands, streams, and land along lakes, rivers and streams and to restore previously degraded areas. The Service works with the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission and other federal and state agencies to establish a series of wetland and stream mitigation bank sites throughout Arkansas that can be used when there is a need to mitigate for wetland losses. Wetland and stream mitigation banks contribute to the restoration of wetlands and increase wildlife that is dependent upon wetlands, streams and the clean water they provide.

What are some of the major contaminant issues in Arkansas?

Contaminant issues in Arkansas include natural gas fracking, oil drilling, metal mining, and wastewater discharges. These sources of contamination adversely affect the land and water of Arkansas, National Wildlife Refuges, and the human environment.

The effects of historical and current oil and natural gas production to trust resources are also currently being assessed in Arkansas. Partnerships between the USFWS and other federal and state agencies have been established to assess possible effects. These efforts have led to an increase in the number of sites meeting federal and state regulations, as well as the remediation of sites that adversely affect trust resources. These remediation projects will create habitat for trust resources and reduce water quality effects from oil and brine associated contaminants. Developed with interagency cooperation, the Arkansas Natural Gas Pipeline Best Management Practices (BMPs) and the Fayetteville Shale BMP for gas companies provide a framework with the goal of reducing the effects to Arkansas' trust resources.

How does the Service address threatened and endangered species issues in Arkansas?

The Arkansas Field Office reviews approximately 1,000 Federal actions each year under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Our goal is to protect the 38 endangered and threatened species present in Arkansas from further loss by reducing and removing threats to the species and by contributing to the recovery of species. Threatened and endangered species in Arkansas include the Indiana, Gray, Ozark Big-eared, and Northern Long-eared bats, Ozark Cavefish, two cave crayfish, six bird species such as Red-cockaded Woodpecker, 14 species of mussels, several fish species, Ozark Hellbender, and five plants which are dependent on unique and diverse habitats in Arkansas.

What are the USFWS accomplishments in assisting private landowners in managing habitat on their land?

The USFWS has been assisting private landowners in the conservation and protection of fish and wildlife and trust resources by providing technical and financial assistance through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program since 1995. Since that time the USFWS in Arkansas has entered into cooperative agreements with over 300 landowners, agencies, non-governmental organizations, municipalities, and other entities to restore and enhance over 4,600 upland acres, 17,900 wetland acres, and 77 miles of riparian habitat. Projects include tallgrass prairie restoration and bottomland hardwood forest restoration, glade restoration, streambank stabilization and reestablishment of riparian buffers for the benefit of neotropical migratory songbirds, waterfowl, federally listed fish and mussels, and cave fauna.

In 2007, the USFWS began a voluntary enrollment process in a Safe Harbor Agreement/Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for interested landowners in the Upper Little Red Watershed. Landowners can implement voluntary conservation measures on their property to benefit covered species and receive assurances that no further use restrictions will be placed on the landowners activities on the property. To date, almost 62,000 acres have signed or draft agreements and almost 48 river miles are protected.