

This is the first issue of the Biological Monitoring Team Bulletin. We will be issuing bulletins quarterly as a way to keep Refuge staff updated on our activities. Please call or email if you have questions!

Biological Monitoring Team Bulletin. March 2007

Workshops

Invasive Species Workshop. A workshop on setting priorities for invasive species management on refuges will be held at John Heinz NWR at Tinicum, Philadelphia, PA on March 13-15, 2007. Refuge staff planned the workshop and 36 people from FWS Regions 3, 5, and 4, and WO as well as USGS and university staff will be attending. The workshop will review available decision-support tools for prioritizing invasive species control work on refuges. Participants will make recommendations for future research and development to improve these tools and place them within an adaptive management framework. This information will be used by USGS to prepare a call for research proposals and will be made available to the science community.

Secretive Marsh Bird Monitoring Workshops. A workshop will be conducted on 16-19 April 2007 at Great River NWR, Annada, MO. Twenty-two people have signed up from R3, 2 from R6. A second workshop will be conducted at Prime Hook NWR, Milton, Delaware from April 30-May3, 2007. Detailed agenda and logistics will be sent out in mid-March. Travel costs covered by BMT.

Impoundment Management Study. The annual training workshops for conducting the R3/5 multi-refuge impoundment study will be held at John Heinz at Tinicum NWR on March 15 and at Minnesota Valley NWR on March 21. The workshops will provide study results to date, discuss management treatments, data collection protocols, and share success/problems in conduct of the project. Contact: Hal Laskowski or Soch Lor

Databases

Marsh Bird Database. On 15 Feb. and 6 March the Marsh Bird Monitoring Program Committee alpha-tested the web-based database produced by USGS Patuxent WRC. It's looking good and we look forward to beta testing at the end of March, with deployment of the beta version at the Marsh Bird Monitoring Workshops.

Water Level Monitoring. The Water Level User Acceptance Team (UAT) comprised of Refuge staff from three Regions is currently reviewing the latest version of the Service Water & Impoundment Monitoring (SWIM) database application. The database will be ready for distribution at the end of March with two training sessions to be scheduled in April.

USGS Bird Point Count Database. We are recommending that refuges enter their passerine monitoring data directly into the USGS Bird Point Count Database (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/point/>). Two internet trainings were offered during 2006 regarding use of the database. Please contact Todd Sutherland (R3), Susan Guiteras (R5) or Jennifer Casey (R5) if you want to start to use the Database or if you are having any problems entering or viewing your data. The database only accepts online data entry, not spreadsheets!!

Sampling Designs

Secretive Marsh Birds. Soch Lor is working with the Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center's (UMESC) GIS experts to develop examples of sampling designs for marsh bird monitoring on refuges and WPAs. She will present these examples at the workshop in April. A revised monitoring protocol will be distributed before the field season. Soch also serves on a committee to

develop a sampling framework for the Continental Marsh Bird Monitoring Program and will attend a meeting in Minneapolis on 12-14 March.

Landbird (Passerine) Point Counts. Melinda Knutson is completing a draft version of a passerine (songbird) monitoring protocol and a set of sampling designs for refuges. She will be working with refuges individually to help them set up sampling points for passerine monitoring. The monitoring protocol will be available for use this spring/summer for breeding season monitoring. Please contact Melinda if you would like to use the protocol or would like assistance with a sampling design for monitoring passerines.

Bird Monitoring Workshop. Melinda and Soch attended the *Bird Monitoring and Detectability Symposium* at Colorado State University 26 Feb. - 1 March. The workshop provided much useful information needed to develop sampling designs and survey protocols for bird monitoring.

Working with USGS

Cattail Fire Multi-refuge study progress report and update: A progress report and plans for FY07 field season was submitted to USGS and sent to refuges in mid-Feb. For more details please see [attachment](#).

Reed Canary Grass. A USGS Request for Proposals (RFP) resulted in the selection of a new multi-refuge study to address reed canary grass management. A joint FWS and USGS selection committee conferenced on March 1, 2007 to review and make the selection. Numerous refuge biologists from R3, R5, and R6 provided input to the selection committee. Presently, 6 refuges within R3 will be part of the study. R6 refuge involvement is pending funding availability from USGS. Contact: Soch Lor.

USGS 2007 Request for Proposals. A new USGS Request for Proposals is being developed with an expected release date during May. This RFP will also focus on multi-refuge studies to address refuge management issues. However, unlike previous RFPs which focused only on R3 and R5, this new RFP will be available for Refuges throughout the NWRS. Approximately \$400k/year for 3 years will be available for projects. Contact: Hal Laskowski

Adaptive Management Consultancy. The BMT has made arrangements for refuges to obtain consultations from FWS, USGS, and other experts to implement Adaptive Management. This process will entail on-refuge consultations to develop an adaptive management framework to address an important refuge biological issue. This consultation will result in an implementation plan for the refuge to conduct adaptive management to address the identified issue. Refuges should submit applications ([see attachment](#)) on or before 15 April 2007. Contact: Melinda Knutson, Hal Laskowski or any of the Regional Refuge Biologists.

Postings

The Biological Monitoring Team website on the Intranet (https://intranet.fws.gov/Region3/ScienceExcellenceandLandscapeConservation/bio_monitoring.html) has been updated as follows:

Report. A new report by the BMT, *Management-focused Research Needs of Refuges in the Midwest and Northeast Regions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, FY2006* has been posted. The report summarizes the results of the research needs assessment process we worked through in 2006 that resulted in the three refuge workshops (Reed Canary Grass, Forest Management, Invasive Species). The information was also used to craft the USGS call for research proposals issued last November.

Refuge publications. We've posted a list of publications by FWS Refuge staff on the BMT website. Please send Melinda Knutson a *.pdf of any publications by Refuge staff that you are aware of and we'll add them to the list as a way to highlight staff accomplishments and make the information accessible to all.

Workshops. Results and resource materials from all the Adaptive Management Workshops are posted. The website will be updated with the results of the upcoming Invasive Species Workshop.