



# Fish & Wildlife *News*



Restoring the Gulf / 8

Faces of the Spill / 14

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#### **Restoring the Gulf / 8**

*Bird by bird, egg by egg,  
Service employees and partners  
rise to the occasion*

*By Chris Tollefson, Photo by Catherine J. Hibbard*



#### **Faces of the Spill / 14**

*Some of the many Service employees  
who went above and beyond  
the call of duty*

*Photo by Catherine J. Hibbard*

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*It's been gratifying and humbling  
to witness, on a daily basis,  
the dedication and self-sacrifice  
that our people displayed  
in the face of one of the worst  
environmental disasters  
in our nation's history.*

**Rowan Gould, Acting Fish and Wildlife Service Director**

**On the cover:** *An oiled gannet is  
cleaned at the Theodore Oiled  
Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.  
Photo: Colin White, Petty Officer  
3rd Class / U.S. Coast Guard.*

Rowan Gould



Rowan Gould,  
Acting Director

## Our Finest Hour

The past six months have been some of the most difficult in our nation's history, as we bore witness to and struggled to contend with the slowly unfolding ecological disaster in the Gulf of Mexico caused by the BP oil spill. And yet, I can truly say of the men and women of the Fish and Wildlife Service during this period what Winston Churchill once said of those who defended Britain during another seemingly hopeless time in history — “never was so much owed by so many to so few.”

I was privileged to spend several months in the Gulf, helping to coordinate the Department of the Interior's response to the spill, and I have never seen such dedication and sacrifice than that exhibited on a daily basis by Service people.

The accounts, some of which you will read about in this issue of Fish and Wildlife News, are legion. From the men and women who slept for weeks on barges and left, day after day, on grueling search and rescue missions for oiled birds and other wildlife, to those who spent countless hours in the darkness searching for and marking sea turtle nests to try and save an entire season's worth of hatchlings, to those who donned tyvek suits in 95-degree heat to clean up oiled beaches — the effort and sacrifice displayed by countless Service employees has been nothing short of awe-inspiring.

Nearly 2,000 Service employees — approximately 25 percent of our workforce — spent time working on the spill. That represents a staggering commitment to the Gulf on the part of this agency, and I would like to commend and thank all of those who worked equally long hours at their home stations, meeting our essential commitments while their colleagues deployed to the Gulf.

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*Our roots here run deep,  
and we are in this  
for the long haul.  
We will not rest  
until the Gulf is returned  
to what it was before the  
Deepwater Horizon rig  
exploded and sank.*

Of course, our work is far from finished. It will take years for the Gulf to recover from this spill, and we are only now in the initial stages of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration process. The enormous task of restoring ecosystems and habitat across the Gulf will fall on our shoulders, along with those of our federal, state and conservation partners.

But as I have continued to remind people, the Fish and Wildlife Service has been part of the fabric of Gulf Coast communities for generations. Our roots here run deep, and we are in this for the long haul. We will not rest until the Gulf is returned to what it was before the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded and sank.

You have my deep gratitude and respect. Let's continue the good work together and leave a lasting legacy in the Gulf for future generations. □

## The State of the Birds 2010 Report Focuses on Climate Change

The State of the Birds 2010 Report on Climate Change is the nation's first comprehensive assessment of the vulnerability of United States bird species to climate change. The report shows climate change will have an increasingly disruptive effect on bird species in all habitats.

Scientists scored each of more than 800 bird species based on six factors indicating sensitivity to climate change, including migratory behaviors, dependence on specific habitats, ability to disperse, degree of specialization on limited resources, reproductive potential, and habitat-related exposure. Species were categorized as showing High Vulnerability (vulnerable on four or more attributes), Medium Vulnerability (vulnerable on two or three attributes), or Low Vulnerability (vulnerable on fewer than two attributes).

The resulting analysis indicates which birds are most vulnerable and in need of conservation attention. By addressing climate change and following the actions outlined in the State of the Birds 2010 Report on Climate Change, organizations, agencies, and individuals can combine their efforts and help ensure future generations will enjoy the birds we are working to protect today.

### Key Findings

Birds in every terrestrial and aquatic habitat will be affected by climate change, although individual species in each habitat will likely respond

differently. Some bird species will adapt and succeed, others will struggle—and some will disappear.

Oceanic birds are among the most vulnerable species because they raise fewer young each year and face challenges from a rapidly changing marine ecosystem. They nest on islands likely to be flooded as sea levels rise. All 67 oceanic bird species, including petrels and albatrosses, are among the most vulnerable birds in the United States to climate change.

Hawaiian birds, including endangered species such as the Puaiohi and 'Akiapōlā'au already face multiple threats and are increasingly challenged by mosquito-borne diseases and invasive species as climate change alters their native habitats.

Birds in coastal, arctic/alpine, and grassland habitats, as well as those on Caribbean and other Pacific Islands show intermediate levels of vulnerability; most birds in aridlands, wetlands, and forests show relatively low vulnerability to climate change.

For species already of conservation concern such as the golden-cheeked warbler, whooping crane, and spectacled eider, the added vulnerability to climate change may hasten declines or prevent recovery altogether.

The report identified common bird species such as the American oystercatcher, common



BETH STARR

*Refuge manager Tracy Ammerman chats with a Laysan albatross at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge.*

nighthawk, and northern pintail that are likely to become species of conservation concern as a result of climate change.

The report also offers solutions that illustrate how, by working together, organizations and individuals can have a positive impact on birds in the United States. Specifically, the report indicates the way lands are managed can mitigate impacts of climate change and help birds adapt to the changing conditions.

This 2010 report also outlines conservation actions that will be important as biological planning and design of large-scale conservation efforts take place. The Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, and public/private partnerships for the conservation of birds, as well

as the actions outlined in each State's Wildlife Action Plan will be important tools as the climate change issue is addressed. When conservationists can detect problems early enough, they may be able to prevent extinction.

Secretary Salazar released the first State of the Birds Report for the United States in March of 2009. That initial report was created by an unprecedented partnership through a subcommittee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. It showed birds such as northern bobwhite and marbled nurrelet suffer from habitat loss, shifting migration patterns due to climate change, and other environmental stresses. More than 75 percent of birds that nest only in deserts, shrub-scrub, and chaparral are declining, primarily because of rampant and poorly planned urban growth.

The report highlighted examples where habitat restoration and conservation have reversed previous declines, offering hope it is not too late to take action to save declining bird populations. The report showed birds can be indicators of the health of our environment and called attention to the collective efforts needed to ensure healthy populations of birds and a healthy environment for people.

Both reports were produced through a partnership among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), state fish and wildlife agencies, and bird conservation organizations along with a working group of the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). The partnership includes American Bird Conservancy, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon Society, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, North American Bird Conservation Initiative, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, and USGS. The working group of the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative remains strong and committed to working together on future reports. □

*Alicia King, Migratory Birds, Region 9*

## Service, Partners Celebrate 553rd National Wildlife Refuge

In October, the Service and its partners dedicated Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge as America's 553rd National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge will conserve nationally significant wildlife areas, including habitat for threatened and endangered species and a major corridor for migratory birds and bats. Located only 75 miles from New York City and 100 miles from Philadelphia, the refuge represents a new opportunity to connect more than three million citizens with the outdoors.

The refuge was officially established on October 18, 2010, when the Service acquired 185 acres of land within the refuge boundary from Mary and Dominick Sorrenti of Sorrenti's Cherry Valley Vineyards. The Sorrentis hosted the dedication, which included U.S. Congressman Paul E. Kanjorski (PA-11th), and representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Friends of Cherry Valley and other members of the citizen-led Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Partnership.

"Cherry Valley is a model for the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative," said Acting Director Rowan Gould. "It is an example of how private citizens and local communities can safeguard the places they care about. The Service is pleased to be part of the citizen-led partnership that helped create this refuge, and we look forward to working with our new neighbors to protect additional lands as part of the refuge."

The Service has been working with the partnership and local citizens to identify property to purchase for the refuge since it was approved in



*Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge.*

December 2008. The approved boundary for the refuge encompasses more than 20,000 acres in Monroe and Northampton counties. The first 185-acre parcel of land was purchased from the Sorrentis with congressionally-appropriated Land and Water Conservation Fund monies.

Local citizens, with assistance from The Nature Conservancy, created a partnership to protect Cherry Valley in 2001. At the urging of the partnership, Congressmen Kanjorski and Charles W. Dent (PA-15th) co-sponsored the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge Study Act, which passed in 2006. This study led to the decision to approve the refuge.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and many others have long been key pieces of this initiative and have been instrumental in establishing the refuge," said Congressman Kanjorski. "Because

of this refuge, people living in Monroe County for generations to come will have the opportunity to experience an untouched environment that will continue to remain preserved for years to come."

"Cherry Valley is an important part of The Nature Conservancy's work to protect Pennsylvania's special places, for people and for nature," said Pennsylvania Chapter Executive Director Bill Kunze. "This refuge will help protect working farms and a portion of the Appalachian Trail, as well as habitat for rare species."

To learn more about the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge, visit <[www.fws.gov/cherryvalley](http://www.fws.gov/cherryvalley)>. For more information about America's Great Outdoors Initiative, go to <[www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/index.cfm](http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/index.cfm)>. □

## United States Highlights Service Priorities at the 15th Conference of the Parties in Doha, Qatar

The U.S. was one of 175 member countries in attendance at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (commonly referred to as CITES). During the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP15), U.S. Delegates convened to discuss negotiations and positions in Doha, Qatar. This marked the first time that CITES met in the Middle East and the State of Qatar invested substantial financial resources to host the meeting.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Justice were awarded the Animal Welfare Institute's prestigious Clark R. Bavin Law Enforcement Award at a reception sponsored by the Species Survival Network for their successful, six-year

undercover investigation of unlawful international trafficking in sea turtle parts and products.

Service priorities were soon highlighted as the U.S. agreed with the Secretariat that Parties should recognize the actual and potential impacts of climate change on CITES implementation, and further reiterated climate change within the CITES context should be limited to science-based decision-making, such as when making non-detriment findings and listing decisions.

The United States was disappointed its proposal to protect polar bears from international trade was not accepted, but promised to continue work with other countries to highlight threats

to the species, including climate change. Conference highlights include:

**Asian big cats:** The Parties agreed to retain language calling on countries with tiger captive breeding operations to limit breeding only to levels supportive of the conservation of wild tigers.

**Elephants:** Proposals from Tanzania and Zambia to downlist their African elephant populations to Appendix II and allow one-off sales of ivory stockpiles were rejected. The United States expressed strong opposition to any renewed ivory trade. The United States also played a key role in moving forward efforts to monitor illegal killing of elephants, and to strengthen illegal ivory trade controls and implementation of the African elephant action plan.

**Budget:** The U.S. delegation identified increased enforcement capacity as a budgetary priority and strongly advocated for a modest budget increase for the CITES Secretariat to allow for the addition of a second permanent enforcement officer.

**Asian snake trade:** The U.S. co-sponsored with China a document to begin actions to address the Asian snake trade, possibly the largest under-regulated terrestrial wildlife trade in the world. The proposal, agreed by consensus, is to convene an international workshop to examine the snake conservation, trade management, and enforcement issues.

**Trade in CITES-listed coral specimens:** As a result of U.S. and European Union submissions, the CoP adopted decisions facilitating the uniform reporting of coral specimens in trade and improving the effectiveness of coral listings.

The Service invested in advanced communication efforts for CoP15. It established a new website <[www.uscites.gov](http://www.uscites.gov)> to report on the session from a U.S. perspective. The website generated more than a million hits in March. During the conference, the website provided real-time updates on actions taking place during the conference, using social media tools including daily blogs, twitter (USFWSInternatl) and an RSS feed. The Service plans to make this website a permanent source of CITES-related information for the general public, interested parties, and the news media.

The Service also participated in press conferences, a live interview with Al Jazeera television, and a media roundtable hosted by the U.S. Ambassador to Qatar. More than 440 media stories were generated, many featuring the information shared by the Service. While the Service's species proposals were not adopted, it provided valuable leadership in international conservation, and is already beginning preparations for CoP16 which will be hosted by Thailand in 2013.

Tom Strickland, head of the CITES U.S. delegation, at Al Jazeera English TV Studio in Doha, Qatar.



CHRISTINE EUSTIS / USFWS

*Christine Eustis, Deputy Assistant Director, External Affairs, Washington, DC*

Field of rough blazing-star  
(*Liatris aspera*) in Wisconsin

## The Right Conservation in the Right Places: Landscape Conservation Cooperatives

Four years ago, through a cooperative effort culminating in the 2006 National Ecological Assessment Team Report, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) outlined a unifying adaptive resource management approach for conservation at landscape scales—the entire range of a priority species or suite of species.

Known as strategic habitat conservation or SHC, it is an adaptive resource management approach that focuses on planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating habitat conservation on the landscape. SHC helps resource managers deal with high levels of uncertainty and respond to a range of large-scale conservation challenges, such as habitat fragmentation, invasive species, water scarcity and energy development—all of which are compounded by accelerating climate change.

Now the SHC approach is expanding to a new level through a national network of applied conservation science partnerships called Landscape Conservation Cooperatives or LCCs. LCC partnerships inform integrated resource management actions addressing climate change and other stressors within and across landscapes. They are true cooperatives, formed and directed

by land, water, wildlife and cultural resource managers and interested public and private organizations within a geographically defined area. LCCs support biological planning, conservation design, prioritizing and coordinating research, and designing species inventory and monitoring programs—key steps of SHC. They also have a role in helping partners identify common goals and priorities to target the right science in the right places for efficient and effective conservation.

“By functioning as network of interdependent units rather than independent entities, LCC partnerships can accomplish a conservation mission no single agency or organization can accomplish alone,” says FWS Deputy Director Dan Ashe.

LCCs along with Climate Science Centers form the cornerstones of the Interior Department’s climate change strategy. Each has a distinct science and resource-management role but also shares complementary capacities and capabilities. LCC scientists, using advanced computer models and predictive data regional Climate Science Centers, will forecast how climate change could alter regional ecosystems decades from now. That, in turn, will help resource managers determine

adaptive conservation strategies and actions that anticipate changes in habitat and the abundance and distribution of species.

With an initial federal investment of \$25 million in this fiscal year and other funding sources, the Service and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) are forming nine LCCs across the country. Those “first generation” cooperatives include the Arctic, Great Northern, Great Plains, North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Pacific Islands, Plains and Potholes, Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks, and California regions. Most incorporate parts of several states.

Interior’s FY 2011 budget request includes \$3.8 million to establish three more LCCs, and the FWS is requesting \$8 million in direct appropriations for climate change planning and science aimed at adaptive management. Ashe says the eventual goal is to create a national network of 21 cooperatives by 2012.

The level of partnership engagement and commitment is encouraging. In addition to the Service, DOI’s Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service are providing base funding and support to establish LCCs in various regions. Other key DOI and federal partners include the Bureau of Indian

Affairs, Minerals Management Service, Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Across the country, LCC partnerships are already identifying priority species and habitats within their respective geographies and launching projects that will inform conservation decisions and actions on the ground. Each LCC is guided by a steering committee composed of executive and management level representatives from partner organizations, which will provide management direction.

Ashe says he expects most if not all FY 2010 LCCs will have staff in place (including LCC coordinators and science coordinators) and governance details ironed out by the end of the year. Though it may take a few years for the LCC network to be fully functional in terms of science capability and connectivity, Ashe says LCCs will begin providing scientific support to resource managers immediately, and that capacity will grow through 2011 and 2012.

### Thinking Big

LCCs not only represent a more networked approach to conservation, but they also signal a new way of doing business.

Ashe says that during the past century, the conservation business model largely focused on protection, restoration and management. “Along with states and other partners, we’ve had great success with that approach, but the unprecedented pace and scale of climate change and other landscape-scale stressors >>

Conservation, continued from page 5

have changed the game,” he says. “Our conservation target—once as simple as protecting and managing parts and pieces—is now as complex as sustaining systems and functions, species and populations at global scales.”

Ashe says LCCs embrace the idea that protection, restoration and management are not ends unto themselves. These activities, as well as applied science, are a means to a larger outcome—landscapes capable of sustaining abundant, diverse and healthy populations of fish, wildlife and plants.

“LCCs can transform and build on the work conservation partners are doing right now,” he says. “The key difference is that our decisions will be tied to something bigger than what is in our own backyard.”

**Value Added**

That’s precisely what’s happening in the Prairie Pothole Region of the northern Great Plains, where the FWS Midwest and Mountain-Prairie Regions are working with partners to establish the Plains and Prairie Potholes LCC.

According to the U.S. Global Change Research Program, climate change effects in the region, combined with other human-induced stresses such as cropland conversion and energy development, are likely to further increase the vulnerability of ecosystems to pests, invasive species and loss of native species. As a result, the region could lose up to 90 percent of its wetlands, reducing the number of

*LCCs can transform and build on the work conservation partners are doing right now. The key difference is that our decisions will be tied to something bigger than what is in our own backyard.*

**Deputy Director Dan Ashe**

the region’s breeding ducks by as much as 69 percent, according to the Wildlife Management Institute report, “Season’s End: Global Warming’s Threat to Hunting and Fishing.”

Lloyd Jones, project leader for Audubon National Wildlife Refuge Complex in North Dakota, says the Plains and Prairie Potholes LCC will leverage existing science capacity and partnerships to help conserve native wetlands and grasslands in the region. Jones says the area has many strong conservation partnerships, including three migratory bird Joint Ventures and four Fish Habitat Partnerships. Existing Service science and strategic conservation planning capacity includes the Habitat and Population Evaluation Team (HAPET) offices in Fergus Falls, MN, and Bismarck, ND, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices, the Fish Technology and Fish Health centers, and many national wildlife refuges, national fish hatcheries and ecological services field offices.

The region also has a solid history of collaboration with USGS, which operates the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center and the South Dakota State University Cooperative Research Unit and is

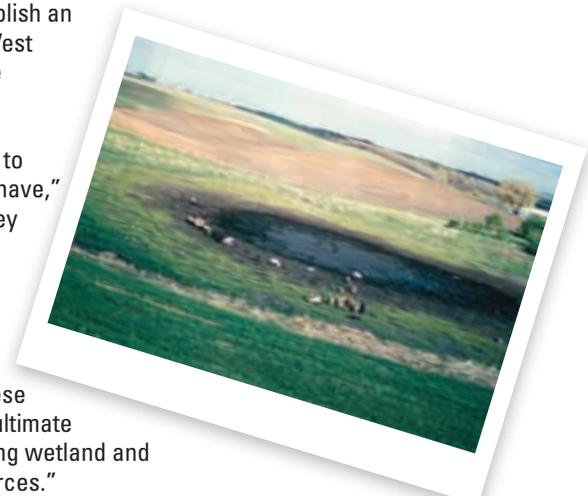
planning to establish an Intermountain West Regional Climate Change Hub.

“LCCs add value to what we already have,” Jones says. “They can ramp up our level of understanding and scientific knowledge and help connect these efforts with the ultimate goal of conserving wetland and grassland resources.”

Jones says refuge managers and field staff have an important role to play by providing essential feedback that will improve the LCC’s ability to model and predict how landscapes and species will respond to a changing climate.

“We already have the manpower and expertise on the landscape to provide research and data through vehicles such as surveys and wildlife population counts that can be integrated into additional science and research done under LCCs,” he says. “It’s pretty exciting to think about how far we can go.”

For more information on LCCs, visit [www.fws.gov/science/shc/lcc.html](http://www.fws.gov/science/shc/lcc.html). □



*David Eisenhower, Public Affairs, Washington, DC*

# Service Enters Unique Partnership for Climate Change

## *The impact on northeast shorebirds*

by Marci Caplis

**W**orking once again at the forefront of climate change issues, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has entered a unique partnership with the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences to study climate change and its effects on shorebirds in the northeast region.

It is estimated more than half of all bird species are likely to be affected by changing water regimes associated with climate change. Shorebirds in particular have some of the greatest potential for being impacted. As their name implies, most shorebirds use low-lying areas along the coast for habitat. They feed in mudflats and along the water's edge for bivalves, worms, insect larvae, and other invertebrates. Many shorebirds also nest on barrier islands, in marshes or in other low-lying coastal areas. Sea level rise caused by climate change has the potential to devastate shorebird habitat and populations throughout the northeast.

Of the 72 national wildlife refuges in the northeast region, 48 are situated along the

coast or on tidally influenced waters subject to the effects of sea level rise. Ten of these refuges, including Edwin B. Forsythe NWR in New Jersey and Chincoteague NWR in Virginia, are so important to shorebirds they have been designated a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) Sites of Regional, Hemispheric or International Importance. Nationwide, 40 refuges have attained a WHSRN site designation.

In an effort to combine the study of climate change and its impacts on shorebirds, FWS wildlife biologist and park ranger Dorie Stolley has joined forces with the Manomet Center to study climate change on FWS/WHSRN sites. Stolley will design and test an assessment framework enabling refuge managers to measure the vulnerability of their sites to climate change and consider what options are available to best maintain shorebird habitat. Having worked on refuges for ten years, Stolley hopes this project will provide sound science to assist refuge

managers in habitat management planning. This information on WHSRN sites will also benefit Manomet in its quest to protect shorebird habitat on a hemispheric scale. Ideally, the tested vulnerability assessment framework will be used at WHSRN sites across the board, whether on refuges or not.

“We have to plan ahead for climate change if we want to protect both habitat and trust species,” said Stolley. “The Service is doing important work in the field of climate change adaptation and mitigation, and this project will give managers a tool to use in planning for shorebird habitat conservation.” In addition to looking at sea level rise, Stolley’s assessment will factor in other climate change impacts such as changes in temperature, precipitation, fire regimes, and the availability of water. All are elements that will help FWS and refuges in long term habitat planning.

To start, Stolley will be traveling to different refuges to assess current climate change work and needs from Service personnel, and will be focusing on refuges hosting two particular shorebird species, the red knot and American oystercatcher. Red knots, which have suffered a catastrophic population decline in recent years, use coastal sites vulnerable to sea level rise during migration, and nest in Arctic habitats that may also be impacted by climate change. American oystercatchers, already declining as a result of coastal development and increasing predation, nest and raise their young on barrier islands, coastal beaches and mudflats, all extremely vulnerable to sea level rise.

This partnership was approved through an Intergovernmental Personnel Act mobility agreement, and involved approval from the regional directorate and Department of Interior.

To find out more about FWS and Manomet projects in climate change, please visit <[www.fws.gov/home/climatechange](http://www.fws.gov/home/climatechange)> or <[www.manomet.org/node/220](http://www.manomet.org/node/220)>. □

*Red knot*

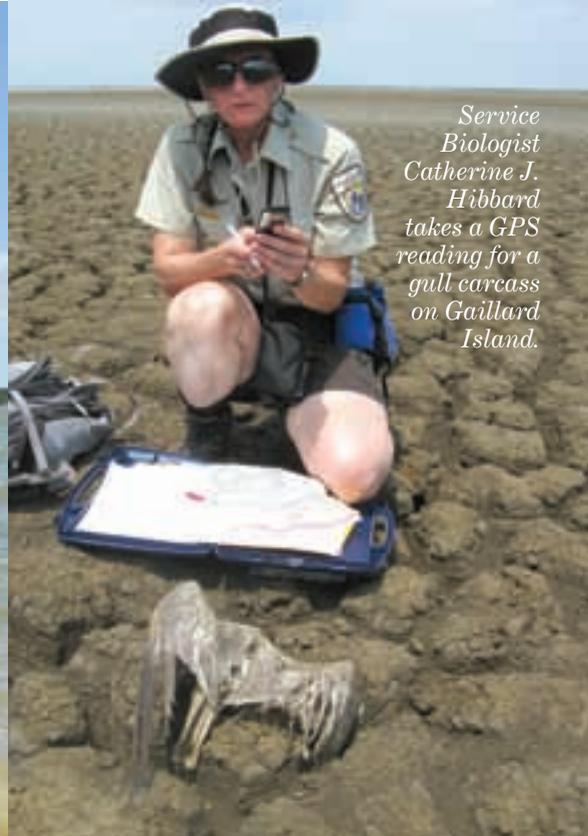


USFWS

Marci Caplis, Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Northeast Region



*Service veterinarian Dr. Sharon K. Taylor and Aransas NWR refuge manager Dan Alonso release of brown pelicans into the wild—the largest of 10 bird releases.*



*Service Biologist Catherine J. Hibbard takes a GPS reading for a gull carcass on Gaillard Island.*



*A child examines loggerhead turtles that hatched just before a relocation.*

# RESTORING the GULF



*A Service employee walks along a boom and surveys wildlife in Dennis Pass, Louisiana.*

TAMI HEILEMANN / DOI

*Bird by bird, egg by egg, Service employees and partners rise to the occasion.*

*By Chris Tollefson*

From the moment oil started flowing into the Gulf of Mexico, Fish and Wildlife Service employees began working to protect and restore the Gulf Coast's fragile ecosystem. Now that the leak has been plugged, the Service's work is just beginning.

Just this once, James Harris figured that he could get away with going to work in his pajamas. Of course, since he'd had major surgery less than a week before, the fact that Harris was out of uniform was the least of his worries.

But Harris, senior wildlife biologist deployed to Venice, Louisiana as part of the Fish and Wildlife Service's response to the Gulf oil spill, was adamant that nothing was going to keep him away at this time of crisis.



James Harris

For weeks, he had spent 14-hour days as part of a team that would go out in boats daily to check on boom and search for oiled wildlife at Breton and Delta National Wildlife Refuges. One night, after working a typical 14-hour shift, he started having severe abdominal pain and by the next morning he could barely walk. A co-worker drove him two hours to a hospital in Lacombe, where doctors removed his appendix. The doctor told him that in two more days, his appendix would have ruptured.

The day after his surgery, Harris was working on response issues on the phone. Six days after his surgery, he reported back to work at his home office in Lacombe, where the Southeast Louisiana Refuge Complex is headquartered. But he showed up for work in his pajamas.

"When I came back to work, the scars were still healing and I couldn't wear regular pants with a belt, so I came to work in my pajamas," he recalled. "I figured that was the only time my project leader would let me get away with that, so I took advantage of that." Two weeks after his surgery, Harris was back in a boat in Venice working directly on the spill.

Harris' incredible story is just one of many. In responding to the BP oil spill, Service employees from across the nation approached their work with uncommon dedication, working long hours in searing heat and humidity for weeks on end.

#### Many Hands Make Light(er) Work

Nearly 2,000 employees — approximately 25 percent of the Service's workforce — have worked on the spill since the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded and sank on the night of April 19, causing a leak that would eventually spill more than 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf and contaminate more than 600 miles of shoreline.

"The Gulf Coast supports some of the richest and most abundant wildlife resources in the world. From the beginning, it's been imperative for us to do everything we can to help restore its vital ecosystems — not only for future generations, but for the communities and people who depend on these resources for their livelihood," said Acting Service Director Rowan Gould.

Gould, who himself deployed full-time to the Gulf for more than two months to coordinate the Service's response, said the response of employees from across the nation has been overwhelming.

Employees cleaned tar balls off beaches and worked long hours behind the scenes hunched over laptops in Incident Command Centers; surveyed bird colonies and habitats by plane, helicopter, boat and on foot; rescued oiled birds and brought them in for cleaning; saved baby sea turtles who might otherwise have died; and volunteered for second, and third, and fourth deployments.

Most important, the Service's men and women integrated smoothly into the largest and most complex Incident Command Structure ever assembled outside of a war zone.

"It's been gratifying and humbling to witness, on a daily basis, the dedication and self-sacrifice that our people displayed in the face of one of the worst environmental disasters in our nation's history," said Gould.

The work performed by the Service and its federal and state partners has been critical to the response effort. To date, state and federal wildlife teams have captured alive more than 2,000 oiled birds. More than half of those birds have been cleaned, rehabilitated and released back into the wild. In addition, roughly 5,800 visibly oiled dead birds have been collected.

"The spill took place at a time of year that, biologically speaking, was perhaps the worst possible. Colonial nesting birds ringed the coastline; thousands of them >>

*These men and women made huge sacrifices, both in terms of the work piling up in their home offices while they were deployed and the loss of time with their families. Their dedication was incredible, and their unflagging efforts in the face of a job that sometimes seemed almost insurmountable helped me keep on going through the tough times.*

Kimberly Trust, Nongame Migratory Bird Coordinator, Alaska Region

**Gulf, continued from page 9**

either still sitting on eggs or caring for newly hatched juveniles,” notes Jewel Bennett.

Bennett, the Alaska Region’s Branch Chief for Conservation Planning, spent a total of 6 weeks deployed as the Operations Chief for the Wildlife Branch in the Houma Sector. Based in the Incident Command Center, she supported field operations related to wildlife reconnaissance and recovery.

Bennett said she was surprised by how familiar the challenges were to those working in Alaska’s remote areas—difficult access, operations that were frequently disrupted by the whims of weather, and the challenge of maintaining reliable communication. Most of all, she saw the value of having professional wildlife biologists on the ground.

“The decisions of which areas to boom, or even which oiled birds to attempt to capture, were complex and required high levels of biological expertise,” she said. “It was sometimes an all but overwhelming job, but the incredible Service personnel on site continually found ways to do the nearly impossible

despite the challenges of an environmental disaster of a size and scope none of us had ever experienced or imagined.”

**Sea Turtle Nests at Risk**

The spill also occurred at the worst possible time for nesting sea turtles.

With oil threatening to wipe out an entire season’s worth of hatchlings from some of the world’s most threatened sea turtle populations, an audacious plan was born to relocate thousands of hatchlings to Florida’s East Coast.

Sandy MacPherson, the Service’s National Sea Turtle Recovery Coordinator, worked extensively with rehabbers, NOAA, her colleagues in the Service and the states to find, mark and excavate hundreds of sea turtle nests from beaches across the Alabama and Florida panhandle. The eggs were transported to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida in custom cases on climate-controlled trucks donated by operational partner FedEx, where they were incubated until the hatchlings could be released into the waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

MacPherson also worked with turtle biologists to formulate protocols for dealing with adult turtles oiled in the



*National Sea Turtle Recovery Coordinator Sandy MacPherson briefs Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Tom Strickland on the sea turtle nest relocation effort at a nest site near Panama City, Fla.*



*Felix Lopez, Environmental Contaminants Specialist, briefs response crew at Grand Isle prior to search for oiled birds.*

**A Gentle Journey: Relocating sea turtle nests**

*Eggs being placed into a cooler for transport to their new location.*



JENNIFER STRICKLAND / USFWS

*Sea turtle nest transfer from Alabama to Florida. SE Regional Director Cindy Dohner (second from left) looks on.*



BONNIE STRAWSER / USFWS

*Dave Moody and Ron Langdon transport eggs from St. Vincent NWR.*



SHAWN NAGLE / NPS

*The Service's men and women integrated smoothly into the largest and most complex Incident Command Structure ever assembled outside of a war zone.*

marine environment, as well as those coming ashore to nest. The pressure was intense, as the unrelenting glare of the media, elected officials and the Unified Command settled on the small team of biologists. She found herself working around the clock for several weeks during the run-up to the relocation effort.

“The way we were able to pull this operation together in a matter of weeks — to bring so many biologists and logistics experts together to develop a strategy and protocols, to find and mark the nests and to actually begin relocating thousands of eggs, has been amazing. Everyone was so eager to help. This has really proven to be a model partnership among multiple federal and state agencies, conservation groups and the private sector,” MacPherson said.

Fortunately, the Service was able to suspend those translocations after the leak was plugged and it became apparent the turtle hatchlings were no longer in danger. In all, nearly 15,000 sea turtle hatchlings were incubated and released — a success rate far in excess of what biologists expected — giving biologists hope that as adults, some will find their way back to the Gulf Coast beaches where they were laid to reproduce again. >>

GARY PEEPLES / USFWS



*Shorebird study coordinator Mark Capone addresses the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) planning team.*

*(Left) University of Florida students Natalie Williams and Brail Stephens place eggs in new location. (Right) Bon Secour refuge biologist Jackie Isaacs, Mountain Longleaf deputy refuge manager Eva Kristofik and interns prepare nest.*



JENNIFER STRICKLAND / USFWS



BONNIE STRAWSER / USFWS

*Sea turtle that hatched before relocation.*



USFWS

Spill, continued from page 11

### Juggling Twin Duties: Family and Work

Many Service employees who volunteered to work on the BP oil spill response left their families behind to do so. Tera Baird took part of her family along—the baby boy with which she was six months pregnant when she volunteered to work in the Mobile Incident Command Center in late June and early July.

Baird, a biologist in the Charleston Field Office who works with the Coastal Program, discussed the deployment with her husband Morgan, who manages a historic site for the state of South Carolina, and he agreed to take care of their daughter Adeline, then 13 months old. Her superiors recommended an 11-day deployment instead of the standard 14 because of her pregnancy. But once she was in Mobile, she barely had time to think about her condition.

“You really just don’t have time to be tired. You’re just in the zone, responding to so much. I would be at the Wildlife Operations Room in Daphne at 6 a.m. most mornings to give a briefing, then spend the morning in Daphne, then drive over to the Mobile Incident Command, about an hour away, and sometimes work till 8 at night,” she said. “Now when I returned, I was exhausted. That’s when I really felt it.”

Baird is now back in Charleston after giving birth to her son River Keeler Baird on October 4. Looking back on her experience, she said she’s glad she went, and would volunteer again if needed when her maternity leave ends.

“Just because I’m pregnant and have a young family, that doesn’t mean I shouldn’t serve,” Baird said. “Everybody who has been to the Gulf has family or some kind of commitments outside the Service. I didn’t really think I was doing anything exceptional.”

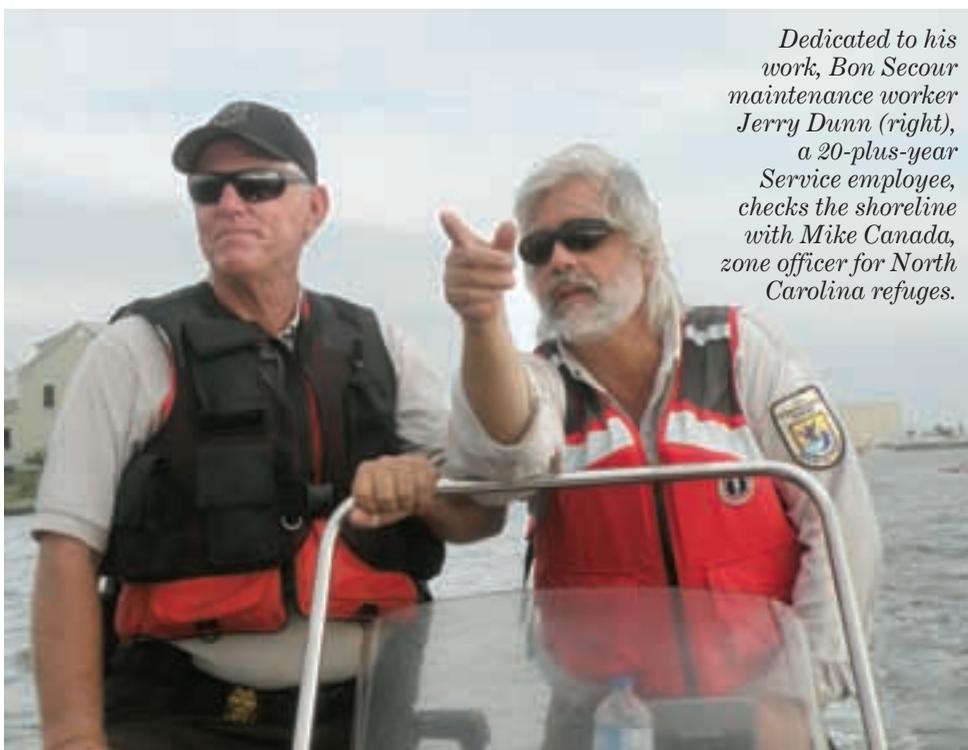
Others would beg to differ.

Kimberly Trust, Alaska Region’s Nongame Migratory Bird Coordinator, spent more than 90 days deployed to the



*Amanda Hill, Service Fisheries Biologist, holds an oiled brown pelican rescued from the Gulf.*

BONNIE STRAWSER / USEFWS



*Dedicated to his work, Bon Secour maintenance worker Jerry Dunn (right), a 20-plus-year Service employee, checks the shoreline with Mike Canada, zone officer for North Carolina refuges.*

Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill, serving in the Natural Resource Damage Assessment Program as both the Deputy Case Coordinator for the Department of the Interior and the Operations Chief for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Bird Technical Working Group. Trust, who was singled out by her Regional Office for her own dedication, said she was constantly energized by the exceptional dedication of so many volunteers.

"For me, the Fish and Wildlife Service people who responded to the spill, particularly those who volunteered for multiple deployments, were real inspirations," she said. "These men and women made huge sacrifices, both in terms of the work piling up in their home offices while they were deployed and the loss of time with their families. Their dedication was incredible, and

their unflagging efforts in the face of a job that sometimes seemed almost insurmountable helped me keep on going through the tough times. I've never been prouder to be part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service family." □

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*Chris Tollefson, Chief of Communications, Washington, DC, with contributions from Regional Public Affairs Offices*

## **The Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Process: Restoring the Gulf at No Cost to Taxpayers**

Even as they worked to contain the BP/Deepwater Horizon oil spill and respond to its impacts on wildlife and natural resources, the Service and its partners were laying the foundations for returning the Gulf to its pre-spill condition through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) Program. From the time that the spill was finally capped, those efforts have accelerated.

Federal and state partners with natural resource trust management have initiated the NRDAR process to assess natural resource injuries caused by the spill and to identify appropriate restoration actions. To guide this process through the preliminary stages, the trustees have formed a Trustee Steering Committee to facilitate cooperation and coordination among the participating state and federal agencies. The committee includes representatives from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of the Interior. Because they have jurisdiction over natural resources in the area, the Departments of Defense and Agriculture along with affected tribes in the Gulf have also been invited to participate.

"The scope and magnitude of natural resource injuries and other impacts resulting from the spill are extraordinary and still not fully known," said Cindy Dohner, the Service's Southeast Regional Director and the Department of the Interior's authorized official on the Trustee Council. "We don't know at this time the

extent of the injuries, but we believe that in all likelihood, they will affect fish, wildlife and plant resources in the Gulf, and possibly in other areas across the country, for years or more likely decades to come."

Dohner noted that the Trustees have established 13 technical working groups to assess impacts of the spill on broad resource categories, including natural resources, human use of impacted natural resources, and cultural sites. Each group is developing studies to assess injuries pertaining to its resource area, taking into account both impacts from the oil spill and from response actions. In addition to these studies, the trustees are reviewing and incorporating the vast amount of monitoring data on the Gulf of Mexico to better understand and assess injuries that may potentially result from the oil spill.

The NRDAR process underway in the BP/Deepwater Horizon oil spill is built upon many of the lessons learned from the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska, and is authorized by the 1990 Oil Pollution Act, enacted in the wake of that spill.

For example, trustees are posting study plans on the internet to increase transparency; conducting frequent calls with study plan leaders, lead scientists and others to assist in developing a broad, integrated ecosystem perspective; and reviewing the myriad restoration possibilities in the Gulf to ensure injury assessment studies are providing relevant data related to these possibilities.

The trustees will attempt to reach a settlement with the responsible parties for the cost of the restoration, for the loss of the use of the land or resources to the general public, and for the money the trustees spent to assess the damages. If a negotiated settlement cannot be reached, the trustees can take the responsible parties to court. Most cases are settled out of court.

When a settlement is reached, a restoration plan is developed with public input that specifies the actions necessary to restore the injured resources. These actions can be carried out on the lands where the contamination occurred or at an alternate site which, when restored, provides a suitable replacement for the injured or lost resources. Sometimes the responsible party donates land to be restored and protected. The process is nimble enough to accomplish restoration projects even before the full assessment is completed, provided those projects prevent additional or ongoing injury, are reasonable, and approved by the trustees.

The trustees will monitor the restoration projects to assure they continue to be properly operated and to ensure the long-term success of the restoration. For more information about the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program and the oil spill, go to: <[www.fws.gov/contaminants](http://www.fws.gov/contaminants)> and <[www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill](http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill)>.

# faces OF THE spill

Hundreds of Service employees served multiple tours in the Gulf, working long hours under extremely difficult conditions.

Like those in our lead story, the following employees were nominated by their regional offices for their performance in oil spill recovery efforts.

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## Steven Alexander



Steven Alexander responded quickly to the call for assistance when the spill began. He worked as the Operations Section Chief in Houma, and was responsible for developing the

efficient and effective wildlife recovery and response efforts that were executed in that area. He worked with the state of Louisiana, U.S. Coast Guard, and BP to ensure that the mission was accomplished while keeping employees safe. Alexander was the Service's representative to the Environmental Unit. He was responsible for ensuring that the strategies used to prevent oiling of beaches and marshes, and efforts to remove oil from these same areas did not do more harm than good.

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## Allison Arnold



Allison Arnold served on a team conducting the first surveys in Texas designed to look for, identify, document, and seize dead or live bird that had been affected by oil. Arnold, a biologist

with the Southwest Region's Ecological Services Field Office in Austin, TX, began each day before dawn identifying the transect to be surveyed that day. She and her team surveyed two kilometers of the beach on Galveston Island as many as three times each day. "The cross-section of people involved in this effort was astounding. So many agencies, consultants, divisions, states and partners had to come together in very short order to make all of this work. And it did work," said Arnold, noting that the public was very interested and worried, but very supportive.

Arnold and her team did an outstanding job of setting up the initial surveys and organizing transitions for the next deployment.

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## Jim Behrmann



Jim Behrmann deployed as a Departmental Industrial Hygienist monitoring employees for possible exposure to chemical contaminants.

Behrmann visited every major operational site south of New Orleans and conducted scientific monitoring of employees. His efforts provided a much clearer picture of actual exposures to employees, as well as the strategies needed to mitigate potential exposure. He was involved in the recovery of oiled birds, assisting in the identification and collection of evidence that would later be used by law enforcement. Behrmann also monitored Service law enforcement personnel as they processed evidence and provided them with valuable information to reduce risks. In addition, he provided a comprehensive Industrial Hygiene review of aviation operations, confirming the effectiveness of current aviation protocols in controlling chemical exposure to employees.

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## Catherine Berg



Catherine Berg, with the Anchorage Fish & Wildlife Field Office, was one of the first Alaska Region employees to deploy to the Gulf. Berg spent more than 60 days there. When asked about

her role and that of the Service she said: "Well, the whole event is so hugely

devastating and overwhelming and the role we play as individuals seems tiny in comparison; but I would have to honestly say that yes, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service team is making a major contribution in preventing and minimizing injury to our trust resources (including migratory birds and National Wildlife Refuge lands), in rescuing oiled birds, and in assessing the damage in a way that will inform any future compensation and restoration."

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## Jack Bohannon



As manager of the Breton and Delta National Wildlife Refuges Jack Bohannon has been on the front line of the spill since it started. His spill experience, however, started almost 30

days prior to the BP rig explosion, when work crews damaged a pipeline on the refuge. Bohannon had just finished that cleanup when the BP spill started. Since then, his work with both BP and Coast Guard officials has been invaluable in protecting the refuge and southwest Louisiana's natural resources. When Bohannon wasn't working long hours on the spill, he provided support for Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal during their visits. Through media interviews, he helped the public understand the impact of the spill—often one of the few people able to give firsthand accounts of the spill's impacts because of his boat captain skills.

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## Angela Burwell

Angela Burwell coordinated transformation of the agency's finance and budget tracking system into a Unified Command, DOI Finance Section that included the National Park Service (NPS) Sensitive Lands Program and

NRDAR and Wildlife Recovery branches. Her duties as the DOI Finance Section Chief/Leader, she was responsible for all financial, administrative, and cost analysis associated with the Branch, and for supervising members of the finance/administration section. Burwell's work, with little guidance or help, was outstanding—from creating the organizational structure, establishing the reporting and chain-of-command procedures with DOI Financial Section, to assigning work and overseeing performance and to fostering teamwork.

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### Tracy Bush

For nearly five months, responders from the Service and many other agencies were deployed to the Gulf Coast with a bewildering combination of computer software and hardware. These new responders needed quick and reliable access to important data and networks. And for that, they needed experienced IT support. Tracy Bush, an IT specialist in the Daphne, Ala. Field Office, deployed four times to the spill response, both in Houma and Mobile. With a smile on her face, Bush somehow managed to keep hundreds of laptops operational and connected. Because of the constant moves of various command centers, she had to tear down and reinstall entire offices of equipment, sometimes more than once a day. For more than four months, day and night, she provided technical support, often when she was home and not deployed.

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### Chris Cline



As an environmental biologist in the Utah Ecological Services Field Office, Chris Cline was a key asset given his extensive experience in the arena of “spills and kills” and

the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process. Cline went above and beyond the call of duty, serving three tours in the Gulf. Cline performed bird recovery surveys and helping develop and standardize the data collection methods that future teams would use in the NRDA case development process. She then served as Deputy NRDA Coordinator in Daphne, Ala., where she was instrumental in the design of a new database to meet the required parameters for damage assessment studies and data collection. Finally, as the Operations Manager, Cline coordinated the damage assessment studies efforts, managing input and ensuring stakeholder support.

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### Glenn Constant

Glenn Constant, who works in the Baton Rouge Fishery Resource Office, was on the scene from the moment the oil rig exploded and sank. He immediately began assessing the situation, and transitioned his Fisheries staff from their regular work into support and reconnaissance for the Houma Incident Command. Early on, Constant's leadership and GIS experience was invaluable. Despite his tireless efforts, he continued to work on the team daily. Constant is the primary author of the Gulf Sturgeon assessment and recovery plan that BP has agreed to fund.

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### Shane Del Grosso

Shane Del Grosso has worked numerous wildfires and natural and man-made disasters throughout his career, including the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster; the Red River Flood of 2008, and a supporting role in the 9-11 response. According to Del Grosso, the oil spill was exceptional because of its complexity and the sheer volume of resources an adequate response required. Del Grosso pulled in personnel from every natural resource agency he could muster and introduced the principles of the Incident Command System. He attributes success to the tenacity of the responders, and credits his teams for their adaptability, saying that “very little could be accomplished ‘by the book.’” The environmental and personnel metrics he created indicated whether his staff were approaching unsafe working conditions or that sensitive areas were not being adequately surveyed, or both.

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### Steve Gard



Steve Gard is recognized for his instant willingness and ability to mobilize resources to support the Service's response to the oil spill. Gard quickly realized the gravity of the

situation and provided staff, resources and his own time at a moment's notice, while maintaining operations at his field station. He then accepted a two-month detail as the Acting Project Leader for MS Sandhill Crane NWR Complex. The oil spill affected two refuges within the Complex, and most staff were needed to address these impacts and the Service's response. Gard oversaw the efforts and provided law enforcement assistance and technical advice to reduce the oil's impact on refuge resources.

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### Charlie Hebert



Charlie Hebert deployed to the Gulf three times, serving as the Deputy Wildlife Branch Chief in Houma. Hebert, oil spill coordinator in the Pacific Northwest Regional Office in

Portland, provided crucial support and coordination in collecting oiled and dead wildlife, and rehabilitating when possible. Hebert and his team initially organized the incident command structure and established six field stations for collecting oiled animals, an air support unit and a rehabilitation facility. On his second tour, Hebert helped prepare Wildlife Operations for hurricane conditions, relocating one of the Oiled Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers out of the hurricane impact zone. During his third deployment, Hebert planned efforts to maintain an appropriate level of support for Wildlife Operations after the well was capped. In all of his deployments, Hebert worked long hours at a breakneck pace, earning the respect of many.

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### Roxanna Hinzman



Roxanna Hinzman, working from the Regional Office in Atlanta as chief of division planning and permitting, realized quickly that the BP oil spill was going to be major. She went to work,

putting experienced people in charge and organizing the logistics to support an effective and ongoing Service response. It was with Hinzman's skills that the Service was able to put together the many teams needed in the spill recovery efforts, and she saw to it that Service staff had the resources they needed to do the job.

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### Charlotte Kucera

Charlotte Kucera spent approximately two weeks living on a barge and scouring southern Louisiana beaches by foot and by boat for Service trust species. Kucera, a biologist with the Southwest Region's Ecological Services Field Office in Austin, TX, spent long days on the water reporting oiled beaches and recovering both live and dead birds. Teams typically surveyed for approximately eight hours, with all boats expected back by 2 pm. Although the mission was the same each day, the

challenges were not, and contending with everything from stormy weather to communications dead zones meant that 6 am safety briefings and radio call-ins every hour were mandatory. “Even though the conditions could be challenging, getting to work as a part of a team to achieve a common goal was extremely rewarding,” said Kucera.

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### Ken Litzenberger



It is hard to understand how Ken Litzenberger, project leader for the Southeast Louisiana Refuges, was able to maintain any sense of normalcy from the time the oil spill

started in April. Just as Litzenberger and his refuge staff were finishing their response to a pipeline break and oil spill at Delta National Wildlife Refuge, the BP spill began. He and his staff did an incredible job protecting the refuge and its natural resources. In addition, Litzenberger provided critical information and support to both response and NRDAR efforts, and interacted with local parish, state and federal officials regarding the construction of a sacrificial berm. He also hosted orientation tours for workers, state and federal officials, Congressional members and staff, and media.

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### Robert McGinn



Robert McGinn served two tours in the Gulf. His first tour was as an Industrial Hygienist for DOI at the Houma Command Center. McGinn worked with OSHA, EPA, and BP to

establish sampling protocols, conducted evaluations for catching oiled birds, evaluated worker air quality at the Fort Jackson Bird Rehabilitation Facility, addressed NPS concerns regarding snorkeling and wading in contaminated waters, and determined potential respiratory exposure issues for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. In his second tour as a Safety Officer for Grand Isle, La. operations, McGinn worked with employees capturing birds, and then shifted into Natural Resource Damage Assessment. He kept Service staff safe by helping them understand the region’s

unique work-related hazards like heat stress, weather, animals (sting rays, oyster shells, insects), vehicle safety, and food safety issues.

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### Steve Mierzykowski



During two one-month deployments, Senior Fish and Wildlife Biologist Steve Mierzykowski of the Maine Field Office worked a variety of assignments as part of the Service’s

response to the Gulf oil spill. Steve Mierzykowski of the Maine Field Office served as a boat coordinator out of Venice, La. He recovered oiled birds both nearshore (Bayou Terre aux Boeufs out of Delacroix) and offshore (80 miles south of Mobile in the Gulf). Mierzykowski coordinated boat transportation for biologists doing wildlife search and recovery as well as boats for news media out of Venice. This was not an easy task, due to the fact that boat operators were mostly local people using their own vessels, while others were contract boat operators who transported staff and supplies. Mierzykowski arranged for transportation of oiled birds to the nearby stabilization and recovery centers. He also collected data and prepared daily reports of the work. Without his exceptional organizational skills and attention to detail, operations would have been much less effective.

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### Alison Palmer



Alison Palmer answered the call when a request came for volunteers. Expecting to be a ground crew member, she instead was designated a ground crew leader by the

Wildlife Operations supervisor, despite having no prior Incident Command experience. She gladly accepted the challenge. Palmer was instrumental in establishing operating procedures at the ground level, from ordering supplies to ensuring map production was completed for ground survey crews, to assigning crew members and survey areas. She conducted briefings, completed paperwork for daily logs, payroll, and even worked the hotline, taking calls from incident command dispatch. As part of the outreach effort, she was selected to be a spokesperson for

media interviews. Ultimately, Palmer became responsible for the safety of all ground crew members and the assuring ground crews were collecting data in accordance with the standards set by the NRDAR team.

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### Beth Pattinson



The Chief of Permits for Region 7’s Migratory Bird Management Program, Beth Pattinson, spent 74 consecutive days Gulf at Houma. She was originally called in by the Region 4

permit program to help set up the rehabilitation effort for all five Gulf states. That task quickly evolved, however, and Pattinson found herself convincing the IC that oiled wildlife could not simply be transported in the back of U-Haul trailers. She then created and coordinated a complex program to provide safe and appropriate transportation of oiled wildlife from capture sites to the rehabilitation centers. Before the program was implemented, approximately five birds per day were treated in Louisiana, soon jumping to almost 100 a day. “I went from being a permit manager to a fleet manager overnight,” Beth said. “I made a pledge to myself that, on my watch, no oiled wildlife or their rescuer was going to be stranded on a beach or dock somewhere for lack of transport. It was the hardest job I’ve ever loved,” she concludes.

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### Jereme Phillips



Bon Secour derives from the French phrase meaning “safe harbor,” but Bon Secour NWR was anything but a safe harbor in the oil spill, as the refuge’s five miles of coastal beaches were hit

hard by the oil. Refuge manager Jereme Phillips was significantly involved in the protection of the natural beach and marsh habitats of Bon Secour. He initiated berm development on refuge beaches, boom deployment on coastal marshes, and extensive sea turtle survey work. Phillips is particularly pleased with the protection of the Refuge’s Little Lagoon, which, at eight miles in width, belies its name. He and his staff worked long hours cleaning the beach of tar balls and emulsified oil, and rescuing oiled wildlife—including sea turtles that use the refuge as habitat.

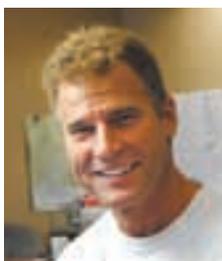
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## Stephen Ricks

Stephen Ricks, a field supervisor in the Mississippi ES Field Office, was first deployed as a liaison/reports officer for the Director. He streamlined processes that kept information flowing among leadership and responders. Ricks helped identify training needs for incoming personnel—leading to the predeployment academy. Ricks also coordinated with outside agencies to provide critical Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Technique (SCAT) training for Service responders serving on SCAT Teams, an area which the Service had very little experience. During a second deployment, Ricks reviewed the Wildlife Operations Branch identifying and reducing excess resources.

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## Greg Soulliere



Taking advantage of his experience in bird identification and wetland ecology, the Service asked Joint Venture Science Coordinator Greg Soulliere to serve on the Oil-spill Air Operations Unit

in New Orleans. “Air-ops” consisted of four helicopter crews with one pilot and two biologist-observers each, plus emergency fire personnel in charge of communications and safety for each helicopter. Soulliere was assigned to a helicopter crew and worked long hours recording oil locations, bird concentrations and locations where boom had washed into marsh, making it invisible to boat crews tending to the thousands of miles of absorbent material. Soulliere and his team entered and analyzed observation data, creating a daily report that included aerial photos taken at each “encounter.” This important information was used to shape decision-making for numerous aspects of the overall spill response.

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## Sharon Taylor

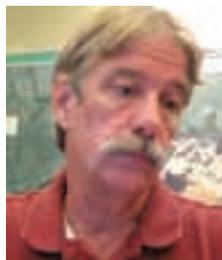


Dr. Sharon K. Taylor, Environmental Contaminants Division Chief and wildlife veterinarian from Carlsbad, Calif., volunteered for deployment. For eight weeks, she

served as the FWS Wildlife Veterinarian Coordinator for the entire Gulf Spill. During this time, she was also assigned to be the Recovered Oiled Bird Release Coordinator. In that role, she coordinated permits, health certificates, release locations, logistics, and aircrafts for wildlife transport. Through her efforts, approximately 400 recovered oiled pelicans and other migratory birds and wildlife were released back to the wild and out of the oil’s trajectory. On June 6th, after successfully releasing birds in Florida, the return flight she was on had an engine fire. The plane had to make an emergency forced landing. Thankfully, all five people on board, including Dr. Taylor were safe. Despite this experience, she insisted on continuing her responsibilities as the FWS veterinarian to fly with the birds to releases. Dr. Taylor was also the Louisiana Incident Command Law Enforcement Liaison and oversaw the Wildlife Morgue. This role was key for potential enforcement and NRDAR evaluations.

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## Peter Tuttle



As a Contaminants Biologist in the Daphne, Ala. Field Office, Peter Tuttle was one of the first people called up when the spill response began. He was quick to realize the spill

would be part of a major NRDAR effort for the DOI. Tuttle quickly organized and directed Regional personnel to begin collecting the pre-assessment data important for establishing conditions before the oil began affecting DOI Trust Resources. Tuttle coordinated a cohesive data-gathering effort with other federal agencies and the states. Due to his efforts, the NRDAR trustees have a solid basis for establishing injury to natural resources throughout the Gulf. His work is far from finished. Tuttle will play a key role in the NRDAR process as the trustees develop and implement restoration plans.

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## Anthony Velasco



Tony Velasco deployed four times, totaling three months of service. An ecologist and environmental contaminants specialist for the southeast region, Velasco worked as

the Deputy Wildlife Branch Director for the Mobile Sector, playing a key role in standing up the sector and developing operational protocols. In a few short weeks, Velasco and his team worked long hours to secure additional responders and to deploy boom around properties and sensitive coastal habitats. Beginning with just four people, Sector Mobile grew significantly to meet the needs in its area of responsibility—an area covering more than 300 linear miles. Due to his strong leadership, knowledge of natural resources and ability to work well with others, he was able to develop an efficient and effective response effort for the Service in the Mobile sector. “This is what I do. This is what I have trained for, and this is where I find relevance in my work with the Fish and Wildlife Service, and my contributions to conservation,” said Velasco.

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## Peggy Whittaker



Peggy Whittaker, a program analyst with Ecological Services in the Atlanta Field Office, has been involved with this incident almost since day one. Although many have made great

personal sacrifices, Whittaker has gone above and beyond. It is estimated that she has been deployed longer than any other Service employee. Unflagging in her efforts, she saw to it that the Service is reimbursed for all of its expenditures. Whittaker has responsibility for tracking, documenting and ensuring the legitimacy of expenditures; documenting costs; and preparing billing related to both the response and NRDAR activities. These activities alone could total \$80 to \$100 million dollars.



## Saving a California Family Business *A Contractor Credits Recovery Act Funding*

by Kim Betton



TODD SLOAT / FALL RIVER RCD

(Left) Rick Poore and Joiner Construction owner Craig Joiner (at right) were awarded a Recovery Act restoration contract. (Right) For the first time in many years, water is flowing in this remnant stream channel of Bear Creek as a result of an innovative “pond and plug” technique.

Joiner Construction of Lookout, California was on the brink of closing for good. The company’s owner, Craig Joiner, felt first-hand the hardships of the nation’s economy when the work contracts stopped coming in.

For several months he spent some long days—no work and no pay. His worries began to focus on the expenses of everyday life; food for family, keeping a roof over their heads, utilities, and trying to determine how Joiner Construction was going to remain a business.

“The population around here amounts to two people per mile and opportunities to find work are very small—we needed to survive,” says Joiner. “Our company has one to two employees and usually has an annual gross income of about \$300,000. That’s up to three or four projects annually. So with no jobs slated for this year, we were worried we wouldn’t have any work at all.”

At that point the struggling entrepreneur’s only alternative was to turn to plan B—shut down his family owned business of nearly 20 years and find another means of earning a living.

But one day an opportunity surfaced. He learned about the chance to bid on a \$170,000 Recovery Act contract through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The contract called for a restoration project at Bear Creek which originates in the highlands of Northeastern California and flows to its confluence with Fall River in Shasta County.

The creek once streamed freely across Big Bear Flat—a 400-acre wet-meadow habitat. Over time, nature and land management practices changed its course and the stream carved a wide gully across the face of the floodplain, severely eroding

the meadow and lowering the water table. The successful bidder would do high value conservation and water quality work in an effort to regain the mountain meadow habitat and improve water quality downstream. Joiner desperately needed the job.

“This was the type of job I’ve always wanted. I’d been waiting for a job like this for 10 years,” Joiner says. “Generally we are bidding against one to two other firms. But this year due to the lack of work, we were up against 60 firms, some of them extremely large— compared to a small family owned business like us,” he said. “Fortunately the bid’s requirements included price, qualifications and experience. We were lucky enough to be successful in all areas and received the contract.”

The project site is located 35 miles from Joiner’s hometown of Lookout. He was proud to get up each morning to travel the distance to work with his father, the company’s co-owner.

“The Big Bear Flat Project was a stream restoration project,” said Joiner. “We went in and raised the water table back up to the surface so it became a wetland again.”

Joiner notes that while the project certainly enhanced the environment and wildlife, the work also provided an economic boost in the Lookout area. “The local community benefited from this project because we were actually the main contractor that did the dirt moving and the land form construction. It also involved two additional companies for tree removal and we all purchased fuel from the local gas companies. So for our small area the stimulus funding was spread around and ultimately benefited quite a few people.”

“It was a great sense of relief to receive this award,” Joiner says. “This Recovery Act contract was our saving grace.” □

Kim Betton, Public Affairs, Washington, DC

midwest 

Unveiling the Stories

It's a crisp calm autumn morning and I'm gathering program materials for a class of inner-city first graders. They're eagerly awaiting a morning field trip to Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. It's the first for this school year. The lesson plan calls for a look at the scientific study of changes in nature-phenology. In preparation for the field trip I went into their classroom with myriad of items signifying change; snowpants, colored leaves, umbrella, nuts, picture of a snowflake, sunglasses, model of emerging green grass. The students had to categorize these items into three groups: plant, animal, or weather. Once this was done we reorganized the items into seasons according to when they would be used or seen.

Change is inevitable and people have been studying the changes in nature for centuries. It is how our ancestors were able to gather and hunt for food and keep track of time. Today, the change that has everyone talking is climate change. The Environmental Protection Agency defines climate change as "any significant change in measures of climate (such as temperature, precipitation, or wind) lasting for an extended period and may result from:

- natural factors, such as changes in the sun's intensity
- natural processes within the climate system, such as changes in ocean circulation;



MARA KOENIG / USFWS

*A new generation of birders, students focus on geese at Minnesota Valley NWR.*

■ human activities that change the atmosphere's composition (e.g. through burning fossil fuels) and the land surface (e.g. deforestation, reforestation, urbanization, desertification, etc.)

Scientists are recording and tracking changes in the environment at an astounding rate. They are researching the widespread melting of glaciers, the increased frequency of extreme weather events, and changes in rain and snowfall patterns. Still, there are people who question the reality of climate change. Is it happening? How can we stop it? What is going to happen? Who and what is responsible? These are just a few of the many questions the Service, along with numerous other agencies and non-profit organizations are trying to answer.

The result of all this interest is that we are bombarded by information on climate change. Much of it is because of our profound connection to technology. Our newest generation is demonstrating for us the impact of having developed under the digital wave. These youth have grown up with digital technologies fully integrated into their lives.

Many students are using new media and technologies to create new things in new ways, learn new things in new ways, and communicate in new ways with new people—behaviors that have become hardwired in their ways of thinking and operating in the world.

As an educator, the question in my mind is how do I teach this topic to students without leaving a "doom and gloom" image? While doing research I concluded there are several curriculums,

activity guides, and papers available and possibly more on the way, but the problem is most are written for middle- and high-school levels. Is the subject of climate change just too complex for elementary student comprehension? I'm always amazed at what information children ages 6–12 can comprehend.

Stories have been used throughout the world to convey messages of culture, values, and traditions. Nature provides stories everyday about the coming and goings of plants and animals. Everyday people of all ages can actively observe nature and learn about the seasonal changes of the ecosystem around them. This fact provides a perfect solution to the question of how to teach elementary students about climate change. Once students have learned about how to observe nature they have >>

### Unveiling, continued from page 9

the opportunity to submit their findings to research. The USA National Phenology Network, <[www.usanpn.org](http://www.usanpn.org)>, brings together citizen scientists, government agencies, non-profit groups, educators and students of all ages to monitor the impacts of climate change on plants and animals in the United States through phenology—the timing of different stages in the lifecycle of a plant.

While preparing for the first graders, I make sure nature is ready to unveil her stories. Today, students will record the phenological events they observe during a hike on the the refuge and discover how scientists use phenology to track the impact of changes on the behavior of plants and animals. They can take this knowledge and record their daily observations in the classroom throughout the school year. This winter, they will come out again to observe and learn about changes animals perform to survive the bitter cold of a Minnesota winter. □

*Mara Koenig, Visitor Services Specialist, Midwest Region*



### Strategic Habitat Conservation at Work

With a new emphasis on looking at natural resources to view conservation on a regional scale, Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) and the resulting development of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives within the Fish and Wildlife Service, are becoming common terms in the conservation community. However the functional aspects of SHC are familiar to most biologists and land managers. In West Virginia, staff at the Canaan Valley NWR, along with multiple partners, have been developing an SHC approach to high elevation forest conservation for several years. It began as a local effort to restore conifer forest on refuge and TNC lands. However with the completion of the Forest Service's Monongahela National Forest Plan in 2006 and the West Virginia DNR Wildlife Action Plan, new emphasis was placed on spruce forest management and restoration throughout the state.

The following year, a High Elevation Forest Conservation Working Group was established representing a large collaborative effort for the restoration and conservation of the red spruce-northern hardwood and wetland ecosystem in West Virginia. Supported by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (West Virginia Field Office and Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge); U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Monongahela National Forest, Northern Research Station, Natural Resources Conservation Service); State of West Virginia (Division of

Natural Resources and Division of Forestry); and the Nature Conservancy among many others. The relationship with the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy, an NGO which facilitates seed collection and propagation for the working groups restoration planting efforts has been critical. In all, more than 26 partners have been involved in the actions to date.

Red spruce and balsam fir are components of the relict montane forest community in West Virginia. This plant community has been severely degraded and in some cases entirely removed from the landscape following years of exploitive logging operations, wildfires and mining operations. The spruce forest in West Virginia provides unique habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species typical of more northern areas such as the fisher, snowshoe hare, saw whet owl

and northern goshawk. The threatened Cheat Mountain salamander and recently de-listed Virginia northern flying squirrel also rely heavily on the mixed spruce forests for their survival. These wildlife populations are limited and in many cases considered fragile due to the fragmented and limited nature of the current spruce ecosystem.

The working group has been practicing Strategic Habitat Conservation in West Virginia since its inception. Utilizing the scientific expertise of several state and federal agencies along with capabilities provided by NGO's, universities and private organizations, specific resource goals have been applied over broad political and geographic boundaries. The recent elevation of SHC collaborative work by the Service has reinforced the group's activities and could

*Canaan Valley NWR*



USFWS

help expand and coalesce efforts throughout the Appalachian Geographic Area Land Conservation Cooperative, established to protect, restore and enhance forest and wetland habitat for priority species of concern regionally.

A regional approach is essential to address fragmentation and habitat corridor creation/restoration in order to create a more resilient forest community. A more intact and healthy forest community is one better adapted to buffer impacts from climate change and will improve habitat for the many wildlife and plant species identified in State, Federal and NGO plans as species of conservation concern in the central Appalachians.

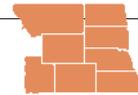
To date the group has planted more than 100,000 red spruce and balsam fir trees helping to restore over 800 acres on federal, private and TNC lands in West Virginia. Other restoration activities include hardwood harvesting to increase spruce dominance through planned silvicultural release operations. An estimated nearly 5000 acres have been targeted for spruce release and up to 200 acres for restoration planting are being planned for 2010–2011 in the Monongahela National Forest. The group has secured over \$74,000 in grant funding and over \$28,000 in in-kind services to complete restoration projects on the ground.

The strength of the working group lies in the number and diversity of its partners—unified under a common vision and identified goals. Cross agency and cross public-private sector communication is critical to achieve successful landscape scale conservation projects. It also provides flexibility in planning annual projects and securing funding sources to aid restoration efforts.

Ultimately, the strength of the group will be measured by its ability to manage, protect and restore the mixed red spruce and balsam fir forest community in the southern Appalachians of West Virginia. However, this working group stands also as a functional model of a Landscape Conservation Cooperative working albeit on a smaller scale. Integration into the Appalachian LCC and the development of a landscape scale conservation plan for the high elevation forests of the central Appalachians would be the ultimate next step for the working group to achieve truly landscape scale conservation projects, and we hope to be there soon. □

*Ken Sturm, Wildlife Biologist, Northeast Region*

## mountain-prairie



### Rocky Mountain Arsenal: A Vision Fulfilled

In October, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar joined the Fish and Wildlife Service and representatives from the U.S. Army and Shell Oil Co. to mark the end of all major environmental cleanup work at Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge outside of Denver. The completion of cleanup work enabled the Army to formally transfer 2,500 acres of land to the Service, bringing the refuge to its planned size of more than 15,000 acres.

The final significant land transfer makes the site one of America's premier urban wildlife refuges and a high-profile, dynamic resource located in the heart of the rapidly-growing metropolitan Denver region. The site provides sanctuary for more than 330 species of wildlife, including bison, deer, coyotes, bald eagles, and burrowing owls.

"With the successful completion of the vision to create a premier urban national wildlife refuge, a new chapter now begins," Secretary Salazar said. "I commend the hard work by so many partners that led to this great achievement. This vital natural resource will provide a permanent safe haven for wildlife and offer many opportunities for people from all walks of life, especially our youth, to connect with nature in a great urban park."

For more than a decade, the Army, Shell and the Service have worked with EPA, the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment and Tri-County

Health Department to complete a comprehensive environmental cleanup. All fieldwork came in under budget and a year ahead of schedule. The total cost is \$2.1 billion.

"The Army is proud to have completed its mission at the Arsenal by transitioning land that was once used to protect and preserve our freedom into one of the largest urban national wildlife refuges in the country," said Hew Wolfe, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for environment, safety and occupational health. Together, we have created a conservation asset for countless generations to enjoy."

"Rocky Mountain Arsenal and urban refuges like it play a crucial role in our efforts to involve the American people in nature and the outdoors. We are immensely proud to have played a role in transforming this site into an oasis for wildlife and wildlife-associated recreation along the Front Range," said Dan Ashe, the Service's Deputy Director.

The Arsenal, approximately 10 miles northeast of downtown Denver, is one of the largest environmental cleanup sites in the country. In 1942, RMA was built to manufacture chemical weapons to be used in World War II as a war deterrent.

The Refuge was formally established in April 2004 and doubled in size in 2007 with another land transfer from the Army to the Service.

*Hugh Vickery, Senior Public Affairs Specialist, Department of the Interior*

### transitions



**Dave Densmore** counts himself lucky. “From the time I was a sophomore in college, I got to do biology work.

I never did anything else.”

After 28 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the past 13 years as project leader at the Pennsylvania Field Office in State College, Densmore recently retired to Annapolis, Maryland, with his wife, LeAnn Myhre, and their sailboat “Curlew.”

Densmore’s journey to Pennsylvania, and now on to Maryland, began in southern California where he was born and raised. After an Army tour in Alaska, he stayed to earn a bachelor’s degree in biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

While working for the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska, Densmore earned a master’s degree in plant ecology at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. He worked for the university and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game before taking a temporary job in 1981 at the Service’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, headquartered in Fairbanks. The following year he went to work for the Ecological Services field office down the hall. Much of his early work centered on the effects of oil development in the Alaska arctic.

Densmore left Alaska for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. There he searched for plants previously placed on the endangered species candidate list without much supporting field documentation. As a result of his work, about a dozen plant species were eventually listed as threatened or endangered.

Following another stint in Alaska, he went to the Sacramento Field Office, where he worked on wetlands protection and environmental contaminants issues in the San Francisco Bay area. This was followed by work in Federal Activities in the Washington, DC office, where he focused on wetlands delineation, mitigation banking and a variety of other wetlands policy matters.

While in Washington, Densmore was detailed to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and assisted drafting a Clean Water Act reauthorization bill before returning to Federal Activities as branch chief.

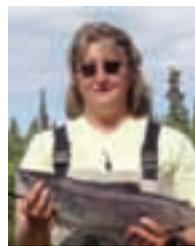
In 1996, while in the midst of a federal furlough, Densmore was struck by the story of a National Park Service project leader in northern Michigan who continued to work despite orders not to—because he felt responsible for a national historic site and the public he served. Determined to return to the field, Densmore jumped when the Pennsylvania Field Office project leader job opened, dusted six years of work in the Washington office off his shoes, and took on a new challenge.

As the supervisor responsible for both Pennsylvania and West Virginia, Densmore was especially alarmed by the effects of more than a century of coal mining on Appalachia, and advocated strongly for more effective regulation of mountaintop mining. He took great pride in his later work with a planning team to establish Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge with a boundary that will make it the largest refuge in Pennsylvania.

“I saw public service as a way to express my child-of-the-sixties idealism,” Densmore said of his career. “By working for the Fish and Wildlife Service, I was channeling my interest in biology into serving humanity through conservation of the natural world and all of its inhabitants.” □

### honors

#### Northeast



**Annette Scherer**, senior endangered species biologist at the New Jersey Field Office in Pleasantville,

was recently selected to receive this year’s Women and Wildlife Leadership Award by the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey. She was honored for “her exemplary service to wildlife science and natural resource protection.”

Martin Miller, the region’s chief of endangered species, lauded Scherer’s tireless work on behalf of wildlife, including her dedication to threatened piping plover recovery, beach nourishment projects benefiting both plovers and the threatened seabeach amaranth, and work on developing innovative habitat enhancement projects. Scherer was instrumental in conservation measures on behalf of the red knot, now a candidate for Endangered Species Act protection. She has been a leader in endangered Indiana bat recovery in the Northeast and was instrumental in starting the Northeast Bat Working Group. Her contributions, according to Miller, produce benefits that extend far beyond New Jersey, including counseling and mentoring other wildlife biologists in the Service and other organizations. □



**Zeeger de Wilde**, of Seaford, Delaware, was selected as the Volunteer of the Year for his

unwavering support and commitment to the Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Maryland and Virginia. Over the last 20 years, de Wilde has volunteered more than 12,000 hours on several refuges near his home and at more than 200 refuges across the country that he was visiting while traveling. Drawing extensively on his background in horticulture, he is leaving a lasting mark by helping create butterfly gardens showcasing native plants. According to refuge staff, de Wilde is a cornerstone of the volunteer program and a role model for volunteers nationwide.

Most recently de Wilde redesigned the Butterfly and Beneficial Insect Garden at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge’s visitor center, adding, removing, and transplanting native vegetation that attracts a variety of butterflies, bees and other pollinating insects. He was also instrumental in developing and maintaining the Bayscape Butterfly Garden at Eastern Neck refuge.

Born and raised in Holland, de Wilde grew up amidst the Nazi occupation during World War II. After the war he studied horticulture and arboriculture. In 1953 he immigrated to Canada and then to the Maryland area in 1968, where he eventually became a U.S. citizen and started his own landscape business.

The National Wildlife Refuge Association and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation selected recipients of the 2010 Refuge System Awards. These annual awards recognize refuge conservation professionals, volunteers and Friends groups exemplifying outstanding dedication and passion for wildlife conservation in advancement. □

**Headquarters**



For his tireless leadership, extraordinary vision, and persistence in the development of Partners in Flight, **Paul R. Schmidt**

received the Champion of Bird Conservation Award at the Partners in Flight 20th Anniversary Celebration held at the 75th Annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. Partners in Flight/Companerous en Vunelo/Partenaires d'Envol is a cooperative effort involving partnerships among Federal, State and local government agencies, philanthropic foundations, professional organizations, conservation groups, industry, academic communities, and private individuals—all working together for the conservation of birds and their habitats. □



**Bill Wilen** is listed in the just published Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) 2009 Annual Report

as the “ National Spatial Data Infrastructure Champion,” and was recognized during the November Committee meeting. Along with a photograph and biography, the report had this to say about Bill:

“Champions are leaders. They take charge, lead by example, see beyond mere trends, and overcome distractions and obstacles to perform the task at hand. They uphold their convictions as they welcome opposing views. As natural visionaries, champions often see possibilities long before they are visible to others. Each year, the FGDC recognizes as a champion one who has taken a strong leadership role in the development of the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI). This year’s honoree is Bill Wilen.

Mr. Wilen’s leadership is well recognized within the geospatial community, as are his exemplary efforts to advance the management and preservation of wetlands. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar’s announcement of the adoption of the Wetlands Mapping Standard in August 2009 came about largely as a result of the tireless commitment, leadership, and dedication to the development of this standard by Mr. Wilen. It is in recognition of his trusted leadership within the NSDI community that Mr. Wilen is recognized as this year’s NSDI Champion.”

Bill Wilen became the Project Leader of the National Wetlands Inventory in 1979 and held that position until becoming Director of the National Wetlands Inventory Center in April 2002. He is currently the Senior Wetland Scientist at the Center’s Washington office. He also chairs the FGDC’s Wetlands Subcommittee, which under his leadership has produced the FGDC’s Wetlands Classification System and Wetlands Mapping Standard. □



At the Service Regulations Committee meeting in early February in Denver, Colorado, **Dave Sharp** received

the Meritorious Service Award for accomplishments attained during his 32 years of working with

migratory birds. Sharp has been the Service’s Flyway Representative to the Central Flyway since 1990 and he was recognized for his extensive work with migratory bird monitoring programs and for working collaboratively with the Central Flyway on myriad and oftentimes controversial issues. Sharp was also recognized for his work on the Mitchell bill, which ultimately resulted in the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Additionally, Sharp recently worked on the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the hunting of migratory birds, which will be used to guide harvest management years into the future. Paul Schmidt, Assistant Director for Migratory Birds, presented the award to Sharp and the venue provided many of Sharp’s colleagues to congratulate him for receiving this honor the second-highest award that an individual may receive from the Department of Interior. □

**Celebrating Wildlife**



Endangered Species Day, the third Friday of May, brings young and old together to learn about the importance of protecting endangered species and everyday actions that people can take to help protect our nation’s disappearing wildlife and last remaining open space. Local parks, wildlife refuges, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, libraries, schools and community centers participate in celebrating wildlife. <[www.endangeredspeciesday.org](http://www.endangeredspeciesday.org)>.

# tribute *to* IN MEMORIAM *OUR* colleagues

We always feel a sense of loss when one of our colleagues is no longer with us. The hard work of all Service employees is felt in every corner of every region. In 2010, in addition to Service Director Sam Hamilton, our conservation community lost seven other individuals. Their combined service totaled more than 200 years of dedication and experience. Because of this, we dedicate this section to the memory of those former employees whose positive impact will be felt for years to come.

*God must have  
had a natural  
resource  
emergency  
in heaven.*

**John Frampton, speaking at former  
Service Sam Hamilton's memorial service  
at the Department of the Interior**



*Service Director Sam Hamilton (at left) and  
Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior, using the  
audio devices at a wildlife exhibit.*

*“The Interior Department family has suffered a great loss with the passing of Sam Hamilton. Sam was a friend, a visionary, and a professional whose years of service and passionate dedication to his work have left an indelible mark on the lands and wildlife we cherish. His forward-thinking approach to conservation—including his view that we must think beyond boundaries at the landscape-scale—will continue to shape our nation’s stewardship for years to come. My heart goes out to Sam’s family, friends, and colleagues as we remember a remarkable leader and a compassionate, wise, and eternally optimistic man.”*

**Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar**

**Joseph Henry Kutkuhn**

Kutkuhn retired after a 34-year career with the Service. Noted for his work in fisheries management, he twice received the Interior’s meritorious and distinguished service award.



**Harvey Nelson** was a devoted wetlands and wildlife manager. “Because I was interested in the wetlands program, and migratory birds, waterfowl particularly, I decided that, by golly, if I could get a job at the Fish and Wildlife Service, that was what I was going to do, and so I did,” said the 42-year career Service employee.



**Dr. Robert E. Putz** Putz joined the Service in 1960 and has served as director of the Leetown National Fisheries Center and Alaska Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska. He’s been honored with numerous awards for his scientific papers and distinguished service.



**Dr. Calvin J. Lensink**, a 30-year career employee of the Service, was instrumental in the creation of Alaska’s National Wildlife Refuges. Lensink was notable for his work on the history of the Alaska sea otter population.



**James “Jim” W. Salyer** had a 43-year Service career as a biologist working on migratory water fowl (ducks and geese) and their aquatic habitats.

*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*

Anne Frank

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**25 Years of Service Together**

**Ray Bentley** and co-pilot **Dave Pitkin** were returning from Newport, Oregon, after a day spent flying over estuaries along the Oregon coast for the Service’s annual mid-winter waterfowl survey when their plane went down. Every winter, select teams of Service pilot-biologists and observers take to the skies to survey North America’s waterfowl during January in one of the oldest wildlife surveys, dating back to the 1930s.



*Dave Pitkin*



*Ray Bentley*

# Fish & Wildlife News

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## parting shots



**Kudos.** James Hautman, an artist from Chaska, Minnesota, has been named the winner of the 2010 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest. The announcement was made at the David Brower Center in Berkeley, Calif., during the annual competition hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Hautman has previously won the Duck Stamp three times, in 1989, 1994 and 1998. Hautman's acrylic painting of a pair of white-fronted geese will be made into the 2011–2012 Federal Duck Stamp, which will go on sale in late June 2011.

The Service produces the Federal Duck Stamp, which sells for \$15 and raises about \$25 million each year to provide critical funds for acquiring and protecting wildlife habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System. For more information on the Federal Duck Stamp Program, including where to purchase stamps, visit <[www.fws.gov/duckstamps](http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps)>.

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**Deadline for future issues:**  
Spring Issue 2011, by: January 1

**Coming soon:**  
Winter 2011: Law Enforcement  
Special Issue