

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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March 2012

Celebrating WSFR 75



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Cycle of Success

By serving as the base for the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program has made huge strides over the last 75 years. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and our partners are helping to facilitate outdoor recreation for this and generations to come. Service photos.



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Todd Turner selected.

By Katie Steiger-Meister, External Affairs

James O. Melius

Celebrating 75 years of WSFR

In what promises to be a historic year, I invite you to join with our partners in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. The national celebration, launched on January 17 at the 2012 Shot Show in Las Vegas, will feature a series of events throughout the year to commemorate the program which began with the passing of the Pittman Robertson Act in 1937. Regionally, we will host a number of events in celebration, as well. I invite you join in on the fun and activities.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program has made huge strides over the last 75 years as the fundamental base for the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. I want to thank state natural resource agencies across the region for their collaboration and partnership as part of this program. Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration revenue is an important component of many state fish and wildlife agency budgets. Last year alone, the program granted more than \$158 million for conservation efforts in our region, and \$749 million dollars in funding nationwide. The Midwest has strong hunting, fishing and boating constituencies. It is a tremendous privilege to facilitate recreational enjoyment from providing hunting opportunities to disabled hunters and archery ranges for youth, to restoring fish populations and conserving habitat. Patrons are appreciative to be able to enjoy the outdoors knowing that the Service and our state partners are there, if needed.

I'm pleased that our region takes recreational opportunities seriously. I encourage all of you to think outside the box about ways in which we could expand special disabled and youth hunts in the region. Starting out small is still a start. I would love to see an additional four or five field stations host an event for the very first time this year.

For a state by state break down of funding by grant program and to learn about on-the-ground projects funded by WSFR dollars, visit the new WSFR web site at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/wsfr/> or the 75th anniversary web site at <http://www.wsfr75.com>

Finally, I want to remind all of you that the March 15th submission deadline date for the Junior Duck Stamp Program is fast approaching. If you know of any students that may have interest I encourage you to invite them to participate. Make copies of the Junior Duck Stamp Program materials to distribute at your children's schools and/or contact your state coordinator. And I would like to thank all of the state coordinators for all of their hard work and for making this another admirable event.

Midwest Regional Director,
Tom Melius



Above: Sherburne Refuge Manager Anne Sittauer (l) shares a laugh with Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius (r) at Winterfest. Service photo by Garrett Peterson.



Above: Deputy Director Greg Siekaniec (l) talks with Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius (r). Service photo by Garrett Peterson.



Accessing America's Great Outdoors: Special Hunts for People Across the Midwest

Physical challenges change your life forever, but they do not have to take away your passion, your grace or your spirit. Over Veterans Day weekend this fall, I had the opportunity to meet a group of hunters who followed this mindset, regardless of the terrain they traveled in life.

The former Savanna Army Depot, now the Lost Mound Unit of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Savanna, Ill. was the backdrop for a special deer hunt for people with disabilities.

Assembling in the early morning hours, long before sun up, 25 hunters and their assistants layered in blaze orange readied their blinds for the hunt.

Blaze orange and safety are top of mind in all hunt situations whether the hunter is standing on his own two legs or trekking in a wheelchair. It was impressive seeing true hunters putting the best practices of hunting in motion and doing so with reverence and humility.

Refuge staff have organized this special hunt since 2007 and have strategically scattered hunters across the 10,000 acre sand prairie landscape, peppering them around the World War I and II structures that are usually closed to the public. An old army depot, crisscrossed with primitive roads, proved to be the perfect hunt location, with ground level, wheelchair-friendly blinds available for all participants.

While hunting and fishing are well-known recreational activities on many of our nation's 555 refuges, access for people with disabilities across federal lands is limited, and opportunities like



this draw a wide audience. Hunters travelled from nine states, including Louisiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Iowa, Wisconsin, Alabama, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois.

Over the course of our lives, seven out of 10 of us will experience some form of limitation due to a physical disability. This is a sobering thought and one that reminds us that it's important to stay sharp and challenge your heart and mind. Throughout our lives, regardless of what comes our way, it is good to know that there are special places to connect, recharge and to find anchor points within the natural world.

Field stations across the Midwest Region offer similar hunting opportunities for people with disabilities, as well as young hunters that are just starting to take an interest. More than 20 stations currently offer special hunts on refuge lands across the heartland. Here are a sample of hunts from the past year:

Illinois

The special youth deer hunt at the Lost Mound Unit of Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge was held October 8-9, 2011. Lost Mound offers a unique opportunity for both youth and hunters with disabilities. Because of access restrictions for most of the year on this shuttered army base, the deer population is much higher than the surrounding areas of Illinois. The number of large bucks is impressive and offers an outstanding opportunity to see and harvest deer for a special group of hunters.

Minnesota

Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge staff and Friends of Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District, along with volunteers from Ducks Unlimited, hosted youth and their families for a morning of hands-on waterfowling.

Missouri

Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge hosted the second annual mobility and visually impaired hunt for youth and adults in October.

Continued on next page.

Accessing America's Great Outdoors: Special Hunts for People Across the Midwest

Mingo National Wildlife Refuge hosted a managed deer hunt for youth. The youth, selected through a random draw, attended one of two pre-hunt orientation meetings conducted by refuge staff. The staff discussed refuge history, management techniques, deer biology, as well as the rules and regulations for the youth-only rifle hunt.

Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge hosted a special white-tailed deer hunt for persons with disabilities in December. Eight individuals confined to wheelchairs were selected for this two-day muzzle loading firearm hunt. Applications for this hunt were made through Squaw Creek NWR with assistance from the Missouri Department of Conservation. Each applicant was permitted to have a non-hunting assistant.

Michigan

Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge has implemented a program for non-



Above: Midwest Region Refuge Chief Rick Schultz meets with Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge staff and others during a special hunt on the refuge this fall. Service photo by Tina Shaw.

ambulatory deer hunters since 1991. In fact, it is one of the first such programs initiated in the refuge system. This year's hunt was conducted in November, with 26 hunters participating.

Wisconsin

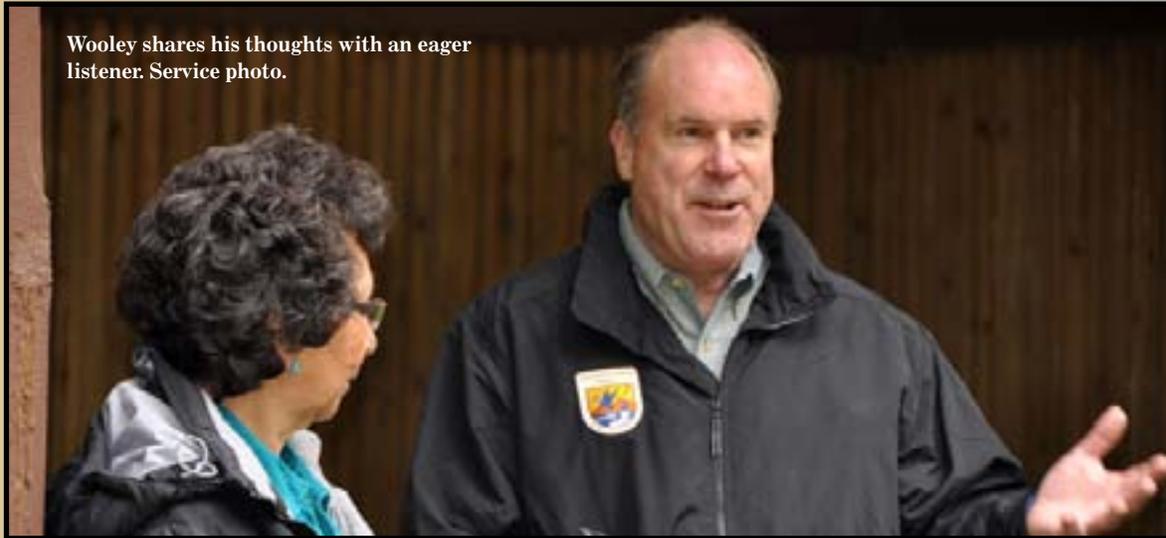
Horicon National Wildlife Refuge hosted a youth waterfowl hunt, as well as, a special gun hunt for adult deer hunters with disabilities, both in October. The refuge has an 880 acre area with 10 blinds, but the hunters are not restricted to the blind. Hunters can also set up portable blinds or hunt from their vehicle. Education clinics are a pre-hunt requirement for the youth hunt.

--Tina Shaw,
External Affairs



Wildlife Refuge Manager Ed Britton issues deer permits to hunter Jeff Fraizer. Service photo by Tina Shaw.

Deputy Regional Director Charlie Wooley Honored with DOI's Distinguished Service Award



Wooley shares his thoughts with an eager listener. Service photo.

Charles M. Wooley's active leadership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been marked by his ability to build consensus and inspire members of the conservation community to apply common sense solutions to the Great Lakes' most difficult challenges. His capability in identifying limiting factors affecting fish and wildlife resources has led to significant restoration milestones.

Wooley was instrumental in establishing the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, an innovative cooperative that restores fishery resources from losses caused by the operation of hydroelectric facilities. He also led field, regional and national efforts to identify natural resources injured by contaminants, recover damages from those responsible, and undertake restorations.

On behalf of the Department of the Interior, he negotiated one of the earliest, large settlements nationally for the

Saginaw River in Michigan and continues to lead Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration program activities across the region.

As a Service Deputy Regional Director, Wooley has a special affinity and appreciation for the day-to-day work of field biologists across all organizations. He makes himself available to all employees and his coaching, guidance, and caring are hallmarks of a generous leader.

The Distinguished Service Award is the highest honorary recognition an employee can receive within the Department of Interior. It is granted for outstanding contribution to science, outstanding skill or ability in the performance of duty, an eminent career in the Department, an outstanding record in administration, outstanding contribution to energy conservation, or any other outstanding contribution to public service.

Bald Eagle Nest Moved to Avoid Power Lines

Under provisions of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, a bald eagle nest near Deer River, Minnesota, has been moved because of concern that the nest and nest tree might fall and strike nearby power transmission line. The relocated nest, visible from Highway 2, was relocated about one-half mile south under a permit issued by the Service to Otter Tail Power.

The Service issued a permit allowing relocation of the nest after other means of avoiding or minimizing disturbance were exhausted by the company. The company is upgrading transmission lines along a corridor from Bemidji and Grand Rapids, and has worked with the Service to avoid and minimize impacts to five eagle nests within the work area. The nest was not active at the time of removal, so eagles had not yet returned to the area and had not laid eggs.

“We know that people in the area are concerned about the nest, and we want to reassure the public that the nest has been successfully relocated on a platform placed in a location about ½ mile south, where we expect to encounter little if any disturbance,” said Deanne Endrizzi, wildlife biologist with the Service’s Midwest Region Migratory Bird office. “It’s our goal under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act to find solutions to situations such as this one that are good for people and good for eagles.” The nest will be monitored in the coming months to determine if the eagles use it for nesting this year. The site of the nest removal will also be monitored to determine if the eagles try to re-nest in the same location. As partial mitigation for removing the nest, the company will construct a second nest platform in the general



Bald eagles are protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Service photo.

area at a site which is considered to be preferable eagle habitat. An environmental consultant for Otter Tail Power said a pair of bald eagles built the nest last year after a previous nest in a nearby tree was lost when the tree fell down. Because the new nest was relocated within the bald eagle’s territory, it is likely the pair will find the nest while foraging or defending their territory. Additionally, because the nest was relocated before the breeding season began, the eagles will have ample opportunity to build another nest if they do not like the new location. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act was passed by Congress in 1940 to protect eagles from shooting, trapping, possession, sale and other activities. Eagles recovered, but then declined again with widespread use of the pesticide DDT, shooting, and habitat loss. In 1963 the population in the lower 48 states was estimated at 487 nesting pairs. Bald eagles were listed under an early version of the Endangered Species Act in 1967, and listed as endangered or threatened in the lower 48 states with the passage of the Endangered Species

Act of 1973. Protections of the ESA, recovery efforts by states, tribes and other partners, and the ban on DDT set the stage for an eagle comeback.

The national symbol was removed from the list of endangered and threatened species in 2007 when the population the conterminous 48 states was estimated at nearly 10,000 pairs. The bald eagle continues to be protected by federal laws, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, both of which prohibit destruction of eagles and their nests, chicks and eggs. The Eagle Protection Act contains provisions under which disturbance of eagles may occur if a permit is issued and conservation measures are undertaken.

For more information about bald eagles, visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/eagle/>

--Georgia Parham,
External Affairs

Honor and Recognition



Todd Turner Announced as New Midwest Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries

Todd Turner has been selected as the Midwest Region's Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries. Turner has been the Midwest Region's Deputy Assistant Regional Director of Fisheries since 2009 and has been the Acting ARD for the past several months.

Turner's extensive experience with the Midwest Region's Fisheries Program made him an ideal candidate to fill this senior position within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He is a great example of an exceptional leader developed right here in the Midwest Region.

As Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries, Turner will provide region-wide leadership in the programs, issues and policies related to the protection of fish and wildlife resources in the Midwest Region. He will develop short and long-term plans, objectives and priorities for the Midwest Fisheries program, as well as provide guidance to the Regional Director and other Service officials and managers regarding controversial and complex scientific, political and economic issues.

Prior to 2009, Turner was the Midwest Region's Hatchery Program Leader beginning in 2001. He also served as Assistant Hatchery Manager in 1991 and eventually Hatchery Manager in 1995 at Genoa National Fish Hatchery. Turner started his career with the Service in 1989 at Sullivan Creek National Fish Hatchery, formally Hiawatha Forest National Fish Hatchery.

A Minnesota native, Turner is an alumnus of Bemidji State University. Before working for the Service, he served in the U.S. Army Reserves for 7 years and worked for the Leech Lake Reservation Department of Resource Management as a fisheries technician. A true outdoorsman, his hobbies include hunting, fishing, making maple syrup and snowmobiling. He is married to Laurie Turner, with whom he has two sons.

Katie Steiger-Meister, External Affairs

Cathy Vanatta Receives 30 Year Award

Chief of Contracting and Facilities Management, Cathy Vanatta, was honored in February for her 30 year federal career that started in 1971 as a seasonal GS-2 data transcriber for the Internal Revenue Service in Kansas City, Mo.



Above: Cathy Vanatta receives 30-year recognition from Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius and Deputy Director Greg Siekaniec.

Service Lists Rayed Bean and Snuffbox Mussels as Endangered

The Service has listed two freshwater mussels – the rayed bean and the snuffbox – as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. The two mussels are found in river systems in the eastern United States. The Midwest Region's Ohio Ecological Field Office is the Service lead for the two species.

The rayed bean is found in rivers in Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia, as well as Ontario, Canada. The snuffbox occurs in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Ontario, Canada.

The Service has found dramatic declines in populations of both mussels. The rayed bean is gone from 73 percent of its historical range, and the snuffbox has disappeared from 62 percent of the streams in which it was historically found.

Threats to both the rayed bean and the snuffbox include loss and degradation of stream and river habitat due to impoundments, channelization, chemical contaminants, mining and sedimentation. Freshwater mussels require clean water; their decline often signals a decline in the water quality of the streams and rivers they inhabit.

The final rule appeared in the February 14 Federal Register. The Service will now work cooperatively with partners to develop recovery plans for the two mussels and coordinate efforts to conserve their habitats.

Under the ESA, "endangered" means a species is in danger of becoming extinct throughout all or a significant portion of its range. It is illegal under the ESA to kill, harm or otherwise "take" a listed species,



Snuffbox mussels collected during a river survey. Photo by Mike Hoggarth

or to possess, import, export or conduct interstate or international commerce without authorization from the Service. The ESA also requires all federal agencies to ensure actions they authorize, fund, or undertake do not jeopardize the existence of listed species.

More information on mussels and endangered wildlife can be found at www.midwest.gov/endangered

--Georgia Parham,
External Affairs

Youth Fish Day!

Friday May 11, 2012
9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Bass Ponds
Minnesota Valley
National Wildlife Refuge

For more information or to
volunteer contact:

Beth A. Ullenberg, Supervisory
Visitor Services Manager
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Minnesota Valley National
Wildlife Refuge

952/854-5900 Refuge
952/858-0712 Direct

Whooping Cranes End Ultralight-Led Journey in Alabama

Nine whooping cranes led by ultralight aircraft from Wisconsin in the fall of 2011 have been released from a holding pen at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama, wrapping up the latest effort just short of their goal of St. Marks and Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuges in Florida.

The alternate ending came after a series of delays caused by weather, the Federal Aviation Administration and the cranes themselves.

The original plan when the migration began on October 9, 2011, was to have the pilots of Operation Migration guide the cranes to St. Marks and Chassahowitzka, but the young birds did not follow the ultralights farther south from Alabama. There they waited as weather and issues with the FAA grounded them for over a month. The FAA later provided a waiver for the pilots, but weather, and then the cranes, did not cooperate.

The Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership determined that it would be best to transport and release the cranes at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. "So far the cranes are foraging and hanging around close to the pen and moving into the flooded fields," said Bill Gates, biologist at Wheeler NWR, after the release. "We plan to leave the gate to the pen open, so if they need to come back here they can."



Newly released juvenile whooping cranes check out their surroundings at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama. Service photo by Bill Gates.

Eva Szyszkoski, from the International Crane Foundation, a WCEP partner, hopes the young cranes will link up with sandhill cranes and three whooping cranes about 400-500 yards from the pen site. She has been tracking the whooping cranes on this project for the past five years. There are four other whooping cranes also at the refuge in other areas.

As the class of 2011-12 whooping cranes prepares to meet their fellow whooping cranes from previous migrations, thousands of sandhill cranes have already left the refuge, two weeks earlier than usual. About 11,000 sandhill cranes and seven whooping cranes wintered at Wheeler this year, according to Dwight Cooley, refuge manager.

In another interesting twist this year, one crane that broke away from the ultralight-led migration in the first few days was later discovered in the company of sandhill cranes. Its transmitter failed, preventing easy detection. It was later spotted in north Georgia, and finally in Florida. Biologists

hope to capture this crane and replace the transmitter and attach color bands for identification purposes.

Besides the ultralight-led migration, the partnership uses the Direct Autumn Release method, which places young chicks in the company of seasoned birds in Wisconsin. They

then learn the migration route, as well as vital survival skills, from those older, and hopefully wiser cranes. Two direct release birds wintered at Wheeler NWR this year.

Now that these nine cranes have been released, the total eastern population is 112 whooping cranes. Estimated distribution as of mid-January 2012 included 39 whooping cranes in Indiana, six in Illinois, seven in Georgia, seven in Alabama, two in South Carolina, two in North Carolina, six in Tennessee, one in Missouri, 12 in Florida, 14 at unknown locations, one with no recent report, and six long-term missing. Florida has about 20 in a non-migratory flock. Louisiana has a project underway for a non-migratory flock of about 20 whooping cranes. The western flock has about 300 cranes, and about 130 are in captivity.

*Tom Mackenzie
External Affairs, Southeast Region*

Preparation Makes All the Difference



Winona District intern Laura Erickson prepares a GPS unit for locating trees in a heron rookery. Service photo by Mary Stefanski.

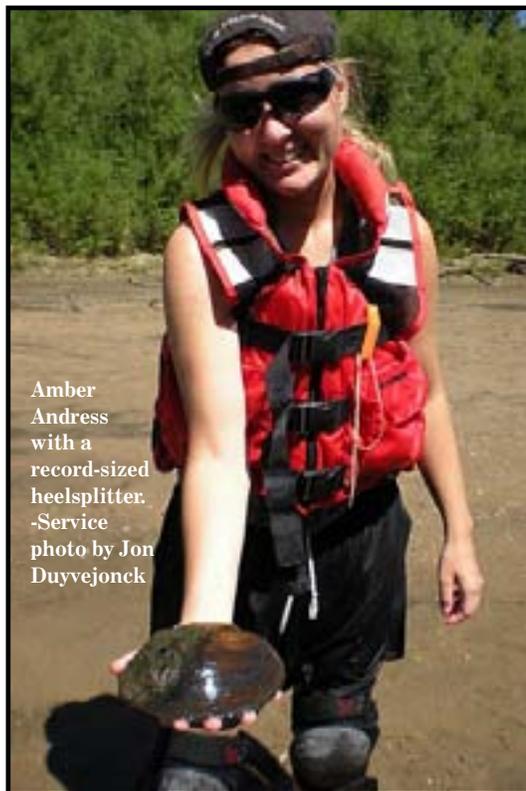
Getting in Touch with Your Inner Raccoon

“Time’s up, folks!” hollered our group leader from the boat nudged up on the shoreline. I stood up, dripping, and began to wade my way back to the rendezvous point. It was a beautiful August day full of sunshine and accented with white puffy summer clouds – a perfect day to be neck deep in the river. Biologists and volunteers representing state and federal agencies, the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee, universities, and local environmental groups from around the region had gathered to assist the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in a mussel blitz to assess the health of mussel populations on a few of the Mighty Mississippi’s Iowa tributaries. We had convened for briefing earlier that morning, donned our life jackets, strapped on our mesh bags, and split up into groups to survey various sections of the Wapsipicon River with timed searches.

Because the river was low, most of our survey could be done by pollywogging. As a relatively new hire with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on my first mussel blitz, I was soon to learn the true meaning of the peculiar-sounding term. Pollywogging, it seems, has nothing to do with larval frogs or toads, as the biological definition of the term might imply, but rather it involves searching about in the shallows on one’s hands and knees, feeling for and collecting mussels buried in the substrate.

Back at the boat, it was time to compile, identify, and measure the mussels our group had collected on its first run of the morning. As we emptied our catches, I couldn’t help

but notice that one of the team members, Kevin Hansen, had a mesh bag that was overflowing with mussels of all different species. I glanced sheepishly down at my own bag carrying just two medium sized white heel splitters—the only ones I had managed to find in the last half-hour.



Amber Andress with a record-sized heelsplitter. -Service photo by Jon Duyvejonck

“How do you get so many?” I asked Kevin. “Well,” he replied, “you just have to get in touch with your inner raccoon.” *Inner raccoon?* I thought, as we measured the specimens. Having frequently assisted a local wildlife rehabilitator with young raccoon rescue and release, I knew exactly what he meant.

After we had documented and released our catch, the group boated a short distance down river and began a second timed search. When the clock started on the run, I went into full raccoon mode – paws shuffling along every inch of sand bar slopes, probing in and around snags, and exploring the entire circumference of bridge piers. This time when we gathered to count our catch, I grinned as I presented my full bag of pocketbooks, heel splitters, black sandshells, and my prize find for the day, an elktoe. Thanks to the advice of an expert mussel surveyor and the inspiration of a resourceful little creature, I had learned to pollywog!

Author’s note: The 2011 Iowa mussel blitz included sampling on the Cedar, Little Wapsi, Little Turkey and Wapsipicon Rivers, as well as Crane and Buffalo creeks. The multi-day, interagency effort collected approximately 4,000 mussels, including several healthy specimens of our federally endangered Higgins eye pearlymussel (most of which were found by Kevin Hansen). Genetic testing has indicated that these specimens were the result of recent reintroduction efforts by the Service in partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For more information about the reintroduction of this endangered species, visit: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/RockIsland/ec/Research/CedarRiver/HEPMRec.html>.

Amber Andress, Rock Island Ecological Services Field Office

Genoa National Fish Hatchery Hosts Sixth Annual Kids Ice Fishing Event!

Over 250 youths and their parents came out to Genoa National Fish Hatchery in late January to enjoy a short seminar on ice safety tips and ice fishing techniques from resident ice fishing expert, Eric Leis, of the Lacrosse Fish Health Center. The learning continued with a talk by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Game Warden, Dale Hochhausen, who explained the importance of fishing regulations and catch limits in fisheries management. Families were then set loose on a two acre hatchery pond stocked with 1,500 10 to 14 inch rainbow trout to test their new-found ice fishing knowledge. A sunny and brisk day, every line had a bite, with many children catching their first fish.



Above: Many children caught their first fish at the ice fishing event. Service photo.

A highlight of this year was retired refuge employee, Fritz Perkins, who brought a horse drawn sleigh. Parents and children alike enjoyed winter sleigh rides through the nearby prairie restoration project.

Below: More than 250 children and their families came out to Genoa NFH to try their hand at ice fishing. Service photo.

The 6th annual Kids Ice Fishing Event was sponsored by the Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Fisheries Services and three U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fishery program offices located in the Lacrosse, Wis. area. Fishery offices that participated in the ice fishing event include the LaCrosse Fish Health Center, the LaCrosse National Fish and Conservation Office and the Genoa NFH.

A rewarding experience for all involved, it is hoped that the memories the children made at this year's ice fishing event will spark a lifelong appreciation for the outdoors.

Katie Steiger-Meister, External Affairs and Doug Aloisi, Genoa NFH



Piping Plover Nesting Habitat Protection Along the Shores of Lake Michigan

The endangered piping plover will soon return to the beaches of the Great Lakes to begin another nesting season. In 2011, there were only approximately 55 breeding pairs of piping plover in the Great Lakes region. Plovers nest on wide sand and cobble beaches near where the vegetation starts to grow. Each pair of plovers normally has a clutch of four eggs that both adults incubate for about 28 days. After the eggs hatch, the chicks are extremely vulnerable because they cannot fly for their first four weeks. During this time, any type of harassment can significantly decrease their chances of survival. If adult plovers are chased away because of harassment, the flightless chicks are easy prey for gulls and other predators, as the adults are not there to warn them of danger. Dogs that are not on a leash can easily chase and injure or kill the chicks.

Cooperation by private land owners is key to recovery efforts for this highly vulnerable species. In a typical year, 20 to 30 percent of Great Lakes piping plovers nest on private property. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works closely with groups such as the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy to establish partnerships with private landowners in order to protect the plovers. During the breeding seasons, UPLC employees closely monitor each plover nest from a safe distance. They also educate landowners, and other people who recreate on the beach, about how to coexist without adversely affecting breeding efforts. Most landowners and beach users are mindful of piping plover nests and are willing to help. "Once people understand the plight of the species and that their actions can make a difference in helping piping plovers

survive, most people gladly do their part," states Jack Dingledine, deputy field supervisor for the Service's East Lansing Field Office. "Many landowners are proud to have such a rare species nest on their property."



Unfortunately, not all nesting piping plovers on private property are safe from actions that can harm the species. In June of 2010, a Special Agent with the Service initiated an investigation into allegations that a landowner had been harassing endangered piping plovers, a federally protected species, that were nesting on a stretch of beach near her property on Lake Michigan.

The investigation revealed that in the summers of 2009 and 2010 a private landowner had knowingly harassed plovers by repeatedly allowing her unleashed dog near a plover nest, approaching a hatching plover nest on several occasions, and permitting the use of all-terrain vehicles near plover nests. Local plover biologists from the UPLC attempted to curtail these disruptive activities by educating the landowner and obtaining voluntary compliance, but these efforts failed. These disturbances can

cause adult piping plovers to abandon their nest or chicks potentially resulting in their death. During 2009 and 2010, none of the plover chicks survived at either of the nests near the property. The investigation found that the landowner had violated the Endangered Species Act, resulting in \$7,500 in restitution and 80 hours of community service.

The recovery of this highly endangered species is dependent on the cooperation of private landowners and those who visit our Great Lakes shorelines.

On your next visit to the beach, you can help protect the Great Lakes piping plover by:

- Staying away from posted piping plover breeding areas.
- Keeping your dog leashed while on beaches with nesting piping plovers.
- Packing out your food waste and garbage that would attract gulls and other predators.
- Not operating vehicles on beaches with nesting piping plovers.
- Reporting the location of piping plovers to the Service.
- Leaving driftwood and other wrack on the beaches.
- Reporting people or pets disturbing piping plovers to the Service or DNR RAP hotline: 1-800-292-7800.
- Learning more about piping plover.

To learn more about piping plovers, visit: http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/piping_plover/pipingpl.html

Tina Shaw, External Affairs

Winona Fishing



Approximately 75 people attended the annual Youth Ice Fishing Event held at the McNally Landing on the Winona District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge near Winona, Minn. The event is co-sponsored by the Refuge and the Friends of the Refuge Headwaters. Service photos by Mary Stefanski.



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/>

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