Inside Region 3

August 2013

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Tom Melius • Regional Director
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Getting Out To Enjoy The Fruit of our Labors

I hope everyone has been having a great, safe and productive summer around the Region. I am and have enjoyed taking the opportunity to see firsthand the great things each of you do on a day-to-day basis. A nice addition to summer, as it is every year, is seeing our summer interns and student employees onboard. It's always refreshing to see them spend a portion of their summer with us. We hope that their time with us is fun, educational and interests them in a career with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

My travels this month included a trip to Maine for our Directorate Meeting, where our leadership collectively continues to share and further develop the ways we manage through the challenge of declining budgets. As the likelihood of new rhetoric increases and the next fiscal year approaches, we will do all we can to make sure you have reliable and timely information on where our budget stands and how this may affect the work that we do. As our splendid summer days continue, I'm also excited at the prospect of travelling to our Tamarac and Agassiz National Wildlife Refuges to see and learn more about the refuge.

This month we will be signing an important Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This MOU will continue our pledge of working together on state and federal lands along the Detroit River and Lake Erie in research, monitoring, conservation planning, restoration and public use opportunities. This is a partnership with great results over the years that will no doubt continue to blossom.

As the accolades continue to come in and highlight our staff and their usual great work, they are also extended to our facilities. Congratulations are in order for our Neosho National Fish Hatchery staff, where their visitor center became the first Service building to receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold Certification and was recently recognized with Environmental Leadership Award from the Service. I encourage any of you who are in the area to stop by and see this great facility that is saving 42 metric tons of greenhouse gasses annually, thanks to their geothermic heat pump and solar energy use. Hatchery Manager Dave Hendrix and his staff do a wonderful job and would be happy to have you stop in.

Another great new facility will be celebrated on August 21, with the groundbreaking ceremony for the Great River Road Interpretive Center, right next to our Genoa National Fish Hatchery. The center will offer a great way for the local community and those passing thru to experience what we have to offer, and is the result of another great partnership, in this instance with the Federal Highway Administration. The center is designed to commemorate the local history of the area and to celebrate the rich conservation history of the Upper Mississippi River Region.

I hope that you also will have time to get out and see the fruits of our labors around the Region before this summer season winds down. As always, I appreciate the great work you are doing and ask that you stay safe.

Enjoy this month's issue of Inside Region 3!

Tom Melius
Regional Director, Midwest Region

On the Cover
Endangered Topeka shiners will be reintroduced in Missouri.
Photo by Garold W. Sneegas

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In this Issue

First Returning Kirtland's Warbler Fledgling Documented in Wisconsin

By Georgia Parham
External Affairs

A Kirtland's warbler that hatched in Wisconsin last year and was banded before its first migration has returned to its birthplace in Adams County, Wisconsin, marking a significant milestone in efforts to help boost its populations.

The returning bird was discovered in Adams County on June 3, by nest monitors Valarie Michel and Daryl Christensen. The bird had been hatched at the same site in 2012 and was captured and banded in August 2012 by Service retirees Ron Refsnider and Joel Trick. Refsnider estimates the chances of finding this individual at the same site a year after hatching was less than 15 percent.

Chris Mensing, endangered species biologist with the Service's East Lansing Field Office, said, "It's exciting to see Kirtland's warblers returning to habitat in Wisconsin. With endangered species, you never want to put all your eggs in one basket. Having a successful breeding population outside the core Kirtland's warbler range in Michigan helps protect the species from catastrophic events."

The Kirtland's warbler was listed as an endangered species about 40 years ago, when its population dropped to about 300 birds. Until 1995, Kirtland's warblers were found almost exclusively in the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan and were struggling to recover from a steep decline in populations in the 1960s and 1970s due to habitat loss and trouble from brown-headed cowbirds.

A Male Kirtland's warbler in a jack pine tree. Kirtland's warbler recovery reached another milestone in 2013, when a bird that hatched in Wisconsin in 2012 returned to its birthplace. Joel Trick, USFWS

Starting in the late 1990s, the protections and efforts made under the Endangered Species Act enabled the Kirtland's warbler to start expanding its breeding territory to Wisconsin, Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Ontario. The warblers have been observed in several counties in Wisconsin, and nests have been confirmed in Adams and Marinette counties. In 2012, Kirtland's warblers were recorded in five counties in Wisconsin (Adams, Douglas, Bayfield, Vilas, and Marinette), and a minimum of 24 singing male warblers were documented in the state.

To help increase Kirtland's warblers in Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources, the Service and other partners now conduct annual surveys to listen and look for the birds, monitor nests in Adams County where breeding sites have been found, and set traps to keep cowbirds away from the warblers' nests. The partners also are working to maintain and expand the mix of 5- to 20-year-old jack pine trees and barrens necessary by planting the tree species.

Get current and past reports on the Kirtland's warbler at: www.fws.gov/midwest/GreenBay/endangered/kiwa/Updates.html.

Collaborating in Minnesota: Trust Species and Valuable Minnesota Habitats Benefit from Land Exchange

By Tina Shaw
External Affairs

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Tom Landwehr and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director Tom Melius officially sign land exchange documents on June 12, 2013. USFWS

In mid-June, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service marked the completion of a land exchange that benefits Minnesota wildlife and habitats near Sandstone, Minn. and Minnesota National Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Tom Landwehr and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director Tom Melius joined with realty staff from both agencies to finalize the land exchange at the Bloomington Visitor Center and were pleased that the project had reached completion.

"Land exchanges like this increase our efficiency, because the areas being exchanged are in close proximity to existing protected lands," said Melius.

All plants and animals will benefit through this land exchange and by the long-term conservation efforts of both agencies. These high-value lowland forests are home to American woodcock, golden-winged warblers and other trust species. Also of note are State-managed species ruffed grouse and American black bears.

Both Landwehr and Melius took a few minutes during the document recording process to thank staff for their dedication and persistence during this multi-year process. They noted that strong working relationships and an awareness of the potential in joint conservation projects like these will help build collaborations in the future.

Divesting to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

- Rice Lake Unit, Minnesota Valley NWR
  Carver County - 19.12 acres
- Nicols Fen, Minnesota Valley NWR
  Dakota County - 13.01 acres
- Savage Fen (4 tracts), Minnesota Valley NWR
  Scott County - 188.15 acres
- Sandstone Unit, Rice Lake NWR
  Pine County - 2,045.36 acres
- Wright County WPA, Wright County - 25.55 acres

Acquiring from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

- Rapids Lake Unit, Minnesota Valley NWR
  Carver County - 147.66 acres

In attendance

- MN DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr
- USFWS Regional Director Tom Melius
- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Manager (acting) Jeanne Holler
- MN DNR Chief of Wildlife Section Paul Telander
- USFWS Chief of Realty Management (retired) Ross Grimwood
- MN DNR Realty Program Coordinator Katherine Giel
- MN DNR Area Wildlife Manager Fred Bengtson
- USFWS Chief of Acquisitions Branch John Saxhaug
- USFWS Senior Realty Specialist Shirley Karman
- MN DNR Land Acquisition Coordinator Kim Hennings
- MN DNR Area Wildlife Supervisor Diana Regenscheid
- MN DNR Realty Specialist Bridget Jacobson
- MN DNR Deputy Commissioner Dave Schad
- USFWS Senior Realty Officer Pat Carroll
- USFWS Refuge Supervisor Jim Leach

Conservation Partners With the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie and Big Rivers LCC Unveil New Web Site

By Ashley Spratt
External Affairs

The Eastern Tallgrass Prairie and Big Rivers LCC recently released its newly designed public Web site: http://TallgrassPrairieLCC.org/ to promote effective conservation through collaboration and sound science.

The LCC facilitates dialogue among federal, state, non-governmental, academic and private interests to build a collaborative network of knowledge of natural resources challenges across a heavily agricultural landscape. That landscape stretches across our nation's heartland from southwest Ohio to parts of eastern Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota and Minnesota.

LCC partners are working together to bridge the gap between science and natural resources management while tackling broad reaching natural resources challenges like climate change, agricultural practices, water demands, urbanization, and socio-economic implications of conservation practices.

TallgrassPrairieLCC.org provides natural resources professionals and the public with access to shared conservation priorities, ongoing scientific research, funding opportunities, and educational resources, while offering continued transparency on behalf of the LCC community.

This network of knowledge equips the conservation community with the tools necessary to prepare for and address current and future stressors impacting the natural resources of this ecologically diverse working landscape.

Retired Agassiz NWR Manager Maggie Anderson Earns University of Maine Honor

By Tina Shaw
External Affairs

In June 2013, retired Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge Manager Maggie Anderson received the Award of Professional Excellence from The Department of Ecology, University of Maine-Orono.

The Award is given to those graduates who distinguish themselves throughout their careers and have brought honor to themselves and the University Department.

As a part of this honor, Anderson's name will permanently be posted on the university's website and on a plaque in Nutting Hall at the University of Maine-Orono campus.

Former Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge Manager Maggie Anderson in the field. Photo courtesy of Michael Furtman Photography

Partners Study Bald Eagles to Gauge Great Lakes Region's Environmental Health

By Jeremy N. Moore
Contaminants Biologist
East Lansing Field Office

High up in the trees above Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, in east central Michigan, biologists gently remove a 52-day-old bald eagle chick from its nest. The eaglet is carefully banded, weighed and measured, and samples taken of its blood and feathers, before it is returned to its nest to be tended by its parents.

Six years after the bald eagle was declared recovered and removed from the list of threatened and endangered species, a team of partners continues to monitor the species' status. In Michigan, this work not only focuses on the numbers – how many pairs of eagles, the number of nesting attempts, how many eaglets hatch – but the health of the birds as well. Biologists here are closely watching for signs of the contaminants that originally forced eagles to the brink of extinction and threatened the health of their environment.

As a top predator, the bald eagle accumulates

A team of partners is keeping tabs on the health of bald eagles like this one in a nest in Michigan Jeremy N. Moore, USFWS

contaminants from the prey it consumes. Because bald eagles are susceptible to problems caused by some types of contaminants, biologists use them as a sentinel species. The observations and data acquired through continued monitoring allow resource managers a glimpse into bald eagle and ecosystem health.

Today, the Service's East Lansing Field Office coordinates monitoring efforts in Michigan through support from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Among the key partners in the monitoring effort are University of Maryland, which runs the program and provides supplies and field crews; Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, which funds the program; Michigan Department of Natural Resources, which flies survey routes; and Michigan State University, which trains field crews. Volunteers also play an important role.

Because bald eagles feed primarily on fish, biologists can analyze blood and feather samples to gain information on water quality. Contaminants such as DDT, PCBs and mercury can be detected and pose risks to eagles, fish and other wildlife where detected. The information can then be used to establish acceptable levels of contaminant discharge and to prioritize clean-up efforts. The data is also used to focus clean-up efforts in Areas of Concern – those sites around the Great Lakes that are most affected by toxic substances.

Michigan's bald eagle population has rebounded dramatically from lows in the early 1960s. In 1961, there were 52 occupied territories (meaning a pair of eagles was present), and 21 pairs produced a total of 34 eaglets. In 2012, the state had 684 occupied territories, with 457 pairs producing 718 eaglets.

The bald eagle recovered primarily because the United States banned the use of DDT, a pesticide that resulted in thin eggshells and failed nests; and the passage of the Endangered Species Act which coordinated recovery efforts and focused attention on the plight of imperiled species.

Today, bald eagles remain protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Continued monitoring by the Service, state and tribal partners and other organizations are aimed at ensuring the nation's symbol continues to thrive.

See the links below for more on eagle monitoring efforts:

ABC 12 of Flint, Michigan, captured a report of the eaglet examination at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge: http://www.abc12.com/story/22209570/52-day-old-bald-eagle-examined-and-banded-in-saginaw-county.

Here's a look at biologists banding a young eagle at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, provided by Michigan Out-of-Doors: http://youtu.be/dt68xIB0nIU.

This video shows biologists working with an eaglet at Stony Creek Metropark, provided by Macomb Audubon Society: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXPFLSi3c0g&hd=1watch?v=NXPFLSi3c0g&hd=1.

See images of biologists banding bald eagles in Michigan at http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmidwest/sets/72157626330608487/ and find out more about the Midwest's bald eagle population at www.fws.gov/midwest/eagle .

Avian Radar Units Provide Crucial Data To Guide Wildlife Managers Along Great Lakes Shoreline

By Larry Dean
External Affairs

Using funds from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Midwest Region was able to acquire two Avian Radar Systems and put them to use collecting valuable Great Lakes shoreline migration data.

Since 2011, the units have been deployed for five seasons , during spring and fall migration, and are designed to locate and track flying birds and bats. That data will be of great use for managers as wind power projects expand along known flyways, and thus increase potential risks to wildlife sharing that path.

Jeff Gosse, Dan Nolfi, Nate Rathbun, Tim Bowden, Becky Horton, David Larson, and Erik Olson compose a team of seven biologists from Ecological Services who collect and analyze data from the avian radar units to provide support for the Service's Wind Energy Guidelines.

"The purpose of the units is to help determine locations of migration corridors, timing of migration, and possibly stopover sites along the shores of the Great Lakes," said Jeff Gosse, Regional Energy Coordinator, "The ultimate intent is to help guide development, such as wind facilities and communication towers, away from areas with high bird or bat concentrations."

The Horizontal Scanning Radar used in the unit's monitoring can capture the location and direction of moving targets on the landscape. Additionally, its Vertical Scanning Radar provides the altitude of passing targets and provides a count of those passing through.

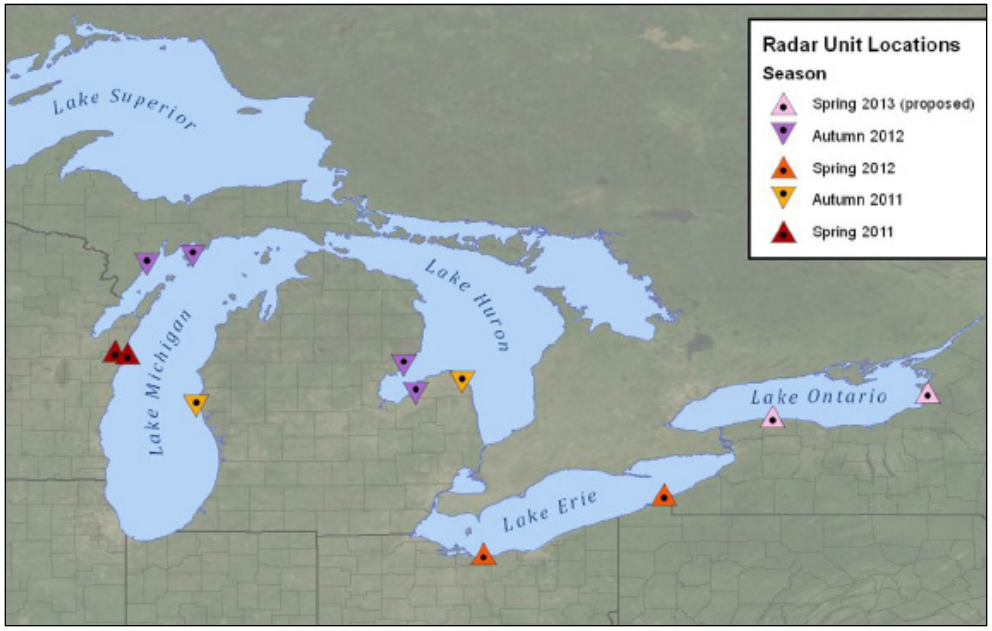
Avian Radar Unit purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. USFWS


Service employees listen as Dan Nolfi talks about the Making Wind Power Wildlife Friendly project during the June visit to the Regional Office. Joanna Gilkeson, USFWS

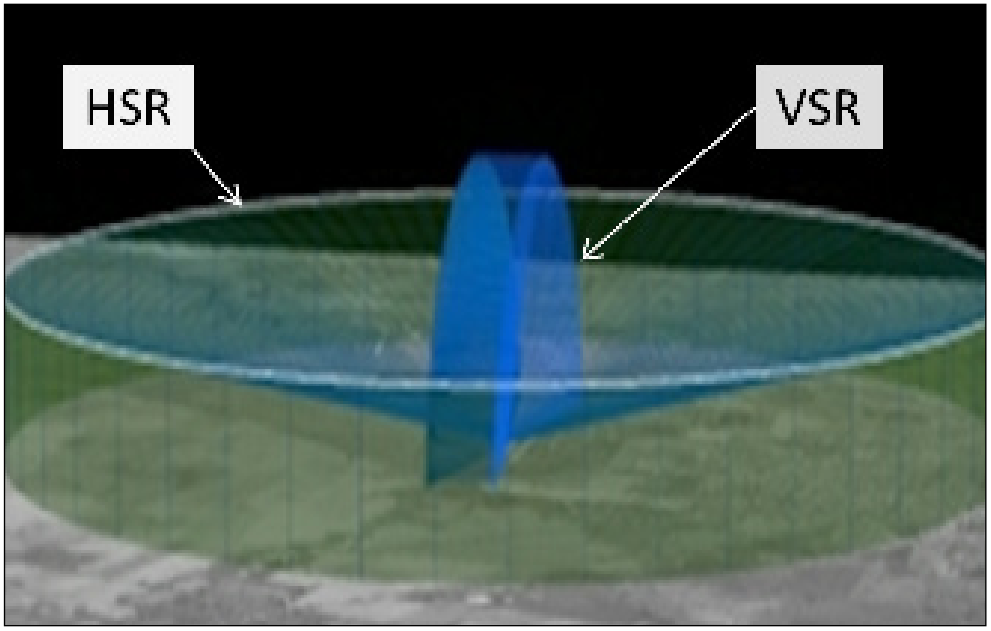
"Data collected from these units will tell us the date, time, number, direction, and flight height of birds and bats passing through the area. It's also particularly useful for showing us what is happening at night when all bats and most passerines (songbirds) migrate," Gosse said.

When in use the radar operates 24/7 and can cover up to six miles in diameter. Units have been deployed along the shorelines of Lakes Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario during spring and fall migration and are currently on Lake Michigan in Wisconsin monitoring fall migration.

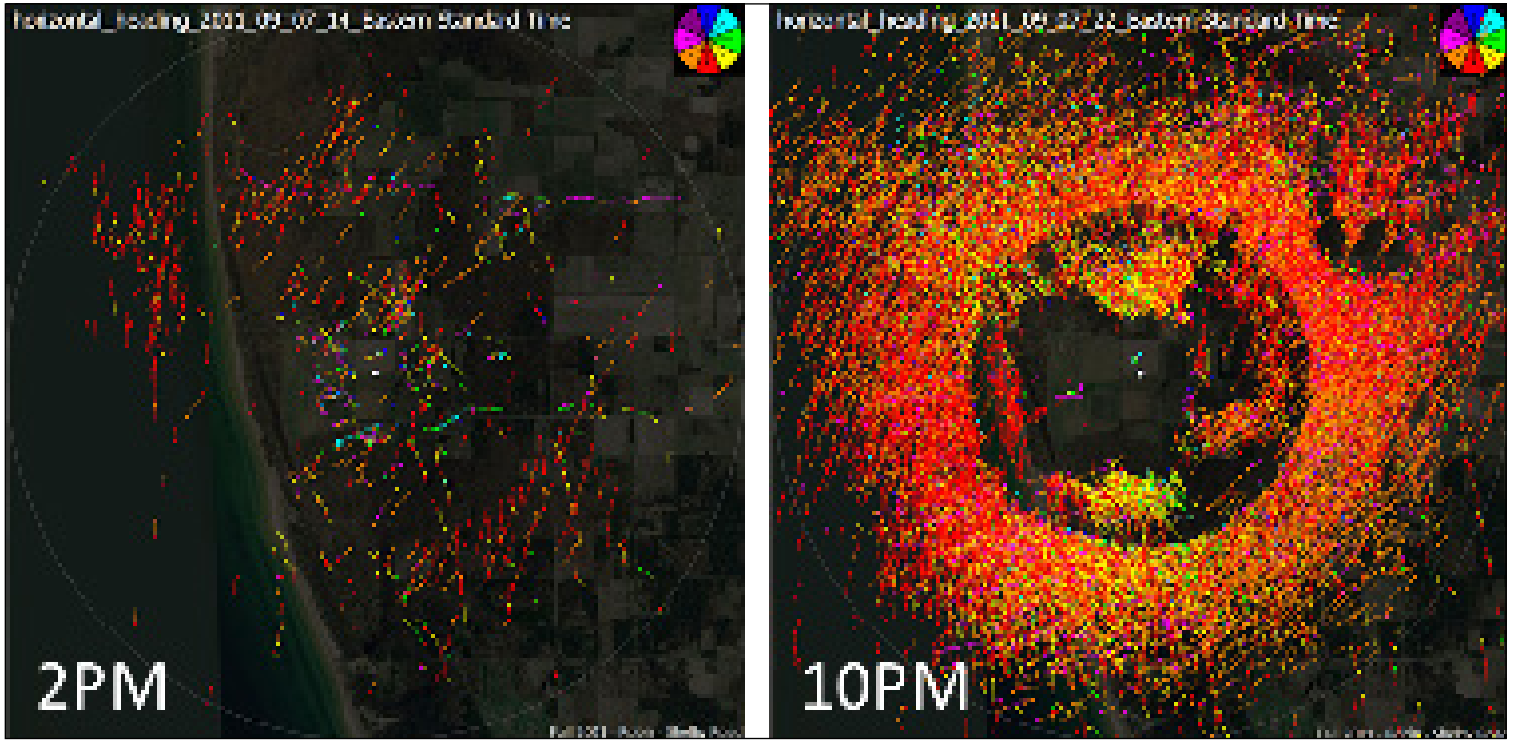
In addition to the avian radar units, project biologists have deployed



Locations of Avian Radar Units since 2011. USFWS



A graphical view depicting how the Horizontal Scanning Radar and Vertical Scanning Radar antennas work together to track birds and bats. USFWS



An hourly summary of detections of activity at 2 p.m. (daily patterns) and 10 p.m. (intense southerly movement) from the Horizontal Scanning Radar, on September 7, 2011. USFWS

over 30 acoustic monitors along the Great Lakes shorelines to increase our understanding of both bird and bat migration. Acoustic units provide additional insight to the radar data as they pick up specific calls of bats and nocturnal birds in the area monitored.

The use of the region's Avian Radar Systems will have a major positive impact along the Great Lakes in terms of providing solid data to make the best decisions possible for managing the protection of native birds and bats while working toward the expansion of alternative energy sources like wind energy.

Additional information about the project is available at: www.fws.gov/radar.

Final Rule Paves the Way for Topeka Shiner Reintroduction in Missouri

By Georgia Parham
External Affairs

Endangered Topeka shiners will be reintroduced in Missouri. Photo by Garold W. Sneegas

Endangered Topeka shiners will be reintroduced in northern Missouri in a partnership among the Service, the Missouri Department of Conservation and The Nature Conservancy. The Service published a final rule in the Federal Register on July 17, 2013, which paves the way for the reintroduction.

The reintroduction is part of an effort to restore populations of the small fish in Missouri in areas where the Topeka shiner once lived before its numbers declined. The reintroductions would be carried out on lands managed by Missouri Department of Conservation and The Nature Conservancy.

The reintroduction will establish "non-essential, experimental" populations of Topeka shiners in northern Missouri. This designation gives wildlife managers more flexibility in working with the reintroduced Topeka shiners and provides nearby private landowners with reassurance that the presence of a protected species will not affect their activities.

Three nonessential experimental population areas are planned: the Big Muddy Creek, Little Creek and Spring Creek watersheds of Adair, Gentry, Harrison, Putnam, Sullivan, and Worth counties. All the reintroduction sites are on lands owned by the Missouri Department of Conservation and The Nature Conservancy. Partners will collect Topeka shiners from existing populations and rear them in ponds this summer. Reintroductions will be made during September and October.

The Topeka shiner is a small minnow that lives in small to mid-size prairie streams in the central United States where it is usually found in pool and run areas. Suitable streams tend to have good water quality and cool to moderate temperatures.

Populations of the Topeka shiner have steadily declined, and the species now occupies only about 19 percent of its historical habitat, and only 15 percent of its former range in Missouri.

The Topeka shiner was designated a federally endangered species in 1998. Threats to the species include habitat destruction, sedimentation, and changes in water quality. Under the Endangered Species Act, plants and animals listed as endangered are at risk of becoming extinct in the foreseeable future.

You can find out more about Topeka shiners at www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/fishes/Topekashiner.

Night Moves: Alpena's Ichthyoplankton Sampling for Early Detection of Aquatic Invasive Species

By Eric Stadig
Alpena FWCO

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fish biologists, Stephen Hensler and Eric Stadig, from the Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office's Waterford Substation, recently completed their larval fish sampling cruise.

Armed with bongo nets and light traps aboard the R/V Kraken, the biologists searched for non-native species on Maumee and Sandusky Bays. Larval fish sampling concluded on both bays after sampling in the months of May, June, and July. This unique nighttime effort represents one of four portions of the Service's large-scale early detection monitoring program for invasive species using traditional and non-traditional gear types within the Great Lakes.

Ichthyoplankton, more commonly known as larval fishes, are planktonic, meaning they cannot swim effectively against currents under their own power. Early stage larvae swim poorly and are impacted by hydrodynamic conditions such as seiches. A seiche is a wave that swings back and forth in lakes, bays or gulfs, lasting from a few minutes to a few hours, as a result of seismic or atmospheric disturbances. Lake Erie is particularly prone to seiches because of its east-west orientation and shallow depths.

Lastly, larval fish are heavily influenced by light conditions, and are drawn to the surface by the moonlight. This behavior allows the larval fish to feed at the surface when their predators cannot see them as easily. This does, however, make them more susceptible to traditional sampling gear, such as bongo nets, during nighttime sampling.

The Alpena FWCO crew has seen their larval fish sampling pay off with numerous samples filled with larval fishes. These samples will be analyzed in collaboration with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offices in Duluth, Minnesota and Cincinnati, Ohio. The sampled fish will be identified using both traditional taxonomic identification and genetic barcoding.

Genetic barcoding is particularly useful for early detection of aquatic invasive species, as results are automatically cross-checked against a global database of genetic codes for various types of species. The concept could provide an adaptation to fisheries monitoring plans worldwide.

A larval fish sample collected in Sandusky Bay, Ohio, by staff from Alpena Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office.
Eric Stadig, USFWS

On the Brink: Preventing Extinction of the Purple Cat's Paw

Ohio is home to one of nation's rarest freshwater mussels

By Angela Boyer
Ohio Field Office Biologist

One of the rarest freshwater mussels in North America, the purple cat's paw, was widespread in the southern Ohio River and its larger tributaries before these rivers were dammed. The species was listed as endangered in 1990 when it was thought to be functionally extinct, meaning that some live adults existed in the wild, but these individuals did not appear to be producing any young.

In 1994, biologists discovered a breeding population in Killbuck Creek, Ohio, which renewed hope for the species' existence. However, water quality in Killbuck Creek has since degraded to such an extent that drastic measures are necessary to ensure the purple cat's paw mussel's survival.

Funded by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Preventing Extinction grants, surveys and efforts to collect purple cat's paw mussels for captive propagation began. After the 2006 survey, biologists found that safeguarding the species in captivity would be a challenge. The wild population had declined significantly, and only nine males were found after extensive surveying efforts. In 2007, three additional males were found, but no females.

Two open purple cat's paw mussels in stream. The purple cat's paw, found only in Killbuck Creek, Ohio, is among the rarest freshwater mussels in North America. Angela Boyer, USFWS

In dire straits, the purple cat's paw could still survive if biologists could find at least one female. Propagation facilities can produce large numbers of juveniles from a single female. With successful captive propagation, additional recovery efforts become feasible, including reintroductions and habitat conservation and restoration. So, the search continued.

In 2012, much of the Midwest experienced drought. Ironically, this rainfall shortage provided exceptional survey conditions because Killbuck Creek is normally turbid, with high flows that limit visibility and access. This survey yielded some encouraging findings: 15 males and 10 females from various age classes, including some only 3 or 4 years old. Surveyors placed these mussels into in-stream holding cages so they could be collected the following spring when females would likely be carrying mature larval mussels, called glochidia.

Earlier this year, biologists pulled the cages and transported the 10 female mussels to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium's Freshwater Mussel Conservation and Research Center. At the zoo, biologists found that six of the mussels carried glochidia. The partners in purple cat's paw recovery hold the mussels at three separate propagation facilities to avoid a single accident or mistake wiping out the entire batch of glochidia.

Freshwater mussels have an unusual and complex method of reproduction. Female mussels release glochidia directly into the water and the glochidia must attach to the gills or fins of a specific host fish species to complete development. After attaching, glochidia transform into microscopic-sized juveniles within a few weeks and then drop off the fish. At each propagation facility, biologists have extracted glochidia from the purple cat's paw mussels and placed them in containers with host fish. Biologists are now waiting to see if viable juvenile mussels drop from the host fish. The very existence of the purple cat's paw is riding on the success of this effort.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with many partners to prevent purple cat's paw extinction, including the Columbus Zoo, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Center for Mollusk Conservation in Frankfort, Kentucky, and Ohio State University.

For more information on the purple cat's paw and other endangered and threatened species in the Midwest, go to www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered.

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, the Service is featuring endangered species stories on each of the 50 states throughout the year. More about the Endangered Species Act 40th anniversary and other endangered species conservation articles can be found at http://www.fws.gov/endangered.

Genoa Hosts Accessible Fishing Event for Children With Help of Very Large CAST

By Doug Aloisi
Genoa National Fish Hatchery

Possibly one of the greatest days of 2013 on the Upper Mississippi River happened in June, at the tail end of a torrential downpour that felt as though it nearly swept southwest Wisconsin into northern Illinois.

The Genoa National Fish Hatchery organized a fishing event on Pool 9 of the Upper Mississippi River with support from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries program field stations and the National Wildlife Refuges on the river, and with many local and national partners. The diverse group banded together to host a memorable fishing event for critically ill children and children with limited accessibility to enjoy the outdoors.

The event planning was supported by CAST for Kids and the United Special Sportsmans Alliance, two national advocates for creating opportunities to get critically ill children outside. Through these organizations, the participants and their families were contacted and children were outfitted with

A proud angler and his fishing event mentor show off their catch at the CAST fishing event at Genoa National Fish Hatchery. (Photo courtesy of United Special Sportsmans Alliance)

fishing poles and gear to make a morning of fishing a reality on the big river.

The only thing left to chance was the weather and did we ever find out just what nature is capable of. On the morning of the 21st, Genoa recorded over 3.25 inches of rain in one hour. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Blackhawk Park, where the event was scheduled to take place, ended up underwater in many places. With children and their families already on their way, Plan B was executed and the accessible fishing pond located on Genoa National Fish Hatchery grounds became the new location for the event.

After a tour of the hatchery, the skies cleared and the children were let loose on the hatchery pond stocked with bluegill, sunfish, yellow perch and rainbow trout.

One of the many volunteer mentors who helped make the CAST event a success, helps a young angler try to land a prize catch. (Photo courtesy of United Special Sportsmans Alliance)

Boat captain and child celebrate their CAST event catch. (Photo courtesy of United Special Sportsmans Alliance)

Many smiles were created as volunteer boat captains and others helped the kids reel in their "trophies."

Much gratitude and thanks go to Service staff, our local Friends groups, and the volunteer boat captains who never got a chance to get their boats in the water, but stayed and helped the children fish.
After catching their fill of fish, a barbecue lunch sponsored by the Genoa Lions Club finished off the day.

Service Issues Incidental Take Permit for Indiana Bats at Proposed Ohio Wind Farm

By Georgia Parham
External Affairs

The Service has approved the first-ever incidental take permit under the Endangered Species Act for Indiana bats at a wind facility. The Service approved an extensive habitat conservation plan and has issued an incidental take permit to Buckeye Wind LLC allowing incidental take of a small number of endangered Indiana bats at its proposed wind power project in Champaign County, Ohio.

The habitat conservation plan includes measures to minimize impacts and ensure the long-term conservation of Indiana bats through offsite mitigation, which will offset the incidental take resulting from construction and operation of the facility.

Buckeye's plan includes measures to reduce the likelihood of taking Indiana bats by modifying their turbine operations during times when Indiana bats are most vulnerable to collision with turbine blades. These include spring and fall migrations as well as the summer maternity period, between sunset and sunrise.

Buckeye Wind's habitat conservation plan also addresses the Indiana bat's conservation needs, including protecting and enhancing existing habitat; monitoring take through post-construction mortality studies; adaptive management; and funding of research to better understand Indiana bat and wind turbine interactions.

Buckeye Wind plans to construct and operate up to 100 wind turbines for 30 years in eastern Champaign County, Ohio. While approximately 80,051 total acres are located within the Buckeye Wind Action Area, a relatively small portion of that land, about 130 acres, will be permanently occupied by project facilities. The project would include wind turbines, access roads, and other facilities.

Visit http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/permits/hcp/buckeyewind/index.html for more information.

The Service has issued the first incidental take permit for Indiana bats at a wind facility.
Andrew King , USFWS