

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# Inside Region 3



*February 2012*



**2011**

## **Year End Review**



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# what's inside

## *Features*



### **2011 Activities/ 3**

Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius at the Conserving the Future Conference in Madison, Wis.



### **Urban Bird Treaty/ 8**

City Bird Day declared.

*By Ashley Spratt*



### **Environmental Education/ 10**

Environmental Educator Molly Stoddard on the prairie.

*By Tina Shaw*

*On the Cover:*

*Midwest Regional employees of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service make 2011 a memorable year. USFWS photos.*



### **Fixing What's Broken/ 11**

It's what NRDA does.

*By Georgia Parham, Mike Coffey, and Annette Trowbridge*



Tom Melius, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Regional Director for the Midwest Region, opened the Conserving the Future Conference in Madison, Wis. to a crowd of 1,000 wildlife conservation professionals, non-profit organizations, and private and state partners. Melius highlighted the natural resources found within the 54 national wildlife refuges and 12 wetland management districts within the region's eight states. USFWS photo.

Last July, I was pleased to be a part of was the Conserving the Future Conference in Madison, Wis., where I gave the welcome address to more than 1,000 wildlife conservation professionals, non-profit organizations, and private and state partners. All were treated to a host of inspiring speakers and events that were dedicated to conserving the future of wildlife refuges and preparing the next generation. It was a wonderful opportunity to share ideas and get connected. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to those of you who contributed your time and effort into making the conference the success that it was. I encourage all of you to view video and read follow ups of the conference at: <http://americaswildlife.org/multimedia/>.

The Vision Conference was only one of the many milestones that we had in 2011. This issue of Inside Region 3 features a glimpse into what was a year that I can say I was truly proud of. It would be quite a task to highlight every milestone that we had in 2011, but please know that as always, I appreciate all that you do.

*--Tom Melius, Midwest Regional Director;  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*



Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius, FWS Director Dan Ashe and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar walk along Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge's Humbug Marsh as they mark advances in the conservation partnerships of the refuge. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.

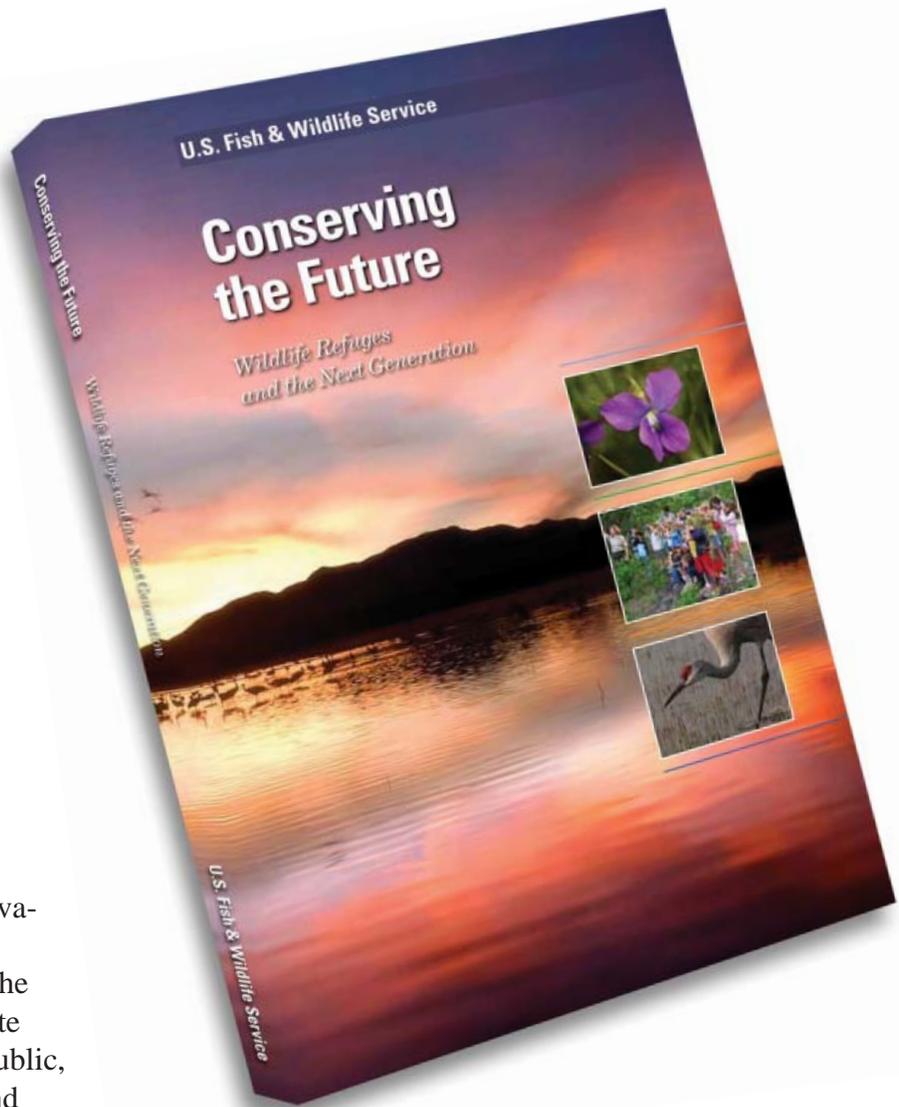
# Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation

## Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation

The National Wildlife Refuge System made great strides in planning the next 15 years of conservation for the Service last year, with the completion of the Conserving the Future conference in July 2010 and the final vision document this past fall. The vision document is a culmination of 18 months of study and public conversation about conservation and the strategy for the Refuge System over the next decade.

In an extraordinarily transparent process, the Service launched an online conversation about conservation starting in fall 2010 to distill the new Refuge System vision. The final recommendations incorporate extensive suggestions from the public, NGOs, state wildlife agencies, and employees of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Implementation is expected to be largely complete in about five years.

To implement the new vision, nine Implementation Teams have been established: Urban Wildlife Refuges; Strategic Growth; the Leadership Development Council; Planning; Science; Community Partnerships; Communications; Hunting, Fishing, and Outdoor Recreation; and Interpretation and Education. As of fall 2011, all the implementation teams are actively getting the new vision in motion.



A photograph showing a man with glasses and a young girl looking out a window. The girl is holding binoculars to her eyes. The man is looking on. The window has wooden frames and a view of a textured wall outside.

# 2011 Year In Review

**Photo Essay: A Window into History in the Making**

RD Tom Melius visits with Blair Schools students at DeSoto NWR. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.

# 2011 Year In Review

## Photo Essay: A Window into History in the Making

### History in the Making



1. Participants in a Service sponsored motorboat and airboat safety instructor training hosted by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa gather for a photo. Service photo.



2. Joel Trick of the Green Bay ES Field Office talks to visitors at a Kirtland's warbler nesting tour in Wisconsin. USFWS photo.

3. Matt Stuber, member of Eagle Team at East Lansing Ecological Services Field Office with eagle chick in nest. Photo courtesy of Dr. Tim Kaufman, Emergency Medicine, Saginaw, Mich.  
4. T. J. Miller prepares for the historic move of the Midwest Regional Office from Fort Snelling to Bloomington, Minn. Service photo.

# 2011 Year In Review

## Photo Essay: A Window into History in the Making



Left: Service biological science technician Brett Witte shows the distinctive coloring, body shape and long, flat snout of an endangered pallid sturgeon. USFWS photo.

1. Scott Yess returns spawned lake sturgeon to the Rainy River. Photo by Jerald Roberts (White Earth Natural Resources Department).

### 2. Monitoring Efforts

Curt Uran (White Earth Natural Resources Department) takes lake sturgeon out of gill net during a monitoring survey conducted on White Earth Lake. USFWS photo by Scott Yess.



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3. John Christian (l) and Charlie Wooley (r) congratulate Barb Pardo (c) on her 30-year career milestone. USFWS photo.

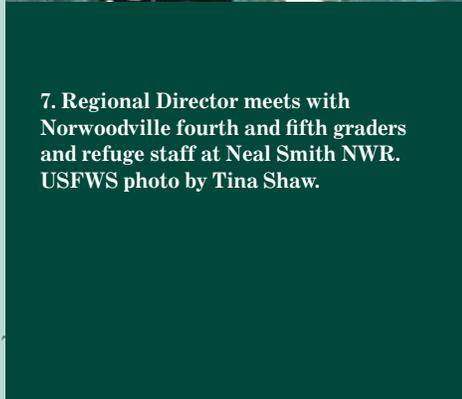
4. Young helpers stock lake sturgeon at White Earth Lake. Sturgeon were raised to fingerling size by Genoa National Fish Hatchery. USFWS photo by Scott Yess.

5. Midwest Region divers Scott Yess and Nick Rowse in preparation. USFWS photo by Katie Steiger-Meister.



6.

6. Margaret Anderson is presented with the 2010 Minnesota Award by last year's recipient, Dr. John Toepfer of the Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus, at the Minnesota Chapter of the Wildlife Society meeting Dec. 10, 2010. Photo courtesy of John Loegering, past president and professor at University of Minnesota, Crookston.



7.

7. Regional Director meets with Norwoodville fourth and fifth graders and refuge staff at Neal Smith NWR. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.

# Minneapolis St. Paul Bird Treaty



Inset: Mayor R.T. Rybak accepts commemorations presented to him by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. John Christian reflects on the history making day. Background: Green team raises commemorative birds in celebration. USFWS photos.

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# Minneapolis and Saint Paul Declare July 14 “City Bird Day” in Honor of Urban Bird Treaty

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, in partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and Audubon Minnesota, celebrated this July the Twin Cities implementation of the Service’s Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds.

The partners celebrated both the Urban Bird Treaty and the Mayors’ Proclamation of July 14 as “City Bird Day” at Minneapolis’ BF Nelson Park set along the beautiful Mississippi River.

Under the Urban Bird Treaty program, the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul will conduct habitat restoration (focusing on native plants), invasive species management, and develop educational materials to support conservation of birds that spend a portion of their life cycle in this metropolitan area.

“Minneapolis and Saint Paul sit at a geographic crossroads for a variety of migratory, resident and breeding birds that use the diversity of forest, marsh, grassland, and riverine habitats provided by the Mississippi River,” said John Christian, Assistant Regional Director, Migratory Birds and State Programs. “The cities are a natural fit for the Urban Bird Treaty program, and the efforts put forth by the City of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, City of Saint Paul, and Audubon Minnesota will bring to light the importance of protecting birds in our neighborhoods, parks and backyards.”

The Service will provide a \$70,000 grant to the Urban Bird Treaty partnership, which will be used for on-the-ground, bird-friendly efforts by the partners over the next two years. Outdoor



Above: John Christian and Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak discuss the tasks ahead. USFWS photo.

wildlife watching activities like bird watching generate more than \$600 million in economic benefit in Minnesota per year. Birding is an outdoor activity that continues to grow in popularity and can be enjoyed by people of all ages in all geographic areas.

“Our proximity to the mighty Mississippi River is why Minneapolis is here in the first place, and it brings some important characteristics to the Minneapolis experience, such as the diversity of birds that live here and migrate through,” said Mayor R.T. Rybak. “Heron, owls, bald eagles, peregrine falcons, ospreys and songbirds are part of the character of our city -- part of our quality of life, both for people living in and visiting Minneapolis -- and they require healthy habitats to survive.”

“The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is dedicated to creating, preserving and protecting our natural areas and wildlife as well as educating residents and visitors about the natural environment that makes Minneapolis

beautiful and unique,” said John Erwin, President of the Minneapolis Board of Park and Recreation. “The Park Board’s involvement in the Urban Bird Treaty offers us a chance to highlight the diverse migratory birds that are such a treasure to our city.”

“Since taking office, my administration has been committed to investing in education and advancing our environmental efforts,” Mayor Chris Coleman said. “This grant is a great way for us to do both. Through this program, not only will we create a haven for migrating birds but a new way for children to learn about our environment.”

Minneapolis and Saint Paul are seated within an important stopover area along the Mississippi Flyway, a route that supports millions of migrating ducks, shorebirds, waterbirds, and hundreds of species of songbirds during spring and fall migrations.

“Minneapolis – Saint Paul and its varied habitats of woods, waters, wetlands and prairies, supports over 300 species of birds – an outstanding number for an urban area,” said Mark Peterson, Executive Director of Audubon Minnesota. “The Urban Bird Treaty recognizes this outstanding wildlife diversity surrounding us, and the efforts of the residents of the Twin Cities to protect and improve it. It speaks to the quality of life we enjoy here,” he added.

--Ashley Spratt, *External Affairs*

*Reprinted from the August 2011 edition of Inside Region 3.*

# Midwest Environmental Education

Environmental Educator Molly Stoddard takes great pride in sharing her passion for the prairie and the science that goes into managing healthy habitats. Photo by Tina Shaw/USFWS. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.



# Fixing What's Broken It's what NRDA Does

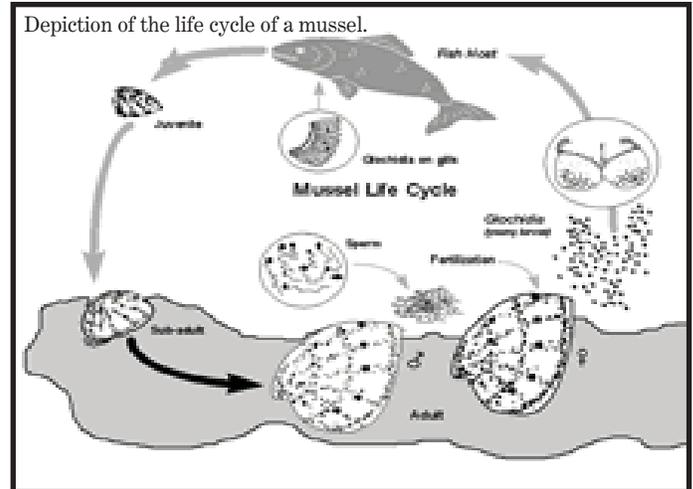
In Bettendorf, Iowa, along the nation's largest river, lie beds of molluscs with improbable names: the butterfly and the pistolgrip, the fawnsfoot and the deertoe, the plain pocketbook and the washrboard. Bettendorf is also home to shoreline factories that depend on large volumes of fresh water from the Mississippi River for their industrial processes. Back when more stringent laws were just coming on the books, one of those factories released polychlorinated biphenyls and other hazardous chemicals into the river. Exposure to hazardous substances played havoc with the natural resources of the river. Warnings were sounded about eating the fish, and the natural systems that made this area unique were compromised. Mussels in particular were vulnerable: they cannot move away from the threats they face.

Enter the Natural Resource Trustees led by the Environmental Contaminants Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. As Natural Resource Trustees, these agencies have joint responsibility to evaluate how much injury has occurred to natural resources and to use this information to restore to the public what was lost - in other words, "fix what's broke."

Using provisions of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration laws, Trustees pursued a claim from the party responsible for

the contamination, securing a settlement which provided funds to launch an aquatic restoration effort. The Trustees then gathered public input and developed a restoration plan to stock mussels, produced at fish hatcheries, into the Mississippi River.

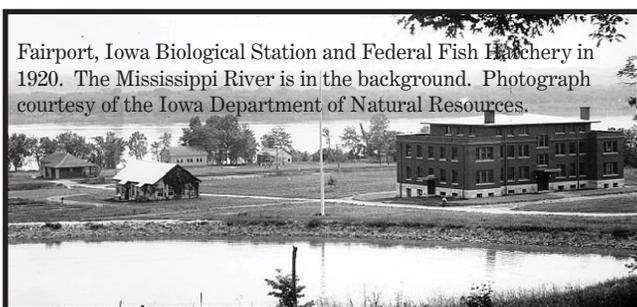
Here's how the Mississippi River augmentation will work. This fall, biologists from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will find and collect adult mussels from area mussel beds after they have naturally spawned. The adult mussels with fertilized eggs will be transported up to the Genoa National Fish Hatchery where they are held until the eggs hatch and the *glochidia* can be washed out of the adults' brood sacs. The glochidia are then allowed to attach to the gills of specific host fishes. The infested fish will be transported to the Fairport State Fish Hatchery near Bettendorf, where they will be held in cages until the glochidia transform into immature mussels and drop off into trays. The immature mussels will be consolidated in the autumn and held over until next summer to increase their body size and avoid many of the natural causes of early life stage mortality.



species will take up their roles in the ecosystem of the Mississippi River.

--Georgia Parham,  
External Affairs, Mike Coffey, Rock  
Island (IL) Field Office, and Annette  
Trowbridge, Twin Cities Field Office

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edition of *Inside Region 3*.



Fairport, Iowa Biological Station and Federal Fish Hatchery in 1920. The Mississippi River is in the background. Photograph courtesy of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

By the summer of 2013, year-old mussels will be placed out in the river. And once again, deertoe, butterfly, black sandshell, fawnsfoot and other little-seen but vitally important mussel

# Gray Wolf Recovery



Gray wolves in the western Great Lakes have recovered, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has removed Endangered Species Act protection for wolves in this area. States and tribes are now managing wolf populations in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin and in areas of adjoining states.



# Year End Highlights

All aboard to Clough Island. USFWS photo.



Snow cave is a big hit at Sherburne's 2011 NWR Winterfest. USFWS photo.



Jordan River National Fish Hatchery celebrates the completion of a fish rearing facility at an open house and dedication ceremony with youth and ground breaking (lower right).



Above: Behind the scenes, the Information Technology team takes care of business. USFWS photo.



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## U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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

Thank you for entering your journal reports and photographs in the Fish and Wildlife Journal (aka. ARS)

<http://ars.fws.gov>.