

Mississippi

Ecological Services Field Office

photo: Rich Seigel



Photos (top to bottom)

Endangered Mississippi gopher frog.

Longleaf pine habitat in southern Mississippi.

Threatened gopher tortoise.

Black bear outreach education.

photo: Linda LaClaire



Station Facts

- Staff: 19.
- Jackson office established: 1977
- Budget: \$2.6 million

Station Goals

- Implement recovery, permit, and section 7 consultation activities for more than 40 federally listed threatened and endangered species in Mississippi.

- Conduct listing and recovery activities for species in Mississippi and for a number of species in the adjoining states.

- Carry out assessments to identify candidate species in the most need of protection and work with partners to conserve these species by improving habitat and removing threats.

- Investigate, prevent, and remediate effects of environmental pollution to maximize quality habitat for Service trust species.

- Assist Federal and state agencies, and private citizens, to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to fish and wildlife resources resulting from development projects.

- Restore longleaf pine, native prairie and degraded riparian and wetland habitats on privately owned lands through our Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

Services Provided to

- Private citizens and community groups.
- Federal/state agencies, local governments seeking federal or state approvals/permits.

- Other Service entities.

Activity Highlights

- Reviews over 1,500 federally funded, licensed or permitted projects annually for impacts on fish and wildlife resources.
- Represents fish and wildlife interests in navigation-related issues on the Lower Mississippi River.
- Assists other agencies in containment spill contingency planning to minimize effects on fish and wildlife resources.
- Conducts section 7 consultation on the pallid sturgeon, least tern, Mississippi sandhill crane, red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, Mississippi gopher frog, Louisiana black bear, Louisiana quillwort, pondberry and other federally listed species in Mississippi.
- Restores/enhances degraded wildlife habitats in the Mississippi Delta and restore longleaf pine, native prairie, degraded riparian and upland hardwood ecosystems in Mississippi through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.
- Works with partners on Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCA) and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA) to implement conservation measures and eliminate threats to the species which may result in removal of the species from candidate status.
- Connects people with nature by providing educational information and programs to the public, along with summer camps for children, on threatened and endangered species, biodiversity, wildlife ecology and other natural-resource-oriented issues in Mississippi.
- Provides protection for animal and plant species through listing and recovery actions taken under provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

photo: USFWS



photo: USFWS



Stephen Ricks, Field Supervisor
Mississippi ES Field Office
6578 Dogwood View Parkway, Suite A
Jackson, MS 39213
Phone: 601/965 4900
Fax: 601/965 4340
E-mail: stephen_ricks@fws.gov

- For more information, check the national Fish and Wildlife Service's web site at: <http://www.fws.gov> and go to the local Mississippi Field Office web site at: <http://www.fws.gov/mississippiES/>

Questions and Answers

What is the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and its accomplishments in Mississippi?

This program provides technical and financial assistance to anyone interested in restoring, improving, and protecting fish and wildlife habitat on private lands. Cropland, pasture, or wet areas that have been drained or altered qualify for this program, as well as degraded riparian, longleaf pine, native prairie and upland hardwood habitats. Assistance is provided through partnerships with farmers, ranchers, conservation groups, corporations, local and governmental agencies and educational organizations.

The Mississippi Field Office has three full time employees who work under the auspices of this program. They provide technical assistance to numerous private landowners and to other government agencies. During 2011, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in Mississippi restored 2,419 acres (22 projects) of upland habitat and enhanced 193 acres (three projects); plus, restored 1,058 acres of wetland habitat (16 projects) and enhanced 157 acres (one project). A total of 42 agreements were signed with private landowners and technical assistance was provided to approximately 60 additional landowners who did not sign agreements.

Is the Service involved in natural resource partnerships in Mississippi?

The Service is involved in several natural resource partnership activities throughout the State but is recently focusing efforts on the lower Mississippi River and the Pascagoula River basins. Partnership activities include water quality improvements, eco-tourism development and habitat restoration for migratory birds, endangered species and other wildlife.

The Mississippi Field Office is working to restore historic flows, improve water quality and fish habitat in Deer Creek of the lower Mississippi River Delta. As part of the partnership effort, plans are initiated to replace stream barriers, restore stream flows and monitor water quality along Deer Creek.

We have joined an affiliation of State and Federal agencies, conservation and agricultural organizations, and others dedicated to the economic revitalization of the Lower Mississippi Delta through the sustainable utilization and management of natural resources. With conservation of existing bottomland hardwood forests and restoration of marginal agricultural lands, much needed income for Lower Mississippi Delta residents could be generated by the forest products industry, private hunting operations and eco-tourism development.

The Bear Education and Restoration (BEaR) Group of Mississippi addresses bear issues of restoration, education and management in Mississippi. As a member of the BEaR, the Service has partnered with the delta city of Rolling Fork to host the annual Great Delta Bear Affair which celebrates black bear, the toy teddy bear and President Theodore Roosevelt's historic Mississippi bear hunt of 1902.

What are the Service's natural resource goals regarding the Corps' section 10/404 permit program in Mississippi?

The Service continues to work with the Corps and its section 10/404 permit program emphasizing the need to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and streams. The Service and Corps also work together promoting the establishment of wetland and stream mitigation banks to create more sustainable and functional ecosystems as compared to small, piece-meal project by project mitigation. To this end, the Service assists the Mississippi Department of Transportation in establishing large mitigation banks in ecologically significant watersheds of Mississippi, such as the Pascagoula, Pearl, Coldwater, and Buttahatchie River basins.

The Service has also been actively working with the Corps to establish Standard Localized Operating Procedures for Endangered Species (SLOPES), which will provide a step-wise process to assist the Corps in developing a determination as to whether its actions (i.e. permits) will affect federally listed species or critical habitats.

March 2012