

Arkansas

Wildlife Habitat and Management Office



photo: Tom Edwards



photo: USFWS



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Photos (top to bottom)

We work with private landowners and other partners to restore wetland habitats like this moist-soil impoundment.

Programs such as the Arkansas Partners Project provide seasonally-flooded croplands as important habitat for wintering waterfowl.

We provide guidance and assistance to the biological programs on Arkansas refuges, such as pre-season wood duck banding.

Station Facts

- Established: 1992.
- Staff: 2.

Station Purpose

- Assures Statewide support and accomplishment of a regional and national migratory bird program, on/off refuge lands and across ecosystem boundaries.
- Provides biological/technical support and consultation to all national wildlife refuges in Arkansas, emphasizing trust species resources.
- Provides coordination, development, and delivery of private lands programs, with emphasis on restoration and enhancement of wetland habitats.

Services provided to

- Private landowners and land managers.
- National wildlife refuges.
- Other Federal, State, and non-profit conservation agencies.

Activity Highlights

- Accomplish wetland habitat enhancement and restoration on private lands through programs such as the Arkansas Partners and Partners for Fish and Wildlife. Over 100,000 acres at more than 275 sites have been enhanced/restored under the Arkansas Partners Project (APP)

since 1993. Agencies cooperating with the Service in the APP include Ducks Unlimited, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

- Act as a key liaison with the Natural Resources Conservation Service regarding consultation and delivery of such programs as Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).
- Serve as the Service representative on a Statewide interagency committee to coordinate the "Managing Rice for Ducks" 4-H youth program. Serve as program sponsor for an annual awards trip to the waterfowl breeding grounds.
- Accomplish refuge assistance needs such as:

Work with planning teams to assure biologically sound Comprehensive Conservation Plans that reflect the Region's broader migratory bird, wetlands, flyway, and ecosystem goals/objectives.

Annually review refuge management plans, inventory plans, etc. and provides recommendations for best techniques and designs for biological monitoring programs.

Identify and recommend land acquisition activities necessary to meet Service migratory bird, biodiversity, and wetlands conservation objectives. Evaluate land acquisition proposals within the state and review Preliminary Project Investigation reports to evaluate the need to proceed with a land acquisition process.

Provide training and biological information transfer services to all Refuges and Wildlife project leaders in Arkansas.

- Meet migratory bird program needs by coordinating/ accomplishing required national/ flyway surveys and banding programs—this involves guidance and overview of the Statewide annual dove survey, duck/goose (Statewide) surveys, and special programs such as preseason wood duck banding, shorebird inventories, and neotropical bird projects.

Questions and Answers

What are the benefits of seasonally flooded croplands, such as those provided by the Arkansas Partners Project, to the landowner, the environment, and waterfowl?

Controlled flooding of agricultural lands during the winter can reduce soil erosion, decrease weed control and crop production costs, enhance soil qualities, and increase recreational opportunities. Additionally, controlled winter flooding improves water quality by reducing turbidity and the amount of agricultural chemicals discharged into local streams. Groundwater recharge also occurs due to winter flooding. Waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife benefit greatly from the additional habitat provided when flooding occurs. Waterfowl disperse widely into croplands to feed on small grains remaining after harvest and on native plant seeds. Waterfowl survival rates and body weights increase when extensive flooded areas are provided during winter. Birds return to the breeding grounds in better condition and are more likely to nest successfully, thereby increasing the fall flights of waterfowl.

What are some of the characteristics of the Cache and Lower White Rivers Ecosystem in eastern Arkansas that make it such an important environmental area?

This ecosystem contains the largest expanse of forested wetlands remaining on any tributary within the Mississippi Alluvial Valley, approximately 350,000 acres. It serves as a critical breeding, migration, and wintering area for waterfowl and neotropical birds, harbors the largest population of native black bears remaining in the south-central states, and is the single most important wintering area for mallards in North America. Fortunately, a large proportion of the Cache/Lower White Ecosystem is in Service ownership, with White River and Cache River National Wildlife Refuges comprising a combined area of about 198,000 acres.