

ON THE WILD SIDE

USDA FOREST SERVICE
September 2003



President Discusses Healthy Forests in Oregon

Remarks by the President on the Healthy Forests Initiative
Redmond, Oregon, August 21, 2003, 3:23 P.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT-... We just toured two fires that are burning in the area... Unfortunately, when I came a year ago, I witnessed the effects of fires. I saw the Biscuit fire and the Squires Peak fire. Both of them are devastating forest fires. They destroyed buildings and homes, changed lives, destroyed natural resources.

The federal government can help. We will give grants, FEMA grants, all the SBA loans, the different things that happen when there's an emergency. I can assure you Gordon and Greg will be all over us to make sure we appropriate the proper to spend. (Applause.)

But the government has got to do more than just spend money. We'll spend it, but we've got to effect wise policy... But it seems like to me we ought to put a strategy in place to reduce the amount of money that we have to spend on emergency basis by managing our forests in a better, more common-sensical way. (Applause.)

The forest policy, the conditions of our forests didn't happen overnight. The experts who know something about forests will tell you that the condition, the overgrown and unhealthy condition of a lot of our forestland happened over a century. It's taken a while for this situation to evolve. It may interest you to know that today there's 190 million acres of forests and woodlands around the country which are vulnerable to catastrophic fire because of brush and small trees that have been collecting for literally decades. A problem that has taken a long time to develop is going to take a long time to solve. So what we're going to talk about today is the beginnings of a solution. But we've got to get after it now. We have a problem in Oregon and around our country that we must start solving.

You see, the undergrowth issue, the problem of too much undergrowth creates the conditions for unbelievably hot fires. These forest firefighters will tell you that these hot fires that literally explode the big trees can be somewhat mitigated by clearing out the undergrowth. And by the way, the undergrowth chokes off nutrients from older trees. It makes our forests more susceptible to disease. We got a problem. It's time to deal with the problem. And that's what we're going to talk about.

Before I talk about the solutions, I do want people to understand that if you are concerned about the endangered species, then you need to be concerned about catastrophic fire. Fires destroy the animals which, obviously, live amidst the raging fire. If your concerned about old growth, large stands of timber, then you better be worried about the conditions that create devastating

fires. The worst thing that can happen to old stands of timber is these fires. They destroy the big trees. They're so explosive in nature that hardly any tree can survive.

You know, what I'm telling you about a strategy to deal with our forests to make them healthy is not something that was invented in Washington, D.C. It's the collective wisdom of scientists, wildlife biologists, forestry professionals, and as importantly, the men and women who risk their life on an annual basis to fight fires. That's who I've been listening to. (Applause.)

So, having listened, and realized that we've got a problem, I've proposed a healthy forest initiative. And I proposed it right here in Oregon one year ago. At my direction, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality, Connaughton, ...[are] to cut through bureaucratic red tape to complete urgently needed thinning projects...We are speeding up the process of environmental assessments and consultations required by law...We're expediting the administrative appeals process so that disputes over thinning projects are resolved more quickly. We want to hear people...Our approach relies on the experience and judgment and hard work of local people.

I appreciate the stewardship contracting programs that will be going on...Stewardship contracting -- what that means is that private organizations or businesses will be able to do the necessary thinning, and they'll be able to remove small trees and undergrowth, and they'll be able to keep part of what they remove as partial payment. That seems to make sense to me.

I'll give you a quick report. The healthy forest initiative is producing results. Last year we treated 2.25 million acres of overgrown forests. By the end of the fiscal year in September, we will have treated more than 2.6 million acres of forest and rangeland.

But the initiative I've laid out is one step. Congress needs to act. People ought to understand up there in Washington that...that current law makes it too difficult to expedite the thinning of forests because it allows for the litigation process to delay progress and projects for years and years...

For more information contact Kathryn B. Reis, Wildlife Partners Network Coordinator at the Wildlife Management Institute, 1146 19th St. NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036 (phone 202-371-1808, ext. 35, fax 202-408-5059 or <http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org>)

--complete transcript at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/08/20030821-4.html>

Declare Harvest of Old-growth Forests Off-limits and Move On

Sunday, August 24, 2003

Seattle P-I Focus:

By MIKE DOMBECK and JACK WARD THOMAS

Guest Columnists

We write as former chiefs of the U.S. Forest Service with combined experience of more than a half-century dealing with national forest issues. For three decades, an increasingly acrimonious debate over old-growth forests has raged. It is time to declare old growth off-limits to logging and move on. Why?

First, although no one knows exactly how much old growth remains, what's left is but a small fraction of what once was and will ever be again. And what remains did not survive by accident.

Most remaining old-growth stands occur in rugged terrain where the economic and environmental costs are simply too high.

Second, scientists increasingly appreciate old-growth forests as reservoirs of biodiversity with associated "banks" of genetic material. Most stands are protected as habitat for threatened or endangered (and associated) species -- to meet the purpose of the Endangered Species Act "... to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved. ..." It's time to stop fighting over what little old growth remains unprotected.

Third, a large and growing number of people want old-growth forests preserved for posterity. Values associated with "beauty," "spirituality" or "connection with the past" are expressed in other terms applied to old growth such as "ancient" or "cathedral" forests. These values are as real as those determined for commodities in the marketplace and clearly exceed the values as timber.

Fourth, if the past is prologue, harvest of old growth will be publicly resisted in sequential and predictable steps -- appeals, legal actions, protests and, in the end, civil disobedience. In the Pacific Northwest, where most old growth remains, costs of making old-growth timber sales are disproportionately high with very low chance of ultimate success given environmental constraints and process requirements. Ten-year-old plans that envisioned some old-growth harvest have been overcome by events -- legal, political, social, scientific and economic.

Fifth, few sawmills remain in business that can process large old-growth logs. The mills that have survived are geared to efficiently process smaller second-growth trees.

Sixth, and most important, the never-ending fight is draining time, money, energy and political capital needed to address more pressing problems.

Forest management should focus on restoring forest health and reducing fire risk, initially in areas where risk to human life and property are greatest -- the so-called wildland/urban interface. Then, appropriate management practices should be strategically targeted in the right places and at the right scales across the landscape. The knowledge gained in the wildland/urban interface should then set the course for any expanded management actions. That's a prescription that draws on pragmatic combinations of economic need, political reality and the application of adaptive management based on research and experience.

Meanwhile, younger trees -- some quite large -- now inhabit old-growth stands as a result of a century of fire suppression that prevented periodic low-intensity ground fires that naturally thin the forests. Such trees provide "ladder fuels" that can carry fire into the crowns of old-growth trees. These are the trees that should be thinned and harvested to reduce the potential fire mortality of the old-growth trees. Redwood and sequoia stands in northern California are particularly vulnerable.

Those who have won the past fights to protect old growth should now support forest management -- including thinning -- to address forest health problems, reduce susceptibility to fire and provide a sustainable supply of wood in the spirit of the multiple-use mandate. As our demands for wood increase, is it ethical to import more timber from nations with weaker environmental protections and less technical capabilities and ignore our own sources of supply? We think not.

Several decades ago, the Forest Service struggled to meet targets to harvest more than 10 billion board feet a year from the national forests. Most now agree that was unsustainable. Today, circumstances have reduced harvest levels to below 2 billion board feet a year -- considerably below what could be sustained while meeting multiple-use mandates.

It is time to move beyond the "board feet of timber debate." The performance standard should be "acres treated" based on state-of-the-art science and in compliance with the law. In the spirit of multiple use, all applicable values should come into play, including cultural/archaeological, water, timber, biodiversity, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, wilderness, non-timber forest products and grazing. The work of improving forest health and restoring watersheds on national forests has great potential to provide jobs and economic opportunities to many of the same communities caught up in the "cut vs. no-cut" battles of the past.

Should we protect remaining old growth? We say yes. In turn, should we expect agreement on the mandate of the Organic Administration Act of 1987 that states: "No national forest shall be established except to protect the forest within the boundaries, or for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows, and to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of the citizens of the United States." Again, we answer yes.

A saying common in India comes to mind. "When elephants fight only the grass suffers." Rural communities, and the forests, have suffered enough from strife too long sustained and management too long delayed. It is time to move on. Recognizing that harvest of old growth from the national forests should come to an end is a good start.

Mike Dombeck is professor of global environmental management at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Jack Ward Thomas is professor of wildlife biology at the University of Montana.

Chairmen Tauzin, Pombo Launch Natural Gas Task Force Website

For Immediate Release: August 12, 2003

Contact: Ken Johnson 202-225-5735

WASHINGTON (August 12) - As part of their continuing effort to address the nation's looming natural gas crisis, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman W.J. "Billy" Tauzin (R-LA) and House Resources Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CA) today launched a website to keep the public informed on the progress of the Speaker's Natural Gas Task Force For Affordable Natural Gas. The website address is <http://energycommerce.house.gov/NaturalGasTaskForce>.

"As our task force members hold public meetings and events throughout the nation to address the nation's natural gas supply shortage, this website will serve as a one-stop shop for the public to stay informed on our progress," said Tauzin. The site will provide the latest news and developments on the task force as well as important facts about the natural gas problem in America. We will continue to keep the public well-informed as we continue to work toward tackling this critical challenge."

"Consumers across America are beginning to get very expensive gas bills," said Pombo. "Justifiably, they want to know why they are paying more, who or what is responsible for the increases, and what is being done to bring them down. This website will help answer these questions and educate the public on the many critical uses of natural gas."

The new website, at <http://energycommerce.house.gov/NaturalGasTaskForce>, will provide up-to-date information about task force public meetings and developments. The website will provide visitors with information about the task force mission and goals, natural gas facts, informative reports, and a view of the latest photos. Visitors may also sign up to receive timely email updates on task force developments. The task force findings will be posted once the panel wraps up its work in late September.

The Speaker's 18-member Task Force for Affordable Natural Gas has been charged with identifying the causes of today's natural gas shortage, the impact of natural gas prices on the American economy and short and long-term plans to encourage a stable supply of natural gas to ease prices. The panel must report back to House Speaker Dennis Hastert by September 30th.

For more information contact Kathryn B. Reis, Wildlife Partners Network Coordinator at the Wildlife Management Institute, 1146 19th St. NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036 (phone 202-371-1808, ext. 35, fax 202-408-5059 or <http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org>)

Clarke Orders BLM Managers to Review Oil and Gas Drilling Restrictions

As part of its implementation of President Bush's National Energy Policy, the Bureau of Land Management today issued new policies aimed at reducing or eliminating impediments to oil and gas leasing on BLM-managed lands. The policies, which take effect immediately, instruct BLM land-use planners to evaluate the necessity of current constraints on energy development in high-potential oil and gas areas.

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke said the new policies "will further our Agency's efforts to ensure a reliable supply of affordable energy, as called for by the President." As part of this new direction, Clarke has designated seven "focus areas" that contain a high potential for oil and gas development. The BLM's field managers will concentrate on these areas in setting priorities for work related to oil and gas planning, leasing, and permitting.

The new policies provide direction to the BLM's state and field offices on ways to incorporate the findings of a comprehensive oil and gas inventory into the Agency's land-use planning process. The findings come from an inventory carried out pursuant to the [Energy Policy and Conservation Act \(EPCA\)](#) of 2000, which required that estimates be made of oil and gas resources beneath Federal lands in five Western basins and that the nature and extent of impediments to developing these resources be identified.

"The EPCA report findings will help our field managers make informed decisions concerning the exploration and development of oil and gas on public lands," said Clarke. "That includes decisions related to the placement of such infrastructure as pipelines, powerlines, and roadways.

Our overall objective is to ensure the timely development of these critical energy resources in an environmentally sound manner.”

In carrying out the new policies, the BLM’s state and field offices will determine by December 31, 2003, the need for changing existing land-use plans to facilitate oil and gas exploration and development based on the EPCA findings. The policies direct the Agency’s land-use planners to not unduly restrict access to Federal lands, while continuing to protect resources when they review oil and gas lease stipulations, especially in cases where an unnecessary stipulation could result in the abandonment or delay of a project.

The new policies also require all BLM state offices with a significant oil and gas program to conduct at least one meeting with industry representatives within a year from today to share the EPCA findings and discuss oil- and gas-related policy changes.

The policies issued today can be accessed on the BLM’s Internet Home Page at www.blm.gov.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land — 261 million surface acres — than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.9 billion and a workforce of some 10,000 full-time, permanent employees, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

International Monitoring Effort to Help Save Ferruginous Hawk and Grasslands

Montreal, 6 August 2003 — Educators, birding enthusiasts and the public alike can follow the migration of ten ferruginous hawks tagged with satellite transmitters through a new web site launched today at www.ferruginoushawk.org.



The web site, which will feature daily updated maps, species information, and an educational section with lesson plans and activities for students, is part of a five-year study into the key habitats and distribution range of North America’s largest hawk.

Spearheaded by fourteen nongovernmental and governmental organizations, including the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), the international monitoring effort was prompted by concern over the species’ status in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

The decline of the ferruginous hawk population has been documented since the early 1900s, when grasslands conversion for agriculture and other development purposes began to impact the species’ nesting areas and range. In Canada, its range shrank by an estimated 50 percent. Today, the CEC lists the ferruginous hawk as a “species of common conservation concern” for North America.

“These birds are tied very closely to the native prairie that we are only now beginning to understand and look at,” said Jim Watson, wildlife research scientist with the Washington

Department of Fish and Wildlife, who is overseeing the field research. "The data collected from these transmitters will help inform future conservation efforts for ferruginous hawks and their grassland habitats."

"This study is significant because the lessons learned about the ferruginous hawk can be applied to other grasslands species, many of which are also imperiled," echoed Bob McCready, director of The Nature Conservancy's Prairie Wings project.

Current concerns for the ferruginous hawk include the loss of suitable breeding and wintering habitat. The study will therefore provide scientists for the first time with data on how regional ferruginous hawk populations interact throughout the year, as well as winter ecology and nesting patterns.

"If we don't address the conservation of winter habitat in Mexico, we dramatically increase the risk of losing the species entirely," said Dr. Alberto Lafón, a researcher at the Autonomous University of Chihuahua.

In Canada, where the ferruginous hawk breeds in the spring, the species is listed as a "special concern." Ursula Banasch, a wildlife biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service, explains: "Some agricultural practices and the southward expansion of parkland into the northern part of the grasslands have resulted in a reduction of the ferruginous hawk's range."

"Birds don't recognize national boundaries, and since many populations of the ferruginous hawk migrate between Canada to Mexico, a study like this could only be accomplished through international cooperation," concluded Jürgen Hoth, program coordinator for the CEC.

Findings from the five-year study will be published in a peer-reviewed journal and appear on the web site.

The ferruginous hawk has a wingspan of approximately 4.6 feet. It is found in three Canadian provinces, 17 US states, and winters as far south as central Mexico.

Tips to help save the ferruginous hawk:

- Support local and global bird conservation efforts.
- Maintain existing large blocks of native grasslands.
- Maintain prey species on those grasslands, especially prairie dogs, ground squirrels, and jackrabbits.
- Avoid disturbance at nest sites from 15 March until 15 July, and tailor nest buffers to protect native habitats within 1 km of nests.
- Protect natural nest structures, trees, cliffs, and rock outcrops from activities that would damage them (i.e., cattle, mining, etc).
- Construct artificial nest structures.
- List of partner organizations:

Arch Coal Inc., Canadian Wildlife Service, Commission for Environmental Cooperation, Nature Conservancy (Prairie Wings project, Wyoming Chapter), Northern Great Plains Joint Venture, Profana Chihuahua, A.C., Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Tierra Consulting, Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, USDA Forest Service International Program, USDA Forest Service Thunder Basin National Grassland, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wyoming Game and Fish, Wyoming Audubon.

USDA Announces OK for Meat Importation from Canada for Hunters

Veneman announces that import permit applications for certain ruminant products from Canada will be accepted

Scientific Evidence Indicates No Measurable Risk to Public Health Calls for International Dialogue to Develop a Practical, Risk-based Approach to Trade

WASHINGTON, Aug. 8, 2003--Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman said today that, after a thorough scientific analysis, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will begin accepting applications for import permits for certain ruminant derived products from Canada.

“We have a long history of safeguards in place to prevent the introduction of BSE in the United States, and the continued protection of the U.S. food supply is our top priority,” Veneman said. “Our experts have thoroughly reviewed the scientific evidence and determined that the risk to public health is extremely low.”

On May 20, 2003 Secretary Veneman temporarily halted imports of live ruminants and most ruminant products from Canada after a cow in Alberta was found to have Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). Today’s announcement comes after a close review of the international standards set by the International Office of Epizootics (OIE)—the standard-setting organization for animal health for 164 member nations; an exhaustive epidemiological investigation into the case by Canada, during which no other animals were found to be infected; and additional risk mitigation measures put in place by Canada in response to a review of their investigation by an independent expert panel.

Veneman said that USDA weighed these and many other factors as it evaluated the risk, including the preventive measures that Canada had in place prior to the detection of BSE, such as import controls, feed bans and surveillance measures conducted at levels that met or exceeded the OIE standards.

Based on these determinations, Veneman said that USDA will no longer prohibit the importation of hunter-harvested wild ruminant products intended for personal use and it will begin to accept applications for import permits for certain products from Canada, including:

- Boneless sheep or goat meat from animals under 12 months of age;
- Boneless bovine meat from cattle under 30 months of age;
- Boneless Veal (meat) from calves that were 36 weeks of age or younger at slaughter;
- Fresh or frozen bovine liver;
- Vaccines for veterinary medicine for non-ruminant use; and
- Pet products and feed ingredients that contain processed animal protein and tallow of non-ruminant sources when produced in facilities with dedicated manufacturing lines.

Veneman noted that the single BSE case in Canada and its impact on global trade call for an international dialogue on BSE to develop more practical, consistent guidance to countries regarding the resumption of trade with countries that have reported cases of BSE. Veneman said that the United States, along with Mexico and Canada, have requested that the OIE include such a dialogue in an upcoming meeting of international experts in September.

“The current OIE standards have been helpful in guiding countries with their risk mitigation efforts,” Veneman said. “But we are continually learning about this disease and the science is advancing. Many countries with and without BSE have taken new steps to control and prevent it. All this places the international community in a much better position today to develop a practical, risk-based approach to addressing safety issues that impact trade. Countries knowing they will be treated consistently and fairly will have greater incentive to conduct appropriate levels of surveillance and reporting of BSE as well as to demonstrate transparency with their trading partners.”

She added, “It is vital that we pursue this course so that there is consistency among trading partners and assurance to consumers around the world that their food supply is safe.”

USDA Permitting Process

Hunters can immediately begin bringing wild ruminant meat products intended for their personal use into the United States, but will need a “Veterinary Services Special Permit for the Importation of Hunter-Harvested Wild Ruminant Meat,” along with one of the following: a valid Canadian export certificate for game meat, or a copy of a valid hunting license or a valid hunting tag. The permit can be downloaded from <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/bse/bse.html> or obtained by calling the APHIS National Center for Import and Export at (301) 734-3277.

Certain other previously banned ruminant meat products may be imported with a “United States Veterinary Permit for Importation and Transportation of Controlled Material.” The application can be completed on line at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/import_export.htm or can be downloaded from <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ncie>, or can be obtained by calling (301) 734-3277.

Veneman said that a rulemaking process would begin immediately for the importation of live ruminants and ruminant products.

U.S. Steps to Prevent BSE

The United States remains diligent in its BSE surveillance and prevention efforts. A risk assessment conducted by Harvard University in 2001 showed the risk of BSE occurring in the United States as extremely low. The report also determined that early protection systems put into place by the USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have been largely responsible for keeping BSE out of the United States and would prevent it from spreading if it ever did enter the country.

Prevention steps include an active surveillance program, which tests the highest risk animals. USDA more than tripled its testing in FY 2002, and its testing rates are significantly higher than the standards set by the OIE. Under the international standard, a BSE-free country like the United States would be required to test only 433 head of cattle per year. The USDA is now testing 46 times that amount, and to date, no evidence of BSE has been found in the United States.

In August 1997, to further enhance BSE prevention efforts, FDA began prohibiting the feeding of most material from ruminant to other ruminant animals. In addition, FDA and the state regulatory agencies have increased the number of inspections of renderers, animal feed manufacturers, feed mills and other firms responsible for keeping prohibited mammalian protein out of cattle and other ruminant feed. FDA has dedicated more resources to these animal feed inspections and has upgraded its tracking system and database to ensure effective and timely follow-up. FDA is working to assure full compliance with the BSE feed regulation. It annually inspects 100 percent of the limited number of firms that actually handle prohibited material. Over 99 percent of these firms are in substantial compliance. Even if an infected animal were ever to be found in the U.S., the ban would prevent establishment of the disease.

For more information on BSE, visit www.usda.gov

Terrestrial Wildlife Ecology Website

The Terrestrial Wildlife Ecology Unit website has been completely restyled and is available for your viewing pleasure at <http://www.fs.fed.us/wilddecology>. You will find information on current wildlife ecology topics, a variety of web tools for wildlife biologists and ecologists, links to upcoming professional meetings and symposia, and information for contacting regional and national wildlife ecologists.

If you have comments on the website or suggestions for additional material, contact Christina Hargis (WO) at chargis@fs.fed.us.

Late Rain Helped Ducks on Prairie Breeding Grounds

Although water levels on the prairies were low in late winter, spring rains on the breeding grounds brought the total number of ponds above its long-term average, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's annual survey.



The total population of breeding ducks in parts of Canada and the northern United States rose to approximately 36.2 million birds in areas that have been surveyed since 1955. That number represents a increase of 16 percent from last year's population of 31.2 million birds, and was 9 percent above the long-term average.

"Water levels really looked good in late spring and duck breeding populations are up from last year," said Service Director Steve Williams. "Most species in the midcontinent region were above their long-term averages, but we continue to have concerns over the status of pintails and scaup, whose populations remain below their long term averages."

The Waterfowl Breeding Ground Population and Habitat Survey, the largest and most comprehensive survey of its kind in the world, samples 1.3 million square miles across the north-central United States, south-central and northern Canada, and Alaska. The survey estimates the number of ducks in the continent's most important nesting grounds.

Annual survey results help guide the Service in managing its waterfowl conservation programs under authority of the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Service works in partnership with state representatives from the four flyways - the Atlantic, Mississippi, Central and Pacific - that waterfowl and other birds use during their migrations to establish regulatory frameworks for waterfowl hunting season lengths, dates and bag limits.

The breeding population estimate for mallards in the traditional survey area was 7.9 million birds, largely unchanged from last year and remained near the long-term average. Surveys of mallards conducted in the Great Lakes states (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) indicated the population had decreased from 1 million in 2002 to 851,000 this year. The combined estimates of mallards from the traditional survey area and from the Great Lakes states (8.8 million) are used for setting duck hunting regulations through the Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) process.

Blue-winged teal numbers; at 5.5 million; increased 31 percent over last year's estimate and 23 percent above their long-term average. The breeding population estimate for green-winged teal of 2.7 million birds was 46 percent above its long-term average and at its second highest level since 1955.

The Breeding Ground Survey also record record increases in the number of northern shovelers at 3.6 million birds up 56 percent. Pintails increased by 43% over 2002 estimates to 2.6 million.

Many other species' populations did not change much from last year, including gadwall (2.5 million, 55 percent above its long-term average), wigeon (2.6 million), green-winged teal (at 2.7 million), redheads (0.6 million), canvasbacks (0.6 million) and scaup (3.7 million).

Habitat conditions for breeding waterfowl have greatly improved over last year in most of the prairie survey areas. These improved conditions are reflected in the numbers of ponds counted this year. The estimate of May ponds (U.S. Prairies and Prairie and parkland Canada combined) of 5.2 million is 91 percent higher than last year and 7 percent above the long-term average. Numbers of ponds in Canada (3.5 million) and the U.S. (1.7 million) were above 2002 estimates. Canadian ponds were similar to the 1974-2002 average, while ponds in the U.S. were 10% above the 1974-2002 average.

The entire 2002 Trends in Waterfowl Breeding Populations report can be downloaded from the Service's Web site at < <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/reports/reports.html>>

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

Shooters take aim at 10th Annual Turkey Shoot

With more than 17 million people in this country who enjoy the shooting sports, it's easy to see why the National Wild Turkey Federation's 10th Annual Turkey Shoot is looking to be a hot item this summer.

The Meadows National Gun Club, located only one hour from Atlanta, will host the Turkey Shoot Aug. 15-17. More than 600 shooters and 30 sponsors will be traveling from across the nation to attend the event.

"I enjoy the Turkey Shoot because it helps me prepare for the National Sporting Clays Championship competition, said Tre Sides, two-time defending champion and four-time overall champion of the Turkey Shoot. "There are a lot of Master Class shooters that participate in the Turkey Shoot, so the competition level is very tough."

In its tenth year, the event draws some of the nation's finest shooters, outdoor product vendors and shooting industry representatives. Targets on both open and wooded terrain provide challenging sporting clayshooting that will test shooters at this highly competitive national event.

"This event is centered right in the prime time of the shooting sports season," said Rhett Simmons, NWTF event coordinator. "The Turkey Shoot will be the perfect opportunity to cash in on some great shooting competition. This event is expected to sell out."

The Turkey Shoot is separated into two divisions: the highly competitive National Sporting Clays Association Class for professional shooters and the Hunters Class for recreational shooters. Participants for all levels will be able to shoot both Browning courses on Saturday.

The 50-bird Briley Squaded Subgauge 20-, 28- and .410-gauge competitions begin on Friday as well as the pump-action, side-by-side and Browning 12-gauge preliminary. There is also a 50 registered target 5-Stand competition.

The main event is a 200-target sporting clays competition scheduled to start at 9:00 a.m. Saturday morning and finish Sunday afternoon. This event is the most popular, so competitors will want to hurry up and register as the event is limited to only 540 registrants.

Preliminary rounds of The Outdoor Connection, Inc. World Wild Turkey Still Target Championships are also scheduled for Friday and Saturday with participants competing in the main event on Sunday. Fun shooting events, sponsored by the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, will be available for everyone throughout the weekend.

"The NWTF is committed to the shooting sports industry and this event allows shooters and industry leaders to get together for a competitive and enjoyable shoot," said Dick Rosenlieb, Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

Aside from the shooting competition, a silent auction, followed by a southern style barbecue is scheduled for Friday night, and a seafood buffet and silent auction is scheduled for Saturday night.

Proceeds from the Turkey Shoot will help benefit Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF, an outreach program that provides individuals with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors through local NWTF chapter events nationwide, such as hunting, fishing, and shooting activities.

The Meadows is located on Interstate 75, Exit 181-Rumble Road/Smarr. Turn west 200 yards; the entrance is on the right.

For more information about the Turkey Shoot or about the NWTF, visit the website at www.nwtf.org or call 1-800-THE-NWTF.

2003 Turkey Shoot sponsors: ATK/Federal, Avery Outdoors, Baron Technology, Inc., Bass Pro Shops, Bombardier, Briley Manufacturing, Inc., Browning/Simpson Sales, Cabela's, Charles Daly, Club Car, Dick's Sporting Goods, Evans Sports, Inc., Gander Mountain, Harrell Howell

Enterprises, Hechler & Koch, Henry Repeating Arms, Hornady, Husqvarna Forest & Garden Co., Jon's Sports/J&S Specialties, Knight Rifles, Leupold & Stevens, Inc., Miller Brewing Co./Macon Beverage, Mossy Oak Apparel, National Shooting Sports Foundation, O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc., Plano Molding Co., Quaker Boy, Randy Ryan, Realtree, Remington Arms Co., Inc., Royal Sporting/Gamebore, Streamlight, Inc., Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc., Texsport Authentic Adventure Gear, The Marlin Firearms/H&R 1871, LLC, The Outdoor Connection, Inc., U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, Wild Turkey Bourbon, Winchester Division/Olin Corp.

About the NWTF: In 1973 when the National Wild Turkey Federation was founded, there were an estimated 1.3 million wild turkeys and 1.5 million turkey hunters. Thanks to the work of wildlife agencies and the NWTF's many volunteers and partners, today there are more than 6 million wild turkeys and approximately 2.6 million turkey hunters. Since 1985, more than \$175 million NWTF and cooperator dollars have been spent on over 24,000 projects benefiting wild turkeys throughout North America.

The NWTF is a half million-member grassroots, nonprofit organization with members in 5 states, Canada and 11 foreign countries. It supports scientific wildlife management on public, private and corporate lands as well as wild turkey hunting as a traditional North American sport. For more information on the National Wild Turkey Federation call (803) 637-3106, check out our web site at www.nwtf.org or e-mail questions to nwtf@nwtf.net.

Advanced Training in Amphibian Population Decline Research - January 4-13, 2004 Costa Rica

Sponsored by the Research and Analysis Network for Neotropical Amphibians (RANA) and the IRCEB team studying Host-Pathogen Biology and the Global Decline of Amphibians, and funded by the US National Science Foundation. The course is open to post-doctoral and senior graduate level biologists from throughout the Americas. Application requirements: (1) a filled application form, (2) curriculum vitae, (3) a letter of interests and future research plans, including reasons for participating in the course, and (4) two reference letters.



Application deadline: 8 October 2003. All application documents should be sent to Roberto Ibáñez preferably by e-mail at ibanezr@tivoli.si.edu, or to Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Atención: Roberto Ibáñez / Tupper Bldg., Apartado 2072, Balboa / Ancón, Panamá, Rep. de Panamá. Successful applicants will be notified by the end of October. Course cost, room, board, and travel expenses will be covered for successful applicants. Instruction will be simultaneously translated in English and Spanish. Brazilian biologists able to understand either language are also encouraged to apply. For more information and an application form see <http://rana.biologia.ucr.ac.cr>.

Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation www.parcplace.org

Guzzlers for Gobblers Tops \$1 million for Western Wild Turkey Habitat

For Immediate Release: August 15, 2003

Contact: James Powell or Jonathan Harling, 803-637-3106

In the dry and dusty mountains of New Mexico, the National Wild Turkey Federation's Middle Rio Grande chapter knows what it means to "obey your thirst."

Drought conditions have been the norm in the past years, which has forced the chapter to find ways to get water to the wildlife in their region. And so they have turned to the NWTF's Guzzlers for Gobblers program.

"NWTF National Project funds have helped support a number of guzzlers projects in this region, otherwise wild turkey populations and other wildlife would be in bad shape," said Dick Kreiner, president of the NWTF's Middle Rio Grande chapter. "Guzzlers for Gobblers is a program that provides much needed water relief for wildlife in the West."

This year Guzzlers for Gobblers topped the \$1-million mark for spending on habitat projects in 15 western states. The program has for five years improved water availability and habitat for wild turkeys in arid regions of the western United States.

"This program covers more than just constructing water tanks, or guzzlers, for the use of wildlife," said Scott Vance, NWTF biologist. "We have the opportunity to work with state agencies and local biologists to determine what habitat enhancements can have the most positive effect on wildlife."

In many parts of the West, water is a limiting factor in wild turkey habitat. Habitat along streams and rivers is also very critical to wild turkeys and most wildlife species in the West. The Guzzlers for Gobblers program helps improve these habitats by planting desirable trees, building water control structures, protecting wet meadows, improving water quality and decreasing soil erosion. More than 1.5 million acres of wildlife habitat has been improved through the Guzzlers for Gobblers program.

Guzzlers have been utilized since the 1940s by state and federal agencies to improve water availability for wildlife. Ben Galding with the California Fish and Game Department was one of the first to design and develop artificial water devices for game birds and other wildlife. He coined the phrase "gallinaceous guzzler" referring to self-maintained man-made watering units.

"Many state game agencies and NWTF chapters in the West have helped improve wildlife habitat where water is a necessity," said Vance. "All species of wildlife need water, and we have the ability to help in important areas, especially during severe drought conditions."

There are many factors to be considered when installing a guzzler including the target species (i.e. antelope, elk, turkeys), timing and amount of precipitation, materials for use, size and accessibility for construction.

One of the most important considerations is what wildlife species will be using the guzzler. This is critical because different animals have different daily water requirements. By calculating the expected requirements and number of animals using the water, wildlife biologists can determine the most appropriate guzzler size for a specific project.

Supported by the NWTF's National Projects funds, partnerships with state, federal and local wildlife agencies and organizations and corporate contributions, the Guzzlers program has provided more than \$1 million for western habitat improvements since 1999.

For more information on how to get involved with the Guzzlers for Gobblers program, contact Scott Vance at svance@nwtf.net or call 800-THE-NWTF.

About the NWTF: In 1973 when the National Wild Turkey Federation was founded, there were an estimated 1.3 million wild turkeys and 1.5 million turkey hunters. Thanks to the work of wildlife agencies and the NWTF's many volunteers and partners, today there are more than 6 million wild turkeys and approximately 2.6 million turkey hunters. Since 1985, more than \$175 million NWTF and cooperator dollars have been spent on over 24,000 projects benefiting wild turkeys throughout North America.

The NWTF is a half million-member grassroots, nonprofit organization with members in 50 states, Canada and 11 foreign countries. It supports scientific wildlife management on public, private and corporate lands as well as wild turkey hunting as a traditional North American sport.

For more information on the National Wild Turkey Federation call (803) 637-3106, check out our web site at www.nwtf.org or e-mail questions to nwtf@nwtf.net.

Deborah M. Hahn is IAFWAs New Migratory Bird Coordinator

The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is pleased to announce Deborah M. Hahn as our new migratory bird coordinator. Debbie replaces Rick Kearney who left a few months ago to take a position with USGS. She will coordinate IAFWA's all- bird workshops, Partners in Flight initiative, Shorebird Conservation Plan, and Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative efforts. In particular, she will work with these bird initiatives to assist the State fish and wildlife agencies with their State Wildlife Conservation Plan efforts related to the State Wildlife Grants. She also will provide staff assistance for all related IAFWA committees/working groups and the NABCI Council.

Debbie most recently worked as an Environmental Scientist for Horne Engineering Services, Inc., based in northern Virginia, where she developed natural resource management plans for Department of Defense bases as well as other sites. These plans integrated management of migratory birds, other fauna, flora, soils, threatened and endangered species, recreation, and human use. Through this work, Debbie received a medal of merit from the state of New Mexico for exceptional work on ecosystem management. Debbie got her Master of Environmental Management from Duke University, where her master's project entailed analyzing potential habitat use for the red wolf. She earned her B.S. from Penn State. She will be reachable at dhahn@sso.org and 202/624-7890 starting September 2. She will attend IAFWA's annual meeting and we encourage you to introduce yourself and talk about your state's or agency/organization's needs and interests related to bird conservation.

Eric C. Schwaab is IAFWAs New Resource Director

For Immediate Release: August 20, 2003

Contact: John Baughman 202-624-7890

The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies today announced the appointment of Eric C. Schwaab as the Association's Resource Director effective September 1, 2003.

The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies was founded in 1902 as a quasi-governmental organization of public agencies charged with the protection and management of North America's fish and wildlife resources. The Association's governmental members include the fish and wildlife agencies of the states, provinces, and federal governments of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

Schwaab will replace Robert L. Miles who retired in July after five years as Resource Director.

Until May of 2003, Mr. Schwaab served for almost 20 years in various positions at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. For the past four years, Schwaab worked as Director of the MD DNR Fisheries Service. In that position Eric also served as a Maryland Commissioner to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, a Council Member for the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council, and as Chairman of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. Prior to assuming his responsibilities as Fisheries Service Director, Schwaab directed the Department's Forest, Wildlife & Heritage Service. His career at MD DNR also included extensive work in public lands management and natural resources law enforcement. Since May, Schwaab has provided fisheries consulting services to the National Marine Fisheries Service.

In his new position, Eric will represent the International and its members on a wide range of fish and wildlife issues and actions and also supervise a number of projects of national scope.

Schwaab and his wife Valerie live with their three daughters in Catonsville, Maryland where Eric is an avid fisherman and cyclist and is active in coaching youth basketball and lacrosse.

FY03 Annual NatureWatch Awards Deadline for Nomination is Friday, November 16, 2003

From Don Virgovic, Forest Service

National Naturewatch Coordinator

dvirgovic@fs.fed.us

503-808-2675

Recognizing exemplary performance is an important element of the NatureWatch Program. Recognition provides employee motivation to achieve their Program goals, objectives, and individual projects at a high level, that contribute to the overall Program mission, strategy, and direction. It also encourages and rewards hard work, creativity, and innovation in the work place. Part of all of our jobs is to inform/nominate an individual or group who is doing exceptional work.



This year's National NatureWatch Awards are tied to the WFRP_MS reporting system to make the nomination process very easy for everyone. I am hopeful this method of nomination will accomplish two tasks. It will familiarize and encourage more and better use of the WFRP as our primary communication tool, and it will encourage more nominations for exemplary work because it will omit the necessity of having to complete relatively long nomination forms that often have the same content as a WFRP narrative.

The nomination process is simple. For example, for the award category for Photography titled "People Watching Nature" all you would have to do is "save photo as" (right click) from a WFRP



report photo and then attach/email the photo to me. Like this: Bear viewing.jpg(right click on the icon and view). And attach the URL from the WFRP project report that contains the photograph. Like this: (Click on the URL to view.)

[http://wodata01/fsfiles/unit/wo/wfrp/usforest_2002.nsf/\(ReportWithoutPartnerSummary\)?OpenAgent&UNID=EF21203B13605B3485256C59007F1E4E](http://wodata01/fsfiles/unit/wo/wfrp/usforest_2002.nsf/(ReportWithoutPartnerSummary)?OpenAgent&UNID=EF21203B13605B3485256C59007F1E4E)

Each Award Category has specific instructions for submitting a nomination. The instructions are very easy to understand. In my original note I also attached the NatureWatch Program Elements and Definitions for your reference for two of the Award Categories provided in the Awards document.

Please put "NatureWatch Award" in the subject line of your nomination when you send it.

Soon, I will be asking for five volunteers to work on a NatureWatch Award selection team to help make selections for these important awards. Stay tuned.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the National NatureWatch Program Awards, and continue to have a safe and enjoyable field season.

Waterbirds Around the World – A Wetlands International Conference

Waterbirds Around the World is the first conference to focus entirely on all major themes and developments related to the global conservation of waterbird flyways during their full annual cycle: breeding areas, stop-over sites and wintering areas. It will address achievements of the last 40-50 years and formulate the need for initiatives to stimulate future conservation, research and management not only of the world's migratory waterbird flyways, but also of threatened non-migratory species; such as those on small islands or otherwise isolated.

The conference will be held 3-8 April 2004 in Edinburgh, UK at the Heriot-Watt Conference center (www.eeescotland.com). Pre-and post conference excursions are available. For more information see the website at: <http://www.wetlands.agro.nl/GFC/Default.htm>.

National Forests Nationwide Improve Due to Healthy Forest Initiative

For Immediate Release: August 7, 2003

Contact: James Powell or Jonathan Harling 803-637-3106

As the largest wildfire in Colorado history devoured more than 137,000 acres of forestland, Mike Storey's concern for the wildlife and land quickly grew into concern for his family and neighbors. As president of the National Wild Turkey Federation's Colorado State Chapter, Storey had a long history of working to improve natural areas for wild turkeys and other animals that thrive there. But as the rampaging wildfire served to destroy the habitat Storey and others like him had worked to protect, it also threatened their own homes.

Fortunately for Storey, the Hayman Wildfire that burned 133 houses and an additional 466 outbuildings was extinguished before reaching his home. When the flames were finally brought under control, they were a mere eight miles away.

"It got way too close, but it wasn't as close to me as some people," Storey said. "We were very lucky."

Unfortunately, tales like Storey's and his Colorado neighbors were not uncommon last year. According to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, more than 88,000 wildfires turned nearly 7 million acres and 815 homes and buildings to ash across the nation in 2002. The real tragedy is that much of this could have been avoided, and with the Healthy Forest Initiative in full swing, forests across the U.S. are back on their way to healthy conditions.

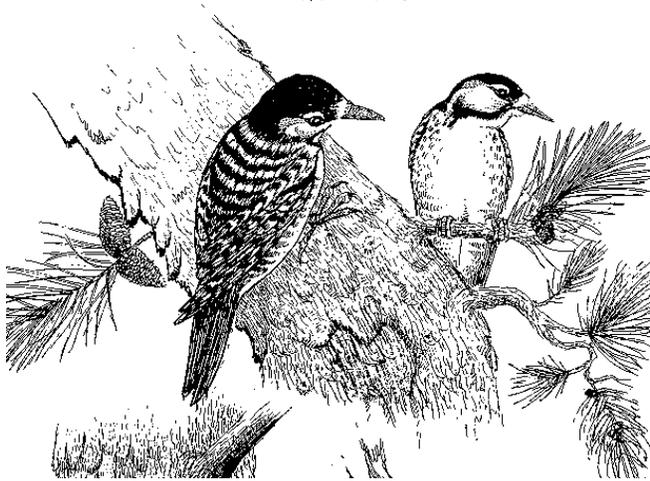
"A forest will not manage itself, and today we have forests that are too old and thick for wildlife, said Dr. James Earl Kennamer, NWTF senior vice-president for Conservation Programs. "Future

generations will also depend on the timber industry for jobs and products. For these reasons and for human safety, the NWTF fully supports the Healthy Forest Initiative."

The Initiative seeks to restore millions of acres of forests and rangelands through the thinning of cluttered stands of timber and the removal of fire fuels through prescribed burning. These and other management techniques will also help control invasive insects and the threats posed by nonnative plants. The result will be healthier forests, which provide better habitat for wildlife and more safety and enjoyment for people.

Examples of how these management techniques can improve natural areas for wildlife while also reducing the risk of large wildfires are making headlines and providing clear evidence of the continued need to manage our forests.

Judge Lifts Injunctions to Help Red-cockaded Woodpecker



On the national forest system in East Texas, it was the court system that originally stopped habitat improvement there. Two injunctions halted the Forest Service's practices of harvesting mid-story sized trees and using prescribed burning in the Angelina and Sabine national forests, techniques that benefit the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Fortunately, a federal judge recently lifted the bans preventing forest management practices.

"The Forest Service is tremendously pleased with the court's ruling that the Texas red-cockaded woodpecker plan complies with the Endangered Species Act," said Ruth Yeager, U.S. attorney who represented the forest service in the case. "The court's approval of the plan and the dissolution of two injunctions will allow the Forest Service to at last implement the plan to the benefit of the red-cockaded woodpecker, its habitat and its continued existence and survival."

Judge Rules Bats Not Effected by Missouri Forest Management Project

A federal judge in Missouri recently rejected a lawsuit filed by environmental activists that sought to prevent a proposed forest management project in the eastern part of the state. Judge Charles Shaw upheld the way in which the U.S. Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service determined the project would not negatively impact the Indiana bat, an endangered species.

The proposed project, which adheres to the guidelines of the Healthy Forest Initiative, authorized a combination of clear-cutting, commercial thinning and other tree removal. In his ruling, Judge Shaw determined that the methods used by the two agencies to determine the bat would not be adversely impacted were sufficient since they were acting under a law that didn't require the preparation of an environment impact statement.

South Carolina National Forest Benefits from Healthy Forest Initiative

Fire is not the only threat to America's forests. This natural resource has natural enemies of all shapes, forms and sizes. At the Long Cane Ranger District, a part of Sumter National Forest located near Edgefield, S.C., and the NWTF's Wild Turkey Center, the threat posed to our forests by Southern Pine Beetles is just one of the challenges biologists are facing these days.

There, biologists are battling this threat through an ongoing cost-share project between the NWTF and the U.S. Forest Service in South Carolina to control damage caused by the beetle, as well as using prescribed burning to control wildfires and encourage plant growth. Planting and rehabilitation of fields, utility right-of-ways, savannah restoration and other habitat improvement projects are also on the agenda.

"We are having good success in habitat improvement," said Long Cane District Ranger Bet LeMaster. "If you talk to the hunters in the area, they are saying they like seeing the wildlife openings and all the work that is being done. The Healthy Forest Initiative has opened the door for more sound, accepted wildlife habitat improvement."

The Healthy Forest Initiative's emphasis has not only been on employing sound management practices, but also reduces the red tape and legal hurdles public and private forest managers have to go through to do their jobs. With this Initiative, our nation's forests are again on their way to becoming the model for providing ideal habitat for wildlife and plants, much to the joy of hunters like NWTF Chapter President Mike Storey, campers and anybody else who truly cares about the outdoors.

For more information on habitat improvement or the Healthy Forest Initiative, check out NWTF online at www.nwtf.org or the U.S. Forest Service at www.fs.fed.us/.

About the NWTF: In 1973 when the National Wild Turkey Federation was founded, there were an estimated 1.3 million wild turkeys and 1.5 million turkey hunters. Thanks to the work of wildlife agencies and the NWTF's many volunteers and partners, today there are more than 6 million wild turkeys and approximately 2.6 million turkey hunters. Since 1985, more than \$175 million NWTF and cooperator dollars have been spent on over 24,000 projects benefiting wild turkeys throughout North America.

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For more information on the National Wild Turkey Federation call (803) 637-3106, check out our web site at www.nwtf.org or e-mail questions to nwtf@nwtf.net.

Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) Seeks Director

WHSRN is a hemispheric network of sites and partners working to conserve habitats critically important to migratory shorebirds. The Director of the WHSRN Coordinating Office works closely with WHSRN partners and sites to achieve WHSRN's mission. Through 2008, special emphasis will be given to expanding the Network, especially in South America; building local capacity at all 57 sites; and extending public information programs throughout the Network. Maintaining the Network's strong collaborative character, promoting and supporting intra-site initiatives, and fund raising will be central to the Director's responsibilities. For more information about WHSRN: go to <http://www.manomet.org/WHSRN/>.

Qualifications:

A strong ecology/ornithology background is essential, a Ph.D. is preferred. Spanish-English fluency and experience in Latin American conservation are highly desirable. Demonstrated management, program development and fund-raising experience is required. The position is based at the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Manomet, Massachusetts.

To Apply:

Please submit a résumé to:

WHSRN Director
MCCS
PO Box 1770
Manomet MA 02345-1770

E-mail submissions are encouraged (jrobbins@manomet.org), but please also send a hard copy. Please indicate in your correspondence that you are responding to this announcement in WHSRNews.

WFRD Releases New “Calls of the Wild – Vocalizations of Georgia’s Frogs” Compact Disk



For Immediate Release: August 11, 2003

Contact: Kitty Esco, Sr. Public Relations & Information Specialist -- (478) 994-1438I or John Jensen, Wildlife Biologist -- (478) 994-1438

FORSYTH, Ga. -- Have you ever wondered which animal produced the sounds of spring and summer in your backyard or questioned the call that came bellowing from the bushes from a nearby pond? Georgian's can now learn more about some of these sounds with the new "Calls of the Wild - Vocalizations of Georgia's Frogs" Compact Disk produced by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division (DNR/WRD) with the help of Georgia frog expert and talented nature recording artist Walter Knapp. Presenting the unique calls of all 31 species, this CD will introduce the public to the wonderful and often bizarre calls of Georgia's frogs and toads.

Whether it's the jug o' rum, jug o' rum of the bullfrog, the sheep-like buzzing of the Eastern narrowmouth toad, or the vomiting sound of the spadefoot, every species has a distinct, individual call. The CD has separate recordings of every native species, as well as a non-native species from the Caribbean, the greenhouse frog, that has become established in several areas of southern Georgia. Additionally, over 20 minutes of mixed species choruses are included that can be listened to as peaceful and natural background music or can be used to test your ability to identify individual species mixed within others. Informative narration is provided for each of the individual species' recordings, and a 15-page booklet loaded with information including natural history, range maps and physical characteristics for each species accompanies the CD.

To help educate yourself and others about the frog calls in your backyard and throughout the state, order Georgia's "Calls of the Wild" CD by mailing a check payable to WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FUND for \$15.36 each CD (includes \$12.95 CD cost, \$0.91 sales tax - Georgia residents only - and \$1.50 for shipping/handling) to: GA DNR/WRD, Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage Section, 116 Rum Creek Drive, Forsyth, GA 31029, ATTN: Georgia's "Calls of the Wild" CD, or for more information call 478-994-1438.

Georgians can support the conservation and protection of frogs and toads and their habitats by purchasing a wildlife license plate for their vehicles, or by donating to the "Give Wildlife a Chance" State Income Tax Checkoff. Since 1997, more than 937,000 wildlife license plates have been sold in Georgia, raising over \$13 million for wildlife conservation, recreation and education projects. The primary source of funding for the Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage Section, the 1997 plate depicts a Northern bobwhite (quail) in flight through longleaf pine habitat - one of Georgia's most at-risk ecosystems.

For more information on frog and toad conservation problems and potential solutions, please visit the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation website: www.parcplace.org.

For general information on Georgia's frogs please visit:
<http://wwwknapp.home.mindspring.com/GAFrog.Toad.html>
Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
www.parcplace.org

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Releases Draft Strategic Plan for Review (article excerpted from The All-Bird Bulletin)

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is undertaking a strategic planning effort to recommit to its migratory bird trust responsibilities and set a successful course for its Migratory Bird Program. In early August the Service will release its draft strategic plan for a broad-scale, web-based internal and external partner consultation.

The draft plan outlines the Service's vision for migratory bird conservation and the goals and strategies required to reach it. The plan emphasizes that the conservation of "birds for people" depends upon the consistent application of science and strong, lasting partnerships among the individuals, organizations, and nations linked by the flight paths of these species.

The Service will host a Migratory Bird Conservation Forum in January 2004, to work with partners to resolve outstanding issues and generate consensus on priority actions in the draft plan. The final strategic plan will be released at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Spokane, Washington in March 2004.

The Service currently is soliciting comments on its strategic plan. Please review the document and provide your input by visiting <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/mbstratplan/mbstratplan.htm>. Your Recommendations are vital to the future of migratory birds!

PIF to Release Landbird Continental Plan in Early November (article excerpted from The All-Bird Bulletin)

Partners in Flight (PIF) is nearing completion of its North American Landbird Conservation Plan, based on a biological assessment of the 448 breeding landbirds of the United States and Canada. This plan identifies 100 species on the new PIF Watch List, as well as 95 additional stewardship species restricted to a single major North American biome. For each of these 195 species of continental importance, the plan provides an estimate of population size, numerical population objective, recommended conservation action level, and monitoring needs. Species in need of immediate action to protect small, highly threatened populations tend to be concentrated in the southwestern U. S. and Florida, while declining species in need of active management are most concentrated in the Great Plains. A large number of species endemic to boreal and arctic regions and the western U. S. are not highly threatened at present, but are targeted for long-term

planning to sustain future populations. Together, these conservation actions across the entire continent will meet PIF's ambitious goal of restoring and sustaining all of North America's native landbirds in healthy numbers across their natural ranges. This plan calls upon decision-makers, land managers, and researchers working at national and international levels to help meet this goal. For more information, contact Terry Rich, the National PIF Coordinator, at Terry Rich @ fws.gov. <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/mbstratplan/mbstratplan.htm>

The following job announcements are just a sample of the job opportunities that can be found at: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

Title	Grade/Series	Deadline	Vacancy #	Location
<u>WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST</u>	GS-486-9	Sept 11, 2003	DEU4-03-128	DeLeon Springs, FL
<u>WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST</u>	GS-0486-07/09	Sept 9, 2003	R212-067-03DEMO	Leadville, CO
<u>SUPERVISORY NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST (INTERDISCIPLINARY)</u>	GS-0401-13	Sept 29, 2003	GS-0401-13	Grand Island, NE
<u>NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST</u>	GS-0401-09/09	Sept 12, 2003	DD177780	Estes Park, CO
<u>FISH AND WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST (TERM)</u>	GS-0401-09/11	Sept 11, 2003	FWS5-03-071	State College, PA
<u>NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST</u>	GS-0401-07/09	Sept 12, 2003	R215-095-03D	Carbondale CO
<u>WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST</u>	GS-0486-09/11	October 1, 2003	BLM/ID-03-145	Challis, ID
<u>LIFE SCIENTIST</u>	GS-0401-13/13	Sept 16, 2003	Reg 4-DE-2003-0075	Atlanta, GA
<u>RESOURCE PLANNER, INTERDISCIPLINARY</u>	GS-0401-11	Sept 30, 2003	MAL-1418-03D	Burns, OR
<u>RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR</u>	GS-0401-12/12	October 2, 2003	NRCS-03-587B	Cannelton & Versailles, IN

Hotlinks!

- Wildlife, Fish and Rare Plants: <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/>
- 2003 News Releases: <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2003/releases.shtml>
- FS Today Newsletter: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/pao/fs_today/
- National Fire Plan: <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/nfp/>
- Roadless Area Conservation: <http://roadless.fs.fed.us/>
- Large-Scale Watershed Restoration Projects: <http://www.fs.fed.us/largewatershedprojects/>
- Land and Resource Management Plans: <http://www.fs.fed.us/forum/nepa/nfmalrmp.html>
- Watershed and Air Management: <http://www.fs.fed.us/clean/>
- Lands and Realty Management: <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/>
- Road Management: <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/roads/>
- Recreation, Wilderness and Heritage Resources: <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/>
- Forest Management: <http://www.fs.fed.us/land/fm/>

- International Programs: <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/>
- Research: <http://www.fe.fed.us/research/scientific.html>
- Healthy Forests Initiative: <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/HFI.shtml>
- Partners in Planning: <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/planning/guide/index.html>
- Atlantic Coast Joint Venture website, housed in Region 5 of the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service: <http://acjv.org> or <http://northeast.fws.gov/migratorybirds/acjv.htm>

IMPORTANT NOTE: Once you select a link, please be sure to hit the “Refresh” button to ensure that you are loading the most current version of the web page!

On The Wild Side is a monthly update of activities of the National Forest System Terrestrial Wildlife and Ecology Program of the USDA Forest Service. All information presented is subject to change as projects evolve, opportunities arise and issues unfold. Contributions are welcome and should be submitted to Debbie Pressman at dpressman@fs.fed.us no later than the 25th of each month. We reserve the right to edit contributions for clarity and brevity.

Positions listed are for outreach purposes only and are not full announcements. Interested individuals should contact the forests referenced or consult the USAJOBS website.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."