

On The Wild Side

WILDLIFE PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



USDA
FOREST SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 2004



The day I see a leaf is a marvel of a day - Kenneth Patton

News

UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY - THE FIRST STEP IN PROTECTING IT

This article appeared at http://bobwhitson.typepad.com/howlings/2004/08/understanding_d.html

Thursday, August 12, 2004

by Dr. David Suzuki

A massive deep-sea expedition in the North Atlantic recently uncovered hundreds of species of fish and squid, including several that appear to be new to science. The expedition made headlines, but some readers may have been left wondering, "So what?"

The two-month international expedition netted some 80,000 specimens from waters up to several kilometers deep. Scientists were thrilled with their discoveries, which included potentially several new species, along with a variety of observed strange phenomena, from reef-building cold-water coral to rings of planktonic organisms more than 10 kilometers wide.

It's all part of the 10-year Census of Marine Life. But at a cost of more than \$1 billion, some might say the price seems a bit high to find a few new fish. So what makes this kind of work so important? Well, beyond the simple thrill of gaining knowledge for its own sake, understanding life diversity on the planet and how it interacts is vital to humanity. In nature - diversity rules. A diversity of life has proven to be a key element of evolution and the survival of life on Earth. The more we understand about diversity in nature and how to protect it, the better off we will be.

Faced with a growing population of some 6.5 billion people and an explosive rise in the demand for energy and natural resources, the planet's life diversity is under assault at all levels, from the number of species on the planet (species diversity), to the number of different populations with a species (population diversity), to the variation within populations (genetic diversity). Although most of our focus tends to be on species diversity, population and genetic diversity are also extremely important to the health of an ecosystem.

For example, a recent study out of the University of Toronto found that genetic diversity within a plant species can have the same effect as species diversity when it comes to influencing the variety of life in an ecological community. For the study, researchers planted clusters of evening primrose at field sites, some of which were a monoculture of one genetic variation, others of which contained a number of genetic variations. They found that the most diverse clusters attracted 17 percent more species of insects, spiders, and other arthropods.

Again, however, the skeptic might ask, "Great, so greater genetic diversity means more bugs; so what?" Well, on a large scale, this diversity of life on Earth underpins many of the ecosystems services we need to survive. Microorganisms in our soil, for example, help make it fertile, while microorganisms in our oceans provide us with the oxygen we need to breathe. For humans, these services are essential. They are priceless. Preventing the degradation of these services is therefore essential.



Of course, humans don't set out to harm ecosystem services. Instead, we do harm on an incremental scale, site by site, ecosystem by ecosystem. That makes the impacts less obvious — especially when we don't understand how species and processes interact with one another in the first place. Fortunately, some ecosystem services take place at a scale small enough to measure with a dollar value. A recent study in Costa Rica found that preserving forest fragments around coffee plantations could boost crop yields and increase income. Researchers found that the forest offered a refuge for bee species, which helped pollinate coffee plants. Plants closer to the forest received more pollen from these bees, more often, than did plants further away. As a result, plants near the forest yielded 20 percent more beans. So what's the big deal about finding fish in the middle of the ocean? It may not have been in the news stories, but it's all part of the big puzzle of understanding the diversity of life on Earth, how we benefit from it, and how we can protect it. And that is a pretty big deal indeed.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION DEFERS ROADLESS DECISION UNTIL AFTER ELECTION

Contact: Heidi Valetkevitch, 202-205-1089, U.S. Forest Service

Date: 9/8/04

The Bush administration has extended the comment period through November 15, 2004 for the proposed rule to revise regulations concerning the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, thereby delaying a final decision on whether to allow road building and logging on 58 million acres of national forest where both

now are prohibited. U.S. Agriculture Department officials said the delay came at the request of groups seeking to comment on the proposed rule change. The proposed rule would allow governors to petition the Secretary of Agriculture to establish or adjust management actions in forest plans for inventoried roadless areas within their state. The complete release can be viewed at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2004/releases/09/roadless-rule.shtml>.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS, NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION ACT FOR 2005

Dear Bird Conservation Colleague:

We are pleased to announce our 2005 Request for Proposals under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. The Act establishes a matching grants program to fund projects that promote the conservation of these birds in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Projects may include activities to benefit bird populations and their habitats, research and monitoring, law enforcement, and outreach and education. All grant requests must be matched by partner funds at least 3:1. Partner funds from a U.S. federal source may be involved in the project, but are not eligible as match.

Congress appropriated \$4 million for the grants program in Fiscal Year 2004. The FY 2005 appropriation has not yet been determined.

Please refer to our Web site <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov>, and click on Neotropical Birds Grants Program for additional information and application materials. Proposals must be sent electronically to us by December 3, 2004. Please pass this message on to your colleagues, especially those in Latin America and the Caribbean. We hope to hear from you in December.

Best Regards,

**Division of Bird Habitat Conservation
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Bird Habitat Conservation
4401 North Fairfax Drive, MBSP 4075
Arlington, Virginia 22203
Phone: 703-358-1784
Fax: 703-358-2282**

COMPREHENSIVE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

There is little more than one year remaining for states to complete the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies required by Congress under the State Wildlife Grants program. Some states have made good progress on their strategies, while others are just beginning the process. The term "Wildlife" in the title is inclusive of fish. The required elements include coordination, implementation, review, and revision of the strategy with Federal, State, and local agencies and Indian tribes that manage significant land and water areas within the State, or administer programs that significantly affect the conservation of identified species and habitats.

The attached letter was jointly prepared by the Chief's Office and IAFWA to encourage Forest Service and state fish and wildlife personnel to work together to complete and implement the strategies. Seize opportunities to work in partnership with your state fish and game colleagues – **Bill Lorenz, Assistant National Fisheries Program Leader, U.S. Forest Service, Washington, DC.**

File Code: 2600/4000



To: State Fish and Wildlife Directors and Forest Service Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area and IITF Directors

Date: May 6, 2004

Re: Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies: Opportunities for Partnerships between State Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Forest Service



State fish and wildlife agencies and the Forest Service share an important mission as stewards of our nation's natural resources. The development of Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies, required by Congress under the State Wildlife Grants program, presents a historic opportunity for the state agencies and the Forest Service to work together to advance their shared resource management goals.

The State Wildlife Grants program was created by Congress in 2001, to provide expanded federal support for wildlife conservation. The program builds on a history of very successful federal-state wildlife conservation partnerships, including the 1937 Wildlife Restoration Act (the Pittman-Robertson Act), and the 1950 Sport Fish Restoration Act (the Dingell-Johnson Act). Like these successful laws, the State Wildlife Grants program provides funding to state agencies to support on-the-ground conservation projects. The overarching goal of the program is to prevent wildlife from declining to the point of becoming threatened or endangered.

In many ways, the State Wildlife Grants program is ushering in a new era of fish and wildlife management. Under this program, states now have a better opportunity to fulfill their mission to conserve all wildlife species while optimizing wildlife-related recreation and education. In only a few years, states have already made great strides in restoring and conserving the diversity of fish and wildlife by investing in a wide variety of on-the-ground projects to study and conserve previously overlooked species.

In order to receive the State Wildlife Grants funds, each state is required to submit a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by October 2005. Each state's strategy will identify priority wildlife species and habitat, assess threats to their survival, and identify long-term conservation actions. While state fish and wildlife agencies are leading the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy development process, the aim is to create a strategic program for conserving wildlife, not just a plan for a state agency. Once completed, the strategies will provide an essential foundation for the future of wildlife conservation, and a stimulus to engage the states, federal agencies and other conservation partners to strategically think about their individual and coordinated roles in prioritizing conservation efforts in each state.

Both the states and the Forest Service stand to benefit from the exchange of information about wildlife and habitat resources, as well as management goals and priorities. Specific areas for potential cooperation include, the eight required elements:

- Data and information on fish and wildlife, and habitat occurrence and condition. Information gaps are a constant challenge to both state agencies and the Forest Service. The Comprehensive

Wildlife Conservation Strategy process gives the states and the Forest Service the opportunity to share data and improve the information they rely on for effective management decisions.

- Data and information on wildlife population processes and cause-effect linkages between fish and wildlife and their habitats. Managing populations depends on understanding the key processes that link them with habitat condition. Forest Service and state agency wildlife research elucidates these linkages so we can predict the effects of habitat management and other changes and disturbances on wildlife populations.
- Management objectives and priorities. Increasingly, we are learning that effective resource management needs to work across jurisdictional and political boundaries. An effective statewide Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy will need to draw on and integrate the management goals and priorities of other resource managers, including the Forest Service. When completed, the strategies will also be a useful source of information for Forest Service planning and management decisions.
- Expertise and experience in implementation and monitoring. States and the Forest Service are learning that effective monitoring programs are essential to the long-term success of conservation actions. Monitoring must be cost-effective and designed to collect statistically valid information and analyses that can be used by resource agencies to make management decisions. The strategy development process presents an opportunity for states and the Forest Service to share ideas about monitoring and develop common approaches that will facilitate the exchange of information on both sides.
- Public outreach and involvement. Effective engagement of diverse stakeholders is critical to the development and implementation of conservation and management actions. By sharing their experience and resources in public involvement, the states and the Forest Service can discover new approaches to stakeholder engagement and benefit from each other's existing relationships with key constituencies.

Additional information on the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies is available on the Teaming with Wildlife web site <http://www.teaming.com>. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact Dave Chadwick on the IAFWA staff at (202) 624-5429 or by email at chadwick@sso.org.

We urge state fish and wildlife agency and Forest Service personnel to work together in the completion and implementation of the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies. Working together, we can make a difference for America's fish and wildlife resources.

/s/ John Baughman
JOHN BAUGHMAN
Executive Vice President, IAFWA

/s/ Sally Collins (for)
DALE N. BOSWORTH
Chief, Forest Service

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM GETS NEW LIFE

(Excerpt from the Outdoor News Bulletin, Wildlife Management Institute, Volume 58, Number 8, August 17, 2004, Richard E. McCabe, Editor)

Suite 700, 1146 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-371-1808, Fax: 202-408-5059
WMI Website <http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/>

No program in history has done more for landscape-level conservation of soil, water and wildlife habitat on farmland, while offering producers a significant and stable source of income, than the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). In 2002, Congress increased the acreage cap to 39.2 million acres because it believed that CRP has been very popular with landowners, as evidenced by the demand for land enrollment often exceeding availability by a 3:1 ratio.

CRP not only reduces soil erosion and improves water quality, but it also provides habitat for many species of wildlife across the country. It has been important where cropland had replaced grassland on marginal soils. In the US Prairie Pothole Region (which includes portions of Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota and Montana) 56 million acres (62%) of the original 90 million acres of native grassland have been converted to other land uses. The 4.7 million acres of CRP within this landscape have helped to recapture the wildlife, soil, and water quality values of native grasslands on this landscape, but more grassland restoration through CRP is needed to achieve a level of sustainability for these public benefits.

In 2007, 16 million acres under CRP contract will expire. Another 6 million acres will follow in 2008, then 4 million in 2009 and 2 million in 2010. These facts, coupled with the need to prepare for the next Farm Bill, which is scheduled for 2007, has created much concern within the conservation community. During writing of the 2002 Farm Bill, there was concern that CRP was crippling local economies. These claims were founded on the assumption that idle land would translate into a decreasing demand for farming equipment, seed, fertilizer, pesticide and generally fewer dollars in local economies. Various studies have documented that few of these assumptions were correct or that the concerns materialized.

CRP has been blamed for the human population decline of rural America, by taking land out of production. Upon examination of the data, it is clear that rural population decline and decline in the number of farms across the Great Plains started decades before CRP ever entered the picture. In the case of North Dakota, the decline in farm numbers started in the 1930s and actually has slowed since CRP introduction in 1986. There is no CRP-type program just across the border in Prairie Canada, yet declining farm numbers and rural populations also are occurring in that region. These data indicate that factors other than CRP are driving the reductions in farm numbers and rural populations, and it is possible that CRP is helping to reduce this trend. The USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS), in its February 2004 Report to Congress, entitled The Conservation Reserve Program: Economic and Social Impacts on Rural Counties, found that post-1985 population trends in rural counties were largely unaffected by high levels of CRP enrollment.

CRP has helped many farmers diversify their income sources, by incorporating grass agriculture and recreation-based businesses into their operations. Some have decided to use CRP to help make the transition from cropping to ranching. Hundreds of farmers in the Dakotas and Iowa have restored formerly drained wetlands within their CRP tracts. Many others are using available incentive programs to install grazing systems on expiring CRP. Others are using CRP payments to stabilize their financial situation and to pay off debt. As of May 2003, portions of more than 400,000 farms have enrolled in CRP across the nation. CRP remains particularly popular in prairie states such as Texas, Kansas, Nebraska

and Minnesota, where portions of over 20,000 farms in each of these states have enrolled in CRP. It is quite obvious that farmers and ranchers believe the CRP fits handily into their operations.

United States taxpayers are benefiting from cleaner air and improved water quality, because CRP removes greenhouse gases from the atmosphere and reduces soil erosion and nutrient runoff into our waterways. Increasing wildlife populations are helping to diversify income sources for farmers who are responding to strong demand for fee hunting opportunities by operating hunting-related businesses. Many producers also have opened up the land they have enrolled in CRP to public access for hunting and fishing, thus improving the relationship among landowners, state fish and wildlife agencies, fish and game law enforcement officials, and the hunting and fishing public.

The Economic Research Service report to Congress conservatively estimated the value of selected wildlife-related activities attributable to CRP to be in excess of \$700 million per year. Instead of CRP being viewed as contributing to the decline of rural America, it holds promise to help restore quality natural landscapes around which new and diversified service sector and small business jobs can be built. A severe decline in acres enrolled in CRP, such as the 28 million acres associated with expiring contracts in 2007 to 2010, may have drastic economic and ecological effects on farming and ranching.

The conservation community met with President George Bush and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman twice in the last eight months, and asked them to make sure CRP remains a viable program into the future. In August, President Bush and Secretary Veneman announced that the USDA would fully implement President Bush's directive to sustain the environmental benefits of the CRP by offering early re-enrollments and contract extensions for acres that begin expiring in 2007. President Bush directed USDA to ensure that vital conservation under the program continues. His directive underscores a commitment to full enrollment of CRP up to 39.2 million acres. Secretary Veneman announced dates for CRP general sign-up and invited public comments on other issues essential to the future of the program.

The President also launched two new important conservation initiatives to protect and increase wildlife and wetlands. One new initiative will create 250,000 acres of habitat for the northern bobwhite. The other new initiative will create 250,000 acres of wetlands and playa lakes in non floodplain areas, which are vital habitats for species such as upland ducks, pheasants and sandhill cranes (see article in next issue).

More detailed information on CRP and the general sign-up (August 30th through September 24, 2004) is available at local Farm Service Administration (FSA) offices and on FSA's website at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/daftp/cepd/crpinfo.htm>.

The Federal Register notice seeking public comment on CRP also is available on FSA's website and at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>. Comments on the issues must be received in writing by 120 days after the date published in the Federal Register. Comments may be submitted in writing or electronically via the means provided in the notice-Terry Riley.

FARM BILL CHANGES TO BENEFIT PLAYA LAKES

Playa lakes are getting long-deserved attention thanks to a recent push for more wetlands protection under the Farm Bill. In an address to Minnesota farmers this week, President Bush directed the U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement the new Wetlands Restoration Initiative. The initiative aims to restore up to 250,000 acres of wetlands and playa lakes through the Farm Bill's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Of those acres, 56,600 will be allocated to Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas where more than 60,000 playa lakes occur.

For more information contact:

Debbie Slobe
Playa Lakes Joint Venture
303-926-0777

See full story: <http://www.pljv.org/newsarchive/NewsReleases/release080604.html>

NATIONAL WILDLIFE TURKEY FEDERATION SUPPORTS U.S. OLYMPIC SHOOTING TEAM

August 27, 2004

For more information, contact James Powell or Allison Kotowski
803-637-3106



The National Wild Turkey Federation, an official partner of the U.S. Olympic Shooting Team, is proud of the gold medals Kim Rhode and Matthew Emmons are bringing home to the United States. On Sunday, August 23, Kim Rhode won a gold medal in women's double trap. Monday, August 24, Matthew Emmons won a gold medal in the men's 50-meter rifle prone.

"It's an amazing feeling," said the 35-year-old Rhode, of El Monte, Calif. "I don't think it's quite sunk in yet that I've won. It usually hits me when I get home." Over the last 10 years, the Federation has donated \$100,000 to the U.S. Olympic Shooting team to help ensure our rich hunting and shooting traditions are preserved for future generations.

"The NWTF is rooting for the shooters who are taking part in this year's Olympics," said Rob Keck, NWTF CEO. "The Federation has a special partnership with the U.S. Shooting Team, which makes it even more exciting for our members here in the United States."

2004 U.S. Olympic Shooting Team Roster: Mike Anti-Fort Benning, GA, Lance Bade-Colorado Springs, CO, Sarah Blakeslee-Colorado Springs, CO, Elizabeth Callahan-Upper Marlboro, MD, Emily Caruso-Colorado Springs, CO, Shawn Duloher-Columbus, GA, Glenn Eller-Houston TX Matt Emmons-Colorado Springs, CO, Bret Erickson-Buena Vista, GA, Todd Graves-Cusseta, GA, Morgan Hicks-Murray, KY Hattie Johnson- Buena Vista, GA, Collyn Loper-Indian Springs, AL, Jason Parker-Cusseta, GA, Kim Rhode-El Monte, CA, Connie Smotek-Lyons, TX, Rebecca Snyder-Colorado Springs, CO, Darryl Szarenski-Seale, AL, Jason Turner-Colorado Springs, CO.

Headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colo., the USA Shooting team is responsible for training and selecting shooting teams to represent the United States at events such as World Cups, World Shooting Championships, Pan American Games and Olympic Games. The 2004 Olympic Games in Athens will continue through August 29.

To receive more information about the NWTF and about its support for the shooting sports industry, call 1-800-THE-NWTF or visit the web site at www.nwtf.org.

REMARKABLE RAIL DISCOVERED "JUST IN TIME"

August 17, 2004

Excerpt from

http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2004/08/calayan_rail.html

Image by: Carmela Espanola.

"The discovery of the Calayan Rail is a wonderful demonstration that the world has much to reveal to us yet. However, these newly discovered species are nearly always at risk from human influence, because most are on islands or mountains, where their ranges are naturally quite small.

The Calayan Rail is another species that we have discovered just in time, another case for long-term care by human society." —Nigel Collar, BirdLife International

Exactly one hundred years after the last visit by an ornithologist, a team of bird, mammal, reptile and amphibian specialists arrived in May this year on the island of Calayan, one of the Babuyan Islands in the northernmost part of the Philippines archipelago. There, they made the remarkable discovery of a new species of rail, which they have named the Calayan Rail *Gallirallus calayanensis*. (The formal description appears in *Forktail* 20: 1–7, published by the Oriental Bird Club.)



Like its closest relative, the Okinawa Rail *G. okinawae* from Okinawa Island, 1,000 km to the north in the Ryukyu Islands, Japan, the new species appears to be almost flightless. The two species closely resembles one another in size and structure.

The Babuyan Islands Expedition was jointly led by Carl Oliveros and Genevieve Broad, who had both previously worked on a WWF project to conserve humpback whales in the waters around the island. They had the support of the Mayor of Calayan, who wants the island and its surrounding waters to be made a protected area. Just before noon on 11 May 2004, Carmella Espanola was walking through a clearing and heard unfamiliar calls that drew her attention to a group of four rails in the undergrowth. Shortly afterwards she watched two birds cross the trail and begin feeding. They were all dark, with orange-red bill and legs and appeared to be the same size as Barred Rail *G. torquatus*, a common species on the island.

Carmella took notes and photographs, and recorded the calls. But her account of the sighting had Des Allen, an expedition member and expert on oriental birds completely stumped. Next day he went to the same area, and heard unfamiliar "loud, rasping trumpeting calls", interspersed with the calls Carmella had recorded. He played back her recording, and a bird answered it and later he saw the unmistakable silhouette of a medium-sized rail. Returning towards camp, Des heard the calls again in an area of primary forest. This time, playback attracted a rail to within two meters of where he stood. From the uniform dark plumage, red legs and medium-length red bill, Des knew that this was something unknown. Later that day, he made a short video-recording of one of the rails, and showed it to the other team members. Over subsequent days, the team observed the birds many times. In fact, the number of sightings indicated that the rail was quite common in the area. Discussions with local people established the rail was well known to them, and had a local name of "piding"

The rail appears to be restricted to forests on coralline limestone areas, which probably make up less than half the island's surface, and the extent of their suitable habitat is likely to be much less than 100 km², and could be smaller than 10 km². Des suspects they are abundant but localized. Although the rails are occasionally caught in chicken snares, they are not directly hunted. Work to build a road around the island from Poblacion to the center has already begun. These roads may encourage the spread of settlements, and people will bring introduced predators — cats, dogs and rats — along with them.

On the basis of its small currently known population and range size, the Calayan Rail appears to qualify as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of threatened species. It is likely to become more threatened in the future, and action is needed to pre-empt potential threats to the bird and its habitat. The expedition team plans further research to determine the habitat requirements, distribution and population of the Calayan Rail. They will work closely with the local community to minimize threats, and encourage long-term initiatives to protect the forest. Genevieve Broad said the Calayan islanders are concerned about the future of the island's environment and natural resources. "I hope this discovery will bring the recognition these islands deserve, as an important site of biological diversity," she said.

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY AWARDED GRANT FROM GORDON AND BETTY MOORE FOUNDATION

August 12, 2004
Washington, DC



The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has been awarded a \$2.37 million grant by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation under their Andes-Amazon Initiative. The grant will support ABC's Conserving Biodiversity in the Tropical Andes Program, enhancing the protection of a series of large protected areas in Peru and Ecuador via the implementation of management programs at strategically-located, privately-owned reserves. The grant will also support strengthening the quality of science and conservation of cloud forest habitats in the southern Andes of Peru and northern Bolivia. The grant will be implemented in collaboration with ABC's established partners in the region including Fundación Jocotoco and Asociación Ecosistemas Andinos. "The tropical Andes present some of the most intriguing challenges and opportunities in modern biodiversity conservation: incredible species diversity and endemism coupled with a high threat level. Despite constant pressure from land clearance, the Andes-Amazon region still contains some of the world's most pristine montane and tropical lowland rainforest wilderness areas. We are delighted to partner with the Moore Foundation and local conservation groups to tackle some of the highest conservation priorities for birds and biodiversity in the world" said ABC President, Dr. George H. Fenwick.

ABC is a U.S.-based 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to conserving wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. ABC is head quartered in Virginia, with offices in ten states. ABC has more than 300 partner organizations throughout the Americas primarily through its leadership roles in the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, Partners in Flight, the Bird Conservation Alliance, the National Pesticide Coalition, and the Alliance for Zero Extinction. ABC was recently rated one of the best-managed small charities in the U.S. by the independent group "Charity Navigator," and given their highest rating for fiscal management. For more information visit: www.abcbirds.org, or contact Mike Parr on 202-452-1535 ext. 204.

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation was established in November 2000, by Intel co-founder Gordon Moore and his wife Betty. The Foundation funds outcome-based projects that will measurably improve the quality of life by creating positive outcomes for future generations. Grant making is concentrated in initiatives that support the Foundation's principal areas of concern: environmental conservation, science, higher education, and the San Francisco Bay Area. **For more information contact Mike Parr, Vice President for Program Development, American Bird Conservancy, Phone: 202-452-1535 ext. 204, E-mail: mparr@abcbirds.org.**

Coming Events

INVITATION TO EXHIBIT AT THE FOREST SERVICE CENTENNIAL CONGRESS 2005

Be an exhibitor at the Centennial Congress. Join in the commemoration of 100 years of caring for our natural legacy, our National Forests, and a look into the future of the Forest Service for the next 100 years. Reach out to the conservation leaders, key industries, non-profits and form relationships with current agency leaders. Take advantage of the ability to reach a wide variety of people who are interested in information, services, and products that are available today and in the future.



Important Details about Exhibiting

Dates: January 3-6, 2005

Location: Washington Grand Hyatt, Constitution Ballroom CDE, Washington, D.C.

Logistics

Booth Fee is \$1,000.00, 10'x10' booth with draped supports, carpeted exhibit hall, aisle maintenance, basic registration for two representatives, 24-hour perimeter security, booth identification sign, one six foot draped table, two chairs, waste basket, table top space is \$250.

Exhibitor May Include

Travel/Tourism
Wildlife/Fisheries
Outdoor Industry
Forest Products Industry
Research and Development
Urban and Community Forestry
Public Land Management and Conservation Interests
Technology/Computer Services
Fire Management Services and Equipment Conservation Education
Forestry/Range/Wildlife Geology/Minerals related interests
Natural resource management and tools and equipment

A short statement of the exhibitor's organization, services, or products must be submitted at the time of deposit. This statement will be used on the website, and a program to be distributed at the Congress.

Who's expected to attend? 500 delegates including: Congressional leaders, representatives from agency partners and interests, leading academicians, industry leaders, state and local government representatives, media, Forest Service leadership.

For more information contact: Teresa Fraser, 530-647-5392, tfraser@fs.fed.us.

NORTH AMERICAN MOOSE CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP

The 41st annual North American Moose Conference and Workshop will occur in Whitefish, Montana from May 22 – 26, 2005.

The U.S. Forest Service Region 1 and the Flathead National Forest will co-sponsor a one-day field trip, Tuesday May 24th up the North Fork of the Flathead River to view a series of recent and past fires and moose habitat. There is not much on the website now but more specific information on the details will be available later @ <http://fwp.state.mt.us/hunting/namc/default.html>.

The conference is located at a great facility, Grouse Mountain Lodge, with great room rates for the participants. **For information contact: Steve Anderson, 406-758-5255, sjanderson01@fs.fed.us.**

NATIONAL GRASSLAND BIRD CONFERENCE, SOCORRO, NEW MEXICO, NOVEMBER 2- 4, 2004

Image from: http://www.ctbirding.org/grasshopper_sparrow_data.htm

I would like to invite you to a National Grassland Bird Conference to be held at the Holiday Inn in Socorro, New Mexico during the first week of November. The draft agenda, subject to some future modification, is attached. The conference will focus on the needs of grassland birds on our National Grasslands, wintering grassland birds, and the Forest Service's international partnership with Mexico, Canada, and TNC. Information on logistics will be forthcoming. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible - John Sidle



A reminder if you plan to attend, you will have to vote by absentee ballot.

John G. Sidle
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<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/nebraska/gpng>

National Grassland Bird Conference Agenda

Tuesday, November 2

8:00-8:15	Introductions
Welcome	Harv Forsgren, Regional Forester, Region 3
8:15-8:45	Grassland Ecology, Southern Great Plains--Paulette Ford
8:45-9:15	The Riparian Component of Grasslands—Deborah Finch
9:15-9:45	Effects of Management Practices on Grassland Birds – Douglas Johnson
9:45-10:15	Assessing Mountain Plover Habitat – Dan Uresk
10:15-10:40	Break for Birds, Fort Pierre and Land and Resource Management Plans – Greg Schenbeck
11:30-12:00	Robel Pole: A Unified Approach to Monitoring Grassland Bird Habitat
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:45	More Notes on Grassland Structural Requirements – David Hanni
1:45-2:30	Monitoring Grassland Bird Populations: Point Counts – David Hanni
2:30-3:00	Monitoring Grassland Birds at Thunder Basin National Grassland – Doug Falkner

- 3:00-3:30 Break
- 3:30-4:00 Grassland Bird Populations on Little Missouri – Dan Svingen
- 4:00-4:30 The Long-billed Curlew – Stephanie Jones
- 4:30-5:00 Discussion

Wednesday, November 3

RMRS Grassland and Riparian Avian Research
Sevilletta National Wildlife Refuge Tour

Thursday, November 4

- 8:00-8:30 Our Western Hemisphere Connection – Bob Ford and Jack Capp
- 8:30-9:15 Mexico, Forest Service and TNC Partnership Update – Bob McCready
- 9:15-9:45 The Ferruginous Hawk Connection to Mexico – Jim Watson
- 9:45-10:15 The View From Mexico
- 10:15-10:45 Break
- 10:45-11:15 Wintering Grassland Birds
- 11:15-12:00 Partners in Flight and Grassland Birds
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch
- 1:00-1:30 The Role of Joint Ventures—Playa Lakes
- 1:30-2:00 Sonoran JV
- 2:00-2:30 Incentives for Grassland Landowners—Ted Toombs
- 2:30-3:00 Discussion on International Cooperation
- 3:00-3:30 Break
- 3:30-4:30 Action Items

Training, Tools and Information

AMPHIBIAWEB: A SITE INSPIRED BY GLOBAL AMPHIBIAN DECLINES



AmphibiaWeb, a site inspired by global amphibian declines, is an online system that allows free access to information on amphibian biology and conservation. AmphibiaWeb offers ready access to taxonomic information for every recognized species of amphibian in the world. Species descriptions, life history information, conservation status, literature references, photos and range maps are available for many species and are being added to regularly by specialists and volunteers from around the world. In addition, AmphibiaWeb provides easy and fast access to museum specimen data from large herpetological collections. We hope AmphibiaWeb will encourage a shared vision for the study of amphibian declines and the conservation of remaining amphibians. Please see AmphibiaWeb at <http://elib.cs.berkeley.edu/aw/>, for more details.

BEAR-PROOFED DUMPSTER DESIGN

Good news and hot off the press!

Here is the link for the AutoCAD drawings (bear-proofing dumpsters) for which you all have been waiting:
<http://fswweb.sdtcd.wo.fs.fed.us/programs/rec/recreation.html>. Please see



our web page for links to other documents regarding bear-proofing. Thank you for your patience! Marty

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ABOUT THE INVASIVE SPECIES ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

Which non-native species pose the most serious threats to native species and ecosystems? To answer this question, NatureServe, in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, has developed a protocol for assessing, categorizing, and listing non-native plants according to their impacts on native biodiversity. The protocol is designed to focus specifically on the effects non-native species have on native plants, animals, and natural communities and to make the process of assessing non-native species objective, transparent, and systematic. The protocol is intended to be applied to species as they occur over large areas, such as nations, ecoregions, provinces, or states.

NatureServe has recently begun to use the protocol to assess the approximately 3,500 non-native vascular plants recorded as occurring outside of cultivation in the United States.

For more information visit: <http://www.natureserve.org/getData/plantData.jsp>

LOOKING AT BIRDS THROUGH CREATIVE EYES

By Doug Stewart, National Wildlife Federation Newsletter Online



David Sibley's innovative books on species identification and behavior have become must-reading for many American birders; what's behind his passion for the feathered world?

Like Roger Tory Peterson's classic bird field guide, first published in 1934, Sibley conceived, wrote and illustrated his first book by himself. He admires Peterson's (as a boy, Sibley pored over it under his covers at night), but in his own field guide he wanted more pictures, more plumages, more birds in flight, more songs and calls. Of the book he produced, he says, "This is the field guide I always wished I had in my own library."

His thoroughness is astonishing. His book has an average of eight full-color paintings for each species. Hawks and eagles are shown in flight from different angles, gulls in their first, second and third winter plumages, storm-petrels soaring, flapping, landing, swimming, even "foot-pattering" on the water when feeding. His notes on bird sounds include songs, warning cries, flight and display calls, and the begging cries of nestlings. In his paintings, Sibley sought to show what's distinctive about each bird without exaggerating their markings. "I tried to simplify my illustrations just enough to eliminate extraneous details, like individual feathers, while keeping the important details. What I tried to show is what you actually see at a distance through binoculars."

Sibley has probably spent years of his life looking contentedly through binoculars. Many, if not most, people who spot a bird, of course, are hard-pressed to find it in the field guide they're holding before the creature flies away. Trying to draw in detail a bird perched briefly on a distant branch, not just copying its

photograph (or visiting an aviary), would seem to be infinitely harder. Sibley explains that each illustration he makes is really a composite of many hours of observations spread over many years.

With its 810 species of bird life, The Sibley Guide weighs more than two pounds and fits more comfortably in a backpack or bookshelf than in even a very large coat pocket. Sibley envisioned the readers as experienced birders who would use it to bone up at home or to confirm sightings they'd already made. He's been pleasantly surprised that beginning birders seem to be snapping it up.

The book's timing is excellent: Bird-watching is now a mainstream activity. The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment for 2000 estimated that 70 million Americans annually enjoy watching and identifying birds, more than triple the number of birders 20 years ago.

For the full story visit

<http://www.nationalwildlife.org/nationalwildlife/article.cfm?articleId=759&issueId=61>

PRESENTATIONS MADE AT THE SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY'S ANNUAL MEETING

Photo by Karen Wattenmaker

Special Section

- Wildfire and Conservation in the Western United States - http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/doi/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2004.600_1.x/full/
- Forging a Science-Based National Forest Fire Policy: <http://cerc.columbia.edu/scb2004/pdfs/Franklin-2.pdf>
- Scientific findings require a new vision for successful wildfire preparation <http://www.conbio.org/Media/Fire/>



NEWLY REDESIGNED NATIONAL FIRE PLAN (NFP) WEBSITE

On July 26, 2004, the newly redesigned National Fire Plan (NFP) website, www.fireplan.gov, was released sporting an entirely new look. With more people than ever turning to the internet for their information needs, having a site that is well organized, highly informative, and customer service oriented was a key objective in the redesign effort. During the last four months, Forest Service and Department of Interior (DOI) representatives have overseen significant revisions of the site to arrive at an end product that meets the objectives. Site visitors will now be able to locate a variety of key NFP information within two clicks from the home page. A great example of the reorganized information is the second link on the menu bar titled, "NFP Helping Your Community." Under this popular link, site visitors will find information and links on grants available through the Rural Fire Assistance (DOI), State Fire Assistance, Volunteer Fire Assistance, and Firewise all in one location.

The slide show and "Top Story" areas are two new features designed to have the photos and information routinely refreshed. Currently, the Top Story area provides wildland fire information which is updated daily. In the future, visitors will find information on new initiatives, significant NFP accomplishments, or event announcements in the "Top Story" block. The future slide shows will depict a variety of wildland fire, prescribed fire, hazardous fuels treatment, and community involvement photos. Success stories will continue to be a forum for sharing the success of NFP projects from across the nation.

New information and links on the site will evolve over time. One feature that is currently under construction is the section entitled Innovative Technologies. When complete, this section will serve as an information exchange for a host of technologies being explored and developed in support of NFP activities. New links to sites will routinely be added and, in the very near future, a companion site, translated to Spanish will be available.

Please take the time to visit the new National Fireplan website and feel free to submit your comments through the site's user feedback form.

AVIAN VISUAL COGNITION

By Dr. Robert G. Cook

August 10, 2004

See <http://www.pigeon.psy.tufts.edu/avc/toc.htm>, for the full story.

Welcome to the brave new world of electronic publishing. Avian Visual Cognition provides a comprehensive and systematic survey of one area of modern comparative research and represents the first multimedia cyberbook about animal cognition available in an electronic format. Because of the Internet, we are in the midst of an information revolution that is transforming virtually every aspect of the world, fundamentally changing what we mean by information and how it is shared. Science is no more immune to this trend than any other human endeavor. In fact, it can be argued that scientific information is ideally suited to this particular medium. This cyberbook is an attempt to advance this activity and provide a new direction to the public dissemination of scientific information in my area of psychology.

MONITORING TRENDS IN BAT POPULATIONS

The publication, "Monitoring trends in bat populations of the United States and territories: problems and prospects", is now available at <http://www.fort.usgs.gov/default.asp>. This 274-page USGS publication is the result of the bat monitoring workshop held in Estes Park, Colorado, in 2001.

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<http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/tes/index>

MONITORING NOCTURNAL BIRD VOCALIZATIONS

Johnson, J. B., D. Saenz, D. B. Burt, and R. N. Conner. 2002. An automated technique for monitoring nocturnal avian vocalizations. *Bulletin Texas Ornithology Soc.* 35(2): 24-29.

Vacancies

OUTREACH - USFS REGIONAL WILDLIFE PROGRAM MANAGER, OGDEN, UTAH

The Intermountain Region is planning to advertise one position on the Bio-Physical Resources Staff (Wildlife, Fish, Soils, Water, Minerals and Geology) in the near future. This leadership position, Regional Wildlife Program Manager, Wildlife Biologist GS-0486-13, is part of a regional team that manages and

coordinates a complex wildlife program across the FS Intermountain West. We are looking for a creative, energetic individual. This is a highly visible position that will interface with all levels in the Forest Service and other government, state and private organizations. The position will be located in the Regional Office in Ogden, UT. (www.ogden-ut.com)

Vacancy Announcement: The vacancy announcement for this position will be posted on the U.S. Government's official website for employment opportunities, www.usajobs.opm.gov

Outreach Response: Interested applicants, or those desiring further information, should contact Bill LeVere, the Bio-Physical Resources Director at 801-625-5669 (wlevere@fs.fed.us).

Federal job announcements can be found at:
http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/agency_search.asp

Hotlinks!

Wildlife, Fish and Rare Plants: <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/>
Working with Partners for Bird Conservation <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/>
2004 News Releases: <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2004/releases.shtml>
FS Today Newsletter: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/pao/fs_today/
National Fire Plan: <http://www.fireplan.gov>
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.fs.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>
Landowner Assistance Programs:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/loa/index.shtml>
Forest Service's Annual Fall Foliage Hotline: <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/fallcolors/>

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 provided by the National Forest System Wildlife Program of the USDA Forest Service. Contributions are welcome and should be submitted to Debbie Pressman at dpressman@fs.fed.us or Jina Mariani at jmariani@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."