

Alabama

Wildlife Habitat and Management Office



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Photos (top to bottom)

The National Wildlife Refuge system is a national resource of incalculable value and provides the critical land base which serves as the cornerstone of the Service's ecosystem management approach. Providing biological assistance to refuges is a critical function of the Auburn Wildlife and Habitat Management Office.

Providing nesting and wintering habitats for a wide variety of migratory birds, such as these snowy egrets, is a principle activity of this station.

Prescribed burning is an extremely important habitat management activity on both national wildlife refuges and private lands in the Southeast. This not only provides immediate improvement of habitat for many species of wildlife but also reduces vegetative fuel loads which can result in dangerous wildfires.

Endangered species management is an integral function of the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Red Wolf Recovery Project is a prime example of our attempts to restore the indigenous wildlife of the Southeastern United States.

Station Facts

- Established: 1986.
- FY 02 budget: \$114,000.
- Station staff: two FTEs.

Station Goals

- Conserve, protect and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats by providing leadership and assistance to agencies, groups and individuals in Georgia and Alabama involved in the management of Federal trust resources, especially the national wildlife refuge system.

- Provide biological consultation and overview of the national wildlife refuges in Georgia and Alabama to help meet wildlife resource objectives and needs especially in regard to migratory birds and threatened and endangered species.
- Provide leadership and serve as primary coordinator for all national migratory bird surveys and other migratory bird activities such as waterfowl banding and neo-tropical bird monitoring programs conducted in Georgia and Alabama.
- Preserve and restore wildlife habitats and populations on private lands in Georgia and Alabama by providing leadership and active participation in all federal and state private lands programs as well as the Fish and Wildlife Service Ecosystem Management Teams.

Services Provided to

- National wildlife refuges.
- Private citizens.
- Federal and state agency clientele.
- Local governments and community groups.
- Other U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service entities.

Activity Highlights

- Provided biological assistance to a total of 14 Southeastern national wildlife refuges and several military bases in the areas of wildlife population and habitat management. This includes conducting complete deer herd health surveys on several district refuges.

- Active involvement in the FWS Ecosystem Management Initiative and leadership provided in the establishment of migratory bird committees in the Northeast Gulf and Altamaha River Ecosystems.
- Coordination and preparation of reports for data collected in the following annual surveys/activities:
 - Mid-winter Waterfowl Survey.
 - Mourning Dove Call Count Survey.
 - Waterfowl Banding Activities.
 - December All-Goose Survey.
- Provided technical assistance in wildlife techniques to several hundred private landowners in Georgia and Alabama since 1986 through the Fish and Wildlife Service “Partners for Fish and Wildlife” and other Federal and state private lands programs such as the Department of Agriculture Wetland Reserve Program.
- Serve as Fish and Wildlife Service liaison with the Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and faculty of Auburn University. Faculty advisor for the Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center at Auburn University. Work closely with personnel of the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study at the University of Georgia in the realm of wildlife disease and parasites.

Questions and Answers

What is the Mobile Bay Joint Venture Project?

The Mobile Bay Joint Venture Project is a cooperative project under the auspices of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the Gulf Coast Joint Venture. This agreement combines the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Coastal Land Trust of Alabama, and Scott Paper Company. These entities have combined their resources to better manage and protect more than 60,000 acres of land in the upper Mobile Bay/Tensas River Delta. The Service provides technical assistance in the areas of waterfowl management practices and silviculture adaptations which preserve and improve wildlife habitats while maintaining a profitable timber operation for Scott Paper Company.

Scott Paper and other landowners have agreed to limit the size of clearcuts to reduce immediate impacts on the environment. New clearcuts will also be shaped to increase the valuable “edge effect” for wildlife and large hollow trees and dead “snags” will be left standing for woodpeckers and other cavity nesting birds. New roads will be kept well away from drainages and streams and vegetated to reduce erosion. Waterfowl food plants are seeded in appropriate areas and a large-scale wood duck nesting box project is underway. Other lands within the Tensas River bottoms are under consideration for additions to the project.

What is the Ocmulgee River Greenway?

The Ocmulgee River Greenway project is an excellent example of Federal, state, municipal and private organizations combining efforts and resources to preserve one of the few remaining, large tracts of intact bottomland hardwood swamp in central Georgia. This is a cooperative project between the Fish and Wildlife Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, The Trust for Public Lands, and several other public and private groups. These combined efforts have resulted in a North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant of one million dollars to begin acquisition of these lands. The initial grant has been matched by Georgia DNR Rivercare funds to provide an outstanding initiation for this project.

Plans for the area are to eventually acquire approximately 11,000 acres of forested wetlands to be added to the existing and adjacent Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. The partnership’s goal is to protect and manage these lands for diverse wildlife habitats with special emphasis on endangered species, migratory birds, and wetland dependent fish and wildlife that will provide lasting benefits to the public.