



# News Release

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## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Endangered Species Recovery Champion Awards

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Acting Director Rowan Gould today announced the 18 recipients of the Service's 2008 Recovery Champion award. The Recovery Champion award recognizes U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees and their partners for contributions to the recovery of threatened and endangered species in the United States.

"The Recovery Champion award both recognizes the exceptional conservation accomplishments of its honorees and highlights the importance of strong and diverse partnerships in species conservation," said Gould. "Recovery Champions are helping imperiled species regain their place in the natural resources fabric of our country while focusing attention on the importance of conserving our nation's biological heritage for future generations."

The 2008 Recovery Champion honorees are working to benefit a range of endangered and threatened plants and animals. From whooping cranes to mussels, Service employees and partners such as universities, conservation agencies, and private organizations are devoting their resources to a shared mission. Habitat restoration, public awareness campaigns, and species' monitoring programs are just a few examples of this year's Recovery Champion honorees' efforts.

Two of the National Recover Champion award recipients have been honored for their work in the Southwest.

Recipient Jackie Poole has been honored for her work protecting a number of endangered Texas plants. A botanist for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for over 20 years, Poole has worked tirelessly to conserve rare plants. She was honored for a body of work that included her direct involvement with developing and implementing population monitoring protocol for endangered Texas flora including wild-rice, Tobusch fishhook cactus, Texas snowbells, star cactus, and Texas poppy-mallow. Poole's biological knowledge, networking skills, and educational efforts have been instrumental in promoting collaboration between private citizens, public groups, universities, and state and national agencies to recover listed plants. Her role as lead author of the recently published "The Rare Plants of Texas," further supports her efforts to provide information critical to understanding, protecting, and recovering listed plants in Texas.

National Recovery Champion award recipient Tom Stehn has made innumerable outstanding contributions to the recovery of the whooping crane over the past 26 years. A globally endangered species, Stehn has worked to protect this species as the lead Service biologist for on the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Texas – home to the only wild migratory flock of whooping cranes. Stehn’s efforts include: annual collection of population data, serving as the whooping crane recovery team co-leader, being the primary author of the recovery plan, facilitating recovery efforts, and working with a variety of stakeholders and partners to promote whooping crane conservation efforts. Stehn’s tireless efforts in habitat management, conservation, research, and monitoring at the Refuge, as well as his participation in international coordination for all aspects of whooping crane recovery, have contributed tremendously to the success of this flagship endangered species recovery program.

“We are incredibly fortunate to have such capable and dedicated people – both within and outside of the Service – who are so actively committed to conservation,” said the Service’s Southwest Regional Director Benjamin Tuggle. “We are proud of their efforts, and delighted that they have received this recognition for their outstanding stewardship.”

For additional information, please visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Recovery Champion website at: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/recovery/champions/index.html>

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit **www.fws.gov**.

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