

Reporters' Tip Sheet

Ideas for Stories about Midwest Fish and Wildlife Issues

From the boundary waters of Minnesota to the tip of southern Illinois, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Midwest Region works to conserve migratory birds, endangered species, nationally significant fish resources, and manage national wildlife refuge and waterfowl production areas. The Midwest Region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin. Below are ideas for outdoor and environmental writers about the Service's work in the Midwest. To follow up on these topics, contact the outreach coordinator listed.

All Midwest States

Road to Recovery: The Bald Eagle

The road to the recovery of the bald eagle is a conservation success story. Americans have witnessed the recovery of bald eagles since they were listed as an endangered species in 1973. From a low of only 417 nesting pairs in 1963, the bald eagle population in the lower 48 states has grown to a current estimate of 9,789 nesting pairs, the highest count since World War II. The bald eagle's successful recovery is due to cooperative efforts among the Service, other federal agencies, tribes, state and local governments, conservation organizations, universities, corporations and thousands of individual Americans. The Service removed the bald eagle from the list of threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act in all areas except the range of the Sonoran Desert bald eagle population, which remains protected as a threatened species. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (Eagle Act) remains as the primary law protecting bald eagles in other parts of its range and the golden eagle.

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Cycle of Success: Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program

There's a reason the Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program has been called "The Cycle of Success." As part of the Sport Fish program, anglers and other outdoor recreationists pay taxes on the tools of their trade - fishing tackle and gear, motorboat fuel, electric trolling motors - and these taxes fund state conservation efforts to sustain sport fishing. These efforts include habitat improvement, conducting surveys and research, providing boating and fishing access, sport fish stocking, and the increasingly important task of educating the public about aquatic resources. The WSFR program facilitates partnerships between federal and state agencies, which in turn make conservation work around the country possible. WSFR administers more than \$183 million in grants to states and tribes in our eight-state region. For more information on grants supported by the WSFR federal aid program visit

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/FederalAid/>.

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BIG P

The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, or BIGP, is a key program within the Sport Fish Restoration Program. It provides funding for construction of facilities that enhance boating for large (26 ft or over in length) recreational boats. BIGP was authorized by Congress through the Sport Fishing and Boating Safety Act in 1998. The grant funds are generated from a federal excise tax on fishing equipment and motorboat fuels.

BIGP grants are two-tiered. Tier I grants are non-competitive and provide grants of up to \$100,000 to each applying state. Typically, these funds become available in November. From 2000 – 2008, BIGP distributed more than \$6.2 million in non-competitive grants in the eight-state Midwest region. Tier II grants are competitive and assessed by a ranking committee. They offer applicants grants over \$100,000 and awards are usually announced in February. From 2000-2008, BIGP distributed more than \$11.4 million in competitive grants to state agencies in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin. In 2006, Iowa received the largest grant ever awarded, \$3 million.

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Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP): Class of 2008

Fourteen young whooping began their ultralight-led migration from central Wisconsin's Necedah National Wildlife Refuge on Oct. 17, 2008. This is the eighth group of birds to take part in a landmark project led by the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP), an international coalition of public and private groups that is reintroducing this highly



imperiled species in eastern North America, part of its historic range. There are now 68 whooping cranes in the wild in eastern North America thanks to WCEP's efforts.

The four ultralight aircraft and juvenile cranes will be following a new route this year, passing through Wisconsin, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia to reach the birds' wintering habitats at Chassahowitzka and St. Marks National Wildlife Refuges along

Florida's Gulf Coast.

For information on this year's migration, potential flyover opportunities and education opportunities, visit the WCEP Web site at <http://www.bringbackthecranes.org>

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Photo: Young whooping cranes follow ultralight. Courtesy WCEP

The Duck Stamp Story: One stamp. More than 5 million acres. More than \$700 million

Since 1934, sales of Federal Duck Stamps have raised more than \$700 million to acquire habitat for national wildlife refuges in all 50 states. Find out which refuges near you have been purchased in part with Duck Stamp dollars at



<http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/Conservation/conservation.htm>. Then go visit, meet the refuge manager and explore the refuge to see the spectacles of wildlife that Duck Stamp dollars have helped protect. Ninety-eight cents of every dollar generated by the sales of Federal Duck Stamps goes directly to purchase or lease wetlands specifically targets vital breeding habitat within the National Wildlife Refuge System. When you buy a Duck Stamp, you are doing your part to help ensure a bright future for wildlife,

waterfowl and other migratory birds.

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Photo: Winner of 2008 Duck Stamp Contest by Joshua Spies. UFWFS photo

Junior Duck Stamp Program

The Junior Duck Stamp is a pictorial stamp produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to recognize the conservation efforts of young people and support environmental and conservation education programs in the United States. The stamp design is selected from a national art contest administered by the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program. The first place national winner of the art contest graces that year's JDS and is sold by the U.S. Postal Service and Amplex Corporation for \$5. The first stamp, issued in 1993-1994, and was painted by Jason Parsons of Illinois. All proceeds of the stamp are used to fund environmental education programs, award the students for their work, and market the JDS program.

The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program is a dynamic arts curriculum that teaches wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students in kindergarten through high school. The program incorporates scientific and wildlife management principles into a visual arts curriculum with participants completing a JDS design as their visual “term papers”.

Today more than 27,000 students throughout the United States, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands submit entries to a state or territory JDS Contest. The program’s success is due to partnerships with federal and state government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, private businesses, and volunteers who have helped to recognize and honor thousands of teachers and students throughout the United States for their participation in conservation related activities.

For more information, see <http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/JuniorDuckStamps.htm>
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Highlight a National Wildlife Refuge

Each refuge has a unique and interesting set of fish, wildlife, plant and people that make it a special place for Americans to visit. One is located within an hour or so drive of most American's homes.

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Want to Manage Wildlife for a Living?

Meet a new hire in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Midwest Region and follow the education, travel and training it took to land the job.

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Duck's-Eye View of the Prairie Pothole Region

Follow the Regional pilot as he uses an airplane to map habitat, survey easements and estimate wildlife populations across the Midwest and the Continent.

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Marsh Masters

Who do you call when you've got miles of marsh between you and where you need to be? The Marsh Master. This unique piece of equipment allows staff at several refuges to conduct management activities and conduct surveys in hard to get places.

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Air Boats: Not Just for the Bayou

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge and other refuges use air boats for many activities across the Midwest. These boats are used year-round on both water and ice.

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USFWS Special Agents and Wildlife Inspectors

Special Agents in the USFWS conduct a wide variety of undercover operations across the state and the nation. Wildlife Inspectors also inspect wildlife brought into Minneapolis, Detroit and Chicago International Airports from across the world. A look at what these agents encounter over a few days would be very interesting. The illegal wildlife trade is second only to the illegal drug trade.

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Follow a Refuge Law Enforcement Officer

In addition to Special Agents and Inspectors, national wildlife refuges also have resident law enforcement officers who protect the wildlife and habitat (as well as visitors) to national wildlife refuge and waterfowl production areas.

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Hydrokinetic Power and Wildlife

Hydrokinetic projects in major waterways are among the latest endeavors as the United States looks for renewable energy resources. Consisting of turbines installed on the riverbed, hydrokinetic energy has become a focus for energy producers and resource managers. As producers seek permits through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for hydrokinetic projects, the Service is among many resource agencies faced with attempting to coordinate review and identify potential impacts. On the Mississippi River alone, about 60 projects have been proposed. As this potential energy source becomes more attractive, the Service and other resource agencies will be busy assessing impacts on fish and wildlife and other resources. The Service is already looking ahead, hosting a workshop for resource agencies to find ways to coordinate their reviews of hydrokinetic project, and assess impacts.

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Illinois

Mussel Comeback in Illinois

The final environmental assessment for augmentation and reintroduction plan for two Illinois freshwater mussels, the clubshell and northern riffleshell, was completed in August 2008 by the Rock Island Field Office. Both mussels were listed as endangered in 1993 and were believed to be gone from Illinois until discovery of a live clubshell in 2000. The Service, with its partners and the State of Illinois, explored options for releasing clubshells and riffleshells into suitable habitat as one of a number of ongoing efforts to recover the two species.

The clubshell was once found from Michigan to Alabama and from Illinois to West Virginia. The northern riffleshell occurred throughout the Ohio River Valley and north into Michigan. Both species' populations have declined dramatically throughout their range due to declining habitat quality.

Because of the mussels' rapid decline and highly isolated populations, the Service believes the augmentation and reintroduction of the clubshell and riffleshell will be an essential tool in upgrading their status to threatened, and eventually, in recovering the two species.

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Freshwater Mussel Program: Endangered Mussels in the Upper Mississippi River Basin

Fish and Wildlife Service biologists working alongside state (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois) and federal biologists released more than 6,500 2- and 3-year-old Higgins



eye pearlymussels in the Wisconsin, Rock and Mississippi rivers. The Higgins eye has been on the Federal Endangered Species list since the early 1970s. A major tool in the recovery of the Higgins eye is mussel propagation. Propagation efforts have allowed for the production and release of more than 35,000 sub-adult mussels in the past two years. Some of these mussels are now actively reproducing in their new homes, completing the loop of recovery.

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Photo: Endangered Higgins eye pearlymussels are released in the Upper Miss. USFWS photo

Indiana

Frog Monitoring in the Midwest

This year was the ninth year of field work for the National Abnormal Amphibian Monitoring Project. The Bloomington Field Office, with assistance from the East Lansing Field Office, coordinates and performs fieldwork for the project for Region 3. Staff, volunteers and interns from each participating refuge also provided valuable fieldwork and support. Through this collaborative effort, over 750 amphibians from six refuges were collected and examined this summer in Region 3.

In response to the increasing number and range of reported frog abnormalities, in 2000, the Service launched an investigation of abnormal frogs on national wildlife refuges across the country. The goals of this effort are to identify refuges with significant numbers of abnormal frogs, and to investigate what role environmental stressors play in causing the abnormalities. As of



January 2006, 131 refuges in 47 states have been monitored at least once for abnormal frogs, and many refuges have been assessed more than once.

The Midwest Region manages 54 national wildlife refuges and 12 wetland management districts. Of these 66 managed areas, eight are unlikely to be suitable for amphibian sampling, primarily based on habitat, and in a couple of instances, limited access. Most of these unsuitable sites are small islands located in the Great Lakes.

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Photo: USFWS is studying malformed frogs at national wildlife refuges. USFWS photo

Iowa

Removing trees on the prairie

Tree stands across the northern tallgrass prairie are non-native invaders planted by settlers. We are working to remove these stands from our Waterfowl Production Areas to help provide a natural experience and lessen threats from predators that use these tree stands to impact native prairie bird species.

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Upper Mississippi River NWFR Virtual Geocache GPS Tour and cell phone tour

Take a virtual geocache GPS tour of the Upper Mississippi River NWFR. Geocaching is becoming a growing form of outdoor recreation and the Upper Mississippi River is trying to provide an opportunity for the public to test their skills and tour the refuge.

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After the Flood: Mussel Conservation in Iowa

In a 10-month time span, Iowa rivers have undergone two major flood events including the record setting flood of June 2008. Biologists from Genoa National Fish Hatchery,

Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recently examined how the freshwater mussels in the Wapsipinicon River, Iowa, were doing after the floods.

Federal and state agencies have been working to introduce the federally endangered Higgins eye pearl mussel in the Wapsipinicon River for the past seven years. To learn about the freshwater mussel recovery efforts, visit Genoa National Fish Hatchery's Web site at

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/genoa/>

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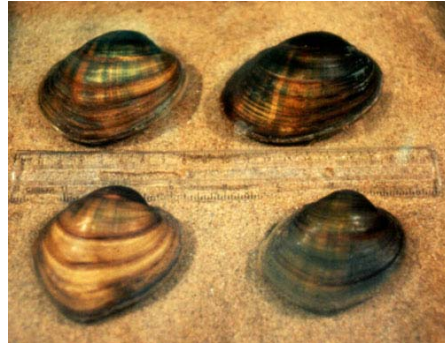


Photo: Higgins eye pearl mussels are introduced in Iowa river. USFWS photo

Michigan

First-Ever Internationally Funded Fish Habitat Restoration Project in the Great Lakes ongoing at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

U.S. and Canadian biologists are working together to engineer and construct a lake sturgeon spawning reef in the Detroit River. Construction is nearly completed on the project, located in Canadian waters, just off of Fighting Island, across from Detroit, Mich. The location was selected because the area was historically known as an important spawning and nursery area for lake sturgeon. In November 2006, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey biologists captured four juvenile lake sturgeon near the southern end of the island. The historic and recent evidence of the importance of this area made it the ideal location to build the reef.

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Kirtland's warbler recovery in Michigan and Wisconsin

For the first time ever, successful nesting of the endangered Kirtland's warbler was documented in Wisconsin in 2008. Leading up to this milestone were the joint efforts of multiple partners – USDA Wildlife Services, Plum Creek Timber Company, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Service -- who each made critical contributions to the project.



A record count of singing males and continued production of Kirtland's warbler chicks outside of Michigan highlighted the 2008 Kirtland's warbler nesting season. The 2008 census counted 1,803 singing males, including 34 males in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, nine males in Wisconsin, and three males in Canada. In addition, nests were found outside Michigan in Ontario,

Canada, and Wisconsin for the second consecutive year. Four chicks fledged from one nest in Ontario, and 10 chicks fledged from two nests in Wisconsin. Unfortunately three additional nests in Wisconsin failed.

The continued recovery of Kirtland's warbler can be attributed to intensive habitat management and annual brown-headed cowbird control. Land managers with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regenerate approximately 4,200 acres of jack pine habitat per year. This ensures that the Kirtland's warbler has enough suitable habitat for nesting. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture - Wildlife Services trap cowbirds in occupied Kirtland's warbler habitat in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and Wisconsin to reduce the threat of cowbird nest parasitism.

The Kirtland's warbler recovery program would not be possible without the coordination and partnership among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Department of Agriculture - Wildlife Services, The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Audubon Society, Plum Creek Timber Company, the Canadian Department of National Defense, and many others.

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Photo: Kirtland's warbler populations continue to improve. Photo by Wisconsin DNR Kirtland's warbler monitor Jennifer Goyette.

Isle Royale National Park: Coaster Brook Trout

Isle Royale National Park is undergoing a comprehensive review of research activities on the island including the historic wolf-moose studies led by Michigan Tech. researchers and coaster brook trout work led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Nine highly



acclaimed academics from Alaska to North Carolina and points in between have been contracted to provide review of existing activities and recommendations for future research at the island.

Isle Royale National Park is one of the most remote and unique wilderness areas in the U.S. The park consists of one large island surrounded by about 400 smaller islands; it includes submerged land which extends 4 1/2 miles out into the largest freshwater lake in the world. Due to Isle Royale's biological and ecological uniqueness, it was designated an International Biosphere Reserve in 1980.

Isle Royale is home to three of about a dozen populations of coaster brook trout remaining in Lake Superior. Data collected by the Service such as age and size at

maturity has contributed to management actions by the Park and Michigan DNR to help ensure the continued existence of coasters at Isle Royale.

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Photo: Coaster brook trout. USFWS photo

Minnesota

New Hunting Opportunities at Two Minnesota Refuges

Hamden Slough and Agassiz national wildlife refuges in Minnesota will soon offer new hunting options. These new opportunities are the perfect way for a family to begin a “new” hunting tradition.

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Removing trees on the prairie

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Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge

Minnesota’s newest national wildlife refuge continues to grow, providing unique prairie and wetland habitat and offering increased outdoor recreational opportunities. The Service is working with the Crookston Chamber of Commerce and The Conservation Fund to increase awareness of this refuge.

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Smallest National Wildlife Refuge in the Country

Mille Lacs NWR, an island in Lake Mille Lacs, a just a few acres in the smallest national wildlife refuge in the nation. It is also home to a unique population of terns.

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Upper Mississippi River Pool 6 Draw-Down

Pool 6 of the Mississippi River will be down to about 1 foot between June 15 and Sept. 15, 2009. This will expose an estimated 500 to 1,000 acres of mudflats and help restore long-absent fish and wildlife habitat.

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Tundra Swans by the Thousands

From early November through about the third week in November, hundreds of people come to a newly constructed overlook near Brownsville, Minnesota, to view thousands of tundra swans, ducks and geese feed, rest and migrate through the Mississippi River Valley.

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Wetland and Grassland Easement Violations

Go with a refuge law enforcement officer and our regional pilot as they fly over the state looking for people who have intentionally violated easements and destroyed wildlife habitat.

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St. Louis River Restoration

The Lower St. Louis River has been significantly impacted by decades of industrial, commercial, and residential use, prompting its designation as a Great Lakes Area of Concern. To be removed from the list, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency requires that degraded water quality and related fish and wildlife problems, as defined in Beneficial Use Impairments, be addressed by developing and implementing BUI delisting targets. Environmental Contaminants biologists from the Twin Cities Ecological Services Field Office, through the St. Louis River Citizens Action Committee, are helping to develop delisting targets, strategies and actions which will eliminate the causes of these impairments and significantly move the St. Louis River Area of Concern towards delisting. Service resource management responsibilities in this 12,000-acre freshwater estuary focus on: migratory bird habitat protection and restoration (with an emphasis on Great Lakes coastal wetland conservation), endangered species recovery (piping plover), and Great Lakes fishery enhancement (lake sturgeon reintroduction).

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Missouri

The World's Largest Salamander is in Trouble

The Ozark hellbender, which grows to lengths up to 2 feet, inhabits the White River system in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. It is one of the world's largest species of salamander, yet it faces significant threats. Ozark hellbender populations have declined an estimated 75 percent since the 1980s, with only about 590 individuals remaining in the wild. Most likely, numbers have dropped because of habitat loss resulting from impoundments, ore and gravel mining, sedimentation, nutrient runoff, and nest site disturbance due to recreational uses of the rivers.

Heightening concern is the discovery of a fungal disease, chytridiomycosis (chytrid) in all remaining wild populations of the Ozark hellbender. Chytrid is fatal to an increasing number of amphibian species worldwide, and has proven to kill Ozark hellbenders in captivity. Researchers view chytrid as one of the most challenging threats to the survival of this subspecies.

In addition, biologists have found that Ozark hellbender populations are aging, with fewer young produced each year. This and the multiple threats from disease and habitat loss have made the Ozark hellbender a candidate for federal listing as endangered or threatened.

Hellbenders are salamanders with a large tail and tiny eyes. Adult Ozark hellbenders may reach lengths up to 2 feet, and their flattened bodies enable them to move in the fast-flowing streams they inhabit. Hellbenders are habitat specialists that depend on constant levels of dissolved oxygen, temperature, and flow in their aquatic environment. Even minor alterations to stream habitat are likely detrimental to hellbender populations. Contact: Georgia Parham 812-334-4261 x 203 georgia_parham@fws.gov

Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery Renovations

The Missouri Department of Conservation, with support from Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program has recently completed improvements to the Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery near Branson, Missouri. A new fish ladder has been constructed to facilitate brown trout movement directly into a new brown trout spawn take/incubation facility; new raceways were constructed; covers were added to all raceways; a liquid oxygen system was installed, and water flow improvements were made. Total project cost is \$6.87 million (\$5.15 million federal share).

Located approximately 6 miles to the southwest of Branson, Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery is the largest trout production facility in the Missouri Department of

Conservation trout production program. The hatchery typically produces 1,125,000 catchable trout annually, weighing 301,000 pounds. The primary role for this facility is the production of rainbow and brown trout to meet the Conservation Departments management requirements. This facility also plays an important role in supplying eggs and fingerlings for grow-out at other Conservation Department trout production facilities. Contact: Ashley Spratt 612-713-5314 ashley_spratt@fws.gov

Ohio

Cutting Out Kudzu in Ohio

It's surprising, but true. Kudzu grows in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Pennsylvania. It doesn't grow as fast in Ohio as it does in Alabama, but it manages to kill Ohio trees, hide buildings and cover plenty of acres. As global climate change leads to more hot days in the northern states, kudzu will be able to move faster.

The partners of the Iron Furnace Cooperative Weed Management Area are working to control the kudzu now, while the populations are still scarce, so it never becomes the problem in Ohio that it has been in the southern states.

The Iron Furnace Cooperative Weed Management Area has brought together a group of agencies, private businesses and individual families with the mission of protecting a portion of southern Ohio from invasive plant species. The biggest local landowner is Wayne National Forest, a leader in the partnership. The Forest is recognized as an Important Bird Area and is home to the endangered running buffalo clover.

Landowners often say they've tried to kill the kudzu, but gave up after repeated attempts. Effective herbicides and timely follow-up treatments make it possible to kill kudzu. The Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife program hires contractors who can provide those two important elements.

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Wisconsin

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Photo: One of the first Kirtland's warblers to fledge in Wisconsin. Photo by Wisconsin DNR Kirtland's warbler monitor Jennifer Goyette.

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New Hunting Opportunities at Wisconsin Refuge

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Piping Plover Recovery in Wisconsin

At least seven pairs of piping plovers were present in Wisconsin in 2008, consisting of six pairs at Apostle Island National Lakeshore on Lake Superior, and one pair at Seagull Bar on Green Bay, Lake Michigan. At Apostle Islands, five of the six pairs present attempted to nest. Three pairs were successful, producing a total of six young, all of which were banded by University of Minnesota researchers. The pair at Seagull Bar also attempted to nest but the eggs were apparently lost to a predator during incubation. Although the number of pairs of piping plovers in Wisconsin has now reached its highest level in many years, the number of chicks produced in 2008 was relatively few, largely the result of a late spring and prolonged cold weather.

The Fish and Wildlife Service's Green Bay Field Office, the National Park Service, the Wisconsin DNR, and Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians worked together to protect the Apostle Islands plovers by hiring plover monitors to spot nesting pairs, developing plover signs to help beachgoers avoid disturbing the nests, and putting up nest exclosures to protect the nests from predators. Having two full-time biologists on location during the nesting season to find and monitor the nests again paid great dividends in this season's nesting success. One of the plover monitors was hired by the Wisconsin DNR using Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Act Section 6 funds, and a second monitor was funded by a generous donation from The Johnson Family Foundation.

The success of piping plover protection efforts in Michigan has resulted in an increasing population that is moving into available habitat in Wisconsin. The additional young produced in Wisconsin this year bodes well for the continued expansion of this population, and further progress towards recovery of the species. Continued strong partnerships forged between state, federal, tribal and NGO partners will remain critical to the success of piping plover protection efforts in Wisconsin. The piping plover is one of the Region's most endangered birds, and the establishment of an additional breeding group outside of Michigan will greatly contribute to making the species more secure. The growth of this small group of breeding plovers will enhance the likelihood of continued population expansion into suitable habitat and progress towards recovery of the species. The piping plover is identified as a Species of Greatest Conservation need in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan.

Tree stands across the northern tallgrass prairie are non-native invaders planted by settlers. We are working to remove these stands from our Waterfowl Production Areas to help provide a natural experience and lessen threats from predators that use these tree stands to impact native prairie bird species.

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Freshwater Mussel Program: Endangered Mussels in the Upper Mississippi River Basin

Fish and Wildlife Service biologists working alongside state (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois) and federal biologists released more than 6,500 2- and 3-year-old Higgins eye pearl mussels in the Wisconsin, Rock and Mississippi rivers. The Higgins eye has been on the Federal Endangered Species list since the early 1970s. A major tool in the recovery of the Higgins eye is mussel propagation. Propagation efforts have allowed for the production and release of more than 35,000 sub-adult mussels in the past two years. Some of these mussels are now actively reproducing in their new homes, completing the loop of recovery.

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