



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

August 2008

A large background image consisting of a 2x2 grid of dandelion seed heads. The seed heads are white and fluffy, set against a blurred green background. The grid is defined by thin red lines.

Summer's Bloom!

**Taking Terns
Service Helps Flooding Recovery
The Birds!**

Editor's Note:

Connecting with nature does not look the same for everyone. Connecting with nature means different things to different people. For some it's hunting and fishing. For others, it's walking in the woods or on the beach. What does your nature encounter look like? We want to know. To that end, we have added a regular section called Let's Go Outside!

We invite you to submit personal nature encounters as experienced by you and your children, as well as innovative ideas on how to connect with nature. We will run your accounts in this feature segment.

This month we are introducing another regular section: Kid's Corner. Kid's corner features the nature writing and photographic pieces by the children of regional employees.

E-mail: valerie_redmond@fws.gov with your Let's Go Outside and Kids Corner articles, photos, journal entries and poems.

On the Cover: Photo by Samantha Elayne; A senior at Eagan, Minn. High School, Samantha Elayne is a budding nature photographer.

Departments

The Buzz /3

Peace of Mind /10

Kids Corner: Tender Buds/16

Around the Region /17

Quote of the Month /18

Features



An Unforgettable Experience / 4

Thirteen disabled hunters had the experience of a lifetime at the 2007 Disabled Access Deer Hunt at Rice Lake NWR

By Valerie Rose Redmond



Taking Terns / 6

Local Citizens Take "Terns" Viewing Endangered Bird

By Kevin Lowry



Warbler Success / 7

Partnership Leads to Nest Success for Wisconsin Kirkland Warblers

By Joel Trick



Unique Perspective/ 13

Legally blind wildlife artist, Jim Hansel is anything but conventional

By Valerie Rose Redmond



*Right:
RD Robyn
Thorson partners
with Wildlife
Forever in the 2008
Fish Art Contest.
Here she awards
fishing gear prizes.
Photo credit: Pete
Wuebker;*



The Buzz



U. S. Fish and Wildlife's Ohio partnership program, Camp Oty'Okwa, hit the mark by securing one of 16 coveted national awards from the Forest Service's second annual *More Kids in the Woods* endowment. The recipients will receive a \$22,940 share of the half million dollar grant, which is designed to connect children to nature. The grant monies will go a long way towards the \$66,433 total project amount.

The Camp Oty'Okwa project will provide 580 children with outdoor education experiences and structured camping programs to increase their awareness and understanding of the natural world and benefits of forest ecosystems. Plant Ecologist Sarena Selbo of the Reynoldsburg Ecological Service Field Office helped secure the award with many years of assistance to the Wayne National Forest at the site.

Other partners involved in the project include: Northern Research Station, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ohio, Columbus City Schools (Dana Elementary), Delaware City Schools (Willis Intermediate), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ohio Division of Natural Resources, and the Wayne National Forest.

The Service provided a Section 6 Recovery Land Acquisition grant in 2005 to acquire an easement at Camp Oty'Okwa to aid in the recovery of the small whorled pogonia. "We've helped secure the site for the conservation of the pogonia," says Mary Knapp, Ph.D., Field Supervisor at the Ohio Field Office, "and in addition, kids now have a safe place to enjoy the natural world."

*--Valerie Rose Redmond,
External Affairs*



*On
July
9-11, 2008,
the Regional
Office National Wildlife*

Refuge System (NWRs) program hosted a summer intern workshop for 29 summer interns serving at NWRs stations across the region. Attendees included five Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) interns along with 10 Conservation Internship Program (CIP) interns and 14 Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) interns.

Highlights of the workshop included presentations by the Diversity and Civil Rights office, Ecological Services, Fisheries, Migratory Birds, State Programs and various NWRs programs. New this year was a presentation by Paul Dion, Campus to Careers Program Manager with NWRs recruiting partner the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE). The NCSE presentation focused on job trends and opportunities in the environmental field as well as exploring strategies to compete for positions in this area.

This was the third consecutive year that the Regional NWRs program has hosted an summer intern workshop. The first day focused on information sharing from FWS representatives to the students. On the second day the students shared information about themselves with Regional Office staff. Day Two was capped off with a tour and informal BBQ at Minnesota Valley NWR.

On the final day of the workshop students were able to meet with Regional NWRs Chief Nita Fuller, NWRs SCEP Coordinator Dan Sobieck, and Personnel Specialist Kathryn Besser to discuss the application procedures for the SCEP program as well as other types of federal appointments. Following the workshop, students returned to their stations to complete the remainder of their summer tours with the NWRs program.

*--Dan Sobieck
SCEP Coordinator; USFWS - Great Lakes Big Rivers Region*

Refuge Spotlight: An Unforgettable Experience

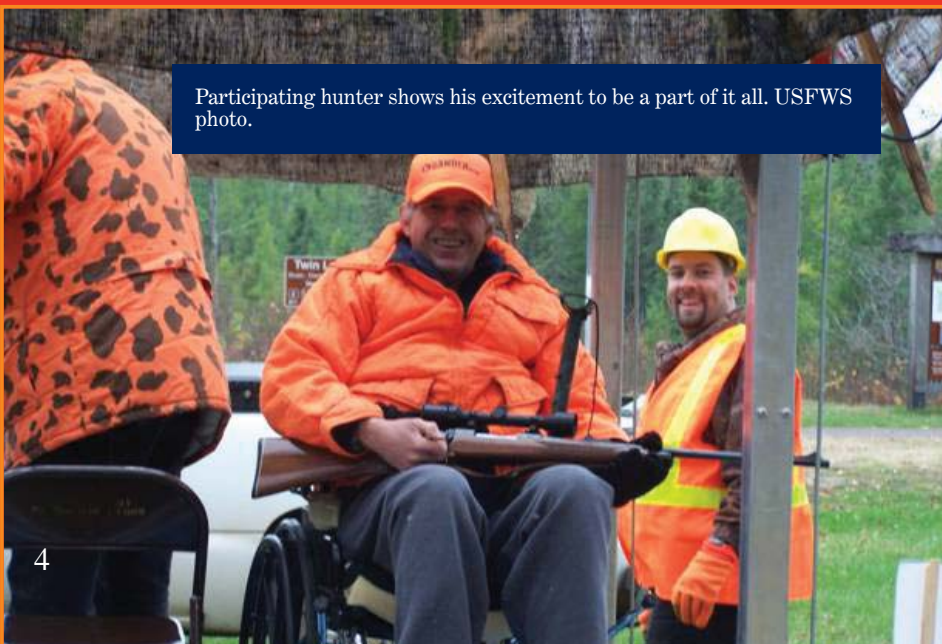
THE DISABLED ACCESS DEER HUNT AT RICE LAKE NWR

Orchestrated by Walt Ford Refuge Manager at Rice Lake and Mille Lacs NWRs, 13 disabled hunters had the experience of a lifetime at the 2007 Disabled Access Deer Hunt at Rice Lake NWR last fall. Ford teamed with major partners Friends of Rice Lake NWR, local sportsmen's clubs, Minn. DNR, Relief Association and the McGregor Volunteer Fire Department, as well as a host of others to create a memorable event for all involved.

Below: Hunters enjoying the camaraderie of the deer camp experience.



Participating hunter shows his excitement to be a part of it all. USFWS photo.



Ford and partners took a field trip to Rydell NWR in October of 2006 to see first hand how to organize a successful hunting event.

After the trip, Ford initially had some funding concerns but they were quickly dispelled. When word got out that Rice Lake was organizing a disabled access deer hunting event, the community was electric with excitement. Energized by the thought of helping disabled people live out what for many is only a distant dream due to limited or no access to the sport, community funding started coming from

Refuge Spotlight: An Unforgettable Experience

everywhere. “I was afraid I was going to get run over,” Ford tells the completely absorbed audience that came to hear his recent bag lunch account of the event at the RO. “It just started pouring in. People started stopping me on the street asking what they could do.”

Participant disabilities ranged from quadriplegia to paralysis from the waist down. Quadriplegics were transported via a cart to the hunting sites. Special equipment was used to aid the hunters in the hunt. There were two volunteers for each hunter, with a five to one ratio including all of the volunteers.

“Able body people take a lot for granted,” comments Kevin Hoge, a volunteer from Friends of Rice Lake Refuge and resident cook. “If a hunter is in a stand and a deer is in the tall grass, a disabled person can’t see it. These people have so many limitations, that we just take for granted.”

No deer were harvested at the event. “It requires a lot of luck for them to harvest a deer, so we wanted to make this experience memorable,” said Hoge. For this reason it was important to Ford and primary organizers, Gene Streeter, from the Minnowawa Sports Club, and



Here Rice Lake volunteers prepare to transport this hunter to the deer stand, shown below. USFWS photo.



Darlene Turnock from the Friends of Rice Lake Refuge to create and give the hunters an unforgettable deer camp experience.

A hunt camp was erected in the 11-year old Rice Lake shop. “This shop hasn’t looked this good since the day it was built,” was the comment from many, says Ford. Eating tables were set up at the hunt camp. The organizers gave away mementos that were either donated or purchased at cost. “Hunters were given the

opportunity to rub elbows with others in the hunt camp, and tell lies like everyone else,” Ford said. While no deer were harvested at this event, all had a good time, including the volunteers who were helping. The 2008 Hunt will be held October 2 – 5. The number of hunters will increase from 13 to 20. Thanks to this event, “Rice Lake became more prominent in the community,” said Ford. “They see we care.”

-Valerie Rose Redmond, External Affairs



Left: Participating hunters were given a wide range of souvenirs to ensure that the deer camp will be a memorable experience. USFWS photo.

The Birds!

Local Citizens Take "Terns" Viewing Endangered Bird

With squally winds blowing, dark gray clouds blocked the sun's rays all morning on Saturday, June 28, 2008. But the gloomy weather did not prevent citizens from the small Illinois town of Jacob from taking "terns" to get a bird's eye view of a new neighbor that moved into town in late May. Service employees from Middle Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge and Marion Ecological Services Field Office (ESFO) put together an event to introduce the people of Jacob to the Endangered Least Tern.

The project got its start when local terns decided to nest on a gravel road in Jacob. Generally, the bird makes its home on open sandbars along the Mississippi River, but high water levels forced the bird to make Swan Pond Road its temporary home. The road floods at least once every two to three years, leaving behind sand and small gravel, which the birds use to camouflage its two or three buff, lighted spotted eggs in a shallow scrape in the substrate. To protect the terns, county officials closed the road until the birds complete their nesting cycle.

During the event, the Service provided spotting scopes and binoculars to help visitors view the nesting terns from a distance. But participants got a bonus: one adult male decided to put on a show -- as television news cameras rolled -- by elegantly flying overhead into the strong winds, loudly and sharply announcing "kellick kip-kip-kip-kiddeek," or in other words "Hey, watch this!"

The bird hovered in one spot over the inundated farm fields for nearly eight seconds, peered downward in search of an appetizer to bring its mate, folded its wings and slammed into the water. "Holy cow, did you just see that?" said Missy Klein of Jacob. Another woman screamed, "Woooooow, cool!" While the audience continued to look on in amazement, the adult male exploded out of the water and flew off with a small minnow in its beak, bringing it back to the nesting female.

Those who attended the program were treated to gift bags, courtesy of Ecological Services, full of bird-related stickers, pencils, posters, coloring books, as well as a least tern beanie baby, which when squeezed,

makes the actual call of a least tern.

Administrative Assistant Shelley Simmonds from the Marion ES Field Office and Assistant Field Supervisor Joyce Collins ordered and filled all gift bags and handed them out to members of the audience. Collins, along with Refuge Manager Robert Cail enthusiastically answered additional questions after the program ended.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to inform and inspire not only adults but also our youth, who will be the decision makers in the future," said Cail. Kevin Lowry, biological science technician who instructed the migratory bird program on least terns, was interviewed by WSIL News Channel 3. "We are aware the road closure is an inconvenience to some local residents. However, this can be looked at from a positive point of view as well. Bird watchers from other towns in Illinois and Missouri will visit Jacob to view the federally endangered birds, ensuring increased visibility to local businesses," Lowry pointed out.

Ten-year-old Timmy Korondo, a local resident, ecstatically said, "My favorite bird used to be a red cardinal, but now it's the interior least tern!" After the program came to an end, senior citizen Larry Clemons said, "I am 87 years old and I just learned something new today. Thank you for that."

The interior least tern is a very small white tern with black cap, white forehead, pale gray back and wings, black-tipped yellow bill and very shallow wing beat. The interior population was listed as endangered in 1985 after populations declined due to threats such as habitat loss and degradation and disturbance of nesting sites.

Kevin Lowry, Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge



6

Above: Kevin Lowry connects local citizens in Illinois with nature by teaching them about the federally endangered interior least tern. Photo credit: Robert Cail

Partnership Leads to Nest Success for Wisconsin Kirtland Warblers

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 -- each of whom made critical contributions to the project.

A preview of this year's success came in 2007, when the first Kirtland's warbler nest ever found in Wisconsin was discovered in Adams County. But of the three nests found last year, two were parasitized by brown-headed cowbirds, and the success of the third nest remains unknown. To prepare for the 2008 nesting season, the Service worked with the Wisconsin DNR, Plum Creek, Wildlife Services, and the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to enhance the warbler's chances of successful nesting.

Kirtland's warblers are vulnerable to nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds, and cowbird control in the nesting areas is one of the key

factors contributing to the success of the Kirtland's warbler recovery program in Michigan. The Service enlisted the aid of USDA-Wildlife Services to construct and operate two cowbird traps at the Adams County nesting site beginning in mid-April 2008, well before the arrival of the warbler. Wildlife Services contributed not only their expertise, but also the costs of materials and labor to construct the traps, bird feed, and live cowbirds for trap decoys. Additional funding for cowbird trap operation was received from the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin DNR used a portion of their Endangered Species Act Section 6 funding to hire a full time warbler monitor to make detailed observations at

the site throughout the nesting season. Thanks to the information gathered by this monitor, we know that at least eight male Kirtland's warblers were resident at the site in 2008, and at least five females were present as well, with a minimum of five nests. Based upon the observations of this monitor, we also know that only one of the five nests was parasitized by cowbirds, and that two of the remaining four nests were able to fledge five young each. This is the first documented successful nesting of the species in Wisconsin.

This successful breeding of Kirtland's warblers in Wisconsin in 2008 may lead to increased numbers returning to Wisconsin next year, and continued expansion of this small nesting population. The Service and our partners

plan to continue to monitor the site in 2009, and to maintain or expand our cowbird trapping efforts. We also plan to continue working with land managers of jack pine habitat, including the state, the U.S. Forest Service, county foresters, and private timber companies, to explore

opportunities to manage the habitats to benefit the Kirtland's warblers. Such management of habitat would be expected to result in additional benefits to numerous other species, including multiple species identified in the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan as Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

-Joel Trick, Green Bay ES Field Office



7 Above L: This young Kirtland's warbler is among the first ever to successfully fledge in Wisconsin (Photo by Jennifer Goyette); Above R: A nest of young Kirtland's warblers makes history in Adams County, Wisconsin (Photo by Jennifer Goyette)

The Birds!

Wings Across the Americas: Migratory Birds Biologist Awarded for Work on the Cerulean Warbler

At the 73rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference on March 27, 2008, Tom Will, Migratory Birds biologist, was recognized for the part he played in assessing non breeding habitat for the Cerulean Warbler in the northern Andes. Will was one of a handful of North Americans who collaborated with dozens of South American biologists and GIS experts at an initial workshop in Quito, Ecuador, in November 2005. The International Cooperation Award was one of five Wings Across the Americas conservation awards presented by the USDA Forest Service. Paul B. Hamel, from the Southern Research Station in Mississippi, was the primary recipient.

Will helped facilitate the Quito workshop that led to the development of five different predictive GIS models for Ceruleans. These models in turn were used to develop a sampling design to further research on Cerulean Warbler distribution and habitat associations on the non breeding grounds. The modeling and subsequent monitoring and research leads to meaningful conservation, management, and protection acquisition aimed at maintaining and

improving habitats for the Cerulean Warbler in South America. El Grupo Cerúleo, the international subcommittee of the Cerulean Warbler Technical Group, serves as a model of a successful partnership of federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions from the U.S., Canada, and all five countries of the South American non breeding range of this long-distance nearctic/neotropical migrant. One outcome of El Grupo's work has been the first reserve in South America set aside specifically to conserve a North American migrant on the wintering grounds: the Reserva Cerúlea in San Vicente de Chucurí, Colombia.

The activities of El Grupo Cerúleo and a similar group working on behalf of Golden-winged Warbler—Alianza Alas Doradas—exemplify a developing paradigm for the conservation of long-distance migrant birds: full life-cycle stewardship. Recent research on Golden-wings, Ceruleans, and other species suggests that these birds may be population-limited during the non-breeding season in Central and South America in addition to being threatened with significant breeding habitat loss in North America. Stewardship of such species will require attention to all phases of the birds' complex, demanding, and tightly linked life cycles. Federal and state agencies entrusted with responsibility for rapidly declining and threatened migratory species will need to redirect resources toward formation of international linkages and non-breeding season conservation action in Latin America in order to achieve conservation success.



Left: Award presentation at the North American Fish and Wildlife Conference in Phoenix, March 26; USFWS Photo;



Right: Migratory Birds biologist Tom Will (2nd row, third from right) with South American biologists and GIS experts at an initial workshop in Quito, Ecuador in November 2005. Will was awarded in March for his international conservation efforts for the Cerulean Warbler in South America. USFWS photo;

A Dolomite-Paved Road to Recovery for the Endangered Leafy Prairie Clover

A multi-partner effort being led by the Chicago Illinois Field Office to restore the federally endangered leafy prairie clover (*Dalea foliosa*) in Illinois recently took a big step when over 2,500 seedlings were planted at sites in two counties in the Chicago metropolitan area.

The leafy prairie clover is restricted to three separate regions of the eastern United States: central Tennessee, north-central Alabama, and northeastern Illinois. A perennial forb, the leafy prairie-clover occurs only in open habitats with thin, calcareous soils. In Tennessee and Alabama, the preferred habitat is limestone or dolomite glades, but in Illinois, this plant is restricted to a very rare plant community, dolomite prairie. Dolomite prairie is characterized by a suite of specific plants (some of them rare) growing in areas where dolomite bedrock forms exposed or "paved" areas. It has been estimated that as little as 600 acres of high quality dolomite prairie remain in Illinois. Only seven surviving populations of leafy prairie-clover remain in the state, with populations ranging in size from a few hundred to several thousand individuals. Not all of these populations are protected, however, and records indicate that several additional, historically known populations have been extirpated. All of these sites are or were once dolomite prairies.

In 2005, the Service's Chicago Illinois Field Office partnered with the U.S. Forest Service (Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Forest Preserve Districts of Kane and Will counties on a multi-phased plan a project that may lead to recovery of the leafy prairie clover at the northern end of its range.

Field Office submitted a proposal and received a grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation that would primarily help restore dolomite prairies where leafy prairie clover could be reintroduced.

The second step was to collect seeds from the seven remaining Illinois populations of leafy prairie clover because it is not readily established

by simply collecting and broadcasting seeds. Ripe seeds collected in the Autumns of 2006 and 2007 were then transferred to Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie because it has state of the art facilities for propagating and handling native plants and their seeds as part of its ecological restoration program.

The third step was to construct sturdy browse exclosure cages because leafy prairie clover is a favorite food of rabbits and deer, and in some years browsing by these animals can severely limit reproductive output by the plants.

The final step in 2008 was that over 1100 leafy prairie clover were introduced into a state-owned conservation area that lacked a known population, but that has extensive habitat. Leafy prairie clover was also returned to a preserve in Kane County that is believed to be the species type locality. The type locality is a site

where a species is first discovered when it is described and given a scientific name, but where no individual has been seen since the late 1800's when the species was discovered.

A second cohort of leafy prairie clover seedlings is being grown by the US Forest Service, and should allow additional augmentation of both existing and newly introduced populations to take place in 2009.



The first, and most costly step was to secure funding to remove invasive species from what would otherwise be suitable habitat for the leafy prairie clover. Late in 2005, the Chicago



9

Above Left: An all-terrain vehicle loaded with about 200 seedling leafy prairie clovers about to be planted in the field. Above Right: Biologist Kris Lah (Endangered Species Coordinator, USFWS Chicago Field Office) plants a seedling leafy prairie clover at a site in northeast Illinois.

-- Michael Redmer and Kristopher Lah, Chicago, Ill. Field Office

LET'S GO OUTSIDE: Fourth of July visit to Lake Michigan. Photo by George L. Lewis.



Peace of Mind

Clarity of Thought

LET'S GO OUTSIDE: Jared Ostrander from the Region 3 Help Desk shares his photos from his boat on the Apostle Islands.

As day breaks, the sun rises, shrouded by an immense fog bank. Mysterious wisps of air swirl inches in front of our faces, dancing like apparitions arising from the ancient tombs of the shipwrecks lying hundreds of feet below the surface. There is an eerie silence broken only by the occasional sound of a foghorn.

The shroud begins to lift, light begins to set in, and the wisps slowly disappear. Flirtatious slivers of blue sky eventually overcome the dark vapors and soon enough, the sun is smiling in a mirror of emerald blue. Our journey to the Apostle Islands has begun.

Cruising further out into the lake, we notice a lone seagull soaring above while schools of coho break the surface, snatching at helpless insects. The islands appear far off in the distance as we venture towards them, leaving behind a mainland that is quickly disappearing into the horizon.

With the sandy shoreline of the mainland now gone, we get ever closer to the islands. The trees on the islands begin to take shape and dot the landscape. The sugar sand beach of Julian Bay slowly comes into view. Upon rounding Presque Isle point, we view our destination, Stockton Island.

As the boat comes to a rest, we tie up snugly to the dock and venture off to find our campsite. After setting up camp, the day is one of fishing and leisure. In the cold, dark depths off Outer Island wait trophy lake trout. On the shore, miles of remote, untouched wilderness beckon to be explored, while the sandy beaches of Julian Bay and Presque Isle Bay tempt those craving an afternoon swim and the sharp bite of the cool, crisp waters of Lake Superior.

Evening begins with a campfire, hopefully to cook up the day's catch. The scent of the earth and the fragrant pine mixes with that of fire and food to permeate the air. The campfire crackles, and smoke floats up into the trees towering majestically above us. Boats are anchored along the horizon, outlined by a sunset beautiful beyond description. Night descends, blanketing the landscape with millions of stars. The deep quiet is only interrupted by the ghostly wail of the loon.

It is the end of the day in the Apostle Islands, a perfect day, a day of creating memories to cherish for a lifetime.

The Apostle Islands in Lake Superior are the perfect place to renew, rejuvenate, and reconnect - reconnect with your loved ones, reconnect with nature, and reconnect with yourself. --Jared Ostrander, IT Contractor for the Helpdesk, Regional Office

Service Helps Iowa Hatcheries Recover from Flooding

Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) in Wisconsin and Neosho NFH in Missouri donated 25,000 rainbow trout after flooding caused the loss of 140,000 catchable size rainbow trout at two Department of Natural Resource (DNR) hatcheries in northeastern Iowa.

June flood waters covered the outside raceways and filled hatchery buildings and offices at both Manchester and Big Springs hatcheries in the neighboring state.

With rainfalls exceeding nine inches in 24 hours, cities and towns were inundated with floodwaters throughout the Midwest this spring. More than 100 counties in central and eastern Iowa and southwestern Wisconsin were declared federal disaster areas during the June flood of 2008.

With a neighbor in need, the Genoa station rerouted 15,000 3.75 inch rainbows from its ongoing forage program to the two flood damaged

hatcheries in Iowa to help jumpstart their programs. Genoa's sister station in Neosho, Mo. also lent a helping hand by sending 10,000 3.75 inch rainbow trout.



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a long and storied history of cooperating with the Iowa DNR to recover and restore fish and freshwater mussel populations. Genoa NFH in Wisconsin raises more than 20,000 catchable rainbow trout annually to stock in tribal or Department of Defense waters to help bolster sport fishing opportunities. The hatchery also raises rainbow trout fingerlings as a disease free source of forage for captive brood programs that support the restoration of freshwater mussel populations. The efforts of both Genoa and Neosho hatcheries highlight the Service's commitment to work with state agencies to recover and restore aquatic species in the Midwest.

--Doug Aloisi, Genoa NFH

Above: Jim Luoma and Brian Lacey from Genoa NFH load trucks with trout to transport to Iowa.

Genoa National Fish Hatchery Thanks the Local Heroes at Tomah Veterans Hospital

Reprinted due to an erroneous story in the previous issue.

On May 21st, staff from the Genoa National Fish Hatchery assisted the annual fishing event held at the Tomah Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC). Weeks prior to this event, staff stocked the Tomah VAMC fishing pond with 880 rainbow trout. In addition, staff and volunteers from Genoa provided a fish fry for participating veterans.

The American Legion – Genoa Post donated 100 pounds of flat head catfish that

were served after a successful morning of fishing. Over 100 veterans from the VAMC, along with 118 helpers from the Tomah 7th grade, tried to catch the biggest fish using worms, corn, and minnows for bait. Over 176 rainbow trout were caught by the veterans and their helpers, in addition to the bluegills, crappies, and bass. The largest rainbow trout that was caught was 17 inches long.

Newcomers to this special event were Harriett, a rehabilitated bald eagle from the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, MN, and her handler Bob, a Vietnam veteran. Harriett was especially important to him since she helped him recover from severe depression, explains Bob. Harriett is the living symbol of our nation, she is very significant to other surviving veterans, he says. Many of the veterans were inspired to see an eagle, and even though Harriett isn't able to fly due to her injuries.

The Tomah VAMC houses 270 veterans focusing on medical specialties such as acute medicine, acute and long-term psychiatry, vocational and social rehabilitation, Alzheimer's assessment and management, residential substance abuse treatment and post-traumatic stress disorder. --Darla Wenger

Mark Your Calendars!

The Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest is coming to Minnesota!

October 17-18, 2008

Bloomington Art Center

Bloomington, Minn.

Unique Perspective

In creative artistry, the general convention is that a painter sees a subject, is inspired by it and the creative juices begin to flow. But legally blind wildlife artist, Jim Hansel is anything but conventional. Diagnosed at age 12 with Stargardts, an eye disease that causes progressive vision loss, Hansel is wildly successful artist who uses memory, magnifiers and low-vision aids to aid him in his chosen craft. EA's Redmond talked with this inspiring artist with a different perspective.

Redmond: When and where were you born? Are you from this area? If not, how did you get here?

Hansel: I was born in 1960 in Shakopee, Minnesota. I grew up in Chaska.

Redmond: What was your childhood like?

Hansel: I was a typical kid. I am the oldest of four. I have two younger sisters and one brother. We did a lot of camping, hunting and fishing with my Dad.

Redmond: Tell me about Stargardts.

Hansel: It's a genetic condition that I was born with. My eye sight gradually worsened over the years when I was growing up. I am now legally blind.

Redmond: Were you worried about your children?

Hansel: My wife is not a carrier. The odds of then getting it was one in one million.

Redmond: How did you get started in wildlife artistry?

Hansel: At a young age I knew I wanted to be an artist because I liked anything that was crafty or had to do with the arts. My parents took me to art shows like the Wildlife Heritage Art Show at Dayton's Auditorium where I saw and met many of the founding fathers in the industry—Les Kouba, David Maass and Terry Redlin. Then other times, I would tell my parents that I was bored and ask what can I do? Then they would say, 'Why don't

you go paint something?'

Redmond: What was your professional training like?

Hansel: I graduated from the U of M with a degree in fine arts. One year after graduating, I started a career as a full time wildlife artist.

Redmond: How did you manage not to become a starving artist?

Hansel: Actually, my dad (a Rosemount engineer) played a big role. He took photos of my first print and asked his co-workers if they would be interested in the print. He collected \$25 from each person in advance. Then after had 2-3 prints had come out with started going door to door during short time summer selling my art work that way... started doing local art shows...making connections with galleries and companies that wanted to market my work; The first years were lean.



Above: Wildlife artist, Jim Hansel in front of his work at Pheasant Fest at the River Center in St. Paul.

Redmond: Do you have a favorite piece?

Hansel: Yes, *Autumn Glow*. It was my first commercial print.

Redmond: What inspires you the most?

Hansel: Subjects with outdoor sceneries; Scenes with log cabins; It's places I'd like to be at myself or dream places people would like to be in; they do well for me;

Redmond: Why wildlife?

Hansel: I love the outdoors. In my younger days hunting before my vision got worse, I would go to art shows. I love nature. And I saw how successful these guys were doing what they love.

Redmond: What was your childhood

like when you were going through your vision transitions?

Hansel: It was traumatic. I couldn't play baseball. I couldn't get driver license. It was tough. I thought, how am I going to get a girl out on the date? **Redmond: So what did you do, I mean to get a girl on a date?** Hansel: Sometimes it was double dab. Well, lucky for me, I met a girl who knew about my vision, but it didn't matter. She'd pick me up for dates.

Redmond: What's your creative process and technique like?

Hansel: I start with an idea in my head. I visualize the whole piece and shoot photos for reference. Then I go back to my studio and put together a few sketches. Then I start putting paint to canvas. The images develop as I go. Things might change from the initial idea to final product. It's never what I anticipate... or what I initially intended. Most images change a little bit along the way. Some images are exact, like Split Rock Light House. I painted it as is. Most of my work is a composition of photos and ideas that I put together.

Redmond: What's your biggest challenge?

Hansel: To create a piece that is different from everyone else's. There are lots of good artists, so I try to create something different. Something that hasn't been seen before; something from a different perspective. Trying to come up with something unique and original that hasn't been done before.

Redmond: What advice would you give to struggling artists?

Hansel: Be persistent and be patient. When I started out, there were a lot of lean years. Get your name out there. Develop your art. Develop a following of people. It's a domino effect. Other businesses you never thought of—they see my work. Then they license my images for products like calendars, t-shirts and others. Keep plugging away and do what you have to, even if that means coming home at night from work to work on your art. And another thing, any time you can get free advertisement, like this interview for example, just do it!

--Valerie Rose Redmond, *External Affairs*

Heads Up! Asian Carp Abundance Grows in Illinois Waterway

Treacherous currents, a flotilla of swift boats, periodic 'missile' attacks, deadly microbes, ultrasonic transmitters, personal protective equipment, and a lurking alligator ... Amidst this intriguing mix of seemingly unrelated subjects, what possible mission could an armada of Service biologists be out to accomplish in uncomfortably steamy surroundings that were often electrically charged? The answer: working with partners and dedicated volunteers to safely conduct annual surveillance for round goby, Asian carps, and fish disease pathogens in the Illinois Waterway System.

Organized and outfitted with supplies, a total of 40 individuals representing nine government (federal, state, and local) agencies, two educational institutions, and two private businesses participated in the 13th Annual Goby Round-Up and the 7th Annual Carp Corral, held June 17-20, 2008. This year's effort spanned a distance of nearly 100 miles from Alsip downstream to Peru and included portions of the Calumet-Sag Channel, the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, the Des Plaines River, and the Illinois River. It was designed to estimate the downstream leading edge and relative

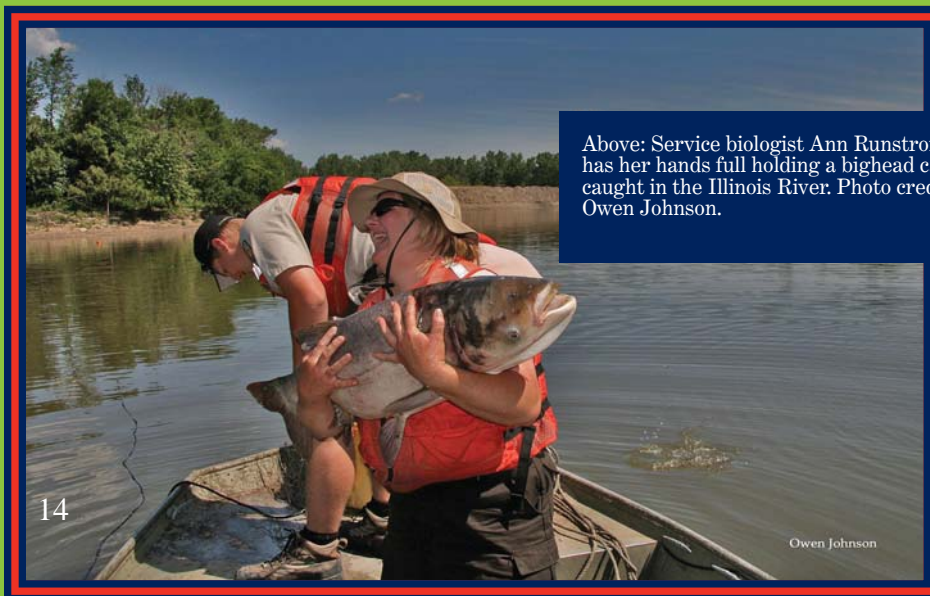
abundance of round goby, as well as the upstream distribution and relative abundance of Asian carps. These and several other species of fish collected here were also tested by biologists from the La Crosse Fish Health Center for the presence of a variety of deadly fish disease pathogens as part of the Service's nationwide Wild Fish Health Survey (<http://www.fws.gov/wildfishsurvey/>).

As in recent years, the numbers of round goby captured in minnow traps suggested a continued decline in the upstream relative abundance of this species since it peaked here nearly a decade ago. Meanwhile flood conditions in the lower Illinois River forced the postponement of surveillance efforts for round goby at sites downstream of Peoria (the currently recognized extent of its dispersal in the Mississippi River Basin) until later this summer. Results of all laboratory tests to detect fish disease pathogens remain pending, but because the often deadly viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus was identified earlier this year in round goby that washed ashore from Lake Michigan in Milwaukee (less than 100 miles from Chicago and the Great Lakes connection to the Mississippi River Basin), there is heightened interest in the outcome of

these latest tests.

Surveillance activities this year did not detect Asian carps any farther upstream than the Des Plaines River location where a bighead carp was collected in the Dresden Island Pool last year. Two bighead carp were captured here this year and one was surgically implanted with an ultrasonic transmitter to closely monitor its movements. Thus far, the documented upstream range of bighead carp remains about 15 miles below an electrical fish barrier in Romeoville and 45 miles from Lake Michigan in Chicago. Meanwhile the relative abundance of Asian carps increased markedly during the past year in adjoining navigation pools located downstream. The number of silver carp that leaped out of the water here, rocketing about the boat like slimy missiles meant to pummel the crew, was inexplicably (and fortunately) reduced this year. This apparent lull in activity is not expected to persist though as flood waters this summer have increased the size of shallow water nursery habitats; eventually expected to help produce a very large 2008 year class of Asian carps.

Surveillance findings were reported to the Asian Carp Rapid Response Team and the Chicago Barrier Advisory Task Force to help guide upcoming actions to limit the continued dispersal of these invasive fish and fish disease pathogens. This information also attracted the interest of reporters and photographers from many electronic and print media outlets, due in no small part to outreach efforts coordinated by the Shedd Aquarium, a partner in this surveillance program for several years now. Garnering other media attention at this time was the capture of a 5-foot-long alligator, thought to be a discarded pet, which was recovered by local authorities from the south branch of the Chicago River. As a consequence of these surveillance efforts and media reports, the public is better informed about the current distribution of these aquatic nuisance species and the impacts they are having on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River ecosystems.



Above: Service biologist Ann Runstrom has her hands full holding a bighead carp caught in the Illinois River. Photo credit: Owen Johnson.

Employee Profile: Rebecca Esser

Below: Rebecca Esser doing what she loves.



Wildlife biologist, Rebecca Esser's career is in peak bloom, much like the prairie forbs on the upland project sites that she frequently travels to for assessment. Stationed at Union Slough NWR in north-central Iowa, Esser's main duty is to implement the Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program in the Prairie Pothole Region of Iowa. She also assists in restoration and management activities on the refuge and within the Iowa Wetland



Management District.

Esser meets with partners and landowners to evaluate potential PFW projects yet to be funded. On a more landscape scale, she has been coordinating with biologists from the state, county and NGOs in implementing tree removal projects on remnant prairie as part of the FWS-funded Private Stewardship Grant. She also partnered with the Rock Island Field Office and helped develop and implement restoration projects on county ground as a result of a hazardous substance release into a creek. She assists Union Slough with the preparation for annual wood duck banding, a prairie walk, and a prairie seed collection event.

Esser grew up in Detroit Lakes, Minn., where her dad was a Conservation Officer for the Minnesota DNR. "He instilled in me a love and respect for the outdoors from day one," says Esser. "Through the years, my dad and I spent many hours at Tamarac, Hamden Slough, and the Detroit Lakes WMD. I always

felt so privileged to be able to experience these areas firsthand."

Esser was attracted to the Service by the National Wildlife Refuge System. Her first job with the Service was during the summer of 1997 where she was a biological science aid at Waubay NWR/WMD. The majority of her duties that summer involved fencing, posting, lawn mowing and other maintenance-related activities. "I was fortunate enough to assist the wildlife biologist with mist netting and banding, four-square mile surveys and colonial waterbird surveys," explains Esser. "That's when I knew I wanted to be a wildlife biologist."

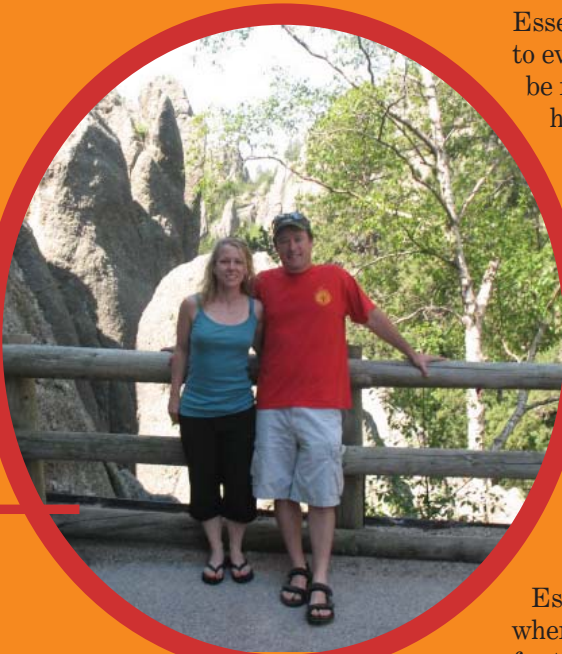
Esser's nine year career includes work at Waubay, Union Slough, and Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR in Commerce City, CO. After her masters in Wildlife Sciences was conferred from South Dakota State, she was hired as a wildlife biologist at

Rocky Mountain Arsenal where she monitored the health and reproduction of American kestrels, black-tailed prairie dogs, and tree swallows. She also conducted surveys of white-tailed deer, mule deer, winter waterfowl, raptors and small mammals.

Born in Hutchinson, Minn., Esser returned to the Midwest to be close to her now husband and family, and because she missed the rural Midwest lifestyle.

Partnerships are key, says Esser, when asked about program success. "I'd like to believe that the farming tradition and the conservation of our natural resources can coexist," she says. "We don't have to agree and we don't have to change our way of life, but we should understand and respect each other if we're going to be neighbors."

--Valerie Rose Redmond
External Affairs



Above: Esser with husband;

Woodie Camp 2008!

August 9-16, Fergus
Falls, Minn.

Kid's Corner: Tender Buds



My Mushroom Hunting Experience

In this picture I was hunting for mushrooms called morels. I finally got to have fun. I picked mushrooms and explored different places in the outdoors. Although it takes a lot of walking and effort, hunting for mushrooms is a great way to get active and have fun. We walked everywhere along the Missouri River and found a little amount but found lots of already picked mushrooms. It is very exciting when you look on the ground and find a mushroom camouflaged. After picking them you can clean the mushrooms and eat them. Some ways to cook them are to fry them in butter in an electric skillet or deep fry them with a wet batter. Then after they are cooked you can add a little salt or pepper and eat them. I think if you want to get active and explore the outdoors, mushroom hunting in the spring is a great way to do that.

-- Troy Hill, Son of Tracy D. Hill
Project Leader, US Fish
& Wildlife Service -
Columbia National Fish



First Turkey!

This youth (Ethan Cox) shot his first turkey while hunting at the Horseshoe Bend Division of Port Louisa NWR.
--Tom Cox, Port Louisa NW



Left: Mitchell D. Lange catches a big one on Jared Ostrander's boat on the Apostle Islands.



flowers are pretty
My pictures about showing the inside of the flower and what's it like to a bee the stuff shows the polyn. color means is the filament and the are the petals and the is the stem. The bee is there to show how big the flower is compared to the bee and it's like a bees I veiw of the flower. by:

Taylor

Above: Flowers Are Pretty
Taylor Alexandria is a fifth grade student at Deerwood Elementary in Eagan.

Around the Region

Celebrating Excellence



Left: Mark Baldwin, Director of Education with the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History, begins to teach a session on contour sketching during the Nature Journaling Workshop at the PWLC. (Photo by Molly Stoddard, 6/17/08)



Above: Fish Biologist, Robert Deems of Pendill's Creek, overlooks the lake trout as they are off loaded into the raceway.



Left: During the Dragons and Damsels workshop at the PWLC, Erica presents the northern bluet damselfly she netted to Dianne Rowse, Minnesota Odonata Survey Project. (Photo by Molly Stoddard, 6/14/08)

Below: Richard "Doe" Ramseyer's restored wetland in Licking County, Ohio as part of the Central Ohio Black Duck Initiative.
- USFWS Photo by: Kurt Waterstradt, 7/3/2008

What's Going On?

Director H. Dale Hall recently announced the 2008 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Environmental Leadership Awards. Region 3's, Joel Kemm of the St. Croix Wetland Management District was awarded the Individual Environmental Leadership Award for Waste and Pollution Prevention.

Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge Manger Don Hultman was awarded the "2008 Golden Glow Public Servant Award" from the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers.

Regional Visual Information Specialist Tom Kelley, and Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge Park Ranger Kelly Blackledge won a 2nd place award in the "One Time Publication-Brochure" category at the annual Association of Conservation Information awards. Tom and Kelly won the award for the design and content of the Tamarac NWR station brochure.



Seeking Volunteers!

Interested in helping with some of the many tasks associated with Duck Stamp and Retiree Reunion events? To see a complete schedule events and the description of volunteers needed, go to:

<https://intranet.fws.gov/region3/aba/duckstamp.html>

If you are interested, pick an event and time to volunteer and click on the link to sign up. Assignments will be made on a first come first served basis. Be sure to get approval from your supervisor before signing up. Since overtime is not available, you must get approval for comp time or change in duty hours.



Quote of the Month

Let nature be your teacher. -- William Wordsworth

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hio Reintroduction Program Gives Boost to Rare Beetle

At first glance, the American burying beetle isn't exactly the poster child for the effort to save endangered species through reintroduction. For one thing, it's an invertebrate – no fur, no feathers, never mind an internal skeleton. And then there's the beetle's life cycle – adults find a freshly dead animal and use its carcass as a nursery and food source for the larvae. But it's exactly this behavior that makes the American burying beetle a marvel of adaptation. And a partnership of agencies is helping the beetle toward recovery in part of its historic range by releasing burying beetles and creating conditions that help them produce young.

Most recently, the Service joined with the Ohio Division of Wildlife, the Ohio State University's Department of Entomology, the St. Louis Zoo, and the U.S. Forest Service to bring the American burying beetle back to the Buckeye State. In late June, 228 pairs of American burying beetles were released in Wayne National Forest in southeastern Ohio with hopes they will establish a population.

The beetles were released in Athens County, in an area of Wayne National Forest surveyed in 2006 and 2007 to determine whether the species was still present. The last known record of an American burying beetle in the State of Ohio was in 1974 in Hocking County, which is adjacent to Athens County.

The beetle release process involves digging holes, or plugs, at specially selected sites, placing a quail carcass and a pair of tagged beetles in each cavity, and re-covering the plugs. This process simulates a natural setting for the beetles' life cycle.

Partners plan to monitor the release sites for signs of breeding activity by checking for larvae and later for new adult beetles.

The American burying beetle was designated a federally endangered species in 1989 – the first insect to be so recognized. This beetle species was historically found in 35 states, including Ohio, and several Canadian provinces. Remnant populations of the American burying beetle presently occur only in eastern parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and on Block Island, Rhode Island. The beetles' population decline has been attributed to pesticides, loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation, light pollution, and competition with other carrion feeders.



Above: An adult American burying beetle is placed on a quail carcass as part of a reintroduction program in Ohio.

American burying beetles are about 1 to 1.5 inches in length with orange and black bodies, and feed on dead animals, or carrion, as larvae and adults. American burying beetles form a brood chamber and prepare the carrion for use by their offspring. Burying beetles are one of the only species of insects that display a high level of parental care, with both males and females tending the larvae.

Breeding programs for the American burying beetle are taking place at the St. Louis Zoo, the Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence, R.I., the Ohio State University, and at the Wilds, a conservation center in southeastern Ohio.

--Georgia Parham
External Affairs



An adult American burying beetle and larvae. The Service is partnering with other groups to reintroduce the endangered beetle in Ohio.

Thank you for entering your journal reports and photographs in the Fish and Wildlife Journal (aka. ARS)
<http://ars.fws.gov>.