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## Fish & Wildlife News: October 1996

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# FISH<sup>AND</sup> WILDLIFE NEWS

OCTOBER 1996

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## Putting Refuges on the Map: Service Celebrates National Wildlife Refuge Week

Tired of hearing people refer to national wildlife refuges as national parks and refuge managers as rangers?

Well, the week of October 5-13 is when you can do something about it. Wildlife refuges across the land will be on public display during the second annual "National Wildlife Refuge Week."

Project Leaders, refuge staff and volunteers are set to host a variety of outreach efforts and wildlife-related activities to invite their communities to refuges and educate them about the national treasure that is our refuge system.

"National Wildlife Refuge Week" is the cornerstone of the Service's "100 by 100" outreach effort to make 100 percent of the American people aware of the refuge system by its 100th anniversary in 2003.

Here are a just a few samples:

- In Hawaii, visitors can take a tour to view endangered birds at Hakalau Forest NWR, enjoy a guided crater hike at Kilauea Point NWR, or join an open house and waterfowl viewing at Kealia Pond NWR.
- In California, the "Make a Wish" Foundation is hosting an event at Hopper Mountain NWR to provide a terminally ill man his wish to see a California condor.
- In Indiana, Muscatatuck NWR will be dedicating its new visitor center bird viewing room, offering special bird walks, and hosting "Conservation Field Days" for county third graders.
- In Illinois, Cypress Creek NWR is sponsoring a Regional Teacher In-



stitute and guided tours of the Cache River Wetland Bioreserve.

- In Kansas, Kirwin NWR is hosting a daily open house, a community partnership awareness run/walk-a-thon, a mountain man interpretive program, a wildlife art carving program, and the dedication of the newly completed Prairie Inter-

pretive Trail built as an Eagle Scout partnership project.

- In Alaska, Tetlin NWR is hosting a refuge carnival with a theme of "Fire-d up about the Refuge."

These are just a handful of this year's events. *Fish and Wildlife News* is eager to hear more about your activities and receive articles

and pictures for future editions. We'll run as many as we can. And by the way, keep your eyes open for the October 1996 issue of *National Geographic Magazine*, which includes a feature story on the National Wildlife Refuge System. 🐟

- Gary Stolz

Public Affairs, Washington

### Statement by President Clinton on Signing the "Mollie Beattie Wilderness Area Act"

"I have today signed into law S. 1899, the "Mollie Beattie Wilderness Area Act." While not everyone had the pleasure of knowing and working with Mollie Beattie, her lifelong dedication to conservation has enriched every American. This legislation names one of Alaska's most imposing wilderness areas in her honor. It ensures that future generations will recall the lasting contributions Mollie made to conserving our Nation's priceless natural heritage.

"Mollie stands out in my memory as the person releasing a bald eagle named Hope back into the wild to celebrate the improving condition of our national symbol. I also remember her as one of the people carrying the gray wolf back

into the Yellowstone ecosystem in a vital effort to help restore nature's balance. Yet these two events, unforgettable as they are, represent only symbols of Mollie's many achievements as the first female Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Although her tenure as director was tragically cut short, Mollie left an enduring legacy to the American people. She was determined to conserve the world's wild creatures and their habitat, and to do so effectively. As a direct result of her efforts to make the Endangered Species Act work better, Americans everywhere have voluntarily joined in conserving and restoring the landscapes and open spaces that surround them.

"Mollie strove throughout her life to help people understand the connections that linked the quality of their daily lives to the health and well-being of America's wildlife. Anyone who ever worked with Mollie recognized that her caring, compassion, and wisdom extended to all living creatures. She truly understood the need to actively engage people in wildlife conservation efforts.

"Under this legislation, Mollie Beattie's name will be forever associated with one of the most wild and beautiful places on this planet, the Brooks Range of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

"It is entirely appropriate that we honor Mollie in this way. She was a passionate defender of our 508 National Wildlife Refuges, the largest system of lands in the world dedicated to wildlife conservation. She saw them as places that must be appreciated and honored, as places where we could begin to fulfill our sacred trust as stewards of God's creation. Mollie worked tirelessly, even as her health was failing, to keep these places wild for the benefit of Americans today and for those who will follow us.

"I am deeply grateful to the Alaska delegation for their leadership in introducing this legislation. I appreciate their willingness to commemorate this wild and beautiful place forever to the memory of Mollie Beattie."

WILLIAM J. CLINTON  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
JULY 29, 1996

## Service Mussels Forward with Ecosystem Approach to Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Mussels in the Ohio River, like species of freshwater mussels in many American rivers, are in deep trouble, decimated by habitat degradation, poor water quality, illegal harvests, and the invasion of zebra mussels. Eleven of the 127 native species have gone extinct and 46 others are endangered or in serious decline.

In the past, the Service's different program areas often would have tackled the problem independent of each other. Ecological Services would have focused on regulatory action and relicensing of hydroelectric dams; law enforcement would have dealt with the poaching problem; the local refuge managers would have concentrated on the mussels within refuge waters; and fishery biologists would have worried about the decline of fish populations vital to the mussels' reproductive cycle. In many cases, communication and cooperation, if extant, would have been minimal.

Two years ago, however, the Service began a transition to an ecosystem approach to conservation. Biologists from all programs formed ecosystem teams based primarily on watersheds. This team approach is paying early dividends

for species like the Ohio River mussels.

"The ecosystem approach brought our own people together," said Bob Krska, an ecosystem coordinator in Region 3. "When we got 35 to 40 people together in a room, everyone forgot what program area everyone else was with. We began to realize our common objectives and got excited about what we could do."

Under auspices of the Ohio River Valley Ecosystem team, a "mussel subgroup" attracted the support of a wide range of outside partners, including the National Biological Service, the U. S. Geological Survey, seven state wildlife agencies, the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission, the Army Corps of Engineers, Illinois and Indiana Sea Grant, the Shell Exporters of America, and even Chi Chi's, a restaurant chain that donated surplus glass racks useful for holding mussels in captivity.

Individuals from all these groups are playing a strong role in the initial mussel recovery effort. For example, two teams of divers from the Service, NBS, and the states collected 3,000 native mussels. Once the mussels were ashore,

biologists and volunteers cleaned, measured, and tagged the animals and then transported them to a quarantine facility at the Ohio River Islands NWR.

After 30 days of quarantine, the Service transported the mussels to ponds at the NBS Leetown Science Center and the White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery for research to determine if the mussels will reproduce and how best to feed and rear juvenile mussels in captivity.

"Once we got key partners on board, we had a formidable team," Krska said. "Having the team really helps to get outside partners involved."

The Service's directorate, at this summer's meeting in Maine, affirmed its commitment to a complete transition to an ecosystem approach, with an eye toward creating similar success stories across the country.

Acting Director John Rogers is overseeing the often difficult process of developing a new organizational structure that includes Geographic Assistant Regional Directors responsible for overseeing the ecosystem teams.

Because the Service manages less than 1 percent of the habitat in the lower 48 states important to maintaining our fish and wildlife resources, much of our attention has centered on the last of these three areas, fostering effective partnerships.

"Moving any organization in a new direction is like turning a big ship — it takes time and a lot of energy," Rogers said. "We are in that process now. There have been a few bumps along the way and there undoubtedly will be more in the future. But we are making good progress in the reorganization at the regional level and in revamping the Service's budget to reflect the ecosystem approach.

"The Service's commitment to the ecosystem approach is strong. It is the way we will operate into the 21st century."

- Steve Rideout  
Deputy Director's Office  
Washington



The Ohio Valley Ecosystem team, assisted by volunteers, prepares 3,000 freshwater mussels collected from the river for relocation to a quarantine facility. Photo by Cindy Chaffee, USFWS.

# Service Helps Dedicate Illinois Wetland as 15th Wetland of International Importance

Thousand-year-old cypress trees, bayous, and tangled brush greet canoeists and boaters as they make their way along the winding creek channel. Herons fly ahead as boats bump against cypress knees and snags. Water snakes glide past while myriad songbirds flit through the branches overhead. Locals call it an "emerald paradise."

Louisiana, or maybe Florida? Try southern Illinois. It's the Cache River, site of this country's newest "Wetland of International Importance."

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance added the Cache River wetland, a vast area of cypress sloughs and flooded bottomlands, to its list of internationally important wetlands in 1994 but the area was not officially dedicated until this spring. It is the 15th area in the United States to receive this international honor.

A partnership of agencies, including the Service, the State of Illinois, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, and the Citizens' Committee to Save the Cache River, joined forces to dedicate the 60,000-acre area, which encom-

passes Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge and several outstanding natural areas managed by the State.

Convention Secretary General Delmar Blasco, visiting from Switzerland, attended the celebration, which also marked the convention's 25th anniversary. The convention is an international treaty among 92 countries that have pledged to cooperate in the conservation of wetland habitats. The Convention is known as "Ramsar" for its place of adoption in Iran.

After touring the Cache River wetlands by boat, Service Acting Director John Rogers and Regional Director Bill Hartwig joined Secretary General Blasco in congratulating those involved in conservation efforts for the Cache River wetland.

"Victories in conservation are won acre by acre in communities across America," Rogers said. "It was a task none of us could have done alone. And it is a task that benefits both wildlife and the people who enjoy wildlife."

The Cache River is a complex web of habitats that includes five types of wetlands, bottomland and

uplands forests. More than 250 species of birds can be found in the watershed, and the naturally flooded bottomland forest and wetlands provide resting, nesting, and feeding habitat for thousands of ducks and geese. The wetland harbors 56 State endangered and threatened species, includes two National Natural Landmarks, and supports a blend of northern and southern wildlife species. Other notable features include cypress/tupelo swamps with huge, ancient cypress trees, grasslands, and rocky bluffs.

These remarkable natural features make the Cache River watershed a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, canoeists, and birdwatchers.

"The Cache River is attracting people from around the region who come here to enjoy its natural beauty," Hartwig noted. "As is happening in other parts of the country, protecting and conserving our natural heritage enhances our economic well-being too."

**- Georgia Parham**  
Public Affairs  
Bloomington, Indiana



Visitors to the Cache River dedication celebration were treated to a boat tour of the cypress swamp, with a stop at this 1,000-year-old cypress tree. Photo by Ned Trovillion.

## Service Proposes Youth Waterfowling Day; Approval of Bismuth-Tin Shot

Youngsters will get a special day to themselves to hunt waterfowl this fall under the Service's annual waterfowl hunting regulations.

States will be allowed to set aside a "Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day." The day provides young people an extra hunting day before or after the regular waterfowl season.

The day must be held on either a weekend or holiday when youths would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The day may be held up to 10 days before or after any regular duck season framework or within any split of a regular duck season.

Participants have to be 15 or younger and accompanied by an adult at least 18 years old.

The adult is not allowed to hunt ducks but can participate in other open seasons. Under the proposal, the daily bag limit and species restrictions must be consistent with the regular duck season in the flyway.

Meanwhile, the Service is proposing to permanently approve bismuth-tin shot for waterfowl hunting. Bismuth-tin would join steel as the only legal loads for waterfowl hunting.

Lead shot was phased out for waterfowl hunting in 1991 because it is toxic to birds that ingest it while feeding.

The Bismuth Cartridge Company petitioned the Service to legalize the use of bismuth-tin shot. The petition acknowledged the company's responsibility to com-

plete three studies to determine the effects of ingested bismuth-tin shot on waterfowl.

The Service gave temporary approval for the use of bismuth-tin shot for the latter part of the 1994-95 season and for the 1995-96 season after the company submitted data for an initial, short-term test which showed no toxicity. The Service has extended this temporary approval for the upcoming waterfowl season.

The company now has completed all required toxicity studies. None has shown any evidence of a toxicity problem.

In September, Federal Cartridge Company filed an application with the Service for approval of tungsten-iron shot. The Service currently is considering that application.



Beauty of the hunt. Photo by Pat Hogan, USFWS

# Seven Departments Agree to Bolster Recreational Fisheries

On a fine summer day when more than 500 schoolchildren fished for catfish, bass, and bluegill in a pond near the Washington Monument to kick off National Fishing Week 1996, representatives of six Cabinet-level agencies and the Environmental Protection Agency signed a plan to ensure the youngsters would have plenty of fish to catch in future years.

The Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan calls for increasing recreational fishing opportunities nationwide by strengthening efforts to conserve, restore, and enhance aquatic systems. It recognizes the importance of fishing to the social, cultural, and economic well-being of American society.

President Clinton called for the plan in an Executive Order on Recreational Fisheries issued during the 1995 National Fishing Week.

Unfortunately, many of our nation's recreational fisheries are plagued by pollution, exotic species, habitat alteration, and other problems. As the number of anglers continues to grow at a rate more than twice that of the population as a whole, one major concern of fisheries advocates is to provide more opportunities for people to fish. In-

troducing children to the sport during National Fishing Week at refuges, hatcheries, and other field stations nationwide is one way the Service is helping to spawn tomorrow's fisheries conservationists.

The conservation plan outlines five-year strategies EPA and the six Federal departments will pursue to improve recreational fisheries within the context of their programs and responsibilities.

Participating departments include Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, Defense, Energy, and Transportation. The plan covers all Federal agencies under these departments that are involved in some way with recreational fish conservation or management.

By year end, each agency will develop a specific plan detailing actions to meet the goals of the conservation plan. In particular, they will design strategies to improve fisheries and their habitats and increase angling opportunities and access on Federal lands. To support these goals, the plan calls for increasing partnerships among Federal, State, Tribal, and private organizations and expanding efforts to educate the public about the value and need for healthy aquatic resources.

Oh yeah, the kids had great fun catching and releasing fish, many of which had been stocked earlier by Service fisheries personnel from Mammoth Spring NFH in Arkan-

sas, Harrison Lake NFH in Virginia, and Private John Allen NFH in Mississippi. The states of Arkansas and Maryland provided the fish.

**- Janet Tennyson**  
*Public Affairs*  
*Washington*



A youngster is all smiles after catching a fish at a "Pathway to Fishing" event, a program to educate children about aquatic ecosystems and to teach them to fish, at a pond near the Washington monument. Photo by Tami Heilemann/DOI.

## Talented Toddler Takes Trout at Alaska "Kids Fishing Day"



Christopher Crawford traded his most prized possession for a graphite fishing pole, patiently persisted for two steamy hours on the muddy banks of a small glacier-fed lake, and finally reeled in three rainbow trout.

But as he posed happily for photographs with his catch, enjoying the adulation of fellow anglers, an emergency

arose. His diaper needed changing.

So, prized Winnie the Pooh bear back in hand, off went the two-year-old superstar of Alaska's annual "Kids Fishing Day" sponsored by the Service in conjunction with the Forest Service. His mother, Kathryn, accompanied him.

This was Christopher's first time fishing. He wore wellies and his lucky fishing hat. His bait? Small salmon eggs. Asked about his technique, the fishertoddler commented. "I'm hungry."

For a while, it looked like Christopher might need some help. Two trained Fish and Wildlife Service biologists and a public affairs officer working diligently to hook a fish for him.

"If we hadn't hooked that little

boy a fish, I would have just died," said Steve Miller, fishery biologist with Region 7. "There for a while, I thought he was going to eat those rocks along the bank out of pure boredom."

In the end, little Christopher reeled in the fish with only minimal assistance from his new friends.

Although he was afraid to touch the fish at first, he agreed to after swiping his finger along one's body and thrusting it into his mouth — just to be sure.

**- Connie M. J. Barclay**  
*Public Affairs*  
*Anchorage, Alaska*

# Service Urges Boaters to “Pump and Dump”

Question: What are millions of Americans doing that is destroying and degrading our nation's bays, rivers, lakes, and marine areas without even realizing the damage they are causing?

Answer: Flushing human waste directly into open water.

In fact, one person discharging raw sewage into a waterway has the same effect as 10,000 people whose waste is processed through a sewage treatment plant.

With 77 million boat owners in the United States, the damage to aquatic ecosystems is widespread.

Human waste does not dissipate. When dumped into the water, it continues to spread disease, contaminate shellfish beds, and lower oxygen levels in water. Waterborne diseases including hepatitis, typhoid, and cholera can be transmitted to humans by infected shellfish. In addition, lower amounts of oxygen in the water cause stress to fish

and other aquatic species and destroy their habitat.

“The enormity of this human-caused pollution problem is staggering when you consider that no navigable body of water is exempt,” said John Rogers, the Service's acting director.

To deal with the problem, Congress passed the Clean Vessel Act in 1992. Under the Act, the Service awards grants to States to help them install pumpout and dump facilities for boat sewage.

To date, the Service has awarded \$30 million in grants. States have installed some 2,500 pumpout stations and nearly 1,000 dump stations.

The Act also authorizes extensive outreach efforts to educate the boating public.

Fortunately, the message is clear and easy to understand, and the solution is easy and inexpensive.

Beginning with a kickoff press

conference last winter in conjunction with the Miami International Boat Show, the Service and its Federal, State, and private partners have been spreading the word.

At the boat show, the Service unveiled the new internationally-accepted Clean Vessel Act symbol and exhibit. In addition, a series of television public service announcements are airing around the country.

The Service's public affairs staff arranged two major press events covered by national media and recruited noted musician, boater, and environmentalist Jimmy Buffett to record a radio public service announcement supporting the Clean Vessel Act.

The U.S. Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also joined the Service in the outreach effort. The State of Florida, where boating and clean water are vital to a strong

economy, also has strongly supported the program.

In addition, Service Clean Vessel Act administrator Bob Pacific has recruited trade associations, pumpout manufacturers, and marina owners and operators to the cause.

The Service and the American Sportfishing Promotion Council of the American Sportfishing Association, for example, are sponsoring a toll-free telephone number, 1-800-ASK-FISH, that boaters anywhere in the country can call to find out the location of pumpout facilities.

Pacific also arranged for the schooner *America*, a re-creation of the original boat after which the America's Cup regatta is named, to fly the Clean Water Act banner at a press conference at the Olympic yachting venue in Savannah, Georgia.

But before the event, the Service discovered the Savannah harbor had no pumpout facilities for the thousands of boats expected at the Olympics.

Pacific, working closely with the Service's southeast region, the State of Georgia's Department of Natural Resources, pumpout manufacturers, and local marinas, arranged for adequate pumpout and dump facilities to be in place by the start of the Olympics, thus averting a potentially major hazard to the health of Savannah's waters.

As the schooner visits various ports-of-call in the United States and around the world this year, it will fly the banner and the crew will hand out Clean Vessel Act literature to all who come on board.

Funds for grants under the Act come from the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration account, which is supported by a 10-percent excise tax on fishing equipment and a 3-percent tax on electric trolling motors and sonar fish finders, a portion of the Federal motorboat fuel tax, and import duties on fishing tackle and pleasure boats. Under the grants, States fund at least 25 percent of the cost of each project.

**- Patricia Fisher**  
Public Affairs  
Washington



Acting Director John Rogers demonstrates the proper technique for using “pump and dump” equipment displayed at the International Boat Show in Miami. Photo by Steve Farrell, USFWS.

# Lions and Tigers and ... Snakes— O'Hare Exhibit Educates Travelers About Illegal Wildlife



Travelers to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport learn about the problems of illegal wildlife trade thanks to a new Service exhibit in the international terminal. On hand to unveil the display were: (left to right) Hugh Murphy, deputy aviation commissioner, City of Chicago; members of the Service's O'Hare wildlife inspection team Jim Fisher, Lydia Handy, Suzanne Mihalko, Karen Halpin, Mike Iacomini, Sharon Lynn; Regional Director William Hartwig; and Acting Director John Rogers. Photo by the City of Chicago.

A woman came off an airplane wearing lively jewelry. Literally. She had pinned a Mexican beetle, rhinestones glued to its wings, to her lapel. The beetle was still alive.

A man deplaned with a suitcase with holes in it. The contents? Thirty-seven aggressive Madagascar tree boas and two venomous Malagasy snakes.

Another man had what looked on an X-ray screen to be an elephant tusk. But when his bag was opened, it appeared to be a wood carving. Nothing wrong with that except on closer inspection the "wood" turned out to be ivory. The man had smoked the ivory to look like wood. His bag smelled like a backyard barbecue.

By the thousands they come each year, travelers trying to bring illegal wildlife into the United States. Some have no idea they're violating the law; others are trying to get their piece of the multi-billion-dollar black market in endangered species.

But each runs into the same dead-end: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement inspectors

trained to spot and seize the contraband.

"Ninety percent of the people we stop don't even know what they're doing is illegal," said Keri Halpin, supervisor of the wildlife inspection program at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

To help change those statistics, the Service has set up a dazzling new display in Terminal 5 at O'Hare, the terminal thousands of passengers each day pass through on their way to destinations around the world. The display teaches travelers about the magnitude and consequences of illegal wildlife trade.

A clear, plexiglass globe enclosing a bald eagle in full flight hovers over glass cases filled with wildlife products. Each item came into the U.S. illegally through O'Hare, only to be confiscated by wildlife inspectors: ocelot fur hats, reptile skin boots, coral, carved elephant tusks, and medicines made from tigers and rhinos. Attached to each item is a price tag listing the cost, not of the product, but of bringing the illegal item into the U.S. — a monetary fine, a prison sentence, or both.

Even travelers hurrying to gates to meet final boarding calls are halted by the display and its message. Exotic, sometimes beautiful, wildlife products are displayed against a photo backdrop depicting the ugly side of illegal wildlife trade: rhinos and elephants slaughtered for their horns and tusks, pandas killed by pelt hunters, and sea turtles taken for their shells. The centerpiece is a striking revolving photo mural showing wildlife in native habitats.

The exhibit shows not only the problem, but also a solution. Viewers are given "buyer beware" tips and information on wildlife laws. Inspectors say the biggest hurdle to overcome is letting the public know about the problem of illegal wildlife trade. They say those who know before they go are more likely to avoid purchasing products that endanger species already in trouble, and are less likely to bring illegal items back into the United States.

Acting Service Director John Rogers and Regional Director Bill Hartwig helped dedicate the display

in May along with officials from the City of Chicago and O'Hare Airport. O'Hare is the first terminal in the United States to incorporate the Service's wildlife inspection program into international passenger processing. Cooperation from the airport and the city are helping the Service get its conservation message to thousands of international passengers each year.

In fact, Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago gave the effort a boost by hosting a media event prior to the exhibit's unveiling.

Inspectors at O'Hare had a roomful of items from which to choose to decorate the display. As with other ports of entry around the country, O'Hare inspectors have a huge responsibility checking cargo, personal luggage, and passengers for illegal wildlife and products. At O'Hare, nearly 4,000 shipments a year, totaling more than \$37 million, pass through the port.

— **Georgia Parham**

*Public Affairs  
Bloomington, Indiana*



# Wolves Thriving in Yellowstone, No New Introductions in 1997

The howl of the wolf once again fills the night air in Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho, thanks to the Service's successful reintroduction program.

The return of the wolf has gone so well, in fact, that the Service will make no new introductions in 1997, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt said.

"The wolves already released have reproduced well and suffered few losses and the program so far is not only under budget but ahead of schedule," Babbitt said. "I have concurred with a recommendation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that we forgo any further reintroductions in the immediate future."

Seven litters of wolves were believed born this spring to reintroduced parents in central Idaho.

Four of the reintroduced Idaho wolves died in Idaho in 1996 according to the Nez Perce Tribe, which monitors wolf activity in Idaho. One was shot, one was killed by a mountain lion, one drowned, and one death was from undetermined causes.

Fifteen wolves were reintro-



Service biologist Alice Whitelaw helps transport a sedated gray wolf. Photo by Pedro Ramirez, Jr./U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

duced into central Idaho and 14 in Yellowstone National Park in 1995.

Twenty wolves were reintroduced in central Idaho and 17 in Yellowstone National Park in 1996.

"If the wolf population in one recovery area does appear to lag, we have the option of moving animals from one area to another," said Ralph Morgenweck, the Service's regional director in Denver, Colorado. Morgenweck said that type of relocation work is routine and also substantially reduces costs and planning.

"Forgoing releases in 1997 will also help reduce potential wolf pack conflicts," said Ed Bangs, the wolf reintroduction program coordinator. Seven wolves have been lost in Yellowstone in 1996—two adults and one pup were

believed killed by other wolves, two were illegally killed, one was hit by a car, and one died after falling into a hot spring.

Bangs said while wolf mortality in Yellowstone was slightly higher than in Idaho, the rate remains below predictions. "With the two litters born last year to the Yellowstone wolves, we started off much better than expected and that momentum has continued throughout this year," Bangs said any reintroduction proposals beyond 1997 will be evaluated on a yearly basis.

Prior to the reintroduction of the gray wolf, the animals had been absent from Yellowstone and central Idaho since the late 1920s. The reintroduction goal calls for establishment of 10 breeding pairs in each of three recovery areas for three successive years, which would result in a recovered wolf population and removal of wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains from the endangered species list by 2002. Central Idaho and Yellowstone National Park are two of the recovery areas; northwest Montana is the third, although it is not a reintroduction zone. 🐾

## National Postal Museum Premieres New Federal Duck Stamp Exhibit

Visitors to the Smithsonian Institution National Postal Museum will learn about wildlife conservation through a new exhibit on the Federal Duck Stamp.

The new permanent exhibit, entitled "Artistic License: The Duck Stamp Story," debuted on June 27.

The exhibit was made possible by a gift from Jeanette Cantrell Rudy of Nashville, Tennessee, an avid waterfowl hunter and one of the world's most renowned collectors of Federal Duck Stamps and philatelic rarities.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is grateful to Jeanette Rudy and the National Postal Museum for giving a resounding stamp of approval to one of this agency's most longstanding and successful conservation programs, the Federal Duck Stamp," said Acting Director John Rogers.

"It's a terrific help to the Service's wetlands conservation mission that the nearly half-million people who visit the National Postal Museum each year now will learn about the invaluable conservation contributions of waterfowl hunters, stamp collectors, artists, and wildlife enthusiasts who buy Duck Stamps and help conserve wetlands habitat and waterfowl."

The 800-square-foot Jeanette Cantrell Rudy Gallery, depicting a wetlands scene, includes displays of rare Duck Stamps and other philatelic artifacts to highlight the Federal Duck Stamp's role in conserving wetlands and waterfowl. Tracing the origins of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, the exhibit includes rare Duck Stamps, stamp irregularities, as well as unique stamp-related materials prized by collectors.

The exhibit also displays three mannequins featuring the faces of Jeanette Rudy, who is depicted hunting waterfowl; Jim Hautman, a two-time Federal Duck Stamp artist from Minnesota, who is portrayed sketching wildlife; and Jack Gregory, a long-time associate of Rudy's who assists with her philanthropic endeavors, who is portrayed birdwatching. The faces were made from actual plaster casts of Rudy, Hautman, and Gregory. 🐾

- Janet Tennyson  
Public Affairs  
Washington



The exhibit, "Artistic License: The Duck Stamp Story," opened at the National Postal Museum this summer. Photo: Tami Heilemann/DOI.



# Race Against the Clock: Refuge Tries to Stop Bird Epidemic Before Fall Migration

Normally a haven for migrating birds, Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge in California instead has become a deathtrap in recent months because of an avian botulism epidemic. At summer's end, refuge workers were struggling to contain the epidemic before the fall migration brings thousands of ducks to the sea's salty shores.

By the end of August, 100 Service employees and their counterparts with the California State Department of Fish and Game had collected 5,563 dead birds. Nearly

4,000 were white and endangered brown pelicans, representing 10 to 15 percent of the West's pelican population.

Clark Bloom, the refuge manager, was not hopeful. Avian botulism thrives in the hot weather common to the Salton Sea.

"If we could get some sort of break in the weather, we might be able to stop it," Bloom said in early September, "but normally we don't get that break until at least October. In the meantime, the only course of action available is to keep picking

up the dead birds."

Some 75,000 ducks stop at the refuge in late September and early October. The Salton Sea, 120 miles north of San Diego, was created by a manmade break in the Colorado River in 1905. It is 278 feet below sea level. Once a popular tourist destination, the sea has become so polluted by agricultural and industrial run off that it smells on hot days. Ducks still find the sea a friendly place to stop because of ample nearby food supplies.

Avian botulism is most commonly spread by maggots that are consumed by other birds. The outbreak is puzzling because pelicans eat fish, which have not been known in the past to have spread avian botulism. Some are concerned that overuse of pesticides in the surrounding area may have a connection to the outbreak.

"Ducks are so mobile, we have the added problem that they stop here, catch the disease, and take it elsewhere," Bloom said. 🐼

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## Major Settlement with Pipeline Companies to Fund Restoration of Midwestern Creek

Boosted by a multimillion dollar settlement with two pipeline companies, the Service will join the States of Ohio and Indiana in a full-scale restoration effort for a biologically rich stream fouled by a diesel spill in 1993.

A ruptured pipeline spilled 30,000 gallons of diesel into Fish Creek in northeastern Indiana and northwestern Ohio, killing fish, endangered mussels, and other wildlife and fouling a waterway considered one of the most biologically diverse in the Great Lakes region.

This summer, a settlement negotiated among the Service, the two states, and the two oil companies responsible for operation of the pipeline will provide \$2.8 million to help restore the creek's resources.

The spill contaminated a 7-mile stretch of the creek killing a variety of wildlife including muskrats, migratory birds such as kingfishers and wood ducks, sport and non-game fish, crayfish, and frogs. The oil also threatened populations of the 30 species of freshwater mussels found in Fish Creek, which act as natural water purifiers and are acutely sensitive to pollution.

Fish Creek has long been recognized as a special place. It is the

only known home of the endangered white cat's paw pearlymussel. The creek also harbors two other Federally endangered mussels, the clubshell and the northern riffleshell, and several state endangered mussels. The presence of

these and other mussel species is testimony to the creek's high water quality and the diversity of wildlife it supports.

Prior to the spill, Fish Creek was the focus of a partnership of public and private agencies to con-

serve and protect the watershed's rare and endangered species. The Nature Conservancy, the Service, resource agencies in Ohio and Indiana, the Consolidated Farm Services Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and local Soil and Water Conservation districts are cooperating in the Fish Creek Preservation Project to ensure the future of this rich ecosystem.

With the settlement, the trustee agencies for damaged natural resources will use funds to restore the unique character of Fish Creek. Trustees include the Service, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. The agencies are working to complete a draft restoration plan which will be made available for public comment.

The plan will suggest strategies to improve water quality and bring back mussel and wildlife populations to pre-spill levels, implement local education programs, and protect the waterway from future harm.



**- Georgia Parham**  
Public Affairs

Bloomington, Indiana



Biologist Cindy Chaffee of the Bloomington, Indiana, field office, collects sediment samples from Fish Creek after a ruptured pipeline spilled 30,000 gallons of diesel fuel into the waterway. Photo by USFWS.

# Faster than a Speeding Bullet

Bad news travels fast. Unfortunately, it travels doubly fast when the bad news happens to be wrong.

The Service is still receiving angry letters and telephone calls months after a prominent sportsman's organization complained in its newsletter that the Service had used Duck Stamp funds to make a grant supporting the work of an anti-hunting group, Friends of Animals.

The complaint was based on false information that could easily have been corrected had the organization called the Service before going to press. But, as the Service has seen repeatedly with so-called endangered species "horror stories," bearers of such news often don't check the facts.

The truth is that the Service had indeed made two grants to Friends of Animals but under the African Elephant Conservation Act — not from Duck Stamp funds (which by law can be used only to buy wetland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System.)

This Act provides funding for the Service to make grants to non-governmental groups to engage in on-the-ground, anti-poaching efforts for the conservation of African elephants in their range nations. Grants must be matched at least dollar-for-dollar by the organizations that receive them. The Act has been highly successful — so successful, in fact, that House Speaker Newt Gingrich made a rare speech on the House floor in favor of its continuation.

The largest recipients of grant

money under the Act have been two sportsman's organizations: the African Safari Club of Washington, D.C., which has gotten more than \$600,000, and the Safari Club International, which has received more than \$100,000.

Friends of Animals applied for, and after a competitive process, received a \$46,259 grant in 1993 for field equipment such as radios, bikes, and uniforms for anti-poaching patrols in the African nation of Senegal, where the westernmost population of African elephants resides. In 1995, the group received \$39,514 for the same purpose. Part of the grants also went to pay salaries of Senegalese anti-poaching patrol members.

FOA also arranged for Israeli commandos to travel to Senegal to train the anti-poaching patrols. As a result of these anti-poaching efforts, the African elephant population in Senegal has stabilized.

The Service supports hunting as an acceptable recreational activity that often serves as a valuable wildlife management tool. In fact, under the President's recent executive order on the management of the refuge system, hunting is cited as a priority use of the system.

But, at the same time, it would be improper for the Service to discriminate against any group because of its position on hunting or any other conservation issue.

FOA submitted competitive grant proposals under the Act; in fact, they were the only proposals dealing with the Senegalese elephant population.



A Service grant helped equip a Senegalese anti-poaching patrol, but some news reports cited the grant as evidence the Service is anti-hunting. Photo by Sue Lieberman.

The vast majority of letter writers and callers to the Service on this issue have been satisfied when the facts were presented to them. They have understood that the Service is operating within the law and not supporting anti-hunting efforts.

Unfortunately, some publications have picked up the story and repeated it, again without calling to verify the facts with the Service. Not surprisingly, the story has changed a bit each time, and one publication recently stated that the Service had given FOA a grant to pay for its legal expenses in an anti-hunting lawsuit.

The challenge for the Service's public affairs staff is to get the cor-

rect news to travel as fast as the bad news.

"Once a story like that gets loose, it takes on a life of its own," said Phil Million, chief of public affairs for the Service. "It often takes an enormous effort to get the truth out before we get buried under an avalanche of letters and phone calls. We have to write letters-to-the-editor, call reporters and outdoor writers before they repeat the story, and answer the queries of congressman and senators who have received complaints from their constituents.

"It's like trying to fight a forest fire. You hope you can snuff it out before the wind picks up."

**- Hugh Vickery**  
Public Affairs  
Washington

## New Policy Balances Angling, Endangered Species Conservation

In a move to better balance the needs of anglers with the need to conserve endangered species, the Interior Department and the Commerce Department jointly approved a new policy to improve the administration of the Endangered Species Act as it relates to recreational fisheries.

The policy, signed during National Fishing Week in June, will guide the agencies in resolving conflicts between native fish restora-

tion and recreational fishing on a case-by-case basis. Most significantly, the new policy encourages all interested parties to be involved in the endangered species recovery planning process.

The policy outlines steps the two agencies will take to ensure consistency in the administration of the Endangered Species Act; increase partnerships with other Federal, State, and Tribal fisheries managers, conservation organizations,

and the recreational fisheries community; involve these groups in recovery planning and other actions taken for species listed under the act and those proposed for listing; increase public information regarding the relationship between conservation and recovery of listed species and recreational fisheries; and provide more fishing opportunities on Federal lands.

The policy was a top priority of the Sport Fishing and Boating Part-

nership Council, a Federally chartered panel of sportfishing and boating advocates from the private sector and state government agencies that counsels the Interior Secretary on recreational fishing and boating issues. President Clinton required the new policy in his Executive Order on Recreational Fisheries signed in June 1995.

# Cold War Laboratory Becomes Wildlife Education Hot Spot

Harry Diamond Laboratory, a few miles outside of Washington in Woodbridge, Va., once was a clandestine outpost of the Cold War, a place where scientists studied the effects of nuclear blasts under top secret cover.

But soon the laboratory, which sits on 580 acres of wet pasture and tidal marshes, will be home to more peaceful activity as a wildlife refuge and education center for urban students.

In 1994, the Army closed the facility, and Congress directed that the buildings and land be handed over to the Service. The transfer will be completed when the Army finishes testing for and removing any toxic waste that might have been discarded on the property during the Cold War years.

"One of the benefits of having the Army control this land was that it remained in effect a wildlife refuge all those years," said Frederick Milton, refuge manager of nearby Mason Neck NWR, who will oversee the new refuge. "It is about the largest section of upland in the county that is not a golf course."

The Woodbridge Foundation, a

non-profit corporation created by local citizens, will assist the Service in creating an education facility for students ranging from kindergarten through post-graduate. The students will have a chance to see and study habitat that is home to more than 200 species of birds, including many raptors.

Being so close to a major metropolitan area has advantages and disadvantages, Milton said. The major advantage is that urban students don't have to travel far to see rare wildlife habitat.

"There aren't too many meadows and grasslands left in this county," Milton said. "We will be able to provide students a hands-on opportunity to take what they learn in the classroom and apply it in the field."

The Service already has an extensive education and outreach program at Mason Neck, which is just across the Potomac River. Four to six classes a month visit the refuge, ranging from kindergarten to 10th grade.

In one area of the refuge, students study three wet meadows that are in different stages of succession.



Refuge Operations Specialist Carol Sanderson, left, and outdoor recreation planner Yvonne Schultz offer congressional staff members a close encounter with an eastern hognosed snake during a tour of Mason Neck NWR. Photo by Hugh Vickery, USFWS.

Local ninth graders also collect basic biological data and do ground-truthing of air photos of the refuge forests. If they are lucky, the youngsters can catch a glimpse of a bald eagle, which the refuge was established to help conserve.

The downside to being located in an urban area is that it can limit management options. Milton wants to do prescribed burns on the Harry Diamond Lab site once the Service takes over the land, but getting ap-

proval of local officials may not be easy. In fact, the county currently is considering an anti-burning ordinance.

"We can mow the fields and that's all right," Milton said. "But it doesn't do the trick over the long-term."

**- Hugh Vickery**  
Public Affairs  
Washington



Regional Director Bill Hartwig addresses reporters in Bayfield, Wisconsin, prior to the arrival of Secretary Bruce Babbitt. "I am proud to say that the Fish and Wildlife Service has played an integral role in restoration of lake trout in Lake Superior over the last forty years. Through stocking from national fish hatcheries, the Sea Lamprey Management program we manage under a bi-national agreement with Canada and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, and active partnerships with tribes, states, other federal agencies and Canada, we have come a long way toward our common goal of self-sustaining populations of lake trout in Lake Superior," he said.

## 17 Service Employees Recognized as "Unusually Outstanding" for 1995

Seventeen Service employees received the "Unusually Outstanding" Award in 1995. The award recognizes: 1) extraordinary service or accomplishment that demonstrates exceptional innovation and/or ability and contributes significantly to improved efficiency or accomplishment in program areas within the Service, (2) performance of assigned duties in such an exceptional manner and with such identifiable benefits as to warrant additional recognition, (3) development and/or improvement of current policies and procedures resulting in extraordinary tangible or intangible benefits realized by the Service, (4) exceptional leadership in the accomplishment of a group initiative, or (5) a significant contri-

bution to the Service's goal of productivity, quality, and timeliness improvement. The 17 recipients were:

Hannibal Bolton, Region 9  
James F. Burnett, Jr., R4  
Helen E. Czekalski, R5  
Dan H. Diggs, R1  
Timothy E. Fannin, R5  
J. Brent Giezantanner, R2  
Mark J. Hogan, R6  
Richard J. Iwanski, R6  
Sharon N. Janis, R7  
Fred A. Johnson, R9  
Ronald D. Major, R2  
Patti A. Meyers, R3  
Richard J. Nehrling, R4  
Robert A. Peoples, R9  
Teresa A. Tancre, R1  
Wayne S. White, R1  
Teresa A. Woods, R7

# Conservation, Water on Prairies Allow Ducks to Fly High Again

Ducks have staged an impressive comeback less than a decade since a long drought left many nesting areas dry as bone and populations at alarmingly low levels. Boosted by three years of plentiful rain and snowfall in key nesting areas, nearly 90 million ducks will fly south this fall, according to Service estimates.

"The fall flight index is 16 percent higher than last year's index, and certainly one of the highest

we've seen since breeding duck surveys were started in the 1950s," Acting Director John Rogers said. "The index for the number of young ducks produced was the second highest recorded and was 25 percent higher than that of last year."

"We've come a long way since the drought of the late 1980s when the fall flight was 57 million ducks," Rogers said. "We can be thankful for the abundance of water

but we also must applaud the habitat conservation work done by the partners of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and by hunters and other conservationists."

The good news on the estimated fall flight follows the results of the annual spring breeding duck survey, which recorded an estimated 37.5 million breeding ducks in the key nesting areas, up 5 percent from 35.9 million in 1995. The survey samples 1.3 million square miles across the north-central United States, western and northern Canada, and Alaska and estimates the number of ducks in important breeding areas.

Populations of four species—gadwall, blue-winged teal, northern shoveler, and canvasback—reached record highs. In particular, blue-winged teal, up 25 percent to 6.4 million, and northern shoveler, up 21 percent to 3.4 million, showed substantial gains.

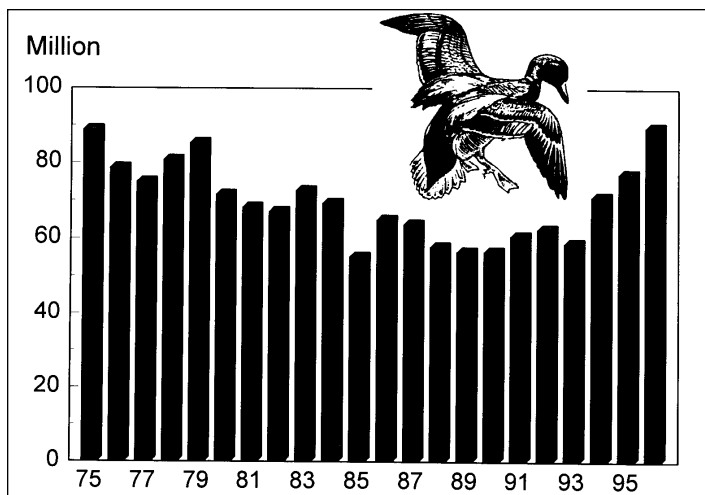
The resurgence in duck populations has made it possible for the Service to extend hunting seasons and expand bag limits in the past two years.

Rogers explained that the fall flight index is only a rough estimate of the number of ducks that will fly south along the Nation's four major flyways this fall. "The estimate comes from a survey of the primary duck nesting areas, which stretch from South Dakota to Alaska," he said. "Biologists have long recognized that the estimate's accuracy isn't known but it does provide a comparison to prior years."

This year's fall flight of 90 million compares to an average of 82 million during the 1970s, a period with abundant waterfowl and good habitat conditions.

"We must keep in mind that these are the good times when we have abundant water on the prairies," Rogers said. "If the past is any indication, there will be drier years sometime in the future. Therefore, we must continue our efforts to conserve and restore wetland habitat. We need to ensure we have a large base of habitat that will be available year in and year out regardless of how much snow and rain fall."

**- Hugh Vickery**  
Public Affairs  
Washington



## Regional Roundup

• **Babbitt, Glickman announce landmark habitat conservation plan.** On June 27, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman announced agreements with Plum Creek Timber Company to protect habitat for threatened and endangered species and other wildlife on private lands and national forests. Secretary Babbitt signed a habitat conservation plan on private lands owned by Plum Creek in the I-90 corridor north of Seattle, Washington. Secretary Glickman announced a proposed land exchange between the USDA Forest Service and Plum Creek to consolidate public forests currently interspersed with 170,000 acres of Plum Creek's private lands in a checkerboard pattern. The Plum Creek HCP will protect old-growth forests, create 200-foot buffers on fish-bearing streams, limit or restrict logging on wetlands, and

provide both habitat for nesting and roosting spotted owls. It will also provide adequate areas for distribution and dispersal to encourage long-term recovery for owls as well as grizzly bears, marbled murrelets, and goshawks. It is estimated that the Plum Creek HCP will protect more than 280 species of fish and wildlife, including 4 listed species, in an ecosystem that spans 170,000 acres and 20 watersheds.

• **Biologists work to unravel mystery of common murre die-off.** Common murre, a Pacific coast seabird, are dying in large numbers on the Oregon coast. An estimated 146 birds have been collected off the beach between the towns of Waldport and Seal Rock—a one-month record for this 5-mile stretch of coastline. Based on this and other counts from other sections of the Oregon coast, mortality of adult

murre could range to several thousand birds. There is also evidence of birds abandoning their nesting colonies toward the southern part of their range in Oregon. The National Wildlife Health Research Center in Madison, Wisconsin, is assisting with on-site and laboratory analysis of recovered carcasses, most of which display signs of emaciation and starvation. Biologists have found no evidence of contamination that may have triggered the die-off. The emaciated condition of the birds may indicate an inability to find food during the stressful breeding season, due perhaps to changes in ocean temperature and chemistry that mimic "El Niño" conditions.

• **Power company to fund jack pine restoration in Michigan.** The Service has negotiated an agreement with Detroit Edison, a

Michigan utility company, to provide \$12,500 for jack pine restoration on a 240-acre property owned by Trout Unlimited. This restoration will provide habitat for endangered Kirtland's warblers.

• **North Carolina safe harbor agreements completed.** Two new Safe Harbor agreements have been completed for properties in Cumberland County, North Carolina. The McCormick family (2,500 acres) and the Estate of Mary Pride Clark (1,800 acres) have agreed to their baseline responsibilities, which include providing foraging and nesting habitat for red-cockaded woodpecker groups.

• **Company pays fine after cutting down tree with hawk nest.** As part of a negotiated plea agreement, Minneapolis-based Opus

Corporation recently agreed to pay a \$1,000 fine and make a \$500 donation to the Wildlife Rehab Clinics. In March 1996, employees of Opus Corporation cut down a tree with an active red-tailed hawk nest. Nearby citizens who had watched the nest for six years were very upset and reported the felling of the tree to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. In addition to the fine and conservation donation, the executives of Opus Corporation agreed to train their employees about laws regarding bird nests.

• **Alert Service inspectors lead to major drug bust.** On June 5, 1996, Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement officers were at O'Hare Airport's Mexicana Air Cargo Facility to seize reptile-skin boots being imported to the United States without a Mexican CITES permit. While one inspector counted the boots, the other noticed two cardboard boxes on a pallet with leather sandals sticking out of one of the boxes. Upon examination, the boxes were found to contain sandals, newspapers, and several square bundles wrapped in brown tape. Suspecting marijuana, the Service inspectors contacted U.S. Customs agents. The two boxes contained 11 bundles of marijuana with a total weight of 112 pounds and a street value (per U.S. Customs) of \$465,000. It was reported to be the largest drug seizure at O'Hare in three years.

• **Insecticide kills thousands of fish.** On July 14, an application of the insecticide endosulfan (trade name: Thiodan) killed 10,000-15,000 fish at Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge near Calipatria, California. One Bureau of Reclamation employee was sickened by the pesticide and hospitalized. Fish and Wildlife Service staff are investigating the situation. Endosulfan is a pesticide included in the ongoing national Endangered Species Act consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency.

• **Agreement reached to protect and restore longleaf pine areas in Louisiana.** The Service, the Louisiana Army National Guard, and The Nature Conservancy reached an agreement in July to protect and restore four longleaf pine areas on Camp Beauregard Training Area in

central Louisiana. The plan will benefit red-cockaded woodpeckers and other species indigenous to this habitat. Prior to the agreement, the National Guard was concerned that restoring longleaf pine would encourage red-cockaded woodpeckers to move onto the training area (none reside there now) and restrict future training activities. To address those concerns, the Service prepared a "no jeopardy" biological opinion that provided the National Guard "Safe Harbor" from prohibitions of Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act. The Safe Harbor provisions were linked to the National Guard's compliance with the reasonable and prudent measures, terms, and conditions of the incidental take statement in the biological opinion.

• **Manatees recover, are released.** Two female manatees that exhibited signs of neuromuscular distress during this spring's manatee die-off have recovered and were released from captivity June 17. Both manatees were rescued in southwest Florida by the State Department of Environmental Protection in April and taken to Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa where they healed rapidly. Since no significant manatee mortality or distress has occurred for several weeks, both animals were released in Englewood, Florida. Two male manatees, which also recovered at Lowry Park, were released at Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island June 4. A fifth manatee, a female, has also recovered but remains at Lowry Park Zoo with a sick calf.

• **Service receives funding to train Russian wildlife managers.** The Service received a \$37,500 grant from the Department of Defense to cover the latest phase of its ongoing program to train Russian wildlife managers. The grant enabled six Russians from the Ministry of Environment and five from the Ministry of Defense to attend the third annual seminar/field trip on practical aspects of wildlife and natural resources management in protected military and civilian areas. The seminar was held in the United States in August. ➤

# FISH<sup>AND</sup> WILDLIFE NEWS

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**Deadline for next issue: November 1, 1996**

## Acting Director's Corner

### A Comeback for FWS News

Welcome to the first edition of *Fish and Wildlife News* since publication was suspended in September 1994. I know many of you missed the News, and so did I. The Service has absorbed some heavy hits recently — none harder, of course, than Mollie's tragic passing — and I thought resurrecting our newsletter might be a way to bring us together and strengthen the organization.

I think all of us know and value the importance of maintaining good communications in a complex, far-flung agency such as ours. It doesn't come easy, but when it works it is always worth the effort. We can promulgate all the policies, "visions," and initiatives we want, but they aren't going to accomplish much unless they are understood and supported by Service employees.

It's our people who make our policies work, not the reverse.

The Department's newspaper, *People, Land, and Water*, does a good job of reporting major Service topics as part of its overall coverage of the Department, and we will continue to

support that effort. But we need something that speaks more directly to individual employees about what is happening within the Service at both the policy level and the people level — something that ties us together despite the program, structural, and geographical barriers that separate us. This is one Service, not a loose confederation of competing programs. *Fish and Wildlife News* will reflect that.

I've asked Public Affairs to produce a newsletter that will be somewhat shorter and more news oriented than the old one. I've also asked that it appear more frequently — we are shooting for eight issues a year. So read, enjoy and criticize (constructively, I hope) at will. I hope that all employees will feel encouraged to submit articles and photographs.

The Service is a wonderful mosaic of dedicated people with an important story to tell. *Fish and Wildlife News* will help us tell that story to ourselves and to the world.

