Many of you know Pat Walsh, some of you don’t. Pat, formerly of Avon Park AFR, FL, has left DoD for cooler pastures in the National Wildlife Refuge system in Alaska (see article on page 18). We owe a debt of gratitude to Pat for all the work he has done in support of the Association. I am personally indebted for his assistance on the Government Affairs Committee during the past two years. Much of what he did was done in a silent way and might not otherwise be recognized. Thanks Pat and good luck!

After a long and considered search, Rhys Evans, with the help of Tessa Martin-Bashore and Jim Beemer, has found a new webmaster. Ms. Ginny Dickerson of Vicksburg, Mississippi recently signed a contract to provide much needed web assistance. This is no small matter. We recognized some time ago, thanks to Marjorie McHenry, that the web would serve as an important information exchange and communication tool for the Association.

And Jess Cobb has done a great job in getting it off the ground at a reasonable cost. Still, we have yet to realize the full potential of this medium. We hope that Rhys and Ginny will help get us there.

We have had an outstanding response to our call for contributions to the Field Notes section of the Newsletter thanks to the efforts of John Joyce and Scott Smith, our two Eastern Directors. Originally advocated by one of our Past Presidents, Tom Poole, we need more of this sort of input to the Newsletter. I challenge each of you to come up with at least one such contribution during the coming year.

In our last issue, we published a letter authored by our friend, Congressman Don Young, requesting information from DoD on the status of natural resource management functions performed by DoD employees. We also included the interim response provided by Defense. As of this
writing, Defense has not provided a final response to Mr. Young. We await the outcome.

We have a new working group on Invasive Species. With exotic species increasingly recognized as a major threat to ecosystem integrity, perhaps second only to habitat loss, it is timely. This follows successful establishment of the Herpetology Working Group, which hosted a workshop at West Point Military Academy, NY this year. Jim Beemer spearheaded the NMFWA working group concept and is to be commended. For more information on the Invasive Species Working Group, contact Kim Mello, Fort McCoy, WI (608-388-5766; DSN: 280-5766). For the Herpetology Working Group, contact Jay Rubinoff, Rock Island Arsenal, IL (309-782-4474; DSN: 793-4474).

Please read and consider the draft resolution published on page 6. While it is simply stated, it has serious implications for the direction that our Association will take in the coming months and years. It cuts to the core of the mission of this organization, and the strategies we pursue in attempting to live up to that mission — providing for sound natural resources management on DoD lands in support of the military mission. This resolution will be brought up for consideration at our March 2001 business meeting.

I thank this year’s Board of Directors for the outstanding work they have done on your behalf during the past 10 months. I also thank you all for allowing us the opportunity to serve and promote the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association. It has been both a rewarding and a frustrating year. Rewarding in seeing that we can accomplish much that is good for Defense natural resources management when we pursue our convictions aggressively. Frustrating in that those for whom we work, and, unfortunately, many others in the greater federal bureaucracy under-appreciate the value and nature of the work that we do in our capacity as civil servants.

I urge you to seek out opportunities to help your Association -- run for a seat on the Board of Directors, volunteer to present a paper, contribute an article or note to the newsletter, participate in our working groups. Be proactive, your Association needs your help. And there is much work to be done!

See you all in Washington, DC. We have important business to discuss, and we need to hear your voice.

As you are reading my fourth newsletter, I want to thank those who make each issue possible — mainly the Board of Directors and Committee Chairpersons, but also those of you in the field who contribute information and articles. You will notice an increase in this issue of the articles which fall under the heading of “Field Notes” (denoted by the borders of stars on the titles). Unfortunately, not all the photos I received could be squeezed into the newsletter — thanks for those and keep those articles coming. The sharing of this information here and on the web site makes this organization a uniquely strong and cohesive group.

Our advertising rates have been finalized, so send any potential advertisers to the President or directly to me. Please address any comments regarding the newsletter to me; those are welcome and will help the FAWN to improve.

Mike Passmore (Michael.F.Passmore@erdc.usace.army.mil)
2001 National Military Fish and Wildlife Association Meeting Program — Washington, DC

Program Summary

Sunday, March 18
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.  Wetlands Grant Proposal Workshop
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.  Board of Directors Meeting
7:30 – 9:30 p.m.  Committee Meetings

Monday, March 19
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.  Committee Meetings

Tuesday, March 20
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.  Partners in Flight Meeting
5:00 – 6:30 p.m.  New Board of Directors Meeting
7:30 – 9:00 p.m.  Government Affairs Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 21
8:00 – 8:20 a.m.  Opening Remarks
8:20 – 10:10 a.m.  Technical Session 1, Conservation and Management of Carnivores on Military Lands
10:30 – 12:00 noon  Technical Session 2, Feral Animal Impacts on Military Operations
1:00 – 2:40 p.m.  Technical Session 3, Degraded Streams and Riparian Management
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.  Technical Session 4, Wetlands: Constraints and Opportunities
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.  Herptile Working Group Meeting
7:00 – 10:00 p.m.  Show and Tell Reception

Thursday, March 22
8:00 – 9:45 a.m.  Technical Session 5, Threatened and Endangered Species Management and Research
10:00 – 12:00 noon  Technical Session 6, Government Affairs “Goes to Court”
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.  Department of Defense Conservation Planning Session
2:45 – 5:00 p.m.  General Business Meeting
5:00 – 6:30 p.m.  Invasive Species Working Group Meeting
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.  Reception
7:30 – 9:30 p.m.  Awards Banquet

Friday, March 23
8:00 – 12:00 noon  Service Breakout Sessions
  U.S. Army
  U.S. Navy
  U.S. Air Force
FOLKS! It’s silent auction time again !!!

It is once again time to think of our annual meeting and the one event that occurs that excites all: the Silent Auction! This activity raises money for our organization and is a fairly painless way to do it. And everyone who participates “wins”! As host of this annual meeting’s Silent Auction, I am asking for donations of useful or attractive items such as artwork, books, CDs, cowboy poetry tapes, etcetera. If you can give something, please let me know via email. I’ll see you in DC!

Tina Lorentzen (loren@gwmail.usna.edu)

2001 dod training sessions

By the time you read this, you should have received your pre-registration packet for our March meeting in Washington, DC. If not, please contact me (wrayt@nswc.navy.mil; 540-653-4186; DSN 249-4186) and I'll forward you the information immediately.

This meeting is shaping up to be one of the best ever. Located at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in beautiful downtown Washington, DC, you will find most if not all of your needs right at your fingertips. Our nation's capitol is served well by its Metro System. Vehicles are not a necessity unless you plan to travel beyond the city limits. Numerous eating establishments of various ethnic origin are located within walking distance of the hotel. And the hotel has spent a few chips since our last stay four years ago, providing us with fitting accommodations for our annual meeting.

The Program Chair has worked hard to ensure a top quality meeting. The Host committee and I have worked hard spending your registration fees. So, come on and get the hell out of Dodge and spend a few days with some of the finest people around.

Look forward to seeing you.

Thomas Wray (WrayT@NSWC.NAVY.MIL)

Nmfw a show & tel l

It is time to start thinking of the 2001 NMFWA Workshop and while you are considering your travel plans to the Nation's capital...how about contributing to the Show and Tell reception. The Show and Tell is a great opportunity to network with natural resource professionals in an informal atmosphere. We need YOU to share the wit and wisdom of your installation's successes, failures, high points, low points, achievements, good deeds, unique programs, partnerships, recent ventures, pet projects, and/or money saving techniques!!!! This is the time to share with your counterparts so we can all learn what is going on in your part of the world. Projects can be presented in several formats: poster boards, video presentation, computer, slide shows, or any combination thereof. Installation contractors can contribute their achievements as well. If you are interested, please contact me.

Coralie Cobb (CobbCH@efdsw.navfac.navy.mil)

NMFWA awards in 2001

The National Military Fish & Wildlife Association Awards Committee is soliciting nominations for its annual awards which will be presented at the Association's Annual Conference, to be held in Washington DC in March 2001.

Nominations may be submitted via fax or email to the Awards Committee Chair (that's me). FAX number is (845) 938-2324. Home e-mail is ravenwindrider@earthlink.net. The categories are Fish & Wildlife Special Achievement Awards; up to seven different categories.

The deadline for submitting nominations is 31 January 2001. Contact me with questions.

Jim Beemer; NMFWA Awards Committee Chair; (845) 938-3857; (yj6936@exmail.usma.army.mil)
2001 NMFWA Photo Contest!!!

Attention shutterbugs! Are you a budding or experienced photographer? Do you have photographs of your favorite wildlife species or field activity you are dying to show off? How about entering them in a photo contest at the 2001 NMFWA conference to get the oohs, ahs, and recognition you deserve? You could win a prize that would make the effort all worth while! Here are the rules:

1. Photos must be taken by the participant. Anyone registered at NMFWA conference is eligible to enter.

2. Photos must be mounted on stiff backing (photo board, art board, foam board, etc.). Each photo must have the name and address of the photographer clearly marked on the back with the entry category. Matting is optional. Do not submit photos in glass frames.

3. Photos must be at least 5 X 7 inches and no larger than 11 X 14 inches. Color and black and white prints are acceptable. Slides will not be accepted.

4. Each photo must qualify under one of the following categories: (a) wildlife, (b) installation field activities (photo must have been taken at a DoD installation to qualify for this category), (c) landscapes (any location is acceptable), and (d) humor/fun (includes wildlife or people in humorous poses, people taking part in fun activities, studio shots, etc.).

5. Each participant may enter up to two photos in each category. One prize will be awarded in each category. Winners will be honored at the annual banquet.

6. Bring your photos with you and submit them before the show and tell reception. Details on where to submit the photos will be provided with your registration materials.

Keep that camera handy and keep snapping!

Julie Eliason (julie.eliason@ca.ngb.army.mil)

2002 Fisheries Symposium —

I am working to put a proposal together to sponsor a symposium at the 2002 American Fisheries Society (AFS) Annual Conference to be held in Baltimore, MD sometime in the last two weeks of August, 2002. Tentative title for the symposium would be "Fisheries & Aquatic Resources Inventory and Management by Department of Defense - The 'Unknown' Federal Player."

I am shooting for a full day which would require about 20 peer-review-quality presentations, each lasting 20 minutes. I hope to be able to have the full spectrum of activities including: recreational fisheries management activities; habitat restoration projects; marine species & habitat; commercial fisheries operations; freshwater mollusk & crayfish projects; T & E fish species studies, management and restoration activities; public utilization; education projects.

The submission date for the proposal will be early September, 2001. If I could have titles, authors, and abstracts by 1 August 2001, that would give the opportunity to put a winning proposal together. Should I receive more than 24 submittals, I would have a committee select the best presentations for the symposium and encourage the remainder to submit their papers to a Contributed Papers Session.

Questions may be directed to me either at work or my home email address:
ravenwindrider@earthlink.net.

James Beemer (yj6936@exmail.usma.army.mil)
Whereas, the DoD is implementing various strategies involved in outsourcing, privatization, and downsizing government positions, including natural resource management functions; and

Whereas, the downsizing, outsourcing, and privatization of natural resource management functions presents a significant threat to the professional management of natural resources and the support of the military mission;

Therefore be it resolved, that the NMFWA considers the downsizing of natural resource management functions throughout DoD to be one of the most significant issues of this time and therefore a high priority action for the Association.

Further be it resolved, that the NMFWA will take, on a high priority basis, political, legal, and/or other necessary actions to halt and reverse the downsizing of natural resource management functions throughout DoD, in order to sustain accomplishment of the military mission and continued professional stewardship of the public trust resources upon which that mission is predicated.

Resolution

Whereas, the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA) is a private nongovernmental organization that is dedicated to the professional and sound management of natural resources on Department of Defense (DoD) lands; and

Whereas, the NMFWA is an organization dedicated to providing for natural resource management on DoD lands in support of the military mission by utilizing sound natural resource management principles under the direction of professionally trained natural resources personnel; and

Whereas, the Sikes Act Amendments of 1997 require each military installation to employ sufficient numbers of professionally trained natural resource managers; and

Whereas, most natural resources management functions are inherently governmental; and

Whereas, the military mission is dependent on the sound management of natural resources; and
In support of the efforts and goals of the Partner's in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC), the Herpetology Working Group proposed the following instructions for inclusion in the DODI 4715.3 rewrite:

"REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

Reptiles and amphibians (herptiles) are integral parts of our environment. They not only provide for increased biodiversity, but also have tremendous medical, ecological, and aesthetic value. Healthy herptile populations are necessary for maintaining diverse, functional ecosystems through insect and rodent control and energy transfer, to name a few. They are also excellent biological indicators of environmental health. Unfortunately, there have been tremendous declines in a number of herptile species within the United States and around the world.

The global decline of herptiles is well documented. Habitat loss, disease, and displacement from invasive species are just a few of the known factors contributing to their decline. DOD already addresses habitat loss in installation Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans, but implementation of additional simple but wise efforts and policies can further reduce threats affecting reptile and amphibian populations on military installations.

The following instruction is implemented in support of the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) and to promote DOD's commitment to the conservation of reptiles & amphibians and their habitats on military installations.

X. Amphibians and Reptiles (herptiles) on Military Installations

X.1 Harvesting/Collecting:
(a) Herptiles may be harvested on a
State's fish and game laws and the installation's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan.
(b) To prevent the potential spread of disease and invasive herptile species, the collection of live herptiles on a Military Installation is prohibited, unless IAW (c) below.
(c) The use of commercially-purchased, live herptiles for fishing bait is prohibited on Military Installations. This is also to prevent the potential spread of disease and invasive herptiles. On-site collection of live herptiles for use as fishing bait is permitted, as long as it is done IAW all applicable state and Federal regulations and no individual animals leave the site.

X.2 Pets:
(a) Individuals who bring herptile pets onto a Military Installation should have proper documentation (origin, permits, purchase receipts) and be aware that under the Lacey Act of 1900, as amended, it is unlawful for any person to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, possess, or purchase any fish, wildlife, or plant taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of any Federal, State, foreign, or Indian tribal law, treaty, or regulation.
(b) Collection of live herptiles off-post is discouraged. However, an individual who brings such collections on-post must have the proper permits (see (a) above). The Installation Natural Resources Manager should be made aware of any live herptiles kept on-post.
(c) To prevent spread of disease and invasive herptiles, the releasing of pet herptiles is prohibited anywhere on the Installation. The Installation Natural Resources Manager should be consulted prior to disposal of unwanted herptiles."

Jay Rubinoff (rubinoffj@osc.army.mil)
A technical forum on "Bat Conservation and Mining" was held in St. Louis, MO, on 14-16 Nov 2000. The meeting was co-sponsored by the USDI Office of Surface Mines (OSM), Bat Conservation International (BCI), and Southern Illinois University, and was attended by approximately 120 representatives of federal and state agencies, universities, conservation organizations, and private firms. The purpose of the meeting was to share information on protecting bat habitat associated with underground and surface mines, and to exchange information on issues and technical concerns of government agencies, conservation organizations, and commercial mining interests. The three-day meeting consisted of approximately 50 presentations in the following sessions: (1) Why bats, (2) interest group perspectives, (3) bat protection and underground mining, (4) bat protection and surface mining, (5) program development, and (6) interest group recommendations. An extensive open discussion was held after each session.

Abandoned mines throughout the country serve as important sanctuaries for many bat species, and some mines have been identified as critical to the continued existence of local bat populations. Twenty-eight species of North American bats have been documented to occur in mines, including six species or subspecies federally listed as Endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973; an additional 16 Species of Concern also use mines seasonally or year-round. Agency and interest groups represented described their experiences, authorities, limitations, and opportunities regarding bat conservation and reclamation of bat habitat. It was emphasized that Abandoned Mine Land (AML) reclamation programs have the capability to either enhance or damage bat populations, depending on how individual projects are evaluated, designed, and constructed. Several papers provided details and design specifications on how to construct bat-friendly gates and protect bat habitat associated with mines. Agencies and organizations outlined their goals and strategies for protecting bat habitat, supporting the mining industry, improving safety, and developing standards for surveys and monitoring.

I was most impressed with the collaboration and free interchange of information among diverse private interests and government agencies, each with its separate agenda and mission. It is important for military personnel to be aware of issues, restrictions, and available technology regarding mine closures and sensitive bat species on federal lands. This is especially important with regard to potential AML actions on defense lands. Please contact me at 601/634-3958 or chester.o.martin@erdc.usace.army.mil if you have any questions regarding the workshop. Abstracts and information from the forum may be accessed (in pdf format) at the following website: http://www.mcrcc.osmre.gov/.
For the last 30 to 40 years, the coyote (Canis latrans) has been expanding its range to the east and south. Since 1988, coyotes have been documented in Polk County in central Florida. Avon Park Air Force Range is located in Polk and Highlands counties, Florida, and is the largest bombing and gunnery range east of the Mississippi at 106,070 acres. The earliest confirmed kill of a coyote on the range occurred in the 1996-97 hunt season. Increased coyote sightings and sign in central Florida over the last ten years sparked interest in studying the range expansion and population growth of the coyote in the region. Avon Park Air Force Range now has two projects underway to study the coyote on the installation.

Using the Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem Working Group as an organizational tool, a regional population and distribution scent station survey for coyotes was initiated in 1997 and run by Avon Park Air Force Range wildlife personnel. This survey is now coordinated by the University of Florida and has 31 participating sites in 19 counties. At Avon Park, a series of 52 equally spaced scent stations are established on one day in February and read for tracks on the second and fifth days hence. A fatty acid scent disk is placed in the center of a three-foot circle of sifted dirt established on the shoulder of unpaved roads. Our results show a steady increase in relative abundance and a spread in distribution across the range over 4 years. Our numbers have risen to within the range of relative abundances found in similar studies done in western states. The coyote harvest by hunters has also increased over the same period of time from one to six animals harvested during the hunt season of each year.

The second coyote study is a capture, tag, and telemetry study also being done in conjunction with the University of Florida. Coyotes are captured with rubber-jawed leg hold trap. Traps are placed in areas of recent coyote sign. Upon capture, the animal is measured, weighed, sexed, checked for previous lactation, and a rough age is estimated. A VHF radio collar is then placed on the animal and it is released.

Positions of each animal can then be calculated by obtaining three or more azimuths from known points using radio telemetry equipment. Since 1998, we have collared 31 different animals and have obtained over 700 positions on study subjects located using a program from Ecological Software Solutions. Positions are transformed (with all associated data) into a shapefile and viewed in GIS. Using a minimum convex polygon method, we found the average range of 9 animals to be a little over 8000 acres in 1999 with very little contemporaneous range overlap between family groups.

Other benefits of the trapping program are the ability to learn about causes of mortality, dispersion rate, general health, and size of family groups. Of the coyotes we have lost from the study, seven have dispersed beyond telemetry range and eight have been confirmed dead. Of the deceased subjects, 75% died from having been shot or trapped by hunters or off range landowners. Only one animal was thought to have died of natural causes. Of the dispersed animals, most (63%) were young males estimated to be in their second year or younger, which is consistent with what is known about dispersal from other areas.

We hope to use the methods at hand to investigate other questions regarding seasonal changes in range, daily activity cycles, and other questions about how the coyote is using the land in central Florida.

Keith Morin (keith.morin@avonpark.macdill.af.mil)
The saga of "Sparky" began several years ago in the deep pinewoods at the Florida Army National Guard's (FLARNG) 73,000 acre Camp Blanding Training Site (CBTS). CBTS is strategically located on Highway 16 in western Clay County. Sparky is one of only 35 red-cockaded woodpeckers (RCW) that inhabit the longleaf pine ecosystems of CBTS. The RCW is a social bird. They typically live in small groups called clusters. Each cluster usually has several nest cavities that are pecked out of live old growth long leaf pine trees. The RCW is protected under state and federal endangered species statutes.

The FLARNG is attempting to maximize military training while maintaining compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This rare woodpecker has been a high visibility species on lands in the southeastern U.S. for the last few decades and is considered an indicator of a healthy pine forest. Forest health also translates into success of other rare and protected plant and animals. More importantly, the military prefers a healthy forest for maneuvers.

Sparky, a male RCW hatched during the spring of 1996, had a life-changing experience when only 7 days old. A typical early summer, fast moving thunder storm blew through the pine woods, with sudden heavy rains and high winds. Associated with this weather were severe lighting strikes. One struck the cavity tree where this young chick and his father were hunkered down. The strike did not kill the two RCWs, although the young chick's feathers were singed. Hence the name "Sparky" given to him by USFWS/University of Florida researchers who have been studying and monitoring the RCW at CBTS for over five years.

Since that nearly fatal experience, Sparky grew into a mature RCW. He roamed from cluster to cluster trying to locate or convince a female RCW to pair up with him; to date he has been unsuccessful. FLARNG resource managers and researchers have decided to take a more active approach.

Part of the integrated natural resources management plan is the RCW recovery plan. The objective of this recovery plan is to restore a viable healthy population of RCWs where the habitat will effectively support them. All of this is being conducted under the guidance and permitting from the USFWS and Florida State biologists. Intensive management tools and procedures such as prescribed burning, hardwood tree removal from clusters, and artificial cavity inserts (a manmade nest box placed into a suitable long leaf pine tree) have made the differences in the RCW stability and potential recovery. In 1999, CBTS was the first national guard installation to translocate RCWs from a healthy donor population to a needy recipient population. The FLARNG plans to perform this innovative protected species management procedure again this year. The target cluster to receive one of the translocated female RCWs is Sparky's cluster. Some landowners may question the concept of relocating protected species on their property. The Guard and the military in general views it in a much more positive way. A stable population of a protected species not only demonstrates an active and successful resource management program, but allows more flexibility in other compatible land uses, such as forestry and military training and routine operations. These stewardship actions are among many that contemporary military installations and bases are embracing in the new millennium.

As a result of this work, Sparky will get the well-deserved opportunity to pair up with a mate. The FLARNG shines in contemporary natural resources stewardship and regulatory compliance while maintaining it's readiness as a state militia, poised for national defense as well as state-wide emergencies.

Michael Adams (adamsmd@fl-arng.ngb.army.mil)
GIS DEVELOPMENT AT DARE CO. BOMBING RANGE

Dare County Bombing Range (IN) has been working with Gulf Engineers and Consultants of Baton Rouge, LA to develop a geographical information system (GIS) to assist in managing the natural resources of its 40,000-acre buffer zone. The original data was in Atlas GIS format and was initially converted to MapInfo and an MS Access database which was customized to track the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) population and management activities associated with the RCW. The Atlas GIS data were converted to ArcView format. Through field collection, purchasing, and acquisition from other sources, a variety of data layers have been incorporated into the system.

Themes currently used in the GIS include RCW clusters, individual trees, cavities, forage habitat, potential recruitment stands, banding data, forest cover types, stands with inventory data, vegetation, ecosystems, soils with peat depth, NWI maps, roads, hydrology, and boundaries. Base data includes 1994 black and white, 1998 color infrared, and 1999 natural color photography, USGS quadrangle maps, and satellite imagery. The RCW database is updated at least annually with RCW monitoring and banding data, and more often with the addition of cavity inserts or restrictors and recruitment stands, and notable RCW or cavity trees observations.

In addition to being used in support of endangered species management, the GIS is used to assist in timber harvests, make management decisions concerning southern pine beetle control, and provide supporting data for NEPA documentation for various actions on the Range. Future uses of the GIS may include housing a digital photograph database for cavity trees, forest stand modeling including growth and yield, managing public hunts for white-tailed deer and black bear, and management of prescribed burning.

R. Scott Knaus (rsknaus@gecinc.com)

Student Conservation Association opportunities

I'm John Lewis and I'm working at HQ USAF conservation division as a resource assistant. Whether you need improvements in trail maintenance, invasive plant control, office outreach or research, the Student Conservation Association (SCA) offers assistance through a variety of working levels. As the nation's leading provider of youth for your conservation needs, the SCA offers groups of high school or college students work under your supervision. Terms are usually three, six or twelve months. This allows ample time for the SCA member to accomplish laborious tasks and grow into a position that releases workload pressure from you and your natural resource team. Each service has an agreement in place with SCA to help you meet your needs. Check with your headquarters' natural resource office for details and application procedures. Also, check SCA's website for a broader perspective at www.sca-inc.org.

NMFWA EMAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED!!!

Reminder: Please send your E-mail address to:
Greg Lee, Membership Committee Chair at: gregory.lee@moody.af.mil for your address to be included in the NMFWA database.

This will aid Regional Directors and other BOD members facilitate improved communication with the membership.
New Jersey wildlife, especially bird species that are dependent on grasslands, has suffered greatly from extensive development in grasslands and old agricultural fields during the past 15 years. However, bird population surveys done in the 1980's revealed that one human activity had created an ideal refuge for grassland birds: airports. The large expanses of open areas that are required along runways have proven to be the last strongholds for grassland birds in many parts of the state, especially in the more developed regions. In the heavily forested south Jersey pinelands, airfields are often the only grasslands that can be found for miles around.

NAES received our Rare Species Survey in 1991. The base was found to have one of the larger populations of grasshopper sparrows, a state listed threatened species, in all of New Jersey. Several pairs of upland sandpipers, a state listed endangered species, were also found.

In response to these findings, the base initiated an ambitious program that proved to be a perfect marriage of military mission facility improvements and habitat restoration. From 1994 through 1997, large-scale tree removal projects were done in stages to reopen the clear zones around the Test Department and Westfield runways. This brought the runways into compliance with NAVFAC clear zone standards and greatly improved the habitat for grassland birds by restoring the treeless expanses that they prefer for breeding. Hundreds of trees were also removed from the 300 acre parachute jump circle, also called the Drop Zone (DZ), resulting in a safer training facility for the military units that conduct paradrops and cargo drops at the circle.

The results have been most impressive, especially for the grasshopper sparrows. While the surveys in 1988 showed a maximum of 42 singing males on the base, surveys conducted by NJ Audubon volunteers in 1994, 1995, 1997, and 1998 turned up averages of 183, 251, 310 and 235 singing males. While this astronomical increase is partially due to more efficient survey coverage, it is still unquestionable evidence that the NAES management initiatives have resulted in huge population increases for this threatened species.

In 1999, the volunteers began fixed-point counts in accordance with US Fish and Wildlife Service Region 5 guidelines for grassland birds. The study uses 58 census points covering about 1400 acres of the installation’s 2000 acres of grasslands. These points are surveyed 4 times during the breeding season, plus two late afternoon surveys to check for late day singers like Henslow’s sparrow and vesper sparrow. For 1999, (although it had only three survey days), the survey picked up an average of 138 singing grasshopper sparrow males per day. Eastern Meadowlark (35), horned lark (8), and kestrel (4), all of which are on the state’s T&E “watch” list, were also recorded. One savannah sparrow (New Jersey-Threatened) was heard during one survey. Upland sandpipers (New Jersey-Endangered) averaged 8 singing males per day, with all but one coming in the DZ.

Starting with this year, the census work is funded with natural resources money and done by contract with the former volunteers. The current year results (average per survey) after 4 surveys: 131 grasshopper sparrows, 30 eastern meadowlarks, 10 horned larks, 4 kestrels, and 10 upland sandpipers.

The upland sandpiper population on NAES has taken on added significance this year. In May, during the World Series of Birding where dozens of teams of top notch birders from all over the mid Atlantic states have a 24 hour competition to tally the most species, the DZ was the only place in all of New Jersey where this
species was found. Data from the survey is now sent to the Massachusetts Audubon Society, which handles grassland bird census data for New England and New York.

Other grassland species on the NJ T&E list that have been confirmed breeding on NAES since 1994 are Henslow’s sparrow (E) in 1994 and 1998, and vesper sparrow (E) in 1995. Singing male dicksissels were heard in 1997 and 1998 although they were not confirmed as breeding. Autumn sightings have included flocks of vesper sparrows and as many as seven northern harriers (E) at one time.

As successful as the grassland bird program on NAES has been, there are still some promising new management initiatives planned for the near future. Several hundred acres have recently been pulled from more mowing-intensive maintenance schedules and designated for inclusion into the once-per-year mowing contract. This is great for the birds as well as a cost savings for the Navy. While some of these areas are too small for many species that are highly sensitive to habitat fragmentation, even smaller areas of less than ten acres that are close to large clear zones will support overflow populations of grasshopper sparrows. This land could bring the base total to nearly 1600 acres of grasslands on the once-per-year mowing schedule. The prescribed burning acreage has also been increased as studies have shown that upland sandpipers and grasshopper sparrows benefit in years 2 through 5 after a prescribed burn. However, burning adversely affects Henslow’s sparrow.

More variation in mowing heights is another management tool that may better meet the needs of a greater variety of species. In studies of grassland birds in Missouri and Illinois, horned larks, vesper sparrows and upland sandpipers were found to prefer shorter, sparser vegetation. Eastern meadowlark, savannah and grasshopper sparrows preferred intermediate height and more dense vegetation.

NAES is quite proud of our grassland program, and the base has established a very good reputation with the birding community and a positive working relationship with the New Jersey Audubon Society. The navy has truly taken a lead role in the preservation of grassland bird species in New Jersey.

Why birds love coffee!!!

People often ask how they can do something to help conservation efforts. If you drink coffee, here’s your chance. You can help conserve vital rainforest habitat and protect more than 150 forest-dependent migratory bird species just by drinking shade-grown coffee. The benefits of shade-grown coffee to birds have been recognized for years. On shade plantations, coffee shrubs are grown under a canopy of trees, the layers and diversity of which offer shelter and food for wild birds. In contrast, sun coffee plantations are devoid of trees and wildlife. In many parts of the neotropics, shade-grown coffee farms are the only forest-like habitat remaining. Due to the increasing demand for coffee worldwide, many of these traditional farms have been converted to "sun coffee" plantations.

Unfortunately, sun-grown coffee, while yielding higher short-term output, requires higher levels of fertilization and plant replacement, suffers increased risk of failure due to drought, leads to soil damage, and means the destruction of the forest -- a long-term resource for native peoples. Loss of the canopy also means loss of habitat for migratory birds; studies have found that the diversity of migratory birds plummets when coffee plantations are converted from shade to sun. Ultimately, consumer awareness and participation is key to this conservation effort.

The theme for International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) 2001 highlights the benefits of shade-grown coffee to migratory birds. Visit the DoD Partners in Flight web site to learn more about shade-grown coffee and how to buy it. Go to <http://www.dodpif.org>, click on “Program Areas” then “Shade-grown Coffee.” Many natural resource offices have a coffee maker. Wouldn’t it be nice if, by IMBD 2001, that coffee was helping preserve habitat for migratory birds?

Chris Eberly (ceberly@dodpif.org)
Devens Army Reserve Command, Massachusetts, is supporting the Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program in Massachusetts with two unique programs. Tom Poole, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife, National Wild Turkey Foundation, and local volunteers, organized two hunts for women only. Enrollees in this nationally recognized program learn and participate in a variety of outdoors activities and skills such as camping, canoeing, orienteering, fishing, and hunting. Graduates of the hunter education classes were invited to Devens for a turkey hunt in April and a deer hunt in December.

Seminars featuring species ecology, hunting techniques, and a safety briefing were followed by a day in the field. Experienced male and female hunters acted as mentors. A mentor accompanied pairs of hunters throughout the day. Eight turkey hunters took two gobblers on opening day, while 10 hunters harvested three deer on the last day of the Massachusetts firearm season. One of these was the largest buck taken on the installation that year. Feedback from participants and supporters was overwhelmingly positive. Suggestions and lessons learned will be added to future events at the installation and other venues.

Tom Poole (poolet@devens-emh1.army.mil)

As Rodney might say, "Vegetation mapping don't get no respect!" It seems like a dull subject, pretty basic with nothing new. However, that just ain't so.

A vegetation map was historically a representation on paper or Mylar of plant species and communities on a site, along with selected features such as topography, streams, and roads. The one or two copies produced were either kept in the office because they were too good to use, or they were taken to the field and kept in a plastic sheet so they wouldn’t get muddy. They were copied in black and white (repeatedly), subjected to spills of hot and cold beverages (repeatedly), and soon became illegible.

The growth of digital capabilities in the last several years has transformed this static and labor-intensive product into a stack of overlapping digital data files that can store and display a large array of individual characteristics. Advances in remote sensing, analysis, and sampling theory provide tremendous sophistication in producing and understanding the mapped data. The quality, information content, and flexibility of maps have risen dramatically. Information is no longer available to just a few, but can be shared, manipulated, and presented to serve many different clients. We can have multiple copies to take to the field! At varying scales. And even in color.

Recognizing the importance, utility, and complexity of maps, the U.S. Army Environmental Center (USAEC) sponsored the development of Guidelines for Mapping Vegetation on Army Installations. The guidelines were prepared using expertise from a variety of organizations and sources, mainly at four of the laboratories in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Research and Development Center. Copies of the Guidelines in CD format can be obtained by contacting the USAEC Hotline at 1-800-872-3845. The document is also on-line and can be either viewed or downloaded. Go to http://www.wes.army.mil/el/elpubs/genrep.html then page down in the 2000 publications. Acrobat 4.0 or higher is necessary for viewing the documents and can be downloaded from the publication page.

The authors promise that the Guidelines will help build respect for vegetation mapping on other DoD lands in addition to Army.

Jean O’Neil (L.Jean.O’Neil@erdc.usace.army.mil)
The 2000 deer hunting season at the US Military Academy was, again, a big success. From its beginnings in 1979, the general public deer hunting program at West Point has slowly brought the whitetail deer population back to a manageable level. In fact, the deer hunting opportunities have been generating a lot of favorable press coverage. Some hunters liken the quality of hunting present as the best in New York State.

While I do not manage it according to Quality Deer Management (QDM) guidelines, the results have been the same. The adult buck population's average age continues to rise while the adult doe population's average age declines. Even though West Point is located in the Hudson Highlands ecozone of New York (a granite/gneiss formation in southeastern NY), the antlers produced by the bucks are impressive. The adult sex ratio in the population (pre-hunt) approaches 1:1.

One other factor which assists the quality experience is that, for safety reasons, the hunting zones at West Point are limited to 1 hunter afield for each 50 acres present (for rifle hunting areas).

A benefit to the intense deer hunting program is that this region of NY is also noted for its high biodiversity for both plants and animals.

Keith Harris (harris.keithd@shaw.af.mil)
Lake Greenwood at Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indiana, is a manmade impoundment approximately 800 acres in size and serves as the primary water supply for much of Crane. It is a very scenic lake due to the wooded hillsides surrounding it, and the foresight of individuals who have kept development of the shoreline to a minimum. The watershed of the lake is also relatively undisturbed, and this makes Greenwood one of the cleaner impoundments in southern Indiana as well as the region. This protection has greatly extended the life of the lake and also contributes to the enjoyment of people using it.

In addition to providing water for the base, Lake Greenwood provides numerous recreational opportunities for both employees and the general public. Other than general sightseeing, fishing is probably the number one recreational activity at the lake. Greenwood supports a typical combination of warmwater fish species for this area. These include largemouth bass, bluegill, red ear sunfish, crappie, and channel catfish. Greenwood also supports a fishable population of white bass, which is fairly unusual for an impoundment of this type. Anglers occasionally take other species of fish such as long ear sunfish, warmouth, and yellow perch from Greenwood.

The Greenwood fishery is professionally managed in cooperation with biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Money collected from the sale of Crane fishing permits is used to partially support management of the fishery. This has included annual fisheries surveys since 1990, fishing regulation changes, and periodic stocking. Species such as bass, bluegill, red ear, and crappie do not require periodic stocking, and are best managed through monitoring their populations and adjusting fishing regulations. Channel catfish were stocked for several years at Greenwood and have now established a self-sustaining population at the lake.

The most recent fisheries survey at Greenwood was conducted by the USFWS on May 8, 2000. Although data analysis has not yet been completed, some preliminary observations from the survey can be made. First of all, the bluegill population appeared to be in very good condition with good numbers of fish up to 5 pounds as well as some larger fish. Bass anglers should find good fishing for small to medium size bass, although the number of larger bass is limited. Once the survey data has been analyzed, Crane’s Natural Resources Manager will work with other biologists to try to increase the number of larger bass in the lake. Greenwood anglers should also find reasonably good fishing for crappie and red ear in the near future.

Other fish management activities conducted at Greenwood during 2000 include the installation of 35 fish attractors and the stocking of 27,000 walleye fingerlings. The walleye were stocked by the USFWS on June 14. An additional 900 larger walleye fingerlings were stocked on October 5. Although walleye have been stocked at Greenwood in the past, they were not stocked according to modern day standards and consequently never provided a fishery. To evaluate the success of the stockings, biologists from the IDNR surveyed the lake again this fall. Thirteen walleye ranging from 7 to 10 inches long were collected during that survey, and anglers have already reported catching some of them. Unlike warmwater fish species, walleye will probably not establish a reproducing population at Greenwood and harvests will be dependent on continued stocking.

For more information on the Greenwood fish management program, please call 812-854-1165 or stop by the Natural Resources Building. Fishing permits are available at Natural Resources or the Lake Greenwood Marina. The current cost of an annual fishing permit is only $15, a bargain especially if you consider the cost of going to a movie! Daily and weekly permits are also available.

Steve Andrews (andrews_s@crane.navy.mil)
Fisheries between Navy and trout unlimited

Trout Unlimited has signed an agreement with the Department of the Navy to enhance and protect streams and rivers on lands owned by the Navy nationwide. The agreement will provide a framework for cooperative activities between the two organizations to enhance, maintain, and conserve coldwater fisheries resources on Department of Navy lands across the country. It is designed to protect important habitat for numerous fish species, including endangered trout and salmon.

The agreement, which was signed in Washington, D.C. by Charles Gauvin, CEO and President of Trout Unlimited and Robert B. Pirie, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Environment, is a renewal of one originally signed between the two organizations in 1991 and expired the same year.

Gauvin said that its willingness to once again sign a cooperative management agreement has enhanced the Navy's positive image as a public lands steward among conservation groups and the general public. "This agreement is a recognition of the value of Navy-owned lands to the nation's coldwater fisheries. Its signing, in turn, signifies a recognition by the Navy of the importance of cooperating whenever and wherever practical to put in place management activities around these resources," said Gauvin.

Don Duff, Trout Unlimited's National Partnership Coordinator with the U.S. Forest Service, said the agreement will effectively partner the Navy with the National Forest Service and state agencies whose lands are adjacent to Navy lands. In those locations, the inclusion of the Navy lands into ongoing watershed management plans will provide a holistic and basin-wide management approach that will benefit all native and recreational fish and wildlife species.

Tammy Conkle (Conkle.Tamara@ni.cnrswnavymil)

Attention: corps Resource managers

Most NMFWA members are familiar with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) and its service of recruiting and supporting college-age interns and crews of high school students to assist with conservation tasks. Many members employed by the Navy, Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force have utilized SCA’s services with great success. In fact, last spring at the Annual Banquet in Chicago, NMFWA awarded special recognition to SCA for excellence in its volunteer support role.

Until now, however, one group of DoD resource managers has been unable to benefit from SCA’s service – those who work for the Army Corps of Engineers. The reason: The Corps lacked authority to enter partnerships with not-for-profit organizations. The recently passed Water Resources Development Act for FY 2001 contained language addressing this oversight. As a result, Corps of Engineers managers now have access to the intern/volunteer support SCA offers under the current agreement between the Department of the Army and SCA.

In brief, SCA can deliver adult interns for terms of three months to one year, with backgrounds managers specify, as a cost-effective way to supplement paid staffs and get more work done. SCA provides interns with travel funds, a living allowance, accident or medical insurance (depending on length of service), and a special clothing/uniform grant. Interns also can earn AmeriCorps education awards ranging from $1,180 to $4,700.

Districts and/or Projects will soon receive more information from Corps Headquarters, but managers who want SCA’s support this fiscal year should contact the organization soon. Call or e-mail Ray Auger, Program Development Director (603-543-1700 x 144; ray@sca-inc.org) or Marsha Towns, Internship Operations Director (same number, extension 123; marsha@sca-inc.org). SCA’s web site address is www.sca-inc.org.

Tammy Conkle (Conkle.Tamara@ni.cnrswnavymil)
After 12.5 years at Avon Park Air Force Range in Florida, Pat Walsh has decided to move on. He has accepted, and by now started, a new job with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as lead biologist on Togiak NWR, southwestern Alaska. Biogeographically speaking, this includes 1.1 million acres of brown bears, caribou, moose, wolves, waterfowl, walrus, and 1,500 miles of salmon and trout rivers and streams. He'll be supervising 5 biologists and other support staff working on fish and wildlife investigations/management issues. The town of Dillingham is the biggest town in the Bristol Bay area- around 3,000 people. It's 350 miles west of Anchorage--no road access--boats or planes only.

Pat writes, “I have found much professional satisfaction in my work here at Avon Park Air Force Range. However, my involvement in the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association has provided deeper satisfaction. I've had the opportunity to help shape national policy in the interest of both national defense and natural resources management. I'm proud of the work our organization has done, and it's been an honor to be a member. I'll miss being a part of this organization, but I'll continue to watch your work. Good luck to all of you and good luck to the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association!”

As a fellow Association member writes, “Pat.... a guy who... thank goodness... doesn't know the meaning of the word ‘quit’. If it wasn't for Pat Walsh, we would be a lot further down the ‘outsourcing’ road. Many of us, whether we know it or not, owe our jobs to Pat. He paid a big price for saying ‘not no, but hell no!’ to those who would ignore the law and go about their business of screwing up the environment on Defense installations. He paid our price. He's that kind of guy.”

Many of you will remember Pat for the outstanding job he and his Avon Park associates did in hosting our annual workshop in Orlando in 1998. Who can forget the diversity of wild game and baskets of raw oysters!

Best of luck Pat!

On his 90th birthday (November 11, 2000), Jerome J. Pratt of Sierra Vista, Arizona, was presented the DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY COMMANDER’S AWARD FOR PUBLIC SERVICE by Major General John D. Thomas, Jr., Commander of the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca.

When Pratt reported for duty as the wildlife manager in December 1957, he filled the first such position in DOD. He developed the first wildlife management plan for a military installation and consummated the first cooperative agreement under the Sikes Act. He joined the National Park Service in 1964 and retired from Haleakala National Park, Maui, Hawaii in 1972.

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