



# Louisiana Wildlife Insider



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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Every state wildlife agency seems to have a few biologists that stand out because of their dedication, their experience in wildlife management, their diplomacy in working groups, and their ability to foster cooperation. For LDWF, both Fred Kimmel and Jimmy Stafford fit this bill. Fred and Jimmy both retired in 2015 after long and distinguished careers with LDWF. During their careers both Fred and Jimmy did much to advance the small game and wild turkey programs within the state. Fred's keen insight on habitat management and diplomatic skills made him an asset to numerous conservation working groups both within and outside Louisiana. Because of Jimmy's unparalleled knowledge of turkey and quail habitat management he has been sought out by other professional biologists on both state and national levels for advice and collaboration. While both of these fine biologists will be sorely missed, the knowledge and skills that they have passed on during their careers will ensure the continued well-being of wild turkey and small game within the Sportsman's Paradise and beyond. It has been my privilege to be able to work alongside both Fred and Jimmy, and I can honestly say that I am a better biologist for it.

Sincerely,  
Jeffrey P. Duguay, Ph.D.  
Editor

# Louisiana Statewide Red-cockaded Woodpecker Safe Harbor Program

BY ERIC BAKA, RCW Safe Harbor Program Coordinator

## THE RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER

The red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) (RCW) is a federal and state endangered species. This species was once widespread, ranging from Virginia to Florida, westward to eastern Texas and as far north as southern Illinois. The RCW is most commonly associated with old-growth longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) forests. During the late 1800s and early 1900s nearly all of the old-growth pine forests in the Southeast were harvested. Much of the RCW's habitat was removed at that time, and the birds were relegated to sparse disconnected populations. As a result of fire suppression and short pine stand rotations (averaging 27 to 50 years) current remaining RCW habitat is a fraction of what it once was prior to 1900. This is the main reason that the RCW is currently listed as a federal and state endangered species.

The RCW is described as a ladder-back woodpecker, referring to the color pattern of alternating black and white stripes on its back. It is approximately the same size as the northern cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*) and can be distinguished from other ladder-back woodpeckers by its white auricular or cheek patch. This species is sexually dimorphic, meaning the males and females have different plumage (feather) characteristics. Males can be distinguished from the females by the red cockade (red patch of feathers) concealed under the male's black cap. It is rare to see the male's red cockade in the field, unless there is a territorial dispute, where the male flashes these feathers at intruding RCWs in his territory.

The RCW is the only woodpecker in North America that exclusively uses live pine trees in which to excavate their roost and nest cavities. RCWs are most commonly associated with longleaf pine forests, but will readily use any species of southern yellow pine including: loblolly (*Pinus taeda*), slash (*Pinus elliotti*), shortleaf (*Pinus echinata*) and pond pine (*Pinus serotina*). Pine trees younger than 60 years old generally do not contain sufficient heartwood for the birds to create a cavity chamber in which to roost. The birds also seek out pines that are infected with red heart disease (rot created by a fungus) which softens the heartwood and makes cavity construction easier. Once a cavity is complete the RCW pecks around the entrance of the cavity creating resin wells. These resin wells weep pine sap that coats the pine tree creating a sticky pine resin barrier. This barrier helps keep predators (mainly rat snakes) from entering the RCW's cavity. It can take as long as seven years for an RCW to complete a cavity, and each bird roosts in a separate cavity. The availability of quality cavities represents the primary limiting factor for this species.

Due to the fact that cavities take so long to construct and the RCW requires very specific trees to excavate cavities in, they have evolved as cooperative breeders. RCWs live in family groups consisting of a breeding pair with one or more helper birds. There is only one nest per family group and the nest is usually established in the breeding male's cavity. Clutch size ranges from three to five eggs and both the male and female RCWs incubate the eggs and brood the nestlings.

The helpers are usually male offspring of the breeding pair. They participate in territorial defense, cavity excavation and brooding and rearing of nestlings. When the breeding male dies one of the male helpers inherits his territory and finds a new female to breed with. At that time the helper's mother leaves to find a new mate. Most new territories are created when a helper bird steals part of the territory from his natal group, a process termed "budding."

### **LOUISIANA STATEWIDE RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER SAFE HARBOR PROGRAM**

In order to promote voluntary, proactive management for the RCW on non-federal lands, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) entered into a safe harbor agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Jan. 25, 2005. This agreement allows LDWF to enter into safe harbor management agreements with non-federal landowners. These agreements establish a baseline number of RCW groups that the landowner agrees to voluntarily manage on their land. In exchange, if the number of RCW groups increases on the landowner's property, they are not responsible for those above-baseline RCW groups. LDWF will relocate those above-baseline groups at the landowner's request, if certain conditions are met.

One might wonder why we would need such a program. There is a "catch-22" with the Endangered Species Act, in that if you manage for endangered species you could possibly increase their numbers on your land. This creates a disincentive for landowners who want to help the species, but do not want more restrictions placed upon them and their property. The goal of safe harbor is to remove the fear of having the endangered RCW on a landowner's property and increase the amount of habitat available for the bird. The RCW is a species that requires intensive management in the form of regular prescribed burning, removal of hardwoods and other midstory trees near the bird's cavity trees, cavity management, and thinning of pine stands to a moderate basal area in order to create a park-like forest.

LDWF's RCW Safe Harbor Program (SHP) is part of the Wildlife Division's Forestry Program. The SHP has two full time staff, program coordinator Eric Baka and program biologist Forest Burks, located in Pineville and Minden, respectively. There are currently 492,808 acres enrolled in the SHP on 14 properties in 15 parishes, with 116 baseline RCW groups and seven above-baseline groups. The owners of these enrolled properties range from state agencies, to industrial timber companies, to private landowners, to real estate developers to investment companies. Each of these landowners has agreed to implement a voluntary, proactive management regime on their property to benefit the RCW. These management actions were crafted to suit each enrolled safe harbor properties' unique needs in consultation with LDWF and the landowner.

The most common management practices to promote enhanced habitat conditions for RCWs are beginning or increasing the amount of prescribed burning, removing hardwood midstory from RCW cluster sites, installing artificial RCW cavity inserts, and thinning overstocked pine stands. Each property enrolled in the SHP conducts a RCW survey to



locate any RCW clusters (the aggregate of RCW cavity trees) on their property to determine their RCW baseline. LDWF and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provide concurrence for these baseline surveys to ensure that they are accurate. LDWF SHP biologists conduct at least one site visit per year to the SHP properties to ensure compliance with their safe harbor management agreement, identify any management issues the landowners may be encountering, and provide technical assistance regarding RCW management. Another function of the SHP is to monitor RCWs on select properties throughout the state. LDWF SHP staff perform demographic monitoring and management of 69 RCW groups located at Alexander State Forest Wildlife Management Area (WMA), Jackson-Bienville WMA, and Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge.

During the RCW breeding season (April to July) SHP biologists inspect all RCW cavity trees for activity by observing the amount of chipping around each cavity. In order to locate the nest tree at each cluster site, all active trees are monitored every seven to 11 days. Since the nest cavities are usually located 20 to 75 feet off the ground, the active cavities are checked with a remote video camera called a “peeper” mounted on a surveyor’s pole. Once the nest tree is located it is monitored until the eggs hatch. When the juvenile RCWs are between 6 and 10 days old they are able to be banded. In order to band the juvenile RCWs, SHP biologists climb the nest tree using Swedish climbing ladders, remove the nestlings from the cavity with a flexible noose and bring the birds safely to the ground. The birds are given a unique identification using a combination of color and aluminum bands. The birds are then returned to the cavity once they are banded. At 20 days old nestling sex is determined by looking for a red crown patch on the juvenile male bird’s head or a solid black cap on the females’ head using the peeper. When the birds fledge, around 26 days old, SHP biologists follow the family group in the woods and read the color bands of the fledglings with a spotting scope. At this time the birds are identified and their sex is confirmed.

RCW demographic monitoring allows LDWF biologists to determine family group size, nesting success and survivorship of juvenile RCWs between different RCW populations. Often small RCW populations (those below 30 potential breeding groups) are demographically isolated and need an influx of new genetics via translocation to persist. Before and after the breeding sea-



Red-cockaded woodpecker nestling with unique leg bands, allowing individual identification.



Red-cockaded woodpecker in nest cavity.

son, SHP biologists install and maintain artificial cavities, commonly referred to as inserts. Inserts are provisioned so that every RCW in the family group has its own cavity in which to roost. RCWs that do not have a cavity in which to roost are susceptible to predation and death due to exposure. A video of LDWF staff installing an insert can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlymwXash3s>.

The goal of the RCW SHP is to help fulfill LDWF’s mission “To manage, conserve, and promote wise utilization of Louisiana’s renewable fish and wildlife resources and their supporting habitats through replenishment, protection, enhancement, research, development, and education for

the social and economic benefit of current and future generations; to provide opportunities for knowledge of and use and enjoyment of these resources; and to promote a safe and healthy environment for the users of the resources.” SHP staff biologists are available to assist all landowners of the state with technical assistance regarding the RCW, its biology, conservation and management. More information on enrolling in the SHP can be found on the LDWF website at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/louisiana-statewide-red-cockaded-woodpecker-safe-harbor-program> or by contacting Eric Baka, RCW Safe Harbor Program Coordinator at [ebaka@wlf.la.gov](mailto:ebaka@wlf.la.gov) or 318-487-5885.

# Managing Migratory Birds: *The Migratory Bird Treaty Act*

BY JEFFREY P. DUGUAY, Ph.D., Webless Migratory  
Upland Gamebird and Research & Survey Program  
Manager

Migratory wildlife often present unique management challenges, especially when species cross state, provincial, or international boundaries. In those situations, management requires coordination between the political units so that a species is not over-exploited when it falls under the temporary jurisdiction of one state or nation. In 1916 the Migratory Bird Treaty was signed by the United States and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada, then part of Great Britain), effectively protecting all migratory birds crossing the borders of both nations. The treaty and its enabling legislation, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918), established appropriate regulatory authority, especially for the determination of waterfowl harvests. The purpose of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was to end the commercial trade in feathers. Around the turn of the 20th century, the long breeding plumes on many bird species were highly prized fashion accessories, and thousands of birds were indiscriminately killed for this purpose. The popularity of feathered hats boomed in about 1875, and for the next 30 years the millinery trade demanded huge quantities of egret plumes that could be obtained only from birds killed during the nesting season. Egret plumes at one time sold for more than \$500 per pound. Confirmation of the Migratory Bird Treaty in 1916 and enactment of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918 brought an end to the indiscriminate killing of birds for their plumes. The treaty prohibited the hunting, killing, capturing, possession, sale, transportation and exportation of migratory birds, their feathers, eggs and nests. Not all North American bird species are protected under the act. Birds that are considered non-native species such as the house sparrow and the European starling are not protected, and many groups of gamebirds, including ducks, geese, doves, and many shorebirds are subject to limited protection and can be hunted in regulated seasons. A similar treaty was signed with Mexico in 1936, thereby bringing migratory birds under a coordinated umbrella of management encompassing all of North America. Later amendments implemented treaties between the U.S. and Japan in 1972 and the U.S. and the Soviet Union (now Russia) in 1976.

**Editor's note:** *The next issue of the Louisiana Wildlife Insider will have additional articles highlighting the importance and success of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.*



Snowy Egret.



Opera Singer Emmy Destinn wearing plume hat.



# The History of Deer Restocking in Louisiana

BY JOHNATHAN BORDELON, Deer Program Manager

Recently, Mississippi State University kicked off a deer genetics project in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. One goal of the project is to determine how early restocking efforts across the states have affected current deer populations. As part of the project, genetic samples are being collected across targeted sample sites in Louisiana. Specific parishes were chosen based on origin (native remnant stock vs translocated stock), suspected levels of admixture (combinations of different genetic lineages), and geographic spread across the state, all factors being considered by the researchers conducting the study. Samples are being collected within a 10-mile radius of known release sites. Additional parishes with no known translocated deer have been selected as control areas for comparison.

Louisiana deer exhibit a wide range of breeding dates throughout the state. Dates are determined utilizing measurements of developing fetuses collected during annual health and disease checks by LDWF biologists. Breeding dates have been instrumental in developing the deer season structure in Louisiana.

Deer were stocked across parts of Louisiana from 1949-1969, moved from areas of higher deer densities to areas of lower deer densities within Louisiana, as well as being translocated from out of state into Louisiana. Capture methods were predominantly box traps, but also included utilization of airboats in coastal Louisiana to round up and capture deer. Over half of the 2,968 deer moved within Louisiana came from Madison and Tensas Parishes, Red Dirt and Catahoula national wildlife management preserves, and Delta National Wildlife Refuge. In addition, deer were also translocated from Wisconsin (363 deer) and Texas (200 deer) from 1949 through 1961. *Table 1* includes a summary of deer capture (source) and release sites.

Early stocking sources were often based on availability of deer rather than similar habitats or breeding chronology. Much less was known about breeding chronology during early restocking efforts than is known today. Roberson and Dennett (1967) were the first researchers to study the breeding season of white-tails in Louisiana. Their results characterized three major breeding zones: southwest Louisiana was

earliest with late September and October breeding; northwest and central Louisiana peak breeding occurred in late October and November; and the latest, December and January peak breeding, occurred along the Mississippi River Delta, Atchafalaya River Basin and southeast Louisiana. Regular herd health and breeding date data collections have been accomplished by LDWF since the early work of Roberson and Dennett. Currently, LDWF has identified peak breeding dates across the state utilizing fetal measurements from 1,168 deer. This extensive sampling has identified several small areas that do not fit into the broad categories described by Roberson and Dennett. One of those sites is the Camp Avondale Boy Scout Camp in East Feliciana Parish.

Camp Avondale is an interesting case study. The mean breeding date for Camp Avondale is Nov. 12 based on a 58 deer sample over a six-year period. There are a couple of things that stand out about the timing of this breeding date. First, it is almost a month earlier than the rest of East Feliciana. The mean breeding date for East Feliciana is Dec. 11 (based on a sample of 190 deer) when Camp Avondale's dates are excluded. Second, the Avondale dates match up with the Red Dirt National Wildlife Management Preserve (RDT) breeding dates. The earliest RDT breeding dates were collected in 1966 with a peak of Nov. 1-15. Considering the RDT was the source for Camp Avondale it is easy to draw parallels on the effect of stocking sources. This example is specific for Camp Avondale and RDT. Similar comparisons were made between Beechgrove in East Feliciana and Delta National Wildlife Refuge through collections by LDWF. Similar associations have been observed in Bossier, Caldwell, LaSalle, Richland and Webster parishes. Obviously, the number of deer stocked and size of the existing resident deer population at the time of stocking will have a major influence. Further complicating the equation are sites that received deer from multiple sources.

While it is a major interest among some hunters, survival of northern deer translocated to the south is relatively unknown. However, mortality of northern deer utilized in research programs translocated to the south is well documented. One example was presented to the Southeast Deer Study Group in 1996, when Dr. Jacobson reported 64.7 percent mortality of northern deer in a Mississippi State research pen, while southern deer in the same pen experienced a 12.5 percent mortality rate. Hemorrhagic disease, a common cause of

annual deer mortality in the south, is thought to have played a major role in the increased mortality of the northern deer. A greater percentage of the southern deer are exposed to varying levels of the disease on an annual basis, resulting in antibodies to defend against the disease and therefore lower mortality during the research period.

As the numbers from the table and data discussed above indicate, the majority of deer restocked were of Louisiana origin. Considering only 12 percent of restocked deer were of Wisconsin origin and possibly high mortality rates, it is unlikely they contributed much towards the genetics of the local deer herd. The mixing of deer from different origins at releases was common. In addition, some release sites had a small native population which would have diluted the genetic contributions of northern deer. However, the genetic analysis of the current Mississippi State project will help answer some of these lingering questions.

Louisiana's deer restocking is considered a success story. A combination of protection, habitat changes and restocking increased deer numbers in Louisiana. By the time Louisiana's restocking efforts ended in 1969, the U.S. Department of the Interior estimated 300,000 deer were present in Louisiana. Considering the estimated deer population has grown from approximately 20,000 animals in 1925 to an estimated 500,000 deer today, restocking efforts and protection provided during the restocking era was an important part of the recovery of white-tailed deer in Louisiana. The history of Louisiana's deer herd is a story of successful management and conservation, accomplished through cooperative efforts of landowners, hunters, researchers and wildlife resource agencies focused on sustaining that species on our landscapes into the future.

## LITERATURE CITED

Roberson, J. Jr, and D. Dennett, Jr. 1967. Breeding season of white-tailed deer in Louisiana. Proc. Ann. Conf. Southeast. Assoc. Game and Fish Comm. 20.123-130.

**TABLE 1.** Capture (source) and release sites, along with parish of release, for deer restocking efforts in Louisiana.

PARISH	YEARS	TOTAL DEER	SOURCE	RELEASE SITE
Acadia	1963-65	70	GMC & DNWR	Lota & 5 mi. S. Eunice
Allen	1949-51	222	Texas, Wisc. & Ruston, LA	West Bay WMA*,** & Reeves
Ascension	1969	15	DNWR	East of St. Gabriel
Avoyelles	1969	34	DNWR	Spring Bayou WMA
Beauregard	1949-53	65	Texas, Wisc., GSE & GMC	Sugartown*, Dry Creek**,** & W. Dequincy
Bienville	1954	28	MAP, TNP & RDT	Liberty Hill, Jamestown
Bossier	1956-57	66	RDT & CAT	4 mi. S. Rocky Mt. & 5 mi. SE Benton
Calcasieu	1956-58	47	RDT, AVI & Wisc.	NW Lake Charles**
Caldwell	1949-1953	135	GSE, MAI, MAP, TNP & Wisc.	Bouef WMA**, 5 mi. SE Hebert & NW Columbia
Cameron	1961-69	83	Texas & DNWR	Grand Cherier*, Grand Lake, Johnson Bayou & W. Creole
Catahoula	1956	31	MAP & TNP	NE Aimwell
Concordia	1964	30	DNWR	W. Ferriday
DeSota	1955-56	59	RDT & CAT	N. & SE Mansfield
E. Baton Rouge	1965	7	GMC	10 mi. N. Baton Rouge
E. Feliciana	1956-68	91	RDT, CAT, ZMP & DNWR	10 mi. SE Clinton & NW Clinton
Franklin	1964	30	DNWR	5 mi. NE Baskin
Grant	1951-56	95	Texas, Wisc. & RDT	Catahoula Preserve**,** & 8 mi. SE Pollock
Jackson	1952-57	71	MAP & RDT	Jackson Bienville WMA & 4 mi. S. Vernon
Jefferson Davis	1962-64	33	GMC & DNWR	5 mi. S. Welsh & Lake Arthur
LaSalle	1953-66	121	MAP, TNP, RDT, DNWR, WBY & Wisc.	White Sulphur Springs**, 10 mi. NW Jena, Dewey Wills WMA
Lincoln	1949-58	74	GSE, RDT & CAT	Unionville, 10 mi. NE Ruston & Corinth
Livingston	1950-51	47	ZMP, MAI, AVI & Wisc.	Killian**
Madison	1952	10	Wisc.	10 mi. S. Tallulah**
Morehouse	1953	23	MAP & TNP	Coulee
Natchitoches	1953-63	140	MAP, TNP, Wisc., RDT, CAT, GMC & ASF	10 mi. N. Marthasville, 5 mi. S. Powhatan**, W. Goldana, Cloutierville & 5 mi. N. Campti
Oauchita	1955-58	112	RDT	E. Fairbanks, N. Monroe, Luna & 10 mi. SE Monroe
Plaquemine	1969	14	DNWR	Bohemia WMA
Rapides	1950-51	82	DNWR, Texas, Wisc., AVI and MAI	Kisatchie National Forest**,**
Red River	1953-57	87	GMC, MAP, Wisc., RDT and TNP	Hall Summit, 10 mi. E. Coushatta and 5 mi. N. Womack
Richland	1955-57	82	MAP & RDT	Buckner, 10mi. E. Monroe & 10mi. NW Rayville
Sabine	1951-56	101	Texas, Wisc., MAP, TNP, RDT, GMC and AVI	4 mi. W. Fisher**,** & 6 mi. W. Many
St. Helena	1955-59	86	ZMP & RDT	Chipola & Montpelier
St. Landry	1961-65	105	MAP, TNP, PCI & DNWR	Thistlethwaite WMA, Port Barre & Dubulsson
St. Mary	1963-64	30	GMC	Cote Blanche Island
Tangipahoa	1963-69	111	DNWR & PCI	S. Kentwood, W. Independence, E. Roberts, S. Amite & 10 mi. NE Kentwood
Tensas	1966	21	Wisc.	5 mi. W. Waterproof
Terrebonne	1969	30	DNWR	Lake DeCade
Union	1950-59	118	Wisc., MAP, TNP, RDT & CAT	Union WMA** & 5 mi. S. Spearsville
Vernon	1951-64	158	RDT, AVI, MAP, ZMP & GMC	5 mi. SE Simpson, Ft. Polk, Anacoco, N. Slagle, W. Rosepine, Lutcher-Moore WMA
Washington	1960-63	37	DNWR, TNP & MAP	SW Mt. Hermon
Webster	1954-57	105	RDT, MAP & TNP	10 mi. SW Cotton Valley, 10 mi. N. Minden, Bellevue & 10 mi. SE Dubberly
West Carroll	1965	14	MAP	Darnell
West Feliciana	1966	13	ALZ	Unk.
Winn	1953	35	MAP, TNP & Wisc.	S. of Mill

Texas\*; Wisconsin\*\*; Gum Cove = GMC; Delta National Wildlife Refuge = DNWR; Glen Shadow Estate, Ruston = GSE; Chicot State Park = CSP; Madison Parish = MAP; Tensas Parish = TNP; Red Dirt National Wildlife Management Preserve = RDT; Catahoula National Wildlife Management Preserve = CAT; Avery Island = AVI; Marsh Island = MAI; Zemurray Park = ZMP; West Bay WMA = WBY; Alexander State Forest = ASF; Pecan Island = PCI; and Alexandria Zoo = ALZ

# Hog Removal Study on Pass-a-Loutre WMA

Hog damage to tidal flat at PALWMA causing increased wetland loss due to erosion.

BY TODD BAKER, Assistant Chief, Coastal & Nongame Resources Division; ANDY NYMAN, LSU; LANCE CAMPBELL, EDMOND MOUTON, SHANE GRANIER, TREBOR VICTORIANO, BRITANY FORET, LDWF Coastal & Nongame Resources Division

By the early 1960s feral hogs were established on the Mississippi River bird-foot delta which is located at the terminal end of the Mississippi River. According to retired wildlife biologist Emile LeBlanc, feral hogs were only found in the marshes west of South Pass until 1991, after which they were observed on the east side of the pass. The population was not considered significant until the late 1990s. In the last 15 years there has been a large increase in the hog population on the bird-foot delta as evident by the increased acreage of marsh damaged by hogs.

Although the Mississippi River bird-foot delta is a dynamic habitat with an ephemeral system of bayous, sandbars and salinity regimes, the impacts that these large invasive omnivores are having on the fragile marsh habitat and species that live in these environments cannot be overlooked. In the marshes of the Mississippi River Delta, hogs are known to impact waterfowl, secretive marsh birds, wading birds, shorebirds, and the sensitive marsh habitat on which they depend. In addition, they are known to carry a large number of diseases such as swine brucellosis and leptospirosis which can infect humans. Hogs also carry pseudorabies which is documented to negatively impact mammals such as white-tailed deer, rabbits and river otter.

On Pass-a-Loutre Wildlife Management Area (PALWMA), hogs are most often observed on tidal flats feeding on tubers

and rhizomes of delta duck potato, cattail, alligator weed, elephant ear, and delta three-square. These species are most often found in the tidal zone. In order for hogs to get to the preferred portions of these plants (tubers and rhizomes), they root up the sediments. The process of rooting up the sediment in the tidal zone exposes the sediment to tidal exchange and accelerates wetland loss with each outgoing tide. This is particularly detrimental when tropical events such as hurricanes or tropical storms impact the area. These events cause severe

erosion and marsh loss on the delta which is magnified in areas with disturbed soils or reduced vegetative cover.

Many of the vegetative species that hogs select are also preferred forage for a large variety of migratory waterfowl that migrate to the delta each fall and spring. Feral hogs are often observed in large stands of duck potato and delta three-square completely rooting up the flats and removing the choicest waterfowl food resources.

Hogs on the bird-foot delta also selectively forage for invertebrates such as craw-



fish and fiddler crabs, which puts them in direct competition with secretive marsh birds and wading birds common on PAL-WMA such as white ibis, glossy ibis, rails and night herons.

In addition to eating eggs, the practice of rooting up large tracts of marsh destroys nesting habitat of ground nesting birds such as mottled ducks and secretive marsh birds by converting heavily vegetated marsh habitat to open mud flats.

In 2013, LDWF in conjunction with LSU and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, initiated a study to determine if hog removal would result in reduced hog induced marsh damage and subsequent marsh vegetation recovery at the PAL-WMA. Aerial vegetation surveys were conducted in March 2013 via helicopter in treatment (area where hogs were to be removed) and control (area where hogs were not going to be removed) areas to document recent hog damage to the marsh. Following vegetation surveys, lethal hog removal from the treatment area was accomplished utilizing shotguns fired from helicopters and airboats. During the study, 145 hogs were removed from the treatment area, which averages 7.6 hogs removed per hour of flying/airboat time.

In March 2014 aerial vegetation surveys were again conducted to compare vegetation response as a result of hog removal. Following hog removal, there was a 68 percent reduction in the number of damaged sites, 66 percent reduction in acres damaged (down from 272 acres damaged to 92.5 acres damaged), and 35 percent reduction in the severity of damage in the treatment area compared with the March 2013 aerial vegetation surveys. The control area, in contrast, experienced a 67 percent increase in damaged sites and a 20 percent increase in acres damaged (up from 103 acres damaged to 124 acres damaged) compared to the March 2013 aerial vegetation surveys.

This research shows that reducing hog numbers in marsh habitats, provided enough hogs are removed, can have important ecological consequences. Since hogs cause ecological damage to marshes by direct removal of vegetation and subsequent wetland loss through erosion, hog removal in these ecosystems is necessary to prevent additional wetland loss. Removal of hogs from these ecosystems will also help enhance wetland bird survival and productivity. While it wasn't a focus of this study, it is hoped that hog removal will also reduce direct competition with waterfowl, secretive marsh birds and wading birds for food resources and reduce damage to nesting habitat.



**ABOVE:** Treatment and control areas.

**BELOW:** Treatment area pre-hog removal (left) and post-hog removal (right). Note vegetation recovery in picture to the right.

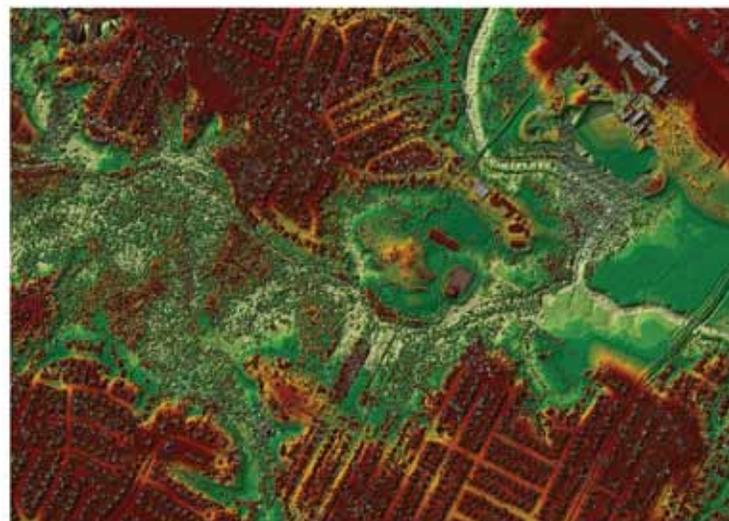
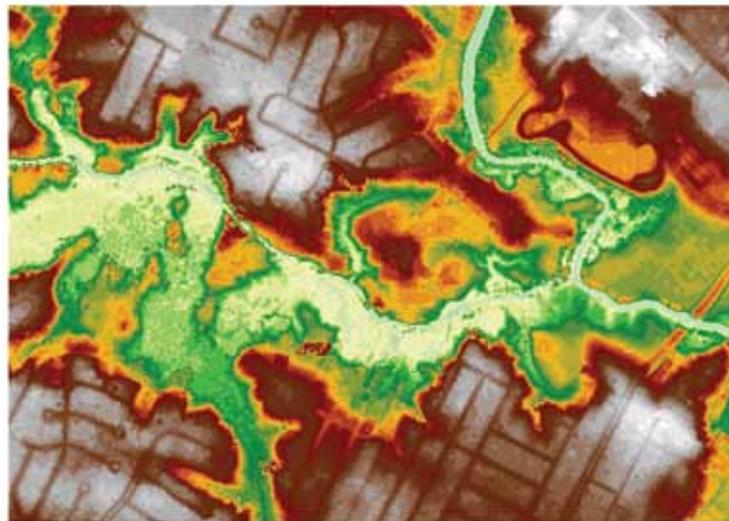


# LIDAR for Wildlife Habitat Management and Assessment

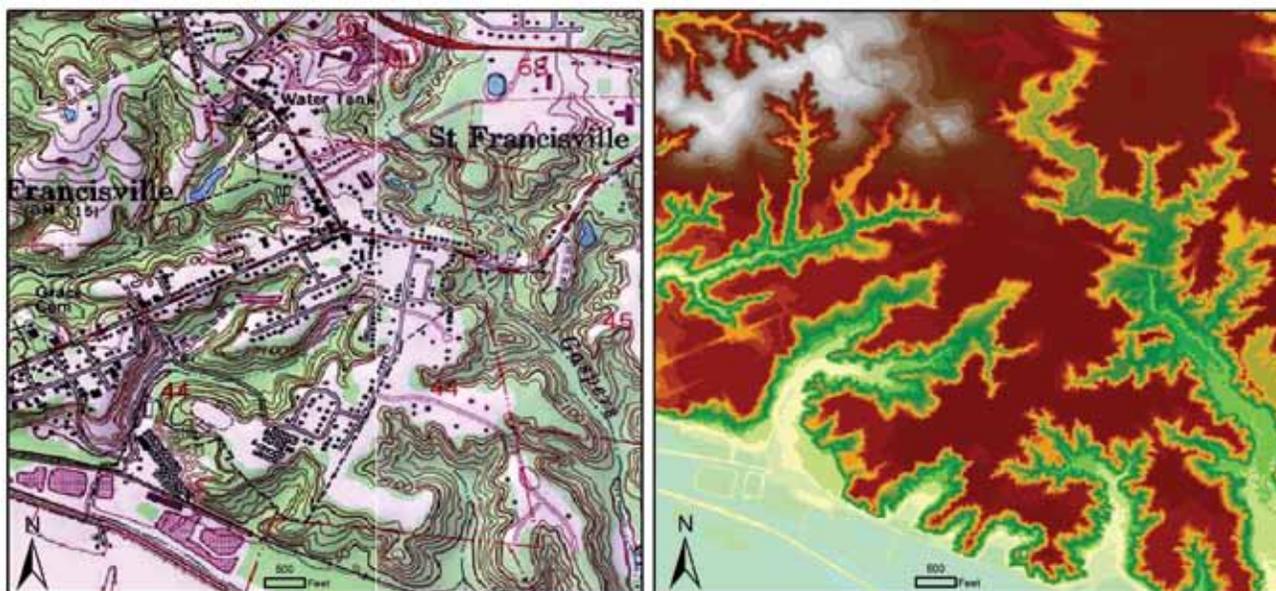
BY BRAD MOONEY, Land Manager (Lands Assessment Lab)

Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) derived Digital Elevation Model (DEM) data have proven to be a critical resource for wildlife biologists. What exactly is LIDAR and what is a DEM? LIDAR is similar to RADAR (Radio Detection and Ranging) with the difference being the use of laser pulses for LIDAR rather than radio waves. The LIDAR instrument fires rapid pulses of laser light at a surface, some up to 150,000 pulses per second. A sensor on the instrument measures the amount of time it takes for each pulse to bounce back. Light moves at a constant and known speed so the LIDAR instrument can calculate the distance between itself and the target with high accuracy. By repeating this in quick succession the instrument builds up a complex 'map' of the surface it is measuring. If the sensor is directed downward toward underlying terrain, the calculated distance value can be used to determine terrain elevation.

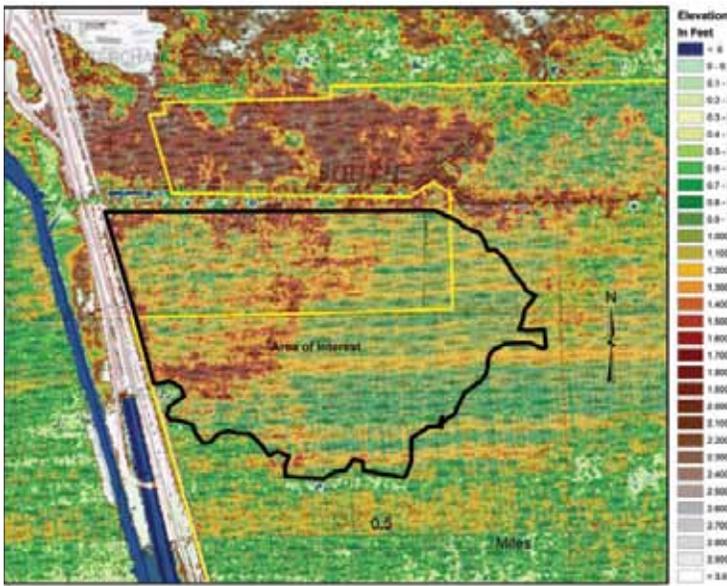
A DEM is a grid based representation of elevation based on pixels such as those present in a digital image, basically it makes a 3D representation of a terrain's surface. Prior to the advent of DEMs, biologists frequently used elevation contours on USGS topographic



**FIGURE 2.** The Image at the top is a LIDAR DEM of the area surrounding LDWF Headquarters. The image at the bottom is of the same area and it is derived from raw LIDAR return data. The top image shows just bare earth features whereas the bottom image captures buildings, trees, bridges, houses and cars.



**FIGURE 1.** USGS topographic map (left) and LIDAR DEM (right) depictions of the same portion of St. Francisville, La.



**FIGURE 3.** LIDAR for determining drainage on Joyce WMA

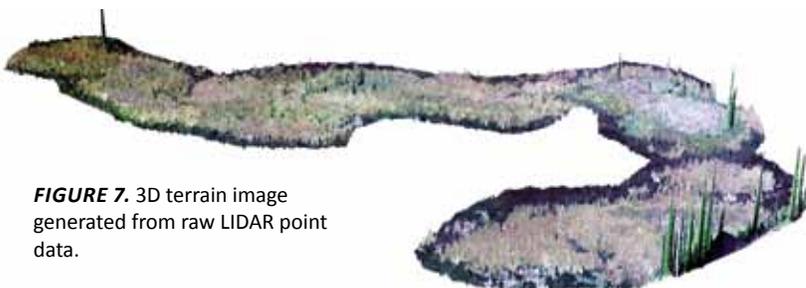
maps to analyze terrain (Figure 1). The term LIDAR is often used to refer to LIDAR derived DEM data used in developing 3D imagery (Figure 2).

Wildlife Division staff often request LIDAR and LIDAR-derived products from the Lands Assessment Lab to support the activities of their respective programs. WMA biologists used a Lands Assessment Lab LIDAR map to determine drainage flow on Joyce WMA (Figure 3).

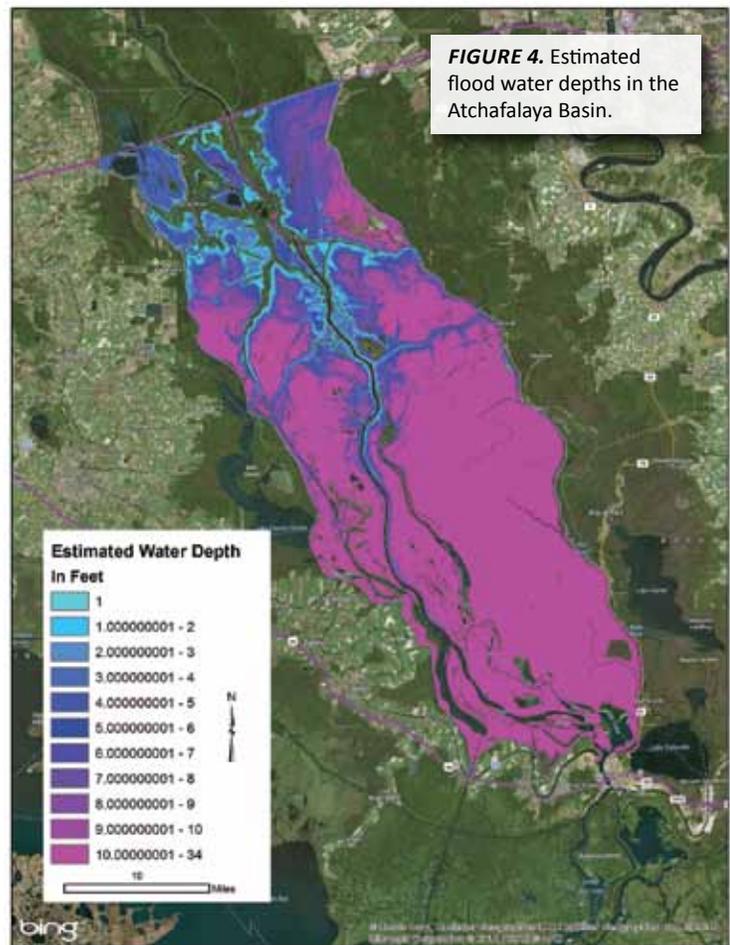
During past annual Mississippi River flooding events, the Lands Assessment Lab has created LIDAR-derived flood estimation layers for the Deer and WMA programs. By analyzing modeled flood water depths in the lower Atchafalaya Basin, biologists are able to determine acreages of suitable habitat for deer as flood waters rise (Figure 4), enabling them to establish season closure levels during fall flood periods. The Lands Assessment Lab created an estimated flood water depth layer for Dewey W. Wills WMA biologists to support their waterfowl habitat management efforts (Figure 5). By analyzing water depth estimation layers, biologists were able to identify lower elevations on Boeuf WMA that may be suitable for waterfowl impoundment development (Figure 6).

The use of LIDAR by the Office of Wildlife is not limited to LIDAR DEM data only. Lands Assessment Lab staff used a 3D profile of raw LIDAR point cloud data to assist with the identification of woody encroachment in a classified Landsat Thematic Mapper image of a Natural Heritage Program coastal prairie restoration site (Figure 7).

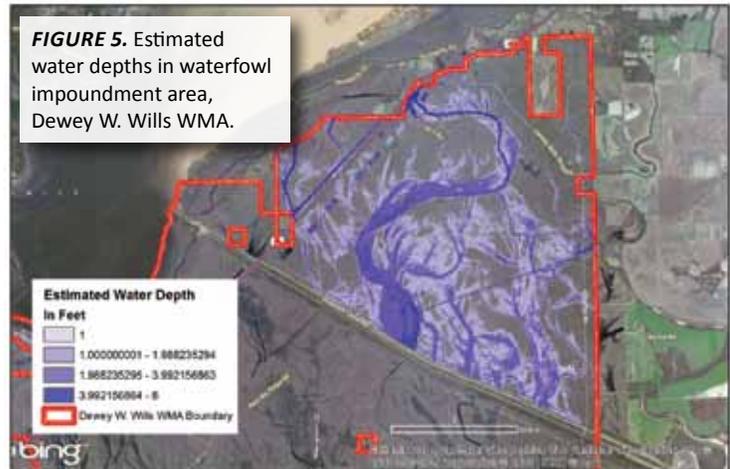
In the 2000s, statewide LIDAR began to become available for use by GIS analysts, planners and other specialists. At the time, it was a relatively new technology, and most seeking elevation data were likely to turn to contours on USGS topographic maps. Today it is used extensively by geospatial analysts, land planners and non-specialists alike. It is used so often that the term LIDAR has become nearly synonymous with Digital Elevation Model or elevation data in general. The Office of Wildlife often has used LIDAR products created by the Lands Assessment Lab. In the years to come, it will continue to be an essential tool to assist LDWF biologists in fulfilling the missions of their programs.



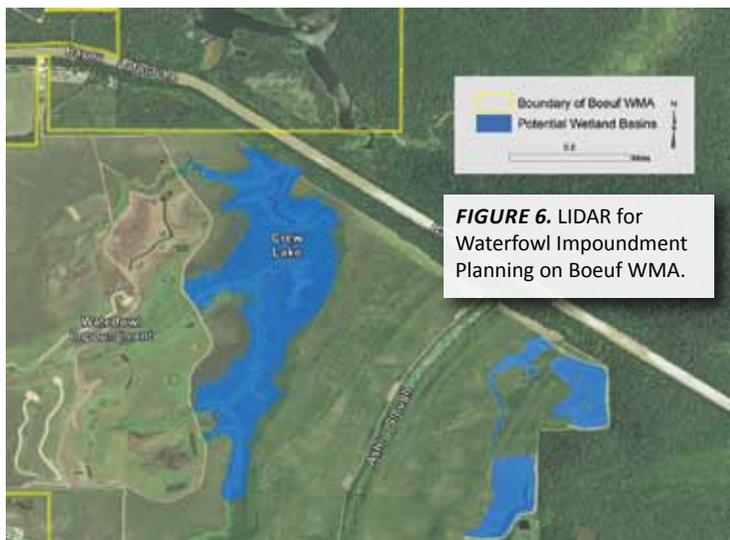
**FIGURE 7.** 3D terrain image generated from raw LIDAR point data.



**FIGURE 4.** Estimated flood water depths in the Atchafalaya Basin.



**FIGURE 5.** Estimated water depths in waterfowl impoundment area, Dewey W. Wills WMA.



**FIGURE 6.** LIDAR for Waterfowl Impoundment Planning on Boeuf WMA.

# Wilson's Snipe

## Legal Shorebird Hunting

BY JASON OLSZAK, Wetland Bird Specialist



Two species of shorebirds are hunted in the United States, and Louisiana hunters are among the most successful at harvesting both. Like the woodcock, which has been reviewed in recent issues of the "Wildlife Insider" (Winter 2014, Winter 2015), the wetland-dwelling Wilson's snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) also offers a wingshooting challenge on par with many upland game species.

Wilson's snipe is a long-billed (2.5 inch), medium sized, migratory sandpiper (family *Scolopacidae*) comparable in size to the robin and bobwhite. These secretive birds often go undetected in the shallow peripheries of wetlands or low areas of harvested agricultural fields, making use of their cryptic coloration that blends flawlessly with the amber-auburn-chocolate hue of rotting vegetation. They're hesitant to flush until nearly under boot, but once airborne their zigzagging, erratic flight path is nearly always accompanied by a startled call of "scaip," identifying itself as legal game. To many hunters snipe are lagniappe, taken while traversing to and from the duck blind, but more than a few make a special trip to the field to specifically target these elusive shorebirds. A good gun dog is not required, but without one a good mark of downed birds is essential. A dog definitely hastens the retrieval of birds put down in the tall weeds, and the use of pointers to locate birds is not unusual among successful snipe hunters.

The snipe's range covers nearly all of North America (Figure 1). Like many shorebird and waterfowl species, they breed mainly in the prairie and boreal portions of the Northern United States and Canada. Males attract females with a combination

of visual and auditory cues during courtship flight displays. Nests are located in short grass, sedges or brush away from, but not dissociated with, a variety of wetland types, from bogs to marshes. They're seasonally monogamous and exhibit bi-parental brooding of no more than four chicks, which is typical of the shorebird group. An age and sex specific staggered fall migration is usually led by adult females (McCloskey and Thompson 2000) with small numbers first arriving in the Gulf States in October.

Like woodcock, the flexible tips of snipe bills permit feeding on subsurface invertebrates as deep as 2.5 inches (Helm

ers 1992). Though woodcock are earthworm specialists, snipe feed opportunistically on a variety of invertebrates. However, food preferences are not easily discerned because the variety of habitats and the hydrological conditions in which they're collected affect prey species abundance in different ways. Additionally, sex-specific nutritional demands appear to influence diet selection and, therefore, habitat use. Generally, oligochaetes (earthworms) are the most common prey items, in addition to *Dipterans* (flies), *Coleopterans* (beetles), *Hemipterans* (true bugs), and crustaceans such as snails (McCloskey et al. 2009).

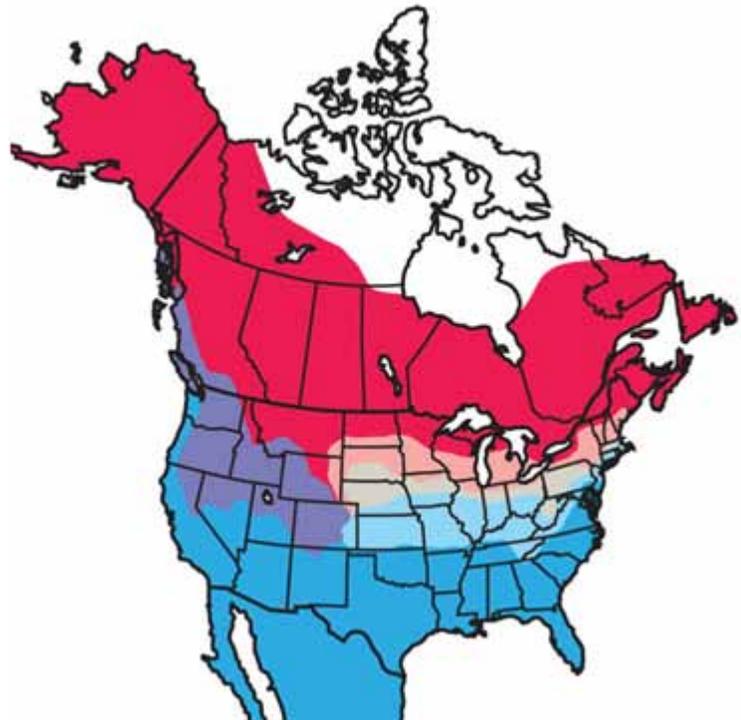


FIGURE 1. Breeding (red), migratory range (gray), and wintering (blue) range of Wilson's snipe. Other colors show areas of overlap in the three listed life cycle ranges.

Wilson's snipe is broadly considered a common species throughout its range. However, there is no systematic, geographically broad snipe survey because of the difficulty in conducting one. Therefore, population abundance and trends are essentially rough estimates and have a low degree of certainty. The most recent continental population estimate is 2-3 million (Andres et al. 2012). Visibility withstanding, the vast, often wooded, landscape upon which they breed precludes any aerial census methods. Additionally, the wide annual and even weekly variation in presence of shallow, wet areas creates survey difficulty up and down their migration route. Snipe are counted on the ground-based Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes (Figure 2), but coverage of the breeding range is incomplete due to the remote nature of Northern Canada where aerial surveys are necessary to census waterfowl and other large species. Incomplete range coverage is also a criticism of any type of courtship display survey. Similar difficulties exist for surveying migratory stopovers and wintering grounds. Unlike most other shorebirds, the snipe's propensity for thick, short vegetation makes ocular sightings difficult at best. Shallowly flooded wetlands and agricultural fields where snipe can be found are often a function of recent local precipitation and therefore, estimates have large variances. Population estimates for wintering birds in the Lower Mississippi Valley have ranged from 2,000 (Elliot & McKnight 2000) to over 1 million (Carroll & Krementz 2014).

Nationwide, the five-year average snipe harvest of 96,500 is largely influenced by southern, wintering states that have a large wetland base such as Florida, Texas, Louisiana, California and the Carolinas (Raftovich et al. 2015). These numbers are generated from the Harvest Information Program (HIP) and, like population estimates, have large standard deviations. Louisiana's annual harvest averages 19,000 but is heavily skewed due to a few anomalous years (Figure 3). The same data shows that an average of 2,000 Pelican State hunters spend 7,200 days afield and harvest 8.4 birds per season.

The only requirements to hunt snipe during Louisiana's 107-day season are a basic hunting license and Louisiana HIP registration. Shooting hours are the same as waterfowl (one-half hour before sunrise to sunset) with a daily bag limit of eight and a possession limit of 24. Non-toxic shot is required on state WMAs and national wildlife refuges, and encouraged on private wetlands that are also used by waterfowl. Season dates vary, but generally begin in early November and end Feb. 28, with a split that largely coincides with the waterfowl split. In the past, snipe regulations were published in the Migratory Game Bird Regulations pamphlet, but beginning with the 2016-2017 hunting season they will be available in the general Louisiana Hunting Regulations booklet.

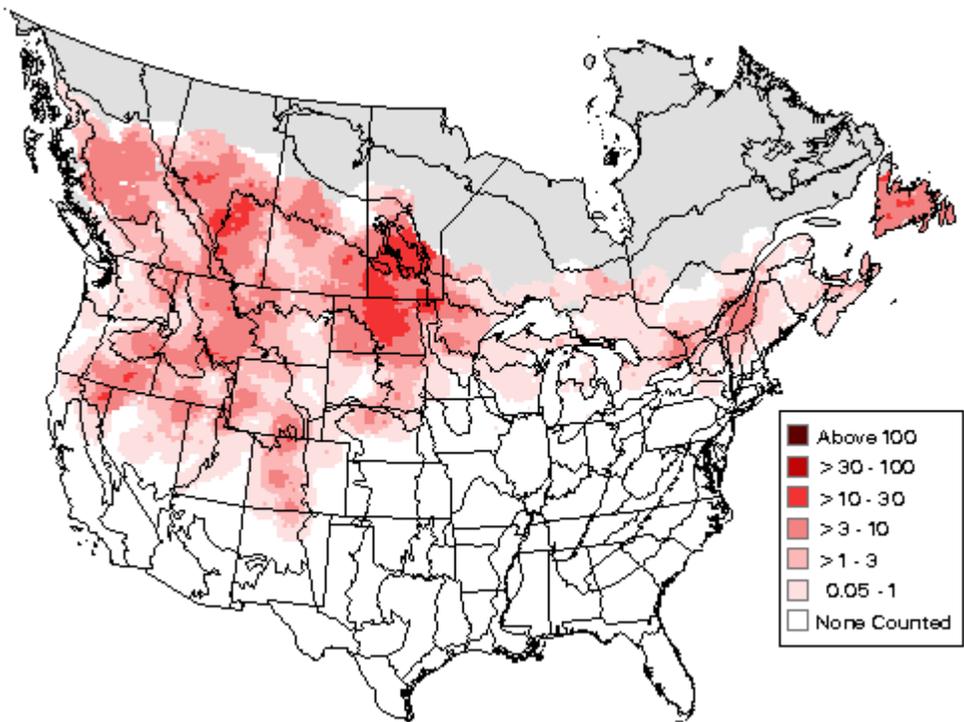


FIGURE 2. Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) Summer Abundance and Distribution of Wilson's Snipe 2007-2013.

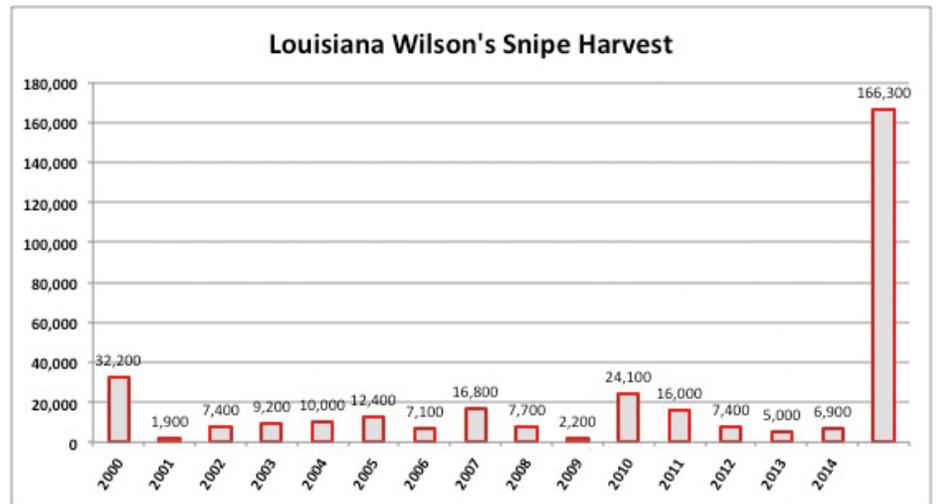


FIGURE 3. Louisiana Snipe Harvest as Compiled from HIP and National Hunter Survey.



Potential for a public land snipe hunt exists wherever open, treeless fields or waterfowl impoundments are holding sheet water at any time during winter. Late season dove fields flooded by heavy rains will also attract snipe. WMA snipe hunting activity is highest on Sherburne, Maurepas Swamp, Manchac and Joyce, while most birds are harvested at Sherburne, Boeuf and Pearl River. On private lands many moist-soil impoundments and rice fields are drained soon after duck season ends, providing an additional month of wingshooting for the bird hunter who hasn't satisfied his compulsion for wildfowl hunting.

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# LDWF Staff Recognized for Bobwhite Restoration/Management Activities

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) staff were recently recognized for their contributions and achievements with regard to restoring and managing bobwhite quail habitat on Sandy Hollow Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Tangipahoa Parish. At the 2015 annual meeting of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee in Galloway, N.J., the Sandy Hollow WMA Burn Team lead by Christian Winslow, WMA Biologist Supervisor, received the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative National Fire Bird Conservation Award for their efforts in conducting prescribed burns on the WMA. In addition to Winslow, Sandy Hollow Burn Team members recognized were Tommy Bruhl, Jill Day, Calvin Waskom, Wade Fitzsimmons, Jake Tate, Jason Childress, Russell Koepf, Bradley Breland, Jimmy Ernst, Mike Perot, Ed Trahan and Wade Tracy.

The National Fire Bird Conservation Award's name symbolizes the historic reliance of bobwhites on fire to maintain the landscape in an early successional stage. Promoting native grasses, wildflowers and "beneficial weeds" through burning provides suitable habitat for bobwhites and other wildlife. The term "fire bird" in relation to bobwhites was first coined by naturalist Herbert Stoddard, who researched bobwhites and worked to restore bobwhite habitat in the early 20th century. Stoddard

advocated the use of fire as a management tool and developed many bobwhite management techniques that are still in use. Today, prescribed burning by trained professionals has become an increasingly important tool for helping create and manage habitat for bobwhites, as well as a suite of songbirds, pollinators and other wildlife that require early successional habitats to survive.

Sandy Hollow WMA is Louisiana's only WMA dedicated to bobwhites. Winslow and his colleagues with LDWF assess habitat response and burn needs annually and then conduct prescribed burns. Although individual prescribed burns are typically small in size (50 to 200 acres) to benefit quail, LDWF staff cumulatively burn approximately 2,000 acres per year on Sandy Hollow - with plans to increase total burn acres in future years. In response to these efforts, bobwhite numbers during annual summer whistle counts have trended upward since the early 2000s. Also, thanks to the leadership, coordination efforts, and dedication of Winslow and other LDWF staff, other quail friendly practices are increasing, including fallow disking, wildlife plantings, and timber harvests. The Sandy Hollow team creates and maintains some of the highest quality bobwhite habitat in the state. Many thanks to all of them for their hard work.



For more information on bobwhite habitat management contact:  
 Cody Cedotal, *Resident Small Game/  
 Wild Turkey Program Manager*  
 (225) 765-2361  
 ccedotal@wlf.la.gov

# WMA Recreational Opportunities

WMA	Primary Game											Access/Special Hunts				
	Deer	Dove	Quail	Rabbit	Raccoon	Squirrel	Turkey	Waterfowl	Woodcock	Fishing	Trapping	General Lottery Hunts	Youth Lottery Hunts	Physically Challenged Hunting Area	Physically Challenged Lottery Hunts	Camping
Acadiana Conservation Corridor																
Alexander State Forest																
Atchafalaya Delta												Alligator				
Attakapas																
Bayou Macon																
Bayou Pierre																
Big Colewa Bayou																
Big Lake																
Biloxi																
Bodcau																
Boeuf																
Buckhorn																
Camp Beauregard																
Clear Creek																
Dewey W. Wills																
Elbow Slough																
Elm Hall																
Floy Ward McElroy																
Fort Polk -Vernon																
Grassy Lake																
Hutchinson Creek																
Jackson Bienville																
Joyce																
Lake Boeuf												Alligator				
Lake Ramsay																
Little River																
Loggy Bayou																
Manchac																
Marsh Bayou																
Maurepas Swamp																
Pass-A-Loutre												Alligator				
Pearl River																
Peason Ridge																
Pointe-Aux-Chenes												Alligator				
Pomme De Terre																
Richard K. Yancey																
Russell Sage																
Sabine																
Sabine Island																
Salvador/Timken												Alligator				
Sandy Hollow																
Sherburne																
Sicily Island Hills																
Soda Lake																
Spring Bayou																
Tangipahoa Parish School Board																
Thistlethwaite																
Tunica Hills																
Walnut Hill																
West Bay																

\*\*\*Check hunting regulations for more specific rules/regulations, limits and hours regarding hunting and fishing on wildlife management areas.

Craig Long of Mira, Louisiana with a doe he harvested during the hunt.



## Sabine Wildlife Management Area

BY JEFFERY JOHNSON, West Gulf Coastal Plain Biologist Supervisor

The Office of Wildlife of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) currently manages over 1.1 million acres in its Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Program. The WMA Program's mission is to provide wise stewardship of the state's wildlife and habitats, to maintain biodiversity, including plant and animal species of special concern, and to provide outdoor opportunities for present and future generations to engender a greater appreciation of the natural environment. Habitats within these lands harbor and help conserve a multitude of endangered species, species of concern, and the more common game species. Recreational opportunities range from hunting and fishing, to canoeing, hiking, camping, bird watching and berry picking. The habitats found on WMAs include upland pine/hardwood, cypress tupelo, pine savanna, bottomland hardwood, brackish marsh, and the list goes on with many globally rare habitat types and plant communities as well. Each issue of the "Louisiana Wildlife Insider" will feature a different WMA highlighting the WMA's history, unique features, and recreational opportunities.

Sabine WMA is located in central Sabine Parish approximately five miles south of Zwolle. Louisiana Highway 6 and U.S. Highway 171 are the major roads providing access to Sabine. This area is approximately

7,554 acres, provided by Hancock Timber Resource Group and Red Oak Timber Company. LDWF is grateful to these landowners for allowing these properties to serve as WMAs, providing wildlife oriented recreational opportunities for the Sportsman's Paradise.

The terrain varies from rolling hills to creek bottoms. The major timber type is loblolly pine plantations. Overstory species include loblolly pines along with red oak, post oak, white oak, hickory and sweetgum. Understory species include yaupon, French mulberry, hawthorn, sassafras, black cherry, wax myrtle, huckleberry and dogwood. The creek bottoms have an overstory comprised of beech, willow oak, water oak, red maple, black gum, magnolia, southern red oak and sweetgum. Understory species include ironwood, dogwood, wild azalea, deciduous holly and overstory regeneration.

Game species available for hunting are deer, squirrel, rabbit, waterfowl, quail, dove and woodcock. Turkey hunting is available by lottery only. Trapping is allowed, and species available for trapping are mink, raccoon, opossum, skunk, fox, beaver and coyote.

Deer hunting is by far the most popular activity on Sabine WMA each year. While many hunters enjoy deer hunting on Sabine WMA and all have their own stories of good times and successful hunts, there is a spe-

cial group that comes together to hunt there each fall. The second full weekend of October is set aside to provide a deer hunting opportunity on Sabine WMA for youth and physically challenged hunters. The WMA is divided into two portions, one where youth, accompanied by a supervising adult, may scout out a good spot and make a hunt. A separate portion is set aside for participants in a lottery deer hunt conducted as part of LDWF's Physically Challenged Hunter Program (PCHP).

The Sabine WMA PCHP hunt is made possible through a cooperative effort between LDWF and a nonprofit organization known as Hunters Enriching the Lives of People (HELP). HELP was formed by private individuals to assist with the Sabine WMA PCHP hunt through on-the-ground volunteers and by providing funding for food and supplies for the event. The Sabine WMA PCHP lottery deer hunt typically hosts 12 to 15 hunters, but has the potential to host up to 20 hunters should that many qualifying individuals apply.

Hunting locations are selected well in advance of the hunt and are prepared by LDWF WMA Program staff. The day before the hunt, LDWF staff and HELP volunteers place blinds in each hunting location. The hunt participants arrive at Sabine WMA on Friday night and meet for introductions to the LDWF and HELP staff working the hunt, an orientation on how the hunt will be conducted, as well as a good meal and time of fellowship. The Saturday hunt day consists of morning and afternoon hunts with a pre-hunt breakfast, midday meal and rest, and then an evening meal. A pre-hunt breakfast and morning hunt are made on Sunday, and then the weekend event wraps up with a midday meal, fellowship and parting of ways. HELP volunteers and LDWF staff then remove blinds and get things back in order and stored so all will be in place to do the hunt again next year.

Most of the participants in the PCHP hunt are wheel-chair bound or have some other type of physical disability that makes hunting for them extremely challenging. The opportunity to hunt is something they truly appreciate. Success to them is measured not by game harvested but by the experiences of the hunt, enjoying nature and fellowship with other sportsmen and sportswomen. For the volunteers that make the hunt possible, while work is involved, the blessing of seeing the appreciation and enjoyment of the participants makes it all worthwhile. With those things in mind, each year's hunt is a success regardless of whether game is harvested, and when game is harvested it is icing on the cake.

# VOLUNTEER PROFILE

HELP, the non-profit organization, helps make the Sabine physically challenged deer hunt possible each year through providing hardworking, dedicated volunteers, and by supplying food and supplies. Additionally, they partner with LDWF and the Louisiana National Guard to help facilitate a Wounded Veterans hunt on Camp Beauregard WMA each fall. LDWF appreciates the folks from HELP and all they do to assist in making these hunts possible. For more information about HELP you can contact Bradley Marr at (318) 315-0185 or by email at sp71967@yahoo.com.



**ABOVE:** Sabine WMA PCHP hunt participants and volunteers gathering for food and fellowship during the hunt.

**BELOW:** Donovan Chasson (left) of Lake Charles with a four point buck he harvested. Donovan is legally blind and was escorted by Lee Whitely (right), a relative. This was Donovan's first hunting trip.



For additional information about Sabine WMA and opportunities on it, including the PCHP lottery deer hunt, contact Jeff Johnson at the LDWF Minden field office at (318) 371-3050 or by email at [jjohnson@wlf.la.gov](mailto:jjohnson@wlf.la.gov).



## Pete LeRoy

Pete LeRoy of Lake Charles is a 16-year veteran Hunter Education volunteer instructor who has taught well over 100 hunter education classes. In addition, he assists with Education programs such as FUN Camp, Becoming an Outdoors Woman, National Hunting and Fishing Day, the Volunteer Hunter Education Instructor Workshop, and the Youth Hunter Education Challenge. Although Pete resides in Lake Charles, he travels all over the state to volunteer for these programs and sacrifices many nights and weekends to do it. He is an elite part of our team of volunteers as he selflessly dedicates his time and expertise to many of our Educational programs.

Pete, a father and grandfather, has devoted the better part of his life to exposing as many people as possible to the outdoors. He has a variety of specialized outdoor skills which include firearm safety, wilderness survival skills, camping, nature trail education, water/boater safety, and kayaking. In addition to these learned skills, Pete is particularly skilled at motivating adolescents to excel in outdoor skills. Pete says he got started as a volunteer instructor in large part due to former LDWF employees, Bud Carpenter and Jonathan Glascock. "Their personalities and passion hooked me. To this day Bud has always been my inspiration and drive for me to stay the course."

Pete attributes much of his continued enjoyment in volunteer work to LDWF staff and the people he gets to meet. "I have been very fortunate to have worked with some awesome coordinators. They have taught me so much and given me many opportunities to do what makes my heart feel good, working with young people to continue active participation in outdoor activities."

LDWF's Hunter/Aquatic Education staff are very thankful for his service and dedication. Fortunately, there are many other volunteers like Pete who give of their time to share their knowledge and passion for the outdoors with others. If you would like to become a volunteer in the LDWF Hunter Education or Aquatic Education Programs, please contact Eric Shanks at 337-491-2575 or [eshanks@wlf.la.gov](mailto:eshanks@wlf.la.gov).



## Fred Kimmel Wildlife Biologist

After growing up in New Orleans, Fred knew he wanted to work in the outdoors and with wildlife, so he attended Louisiana Tech University to study wildlife management. While at Louisiana Tech, Fred had the good fortune to be employed as a student worker in LDWF's Monroe office where he received an introduction to the daily work of wildlife biologists, confirming for him that he was making the right career choice. Upon receiving his B.S. degree from Louisiana Tech in 1981, he entered the graduate program at LSU. While at LSU, Fred researched wild turkey habitat use along the Mississippi River batture lands in East Carroll Parish, earning a M.S. degree in Wildlife Management. Shortly thereafter, Fred went to work for LDWF as a technician on Red River WMA (now Richard K. Yancey WMA). This "real world" experience complimented Fred's academic credentials and provided a foundation for the remainder of his career.

In 1986, Fred was selected for a district biologist position in the Baton Rouge area and worked with private land managers and on WMAs throughout southeast Louisiana. After a one-year detour to law school, Fred returned to LDWF in a position with the Upland Game Program where he would work in various capacities for the next 20 years, including a stint as LDWF's Land Acquisition Program Manager. In the Upland Game Program, Fred pursued his interests in management and research involving wild turkeys, woodcock, bobwhites, doves, rabbits and squirrels. During these years, Fred served on numerous state, regional and national working groups addressing conservation of woodcock, quail, wild turkeys and small game.

In 2009, Fred became the Biologist Director of the Education and Technical Services Branch of the Wildlife Division. In this capacity, Fred was responsible for the oversight and administration of the Education, Private Lands, Large Carnivore, Research/Webless Migratory Bird and Wild Turkey/Resident Small Game programs. In 2013, yearning for more time to focus on individual program improvements, Fred became the Program Manager for the LDWF Hunter/Aquatic Education Program, finding this specialty in the wildlife profession to be very rewarding and challenging.

Fred feels very fortunate and blessed to have been given the opportunity to work for LDWF and with so many dedicated employees and volunteers who demonstrated their commitment to wildlife conservation through their daily actions. Fred retired in 2015 and is now enjoying his wildlife adventures in a more leisurely and relaxed manner. Thanks Fred, for your insight, shared wisdom and dedication to the resources and the sportsmen in the Sportsman's Paradise!

### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT CALENDAR OF EVENTS

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
<b>GENERAL</b>	Dormant season prescribe burn.** Invasive plant control. Take soil samples for food plot preparation.		Growing season prescribe burn, invasive plant control, soil tests, prune and fertilize fruit/mast trees.	Apply herbicide to longleaf stands if necessary, growing season prescribe burn, invasive plant control, fertilize native vegetation.	Plant warm-season food plots*, perform maintenance of fire breaks, growing season prescribe burn, invasive plant control.
<b>DOVES</b>					
<b>DEER</b>	Collect harvest data.	Post-season camera survey before antlers are cast.*** Turn in DMAP records to LDWF.		Browse survey. Work on summer food plots. Fertilize natural deer browse.	
<b>DUCKS/ MOIST-SOIL UNITS</b>		Install new wood duck boxes and clean out existing boxes. Early draw down for moist soil units.	Begin slowly drawing down moist soil units monitor wood duck nest boxes.	Moist-soil plant management/disturbance.	
<b>HOGS</b>	Trap hogs****		Trap hogs		
<b>QUAIL</b>	Prescribe burn/fallow disk.			As needed prescribe burn woody brush areas/avoid mowing-burning all potential nesting areas (2 yr. old native grass areas).	
<b>RABBITS</b>	As needed prescribe burn/disk/mow transition zones.			Escape cover can be created any time during the year as needed.	
<b>SONGBIRDS</b>		Install new bird houses and clean out existing boxes.	Regularly clean bird feeders to reduce disease transfer, prevent nonnative, invasive birds from utilizing bird houses.		
<b>SQUIRRELS</b>					
<b>TURKEY</b>	Prescribe burn/fallow disk/mow for poult habitat.		Listen to gobbling activity prior to hunting season fallow disk/mow for poult habitat growing season burning.	Plant chufa. Growing season burning as needed to improve thick woody brush areas - avoid mowing potential nesting areas.	
<b>WOODCOCK</b>	Future diurnal habitat can be created any time during the year as needed using clearcuts, shelterwood, group selection.				

\*always remember that planting food plots is secondary to natural habitat management; food plots benefit several species including deer, turkeys, quail, and non-game species.  
 \*\*prescribed burning is beneficial to several species including turkey and quail by providing more open habitat for easy movement through the landscape, grasses and forbs for nesting, food,  
 \*\*\*pre-season camera survey more informative/important than post-season camera survey by visualizing buck:doe and doe:fawn ratios and aiding in harvest decisions.  
 \*\*\*\*increase hog trapping effort prior to increases in food availability



# Jimmy Stafford

## Wildlife Biologist

Jimmy grew up in southeast Louisiana hunting and fishing as much as possible. He first learned about the career of wildlife conservation by reading the “Louisiana Conservationist” magazine, some reading material he picked up while sitting in the principal’s office at school, a common landing place for Jimmy as his dad was school principal. In 1982 he graduated from Louisiana Tech University with a B.S. in Forestry/Wildlife and was hired as a wildlife technician at Pearl River WMA. Soon after, he was sent to the LSU Basic Law Enforcement Training Academy. His first duties included various WMA maintenance tasks, game bag checks and WMA law enforcement duties. He was soon promoted to wildlife biologist where he worked with the newly created Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) as well as various WMA duties. Working with private landowners and WMA users cultivated his desire to help people understand wildlife management, and also taught him that listening was the first step in helping people. Jimmy became Region WMA Biologist Supervisor working on all of the WMAs within the southeast region, later being promoted to East Gulf Coastal Plain Region Manager, overseeing both WMA and private land wildlife programs within 19 parishes. In 2010, his career dream of becoming Wild Turkey & Resident Small Game Program Manager became a reality. His previous work subjects varied from alligators to waterfowl, but he is quick to point out that his favorite projects always involved work with quail and wild turkeys.

Jimmy participated in statewide wild turkey restocking efforts from the early 1980s. He conducted the southeast LA gobbler harvest study that monitored over 500 gobblers from 1989-2007. He supervised a similar study started in 2011 on Kisatchie National Forest that to date has monitored 135 gobblers. Jimmy supervised other wild turkey studies that examined hen nesting ecology on Kisatchie, Sherburne WMA, Caddo Parish, and the former Ben’s Creek WMA, as well as a gobbler movement study at Tunica Hills WMA. His quail work includes various habitat management projects on Sandy Hollow WMA, the Vernon (Kisatchie National Forest) quail emphasis area, and he coauthored the Louisiana Bobwhite Recovery Plan. Jimmy also served as Louisiana representative for the National Bobwhite Technical Committee and Southeast Wild Turkey Working Group.

Jimmy is quick to point out that during the span of his 33 year career at LDWF he has been blessed to work with some of the greatest professionals in wildlife conservation. He reports that, “Working with such high quality people makes one want to do his best every day as not to let the team down.” He believes that a good biologist spends more time afield than sitting in an office in front of a computer.

Jimmy retired in 2015 and continues to enjoy time hunting and fishing with friends and family as much as he did growing up. Congratulations Jimmy, your professionalism has earned the respect of all those you have touched across the southeast U.S., and your mentored successors are following your lead. Thanks for your team efforts!

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Growing season prescribe burn. Invasive plant control.		Invasive plant control. Bushog/mow roads, fields.	Mast survey. Plant cool-season food plots.* Invasive plant control.	Invasive plant control.		Dormant season prescribe burn.** Invasive plant control.
Plant brown-top millet for first season dove fields.		Manipulate dove fields for hunting plant brown-top millet for second season dove fields.				
Provide mineral supplements.		Apply for DMAP.	Pre-season camera survey.*** Begin deer stand repairs and prep for hunting season	Pre-season camera survey.***	Collect harvest data.	
Moist-soil plant management/disturbance.		Begin partial flooding for teal, begin duck blind repairs and prep for hunting season.	Manipulate moist soil if needed; mow, disc, burn, plow, herbicide.	Start main flooding of moist soil units.		
		Trap hogs****		Trap hogs		
				Fallow disk borders 50 - 100' wide around fall deer plots to improve summer quail nesting-feeding habitat.		
			Escape cover can be created any time during the year as needed.	Disk near cover to improve feeding habitat.		
			Regularly clean bird feeders to reduce disease transfer, prevent nonnative, invasive birds from utilizing bird houses.		Install new bird houses and clean out existing boxes.	
			Take a youth hunting during special WMA youth squirrel hunts.	Install squirrel nest boxes.		
			Plant chufa.	Plant clover for spring plots.		
			Future diurnal habitat can be created any time during the year as needed using clearcuts, shelterwood, group selection.	Bushhog to a height of 12-18 inches and/or burn openings managed for nocturnal habitat.		

and summer bedding cover for deer, etc.

# LDWF WILDLIFE DIVISION STAFF

**Office of Wildlife**  
P.O. Box 98000 Baton Rouge, LA 70898  
**225-765-2346 225-765-2350**

## LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES ADMINISTRATION



**Charlie Melancon**  
*LDWF Secretary*



**Randy Myers**  
*LDWF Assistant Secretary*



**Bryan McClinton**  
*LDWF Undersecretary*



**Amy Cannizaro Burris**  
*Executive Assistant to the Secretary*



**Wendy Brogdon**  
*Executive Asst. to Asst. Secretaries of LDWF*  
wbrogdon@wlf.la.gov

## BATON ROUGE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



**Kenneth Ribbeck**  
*Chief of Wildlife*  
kribbeck@wlf.la.gov



**Scott Durham**  
*Director, Education & Private Lands*  
sdurham@wlf.la.gov



**Tommy Tuma**  
*Director, Habitat Stewardship*  
ttuma@wlf.la.gov



**Judith Heintze**  
*Admin. Program Specialist*  
jheintze@wlf.la.gov

## DEER PROGRAM



**Jonathan Bordelon**  
*Deer Program Leader*  
225-765-2344  
jbordelon@wlf.la.gov



**James LaCour, DVM**  
*Wildlife Veterinarian*  
225-765-0823  
jlacour@wlf.la.gov



**Rusty Berry, DVM**  
*Wildlife Veterinarian*  
318-487-5885  
rberry@wlf.la.gov



**Jimmy Ernst**  
*DMAP Coordinator*  
225-765-2344  
jernst@wlf.la.gov

## DOVE, WOODCOCK & RESEARCH PROGRAM



**Jeff Duguay**  
*Program Leader*  
225-765-2353  
jduguay@wlf.la.gov

## EDUCATION PROGRAM



**Eric Shanks**  
*Program Manager*  
225-765-2355  
eshanks@wlf.la.gov



**Wayne Higginbotham**  
*Education Manager*  
225-763-5788  
whigginbotham@wlf.la.gov

## LA HUNTING HERITAGE PROGRAM



**John Sturgis**  
*Program Leader*  
337-948-0255  
jsturgis@wlf.la.gov

## WILDLIFE OUTREACH & EDUCATION



**Carrie Salyers**  
*Wildlife Outreach Coordinator*  
337-262-2080  
csalyers@wlf.la.gov

## LARGE CARNIVORE PROGRAM



**Maria Davidson**  
*Program Manager*  
337-262-2080  
mdavidson@wlf.la.gov



**Sean Murphy**  
*Biologist*  
337-262-2080  
smurphy@wlf.la.gov



**Cliff Maehr**  
*Biologist*  
859-420-0981  
smaehr@wlf.la.gov

## SAFE HARBOR PROGRAM



**Eric Baka**  
*Coordinator*  
318-487-5887  
ebaka@wlf.la.gov

## TECHNICAL SERVICES/ FARM BILL PROGRAM



**David Breithaupt**  
*NRCS Liaison/Farm Bill Coordinator*  
dbreithaupt@wlf.la.gov

## SMALL GAME & TURKEY PROGRAM



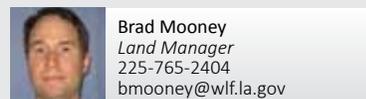
**Cody Cedotal**  
*Program Leader*  
225-765-2361  
ccedotal@wlf.la.gov

## WILDLIFE PERMITS OFFICE



**Melissa Collins**  
*Permits Coordinator*  
225-763-8584  
mcollins@wlf.la.gov

## LANDS ASSESSMENT



**Brad Mooney**  
*Land Manager*  
225-765-2404  
bmooney@wlf.la.gov



**Scott Armand**  
*Land Specialist*  
225-765-2533  
sarmand@wlf.la.gov

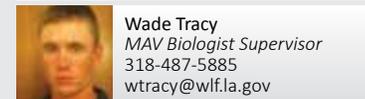
## WMA FORESTRY PROGRAM



**Duck Locascio**  
*Program Manager*  
225-765-2347  
dlocascio@wlf.la.gov



**Fred Hagaman**  
*Biologist Manager*  
318-487-5887  
fhagaman@wlf.la.gov



**Wade Tracy**  
*MAV Biologist Supervisor*  
318-487-5885  
wtracy@wlf.la.gov



**Ed Trahan**  
*GCP Biologist Supervisor*  
318-339-6861  
etrahan@wlf.la.gov



**Buddy Dupuy**  
*Biologist Forester*  
318-487-5895  
mdupuy@wlf.la.gov



**Philip Pritchett**  
*Biologist Forester*  
318-343-4044  
ppritchett@wlf.la.gov



**Mitch McGee**  
*Biologist Forester*  
318-343-4044  
mmcgee@wlf.la.gov

## WATERFOWL PROGRAM



**Larry Reynolds**  
*Program Leader*  
225-765-0456  
lreynolds@wlf.la.gov



**Paul Link**  
*N. American Coordinator*  
225-765-2358  
plink@wlf.la.gov



**Jason Olszak**  
*Wetland Bird Specialist*  
337-948-0255  
jolszak@wlf.la.gov



**Matt Haugen**  
*Biologist*  
225-765-2344  
mhaugen@wlf.la.gov

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA BIOLOGISTS



**Steve Smith**  
WMA Program Manager  
225-765-2359  
ssmith@wlf.la.gov

### OPELOUSAS (Miss. Alluvial Valley [MAV])



**Tony Vidrine**  
MAV Biologist Manager  
337-948-0255  
tvidrine@wlf.la.gov



**Cody Haynes**  
MAV Biologist Supervisor  
337-948-0255  
jhaynes@wlf.la.gov



**Randy Corlew**  
MAV Biologist  
337-948-0255  
rcorlew@wlf.la.gov

### MONROE (MAV)



**Lowrey Moak**  
MAV Biologist Supervisor  
318-343-4044  
lmoak@wlf.la.gov



**Corey May**  
MAV Biologist  
318-343-4044  
cmay@wlf.la.gov

### PINEVILLE (MAV)



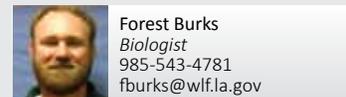
**Cliff Dailey**  
MAV Biologist Supervisor  
318-487-5885  
adailey@wlf.la.gov

### LAKE CHARLES (Gulf Coastal Plain [GCP])



**Wendell Smith**  
GCP Biologist Supervisor  
337-491-2599  
wsmith@wlf.la.gov

### HAMMOND (GCP)



**Forest Burks**  
Biologist  
985-543-4781  
fburks@wlf.la.gov



**Lori White**  
Biologist  
985-543-4780  
lwhite@wlf.la.gov

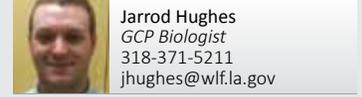
### MINDEN (GCP)



**Czerny Newland**  
GCP Biologist Manager  
318-371-3050  
cnewland@wlf.la.gov



**Jeffery Johnson**  
GCP Biologist Supervisor  
318-371-3051  
jjohnson@wlf.la.gov



**Jarrod Hughes**  
Biologist  
318-371-5211  
jhughes@wlf.la.gov



**Seth Miller**  
GCP Biologist  
318-371-3050  
smiller@wlf.la.gov

## PRIVATE LANDS BIOLOGISTS



**David Hayden**  
Private Lands Program  
Manager  
318-487-5885  
dhayden@wlf.la.gov

### LAKE CHARLES (Gulf Coastal Plain [GCP])



**Kori Legleu**  
WGCP Biologist Supervisor  
337-491-2575  
klegleu@wlf.la.gov

### OPELOUSAS (Mississippi Alluvial Valley [MAV])

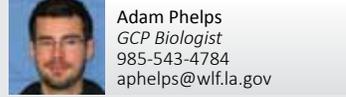


**Chad Gaspard**  
MAV Biologist  
337-948-0255  
cgaspard@wlf.la.gov

### HAMMOND (GCP)



**Zane LeBlanc**  
EGCP Biologist Supervisor  
985-543-4779  
zleblanc@wlf.la.gov



**Adam Phelps**  
GCP Biologist  
985-543-4784  
aphelps@wlf.la.gov



**Nathan Yeldell**  
GCP Biologist  
985-543-4778  
nyeldell@wlf.la.gov

### MINDEN (GCP)



**Kate Hasapes**  
GCP Biologist  
318-371-3050  
khasapes@wlf.la.gov

### MONROE (MAV)



**John Hanks**  
MAV Biologist Supervisor  
318-343-4044  
jhanks@wlf.la.gov



**Johnny Berry**  
MAV Biologist  
318-343-4044  
jberry@wlf.la.gov



**Brad Kennon**  
GCP Biologist  
318-343-4044  
rkennon@wlf.la.gov

### NEW IBERIA (MAV)



**Travis Dufour**  
GCP Biologist  
337-373-0032  
tdufour@wlf.la.gov

### PINEVILLE (GCP & MAV)



**Ken Moreau**  
MAV Biologist  
318-487-5885  
kmoreau@wlf.la.gov



**Ben Holten**  
GCP Biologist  
318-487-5885  
bholten@wlf.la.gov



**CC Richmond**  
GCP Biologist  
318-487-5885  
crichmond@wlf.la.gov



**Justin Ebarb**  
GCP Biologist  
318-487-5885  
jebarb@wlf.la.gov

## HUNTER/AQUATIC EDUCATION BIOLOGISTS

### BATON ROUGE



**Daniel Hurdle**  
Wildlife Educator  
225-765-2920  
dhurdle@wlf.la.gov

### BOURG



**Mitch Samaha**  
Wildlife Educator Supervisor  
985-594-7142  
esamaha@wlf.la.gov



**Rachel Landry**  
Wildlife Educator  
985-594-5343  
rlandry@wlf.la.gov

### BUCKHORN WMA



**Karen Crabtree**  
Wildlife Educator  
318-766-8144  
kcrabtree@wlf.la.gov

### HAMMOND



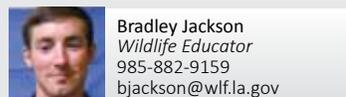
**Jan McGovern**  
Wildlife Educator  
985-543-4777  
jmcgovern@wlf.la.gov

### LAFAYETTE



**Ben Stultz**  
Wildlife Educator  
337-948-0255  
bstultz@wlf.la.gov

### LACOMBE



**Bradley Jackson**  
Wildlife Educator  
985-882-9159  
bjackson@wlf.la.gov



**Talyor Stevens**  
Wildlife Educator  
985-882-9601  
tdstevens@wlf.la.gov

### LAKE CHARLES



**Theresa Cross**  
Wildlife Educator  
337-491-2585  
tcross@wlf.la.gov

### MINDEN



**Todd Buffington**  
Wildlife Educator  
318-371-3326  
tbuffington@wlf.la.gov



**Chad Moore**  
Wildlife Educator  
318-371-3043  
cmoore@wlf.la.gov

### MONROE



**Dana Norsworthy**  
Wildlife Educator Supervisor  
318-345-3912  
dnorsworthy@wlf.la.gov



**Zachary Bounds**  
Wildlife Educator  
318-343-4044  
zbounds@wlf.la.gov

### PINEVILLE



**Angela Capello**  
Wildlife Educator Supervisor  
318-487-5885  
acapello@wlf.la.gov

### WADDILL OUTDOOR REFUGE



**Karla Allen**  
Wildlife Educator  
225-274-8192  
kallen@wlf.la.gov

### WOODWORTH



**Robert Stroede**  
Shooting Sports  
Coordinator Supervisor  
318-484-2276  
rstroede@wlf.la.gov



**Jeff Daughtry**  
Wildlife Educator  
318-487-5885  
jdaughtry@wlf.la.gov

# COASTAL & NONGAME RESOURCES DIVISION STAFF

## BATON ROUGE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**Office of Wildlife**  
P.O. Box 98000  
Baton Rouge, LA 70898  
**225-765-2811**  
**225-765-2812**



**Buddy Baker**  
*Chief of CNR*  
bbaker@wlf.la.gov



**Amity Bass**  
*Assistant Chief*  
abass@wlf.la.gov



**Todd Baker**  
*Assistant Chief*  
tbaker@wlf.la.gov



**Tracy Mancuso**  
*Admin. Program Specialist*  
tmancuso@wlf.la.gov

**Programs:**  
*Alligator & Fur Management, Rockefeller Research, White Lake and Natural Heritage*

**Programs:**  
*Coastal Operations, Rockefeller Refuge and Oil Spill*



**Ghia Borel**  
*Admin. Program Specialist*  
gborel@wlf.la.gov

## FURBEARER & ALLIGATOR MANAGEMENT



**Edmund Mouton**  
*Program Manager*  
337-373-0032  
emouton@wlf.la.gov



**Jeb Linscombe**  
*Biologist Manager*  
(Rockefeller & White Lake)  
337-538-2165  
jlinscombe@wlf.la.gov



**Mike Dupuis**  
*Biologist*  
337-373-0032  
mdupuis@wlf.la.gov



**Angela Guidry**  
*Biologist*  
337-491-2593  
aguidry@wlf.la.gov



**Tonya Sturman**  
*Council Manager*  
337-373-0032  
tsturman@wlf.la.gov



**Jennifer Hogue**  
*Biologist Supervisor*  
337-373-0032  
jhogue@wlf.la.gov



**Catherine Normand**  
*Biologist*  
337-373-0032  
cnormand@wlf.la.gov



**Eric Ledet**  
*Biologist*  
225-763-5492  
ejledet@wlf.la.gov



**Ruth Elsey**  
*Biologist Manager*  
337-538-2165  
relsey@wlf.la.gov

## COASTAL OPERATIONS & MARSH MANAGEMENT (State Wildlife, Marsh Island, Isle Dernieres Barrier Islands and St. Tammany refuges. Atchafalaya Delta, Pointe aux Chenes, Lake Boeuf, Salvador, Timken, Biloxi and Pass-a-Loutre WMAs.)



**Shane Granier**  
*Biologist Manager*  
504-284-5267  
sgranier@wlf.la.gov



**David LeBlanc**  
*Biologist Supervisor*  
337-491-2576  
dleblanc@wlf.la.gov



**Tyson Crouch**  
*Biologist*  
337-373-0032  
tcrouch@wlf.la.gov



**Michael Greene**  
*Biologist*  
337-373-0032  
mgreene@wlf.la.gov



**Lance Campbell**  
*Biologist Manager*  
337-373-0032  
lcampbell@wlf.la.gov



**Jarrod Galloway**  
*Biologist*  
337-373-0032  
jgalloway@wlf.la.gov

## NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM



**Chris Reid**  
*Botanist*  
225-765-2820  
creid@wlf.la.gov



**Beau Gregory**  
*Zoologist*  
337-491-2576  
bgregory@wlf.la.gov



**Carolyn Michon**  
*Asst. Data Manager*  
225-765-2357  
cmichon@wlf.la.gov



**Chris Doffitt**  
*Field Biologist*  
318-487-3412  
cdoffitt@wlf.la.gov



**Keri Landry**  
*Endangered Species Biologist*  
225-765-2809  
klandry@wlf.la.gov



**Sam Holcomb**  
*Grants Coordinator*  
225-765-0239  
sholcomb@wlf.la.gov



**Sairah Teta**  
*Field Biologist*  
225-765-2828  
sjaved@wlf.la.gov



**Charles Battaglia**  
*Field Biologist*  
318-343-4044  
cbattaglia@wlf.la.gov



**Jeff Boundy**  
*Herpetologist*  
225-765-2815  
jboundy@wlf.la.gov



**Nicole Lorenz**  
*Biologist Supervisor*  
225-765-2643  
nlorenz@wlf.la.gov



**Jared Streeter**  
*Field Biologist*  
318-343-4046  
jstreeter@wlf.la.gov



**Neil Douglas**  
*Turtle Biologist*  
318-343-4044  
nhdouglas@att.net



**Michael Seymour**  
*Ornithologist*  
225-763-3554  
mseymour@wlf.la.gov

## OIL SPILL PROGRAM (Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill)



**Jon Wiebe**  
*Program Manager*  
337-262-2080  
jwiebe@wlf.la.gov



**Steven Pearson**  
*Biologist Supervisor*  
337-262-2080  
spears@wlf.la.gov



**Casey Wright**  
*Biologist*  
337-262-2080  
cwright@wlf.la.gov



**Matt Hollis**  
*Biologist*  
337-373-0032  
mhollis@wlf.la.gov



**Laura Carver**  
*Biologist Supervisor*  
337-373-0032  
lcarver@wlf.la.gov



**James Ialeggio**  
*Biologist*  
337-262-2080  
jialeggio@wlf.la.gov

## MINERALS PROGRAM



Vaughn McDonald  
Biologist  
504-284-5267  
vmcdonald@wlf.la.gov



Shelia Roman  
Admin. Program Specialist  
504-284-5260  
sroman@wlf.la.gov

## SCENIC STREAMS, ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS & SEISMIC PROGRAM



Kyle Balkum  
Director  
225-765-2819  
kbalkum@wlf.la.gov



David Butler  
Permits Coordinator  
225-763-3595  
dbutler@wlf.la.gov



Matt Weigel  
Biologist Program Manager  
337-262-2080  
mweigel@wlf.la.gov



Joe Maryman  
Biologist Supervisor  
225-765-2380  
jmaryman@wlf.la.gov



Chris Davis  
Biologist Manager  
225-765-2642  
rcdavis@wlf.la.gov



Zachary Chain  
Biologist  
225-765-3587  
zchain@wlf.la.gov

## ROCKEFELLER REFUGE COASTAL OPERATIONS



Phillip Trosclair  
Program Manager  
337-491-2593  
ptrosclair@wlf.la.gov



James Whitaker  
Biologist  
337-491-2593  
jwhitaker@wlf.la.gov



Sarah Zimorski  
Biologist  
337-536-9400  
szimorski@wlf.la.gov



Phillip Vasseur  
Biologist  
337-536-9400  
pvasseur@wlf.la.gov



Samantha Collins  
Biologist  
337-491-2593  
scollins@wlf.la.gov

## WHITE LAKE COASTAL OPERATIONS



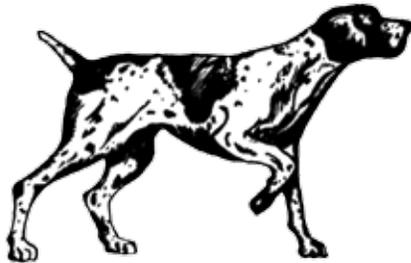
Wayne Sweeney  
Manager  
337-536-9400  
wsweeney@wlf.la.gov



Justin Gilchrist  
Biologist  
337-536-9400  
jgilchrist@wlf.la.gov



Schuyler Dartez  
Biologist Manager  
337-536-9400  
sdartez@wlf.la.gov



# HABITAT IS THE POINT

BY MITCH SAMAHA, LDWF Education Biologist Supervisor

There are about 17 species of *Rubus* in the Southeast. *Rubus* species are often referred to by their common names, dewberry and blackberry. Dewberries are low-growing and generally form dense mats about 2-3 feet high, while blackberries are self supporting and can reach heights of 5 feet or more. The main way to tell the difference is that the stems of dewberries are completely covered with fine hair-like thorns with a reddish tint to the stems, while blackberries are more erect and have large, staggered thorns on green stems.

*Rubus* are a very important group of plants for wildlife in the Southeast. The heavily used soft mast (berries) is a food source for a wide range of wildlife species from the Louisiana black bear to songbirds. Dewberries and blackberries ripen at different times of the year and are available from spring (dewberry) through summer (blackberries). Blackberry leaves appear early in spring and persist late into fall and are an important browse source for white-tailed deer and eastern cottontail. Blackberry thickets provide excellent escape cover for birds, rabbits and other small mammals as well as nesting sites for numerous songbirds.

*Rubus* can easily be promoted through periodic ground disturbance, such as disking. To increase palatability and productivity, fertilize patches of *Rubus* using 13-13-13 fertilizer twice a year, once in spring and once in fall. Use the amount as directed on the product label.



Blackberry Stem



Dewberry Stem



# LOUISIANA WILDLIFE INSIDER

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries  
Office of Wildlife  
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Baton Rouge, LA 70898

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## What is ALAS?

The Archery in Louisiana Schools (ALAS) program is Louisiana's portion of the National Archery in the Schools program (NASP). NASP is a program developed in 2001 by the Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, Matthews Archery, and the Kentucky board of education to help educators who were looking for a way to improve student motivation, attention, behavior, attendance, and focus.

The NASP/ALAS program introduces students in grades 4-12 to international target style archery. As the name states, ALAS is designed to be taught as part of the in-school curriculum, commonly taught as part of physical education.

## Why Archery?

Archery is a life-long sport that nearly everyone can enjoy success in, no matter what their ability level. Archery is a sport of focus and discipline, two attributes that have amazing crossover value in a classroom environment. Archery is not only fun for students but incredibly safe. There has NEVER been a safety incident in the NASP program and it is rated safer than nearly every ball sport. Students of all abilities and backgrounds flourish in archery!

## Who Participates in ALAS?

Every school in the state of Louisiana is eligible to participate in the ALAS program including: public, private, parochial, and home schools.

The ALAS program can also be used as an activity for church groups, leadership trainings, after-school programs, summer camps, and outdoor adventure training.



## How Can Your School Join?

If interested in having the ALAS program available to your children, please contact the ALAS State Coordinator.

The coordinator can provide additional information and support including: teacher training, grant information, and equipment availability

## What About Equipment?

Archery equipment used in the ALAS program is highly standardized. The equipment is designed to be safe, durable, economical, and of universal fit for nearly all students. All students shoot the same model of bow and arrows. Sights, release aids, and stabilizers are not part of ALAS.

Equipment can be ordered by schools and organizations who have a certified Basic Archery Instructor (BAI) by completing and submitting an order form at [www.naspschools.org](http://www.naspschools.org).

LDWF has a limited number of ALAS kits available for temporary loan. LDWF provides 20 equipment grants each year to new schools getting involved in the ALAS program.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Robert Stroede, ALAS State Coordinator  
[rstroede@wlf.la.gov](mailto:rstroede@wlf.la.gov) (318)484-2276



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