

Highlights

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The Talon

May 2004

Bat Population Monitoring and Conservation

Noelle Ronan

Bat population declines have been documented for the past several decades for many bat species in North America. Bat conservation goals reflect the objectives of a study of bats at RMA beginning in May and running through August 2004. The study will examine species composition, relative abundance, and contaminant levels in bats. This is complementary to a study that was conducted in 1997 and 1998. We will also be installing bat houses and conducting a bat education program, which will contribute to conservation measures.

We will survey for bats primarily in water and tree edge habitat. To capture bats, mist nets (fine-gauge nylon nets) will be placed where bat activity is likely to be highest. Also, an ultrasonic bat detector will be used for acoustic detection. Bat detectors provide a diagnostic sonogram of bat calls that enables us to identify bats to species and determine foraging activity. Finally, because bats are vulnerable to contaminants, they are good indicators of environmental pollution. We will evaluate levels of dieldrin, DDT, DDE, and mercury in big brown bats.

This study is important because RMA has been shown to be a valuable bat foraging area, particularly for breeding big brown bats. The study will provide an indication of the effectiveness of remediation in reducing contaminant exposure to wildlife and contribute to more effective conservation and management.



Volunteer Fishing Benefits

All volunteers are welcome to participate on our weekend recreational fishing program any Saturday or Sunday from 8:00 a.m. until sunset. The Service always appreciates the presence of volunteers in the Refuge, whether you're volunteering or just having fun. We allow volunteers to fish in the Refuge, regardless of how many anglers are fishing at one time however, first you must attend an orientation, offered both Saturday and Sunday at 9 am and 3 pm. When you arrive, mention that you are a Refuge volunteer. For any questions regarding fishing, please contact Ivan Vicente at 303-289-0864.

Departing Staff

Ryan Noel has been with the Service for 6 ½ years and the Assistant Refuge Manager at RMANWR since August 2002. Ryan departure date is May 12, Ryan is going to become a Special Agent with the Service. He will spend 5 months at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Georgia to receive training. After his 5 months at FLETC, he will spend 12 months in Nashville, TN. We wish Ryan the best of luck in perusing his life long dream!

VOLUNTEER PROJECTS AT RMA NWR FOR 2004

This year will be another busy year for Refuge staff and Volunteers as a wide variety of land and habitat management activities are being planned, are in progress, or have already been completed. The warm, dry March provided an excellent prescribed burning window, and seven burns totaling over 600 acres were completed, the biggest burning season we have had to date. In terms of grass seeding, our normal average has been about 700 acres per year, but in 2004 this dropped to a little over 500 acres. Sites were delayed for seeding in order to gain a season of noxious weed control. There are many projects this year for the Volunteers to assist, described in more detail in the following table:

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LEAD STAFF PERSON	ESTIMATED DURATION
Scent Stations	Transects that determine predator use. Five transects with 10 stations each need to be sampled.	Eric Stone	Transects need to be run once a month for three months.
Building 111 lawn	Planting forbs, removing old mulch and fabric, adding new mulch after planting. Some parts of main seeding (around trees) may need hand weeding.	Terry Wright	Area must be fenced before forbs planted. Forbs should be planted NLT 5/30. Occasional weeding thru summer.
West Nile Virus monitoring	Volunteer or intern to assist RMA biologists with identifying, tallying and trapping mosquitoes as part of the Refuge's West Nile Virus monitoring program.	Judson Spicer	Once a week throughout summer, probably until end of September. Must be done in mornings.
Seed collection	Collect New Mexico locust, native forbs, shrubs, bush morninglory, sand verbena	Terry Wright	As plants mature throughout season
VC Prairie demonstration plots	Systematic spot weeding as needed.	Jeannine Kimble	Throughout the growing season
Repository lawn restoration	Re-seed the area around the repository to native prairie. Will also involve some shrub planting on N side of bldg.	Terry Wright, Tom Ronning	Site cleanup and weed control spring/summer. Hand seeding in fall.
Prairie dogs	GPS colony boundaries; do litter counts; animal counts	Eric Stone	Throughout the summer
Veg Monitoring	Sample seeded vegetation in older restoration plots using line transects. Native plant ID.	Terry Wright	Mid-July to Mid-September, every morning.
Bat Project	Insect sampling will be conducted at survey sites to examine potential correlations with bat activity and relative abundance of insects. The volunteer will assist with preparing sticky traps, processing samples, and identifying insects. The volunteer may also assist with field work, if desired.	Noelle Ronan	Mid-May, 1 week per month thru Sept
Native forb germination	Samples of hand collected native forb species need to be tested for germination for their future use in seeding. We have dozens of species needing testing, most 5-6 years old.	Terry Wright	Anytime throughout summer, but before September.

Eagle pen conversion	Eagle pen can be converted into a native forb seed production area starting this fall, if eagle leaves and there are no more captive raptors. Site prep, weed control, fabric laying, hand seeding.	Terry Wright	Anytime throughout summer, but before September.
Deer study	Observations of pregnant does for indicators that birth is imminent. Work with staff members to find newborn fawns on the ground (requires a good bit of walking). Use telemetry equipment to determine fawn and doe survival. Find any fawn mortalities and work with staff to collect data from these occurrences.	Sherry Skipper	Fawn birth focused from middle of May to July 1 st . Telemetry and survival assessments will occur year-round.

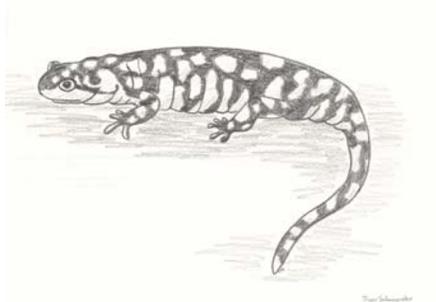


Calling Volunteers!!

<p>Volunteers are Needed for the 2004 Grassland BioBlitz</p> <p>Get ready for the 2004 Grasslands BioBlitz! From 12 noon, Friday, June 25 to 12 noon, Saturday, June 26, help scientists in action and discover the biodiversity of Denver's grasslands! We are currently looking for people who can run data from the scientific field teams back to headquarters, folks to serve as host (greeting people, providing information and directions), set-up and tear down crews, as well as naturalists to assist in educating the public. Won't you join us and help with this exciting event? (Please visit http://www.grasslands-bioblitz.org for more details.) To volunteer with the Grasslands BioBlitz, contact Mark Richert via email at volunteer@grasslands-bioblitz.org or give him a call at 303-417-0792.</p>	<p>If you are interested in volunteering for any of the habitat projects, contact Jeannine at (303) 289-0471</p>
	<p>Trail Rovers are needed on Saturday and Sundays, call the Visitor Center at (303) 289-0930 to sign up!</p>
	<p>Come enjoy your Refuge from 4:30 to Sunset on Weekends. Your assistance is needed, please call the Visitor Center at (303) 289-0930 to sign up.</p>

Thank you

I wanted to extend a heart-felt thank you to everyone who helped with activities at the Refuge Establishment Event on April 17. We had over 100 people visit during the afternoon. We couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day! I do have to tease Evelyn a little. She cleaned that back patio door so well, that someone walked right through it! Thanks Evelyn for taking such care. Everyone pulled together from parking folks, to shuttle drivers, to tour guides, etc., etc. Thanks for making my job so much easier. Susan Echelberger



Calendar of Events

*****Please note the Volunteer meeting will be the 4 Thursday of June*****

June 24 7pm Visitor Center

Guest speaker Terry Wright will discuss habitat restoration projects on the Refuge.

Volunteer Fishing Pot Luck

Friday May 21, 2004 5 pm to 8 pm Visitor Center

All volunteers are welcome to the Fishing potluck. Come enjoy an evening of great company and fun filled fishing at Lake Mary and Ladora. Coordinate what food you'll be bringing with Ivan Vicente at 303-289-0864.

Training

At this time there is no training scheduled.



For those you who were at the Volunteer Appreciation Event, I would like to thank you for showing support of your fellow volunteers. For those of you who were unable to attend the event, you missed a wonderful evening of entertainment, socialization, food, and volunteer appreciation. As a Refuge volunteer, you contribute a significant amount to the many programs we have here at Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and with out your continuing support we would not be able to achieve all that we do. Thanks for all of your hard work. I look forward to another wonderful year! **Jeannine Kimble Refuge Volunteer Coordinantor**

