

WILDLIFE DIVISION ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR OCTOBER 1, 2015 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

[Graphic: Abstract illustration of a deer and butterfly]

[Graphic: Michigan Department of Natural Resources logo]

Welcome

Thank you for picking up a copy of our newest annual report. Wildlife Division staff are honored to be the public trust managers of one of Michigan’s most vital natural resources – wildlife! We are proud of the work we’ve done, and are excited to share our stories. Inside are highlights of some of the work we did during fiscal year 2016, which runs from October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016. This year, the report focuses on our major strategic plan goals: one (population management), two (habitat management), four (wildlife recreation), five (communications), and six (partnerships). We also have metrics included throughout the report that are used to determine if our strategic goals are being met. Financial tables outlining money spent per goal and per fund source are also included. Thank you for your interest in Michigan’s wildlife. Happy reading!

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Dear Reader,

Our annual reports always highlight achievements and challenges. In terms of achievements, the division is focused on improving the management of state game areas (SGAs) in southern Michigan. We want to provide more and higher-quality, wildlife-related recreation on both public and private lands. To that end, we’ve begun to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on SGAs and initiated the restoration of St. John’s marsh in St. Clair County, and the Pheasant Restoration Initiative is making strong strides on public land. On the wildlife health front, the division is committed to understanding and minimizing the effects of chronic wasting disease (CWD) on deer and deer hunting opportunities. To date, with much appreciated cooperation from hunters, the Michigan CWD surveillance strategy seems to be working. The rate of infection remains very low. Winning against this disease is a marathon, not a sprint. With appropriate herd management, there is an excellent chance that CWD won’t destroy an important part of Michigan’s cultural and natural heritage. To the north, the division is finding and implementing new and effective ways to restore deer habitat in the Upper Peninsula (U.P.), including sponsorship and participation in the U.P. Winter Deer Habitat Work Group.

Management plans are complete for nearly all of the deer winter complexes in the U.P. As well, various grant programs are available to assist in these and other efforts to enhance deer habitat. Both in the U.P. and the northern Lower Peninsula (L.P.), the Young Forest Initiative is improving habitat conditions for a variety of game species. At the same time, that effort is enhancing sustainable timber harvest and growth in Michigan's forest economy. On the flip side, the division also faces challenges. Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) is more common among deer than at any time in the past 18 years. And, the number of infected cattle operations in the northeast L.P. has increased. These are unacceptable developments, and the Wildlife Division will take steps to address them. The division is expanding programs that improve deer hunting experiences in the northeast L.P. For example, the Deer PLAN grant program has doubled in size, providing more resources to improve deer habitat while offering greater opportunity to effectively use hunting as a management tool. We've also expanded the Hunting Access Program in the northeast L.P. to provide broader public deer hunting opportunities. The DNR Wildlife Division is committed to providing high-quality and abundant hunting and trapping opportunities, expert wildlife habitat management, and true partnership with the conservation community. We welcome your input. Together, we will ensure that Michigan's abundant wildlife resources remain the envy of the nation.

Yours in conservation,

Director Keith Creagh

Chief Russ Mason

Keith Creagh, Director Department of Natural Resources

Russ Mason, Chief Wildlife Division

[Graphic: DNR director Keith Creagh]

[Graphic: Chief wildlife division Russ Mason]

Wildlife Populations

Managing Wildlife Populations

Osprey Chicks Banded at Lux Arbor

Two young osprey chicks were banded at Lux Arbor Reserve in late June by staff, with assistance from Lux Arbor manager Mark Manuszak. The division began an initiative to band ospreys as part of an effort to re-establish the species in southern Michigan. Banding ospreys allows the division to gain a greater understanding of ospreys' lives, locations, and survivorship. The osprey chicks banded at Lux Arbor grew up in their nest on Middle Crooked Lake. At the time of the banding, the chicks were about five weeks old. At about eight weeks old, the chicks learned how to fly and were ready to leave the nest.

[Graphic: Adult osprey in flight]

[Graphic: Osprey chick being placed into nest]

Banding Ducks

Fulfilling statewide and regional waterfowl banding quotas for mallards and wood ducks was a high priority for the division. In 2016, it was the best banding season with 5,795 duck banded (3,758 mallards and 2,012 wood ducks). These are the most pre-season mallards and wood ducks the division has ever banded. Of those totals, the southern Lower Peninsula duck banding team banded 1,694 of the mallards and 578 of the wood ducks.

[Graphic: Female duck bander holding a duck]

Creating a Habitat Conservation Plan for Bats

The Wildlife and Forest Resources divisions have joined forces with counterparts in Minnesota and Wisconsin to proactively initiate the development of a habitat conservation plan to help offset the steep declines of four species of cave-dwelling bats impacted by white-nose syndrome. These species include the federally endangered Indiana bat, the federally threatened northern long-eared bat, and the two species currently under review for listing by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the little brown and tri-colored bats. The plan will offer reasonable actions to conserve summer bat habitat that is integrated with sustainable forest management. It also will allow state forestland managers and private landowners to comply with the Endangered Species Act requirements for listed species. Grants from the USFWS provide funding for 90% of the plan development and related survey and research data-collection efforts.

[Graphic: Bats hanging from a stone wall]

The elk population in northern Michigan provides exciting and unique hunting and viewing opportunities. The population is managed to provide quality recreation opportunities, while minimizing nuisance issues. This past year, there was an increase in the estimated elk population, which is determined from aerial surveys. The estimated population exceeds the goal outlined within the Elk Management Plan, and the division is increasing hunting opportunities to reduce the herd to stay within the goal. The cause for the increase observed in 2016 could be a combination of an increasing population, low observations and estimates in 2014 due to the hard winter, and/or poor visibility during the aerial survey. The division will be surveying elk more frequently in coming years to gather higher confidence in the aerial estimate in relation to harvest numbers. The Michigan goose population is currently above goal. The division continues to provide quality hunting opportunities, and is working with local partners to manage areas with high goose numbers and conflicts. The division will continue to make full use of goose hunting season days and daily limits available within Federal hunting season regulation frameworks to address the increase in the population. Hunter success rates, along with other indices, and the abundance estimate suggest bear numbers are rising in Michigan. Bear are managed to provide quality hunting experiences and minimize nuisance complaints. The number of bear licenses issued are set to reach or surpass the desired harvest level.

[Graphic: Complex graph of Elk Population Estimate, Call 517-284-9453 for assistance]

[Graphic: Complex graph of Goose Population Estimate, Call 517-284-9453 for assistance]

[Graphic: Complex graph of Statewide Bear Harvest, Call 517-284-9453 for assistance]

Wildlife Diseases in Michigan

Monitoring the health of Michigan's wildlife is a critical component of wildlife management. The Wildlife Division's Wildlife Disease Laboratory (WDL) performs necropsies on animals to determine the cause of death, and assists with disease surveillance. The WDL receives over 1,200 animals annually for general necropsy, in addition to the thousands of deer heads submitted for bovine tuberculosis (bTB) and chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing.

Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic wasting disease was diagnosed in a free-ranging white-tailed deer in May of 2015. Subsequent testing has identified eight additional positive deer in Ingham and Clinton counties (at the time of printing this report). In July 2016, the CWD Core Area and Management Zones were expanded to include 17 townships and five counties (Clinton, Ionia, Ingham, Eaton and Shiawassee), respectively. Since the discovery of the initial case, nearly 12,000 deer have been tested statewide. Surveillance of hunter harvested animals, collection of road-killed deer, issuance of disease control permits, and culling by sharpshooters continue to be important avenues for obtaining samples. Additionally, in late spring, the division began surveillance in the four counties in the U.P. that share the Wisconsin border.

[Graphic: Female lab worker testing deer heads for chronic wasting disease]

Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease

Epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) is a virus affecting ruminants, and is transmitted by a small biting insect called a midge. The hot, dry conditions during the summer of 2016 were ideal for transmission of the virus. The division responded to reports of potential EHD die-offs (dead deer found in or near a body of water), and collected and submitted specimens to the WDL for testing. Sixteen deer were tested for EHD and five positives were found from Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties.

Type C Botulism

Type C botulism is caused when dabbling ducks ingest a naturally occurring toxin that is produced by the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum*. Outbreaks typically occur during periods of elevated temperatures and low water levels. In fiscal year 2016, the division responded to localized outbreaks in Grand Traverse County in early June and in localized areas in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties from July through September. Early identification of the toxin is important as removal of carcasses from an area experiencing a die-off can lessen mortality. 2016 was an average year for Type C, as small die-offs can be found each year under the ideal weather conditions.

Canine Distemper

Canine distemper is a fatal, viral disease causing signs of a neurological disorder (e.g., seizures, lack of fear of humans, lethargy, and being active during daylight hours), and is often mistaken as rabies. The division continues to receive a high number of species submitted and positive tests for canine distemper, of which the majority are raccoons (approximately 72-percent). One hundred and thirty-four animals were found positive in 2016; they included raccoons (97), striped skunks (18), gray foxes (11),

coyotes (3), mink (3), and a single wolf and short-tailed weasel. Cases of canine distemper have been increasing and the disease is being found in species where it was rarely found before.

West Nile Virus

West Nile virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito, and can be transmitted to humans. Identification of the virus in wildlife is an indicator that the virus is present in an area, and allows for the division to inform local public health officials. They, in turn, alert communities to take precautions against mosquito bites, and implement mosquito control if necessary. In 2016, the virus was confirmed in 66 animals from 34 counties.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Bovine tuberculosis is a serious respiratory disease caused by a bacteria *Mycobacterium bovis*. Since 1994, bTB has been found within wild white-tailed deer in northeastern Lower Michigan. Surveillance activities for bTB for fiscal year 2016 were ongoing with an emphasis on the four counties of Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Oscoda, and the seven surrounding counties in the northern-half of the L.P. There also was increased surveillance around positive livestock herds in 3-mile radius circles in Arenac and Huron counties. Since the index cases were first identified, 222,116 free-ranging deer have been tested for bTB, and 800 infected deer have been found.

[Graphic: Male and female laboratory workers with deer carcass]

2016 Wildlife Disease Testing Results

*Wildlife disease testing numbers are reported by the 2016 calendar year, unless otherwise noted.

7,592 deer, 7 elk and 3 moose were tested for chronic wasting disease and 4 deer were found positive.

11,968 deer, 208 elk, and 5 moose were tested for bovine tuberculosis and 8 deer were found positive.

198 animals were tested for canine distemper and 134 were found positive. Positive animals included: 97 raccoons, 18 skunks, 11 gray foxes, 3 coyotes, 3 mink, 1 short-tailed weasel, and 1 wolf.

16 deer were tested for epizootic hemorrhagic disease and 5 positives were found.

58 birds were tested for Types C and E botulism, and 31 were positive for Type C and 23 for Type E.

West Nile virus was confirmed in 66 animals from 34 counties out of 128 animals tested.

Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife Habitat Grants

Southeast Lower Peninsula Region

Pheasants Forever received a WHG (\$77,000) for a second year to work on the Verona State Game Area (SGA) to build on brush removal work completed in 2015. The project was to: replant four poor quality fields totaling 63 acres to a diverse mix of native warm-season grasses and forbs; convert 109 acres of

former croplands to dense switchgrass stands; and, remove brush and trees from four fields totaling 64 acres. The work completed in fiscal years 2015 and 2016 will make great strides in improving pheasant wintering, nesting, and brood-rearing habitat on the area.

[Graphic: Field]

[Graphic: Pheasant nest]

Southwest Lower Peninsula Region

Allegan SGA staff partnered with the Allegan Conservation District and Ruffed Grouse Society to improve habitat on Allegan SGA with nearly \$35,000 in WHG funding. The focus was improving just over 35 acres of ruffed grouse and woodcock habitat by cutting non-marketable timber, invasive species, and speckled alder. The projects were completed using contractors and volunteers. Work included: cutting aspen for regeneration; cutting Scotch pine to allow for regeneration of native species; cutting alder strips in wetland for woodcock habitat improvement; and, removing invasive species to promote beneficial native vegetation.

[Graphic: Field with brush and tree line in autumn]

Northern Lower Peninsula Region

In Cheboygan County, Huron Pines, a non-profit conservation group, was awarded \$59,600 to restore oil and gas well pads to benefit wildlife, particularly elk. Many abandoned well pads fill-in with invasive plants. They removed invasive plants using herbicides and hand pulling. Some locations were then planted with native grasses.

[Graphic: Field with large tree]

Upper Peninsula Region

One of the major habitat objectives in the U.P. is improving winter habitat and food sources for deer. Recognizing this need, the U.P. Whitetails Association Inc., in cooperation with Weyerhaeuser, developed a wildlife habitat project in Marquette County, and received a WHG for \$24,500. The project will help maintain the local deer population by creating food sources within an identified deer wintering complex.

[Graphic: Field during autumn with tree line]

Upper Peninsula Region Planting Oak to Improve Habitat

In May 2016, the division planted oak seedlings and saplings in various locations in the Sault Ste. Marie Forest Unit to improve habitat for wildlife. The trees were planted in areas affected by beech bark disease. Planting areas ranged from Drummond Island in Chippewa County to a deer wintering complex southwest of Gould City in western Mackinac County. The eastern U.P. has been dealing with the effects of beech bark disease, a fatal disease affecting American beech, for many years. The department has targeted diseased beech in order to harvest the beech before the trees die and are no longer commercially viable. The loss of beech means a loss of beech nuts, an important food source for wildlife.

Restoring Forest Openings on Barry State Game Area

Barry SGA staff worked to restore forest openings on the game area. The project entailed cutting the trees that encroached into the opening from the forest edge. With limited staff time available, staff conducted a pilot project to explore the feasibility of commercial opening maintenance. While the amount of marketable timber in openings is too small for a traditional timber sale, contractors were willing to clear the timber for firewood. Cutters were charged a small fee to cover administrative costs. The pilot project was a huge success in creating the desired habitat, and firewood cutters responded favorably to the pilot program. Additional openings work is being planned for fiscal year 2017.

[Graphic: Forest opening with trees]

Little Mud Lake Flooding has a Drawdown

A managed-flooding in Roscommon County, called Little Mud Lake Flooding, is a new, old place to duck hunt. Established in the 1950's, this 260-acre location was flooded in fiscal year 2016 using earthen berms and a wood-stop block system to fluctuate water levels. Normally, scheduled water drawdowns would be planned often to allow the muddy bottoms to be exposed to sunlight, which allows plants to decompose and other plants that waterfowl prefer to germinate. Little Mud Lake Flooding's last drawdown was in 1988.

Cutting Timber for GEMS

Young aspen is important for many wildlife species and is critical to Grouse Enhanced Management Sites (GEMS). The Mark Knee Memorial GEMS is over 4,000 acres in size, and has an emphasis of managing different age classes of aspen. Over 146 acres of aspen was harvested in 2016. Some areas were clearcut; however, oak trees were retained. In addition, tree tops were left in piles or left laying instead of chipping. Large logs, at least 12 inches in diameter and 8 feet long, were left for grouse drumming logs. Next spring, these locations will be full of thick aspen shoots, which will provide great cover and food for wildlife.

Food Plots Increased on Southern Michigan State Game Areas

Food plots are great for wildlife, and a great resource for hunters. In fiscal year 2016, Paris field office staff managed nearly 50 acres of food plots within Haymarsh, Martiny, and Pentwater SGAs. The crops included clover, buckwheat, wheat, rye, and turnips. The Flat River SGA staff also spent significant time and resources planting food plots of clovers, radish, rye, and turnips to benefit deer and turkeys. Several sorghum plots for pheasants also were planted once soil nutrient levels were adjusted.

[Graphic: Food plot surrounded by trees]

[Graphic: Tractor plowing food plot]

Working for Wildlife

Number of acres intensely managed in fiscal year 2016: 10,402 acres of intensive forest management, 10,519 acres of intensive grassland and savanna management, 14,981 acres of intensive wetland management, and 9,329 acres of food plots.

\$910,000 awarded through Wildlife Habitat Grants to 18 conservation projects throughout Michigan.

[Graphic: abstract illustration of a tree]

[Graphic: illustration of Michigan]

Public Participation

Introducing Youth and Others to Hunting

Each year, the division organizes or participates in a variety of events that promote hunting to Michigan youth and other interested individuals. In fiscal year 2016, events varied from rabbit, duck, and turkey hunts for youth to a pheasant hunt for women. Staff enjoy engaging with new hunters.

Women Learn to Hunt Pheasants with Flat River State Game Area Staff Members

Division staff from the Flat River SGA, along with the Pine Hill Kennels and Sportsman's Club, and the Grand Valley chapter of Pheasants Forever, hosted a ladies' pheasant hunt in Ionia County in October 2015. Twelve ladies, who were mostly new to hunting, had a very busy day. They were shooting at clay pigeons; hunting through grasslands and food plots with expert guides and dogs; learning to clean birds; and, enjoying a gourmet lunch.

[Graphic: Pheasant flying, two hunters in foreground]

Muskegon Field Staff and Partners Organize Youth Turkey Hunt

Division staff and partners, such as the West Michigan Wildlife Association, sponsored a spring youth turkey hunt on the Muskegon Wastewater area. In fiscal year 2016, the hunt was held April 23-24. Ten youth, ranging from nine to 15 years old, participated in the two-day hunt. The weekend prior they participated in a field day where youth learned about: turkey biology and behavior; the history of turkey restoration in Michigan and Muskegon County; hunting techniques; and, rules and regulations pertaining to the spring turkey hunt. They also practiced shooting and patterning their shotguns. Four youth were successful harvesting a bird.

[Graphic: Two male hunters with youth hunter posing with turkey]

Sportsmen for Youth Event Draws Thousands; Muskegon Field Staff Participate

The Muskegon SGA staff participate in the Sportsmen for Youth event in early September each year. This is a one-day event with hundreds of vendors sharing information about conservation and hunting. Despite a rainy and windy afternoon, there was a great turnout with nearly 2,500 kids and 1,900 adults. Maverick the mallard made an appearance, to get kids excited about waterfowl and wetlands.

[Graphic: Maverick the mallard with children at Sportsmen for Youth event]

Youth Waterfowl Hunt at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area

The Pointe Mouillee SGA hosted an annual youth hunt, lunch, and workshop in September 2016. This event is organized by the Gibraltar Duck Hunters Association and Waterfowl U.S.A.'s Southwestern Lake Erie Chapter in cooperation with the DNR. Many partners, including Tony Pacos, Pointe Mouillee Waterfowl Festival, Ducks Unlimited, Cabela's, Zink Calls, and others participated. Donated items

included: lunch items, tables, and prizes for the participants such as goose and duck calls, hats, shirts, and decoys. Forty-two youth enjoyed the day; birds were flying, lots of shots taken, and a few waterfowl harvested.

Research Project: Understanding the Sharing of Game Meat

Hunting is a valuable part of Michigan's heritage and traditions. Hunters also help to manage wildlife populations, and contribute economically to state wildlife management, conservation organizations, and local communities. The sharing of wild-harvested game meat by hunters with non-hunters may provide an important opportunity to create positive attitudes toward hunters, hunting, and conservation among the population-at-large. Until recently, the extent to which this meat is shared, and any positive impacts associated with this sharing, were unstudied benefits of wildlife management in Michigan. Collaboration with research partners at Michigan State University addressed these topics. The research team documented that 75-percent of Michiganders annually consume some type of wild-harvested meat (primarily venison) derived from hunting in Michigan, but most sharing occurs among close family and friends. Overall, sharing wild-harvested meat is indicated to have multiple positive effects. To help increase positive attitudes toward hunting, and the relevancy of hunting to society in Michigan, hunters should look for opportunities to share their harvest more broadly with non-hunters.

Creating a System to Find Michigan's GEMS Easier

Working with multiple DNR divisions, Wildlife Division staff spearheaded the development of an interactive mapping system (on the web) for the 17 Grouse Enhanced Management Sites (GEMS), which allows hunters to view all GEMS locations across the state of Michigan, and focus on GEMS of interest. By selecting individual GEMS, hunters can view pictures of the location, printable maps, turn-by-turn directions, and discounts from local area businesses. The division has received positive feedback from users who have visited the updated GEMS website.

[Graphic: Grouse Enhance Management Sites logo]

Turkey Tracts are Built on the Allegan State Game Area

Turkey Tracts are unique turkey hunting areas, patterned after the successful GEMS, that provide great hunting opportunities for youth, seniors, and adults who are new to the sport. The first Turkey Tract opened in spring 2016 at the Allegan SGA. This tract is over 4,500 acres in size with many miles of hunter walking trails. The division worked with the National Wild Turkey Federation and area contractors to improve habitat for wild turkeys and other wildlife through oak savanna restoration activities.

[Graphic: Turkey Tracts logo]

Newberry Staff and Partners Build a New Easy-Access Boardwalk and Blind at Dollarville Flooding

Newberry staff planned and built an easy-access boardwalk and hunting/wildlife viewing blind on the Dollarville Flooding in Luce County. The flooding was constructed in the 1970's for fish and wildlife, and is used year-round by anglers, waterfowl hunters, trappers, and individuals interested in wildlife viewing. Staff partnered with local sportspersons from the Tahquamenon Area Sportsman's group to

design and construct the blind. A small group of hardworking volunteers built a blind, bridge, and about 300 feet of boardwalk in time for waterfowl hunting.

Improving an Upper Peninsula Hunter Walking Trail

In September 2016, staff from Crystal Falls had a contractor bulldoze, disc, and seed a ryegrass and clover planting on the Hosking Creek hunter walking trail located about 6 miles from Iron Mountain. Staff installed gates at both entrances, and posted signs to identify the trail. The system consists of about 2.5 miles of trail, which runs through a lowland creek complex and mixed forest cover. The area provides habitat for deer, ruffed grouse, woodcock, bear, snowshoe hare, and turkey, as well as many other game and nongame species.

[Graphic: Dirt trail with gate]

[Graphic: Wooden walking trail through swamp area]

[Graphic: Group of people sitting in camouflage blind]

Gladwin Field Trial Area Celebrates 100 Years

Not many locations have the honor of being on the map for a century, and, not to mention, also being almost 5,000 acres in size. The Gladwin Field Trial Area, established in 1916, celebrated its 100-year anniversary in fiscal year 2016. Known nationally in the field trial world, the Gladwin Field Trial Area has provided one-of-a-kind, intensely-managed gamebird habitat. A field trial is an event where competitors bring their dogs to find game. Judges determine which dogs are most effective at locating and pointing birds; but, the participant does not kill the bird. Most field dog trials are run in grassland areas and on planted birds. The Gladwin Field Trial Area naturally holds native birds, which makes this area exceptionally unique.

[Graphic: Boulder with Gladwin Field Trial Area historic plaque]

[Graphic: Group of hunters next to Alibi Hall in the Gladwin Field Trial Area]

Michigan Hunting Licenses Sold in 2016

Deer & Deer Combo Licenses: 976,961

Small Game (Base) Licenses: 785,549

Antlerless Deer Licenses: 333,646

Spring Turkey Licenses: 90,788

Fur Harvester Licenses: 58,158

Waterfowl Licenses: 56,832

Fall Turkey Licenses: 30,664

Bear Hunting Licenses: 5,482

Elk Hunting Licenses: 201

*Licenses sold between March 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016.

38,809 additional acres of land added for hunting and trapping in 2016.

Michigan is near the national average (78%) for repeat hunting and trapping license buyers.

[Graphic: abstract illustration of female waterfowl hunter]

Public Outreach

Engaging Through Outreach and Education

Division staff connect with the public through a variety of ways; media outlets, school programs, open houses, and videos are some of the most common. Since the creation of the Public Outreach Unit in 2009, it has been a priority for the division to communicate more effectively with the public in order to build additional appreciation for wildlife conservation and hunting. As a result, the division has been more organized messaging certain topics. In fiscal year 2016, “Keeping Wildlife Wild” and “Coyote Smart” were two important communication campaigns (see pg. 24).

Plumbrook Elementary is Division Adopt-A-School

For the second year, the division has partnered with the fourth-grade teachers at Plumbrook Elementary School in Sterling Heights to bring wildlife programming into the classroom. Fourth-graders eagerly awaited their monthly visits from “Ranger” Holly. Students learned about owls and their diet by dissecting owl pellets, and experienced a day-in-the-life of a wildlife biologist by conducting mock mark-recapture studies and simulated bird call surveys. Students helped with a citizen-science project by collecting bird sighting data for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Great Backyard Bird Count. This partnership has been a great way to inspire appreciation and enthusiasm for wildlife in suburban youth.

[Graphic: Elementary students around tree]

[Graphic: DNR staff demonstrates for elementary students]

Public Outreach Unit Creates K-12 Wildlife Education

In fiscal year 2016, the division developed new education curriculum for teachers to use within their own classrooms; there is now K-12 wildlife programming available to all Michigan teachers! These programs are designed to help educators incorporate Michigan wildlife into their curriculum so as to increase student appreciation for wildlife and their habitats, while meeting current Michigan educational standards. The division now has three programs for teachers to choose from. “Go Wild for Michigan’s Wildlife” (new in fiscal year 2016) is for grades K-5, and had over 400 teachers sign-up to receive the materials. For grades 6-8, “A Year in the Life of a Michigan Black Bear” provides students with the experience of following a radio collared black bear, and learning more about black bear biology. High schoolers (grades 9-12) experience the role of a wildlife biologist or manager by learning about elk and elk management in Michigan through “Elk University - Educating Tomorrow’s Wildlife Managers.”

Northern Lower Peninsula Staff Hold Birding Tours at Managed Flooding Locations

Two managed floodings in the Northern Lower Region hosted their first spring birding tours - Manistee Marsh, found on the far western edge of the region just miles from Lake Michigan, and the Houghton Lake Flats area, located in land just west of Houghton Lake. Both locations provide excellent waterfowl hunting in the fall, and are a prime destination for bird watchers in the spring. Staff provided background on the history and management of the area, and explained the goals of the areas and how they are achieved. A tour gave attendees a chance to see some birds and different areas of the complex, and learn firsthand how a flooding is managed.

Find Us on Youtube

Fiscal year 2016 was big for video in the division. The 60-Second Snakes eastern massasauga video became the most viewed video on the DNR's YouTube Channel reaching over 150,000 views! In all, the 60-Second Snakes videos collectively have passed the 350,000 view mark. In addition, division videos surpassed the millionth minute of watch-time on YouTube.

Understanding How to Apply for Bear and Elk Hunting Licenses

The elk weighted-chances and the bear preference point systems are two important application processes that can be complicated to understand. In 2016, two videos were developed for release during the elk and bear application periods explaining the systems and how you apply. The videos received a significant number of views and positive comments, and were designed to be relevant for many years.

[Graphic: Thumbnail of Michigan DNR YouTube video]

Be Coyote Smart

Often, division staff receive questions concerning coyotes. In order to increase awareness and inform Michigan residents about urban coyotes, a coordinated communications effort occurred in fiscal year 2016. First, a Michigan Coyote SMART brochure was created outlining life history, behavior, tips for coexisting with coyotes, and laws regulating the take of this species. Brochures were distributed to wildlife offices and DNR customer services centers to assist customers with coyote questions and concerns. In addition, a #CoyoteSMART twitter campaign was developed, along with a coexisting with urban coyotes video, which was shared in June 2016, and targeted urban communities in southern Michigan.

[Graphic: Coyote SMART brochure]

[Graphic: Screenshot from Michigan DNR's coyote YouTube video]

Keep Michigan's Wildlife Wild

In order to raise awareness about young wildlife and the importance of leaving them in the wild, a #KeepMiWild email and social media campaign took place March through July 2016. Posts were shared on the DNR's Facebook page about leaving wildlife in the wild and what to do if a baby wild animal was found. These posts were very successful and reached over 660,000 views, and had over 5,000 shares. A

series of press releases also were sent generating numerous media interviews across the state. And, a formal showcasing story called “DNR: Keep Michigan’s wildlife wild” was released in early April.

[Graphic: Two screenshots from Michigan DNR’s Facebook page]

Reaching Out!

450 media contacts, 82 school programs reaching over 8,600 students, 75 outreach programs reaching over 3,000 participants, 14 outdoor shows and events attended with over 5,000 individual contacts made, 17 educators participated in Elk University reaching over 700 students in 9th through 12th grades, 35 educators participated in “A Year in the Life of a Michigan Black Bear” education program reaching over 2,300 students in 6th through 8th grades, 134 educators participated in the migratory bird treaty curriculum

[Graphic: Abstract illustration of an apple, pencil, rainbow, and school]

Fostering Relationships

Building Habitat Through Partnerships

[Graphic: black tern in marsh]

[Graphic: black tern in flight]

Staff and Partners Conserve Black Tern Nesting Habitat in Delta County

Division staff participated with the U.S. Forest Service, the USFWS, Common Coast, and the U.P. Resource Conservation and Development Council on a two-year funded project by the USFWS to conserve Black Terns nesting habitat in Ogontz Bay, Delta County, one of the last coastal breeding sites for this species in Michigan’s U.P. The goals of the project include: monitoring the breeding colony for nesting success and identifying factors that are limiting breeding success; surveying and treating non-native phragmites to protect black tern habitat; and surveying other areas of Big and Little Bay de Nocs to identify other potential sites or habitat for breeding black terns. In addition, artificial platforms were deployed to supplement natural nesting substrate, and remote cameras were placed to determine nest fate and identify potential risks and predators to the colony.

[Graphic: Black tern nest]

Volunteers Build Brush Piles with Paris Field Office Staff

The Paris field office staff along with Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) volunteer coordinator and over 30 volunteers (including City of Big Rapids Department of Public Services) created over 50 brush piles on Haymarsh Game SGA. This habitat effort was in conjunction with MUCC’s annual meeting in Big Rapids. Brush piles benefit rabbits and other small game species on the area.

Volunteers Help Staff Plant Shrubs in the Upper Peninsula

Shingleton staff partnered with MUCC and Wildlife Unlimited of Delta County (purchased shrubs) to put on an MUCC On-The-Ground event in the new Garden Grade GEMS in August 2016. Volunteers planted

230 shrubs in the rain to improve habitat for ruffed grouse, woodcock, and other species. Shrubs planted included American mountain ash, ninebark, red osier dogwood, and highbush cranberry. The 21 volunteers that participated included members of MUCC, U.P. Whitetails of Marquette County, local sportsmen, Forest Resources Division, and family of Wildlife Division Staff.

[Graphic: adult woodcock]

[Graphic: Family of volunteers]

[Graphic: Group of volunteers]

[Graphic: Abstract illustration of leaf]

Kellogg Biological Station Partners with Southwest Region Staff to Build Native Prairies

Scientists from the DNR, Kellogg Biological Station, Eastern Michigan University, and Michigan State University are collaborating on an important habitat assessment project. It is an experimental effort to bring back native prairies in order to preserve biodiversity that has been lost due to invasive takeover. The experiments associated with this project are expected to be long-term, conclusive explorations into the best ways to restore this endangered ecosystem. In fiscal year 2016, seeds and grant support for the project were provided by the division through the private lands program.

[Graphic: butterfly on flower in field]

Financials

Statewide

Total Appropriations

TURKEY \$883,500, NONGAME \$421,800, GAME & FISH \$12,347,200, GENERAL FUND \$1,786,100, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$22,163,100, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$623,600, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$1,884,700, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$1,224,200

Total: \$44,334,200

Total Expenditures

TURKEY \$843,312, NONGAME \$261,411, GAME & FISH \$11,836,259, GENERAL FUND \$1,826,274, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$18,463,248, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$518,772, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$2,254,436, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$1,712,365, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$1,699,520

Total: \$39,415,597

Wildlife Populations

Goal 1

Total: \$10,002,943

TURKEY \$52,756, NONGAME \$157,799, GAME & FISH \$1,753,504, GENERAL FUND \$1,428,172, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$5,993,237, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$88,010, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$444,280, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$85,186, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$0

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 1:

Conduct game species surveys, Operate deer check stations , Meet regularly with stakeholders and partners to discuss game species issues , Collaborate with Mississippi Flyway Council on waterfowl regulations and non-game issues, Attend and give presentations at Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meetings on proposed regulation changes, Conduct statewide hunt drawings , Implement game species research projects, Protect endangered species, Collaborate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on federal endangered species issues, Work with partners to revise the Wildlife Action Plan and identify priority actions, Evaluate effects of changing environments on wildlife species, Monitor and report on wildlife disease outbreaks and emerging diseases, Collaborate with federal and state partners on disease management strategies, Conduct wildlife species vulnerability assessments

Wildlife Habitat

Goal 2

Total: \$8,695,180

TURKEY \$443,406, NONGAME \$42,264, GAME & FISH \$2,668,107, GENERAL FUND \$0, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$3,632,902, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$194,997, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$378,845, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$1,334,659, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$0

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 2:

Monitor the effectiveness of habitat management actions, Collaborate with partners to conduct habitat treatments, Collaborate with Forest Resources Division on state forest habitat treatments, Assist with development of Regional State Forest Management Plans, Develop State Game Area Master Plan , Conduct inventories of habitat conditions, Develop habitat demonstration areas to highlight management actions, Monitor and treat invasive species outbreaks, Conduct habitat research projects, Conduct vulnerability assessments of important habitat cover types

Land Use

Total: \$1.185.976

Goal 3

TURKEY \$559, NONGAME \$0, GAME & FISH \$129,895, GENERAL FUND \$0, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$806,905, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$2,100, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$0, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$22,328, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$224,189

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 3:

Provide information on wildlife surveys, reports, and assessments to department leaders, NRC, and legislators, Conduct legislative bill analyses, Collaborate on department's Land Management Plan, Develop division Land Acquisition Strategy, Collaborate with county and township land use planners, Evaluate impacts of development projects on wildlife resources, Resolve trespass issues, Survey wildlife-administered lands, Collaborate with partners to purchase important wildlife habitat

Public Participation

Total: 1,155,791

Goal 4

TURKEY \$5,684, NONGAME \$1,259, GAME & FISH \$283,833, GENERAL FUND \$0, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$335,722, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$40,420, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$425,686, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$0, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$63,186

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 4:

Develop educational materials to explain hunting and trapping programs, Emphasize the economic impacts of hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing, Enroll landowners in the Hunting Access Program, Conduct wildlife area tours and demonstrations, Conduct opinion surveys of hunters, trappers, and wildlife viewers to help improve programs, Attend outdoor shows to provide hunting, trapping, and wildlife viewing information, Assist with development of Mi-HUNT, Promote wildlife areas to birding communities, Promote small game hunting opportunities on southern Michigan State Game Areas, Modify regulations language for clarity, Identify additional State Game Area sites for wildlife viewing opportunities

Public Outreach

Total: \$2,012,671

Goal 5

TURKEY \$51,832, NONGAME \$12,469, GAME & FISH \$879,641, GENERAL FUND \$49,516, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$884,686, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$87,230, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$0, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$47,295, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$0

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 5:

Develop educational materials to explain wildlife programs, Attend outdoor shows to provide wildlife program information, Engage stakeholders and encourage participation in wildlife programs, Develop new tools to share information with the public, Present educational wildlife programs, Provide talking points to all staff on important wildlife issues

Fostering Relationships

Total: \$1,611,038

Goal 6

TURKEY \$3,611, NONGAME \$0, GAME & FISH \$307,239, GENERAL FUND \$0, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$285,981, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$0, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$1,005,625, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$8,581, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$0

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 6:

Collaborate with MUCC and other partners on new volunteer programs, Provide additional opportunities for stakeholder input, Support the role of citizen advisory groups, Expand web-based communications with partner assistance, Meet regularly with federal and state partners, Meet regularly with stakeholder and partner groups

Internal Communication

Total: \$1,131,823

Goal 7

TURKEY \$0, NONGAME \$0, GAME & FISH \$1,113,265, GENERAL FUND \$0, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$18,558, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$0, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$0, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$0, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$0

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 7:

Improve internal communications, Hold annual all-hands meeting for the division, Provide communications training and technical workshops to staff, Conduct regular employee staff meetings, Schedule time for more face-to-face meetings

Administrative Processes

Total: \$270,003

Goal 8

TURKEY \$3,398, NONGAME \$1,780, GAME & FISH \$151,283, GENERAL FUND \$8,498, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$94,848, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$1,697, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$0, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$8,498, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$0

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 8:

Conduct process mapping of current methods, Identify local experts to help others with processes, Streamline processes to save time and effort, Provide input to Bureaucracy Busters

Equipment and Facilities

Total: \$8,302,565

Goal 9

TURKEY \$192,520, NONGAME \$18,923, GAME & FISH \$2,462,538, GENERAL FUND \$123,850, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$3,912,649, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$97,145, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$0, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$82,794, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$1,412,145

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 9:

Maintain infrastructure and equipment, Participate on technology teams, Conduct annual inventory, Purchase equipment and supplies, Conduct infrastructure inspections and prioritize infrastructure repairs, Maintain and update vehicles, Provide personal safety equipment

Workforce

Total: \$1,408,992

Goal 10

TURKEY \$9,593, NONGAME \$2,717, GAME & FISH \$527,597, GENERAL FUND \$13,043, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$840,452, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$2,573, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$0, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$13,018, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$0

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 10:

Develop and implement the Career Development University, Conduct surveys to measure employee satisfaction, Develop employee training plans, Work with partners on shared employment opportunities

Funding

Total: \$700,509

Goal 11

TURKEY \$8,191, NONGAME \$10,006, GAME & FISH \$207,745, GENERAL FUND \$17,351, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$436,395, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$2,206, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$0, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$18,616, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$0

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 11:

Collaborate with partners to identify and pursue alternative funding sources, Identify gaps in funding, Monitor new federal funding opportunities, Monitor existing funding and budgets monthly

Responsive

Total: \$733,937

Goal 12

TURKEY \$1,375, NONGAME \$0, GAME & FISH \$189,279, GENERAL FUND \$0, FEDERAL (ANNUAL) \$543,283, OTHER STATE FUNDS \$0, FEDERAL (COMPETITIVE) \$0, DEER RANGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM \$0, REVENUE FROM PITTMAN-ROBERTSON LANDS \$0

WHAT THE WILDLIFE DIVISION DOES FOR GOAL 12:

Develop metrics for the division's strategic plan, Conduct climate change vulnerability assessments, Develop emerging issues reports, Report annual accomplishments to federal funding partners, Develop Wildlife Division annual report, Develop annual work plans and budgets for each section, region, and unit to address strategic plan priorities

Appendix

Federal Apportioned Funds

These funds are automatically apportioned to states, provided they meet certain eligibility requirements. Although transferred to the states in the form of grants, the states do not have to compete for these funds. These funds are particularly important because states can count on the monies being available and can plan for funding staff and long-term projects, as the level of funding is relatively predictable.

Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act Grants (PR)

State Wildlife Grants (SWG)

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, Traditional Conservation Grants

Federal Competitive Funds

These are funds that certain federal agencies make available through a competitive application process. The types of funds and the funding programs available can vary from year to year. These opportunities pose planning and budgeting challenges because of the uncertainty in the Wildlife Division's abilities to secure them; however, some have become very important to the division's ability to accomplish certain aspects of its mission. Once successful in competing for these funds, most are available to be expended over multiple years so long-term projects can be supported. These funds, however, are difficult to use to assist in planning and supporting permanent staff positions and also add additional administrative and reporting responsibilities.

Competitive State Wildlife Grants (cSWG)

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, Nontraditional Grants

Endangered Species Conservation – Recovery Implementation Funds

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation (NCWC) Grants

Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act Grant (GLFWRA)

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Avian Influenza (AI)

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)

State Funds

Game and Fish Protection Fund

This legislatively established fund is principally derived from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses; the cost of licenses is set legislatively.

Game and Fish Protection Fund – Deer (DRIP)

This legislatively established fund comes from \$1.50 of each deer license sold.

Game and Fish Protection Fund – Turkey

This legislatively established fund comes from a portion of each wild turkey license and application sold (\$9.50 resident, \$1 senior resident and \$3 application).

Game and Fish Protection Fund – Waterfowl

Historically known as duck stamp revenue, this legislatively established fund comes from the \$12 for each waterfowl license sold.

Game and Fish Protection Fund – Revenue from Pittman- Robertson-Acquired Land

This fund is derived from revenues earned from commercial activities that are incidental to wildlife management on lands acquired with federal Pittman-Robertson grants.

Nongame Fish and Wildlife Fund/Non-game Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund

This legislatively established fund comes through Michigan's Conserve Wildlife Habitat license plate, the sale of certain merchandise by the Wildlife Division, and donations.

General Fund-General Purpose (GF/GP)

General Fund-General Purpose revenues, collected in the main State operating fund, are not dedicated to a specific purpose by statute. The Wildlife Division's GF/GP is used primarily for wildlife disease monitoring and privately owned cervidae oversight.

For more detailed descriptions of each funding source, please visit mi.gov/wildlife.

Thank You

DNR Mission

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

Wildlife Division Mission

To enhance, restore, and conserve the state's wildlife resources, natural communities, and ecosystems for the benefit of Michigan's citizens, visitors, and future generations.

mi.gov/dnr