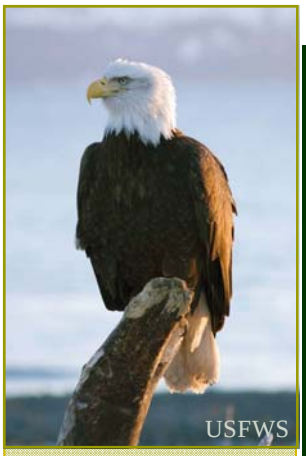
Landowner Letter

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

2010



The Status of the Bald Eagle

Once listed as an endangered species, the Bald Eagle has made a great come-back in recent years. In 2007 it was officially removed from threatened status—though it continues to be protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald & Golden Eagle Act.

2010 Aerial surveys conducted by Fish & Wildlife biologists identified 71 Bald Eagle chicks in nests throughout the state—the highest number on record since 1987!

Fish and Wildlife biologists continue to monitor Bald Eagles in Delaware. If you notice a nest on or near your property, please contact:

Anthony Gonzon
302-735-8651.

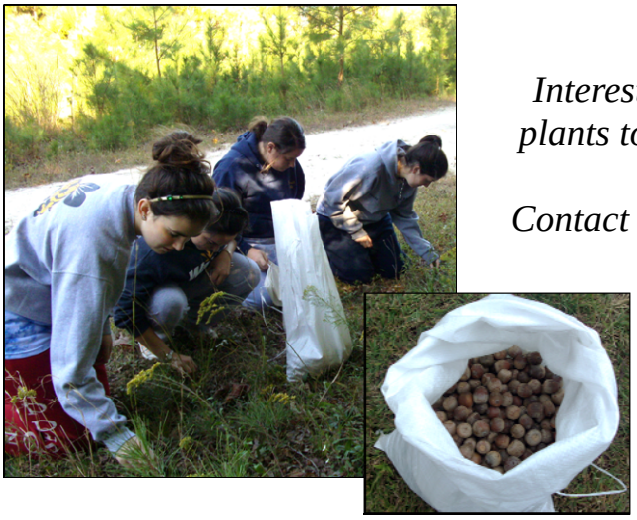
Fall Plantings

Use Native Plants to Add Diversity to Your Wildlife Habitat!

Fall is a great time of year to add new plants to your wildlife habitat. There are many benefits to planting in the Fall versus other seasons. Soil moisture is relatively high in Fall because daytime high temperatures are mild. Our region generally experiences abundant rainfall this time of year as well. Dry roots and heat stress is minimal during more temperate Autumn months.

In addition to mild temperatures and weather patterns, insect activity lessens. Most insects end their lifecycles in the Fall and will not be looking for food sources like they do in Spring and Summer. This gives plants more time to establish better root systems by Spring.

In addition to planting seedlings, spreading seeds over restoration areas will also help diversify your habitat. With minimal effort, seeds can be collected from native plant species and scattered to enhance wildlife habitat.



Interested in learning more about native plants to propagate or collect seeds from?

Contact a LIP biologist for information and suggestions!

Volunteers collect acorns from native oak trees . The acorns will be scattered at Fish and Wildlife reforestation sites.

Delaware Landowner Incentive Program Biologists

Bill Jones
William.Jones@state.de.us
302-284-4795

Jason Davis
Jason.Davis@state.de.us
302-735-3600

DE Landowner Incentive Program
DE Division of Fish & Wildlife
6180 Hay Point Landing
Smyrna, DE 19977
40 50202

LIP Welcomes New Biologist

Jason Davis Joins the Landowner Incentive Program!

The Landowner Incentive Program would like to welcome Jason Davis to our team of biologists! Jason comes to LIP with a broad background in wildlife conservation and ecology. He was a contractual Wildlife Biologist with the Division of Fish & Wildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program for several years and a state employed Wildlife Biologist with the Division of Fish and Wildlife's wildlife section for four years prior to accepting a position with LIP. Prior to that, he was the Assistant Property Manager with the Delaware Nature Society and also worked on the conservation of native forest birds in Hawaii.

"As a kid, I witnessed the grasslands and forests disappear only to give way to developments and shopping malls. Along with the loss of habitat came the inevitable loss of native animals and the introduction of invasive species. This is the driving force behind why I want to preserve and protect our natural heritage!"

- Jason Davis

Early successional fields (grasses and wildflowers) like this one owned by LIP participant Cameron Carlisle provide habitat for a variety of native Delaware wildlife!

What has LIP been up to?

Wildlife Surveys and Plant Propagation

Bird Surveys

LIP biologists monitored bird activity at many sites this summer to identify species using LIP habitats and record breeding activity. Twenty of the species identified are currently listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

Female Northern Harrier
Chuck Fullmer

Keep an eye out for overwintering birds or winter visitors such as:

Savannah Sparrow*	Northern Harrier*	Snow Bunting
White-throated Sparrow	Carolina Wren	American Pipit
American Tree Sparrow	Song Sparrow	Horned Lark
White-crowned Sparrow	Dark-eyed Junco	Cedar Waxwing
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Lapland Longspur	Wilson's Snipe
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Rusty Blackbird	Brewer's Blackbird
Yellow-headed Blackbird	Eastern Meadowlark	

**Species of Greatest Conservation Need*

Frog Surveys

Throughout the months of May and June this year, LIP biologists conducted evening surveys at LIP-enrolled wetland sites for frog and toad species. Delaware has 16 species of frogs and toads throughout the state and 14 of these species were identified at LIP sites this year!

Southeastern Chorus Frog	Northern Cricket Frog	Green Frog
Spring Peeper	Carpenter Frog	American Toad
Wood Frog	Gray Treefrog	Fowler's Toad
American Bullfrog	Cope's Gray Treefrog	Pickerel Frog
Southern Leopard Frog	Green Treefrog	

Green Treefrog (right)
John D. Willson, USFWS

Plant Propagation Program

LIP's Plant Propagation Program was once again successful in propagating and distributing native plants that directly benefit insect species at risk in Delaware. This year, three plants species were propagated with the assistance of the Mt. Cuba Center in Hockessin and Hodgson Vo-Tech in Bear.

Propagated Plants	Targeted Species
New York Ironweed *Vernonia noveboracensis*	several uncommon borer moths
Canada Horsebalm *Collinsonia canadensis*	several uncommon borer moths
White Turtlehead *Chelone glabra*	the Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly

Managing Grasslands

Maintaining Grasslands as Early Successional Habitat.

Delaware grasslands are becoming few and far between as housing developments take their place and nature runs its course of natural succession. Succession may limit the ability of a species to use a particular area and may occur in as little as a few years. Seeds dispersed (mainly by wind, birds and mammals) can severely alter a habitat by changing the plant composition. This can make a site useless for wildlife species that rely on specific plant species and habitat types. Northern Bobwhite quail, for example, have specific habitat needs rendering them vulnerable to become locally extinct from a particular area. This is especially evident in Delaware and is happening throughout many other states. Therefore, if we don't properly manage these habitats, species that rely on them could be lost or excluded over time.

Prior to human involvement, grassland habitats were maintained by fires and natural weather disturbances. Today, with fire suppression, changing land use practices, and sprawling housing developments, these precarious grassland habitats have become vulnerable and often lost altogether.

There are several methods of successful grassland management. The three most effective methods involve mowing, disking, and prescribed burning.

Key Points

- Mowing can be done at a minimum of 12 inches within the first year of establishment. Consult a LIP biologist prior to this practice.
- Disking or burning can be done once every three to five years to reduce woody vegetation growth.
- Mowing, disking and burning should take place before or after the bird nesting season (before April 15-and after August 15).
- The area designated for grassland management should be divided in half or thirds with only one section being mowed, disked or burned each season. This will ensure that suitable vegetation is still available as cover for wildlife species.

Questions about grassland management?

Landowner Incentive Program biologists are available to provide recommendations, tips and techniques!

Photo at Left: Merriken property—managed as early successional grassland habitat under LIP.