



Busy Bees: Pacific and Southwest Regions Rise to the National Pollinator Challenge

What would you do if suddenly almonds, blueberries and squash were hard to come by? Or chocolate was scarce and coffee a hard-to-find luxury item? Scary thoughts for many of us, yet with new evidence showing a decline in many species of pollinators worldwide, it may not be long before we see an impact in the availability of some of our favorite foods and plants.

Pollinators are vital to the integrity of the National Wildlife Refuge System, ecosystem health and agriculture. Up to 80 percent of plant species and three-quarters of the world's food crops rely on pollinators. Yet, 35 species of pollinators are listed as endangered or threatened.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does many things to help pollinators. But Dolores Savignano, Pollinator Conservation Coordinator, thought it could do more. "There was a need to broaden engagement within the Service," Savignano said.

So in 2011, the acting Director of the Service issued a nationwide challenge: From April 15 to July 31, all regions could choose to engage in pollinator education and conservation with the goals of earning the title of 2011 Service Pollinator Champion. >>

standards for wetland habitats, and partnering with federal, state, tribal and private organizations to track wetland changes over time.

The report, which represents the most up-to-date, comprehensive assessment of wetland habitats in the United States, documents substantial losses in forested wetlands and coastal wetlands that serve as storm buffers, absorb pollution that would otherwise find its way into the nation's drinking water, and provide vital habitat for fish, wildlife and plants.

"This report offers us a road map for stemming and reversing the decline," said Service Director Dan Ashe. "It documents a number of successes in wetlands conservation, protection and reestablishment, and will be used to help channel our resources to protect wetlands where they are most threatened and reduce further wetland losses."

The net wetland loss was estimated to be 62,300 acres between 2004 and 2009, bringing the nation's total wetlands acreage to just over 110 million acres in the continental United States, excluding Alaska and Hawaii.

For more details on the report, visit < www.fws.gov/wetlands/Status-And-Trends-2009/>. □

New Wetlands Mapper Now Online

National Wetlands Inventory data are now available through a new and updated Wetlands Mapper.

The Wetlands Mapper is the comprehensive data discovery portal to the Service's wetlands geospatial data holdings and enables resource managers and the public to view and print maps or download digital National Wetlands Inventory data.

Some of the changes include enhanced visual representation; backdrop choices (imagery, streets, topographic); ability to search by location (city, state, ZIP

code); enhanced polygon and linear analysis tools; a new riparian data layer; more historical information; improved wetlands code interpreter; improved printing tool; whole state downloads and status maps for the image era (how old are the data), image scale (how refined are the data), and image type (black and white, CIR, true color).

In 2010, the Wetlands Mapper received about 55 million online inquiries for information. □

ANDREW CRUZ, NWI National Standards and Support Team, Washington Office



Screen capture of the Wetlands Mapper showing map status for the conterminous U.S. Try the mapper at: www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html



“It is the small, daily things we do to improve the survival of pollinators that we can share with the public.”

Pollinator, continued from page 3

Regions nationwide met the challenge with enthusiasm. “The response was incredible,” said Savignano. “We had twice as many activities during the Pollinator Challenge alone as we reported all last year.”

The Pacific and the Southwest regions were especially proactive in their response to the challenge and now share the distinction of being named 2011 Service Pollinator Champions.

While both engaged in a range of pollinator-centered events, pollinator monitoring was the key to the Pacific Region’s success, said Assistant Regional Refuge Biologist Joe Engler. “There haven’t been many done in the past so taking the monitoring angle was really our strength.”

Engler said he is thrilled at his region’s win in the challenge and credits both the hard work and creativity of everyone from the fish hatcheries to the refuge staff and the “integral contributions of volunteers.”

The Southwest Region really shone, according to Pollinator Coordinator Julie McIntyre, in educational events including presentations to the Mescalero Apache Tribal Youth Conservation Corps and the Native American Fish and Wildlife Southwest Regional Conference. She also commended the concerted Service-wide efforts in outreach.

“The key to our success was the tremendous effort and passion of staff,” McIntyre said.

The Service Pollinator Champions exemplify the kind of coordination, creativity and engagement that Savignano says can be added to everyday Service work to ensure healthy pollinator populations.

“If we can add to what we already do in our jobs, it makes a difference,” she said. “It is the small, daily things we do to improve the survival of pollinators that we can share with the public.”

This is a message that, after the success of this first National Pollinator Challenge, the Service will likely have the chance to continue spreading in the years to come. □

AMANDA FORTIN, Public Affairs,
Pacific Region



JAMIESON SCOTT

(Above): Several offices banded and monitored hummingbirds. (Right): Netting at Big Muddy National Wildlife Refuge.



USFWS