

Appendix 6

Examples of Implementation Projects in the Central Hardwoods

Wetlands and waterfowl projects

All of the Central Hardwoods' state agencies, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Shawnee National Forest have participated significantly in wetland restoration and protection in the Central Hardwoods Bird Conservation Region. Many thousands of acres of wetland habitats in the BCR have been enhanced or restored by public-private partnerships in an effort to meet the acreage and population targets outlined in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Wetland-dependent species such as shorebirds, wading birds, and marsh birds as well as a variety landbirds that utilize the terrestrial habitats associated with wetlands complexes undoubtedly have benefited as well. Wetland protection, enhancement and restoration efforts will continue in the BCR wetland focus areas in an effort to meet the wetland acreage needs identified by on-going planning for all the wetland-dependent priority species and species suites.

Targeting private lands efforts for grassland and grass-shrub birds in the Kentucky Barrens area along the Kentucky-Tennessee border

The Department of Defense at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, The Nature Conservancy (Kentucky and Tennessee Chapters), Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency have formed a partnership that will use Farm Bill conservation programs and other private lands incentive programs to enhance habitat for grass land and grass-shrub bird species suites in a focus area along the Kentucky-Tennessee border, a region known as the Kentucky Barrens. Efforts are underway to find funding for a Coordinator who would be hired by TNC with funding provided by Ft. Campbell. The Coordinator will coordinate the develop a spatially explicit plan that will target specific incentive programs in subregions of the area where

each would program be mostly likely to achieve the desired outcomes and be widely accepted by landowners in each area.

Efforts targeted toward focus areas in the Missouri Ozarks

Two workshops on forest bird ecology (one in 2002 and one in 2003) were held by Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) for MDC staff interested in adapting incentive programs, management practices, and outreach efforts in ways that would complement conservation objectives for the forest and grass-shrub bird species suites in the Missouri Ozarks. The second workshop was attended by biologists and managers from the Mark Twain National Forest and Missouri Department of Natural Resources, as well. Following the first workshop, a private lands supervisor in MDC's Southeast Region expressed interest in having the Central Hardwoods' St. Francois focus area become a test area for targeting private lands efforts in a manner consistent with bird conservation objectives, and has met with the Central Hardwoods Joint Venture Coordinator and MDC planning staff to discuss the opportunities and challenges of working with private landowners in the region. A pre-proposal was submitted in June 2003 to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation seeking additional funds for the restoration of savanna-woodland private lands work in a target area surrounded by public lands. A point count sampling effort is being implemented in the focus area to determine the response of the bird community to restoration efforts. In addition, the manager of MDC's lands in the White River Trace focus area, and both the regional wildlife and forestry division supervisors, expressed interest in developing grant proposals that would enhance their ability to manage both the MDC property and surrounding private lands for Northern Bobwhite and other species in the grass-shrub species suite. Missouri Department of Conservation and other partners in the Missouri Grassland Coalition also have on-going efforts to restore habitat for Greater Prairie-Chickens and other high-priority grassland birds in two grassland bird focus areas in the western Missouri Ozarks.

Efforts to secure industrial forest lands near Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge

Over 10,000 acres of land near the Big Sandy Unit of Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR) are being liquidated by Mead/Westvaco, a timber products corporation. Partners including TNWR, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and the Tennessee Valley Authority, met in May 2002 to discuss ways to secure the lands so that the matrix around the refuge would continue to meet a threshold of forest cover associated with adequate levels of reproductive success for forest breeding birds. As a result of that meeting, a successful effort was undertaken to have the area included within a focus area boundary of the Tennessee Forest Legacy Program. The partners have been working with landowners in this area to place conservation easements on these critical lands. Two proposals for the Forest Legacy program were submitted in 2003.

U. S. Forest Service pine woodlands restoration area in the Missouri Ozarks

Efforts to restore pine woodlands are currently underway on a 10,000 acre site known as “Pine Knot” in the Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri. This effort complements other smaller-scale efforts to restore pine woodland ecosystems in the Missouri and Arkansas Ozarks, where the pine-woodland ecosystem once covered hundreds of thousands of acres. The very high-priority Bachman’s Sparrow and other pine-woodland species are likely to benefit, and sufficient habitat may one day exist to support a reintroduction of the extirpated Brown-headed Nuthatch.

Oak regeneration

Although not always directly related to bird conservation, the need to perpetuate oak forest and woodlands to provide habitat for priority birds is obvious. These sorts of projects are going on all over the BCR, especially in those focus areas where oak decline and wood borer infestations already threaten the continued existence of oak and oak-pine ecosystems. The oak decline and oak-borer threats are probably greatest in the Boston Mountains in northwestern Arkansas, much of which falls under the domain of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest.

Barrens and glade restoration

Many projects along these lines by CHJV partners, perhaps the most expansive being those on Dept of Defense's Ft. Campbell along the KY-TN border and Arnold Engineering Center in Tennessee.

Arkansas bobwhite project, Fulton and Searcy Counties

Partner agencies in the Arkansas Quail Study group, under the lead of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, are working within two focus areas in northcentral Arkansas to improve habitat for the Northern Bobwhite and other grass-shrubland species on several thousand acres of private land in the two counties.

The Fulton County focus area comprises over 13,000 acres and has at least 14 landowners enrolled in the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). The Searcy County focus area comprises about 5,800 acres and has 22 landowners already enrolled in WHIP. All of the remaining landowners have expressed a wish to participate as well and will be enrolled in WHIP as well.

Wildlife Habitat Council projects

The CHBCR has been working with the Wildlife Habitat Council's new Corporate Campaign for Migratory Bird Conservation to enhance habitat for birds on corporate land holdings, and to foster public-private partnerships for habitat work in surrounding landscapes. One of the first projects to emerge from this effort is focused upon an approximately seven-mile corridor of land owned by several corporations along the Tennessee River between Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge and the City of Decatur, Alabama, to the east, and the Mallard-Fox Creek Wildlife Management Area to the west. Corporate partners include 3M, British Petroleum, Vulcan Materials, and NuCorr Steel. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alabama Department of Natural Resources, and

the Natural Resources Conservation Service are providing technical expertise and the Decatur City Planner and Morgan County Environmental Education Foundation also are working with the group.

A Vision Plan for the corridor as a whole is being developed by the local partnership. The first phase of work for the project area includes conversion of approximately 280 acres of fescue and weed fields on 3M and NuCoor lands to native warm-season grass-forb mixtures to provide habitat for priority grassland birds such as Dickcissel and Grasshopper Sparrow; tree thinning and prescribed fire on 37 acres surrounding the Vulcan Quarry to provide habitat for Prairie Warbler and other priority grass-shrubland birds; and 30 acres of woodland restoration on British Petroleum's land to improve it as breeding habitat for priority species such as Eastern Wood-Pewee and as stopover habitat for migrating forest birds. These habitats will add to sites that the public can visit along the northern Alabama birding trail, which is being developed and promoted by the Alabama Department of Natural Resources. Staff from the conservation agencies will provide the necessary technical expertise needed to accomplish the habitat improvements. The City of Decatur will help to advertise the Birding Trail. A pre-proposal to help fund the habitat work was submitted to the national Fish and Wildlife Foundation in June 2003.