

EAST GULF COASTAL PLAIN JOINT VENTURE

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Golden Eagle Camera Surveys in the East Gulf Coastal Plain



Carrie Threadgill, Photo by AL Dept. of Conservation & Natural Resources

By Carrie Threadgill, Nongame Biologist, Alabama DCNR

Alabama recently finished up their 7th year participating in the Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group's game camera surveys to assess the eastern population of golden eagles. Partners from Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, Alabama State Lands Division, Department of Defense, US Forest Service, and the Friends Group of Talladega National Forest assisted with setting up game camera sites baited with roadkill deer carcasses, which have been used to detect golden eagle presence across the eastern half of the United States. Along with game cameras, a subset of eagles have been captured and outfitted with cellular tracking devices to determine their movements during migration and on their wintering and breeding grounds. One additional bird was outfitted with a radio transmitter in 2017 for a total of 13 birds captured in Alabama in the last 5 years. Project data is instrumental in learning more about the eastern population of golden eagles, including habitat use and migration pathways. Future analysis of data collected in the southeast will allow development of recommendations for wintering habitat management. The Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group held a meeting in Chattanooga, TN in January, which included partners from state and federal agencies, industry, and researchers from University of West Virginia. During the meeting, updates were given on ongoing analysis of various aspects of the project including roost site selection, age ratios, migration connectivity, and lead in golden eagles. Through this large cooperative project we hope to gain valuable information about the eastern population of golden eagles throughout their winter range.

Recognizing Dr. Barry Grand's Contributions to the EGCPJV

By Catherine Rideout, EGCPJV

Our partner and colleague, Dr. Barry Grand, who has worked as a faculty member at Auburn University and has led the Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit for many years, has taken a new position with USGS. Barry now serves as the Southern Unit Supervisor, and his work will include supervising and managing the performance of 13 Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units at universities from North Carolina to Oklahoma.



Dr. Barry Grand, Photo by K. Grand

Many of you know that Barry has provided science planning leadership and support to our Joint Venture for over a decade. He has participated regularly in our board meetings, served as chair of the Technical Advisory Team, has led our landbird planning, and was central in the development of our longleaf pine conservation tools. What some of you may not know is that he was also instrumental in the very beginning garnering the support of Auburn University and other partners to form the East Gulf Coastal Plain Joint Venture. During my tenure as Joint Venture coordinator, Barry has contributed a great deal of time and talent. To me, he has been and will continue to be an incredible colleague, mentor, and friend. Barry, on behalf of the EGCPJV partnership including our board members and technical partners, thank you for your incredibly valuable contributions, leadership, and friendship.

New Bird Monitoring Forum in Gulf of Mexico



Photo by FL Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission

By Randy Wilson, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Over the last few years, scientists and land managers along the northern Gulf of Mexico have been working to identify a set of common objectives and values underpinning avian monitoring activities along the northern Gulf of Mexico using a Structured Decision Making (SDM) process. As a result of bringing many stakeholders together, this effort quickly evolved into what is now known as the Gulf of Mexico Avian Monitoring Network (GoMAMN). The Network serves as a forum by which partners can operate as a “Community of Practice” working collaboratively to leverage existing resources, capacities, and expertise to develop and implement a Gulf-wide, coordinated and integrated avian monitoring program. More specifically, the objectives are to: (1) create and maintain a forum by which stakeholders can coordinate and integrate monitoring efforts for birds and their habitats; (2) establish clearly articulated core-values and data needs underpinning monitoring efforts; (3) facilitate the identification and implementation of cost-effective yet scientifically robust monitoring efforts; and (4) standardize data collection and data management efforts that support adaptive management. Recent activities include securing funds through the NFWF Gulf Coast Conservation Grants Program to support the hiring of a Post-Doc (Dr. Auriel Fournier) to assist with completing SDM models and associated decision support tools, as well as to assist partners with development of a Gulf-wide avian monitoring plan. Membership is open to any professional interested in advancing and implementing bird monitoring activities within the northern Gulf of Mexico region. For more information, see <https://www.gomamn.org/> or contact Randy Wilson (Randy_Wilson@fws.gov).



Photo by USFWS

Perdido River Water Quality Protection, Habitat Restoration, and Recreational Enhancement Project

By Darryl Boudreau, The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is leading a multi-party effort in Alabama and Florida to develop a regional watershed scale project within the EGCPJV's Gulf Coast Rivers and Bays Initiative area. Growing commercial and residential development in the historically heavily forested Perdido River watershed has drawn together a unique collaboration of parties



Photo by D. Boudreau, The Nature Conservancy

seeking to conserve wildlife habitat, protect and improve water quality, and promote economic opportunity and outdoor recreation. These entities plan to target NRDA and RESTORE funds to protect sensitive floodplain areas, restore wetland hydrology, and restore longleaf pine habitat on adjacent uplands. These entities are also seeking to promote ecotourism and outdoor recreation by developing a bluewater trail including launch and camp sites connecting the Perdido River headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico. Due to the planned expansion of nearby commercial and industrial development and associated residential development, the parties are exploring opportunities for wetland mitigation to lessen the impact from development in these sensitive areas. Collaborators include The Nature Conservancy, Escambia County, Florida, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Northwest Florida Water Management District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the East Gulf Coastal Plain Joint Venture. This project would be the first of its kind to combine restoration and recreation funds across two states. To learn more contact Darryl Boudreau of the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy at dboudreau@tnc.org.

EJ Williams Presented with Prestigious Bird Conservation Award

By Catherine Rideout, EGCPJV

Congratulations to our friend and colleague, Emily Jo Williams, the recipient of the 2017 Gary T. Myers Bird Conservation Award. This prestigious award is presented by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative and the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards to individuals who have demonstrated exceptional accomplishments in bird conservation in support of principles of NABCI and national and international



EJ Williams (ABC) and Jerome Ford (USFWS), Photo by Sean Kelley

bird conservation initiatives. EJ is a longtime proponent of Joint Ventures, having served on many JV boards including the EGCPJV. She serves as Vice President of North American Birds and Habitats at the American Bird Conservancy and has also served as the Assistant Regional Director for Migratory Birds at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. EJ also worked for The Longleaf Alliance, Georgia Wildlife Resources Division, and as state Partners in Flight Coordinator. EJ's work ethic and passion for people and birds make her an amazing leader in our bird conservation community!