

Missouri Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy

From Vision to On-the-Ground Action

Using wildlife information gathered over the past 30 years, Missouri's comprehensive wildlife strategy promotes management that benefits all wildlife, rather than targeting single species. The strategy identifies 36 Conservation Opportunity Areas in which management strategies will conserve both wildlife populations and the natural systems on which they depend. The Department of Conservation, other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and citizen conservationists are using the Conservation Opportunity Areas to focus their efforts for wildlife and their habitats.

Maintaining healthy populations of Ozark fish means healthier waters overall, ultimately benefiting people as well.

Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas **Mid-America Regional Council Brings Together Conservation Partners**

term goal is to connect Kickapoo Island to Weston Bend State Park and create a bridge of restored habitat across the floodplain to forests in Kansas, which will provide important habitat for migrating birds. Working together with local entities makes it possible to conserve vital wildlife and natural areas for future generations.

Proactive Efforts that Benefit Wildlife and People

Restoring Access to Ozark Fish Habitat

Priority objectives in Missouri's wildlife strategy include improving water quality and stream habitat and removing environmental threats. Low water crossings in the Niangua River basin, a Conservation Opportunity Area, impede movement of fish between bridges, including the Niangua darter and other fish, mussels, and crayfish of the Ozarks. In 2006, two low water crossings in the Little Niangua River were replaced with clear-span bridges, recovering access to 14.4 miles of stream habitat for Niangua darters. Subsequent monitoring revealed that Niangua darter numbers increased

Conservation Opportunity Areas in Missouri's comprehensive wildlife strategy provide a strategic platform for building community-based conservation partnerships. The Missouri River floodplain has been drastically altered by extensive draining and levees, reducing its value to wildlife. The

Mid-America Regional Council is leading an ambitious group of stakeholders to restore aquatic and floodplain habitats along the river near Weston Bend, collaborating with local, county, state, and federal partners. The Army Corps of Engineers purchased 200 acres of land on Kickapoo Island in 2007. The long



Missouri River habitat/David Bedan

after bridge replacement and fish diversity increased upstream of all crossings. A future project will make another 8.4 miles of stream habitat available. Maintaining healthy populations of Ozark fish means healthier waters overall, ultimately benefiting people as well.

Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife

Restoring Sand Prairies to Prevent Wildlife from Becoming Endangered

Sand prairies are the rarest natural community in southeast Missouri and conserving them is a regional priority in Missouri's wildlife strategy. Sand prairies support imperiled plants like snoutbean, sand hickory, Hall's bulrush, and jointweed. Animals include dusty hognose snakes, Illinois chorus frogs, bobwhite quail, Eastern meadowlarks, native bees, and sand cicadas. A new Habitat Initiative has brought together a diverse partnership, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, three universities, Charleston Baptist

Association, Missouri Botanical Garden, and the Missouri Departments of Conservation and Natural Resources. This new habitat effort and diverse partnership will help restore habitat for rare and declining species, preventing the need to list them as endangered species.

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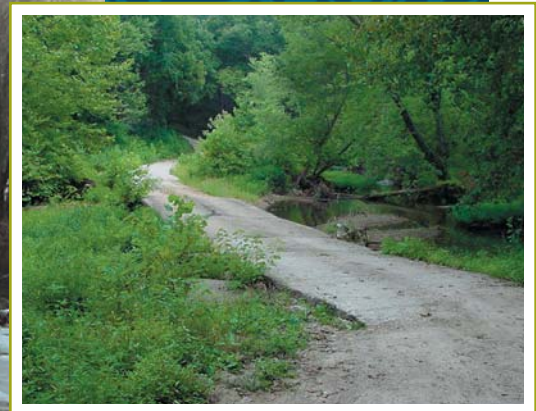
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Dusty hognose snake/Bob Gillespie, Missouri Department of Conservation

A new sand prairie conservation effort and diverse partnership will help restore habitat for rare and declining species, preventing the need to list them as endangered species.



Previous bridge/Craig Fuller, Missouri Department of Conservation

New bridge allows fish passage/Craig Fuller, Missouri Department of Conservation