

Georgia

Ecological Services Field Offices



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Photos (top to bottom)

Robust redhorse conservation efforts.

Endangered wood stork nesting.

Recreation in coastal swamp ecosystems.

Endangered red cockaded woodpecker management.

Station Facts

- Established in 1977 and expanded in 1997 to three offices in Athens, Brunswick, and Fort Benning.
- FY 02 budget: \$1,657,000.
- Staff: 13.

What We Do Station Goals

- Work with landowners, industry, and local, state and federal agencies to ensure balance is maintained between environmentally sustainable development and natural resource protection.
- Ensure that sensitive species and their habitats are provided the full protection of the law.
- Work with local, state and federal agencies and other organizations to ensure that Georgia's natural resources are not adversely impacted by unacceptable levels of pollutants and contaminants
- Develop and maintain partnerships throughout Georgia to protect and restore the integrity of rivers and the watersheds they drain. Watersheds on which the Service focuses include the Etowah, Conasauga, Altamaha, Lower Chattahoochee-Flint and Savannah Rivers.
- Develop and maintain partnerships throughout Georgia to incorporate an adaptive management approach in maintaining protection and conservation of sensitive ecosystems such as the Georgia coastal plain and longleaf pine communities.

Areas of Work

- *Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)* - consult with federal agencies on impacts to threatened and endangered species.
- *Section 10 of ESA* - work with non-federal entities to develop habitat conservation plans (HCPs) to protect threatened and endangered species.
- *Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act* - provide advisory comments to other federal agencies on impacts of water resource development on fish and wildlife resources.
- *Technical Assistance* - provide state, federal, local, and private entities with technical assistance on projects impacting trust resources (i.e., migratory birds, species listed under the ESA, interjurisdictional fish, marine mammals, wetlands, and Service lands).
- *Fire Ecology* - provide consultations to state and federal agencies on fire and fuel reduction projects on national parks, refuges, and forests.
- *Partners for Fish and Wildlife* - assist private landowners in habitat enhancement and restoration activities that benefit trust resources.
- *Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)* - consult with FERC on projects involving hydroelectric facilities and fish passage.
- *Department of Transportation* - ensure delays in road construction are minimized and natural resource and endangered species issues receive full consideration during project design.
- *Environmental Contaminants* - identify and prevent harm to trust resources caused by environmental contaminants, and assistance in the recovery of damaged habitats that support trust resources.

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Activity Highlights

- GAES has funded and assisted on-going *mussel propagation research* at Warm Springs Fish Hatchery and the Tennessee Aquatic Research Institute to augment mussels populations in nearby streams.
- For the past two years, GAES has hosted the *Upper Coosa Basin Aquatics Summit*. The Summit aids GAES and partners in better protecting and conserving the Upper Coosa River Basin.
- Since 1999, GAES has hosted the *Federal Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest* for school age children.
- GAES closely worked with state agencies, non profit organizations and utility companies to develop the *Draft Robust Redhorse Conservation Agreement*.
- GAES has and is successfully working with private landowners and organizations to promote *restoration of the longleaf pine ecosystems*.
- GAES assisted in collection of specimens and provided contaminant expertise on projects such as *Lake Apopka and LCP*.
- GAES co-wrote the stream mitigation Standard Operations of Procedures.
- GAES is working with utility companies to modify right-of-way maintenance to improve water quality and fish habitat.

Questions and Answers

Does the ESA stop development?
The Georgia Field Office reviews hundreds of federally funded or permitted projects each year, none of which have ever been stopped. If a project might impact a federally protected species or rare habitat, Service biologists work closely with the agency that is coordinating the project, making recommendations that will minimize impacts to listed species or their habitats while allowing the project to proceed.

If there are endangered species on my property, are there restrictions on what I can do?

Possibly. It is illegal to harm or harass an endangered or threatened species; under the law this is referred to as "take." Continuing your normal daily activities may not present a problem. However, if you are planning construction work or major changes, it is best to check with our office before proceeding. You may need a permit from the Service if your work will harm or harass a Federally protected species. In addition, you should check with your local state agencies regarding state listed species.

Is there any money available to help wildlife on my land?

There are opportunities for cost-sharing partnerships through several Federal programs such as Partners for Fish and Wildlife. Assistance and information are available through our office and at our national website www.fws.gov.

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For additional information, please visit our web page at www.fws.gov/r4gafo