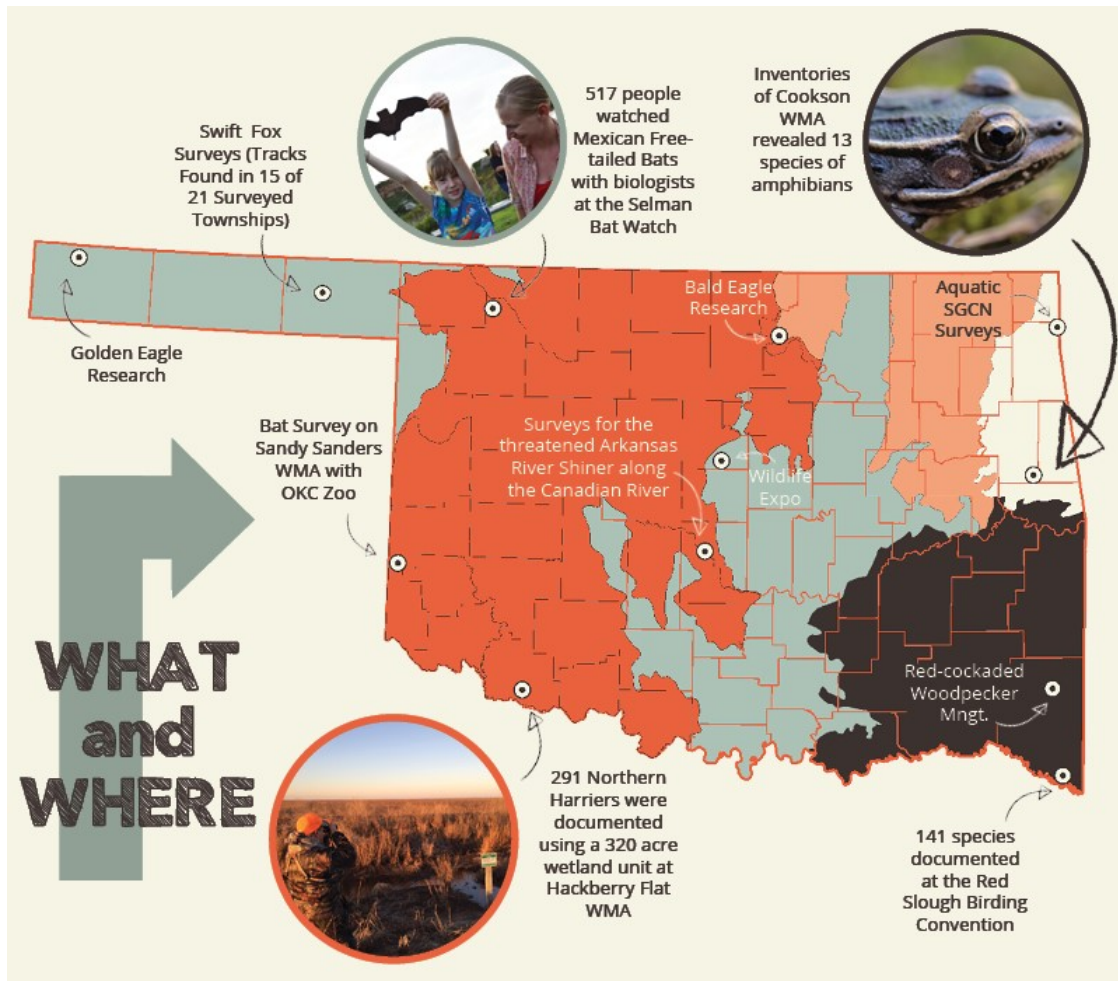


The Wild Side!

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Looking Back on 2016

For Wildlife Diversity Program biologists, 2016 was a year filled with surveys - recording which birds, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibians were found where. From Cookson WMA's salamanders to Beaver County's swift foxes, Sandy Sanders WMA's bats, Hackberry Flat WMA's wintering northern harriers, and the diverse birds of McCurtain County, biologists literally crisscrossed the four corners of the state. On top of surveys, biologists also hosted several wildlife-watching events, introducing wildlife enthusiasts to our state's incredible diversity. Visitors watched bats at Selman Bat Cave WMA, learned about wetland invertebrates at

Hackberry Flat WMA, and watched birds at Arcadia Conservation Education Area and Red Slough WMA.

[Get more wildlife diversity highlights from 2016](#)

Species Spotlight: Nine-banded Armadillo

Bony armor is enough to make the nine-banded armadillo an oddity in Oklahoma's world of mammals, but these curious creatures also have a lower than normal body temperature and a penchant for identical quadruplets.

[Learn more in the Wildlife Department's Field Guide](#)



Biologists Compile Whooping Crane Reports

Many thanks to the 22 wildlife enthusiasts who reported [whooping cranes](#) to the Wildlife Department during the endangered bird's fall migration. At least 19 birds were documented moving through the state by way of photographs and confirmation by field staff. Though the entire population - more than 300 birds - migrate through Oklahoma, whooping cranes make the journey in small groups (generally less than 12 birds) and some may decide to fly high overhead and remain out of sight.



Many whooping cranes delayed their migration by at least two weeks this year, but the entire population is now believed to have arrived at their South Texas wintering grounds.

Winter Eagle Watches

Oklahoma has long been touted as one of the top ten states in the nation for winter eagle watching. Each year, the Wildlife Diversity Program's partners in conservation host organized eagle watches near our state's many lakes, rivers and other eagle hot spots.

[Find the eagle watch closest to you](#)



Bounding After Texas Kangaroo Rats



Last documented in Oklahoma in 1969, the Texas kangaroo rat may have disappeared from our state's southwestern mesquite grasslands. Researchers with the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History have been searching for this rare rodent since 2015 at nearly 200 sites to no avail.



[Find out which rodents took the bait instead and the how researchers can tell the difference between the Texas kangaroo rat and the more common Ord's kangaroo rat](#)

Calendar of Events

The Audubon Society's 117th Christmas Bird Count

Dec. 14, 2016 - Jan. 5, 2017
Statewide

Learn if an event is organized in your area, and get contact information for the "circle" leader with the Audubon Society's [interactive map](#).

Winter Wonders at Hackberry Flat

Dec. 17, 2016
9 a.m.
Hackberry Flat WMA, near Frederick

Build a Bird Feeder

Dec. 17, 2016
10 a.m. - Noon
The Botanic Garden, Stillwater

Identify bird species, learn about specific feeding for various species, and build a bird feeder for your family. This family day activity is \$10 per family and [preregistration](#) is recommended.

The Nature Conservancy's Volunteer Work Day

Jan. 21, 2017
Oka' Yanahli Preserve, near Ada

Nickel Preserve Winter Bird Count

Jan. 22, 2017
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
J. T. Nickel Family Nature and Wildlife Preserve, near Tahlequah



The Wild Side e-newsletter is a project of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's Wildlife Diversity Program. The Wildlife Diversity Program monitors, manages and promotes rare, declining, and endangered wildlife, as well as common wildlife not fished or hunted. It is primarily funded by the sales of Wildlife Department license plates, publication sales and private donors.

Get involved with the Wildlife Diversity Program and learn more about Oklahoma's nongame wildlife at: wildlifedepartment.com