

The Wild Side!

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University of Oklahoma's Ichthyology Class Joins Survey

Twenty students from the University of Oklahoma's ichthyology class (the study of fishes) recently joined biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wildlife Department's Wildlife Diversity Program as they seined portions of the Canadian River for the federally-threatened Arkansas River shiner. Biologists conduct these presence/absence surveys along a 300-mile stretch of the river twice a year, once in July and again in October.

[Get the full story and see more photos from the Canadian River](#)

Species Spotlight: Fulvous Harvest Mouse

If you think this spring's bird's nests go unused after the chicks hatch and leave the nest, think again. Resourceful mice like fulvous harvest mice may remodel these abandoned homes into grassy high-rises.

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



Tracking Swift Fox in Beaver County

Each year, biologists with the Wildlife Diversity Program search publicly-accessible roads in the Panhandle for signs of swift fox, a species considered to be of greatest conservation need.

This fall, tracks were documented in 15 of 21 surveyed townships in Beaver County. Though swift fox are dependent on large expanses of native rangeland, biologists found most tracks in the loose soil along the edge of recently-graded county roads, near water puddles, or along the edges of winter wheat fields or Conservation Reserve Program fields where tracks are most easily observed and the rodents swift fox feed on may be easier to catch.

[Get more information about Oklahoma's smallest fox in a fact sheet developed by Oklahoma State University students](#)



IMAGE CREDIT: IAN STRATTON, USED UNDER CC BY-SA 3.0

Have You Ever Seen a Swift Fox?

If you don't live in the Panhandle, you probably haven't! The Swift Fox, scientifically named *Vulpes velox* and often confused with the Kit Fox, is a smaller-sized fox whose historical range extends into far western Oklahoma.

A Special Fox

The Swift Fox has been on the ODDWC's list of Species of Special Concern since the early 1990's, and the ODDWC joined the multi-agency and multi-state Swift Fox Conservation Team in 1994 when the species became a candidate for the endangered species list. Prior to the formation of the team, the Swift Fox was heavily impacted by trapping and the fur trade.

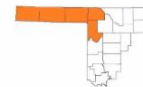
Luckily, the fox was spared from being listed as endangered after investigations in 2001 determined that although the range of the fox has been reduced, overall numbers are stable in about 40% of the current range.

The Swift Fox is classified in Oklahoma as a furbearer species, but has a closed season because of its scarcity. This means it is illegal to trap, or otherwise

knowingly harm this species. The Swift Fox is a monogamous species with an annual breeding season. Breeding usually takes place in the winter months, and the kits remain underground for about one month until weaned from the mother the next fall. The Swift Fox is nocturnal and lives a secretive lifestyle - residing in dens and avoiding interaction with humans and other species.

Where Are They?

The Swift Fox has been surveyed by the ODDWC in low numbers in Cimarron, Texas, Beaver, Harper, and Ellis counties. They also occur in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. Though they occur at low numbers in their range, they are



widespread and occupy landscapes dominated by rangeland, non-irrigated winter wheat, and Conservation Reserve Program fields. They occur most commonly in open, level landscapes dominated by shortgrass prairie vegetation, and avoid areas of tall grasses, rough topography and very dense vegetation.

What is ODDWC Doing?

The Wildlife Department uses track surveys in 84 townships in the fox's Oklahoma range. Data collected is used in annual reports for the continued conservation efforts of the Swift Fox Conservation Team. The Wildlife Department plans to continue monitoring far into the future.

What Can You Do?

Landowners in the panhandle can promote more suitable Swift Fox habitat by enabling the growth of shortgrass prairie grasses like buffalo grass and blue grama. Probably the most important thing you can do is to support the Wildlife Department. Most funds come from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses - so even if you don't hunt or fish, buying one can help fund the conservation of the species you care about!

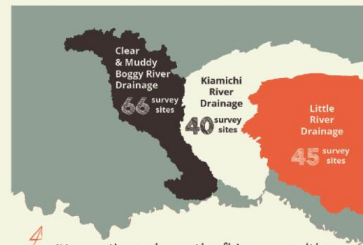
A project by S. Everett, K. Horn, and B. Simans, Oklahoma State University

Fish Surveys Reveal Species of Greatest Conservation Need

The Wildlife Diversity Program recently partnered with the University of Oklahoma's Dr. Bill Matthews and Dr. Edie Marsh-Matthews to learn more about the distribution and status of fish in four river systems in southeastern Oklahoma.

[Get the survey results and recommendations](#)

Surveying Four River Systems for Fish of Greatest Conservation Need (from 2014-2016)



"Across the region native fish communities generally remained in good condition relative to historical information from the 1920s through the 1970s."

- Dr. Bill Matthews
Principal Investigator

By the Numbers:

total # of sites surveyed in the four river systems	: 151	# of sites with three or more species of greatest conservation need	: 10
# of sites with at least one species of greatest conservation need	: 108	Average number of fish species documented per site	: 11

This project was funded by State Wildlife Grant F13401213

Calendar of Events

Historic Candlelight Tour

Dec. 2, Dec. 3, 2016

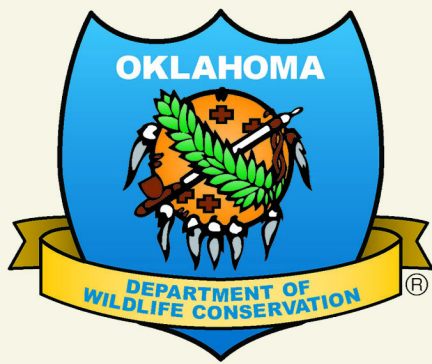
Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Sulphur

Saturday Morning Bird Walk

Dec. 3, 2016, 8-9:45 a.m.

Oxley Nature Center, Tulsa

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

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