Wildlife Success Stories

Early travelers throughout the Great Plains were met with sights one could only imagine. Wild game animals were abundant. Bison herds stretched as far as the eye could see and numbered roughly 60 million. Turkeys and deer roamed the woodlands and dozens of species of waterfowl inhabited wetlands that dotted the prairie. All of these animals provided sustenance for survival and were a needed staple to early settlers.

But it was this need for survival, coupled with unregulated market shooting, direct competition with human farming interests and widespread habitat degradation, that proved to be the downfall of many species of wildlife during subsequent centuries. The wildness of bison will never be seen again on the Great Plains. Black-footed ferrets are virtually gone from the face of the earth. Grizzly bears no longer roam the plains. Wetlands and some wildlife species that use them, like the whooping crane, are in dire straits in many areas.

But despite the alarming trends and population declines in some species, others have done quite well despite the obstacles. White-tailed deer, turkeys, pronghorn, elk and Canada geese are just a few of the more notable species that managed to prosper. The latter has actually been a benefactor, in some cases, of human development. Expensive housing developments are built with the aesthetics of a central pond or lake as a theme, which also offers Canada geese safe haven from predators and resting areas. The coyote has more lives than its feline counterpart and has survived for decades despite the attempts by man to rid the Great Plains of its kind.

Nearly all of the financial support and credit for the successful comeback of many of these species goes to hunters. Sportsmen have paid the lion's share for wildlife conservation since the 1800s, contributing a staggering $3.5 million each day. License fees are the largest portion of a hunter's contribution to state fish and game agencies, totaling nearly $1 billion annually. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages 545 national wildlife refuges totaling 95 million acres for the benefit of wildlife.

Another highlight in wildlife conservation occurred in 1937 with the passage of the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (P-R Act). Strongly supported by hunters, this legislation transferred a 10 percent excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition from the general treasury to state wildlife conservation projects. This tax, which was increased to 11 percent during World War II, now yields $130 million each year. Similar tax programs, from the sale of handguns and archery equipment, were implemented in 1970 and 1972 and result in an additional $54 million and $30 million, respectively, in annual proceeds.

The combination of these taxes has formed one of the best programs ever devised for the benefit of wildlife, benefiting both game and non-game species and hunters and non-hunters alike. Nearly half the revenue from the P-R Act is used to improve wildlife habitat by planting feed and cover, restocking animals, constructing marshes and ponds for waterfowl, providing watering areas for wildlife in arid areas and purchasing or leasing land for wildlife conservation. More than 4 million acres has been secured for wildlife refuges, wintering range, wetlands and public hunting grounds.

Human encroachment and threats to native wildlife will never cease and they must co-exist or perish. Many species have not adapted and will likely follow the passenger pigeon into extinction. However, many species have prospered and for that the nation should be grateful. Wildlife should be celebrated and preserved for future generations. If we don't owe it to ourselves, we owe it to our children.

Meet the ***Faces of the Great Plains-Wildlife Success Stories***.

Species Profiles

1. **AMERICAN ELK** (*Cervus elaphus*) -The original range of the American elk once extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast and from Canada to Mexico making it the most widely distributed member of the deer family in North America. It is often called wapiti, a Shawnee Indian word meaning "pale rump."

Settlement, agriculture and meat shooting by settlers had eliminated elk in the eastern United States by the early 1800s. Similar events in the western part of the country drastically reduced those herds until roughly 40,000 animals remained in the Yellowstone National Park area at the turn of the last century.

The wintering habits of elk didn't help their clash with civilization, either. Elk herds would feed in the mountain pastures during the summer and move down with the onset of snow at higher elevations. These wintering areas created conflicts between wildlife, ranchers and farmers.

Because of wintering range conflicts, state and federal wildlife agencies have secured wintering areas for growing elk herds in states like Montana and Wyoming. Sagebrush flats are being converted to grass which greatly improve the winter carrying capacity for elk herds.

As a result of these efforts there are now more than 1 million elk in 10 western states with scattered, small herds throughout the Midwest and eastern United States.

2. **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** (*Sialia mexicana*) -The Eastern bluebird typically occurs east of the Rocky Mountains from southern Canada to Central America. Bluebirds are the nation's symbol for love, hope and happiness in songs and poems.

Once common, its numbers declined as a result of several factors. Increased pesticide use, particularly in orchards, likely reduced their valuable food source. Competition for nest sites from the exotic, overly aggressive house sparrow and starling has driven bluebirds from their former habitats. They nested in hollow cavities in old, dead trees which were often cut for firewood or as a result of their unsightliness. Wooden fence posts also provide nesting cavities throughout the early 1900s but have since been replaced by metal ones. Severe winters took their toll, too.

The decline was addressed by interested birders and others when they began constructing artificial bluebird nest structures several decades ago. These nest boxes were placed in "trails" in rural settings, usually in sunny, tree-scattered areas with more than 100 yards between each box. Pastures, golf courses and country cemeteries provided ideal nest box locations. Boxes were checked for evidence of starlings or house sparrows and their nest and materials removed if found.

The eastern bluebird is once again a common sight throughout much of its former range.

3. **BALD EAGLE** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) - Our nation's symbol, and arguably the most recognized bird species, the bald eagle is a symbol of strength and prosperity. Named for its conspicuous white head and tail, this adult plumage is not attained until 4 or 5 years of age. Immature birds, with their overall dark color, are often confused with golden eagles. Its numbers may have exceeded 100,000 before Columbus reached this country.

Depredation complaints from fox farmers and fishermen caused the Alaska Territorial Legislature to impose a bounty on bald eagles in 1917. The complaints were later found to be mainly false but not before more than 100,000 bald eagles were killed when the bounty was removed in 1953.

Additionally, widespread use of the pesticide DDT during the mid-1900s allowed the toxic chemical to magnify up the food chain. Eagles that consumed fish, their main food source, with high levels of DDT in their flesh had subsequent poor reproductive success. Egg shells became too brittle and thin and were crushed under the weight of the incubating parent. Coupled with habitat loss bald eagle numbers were reduced to a dismal 417 nesting pairs in the continental United States by the mid-1960s.

The chemical DDT was banned in 1972. The bald eagle was listed as an Endangered Species in 1973. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began captive-breeding programs and habitat protection projects. As a result of these events, bald eagle numbers rebounded. They were upgraded from the Endangered Species List to Threatened status in 1995. These majestic birds number nearly 6,500 nesting pairs in the lower 48 states now and about half of the world's estimated population of 70,000 live in Alaska.

4. **RED FOX** (*Vulpes vulpes*) -Traditionally, the fox was considered a pest by farmers as it preyed on poultry along with its wild prey. Its keen senses, it can hear a mouse squeak more than 100 feet away and smell a bait more than a mile away, coupled with its cunningness make it an efficient predator.

Due to their appearance, most people estimate that red foxes weigh as much as 20 to 30 pounds, but they actually weigh from 8-15 pounds. Several inches of thick fur provide the illusion of being larger.

Unlike other animals, the red fox has done well in human-altered landscapes. They have adapted to increased urbanization and red foxes can be found in and around many major cities throughout the Great Plains. Red foxes will live in and around golf courses, vacant lots, parks and highway interchanges. Their main food sources, rabbits, birds and small rodents, are abundant. Even more importantly their main predator, the coyote, isn't found as close to civilization.

5. **PRONGHORN** (*Antilocapra americana*) -Some 30-40 million pronghorn once roamed the western prairies. They were second in numbers only to the huge herds of bison. The pronghorn is not related to either antelope or goats.

Pronghorn populations began to decline with settlement of the Great Plains. Homesteading, competition with livestock and heavy market and meat shooting by settlers caused numbers to dramatically drop. Less than 13,000 animals remained by the early 1920s.

Hunter-funded Pittman-Robertson Act monies were used to help bring this majestic animal back to its former range. Animals were herded into corral-like enclosures, made easier since pronghorn are reluctant to jump fences (unlike deer), and trucked or flown to reintroduction sites.

Pronghorn and cattle exist on the open range. Fences have been adapted that allow landowners to keep cattle contained while not restricting the movement of pronghorns as they're able to dip under the bottom strand of most fences.

The pronghorn comeback is remarkable. Nearly wiped out at one point, they now number more than 400,000 in the western states.

6. **LESSER SNOW GOOSE** (*Chen caerulescens*)-Each fall and spring, huge flocks of white birds with black wing tips dot the skies in undulating waves. Lesser snow geese make their annual migration to and from breeding habitat in the Arctic tundra and Canada to southern locales of the United States and Mexico.

Lesser snow geese appear in two color forms, the white with black wing tips, and the "blue" goose which is simply a dark colored bird. Unlike other waterfowl, they nest in large colonies with densities of more than 2,000 per square mile. Their populations have skyrocketed over the last decade which is causing a major problem for their continued survival.

When snow geese feed, they pull the entire plant up by the roots. The sensitive tundra, where they breed, is being destroyed at an alarming rate and as a result only bare ground remains. It takes years, even decades, for the tundra to fully recover after it's been destroyed.

Hunting seasons have been increased and liberalized in an effort to reduce the overall population of lesser snow geese. Lesser snow geese are typically wary and travel in huge flocks comprised of older individuals making it difficult for hunters to harvest the large numbers needed to reduce the population. Only time will tell if lesser snow geese indeed eat themselves out of house and home.

7. **HOUSE FINCH** (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) -The house finch had healthy populations throughout the canyons and bottomlands of the American West until around 1900. Bird catchers had been trapping the birds for quite some time and they adapted well to captivity eating canary seed. The birds were sold as "Hollywood finches" to pet stores in the east and it was a business venture for some until 1940 when someone finally realized they were protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. As U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement agents raided a pet store on Long Island in New York one day in 1940, the storekeeper was releasing house finches out the back.

It wasn't long before reports of house finches surfaced along the entire Atlantic Coast. However, experts surmised the house finch was already present in the east before the pet store raid of 1940 and simply misidentified as purple finches or overlooked. The birds from the east began to move west and the birds in the west gradually moved east over the last half-century. Though no one knows for sure when east first met west, it happened throughout the Great Plains sometime during the mid-1980s and all in less than 100 years after it was split into two continental populations.

Today, house finches are common in every state in the contiguous United States and parts of Canada. They commonly nest in hanging baskets or pots on porches and back steps. Although house finches have been a primary victim of a fatal disease called mycoplasmosis, they are still among the most common of all backyard birds with an estimated population between 267 million and 1.4 billion birds.

8. NINE-BANDED ARMADILLO (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) -The nine-banded armadillo has the widest distribution of any armadillo species. Prior to 1850, this animal was not found north of the Rio Grande River. Its numbers were affected by changing habitat and hunting for food by native people of northern Mexico and southern Texas.

The advancement of American settlers and farming practices allowed armadillos to invade the United States. Colonization of states was helped by the deliberate or accidental release of captive animals. The transportation of cattle by railway to other states was likely responsible for some movement as stowaway armadillos were fairly common in cattle cars.

Armadillo expansion is limited primarily by temperature and rainfall. Armadillos have little body fat and can't conserve heat. It's likely they cannot survive if the average temperature in January is below 28 degrees Fahrenheit. These animals also require a constant water source and estimates show they can survive in areas that receive at least 15 inches of annual rainfall.

The nine-banded armadillo continues to move northward. Sightings are becoming more frequent in the central United States and visual glimpses in Kansas are increasingly common.

9. **AMERICAN BISON** (*Bison bison*) - Buffalo, as the American bison is commonly called, aren't actually buffalo. The Asian buffalo, commonly used as a beast of burden, and the ominous African Cape buffalo are the true buffalo of the world. The mistaken identify was coined by early white settlers and explorers and has remained in use today.

Although estimates vary, historic bison herds numbered about 60 million during settlement. No other continent, not even Africa, has produced a single wild game animal in such great numbers.

Bison had natural enemies that included prairie fires, bogs, swollen rivers, weak ice, wolves, grizzlies, coyotes and mountain lions. However, human greed and ignorance are to blame for the species near miss with extinction. Early settlers viewed these massive animals as incompatible with the homestead style of life springing up all across the Midwest. History also hints of the U.S. Army's strategy to destroy the bison and along with it the livelihood of Plains American Indian tribes.

Monetary gain also contributed to their decline. Commercial shooters relentlessly and unrestrictedly slaughtered millions of animals without regard of future consequences. One shooter could kill 250 bison each day and from 2,500-3,000 each year. Taking mainly the hides, which would sell for $3 each when shipped to the east coast, the carcasses were left to rot.

The remnants of the slaughter also proved valuable. In a 13-year span ending in 1881, $2.5 million was paid to Kansas for bison bones collected from the state's prairies. Head and rib bones brought $5 per ton and were used for phosphate in fertilizers. Shin and shoulder bones were sent to sugar refineries as a source of carbon for $8-12 per ton. Horns were a real prize and would bring $30 per ton for use in umbrellas, fans, pipes and buttons.

By 1889 it's estimated only 1,100 bison remained in the United States.

Bison will never again be afforded the ability to roam the Great Plains. However, a few herds now roam free in Yellowstone National Park but many are killed if they wander off of the property due to disease concerns with nearby captive livestock herds. There are many private and government-owned herds, estimated at 350,000-400,000 animals, throughout the country being raised for meat production and as a novelty. While their nomadic lifestyle is gone, their symbol as a fixture of the old West will be preserved.

10. **COYOTE** (*Canis latrans*) -Much like the American bison, coyotes are a symbol of the old West. Their howl elicits fear and excitement among those fortunate to hear it.

Despite this, the coyote may well be the most maligned of all wildlife when it comes to conflicts with man. Coyote damage to livestock and melon crops are a serious problem and much has been done to eradicate them over the years. Bounties, poison and government animal damage control efforts have all been aimed at coyotes over the centuries yet they still manage to survive.

The coyote is adaptable which is likely responsible for its success. They are opportunists and feed on most anything. Rabbits make up a major portion of the coyote's diet followed by mice and rats, wild mammals, small livestock, plants and carrion.

11. **CANADA GOOSE** (*Branta canadensis*) -Canada geese were common prior to settlement. However, as early settlers utilized them as a food source by raising captured geese and shooting wild birds year-

round, their numbers declined. Destruction of critical habitat contributed to the downward trend.

Conservation plans were implemented that allowed the reintroduction of Canada geese, particularly the giant Canada subspecies, to many areas of the United States. Wild birds were obtained and then wing clipped and held in pens to act as decoys for migrating wintering flocks. Since geese imprint on areas where they learn to fly, resident flocks were established. Artificial nest structures were also used to aid in the recovery.

Likely the biggest factor contributing to their survival and increase was their adaptability. Geese were traditionally an aquatic feeder but became benefactors of changing agricultural practices and technological advances. At the end of World War II much of the agriculture in the eastern United States was corn and other grains. Crops harvested by hand left fields with little waste grain but with the advent of mechanical harvesters a portion of the grain remained scattered over the field. Canada geese quickly adapted to a steady diet of leftover grain.

12. **WOOD DUCK** (*Aix sponsa*) -Notably the most striking duck in the waterfowl world, the wood duck is exclusively a North American species. It was commonly found in flooded bottomland, swamps and other aquatic habitats of the eastern and Midwestern United States.

The wood duck hen relies on locating a cavity in a tree to lay eggs and raise her brood, unlike other duck species that build a nest on the ground in tall weeds or grass. As swamps were drained during settlement, and hardwood forests clear-cut in the east, wood duck numbers declined. The absence of beaver contributed to the decline, too, as wood ducks relied on beaver ponds as ideal habitat. By 1900, the loss of habitat and commercial exploitation by settlers reduced wood duck populations to near extinction.

Wildlife agencies and sportsmen's groups implemented regulations to fully enforce laws to protect this species. Thousands of artificial wood duck nesting boxes were erected in their favorite breeding areas to replace the mature hardwoods that formerly provided nesting sites.

Efforts like these were instrumental in bringing wood duck populations back to remarkable levels. These colorful woodland ducks are now considered the most common breeding waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway.

13. **CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*)-A century ago cattle egrets were at home gobbling up insects behind wildebeests and Cape buffalo on the African Plains. Although it's not certain if a storm blew them across the Atlantic Ocean, or whether they simply got off course, their island-hopping trek is fascinating.

Weighing barely a pound, the small, mostly white bird with a hunched neck was first observed in the southern tip of Florida in the early 1940s. Opportunistic feeders, they follow herds of cattle and farm machinery eating grasshoppers, crickets, spiders, flies and other small insects.

River impoundments, irrigation practices and intensive livestock production have redesigned the look of this continent's landscape and doubled or even tripled farm production and increased insect yield. Artificially, the wet and dry seasonality encountered by the cattle egret in Africa has been duplicated here in this country.

Cattle egrets nest in established colonies of snowy egrets, little blue herons and great egrets. Most days cattle egrets leave the nest and fly up to 20 miles in search of food.

Although egrets did not normally migrate in their original range, they now migrate in North America. As the weather turns cold, and the insect supply diminishes, they fly to warmer southern climates such as Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Columbia.

Today, cattle egrets inhabit every state and likely outnumber all other North American herons and egrets combined. They are now found on every continent but Antarctica.

14. **RING-NECKED PHEASANT** (*Phasianus colchicus*) -The ring-necked pheasant was introduced into the United States from Asia in 1880. Kansas' first stockings occurred in 1905 and 1906 with 1,500 pheasant pairs being released in 84 of the state's 105 counties. It adapted well to the agricultural practices of the Great Plains and now thrives in Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota.

While pheasant populations rapidly expanded shortly after introductions, their numbers have steadily declined over the last half-century. Changes in agriculture including clean farming practices, increased pesticide use and reduction in wheat stubble height due to shorter wheat varieties all played a critical factor in the decline. The 1985 Farm Bill provided a bit of a boon to the species by removing highly erodible land from production and returning it to native grass. This Conservation Reserve Program

(CRP) helped boost populations in subsequent years, but the overall trend is still downward.

The average life span of a pheasant is less than 1 year although some live longer. Hunting takes advantage of this natural mortality and has no effect on pheasant populations. In addition, pheasant hunting is a huge economical boost for many states and the activity generates millions of dollars each fall.

15. **BEAVER** (*Castor canadensis*)-The beaver is North America's largest rodent and was once abundant over the entire continent. The beaver is a gifted engineer and unlike many animals, can change its habitat to better suit its needs. It builds dams made of small branches and logs, reinforced with mud, on streams or ponds to provide a year-round, stable water level.

Before Europeans arrived on this continent there were an estimated 400 million beavers. Their numbers plummeted due to the high demand of their luxurious fur by London and Paris hat makers. The European explorers of North America wanted fur more than any other resource including timber, gold or land. Beaver pelts were used as money and the cost of a rifle was a pile of beaver skins the same height as the gun. In 1670, Hudson's Bay Company records stated that a beaver pelt would buy a pound of tobacco, a 1-pound kettle, 4-pounds of shot or two hatchets.

Fur-trading companies sponsored large-scale, unregulated trapping operations. Coupled with Indian and mountain trappers they virtually eliminated beaver from the lower 48 states by the early 1800s.

Pittman-Robertson Act monies were used for beaver research and restocking programs and more than 10,000 beavers were reintroduced to their former habitat.

Beaver populations rebounded and grew, resulting in problems with flooding of crop fields, roads and other man-made developments. Perforated pipes were developed by researchers in New England state which could not be plugged by beavers and allowed excess water to run-off and prevent flooding.

Beaver are found today in nearly every state and abundant in many areas where they were absent for over 100 years.

16. **PURPLE MARTIN** (*Progne subis*) -Purple martins have been around since before colonization of this country. They formerly nested in natural tree cavities but American Indians quickly discovered they could attract these birds to their villages by providing hollowed out gourds for nest sites. Purple martins quickly adapted to these artificial nest sites as settlement hastened forest destruction and they virtually abandoned their former nest sites. This rare phenomenon is knows as a "tradition shift."

Providing purple martin nest houses has been going on now for hundreds of years. The first commercially-made houses were offered for sale in the early 1900s and the larger ones were considered status symbols. They graced the estates of the richest individuals and families such as Henry Ford, Andrew Carnegie, the Duponts, Mellons and Rockefellers.

Unfortunately, the introduction of the house sparrow in 1851 and the European starling in 1890 caused problems for these cavity nesters similar to those experienced by the eastern bluebird. The aggressive exotics out-competed martins for their homes which were often heavy and mounted on fixed poles. Many purple martin populations plummeted.

In the mid-1960s, manufacturers of purple martin houses started making them with doors that opened for nest inspection and poles that telescoped to lower the houses. Refinements in the size and features of these houses over the years have made attracting purple martins something of an art form.

There are several interesting myths that have emerged concerning purple martins and their activities. The first is that a flock wintering in the south, maybe as far as Brazil, would send one member of their group to act as a "scout" to fly north alone. Upon finding suitable habitat and nesting areas the scout would make the return trip to lead the group back. Actually, there is no way that such altruistic behavior could evolve among unrelated birds. The first birds to arrive in an area are actually older individuals looking to secure the best nesting cavities.

The second myth is that purple martins consume huge quantities of mosquitoes, by some claims 2,000 per day. This was perpetuated by manufacturers of artificial houses trying to persuade homeowners and is actually quite untrue. Dietary studies show they feed primarily on dragonflies, damselflies, cicadas, grasshoppers, katydids, moths, butterflies, wasps, beetles, stink bugs, mayflies, bees, midges and horseflies.

17. **WILD TURKEY** (*Meleagris gallopavo*) - Five subspecies of turkeys inhabit this continent and three are common in the Great Plains region. The eastern wild turkey is the most common and covers the eastern half of the U.S. The Rio Grande ranges from Texas up into Oklahoma, Kansas and Colorado.

The Merriam's subspecies is found in the Rocky Mountains and the neighboring states of Wyoming, Montana and South Dakota.

An adult turkey has 5,000 to 6,000 feathers that cover its body. Wild turkeys have excellent vision. Turkeys run as fast as 25 mph and they fly as fast as 55 mph.

Favored over the bald eagle as our national symbol by Ben Franklin, the wild turkey was dependent upon the hardwood forests, particularly in the east. Their numbers dramatically declined as forests were cleared by pioneer farmers and they killed them for subsistence. The turkey was gone from Connecticut by 1813, Ohio by 1880 and Iowa by 1907. By the 1930s, only small scattered groups, totaling less than 30,000, remained in the Deep South.

Early restoration efforts were doomed as the available breeding stock for these efforts contained domesticated turkeys. The resulting birds lacked the ability to survive in the wild and would quickly perish when released.

Biologists invented a trap net that allowed the safe capture of wild turkeys for reintroduction efforts. The reintroduction efforts prospered as a result and wild turkeys now number more than 6.4 million birds with huntable populations in every state but Alaska.

18. **WHITE-TAILED DEER** (*Odocoileus virginianus*)-The white-tailed deer is likely the most recognized species of wildlife to many Americans. They are found in many different habitats from the Deep South into Canada.

White-tailed deer weren't as numerous as some of the other prairie big game species, but they were abundant in the east and quickly became a staple for early settlers. They ate the venison, the skins were used to make clothing and the antlers were used for tools and weapons.

Westward civilization of farming, grazing and logging operations had a negative impact on whitetail populations and fewer than 500,000 animals remained in remote and isolated pockets by the turn of the century.

Restocking efforts began in earnest in the mid-1900s into abandoned eastern farms and newly restored forested and brushland areas. The adaptability of the whitetail and subsequent results were impressive. There were fewer than 4,600 deer in the entire state of Mississippi in 1939. Roughly a decade later saw their numbers jump to some 50,000 animals. Mississippi has more than 1.5 million white-tailed deer within its borders today. In 1987, total legal white-tailed deer harvest in the United States was 4.3 million, more than eight times the entire deer population of North America at the turn of the century. Today there are more than 18 million whitetails found nationwide.

CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS INSTRUMENTAL TO PRESERVING SEVERAL OF THE SPECIES LISTED ON "FACES OF THE GREAT PLAINS-WILDLIFE SUCCESS STORIES."

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation- To ensure the future of elk, other wildlife and their habitat.
Contact Information: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
2291 W. Broadway
P.O. Box 8249
Missoula, MT 59807
1-800 CALL ELK
www.rmef.org

Ducks Unlimited- Conserves, restores and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North American waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.
Contact Information: Ducks Unlimited
One Waterfowl Way
Memphis, TN 38120
1-800-45 DUCKS
www.ducks.org

Pheasants Forever- A non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and enhancement of pheasant and other wildlife populations in North America through habitat improvement, land management, public awareness and education.
Contact Information: Pheasants Forever
1783 Buerkle Cir
St. Paul, MN 55110
1-877-773-2070
www.pheasantsforever.org

The Purple Martin Conservation Association- A non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to the conservation of the purple martin through scientific research, state-of-the-art wildlife management techniques and public education.
Contact Information: Purple Martin Conservation Association
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
Edinboro, PA 16444
(814) 734-4420
www.purplemartin.org

National Wild Turkey Federation- Dedicated to the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of the hunting tradition.
Contact Information: National Wild Turkey Federation
P.O. Box 530
Edgefield, SC 29824-0530
1-800 THE NWTF
www.nwtf.org

Credits: Photos by Bob Gress. Text by Marc Murrell.
Edited by Marc Murrell, Lorrie Beck and Bob Gress.