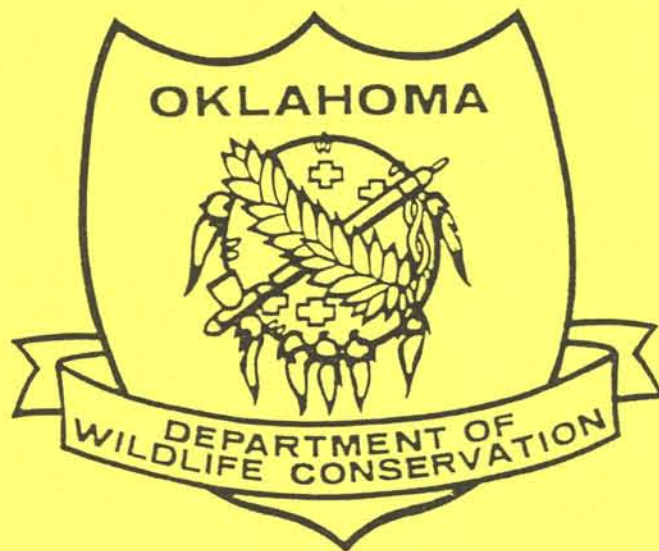


PERFORMANCE REPORT

SECTION 6

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT



FEDERAL AID PROJECT E-21-8

Red-cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) Recovery
on the McCurtain County Wilderness Area (MCWA)

APRIL 1, 1999 - MARCH 31, 2000

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

State: Oklahoma

Project No: E-21-8

PROJECT TITLE: Red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) (Picoides borealis)
recovery on the McCurtain County Wilderness Area
(MCWA)

I. PROGRAM NARRATIVE OBJECTIVE

Recover the RCW population on the MCWA to 45 active clusters by implementing procedures outlined in the MCWA Implementation Plan

II. JOB PROCEDURES**1. Monitoring**

- a. Locate, tag, and map new cavity trees within 300 yards of active clusters.
- b. Determine the status of each cavity tree and cluster, especially during the nesting period.
- c. Band adult and nestlings to obtain data on production, dispersal, and mortality and to aid in identifying single bird clans that would benefit from augmentation.

2. Cluster Stand Management

- a. Reduce hardwood midstory and understory trees within 10 acre blocks adjacent to active clusters.
- b. Control the hardwood midstory within clusters by cutting and fire (controlled burns will be done under the Wildlife Restoration Act).

3. Recruitment Stand Management

Identify, mark, and control hardwoods within blocks of suitable habitat within ½ mile of active clusters.

4. Corridors

When needed and feasible, maintain or develop corridors among clusters and recruitment stands.

5. Restrictors and Predator Guards

- a. Place restrictors on RCW cavities to prevent enlargement by other woodpeckers and rehabilitate enlarged cavities.
- b. Install predator guards on all active cavity trees.
- c. Place squirrel guards on trees where flying squirrels have taken over cavities.

6. Artificial Cavities

Install cavity inserts in active clusters to provide at least 5 usable cavities at each site. Install 3 inserts at recruitment sites. When inserts at recruitment stands are activated, install 2 additional inserts.

7. Augmentation

Identify single bird clans and move subadults to the sites.

III. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

1. Clusters

The number of active clusters fluctuated from 10 to 12 during the reporting period (Table 1.). Clusters 5 and 21 were sporadically active during the period. Other clusters remained active throughout the year.

2. Cavity Trees

Cavities at active clusters were checked at intervals of approximately 4 weeks throughout the year and cleaned and repaired as needed. Twenty-four cavities at active clusters are natural and 71 are inserts (Table 1.). During the year, 5 cavity trees were destroyed by southern pine beetles, and 2 were destroyed by lightning.

3. Restrictors and Predator Guards

All usable natural cavities at active and inactive clusters, except 1 at cluster 105, have been restricted. The 1 unrestricted cavity is in a tree that cannot be safely climbed. All active cavity trees have been fitted with a 5 foot section of aluminum flashing-predator guard. When a cavity tree at a recruitment stand or inactive cluster showed RCW activity, a predator guard was installed.

4. Population

During the 1999 nesting season, 8 nests containing 27 eggs were monitored. This number excludes the first nesting attempt at 112 where 4 eggs disappeared before hatching. All monitored nests contained nestlings at the banding date (approximately 1 week after hatching) and 12 birds were banded. However, only 6 nests successfully fledged young. The cause of the nestling loss at 107 and 12 is unknown. The 9 birds fledged this year is 11 less than the number fledged in 1998. Four fledglings were recaptured and color banded (Table 3.).

5. Stand Management

An additional 79 ac were thinned adjacent to 7 active clusters. Approximately 5,314 ac in compartments 8, 9, 10, and 11 were burned in April 1999. Another 1,370 ac of adjacent National Forest land was included in the burn.

Although 5 cavity trees were destroyed by southern pine beetles in 1999, overall all beetle activity on the area remained low. Beetle spots were widely scattered and generally contained less than 1 acre. Cooperative monitoring of the southern pine beetle population with the Oklahoma Division of Forestry indicated that the beetle population remained relatively low and the predator population high. Beetle monitoring will continue in 2000.

6. Artificial Cavities

During the period, 8 inserts were installed at active clusters and 1 was replaced at a recruitment stand.

7. Corridors.

Development of corridors to connect clusters and recruitment stands and improve foraging habitat continued. Approximately 130 ac of corridor was constructed on the area's east and west sides.

8. Augmentation

A male, juvenile RCW was trapped at the Sam Houston NF in October, transported at night to the area, and released at cluster 21, which contained a single female (Table 4.). The translocated bird did not stay at the release site, and the site is now inactive.

Three RCW's moved to the area in past years are established at active clusters.

9. Other Activities

No road or trail construction occurred on the area. Approximately 6 miles of interior roads were graded. One controlled deer hunt and one controlled turkey hunt were conducted. Monitoring of the clusters in the hunt areas indicated no adverse effects to the RCW's.

IV CONCLUSIONS

Monitoring of clusters will continue through out the year. If a single bird cluster is found, attempts will be made to move a surplus RCW from a donor population to the site. Establishment of new clusters by translocating juvenile RCW pairs from donor populations will also continue. Translocatons are important in maintaining and increasing not only the population's size but also its genetic diversity.

Although southern pine beetle activity at this time is low to moderate, monitoring of the beetle population on the area will continue.

V. DEVIATIONS

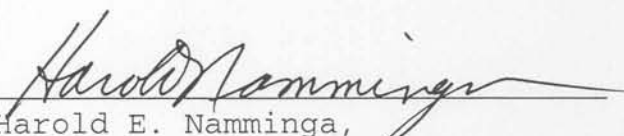
None.

VI. Prepared by; _____

John Skeen, Senior Biologist

VII. Date: April 3, 2000

VIII. Approved by: _____


Harold E. Namminga,
Federal Aid/ Research Coordinator

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TABLE 1. CAVITY STATUS AT ACTIVE CLUSTERS IN 1999

CLUSTER	NATURAL CAVITIES		INSERTS	
	N	A	N	A
112	1	1	7	3
111	4	2	7	3
109	2	1	5	4
2	0	0	6	3
16	0	0	6	3
105	2	0	7	4
107	4	2	4	1
31	5	2	6	1
32	1	1	7	3
12	5	2	5	0
5 *	0	0	6	2
21 *	0	0	5	1
TOTAL	24	11	71	28

N= NUMBER CAVITIES

A= NUMBER ACTIVE

* CLUSTER ACTIVE ONLY PART OF YEAR

TABLE 2. MCWA NESTING RESULTS FOR 1999

C L U S T E R	I N I T I A T I O N	E G G N U M B E R	N U M B E R H A T C H E D	* N E S T L I N G S B A N D E D	N E S T L I N G S F L E D G E D	J U V E N I L E S B A N D E D
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
112 ***	6/1	3	2	2	2	1
111	5/10	4	4	3	3	1
109	5/14	3	2	1	1	1
105	5/11	3	2	1	1	1
107**	5/11	4	3	3	0	0
31	5/5	3	3	0	1	0
32	6/1	3	1	1	1	0
12**	5/5	4	3	1	0	0
TOTAL		27	20	12	9	4

* UNBANDED NESTLING COULD NOT BE EXTRACTED IN A SAFE TIME PERIOD

** NESTLINGS DISAPPEARED BEFORE FLEDGING CHECK

*** RENEST- INITIAL ATTEMPT WAS STARTED ON 4/26 AND PRODUCED 4 EGGS, WHICH WERE GONE BY 5/5

TABLE 4. MCWA TRANSLOCATIONS 1999

Band No.	Date of Move	Population moved from	Age (months)	Sex
1681-76325	8/23/99	SHNF	3	M

SHNF = SAM HOUSTON NATIONAL FOREST

