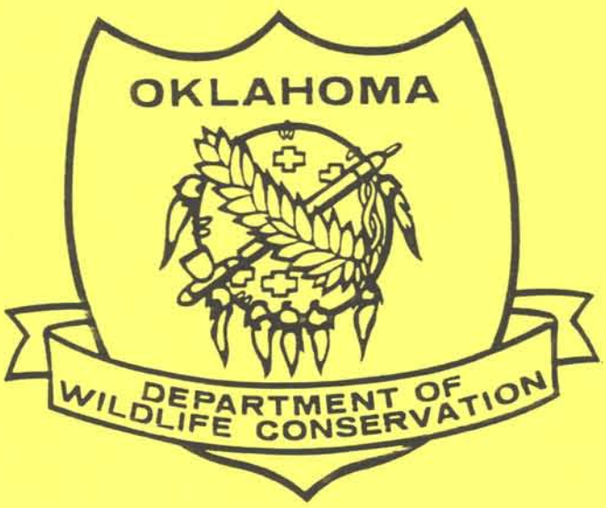
PERFORMANCE REPORT

SECTION 6

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT



FEDERAL AID PROJECT E-21-6

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

APRIL 1, 1997 - MARCH 31, 1998

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

State: Oklahoma **Grant No:** E-21-6

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

I. OBJECTIVE

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

II. 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 increased from 10 to 12 during the reporting period (Table 1.). The new clusters resulted from the activation of an insert tree at R5 by a female released at 112 in 1996 and reactivation of cluster 16 by resident birds. All clusters except number 5 have 2 or more RCW's present.

2. Cavity Trees

Cavities at active clusters were checked at intervals of approximately 4 weeks throughout the year and cleaned and repaired as needed. Thirty-five of the cavities at active clusters are natural and 65 are inserts (Table 1.). During the year, 9 cavity trees (5 natural and 4 inserts) were lost to southern pine beetle infestation. An additional insert tree was lost due to 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 1997 nesting period, 7 nests (Table 2.) were located and contained 28 eggs. Six of the nesting attempts were successful and hatched 18 nestlings. Eleven nestlings were banded and 12 fledged. Two nestlings could not be extracted from the cavities. Nests were rechecked 2 days subsequent to banding to assure that the procedure had not induced injury or mortality. All banded nestlings were active and unharmed .

The number of nestlings fledged was estimated by checking the nests 1 week prior to the fledging date. Five of the 12 fledglings were recaptured and colored leg bands added (Tables 2 and 3).

5. Stand Management

Hardwood sprouts were cut within 50 feet of all cavity trees at active clusters. Approximately 4,000 ac in compartments 5, 7, and 8 were burned in March 1997. Another 500 ac of adjacent U.S. Forest Service land was included in the burn.

Nine cavity trees were lost to southern pine beetles in 1997. Beetle infestations were scattered over the area. Cooperative monitoring of the southern pine beetle population with the Oklahoma Division of Forestry indicated that the beetle population was relatively low and the predator population high. Beetle monitoring will continue in 1998.

The sampling of permanent vegetative plots in each burn compartment continued on schedule (prior to the initial burn and at 5 year intervals).

6. Artificial Cavities

During the period, 14 inserts were installed at active clusters and 1 at a recruitment stand to replace lost cavity trees and to provide additional roosting sites.

7. Corridors.

Development of corridors to connect clusters and recruitment stands and improve foraging habitat continued. Approximately 3.6 miles of corridors (200 feet wide) were constructed along ridges on the area's west side.

8. Augmentation

No augmentation occurred during the period because of a shortage of juvenile birds at the donor populations in Texas and Louisiana.

9. Other Activities

No road or trail construction occurred on the area. Approximately 12 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

Augmentation of a single bird cluster did not occur because a juvenile male could not be located at the Texas or Louisiana donor populations.

VI. Prepared by: John Skeen, Senior Biologist

VII. Date: March 16, 1998

VIII. Approved by: Harold E. Namminga,
Federal Aid/ Research Coordinator

TABLE 1 CAVITY STATUS AT ACTIVE CLUSTERS

	NATURAL CAVITIES		INSERTS	
CLUSTER	N	A	N	A
137	3	2	7	1
112	3	2	6	1
111	5	2	6	0
109	3	1	4	3
2	0	0	5	3
16	1	1	5	1
105	2	0	6	4
5	0	0	5	1
107	3	2	4	1
31	5	3	6	1
32	3	3	8	1
12	7	3	3	0
TOTAL	35	19	65	17

N= NUMBER CAVITIES
A= NUMBER ACTIVE

TABLE 2. MCWA NESTING RESULTS FOR 1997

CLUSTER	INITIATION	EGG NUMBER	NUMBER HATCHED	NESTLINGS BANDED	NESTLINGS FLEDGED	JUVENILES BANDED
137	5/5	4	4	1	1	1
112	----	0	0	0	0	0
111	5/5	4	3	2	2	0
109	4/22	4	2	1*	2	1
105	5/14	4	0	0	0	0
107	5/5	4	3	3	2	0
31	5/5	4	3	2	2	2
32	5/5	4	3	2*	3	1
12	----	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		28	18	11	12	5

* NESTLING COULD NOT BE EXTRACTED

TABLE 3. MCWA TRAPPIND AND BANDING RECORDS 1997

CLUSTER TRAPPED	BAND NUMBER	COLORS	AGE WHEN TRAPPED	SEX	SITE FIRST BANDED	YEAR FIRST BANDED	AGE WHEN BANDED
112	49271	A Lb	A	F	109	94	J
112	8081-99802	OA BkY	J	F	137	97	J
112	49286	PA LbW	A	F	109	96	J
112	8081-32467	BkY PA	A	M	TEXAS	95	J
111	49287	BkY LbA	A	M	109	96	J
111	49276	LgPu LgA	A	M	109	95	J
111	49244	OA BkLb	A	F	109	93	J
109	8081-99812	WY LbA	J	M	109	97	J
109	49285	OW YA	A	F	109	96	J
2	49209	LgA WO	A	F	21	92	J
2	8081-99814	WP LbA	A	M	2*	97	A
32	49228	DgW PuA	A	M	32	92	A
32	49298	WW LbA	A	M	32	96	J
32	8081-99813	WLg LbA	J	M	32	97	J
32	49280	OA BkLg	A	F	31	95	J
16	49293	OA BkLp	A	F	111	96	J
16	49295	WO LbA	A	M	12	96	J
5	8081-84834	LbA YG	A	F	TEXAS	96	J
31	8081-99809	OA BkW	J	F	31	97	J
31	8081-99808	WLb LbA	J	M	31	97	J

* ADULT WITH NO BANDS WHEN TRAPPED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