

Mississippi State Wildlife Grant Success Stories

In the five years since its inception, the State Wildlife Grants Program has played an important role in the conservation of Mississippi's wildlife. The following are some of the projects funded through State Wildlife Grants:



Alligator Gar, Photo Courtesy of USFWS

Conservation: Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife **Mississippi's Alligator Gar**

The alligator gar, a large fish which grows up to thirteen feet and weighs hundreds of pounds, was once abundant in southern Mississippi. Over the last century, their population has dwindled, making the alligator gar extremely rare in the Mississippi Delta and possibly along the Gulf Coast. State Wildlife Grants are now helping to provide baseline status information of coastal alligator gar. Such information is essential to make management decisions. By gathering this information now, proactive conservation measures can be put in place to conserve the alligator gar for future generations.



Bat Tracking, Photo Courtesy of USFWS

Restoration: Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas **Establishing Bat Habitat**

Bats help people by eating insects and pollinating plants. Out of the 14 bat species found in Mississippi, two are endangered and seven more are species of concern. Loss of habitat has not only affected the places where bats find food but it has also significantly limited the shelters where they rest. The objective of this State Wildlife Grants project is to study habitat for bats and evaluate the feasibility of enhancing bat populations by providing artificial shelters for them to rest. This will prevent the listing of even more bat species as endangered, saving taxpayer money by avoiding paperwork and costly litigation.



Tilapia, Photo Courtesy of USGS

Management: Proactive Measures that Benefit Wildlife and People **Preventing Damage by Invasive Species**

Plants and animals that do not naturally occur in an area can be extremely disruptive to the natural balance of an ecosystem. This problem is particularly significant in aquatic ecosystems. Tilapia is a fish that has been introduced to Mississippi's waters and has been identified as a potentially serious threat. This project will look at the seasonal movement of Tilapia and how they were introduced to Mississippi. Such information is vital to develop a proactive plan for controlling the spread of this invasive fish.

Congress has appropriated \$4.2 million in State Wildlife Grants to Mississippi since 2001. This has been matched with at least \$2.9 million state and partner dollars.