



A Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse on Canyon Lakes Ranger District.

# WILDLIFE HABITAT

## Protecting habitat, monitoring species

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) provides habitats ranging from prairie grasslands to alpine tundra and supports more than 500 species, eight of which are federally listed or proposed as threatened, endangered species. Habitat improvement projects focus on creating, restoring, and enhancing habitat. Monitoring of species and habitat provides data to effectively accomplish the various goals of the ARP.

## WILDLIFE 2013FACTS

- Decommissioned **19 miles** of road.
- Installed **6 bat gates**.
- Removed **4.5 miles** of abandoned barbed-wire fence.
- Installed **1.5 miles** of wildlife friendly fence.
- Protected **20 acres** of wetland.
- Led **8 interpretive** and education events.



Young swift foxes play by their den on Pawnee National Grassland.

- ▶ Across the forests and grassland, biologist's conducted surveys for amphibians and their habitat. Twenty-four water bodies on the Canyon Lakes Ranger District (CLRD) and Pawnee National Grassland (PNG) were visited, including historic **Northern leopard frog sites**. Sulphur Ranger District (SRD) confirmed **boreal toad breeding** at three of six known sites and discovered a new **tiger salamander** breeding site. On Clear Creek Ranger District (CCRD), biologists worked with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to monitor eight historic boreal toad breeding sites.
- ▶ Boulder Ranger District (BRD) monitored nest success of a **golden eagle territory**, which is closed seasonally to protect the birds. This site fledged two young in 2013, **the first time since 1990**.
- ▶ Conservation efforts continued on the CLRD for the federally listed **Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse**. The district biologist and volunteers conducted trapping on the **Little Thompson** and **West Fork Little Thompson Rivers** resulting in one jumping mouse capture on each river.
- ▶ **Wildlife friendly fencing** was installed in key wildlife areas on PNG. One and a half miles of poly-coated, highly visible fences were placed on allotments that practice rest-rotation grazing. Both the fencing and the grazing method improve conditions for wildlife habitat.
- ▶ ARP wildlife biologists collaborated with the abandoned mine lands program and **Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety**, to fund/install six bat gates on CCRD, BRD and CLRD.
- ▶ Partners, both internal and external, along with biologists on SRD and CLRD, worked together to **improve habitats and watershed conditions** by completing 19 miles of road decommissioning. This year's accomplished miles contributed toward the 100+ mile benchmark for roads decommissioned on the SRD since 2006 and included a \$20,000 grant from **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation**.
- ▶ Funds and personnel were shared between the CCRD and SRD to plant 100 pine and spruce seedlings along the forest edge and built directional fences to **protect seedlings from damage by winter recreationists** (skiers and boarders) as part of a long term project to restore forested cover within a **lynx linkage area** on Berthoud Pass.

- ▶ Colorado Parks and Wildlife and PNG worked together to conduct swift

fox surveys using remote camera stations. This collaboration contributes to a long term data set that tracks swift fox use and presence on the PNG.

► BRD acquired 823 acres of private land that provides habitat for the federally threatened **Canada lynx** and a variety of other wildlife species. This will facilitate an upcoming restoration project for which the BRD was awarded more than \$120,000 in funding from **Colorado Off-Highway Vehicle Trails Grant**.

► SRD biologists partnered with **Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Rocky Mountain National Park** and **Mountain Parks Electric** to outfit two adult female ospreys with satellite transmitters. Data will be used to educate wildlife managers on home range use, migration routes/timing, stop over sites and winter range locations for the region's largest breeding population of ospreys. **Track their progress by following the 'Osprey Migration' link at [www.RMBO.org](http://www.RMBO.org).**

## RANGEPROGRAM

### *Grazing and forage sustainability*

*The Arapaho Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) have an active rangeland program with allotments on each management unit. Rangeland management includes the production and management of vegetation to stabilize soils, protect watersheds, provide high-quality water, and produce diverse and healthy forage for wildlife and livestock.*

► In 2013, the mountain districts **emerged from drought** thanks to late winter snowfall and above average summer rains. Heavy September rains, while causing destructive flooding across the region, contributed to an abundance of fall forage regrowth.

► The September 2013 floods impacted many allotments and permittees on the Canyon Lakes Ranger District; **damaging fences, roads, trails and water sources and affecting access to allotments**. Rangeland managers are working with permittees to address allotment operations during flood recovery.

► Pawnee National Grassland implemented **new rotational grazing systems** on two allotments to improve rangeland conditions. The Grassland also used **adaptive management practices** to avoid adverse grazing effects on drought-stricken allotments.

► Falling trees, caused by insect infestation, continue to **complicate rangeland management on the Forest by damaging fences and restricting livestock movements**. Permittees and rangeland managers are addressing these challenges.

► Mountain districts continue to work with **Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Habitat Partnership** Program to implement weed control and develop water sources for wildlife and livestock, and continue to partner with **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation** to remove obsolete rangeland fences, reducing hazards and improving habitat.



A golden eagle nests on Boulder Ranger District. Seasonal recreation closures during nesting are key to this species' success.

## RANGE 2013FACTS

■ **Managed 176 active allotments** located on 533,146 acres.

■ **Administered 125 term grazing permits.**

■ **Authorized 38,718 head months of grazing.**



Rains kept Sulphur Ranger District's Muddy Allotment lush.