

Great Rivers Confluence IBA

Counties: Lincoln, St. Charles, St. Louis

Site Description:

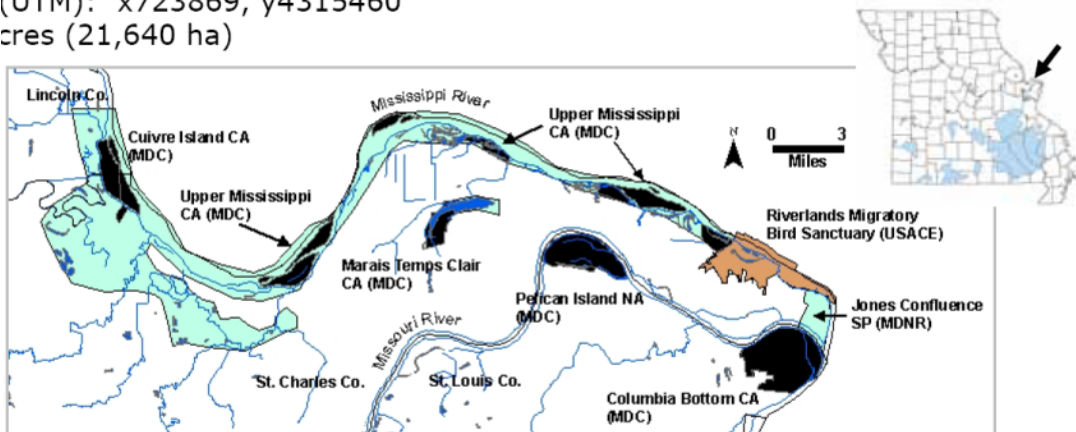
The Great Rivers Confluence IBA was historically dominated by extensive lowland wet prairie and marsh, and bottomland forest (Nigh and Schroeder 2002). Today, much of the IBA is cropland, with embedded restored marshes and bottomland forest. The Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary contains a 1,200 acre (486 ha) restored wet prairie / marsh.

Thirty-eight percent of the IBA is publicly-owned conservation land. Landholdings managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) include: Columbia Bottom Conservation Area (CA) (4,253 acres, 1,722 ha), Cuivre Island CA (1,670 acres, 676 ha), Marais Temps Clair CA (948 acres, 384 ha), Pelican Island CA (2,569 acres, 1,040 ha), and Upper Mississippi CA (4,276 acres, 1,731 ha). Also included in the IBA are Jones Confluence State Park (SP) (Missouri Department of Natural Resources ; 2,761 acres, 1,118 ha), and the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary (US Army Corps of Engineers ; 3,700 acres, 1,498 ha). Over 20,000 acres of this IBA is held by private duck club owners.

Ornithological Summary:

The Great Rivers Confluence IBA is an important wetland complex for migrating and breeding waterbirds along the Mississippi migratory flyway. Bald Eagle, King Rail, and have bred within the Confluence IBA, and American Bittern are also often observed at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, but have not been confirmed breeding there. Interior Least Terns have attempted nesting at an artificial island at Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary, but have not yet been successful due to flooding. Least Bittern and Willow Flycatcher also nest on Marais Temps Clair CA (Palmer and Palmer 2001). Thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds pass through the IBA during migration each year, along with large numbers of neotropical migratory songbirds, which are found primarily in bottomland forest present along the rivers.

(UTM): x723809, y4313460
ares (21,640 ha)



Great Rivers Confluence IBA--continued

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Conservation Issues:

The Confluence IBA is encompassed by MDC's Missouri / Mississippi Confluence Conservation Opportunity Area (MDC 2005), where landowner willingness to habitat restoration, urban sprawl, and public attitudes of natural floodplain qualities remain as obstacles to conservation. Extensive marsh, wet prairie, and bottomland forest restoration is also underway at Columbia Bottom CA and Edward "Ted" and Pat Jones-Confluence Point State Park.

The Confluence IBA is a focal IBA for initial project implementation by Audubon Missouri (AM). AM is part of a multi-partner initiative to restore recently acquired public lands, work with local duck clubs and other private landowners to encourage conservation friendly management of their lands, and to educate citizens in the region about the importance of the ecological and cultural resources in the confluence region. In collaboration with the MDNR, MDC, Great Rivers Greenway, the USACE, the St. Louis Audubon Society, and many community stakeholders, AM is developing an Audubon Center education/tourism project to connect people to the confluence and the broader regional conservation context. AM also intends to contribute to the restoration work at Jones Confluence SP and Columbia Bottom CA. AM will also be collaborating with our partners to derive a conservation plan for the region and working through the Missouri Agricultural Wetlands Initiative concept to help deliver conservation on the ground. Finally, there is promise for connecting to other work in the region, including the work being done through St. Louis Audubon for the Urban Bird Conservation Treaty and the wetlands conservation and education efforts at Little Creve Coeur Marsh. Partners include the St. Louis Audubon Society, MDNR, MDC, Great Rivers Greenway, USACE, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Parks Service, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, local governmental agencies, major foundations and corporations, philanthropists, and private landowners.

**Blurb about what SLAS has
or is planning to do here**