

## Nebraska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit

### Unit Leader

*Craig R. Allen, 2004-present*

### Vision and Mission

*The national Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units program is a partnership between the federal government, universities, states, and the non-profit Wildlife Management Institute. The mission of the program is to:*

- *train graduate students for professional careers in natural resource research and management*
- *conduct research that will create new information useful for management of natural resources*
- *provide technical assistance to partners*



### Background and Overview

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Cooperative Research Units Program has been in existence for more than 70 years. The Nebraska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit was established in 2004 through a Cooperative Agreement signed by the USGS, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Wildlife Management Institute. At that time the unit was staffed by the leader and an administrative assistant. Additional research scientists were hired in 2005 and 2009. Unit scientists now advise 18 graduate students. Research projects have increased from two to 25. Research technicians and assistants numbered 25 in summer 2009. The Unit is helping to establish a regional node of expertise in the area of adaptive management.



### Faculty and Staff

Craig R. Allen, Ph.D.  
Kevin L. Pope, Ph.D.  
Joseph J. Fontaine, Ph.D.  
Valerie Egger  
Caryl Cashmere  
Karie Decker  
Tony Barada

*Unit Leader*  
*Assistant Leader, Fisheries*  
*Assistant Leader, Wildlife*  
*Administrative Assistant*  
*Staff Assistant*  
*Program Coordinator*  
*Program Coordinator*

### Funding

The three unit scientists are federal employees supported by the USGS. Additional operational support comes from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and from UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Research is externally supported, with grants since 2004 totalling in excess of \$8 million. Grantors include the NSF, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the USGS, UNL's Water Center, the National Park Service, Nebraska Environmental Trust, and James S. McDonnell Foundation.



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### Publications

The Nebraska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit routinely publishes 10-15 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles per year.

### Unit Future

Continuing growth is expected. Full staffing as of 2009 should provide for continued and improving productivity. Graduate students will increase to greater than 20 in 2009.

### Research Projects

Current research is focused on the role that diversity plays in providing ecological functions, understanding the dynamics and structure of channel catfish in Nebraska reservoirs, invasive species risk assessments and distribution modeling, evaluating the success of management actions, resilience in stressed watersheds, documenting predator fish control on white perch populations, understanding how resilience is generated in ecological systems, assessing the value of grassland habitats songbird production in national parks, understanding river otter home range and habitat use, the recruitment of walleye and white bass in irrigation reservoirs, and evaluating wetland restorations.

### Role of the Unit in SNR

The Unit advises and supports a relatively large portion of SNR graduate students. The Unit provides undergraduate opportunities through employment as research technicians and by participation in the UCARE Program.



### Collaboration

The unit actively and formally partners with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, USGS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, other national and regional units, and the international Resilience Alliance. The unit is actively establishing partnerships with other units in the Great Plains, and is coordinating a collaboration retreat in 2009.

### Contact

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