

From DNR Regional Wildlife Managers



The added capacity the Roving Crew has brought to our region has been a game changer for us, allowing us to amplify the amount of habitat work we can accomplish in a year. This is especially true on the prescribed fire front, where the Roving Crew has enabled us to increase our effectiveness in planning and executing prescribed burns to enhance forest and brushland. Their efforts are generating interest among other Divisions in the DNR and other agencies. From their efforts, we will see more fire on the landscape across state, federal, and private lands.

I was scouting for ducks on my own time. I hit the peak of the monarch migration on an 80 acre addition to Hurricane WMA. The Roving Crew led the prescribed fire, which reinvigorated all the wildflowers on the unit. The unit was a sea of purple with all the blazing star. And EVERY blazing star had at least one if not two (or more) monarch butterflies. After some back of the envelope math comparing the acres of the site, density of blazingstars, and numbers of monarchs on or around each blazingstar, I conservatively estimate this little patch of heaven in Cottonwood County had over 400,000 monarchs!



From Area Wildlife Supervisors

Recently the Roving Crew conducted a 670-acre prescribed fire on Carp Swamp WMA. A couple of weeks after the fire, DNR staff flushed a brood of sharp-tailed grouse in the now open, freshly green and growing grassy area. A couple of months later staff flushed a dozen sharp-tails from the tall grass in the burned area.



In August of 2019, the Roving Crew burned Pool 3 (7,300 acres) on the Roseau River WMA to control brush and remove cattails during the wetland drawdown. The fire produced great effects on brush removal that we can still see 4 years later. The pool came back in wild rice so thick that some duck hunters had issues getting their boats through the rice stalks. We assume the ducks didn't have any problems with the abundant new food source.

The Roving Crew does some brush shearing at Roseau Lake WMA in most winters. Often within a few weeks people report seeing moose in these project areas.

The Roving Crew and our Shallow Lakes Specialists sprayed non-native hybrid cattail multiple times over the years. We are now seeing historic open water areas return to open water, with increased native vegetation. I received numerous reports from duck hunters that the aquatic duck food abundance, especially scuds, was the best in years. Hunters reported more diversity in duck species, and in increase in duck numbers. (Gadwall image from MN Breeding Bird Atlas.)

