Erskine Focus Area

Description: The focus area is approximately 700 acres owned by Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the U.S. Forest Service and approximately 200 acres of private ranchland. The habitat consists of an extensive cottonwood forest situated along 2.5 miles of the Clark Fork River that includes one large cottonwood covered island. The cottonwood bottom lands include old river channels, some carrying water most of the year. A half mile long oxbow fed by two small streams flows water year around and is bordered by dense shrub cover. A major stream lined with tall shrub and tree cover flows through the east portion of the area. Ungrazed grassland interspersed with swales borders the cottonwood forest. Patches of medium and tall shrubs are found throughout the area. The ranchland consists of grazed pastures, sloughs with cattails, aspen groves and wooded streams.

Bird Surveys: Breeding surveys were conducted in June and July of 2003 and 2004. Observers were Jeff Marks (focus area leader), Larry Weeks, Elizabeth Johnston and Jim Brown.

Priority Species (minimum number of breeding pairs by year 2003/2004):

Barrow's Goldeneye	1/2
Hooded Merganzer	2/0
Osprey	2/1
Red-tailed Hawk	1/1
Calliope Hummingbird	1/0
Lewis's Woodpecker	3/3
Red-naped Sapsucker	7/13
Pileated Woodpecker	2/2
Willow Flycatcher	19/13
Warbling Vireo	3/5
Red-eyed Vireo	4/6
Lazuli Bunting	0/10

Other Significant Observations:

Common Merganzer-- was observed flying into a cottonwood cavity, June 2003.
Great Horned Owl—active nest observed in 2003.
Gray Catbird—is common in the shrub patches.
Audubon Warbler—observed one pair per year.
American Redstart—observed three males in 2004.
MacGillivray's Warbler—observed one pair per year.