

Year 3 Highlights

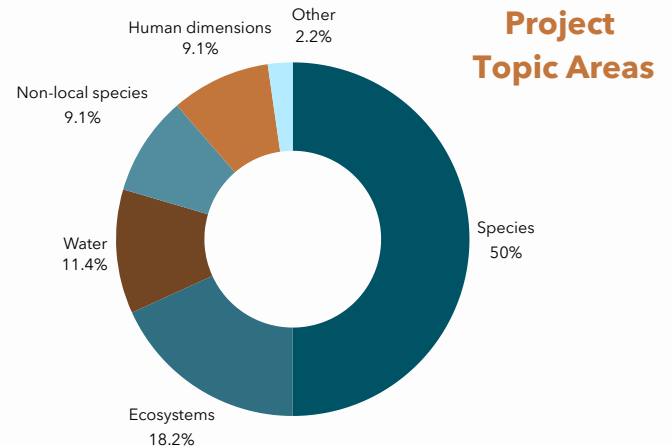
ABOUT US

The mission of the Midwest Climate Adaptation Science Center (MW CASC) is to deliver science to help fish, wildlife, water, land and people in the Midwest adapt to a changing climate. In our third year of operation (from Oct. 2023 - Sept. 2024), we continued our efforts to accomplish this mission through objectives in science production, partnerships, capacity building, and communications.

In year three, several new faces joined the MW CASC team, including T. Kevin O'Donnell, assistant regional administrator; Taylor Siddons, ORISE fellow; and Wes Bickford, visiting scientist. We also welcomed Jennifer Gauthier, director of the Sustainable Development Institute at the College of Menominee Nation, as a new member of our Consortium Leadership Team.

SCIENCE

Through the MW CASC, the USGS has supported a total of 44 research projects, including 12 recently completed projects. The MW CASC received 41 statements of interest in our FY25 Call for Proposals. In year three, we launched five additional synthesis research projects, each led by a postdoctoral researcher at a MW CASC member institution. These projects address priority topics in climate adaptation with potential for national-scale replicability and benefits.



Spotlight

In June 2024, University of Missouri and USGS Missouri Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit researchers on a MW CASC-funded project published an article on changes in duck species' autumn-winter harvest distributions. Using 60 years of band recovery data from the Central and Mississippi Flyways of North America, the researchers showed that band recovery distributions have shifted. The team's findings support the popular notion that winter distributions of duck species have shifted north, but the extent and direction of distributional changes vary. This research has important implications for landscape-scale habitat conservation and population management.

PARTNERSHIPS

In year three, we deepened relationships between scientists and resource managers and strengthened connections between the MW CASC and the broader adaptation community in our region. Staff and leadership team members served on conference planning committees, participated in cross-region working groups, sustained research-focused partnerships with stakeholders and rightsholders, and worked closely with state, federal, and Tribal management agencies.



CAPACITY BUILDING

The MW CASC engages dozens of graduate research assistants, undergraduate interns, and postdoctoral researchers. In year three, the MW CASC held two virtual skills-building sessions for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers focused on decision-support for specific aspects of the climate change adaptation cycle. At the 2024 Annual Gathering, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers also had opportunities to network with their cohort and attend a workshop to hone their skills in communicating research with members of the public and media.

Spotlight

The MW CASC piloted a mentoring program in early 2024 that paired graduate students and postdoctoral researchers with climate adaptation professionals. Eleven mentor-mentee pairs participated. Mentees increased awareness of their research connections as a resource for future collaborations and contributions to the field, increased confidence in communicating science with a diverse array of stakeholders, and gained familiarity with career pathways.



COMMUNICATIONS

In year three, the MW CASC continued to grow our audience and engagement across all communications platforms, including X (Twitter), LinkedIn, email, our website, and our monthly science seminars. MW CASC staff, researchers, and leaders also helped expand the MW CASC's reach through conference presentations and meetings with regional decision makers.

450+

New social media
followers

900+

Science Seminar
registrants

63%

Newsletter open
rate

5500+

Website visits