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Migratory Bird Program: Program Overview

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Migratory Bird Program

Program Overview

Migratory birds are among nature's most magnificent living resources and play a significant ecological, economic, and cultural role in the United States and internationally. Because of their ubiquitous and conspicuous presence, migratory birds symbolize America's experience with our natural world.

Birds enrich our lives in many ways; the loss of bird populations would immeasurably diminish the quality of life for the American public. Birds have intrinsic value to people as threads in the earth's ecological tapestry, as pollinators, predators, and prey. Birds are also actively appreciated and enjoyed by millions of people throughout the country.



Sharp-shinned Hawk USFWS

Migratory Bird Program Goals

Protect, restore, and manage migratory bird populations to:

- ensure long-term ecological sustainability of all migratory bird populations,
- increase socioeconomic benefits,
- promote and enhance hunting, birdwatching and other outdoor bird-related experiences,
- increase awareness of the value of migratory birds and their habitats for their intrinsic ecological, recreational and economic significance.

The Migratory Bird Program seeks to conserve migratory bird populations and associated habitats for future generations, through careful monitoring and effective population and habitat management.

Our Work

The program is committed to undertaking an unprecedented level of cooperation and coordination to protect and conserve these international treasures, and to working together and with partners to assess, manage and conserve over 1,000 native migratory bird species and their habitats.

The Migratory Bird Program develops and implements survey, monitoring, and assessment activities to determine status of both game and non-game birds. Using this information, the Service provides opportunities, through the issuance of permits and regulations, for organizations and individuals to participate in migratory bird conservation activities, such as scientific research, rehabilitation of injured birds, education, falconry, and taxidermy, and control of overabundant species.

Each year, the program compiles proposed and final regulations to authorize migratory bird hunting seasons. The Flyway System provides a solid foundation for a partnership-based approach with the states to establish these annual migratory bird hunting regulations.

The program conducts biological planning, project implementation, and evaluation within the framework of regional, national and international bird management plans, treaties, and initiatives - Partners in Flight, the U.S. Shorebird Plan, the North American Waterbird Plan and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.



Black-necked Stilt credit: Eric Kershner

Joint Ventures - regional-scale, self-directed partnerships of government agencies, corporations, and nongovernmental organizations - deliver migratory bird habitat conservation in support of these national and international bird conservation efforts.



A volunteer helps plant willow saplings as part of a restoration and enhancement project involving the Central Valley Joint Venture. Photo credit: Meg Laws, USFWS.

The Migratory Bird Program coordinates efforts to reduce bird mortalities resulting from collisions with man-made structures, fishery by-catch, pesticide, disease, and other human-related threats. These activities and other proactive efforts are designed to maintain the health and sustainability of migratory bird species, reducing the likelihood of their being added to the Endangered or Threatened Species lists.

The Migratory Bird program administers two multi-million dollar bird habitat grant programs, one under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and another under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA). These competitive matching grant programs catalyze and support conservation partnerships that have affected millions of acres of bird habitat throughout the Western Hemisphere. It also administers the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp) Program, an internationally recognized program that increases revenue available for migratory bird habitat conservation.

To ensure long-term support for bird conservation and continued opportunities for citizens to enjoy bird-related recreation, the program conducts outreach and education programs for children and adults through programs such as International Migratory Bird Day, the Junior Duck Stamp Program, and Urban Conservation Treaties for Migratory Birds (Urban Bird Treaty).



Junior Duck Stamp Participants USFWS

2011 Facts and Figures

Congressional Appropriations

- \$30.9 Million for Conservation and Monitoring
- \$3.6 Million for Permits issuance
- \$3.8 Million to support Avian Health & Disease activities
- \$12.8 Million to support implementation of North American Waterfowl Management Plan through the Joint Ventures
- \$840,000 for the Federal Duck Stamp Program

Grants Awarded in Fiscal Year 2011:

- \$79 Million in NAWCA Grants
- \$3.9 Million in NMBCA Grants
- \$750,000 in Urban Bird Treaty Grants

Emerging Issues

- Climate change impacts on birds
- Energy development impact on birds
- Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Reauthorization
- Focal Species strategy development and implementation
- State of the Birds Report
- Review and assessment of proposed energy land-based and offshore energy development projects
- Collection of scientific data
- Citizens call for action through Urban Conservation Treaties
- Conservation and education outreach
- Natural Resources Damage Assessment such as oil spill response
- Population monitoring and research
- Reduce avian mortalities resulting from human-related threats



Credit USFWS

For more than 50 years, USFWS pilot-biologists have surveyed North America's waterfowl breeding grounds. Those studies, completed in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service, represent the largest and most reliable wildlife survey in the world.

Laws the Program Administers

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.)

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act as amended (16 U.S.C. 2901-2911)

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (16 U.S.C. 668-668d)

North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989, as amended (16 U.S.C. 4401-4412)

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Improvement Act of 2000 as amended (16 U.S.C. 6101)



Redheaded Woodpecker USFWS



Barrow's Goldeneye USFWS



Indigo Bunting USFWS

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Migratory Birds Program
www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/dmbmdbhc.html**

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