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May 2005



Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex
Draft Environmental Assessment and Comprehensive Conservation Plan



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex

*Draft Environmental Assessment
and Comprehensive
Conservation Plan*

May 2005



*This goose, designed by J.N. "Ding"
Darling, has become the symbol of the
National Wildlife Refuge System.*

The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 93-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 540 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. It also operates 65 national fish hatcheries and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long-term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service's best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.

Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex

*Draft Comprehensive
Conservation Plan and
Environmental Assessment*

Volume I. Chapters
May 2005

Prepared by The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 5

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Highlights of the Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment

Chapter 1. Introduction.—The Chesapeake Bay and the refuge complex; the purpose and the need for conservation; the planning process; and the issues and concerns identified by the public

Chapter 2. Alternatives.—How we developed three management alternatives; and, full descriptions of the management actions each proposes

Alternative A. Species-specific Management

Alternative B. Conservation Biology for Trust Species Diversity—Our Preferred Alternative

Alternative C. Maximum Public Use with No Habitat Management

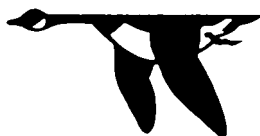
Chapter 3. Affected Environment.—The ecological and socioeconomic conditions of the Chesapeake Bay Estuary and the Environmental Assessment study area: their geographic, physiographic, biological, cultural, historic, and socioeconomic environments

Chapter 4. Environmental Consequences.—The foreseeable consequences for the environments described in chapter 3 arising from the predictable impacts of implementing each of the alternatives described in chapter 2

Chapter 5. Consultation and Coordination.—The compliance of our planning process with the National Environmental Policy Act; opportunities for partnerships in protecting trust resources; who prepared this plan; and, how to contact us

Glossary

Bibliography



CCPs provide long-term guidance for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service management decisions; they set forth goals, objectives, and strategies for accomplishing refuge purposes; and, they identify our best estimate of future needs. They detail levels of program planning that are sometimes substantially above our current budget allocations; as such, they serve primarily in strategic planning and prioritizing Service programs. They do not constitute a commitment for increases in staffing, operating and maintenance, or future land acquisition funding.

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