



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Program Focal Species Strategy Questions and Answers

Why does the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Program have Focal Species?

In 2004, the Migratory Bird Program (Program) developed a performance goal of increasing the percent of migratory bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels. To better measure the success of achieving this goal and increase accountability, the Program initiated a Focal Species strategy. The Focal Species strategy tightly links Program activities to measurable outcomes. The Program has similar measurable outcomes linked to other activities associated with species identified as Birds of Management Concern.*

What is a Focal Species strategy?

The focal Species strategy involves campaigns for selected species to provide explicit, strategic, and adaptive sets of conservation actions required to return the species to healthy and sustainable levels. Focal Species campaigns entail compilation or identification of comprehensive management/conservation strategies into an action plan (a species-specific mix of monitoring, research, assessment, habitat and population management, and outreach) necessary to improve the conservation status; a clear statement of the responsibilities for actions within and outside the Program; a focus of Service resources on implementing those actions; and communications to solicit support and cooperation from partners inside and outside the Service.

How are Focal Species selected?

To select Focal Species, the Migratory Bird Program identifies a subset of the Birds of Management Concern* that need targeted investment because they:

- 1) have high conservation need,
- 2) are representative of a broader group of species sharing the same or similar conservation needs,
- 3) act as a potential unifier for partnerships, and/or
- 4) have a high likelihood that factors affecting status can be realistically addressed.

Are the Focal Species the only birds the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service focuses on?

The Focal Species approach is just one component of Migratory Bird Program activities and complements other work on migratory birds and their habitats. The Service remains committed to landscape-scale, integrated bird conservation for the full array of species of management concern and will maintain existing commitments while using the Focal Species Strategy to more tightly link the Program's activities to measurable outcomes. The current set of Focal Species have been identified to receive specific attention in the next five years (FY2012-FY2016).

Are conservation partners involved with Focal Species Strategies?

The engagement of partners and stakeholders is essential for creation and implementation of action plans and for existing work in support of maintaining or increasing the number of species of migratory birds at healthy and sustainable levels. Contact the Regional Migratory Bird Offices, the Division of Migratory Bird Management, or the website www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Management/FocalSpecies.html for more information on the Focal Species strategy and the Focal Species campaigns now underway or in development.

* The Birds of Management Concern list reflects the results of extensive consultations with partners and processes and criteria established over many years. This list is dynamic and is revised as new information concerning species status becomes available.