Activity: Migratory Bird Management

		2007 Actual	2008 Enacted	2009 Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-)	2009 Program Changes (+/-)	2009 Budget Request	Change From 2008 (+/-)
Conservation and Monitoring	($000)	27,366	27,393	+5,259	+3,475	36,127	+8,734
	FTE	*145*	*145*	*+9*	*+10*	*164*	*+19*
Permits	($000)	1,543	1,576	+27	-5	1,598	+22
	FTE	*23*	*23*	-	-	*23*	-
Duck Stamp Office	($000)	570	579	+10	-2	587	+8
	FTE	*4*	*4*	-	-	*4*	-
North American Waterfowl Management Plan	($000)	10,873	10,893	+99	+3,891	14,883	+3,990
	FTE	*45*	*45*	-	*+6*	*51*	*+6*
Total, Migratory Birds	**($000)**	**40,352**	**40,441**	**+5,395**	**+7,359**	**53,195**	**+12,754**
	FTE	***217***	***217***	***+9***	***+16***	***242***	***+25***

Summary of 2009 Program Changes for Migratory Bird Management

Request Component	($000)	FTE
Birds Forever Initiative --		
• Conservation and Monitoring	+4,200	+10
• North American Waterfowl Management Plan	+3,938	+6
• Conservation and Monitoring – General Program Act.	-559	-
• Travel and Relocation Expense Reduction	-191	-
• Contract Reduction	-29	-
Total, Program Changes	**+7,359**	**+16**
Internal Transfer – **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza** (Fixed Costs and Related Changes)	**+4,922**	**+9**

Justification of 2009 Program Changes

The 2009 budget request for the Migratory Bird Management is $53,195,000 and 242 FTE, a net program change of +$7,359,000 and +16 FTE from 2008 Enacted.

Birds Forever Initiative

On October 20, 2007, the President announced a new effort to conserve migratory birds. This effort included cooperative conservation efforts with Mexico to conserve birds that know no border, improving efforts with migratory joint ventures, and produce a State of the Birds report among other things. The Department's Birds Forever Initiative is complementary to the President's effort. The President asked Secretary Kempthorne to focus on the status of five more species over the next five years to bring more of America's bird species into a healthy and sustainable status.

In June 2007, the National Audubon Society issued the report, Common Birds in Decline, based on an analysis of the Society's Christmas bird counts and breeding bird surveys of the U.S. Geological Survey. The report indicates a significant decline occurring in 20 common species which have lost at least one-half their population in just four decades. On average, populations of common birds have plummeted 70 percent since 1967. The Birds Forever Initiative will target 36 species that are part of Fish and Wildlife's Focal Species Strategy. This strategy offers a framework to improve understanding of these species, restore habitat, and monitor species status and trends. By emphasizing these priority species, benefits will accrue to other species because they often have similar conservation needs and utilize the same habitats. Although many factors lie behind declines in

wild bird populations, habitat loss is number one. Accordingly, protection, conservation, and restoration of habitat on which birds rely for breeding, feeding, and other life stages, is a major component of this initiative.

Collection of Data - Conservation and Monitoring:

Conservation through Focal Species Strategy Implementation (+$2,000,000/+5FTE) One of the ways that the Service's Migratory Bird Management Program addresses declining migratory bird populations is through its Focal Species Strategy. This "targeted species" strategy is one of developing, then implementing, species-specific action plans that explicitly lay out, in priority order, the activities needed to ensure that a population is moving toward a desired condition. Focal species are those which, in addition to coverage by our broad landscape conservation programs, are subject to life history requirements or threats that necessitate fine-scale assessment and management actions. Over the last three years, the Service has undertaken campaigns on 9 focal species, completing or drafting plans on all of these, and beginning implementation as resources are available. The Program has identified almost 30 additional focal species for which it intends to complete action plans by the end of fiscal year 2009. In doing so, it will coordinate with appropriate partners inside the Service and with outside partners. This increase will support the completion and implementation of these plans.

Monitoring Critical to Conservation Planning and Implementation (+$2,200,000/ +5FTE)
Monitoring is a fundamental component of the Service's trust responsibility for North America's migratory bird resource, and the Service is a leader in this important work. Responses of wildlife populations to natural and man-made disturbances in their environment are often manifested in changes in numbers and distribution on the landscape. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation are integral components of an iterative, science-based approach to bird conservation, as a wide array of decisions, requires the information generated by these activities.

Conserving Priority Habitat through Joint Ventures:

New Joint Ventures (+$1,500,000/+4FTE)
The Service is requesting $1,500,000 to support recently developed joint ventures in important migratory bird stopover habitat areas as described above. Four new joint ventures (Rio Grande, East Gulf Coastal Plain, Oaks and Prairies, and Appalachian Mountains) have been initiated by States and other organizations to provide partner-based conservation planning and delivery to those areas of the country without an established joint venture. New funding will support planning and project development processes consistent with guidance from the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and other bird conservation initiatives such as Partners in Flight. Funding will also be allocated to the Northern Great Plains and Central Hardwoods Joint Ventures to bring them up to an operations level comparable to other existing joint ventures.

Existing Joint Ventures (+$2,438,000/+2FTE)
The Service will direct $2,438,000 of the requested program increase to existing joint ventures for the immediate impact these mature joint ventures can have on bird populations. The older joint ventures have better developed strategic habitat conservation capacities and are best positioned to use increased funding to target conservation actions upon high priority habitats already identified through their biological planning and conservation design. The requested increase will also be used for increasing joint venture capabilities by expanding habitat and species modeling, monitoring of birds and their habitats; and for using remote sensing and other resources to detect and assess net landscape change.

General Program Reduction (-$559,000)
General program activities help ensure the highest priority conservation actions are achieved. This reduction will be achieved by allowing Regional Offices to identify at their discretion, and implement any administrative efficiencies that do not adversely affect the Service, Department or Administration priorities. Among activities that may offer the greatest opportunities are, training, organizational streamlining, and postponing or canceling lower priority projects. This reduction will not impact the long term outcome-based program performance. Additionally, other core migratory bird program functions, particularly those associated with monitoring and assessment programs, engaging citizens through urban bird treaties, and other technical components, will continue in conjunction with or be complemented by activities that are part of the Birds Forever Initiative funding in 2009.

Program Overview

Division of Migratory Bird Management, Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, Regional Migratory Bird programs, Joint Ventures, and the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Office comprise the Service's Migratory Bird Conservation Program. These units work cooperatively to prevent new bird species from joining those already on the Endangered or Threatened Species Lists. Migratory bird staff routinely:

- conduct population surveys, monitoring, and assessment activities for both game and non-game birds;
- manage migratory bird permits and hunting regulations;
- participate in international treaty negotiations related to migratory birds;
- manage overabundant bird populations and restore habitat where populations are declining;
- manage grants that implement on-the-ground activities to conserve migratory bird habitats;
- support regional-scale biological planning, project implementation, and evaluation to achieve migratory bird objectives; and
- coordinate efforts to reduce bird mortalities resulting from collisions with communication towers and power-lines, fisheries by-catch, pesticides, and other human-related causes;
- work with children and adults and engage others to conserve migratory birds; especially through urban bird treaties.

Activity: Migratory Bird Management
Subactivity: Conservation and Monitoring

		2007 Actual	2008 Enacted	2009 Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-)	2009 Program Changes (+/-)	2009 Budget Request	Change From 2008 (+/-)
Conservation and Monitoring	($000)	27,366	27,393	+5,259	+3,475	36,127	+8,734
	FTE	*145*	*145*	*+9*	*+10*	*164*	*+19*

Summary of 2009 Program Changes for Migratory Bird Management

Request Component	($000)	FTE
Birds Forever Initiative --		
• Focal Species Strategy Implementation	+2,000	+5
• Monitoring for Conservation Planning and Implementation	+2,200	+5
• Conservation and Monitoring – General Program Act.	-559	-
• Travel and Relocation Expense Reduction	-146	-
• Contract Reduction	-20	-
Total, Program Changes	**+3,475**	**+10**
Internal Transfer – **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza** (Fixed Costs and Related Changes)	**+4,922**	**+9**

Justification of 2009 Program Changes

The 2009 Service request for Migratory Bird Conservation and Monitoring is $36,127,000 and 164 FTE, a net program change of +$3,475,000 and +10 FTE from 2008 Enacted.

Birds Forever Initiative –

Collection of Scientific Data

Conservation through Focal Species Strategy Implementation (+$2,000,000/+5FTE)

A key component of the President's Migratory Bird Initiative is improving the status of birds. The President set out a goal to improve five migratory bird species' status to "Healthy and Sustainable" in five years. Through focal species plans and implementation that goal can be achieved. This funding will allow the Service to continue to implement and further expand its ongoing efforts to improve the number of migratory bird populations that are at healthy and sustainable levels. Through its Focal Species Strategy, the Service's Migratory Bird Management Program is addressing declining migratory bird populations. These funds will provide the resources to implement efforts to address almost 30 species which are currently in decline. This "targeted species" strategy is one of developing, then implementing, species-specific action plans that explicitly lay out, in priority order, the activities needed to ensure that a population is moving toward a desired condition. Focal species are those which, in addition to coverage by our broad landscape conservation programs, are subject to life history requirements or threats that necessitate fine-scale assessment and management actions. Several, but not all of the 20 declining species highlighted by Audubon would serve well as focal species.

Over the last two years, the Service has undertaken campaigns on nine focal species, completing or drafting plans on all of these, and beginning implementation as resources are available. The Program has identified almost 30 additional focal species for which it intends to complete action plans by the

end of fiscal year 2009. In doing so, it will coordinate with appropriate partners inside the Service (e.g., with the Recovery and Candidate Conservation Programs in the development of the plans for any species that also are listed, candidates, or are considered potential candidates) and out. Indeed, thanks to an embrace of species-specific planning by partners, we expect to see the creation of yet more action plans for additional focal species; e.g., Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences has committed to plans for select shorebird species. The Birds Forever Initiative would provide the resources to make significant progress on the implementation of these plans, to the degree that activities can be undertaken by the Migratory Bird Program or catalyzed through partnership.

The existence or likelihood of strong partnerships to form around a campaign actually served as another criterion for selecting our focal species. Partners within and outside the Service are essential to successful focal species campaigns because threats to species require conservation activities far beyond what the Migratory Bird Management Program alone can provide, namely habitat protection and management as well as reduction of large-scale threats (e.g., competition for freshwater, energy development, industrialized agriculture, loss of grasslands, wetlands and forests, and climate change). For example, the conservation of pelagic seabirds requires the protection of breeding sites and the management of threats at sea. Many once-productive breeding sites have been compromised by the introduction of predators or other invasive species, requiring eradication and control activities. Implementation of these activities on Service lands are typically the responsibility of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and Federal Assistance funds (e.g., Coastal Program, Partners for Fish and Wildlife) as well as bird habitat grants may help support projects on non-Service lands. A major threat at sea is fisheries by-catch, an issue that requires engagement and oversight by NOAA Fisheries. However, in all these cases, the Migratory Bird Management Program must provide essential technical services, such as pre-treatment surveys and feasibility research; environmental compliance activities, post-treatment monitoring, and the ongoing planning and coordination to direct management actions, prioritize expenditures, and identify partners.

Taken together, the focal species action plans present a wide array of challenges – both in creation and implementation. A fundamental aspect of action planning is identifying the critical limiting factors governing species sustainability to the degree they are known. Where population information is lacking, the Migratory Bird Management Program must provide leadership in coordinating and facilitating the development and implementation of population monitoring programs. We must ensure an adequate statistical basis for monitoring programs and establish sound objectives, reliable survey protocols and sampling frameworks, and appropriate analytical techniques. (See Monitoring and Assessment, below). As an example, the Reddish Egret is a habitat specialist with a restricted range (in the U.S. it occurs in Florida and along the Gulf Coast, primarily Texas) and the little population data that exist suggest that US, Mexican, and perhaps other populations are in decline. Monitoring programs are necessary to locate key colony sites range-wide, provide a more precise estimate of total population size, produce information on genetic differentiation among subpopulations, measure important but unknown demographic parameters, evaluate relationships between colony locations and foraging sites, and better understand environmental and anthropogenic factors related to this apparent population decline.

When population status for these species has been determined, the Migratory Bird Program will help identify scientifically-based, quantified population objectives and/or "desired conditions" for these focal species. These objectives are developed in conjunction with other programs, such as the Joint Ventures, States, Flyway Councils and other organizations in order that numerically-based population objectives are clear and relevant in guiding development of habitat conservation objectives and associated delivery efforts on the landscape. For example, for the King Rail, a primary conservation objective is to construct regionally-based habitat models in important parts of its range, including in the Gulf and Atlantic states, to better understand habitat requirements and serve as a structured starting point for new surveys.

Where focal species cross international boundaries, we must reach out to partners outside the U.S. to investigate and understand factors influencing population status. The President made this clear by including efforts in Mexico as part of his Migratory Bird Initiative. In the case of the Cerulean Warbler, key needs include activities on the species' wintering grounds in South America (ecological research, assessment of known habitats, and improved mapping of occurrence) as well as on its U.S. breeding grounds. Moreover, engagement with international partners will also be necessary to ensure the conservation of this species through application of sustainable forest practices at both ends of its annual migration.

Urban areas constitute approximately 20 percent of the land area in this country; yet, more than 50 percent of Americans call these areas home. An additional 17 million people are expected to move into these areas in less than 15 years. This places great pressure on our Nation's natural resources and the need to conserve them. A significant tool to "Call Citizens to Action" and to conserve migratory birds is to promote a unique partnership called the Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds. This program is a collaborative effort between the FWS and participating U.S. cities, bringing together private citizens, Federal, State, and municipal agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

The program focuses on the benefits that migratory birds bring to everyday life, and involves citizens in hands-on activities to protect migratory birds. Key features of this program include reducing hazards to migration; restoring, enhancing, and protecting avian habitats; and providing education and outreach opportunities in urban and suburban communities. As a result, cities can become effective sanctuaries for birds and other wildlife, with an environmentally-aware citizenry dedicated to conserving and enhancing these natural resources. By restoring and conserving green-space, urban treaties enhance the livability for human residents as well as the migratory birds that nest or pass through municipal and urban/suburban neighborhoods.

Since 1999, seven cities – New Orleans, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Portland, St. Louis, and Nashville – have embraced this successful partnership opportunity with the Service. The Birds Forever Initiative provides support for five additional cities to join those seven already in place to the mutual benefit of birds and the cities' human inhabitants.

Finally, in cases where factors other than habitat affect focal species populations, the Migratory Bird Program has the responsibility of determining appropriate/acceptable levels of intentional take or whether certain forms of take are consistent with desired population conditions/levels, (e.g., for permits or depredation orders, subsistence harvest, and emerging issues such as pet trade in Painted Bunting and other songbirds). The Service is also a leader in providing guidance and technical assistance to partners and industry to minimize incidental take (e.g., by-catch and collisions with towers, powerlines, and wind turbines) which may affect sustainability of some focal species.

Conservation activities on behalf of focal species often benefit other birds that share habitats or have a similar life history. For example, management activities to sustain horseshoe crab populations in Delaware Bay on the U.S. Atlantic Coast not only contribute towards the conservation of the Red Knot, a Focal Species and a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act, but also benefit the more common Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, and Semipalmated Sandpiper, as all of these species rely on horseshoe crab eggs to replenish fat stores for their journey to Arctic breeding grounds. Similarly, activities to provide the American Woodcock with its preferred habitat will provide benefits to the numerous other birds that utilize early-successional habitats created by periodic disturbance of the forest. Moreover, many stressors acting on migratory bird populations apply across their entire ranges and transcend international boundaries. Thus, development of agricultural practices that benefit Long-billed Curlews breeding in the western United States can be translated to improve range management for all resident and migrant grassland birds in northern Mexico.

Monitoring Critical to Conservation Planning and Implementation (+$2,200,000/+5FTE)
This funding will allow the Service to expand its monitoring and assessment capabilities in further support of its trust responsibilities for North America's migratory bird resource. In doing so, the Service will continue in its leadership role for survey design and implementation on the continent's landscape. Responses of wildlife populations to natural and man-made disturbances in their environment are often manifested in changes in numbers and distribution on the landscape. Consequently, monitoring and evaluation are integral components of an iterative, science-based approach to bird conservation, as a wide array of decisions, requires the information generated by these activities. For example, identifying species in highest need of management and conservation action, directing more resources to determine the causes of declining populations, designating land units that will likely provide source populations, and regulating harvest of migratory game birds all depend on a reliable monitoring and assessment framework. As importantly, monitoring information enables evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of specific conservation or management actions (for example, altering land management practices, applying regulations or restrictions to address take). Tracking population-scale responses of birds to natural and man-made changes provides an opportunity to manage adaptively by incorporating the best and most current information in management decision-making and by providing feedback on the outcome of decisions.

In the President's October 2007 speech, he impressed on the nation the important role that monitoring and assessment plays in the conservation of migratory birds. In order to achieve the goal of improving the status of five more migratory bird species to healthy and sustainable levels, he said, "to achieve this goal we need good data. I mean, we just don't want to be guessing about bird populations, we want to measure. And so I've asked the Secretary to produce a State of the Birds Report by 2009." The Service will be doing most of the monitoring, analyzing, and preparing of this report in 2008 but the report will help inform activities in 2009 and beyond.

Audubon's analysis of species declines was based on annual sighting data from Audubon's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) and Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data collected by the U.S. Geological Survey (please refer to additional information on the BBS below). While these programs provide a wealth of information on the population status of some species, additional multi-species, large-scale surveys are needed to generate the information needed for science-based conservation. For over 50 years, the Service has invested in aerial surveys of waterfowl populations in North America. Yet, aerial survey coverage is still lacking in important migratory bird habitats. Of particular interest are the arctic and sub-arctic ecosystems of the continent where thawing permafrost and changes in the plant and animal communities of northern forests, wetlands, and tundra may be linked to changing climate, significantly altering breeding site suitability for a broad spectrum of migratory bird species. The Service is currently in the process of replacing its aging aircraft fleet, specifically those dedicated to surveying migratory bird populations. With the new turbine aircraft, safe and efficient surveys of populations and habitats in previously inaccessible northern areas will be possible without present concerns over limited payload and fuel capacity.

Reduced operating limitations for our survey aircraft will also allow us to fill important monitoring gaps at sea. For example, the distribution and abundance of waterbirds including seabirds, sea ducks, and diving ducks along the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf Coast and Great Lakes States are largely unknown and poorly documented beyond a few hundred meters from shore; and species using offshore habitats are poorly monitored through extant programs. With better data from aerial surveys, and accompanying ship-board observations, we will be better able to identify areas where high levels of by-catch of birds might occur, determine potential impacts from wind turbine development, comment on navigation projects, conduct damage assessments from oil spills, and plan for and respond to spills. Further south, the investment in the Birds Forever Initiative will provide for expanded aerial coverage to ensure that key stopover and wintering areas in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean will be adequately and reliably surveyed, thus providing another piece to the puzzle of

understanding changes in population distribution, status and trends of shorebirds, waterfowl, and other long-distance migrants and their habitats. Workshops and training sessions, already begun in 2004, will continue in this region and provide increased capabilities of biologists and managers from these countries to design, conduct, and analyze aerial and other survey information on their own in support of continental management objectives for migratory birds and their habitats.

Even with coverage from airplanes, ships, and the thousands of pairs of eyes of citizen observers who contribute to BBS and CBC, the populations of some groups of birds will remain unseen and underserved unless innovative and specialized monitoring programs are developed and implemented. Examples include nocturnal species such as owls and nighthawks; species occurring in high mountain ranges; those that breed under rocks or in burrows, including seabirds such as Xantus's and Kittlitz's Murrelets and Band-rumped Storm-petrel (all three of which are candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act); and the shy and secretive marshbirds such as the American Bittern and rails. Even some groups of birds that are visible at their nests, such as long-legged wading birds nesting in rookeries and seabirds nesting in cliff-side colonies, will require alternative monitoring approaches because of their colonial nesting behavior and extended breeding seasons. Overall, the Birds Forever Initiative will assist in making operational the large-scale, often multi-species surveys needed by researchers and managers to better understand and hopefully forestall the impacts of climate change, habitat fragmentation, land conversion and other large-scale threats.

For focal and other species of special concern, monitoring must also be targeted to explain causes of population changes, assess the effectiveness of current management practices, and answer questions about population dynamics, life history, and limiting factors that will affect the future management of natural resources. With additional resources, the Service can ensure that the highest priority monitoring tasks identified in focal species plans and other planning tools are implemented. Where monitoring through banding and marking is needed to augment surveys, the Birds Forever Initiative will enable us to expand and improve long-standing programs in partnership with the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) of the USGS. Specifically, the improved data-storage capabilities in the BBL and their ability to process recoveries more efficiently from Spanish-speaking Latin American and Caribbean countries make this an ideal time to use these tools to improve our understanding of population dynamics for many species of migratory birds. Additionally, increased banding effort is required for several species of concern in order to better understand their population demographics and identify the life cycle events that are contributing to ongoing population declines. An example is the Lesser Scaup. Population surveys indicate a population decline in recent decades that have led to serious discussions about harvest restrictions for this popular game bird. Banding information is critical to continued efforts to better understand the cause of decline and loss of harvest potential for this species. Little banding has occurred in northern boreal and tundra breeding habitats used by scaup because of the logistical challenges and cost of operating in these regions. Renewed efforts are currently underway by the Service and Flyways to develop and implement banding programs in these challenging environments.

Other non-traditional forms of marking, especially new, remote-sensing technologies, offer innovative ways to answer key questions about bird migration, distribution, abundance, and other vital characteristics of their annual cycle. For example, we propose the use of satellite transmitters to shed light on critical questions regarding Golden Eagle populations in the West. Better understanding of the survival of different age groups must be understood to address issues associated with permitting of take for religious purposes and for issuance of new "disturb" permits. As scientists are able to fit smaller and smaller species with transmitters, including shearwaters on trans-equatorial migrations, oystercatchers moving along our coastlines, and King Rails navigating the marshes or the Mississippi River watershed, we'll pursue their use as necessary to inform conservation of these species. Other ongoing efforts use NEXRAD (Doppler weather radar datasets and their resultant algorithms) to understand the spatial and temporal use of airspace by birds. Overall, an expanded

monitoring program will contribute to our ability to take advantage of migratory birds as useful, sensitive barometers to changes on the North American landscape, and increase our ability to develop and implement management actions in response to these changes.

General Program Reduction (-$559,000)
General program activities are funded to ensure the highest priority conservation activities are addressed. This reduction is possible without causing significant impacts to on-going base operations, and will be achieved by allowing regional offices opportunities to identify at their discretion, and implement any administrative efficiency that does not adversely affect overall Administration, Department or Service priorities. Among activities that may offer the greatest opportunity are travel, training, organizational streamlining, and holding in abeyance or cancelling lower priority projects. This reduction will not impact activities that are necessary to meet the program's long term outcome based performance goals.

Program Performance Change

	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Actual	2008 Plan	2009 Base Budget (2008 Plan + Fixed Costs)	2009 President's Budget	Program Change Accruing in 2009	Program Change Accruing in Outyears
Resource Protection - Sustaining Biological Communities								
6.1.2 # of management actions implemented to address needs of non-BMC in an effort to ensure populations remain healthy	0	24	43	74	74	80	6 (8.1%)	
Comments:	Actions directed at BMC species also impact non-BMC species. Because of the increase in the number of management plans that are developed and implemented as a result of increased funding in FY2009, there will be a corresponding increase in actions on the landscape that benefit non-BMC species.							
6.2.3 # of management actions implemented to address needs of BMC	0	51	67	90	90	98	8 (8.9%)	
Comments:	The increase in management actions for FY2009 is a direct result of the increase in funding and resultant development and implementation of management plans for BMC species. These plans identify specific management actions on the landscape that will benefit these migratory birds.							

Internal Transfer – Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (+$4,922,000/+9FTE)
The Service will continue to participate in early detection and response planning programs intended to reduce the effects of H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza on wild birds, poultry and human health. Specifically, the Service would be involved with helping implement the Interagency Strategic Plan ("An Early Detection System for H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Wild Migratory Birds---U.S. Interagency Strategic Plan", dated March 14, 2006.) The Strategic Plan targets bird species in North America that have the highest risk of being exposed to or infected with highly pathogenic H5N1 because of their migratory movement patterns, with Alaska and the Pacific flyway being the highest priorities for monitoring. The proposed 2009 funding level allows the Service to carry out these high priority monitoring activities. These funds preciously were funded under General Operations but are proposed to be moved to the Migratory Bird Management subactivity to better reflect the operations and management of this activity by that program.

A greater level of effort will be directed to morbidity/mortality surveillance in 2009. In addition to the 1-800 numbers and other mechanisms to solicit reports of sick or dead birds that were used in 2006, in the 2007 surveillance year projects will be established in targeted locations (e.g., National Wildlife Refuges, state wildlife areas) to proactively survey bird populations for the presence of sick and dead birds. While unlikely to produce the same number of birds for testing as live bird or hunter-killed bird surveillance, morbidity/mortality surveillance has been demonstrated in areas of HPAI H5N1 prevalence as the most effective means of detecting the virus in wild birds.

The number of samples produced from surveillance of apparently healthy and hunter-killed birds in the lower 48 states and the Pacific Islands is currently being established in the context of stepping down the updated Flyway Surveillance Plans to specific state plans. Reflecting the refocusing of live bird surveillance on competent carriers (i.e., those species known to carry H5 forms of avian influenza asymptomatically) and the greater emphasis given to morbidity/mortality surveillance, it is anticipated that the number of live bird and hunter-killed birds sampled in the 2009 surveillance year will be less than in 2008.

Collectively, the live bird, hunter-killed bird, and morbidity/mortality surveillance planned for the 2009 surveillance year is expected to provide a level of early detection surveillance commensurate with that in 2008, and over a larger geographic area. In FY 2009, the Service will:

- Continue to collect and sample live and hunter killed birds in Alaska and in the Pacific Flyway, as this is an important pathway of wild migratory birds from Asia to North America and the large federal landbase and field capability make FWS and USGS the most appropriate agencies to conduct this type of surveillance there;

- Focus our surveillance effort in the lower 48 States and the Pacific Islands on developing capacity and carrying out morbidity and mortality surveillance, the most effective method known for detecting the HPAI H5N1 virus in wild birds. Funds would be redirected from live bird and hunter-killed bird surveillance so as to establish capacity and projects in all States to proactively survey targeted localities for sick and dead birds and respond to reports of sick and dead birds. This surveillance effort would compliment APHIS/Wildlife Services' continued live bird and hunter killed bird collection and sampling in the lower 48 States and fully satisfy our commitment to wild bird surveillance under Action Item 7.2.1.1 of the President's *Pandemic Influenza Implementation Strategy*; and

- Work with USDA, state agencies, and others to establish and exercise avian influenza response plans, thus carrying out our responsibilities under Action Item 7.1.1.1 of the President's *Pandemic Influenza Implementation Strategy*, and otherwise establish and maintain capability to respond to an outbreak of HPAI H5N1 in wild birds.

Program Overview

Conservation and monitoring are the two activities that define the fundamental-operational role the Service plays in bird conservation and is the national focal point for bird population management. Critical to the Migratory Bird Program's success are partnerships, which include the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and some of the migratory game bird management plans developed by the Flyway Councils. These plans were developed by coalitions of Federal and State agencies, tribal entities, foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, industry, academia, and private individuals who are interested in the conservation of birds. Survey and assessment information on migratory birds is critical to many conservation management programs. Thousands of managers, researchers and others (both government and non-government) depend upon the Migratory

Bird Program's survey activities to provide accurate and comprehensive status and trend information. States rely heavily on results of annual bird surveys for management and budgeting activities associated with migratory game and non-game birds. Survey data are critical to identify and prioritize management actions and research needs, and provide a scientific basis for effective migratory bird conservation on a national and international scale.

On October 20, 2007, the President announced a new effort to conserve migratory birds. Some of the activities within this effort include:

- implementing cooperative conservation efforts with Mexico to conserve birds in five important areas,
- improving migratory bird conservation through joint ventures,
- producing a State of the Birds report,
- improving another 200,000 acres for birds,
- working with five more cities, through urban bird treaties, to conserve birds, and
- improving the status of five more migratory bird species to "healthy and sustainable" levels.

The Department's Birds Forever initiative is complementary to the President's effort and the Service's Conservation and Monitoring program are one of the main contributors to achieve the goals of the President's Migratory Bird Initiative.

Use of Cost and Performance Information

Through the PART process, specific long-term outcome and annual output performance goals were developed and implemented.

The Migratory Bird Management Program's Project Database contains operational work-plans as a way to prioritize, budget, and manage the division's nationwide workload. This project-based process asks for detailed project-level information, including objectives, scope, and estimated cost. Use of a database facilitates:

- Planning by providing a format for submitting new project ideas
- It allows ranking of prospective projects for implementation
- Tracking of resource allocations at the species level by project
- Cross tabulation of resource allocations by performance measure and ABC code
- Ready calculation of resource allocations according to performance measures and ABC codes
- Performance data are tracked and project status reports will be available
- Project funds are reallocated among regional field components annually
- Regional Offices will have access to both standard and custom reports
- Cost data are tracked allowing managers to redirect surplus funds

Performance measures have been cross-walked with partners such as USGS to improve and expand conservation efforts while avoiding double counting.

2009 Program Performance

In 2009, the Service will continue to implement the President's Migratory Bird Initiative. The Service continues to work effectively with partners in assisting in the development of conservation plans that will contribute to improving the health and sustainability of migratory birds of conservation concern. In FY 2009, the Service plans to continue the development and implementation of focal species action plans, with Regional staff continuing to provide the leadership responsibility for individual species plans based upon the geographic distribution of species and the availability of funding resources.

Over the last three years, the Service has undertaken campaigns on 9 focal species, completing or drafting plans on all of these, and beginning implementation as resources are available. The Program

has identified almost 30 additional focal species for which it intends to complete action plans by the end of fiscal year 2009. In doing so, it will coordinate with appropriate partners inside and outside the Service and as a result of species-specific planning by partners, we expect to see the creation of yet more action plans for additional focal species.

Development of an action plan, including identification of threats to a species and high priority conservation needs, is just one of the initial steps in our focal species strategy. We can not effectively increase the percentage of migratory bird species that are at a productive and sustainable level without sufficient resources to adequately address these threats and priority needs through implementation of the action plans. The Birds Forever Initiative would provide the resources to make significant progress on the implementation of these plans, to the degree that activities can be undertaken by the Migratory Bird Program or catalyzed through partnership.

Between 2006 and 2008, the Service completed conservation or action plans on 8 focal species, including American Woodcock, Pacific Common Eider, Cerulean Warbler, Laysan and Black-footed Albatross, Long-billed Curlew, King Rail, and Henslow's Sparrow. These plans identify limiting factors, priority action, partners and projected implementation costs. Service efforts over the last three years have also included activities designed to obtain more biological information on these and other specific focal species (e.g., improving monitoring program designs, developing monitoring databases, as well as implementing surveys).

Reliable information on population size, distribution during the breeding and non-breeding periods, habitat requirements, survival rates, and reproductive success is vital for understanding and addressing species conservation needs. Monitoring and other data collection efforts have been implemented by the Service and our partners for a number of focal species, including Laysan and Black-footed Albatross, Painted Bunting, and Reddish Egret. In 2008, efforts were undertaken to address the limiting factors and priority conservation needs of additional focal species, including Golden-Winged Warbler, Red Knot, and Rusty Blackbird, all of which have experienced significant population declines.

Program Performance Overview

Performance Goal / Measure	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Plan	2007 Actual	2008 Plan	2009 President's Budget	Change from 2008 Plan to 2009	Long-term 2012 Target
Resource Protection - Sustaining Biological Communities								
CSF 6.1 Percent of all migratory bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels (GPRA) (PART)	61.4% (561 of 913)	61.4% (561 of 913)	61.7% (563 of 912)	61.5% (561 of 912)	62.3% (568 of 912)	62.3% (568 of 912)	0.0%	62.8% (573 of 912)
CSF Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$28,207	unk	$23,239	$24,094	$24,672	$578	$24,889
CSF Program Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$12,062	unk	$12,173	$12,465	$12,764	$299	$12,764
Actual/Projected Cost Per Species (whole dollars)	unk	$50,280	unk	$41,424	$42,418	$43,436	$1,018	$43,436
CSF 6.2 Percent of Birds of Management Concern (BMC) population management needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable populations (PART)	unk	92% (110 of 119)	99% (89 of 90)	98% (88 of 90)	99% (66 of 67)	99% (66 of 67)	0.0%	99% (66 of 67)
CSF Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$18,870	unk	$15,135	$11,624	$11,903	$279	$11,903
CSF Program Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$9,101	unk	$8,870	$9,083	$9,301	$218	$9,301
Actual/Projected Cost Per Projects (whole dollars)	unk	$171,550	unk	$171,989	$176,117	$180,344	$4,227	$180,344

Activity: Migratory Bird Management
Subactivity: Permits

		2007 Actual	2008 Enacted	2009 Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-)	2009 Program Changes (+/-)	2009 Budget Request	Change From 2008 (+/-)
Permits	($000)	1,543	1,576	+27	-5	1,598	+22
	FTE	*23*	*23*	-	-	*23*	-

Summary of 2009 Program Changes for Migratory Bird Permits Program

Request Component	($000)	FTE
Travel and Relocation Expense Reduction	-5	-
TOTAL Program Changes	**-5**	-

Justification of 2009 Program Changes

The 2009 Service request for Permits is $1,598,000 and 23 FTE, a program change of -$5,000 and 0 FTE from 2008 Enacted.

Program Overview

Under the authorities of the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* (16 U.S.C. 703-712) (MBTA) and the *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 668) (BGEPA), the Service is responsible for regulating activities associated with migratory birds. The BGEPA provides additional protections to the nation's eagles. The MBTA and the BGEPA are the primary legislation in the United States established to conserve migratory birds and prohibit the taking, killing, or possessing of migratory birds unless permitted by suitable regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior.

The regulation of take is a primary and traditional Service activity that integrates data-gathering activities designed to evaluate the status of migratory bird populations. For example, various regulatory options for game-bird species are considered each year during the well-defined cycle of procedures and events that result in the body of rules governing annual sport and subsistence harvest. The take of migratory birds for purposes other than hunting are administered through a permitting system (50 CFR parts 21, 22).

The mission of the Migratory Bird Permit Program is to promote the long-term conservation of migratory bird populations while providing opportunities for the public to study, use, and enjoy migratory birds consistent with the provisions of the MBTA and the BGEPA. Existing regulations authorizing take and possession of migratory birds focus on a limited number of allowable activities. Permits are available for scientific study, depredation control, falconry, raptor propagation, rehabilitation, education, taxidermy, waterfowl sale, religious use (eagles), and other purposes. The permits are administered by the seven Regional Migratory Bird Permit Offices. The Regional Permit Offices process over 13,000 applications annually. Since most permits are valid for between 1 and 5 years, approximately 40,000 permits are active (valid) at any given time.

Policy and regulations are developed by the Division of Migratory Bird Management in the Washington Office. Sound science is a fundamental component of migratory bird permit policies and permit decisions. Computer technologies such as the Service's Permit Issuance and Tracking System (SPITS) provide a tool for issuing permits and help monitor cumulative impacts to migratory bird

populations. Policy and regulation development focuses on clarifying and streamlining regulatory requirements.

Use of Cost and Performance Information

- Through the PART process, specific long-term outcome or annual output performance goals were developed.
- Performance measures are now tracked and reported through use of the Service's Permit Issuance and Tracking System (SPITS-database). SPITS was designed in cooperation with the Service's other permit programs to ensure consistency for both policy development and operational compatibility.
- Workload based staffing models have been developed for each of eight permit offices and staffing levels and associated costs can be predicted using historical workload trends. Unit costs can be determined using the workload models for various permit types.
- Fees are charged for permit processing to help offset operational costs.
- Implementing an E-reporting capability to enable the public to submit permit reports electronically.

2009 Program Performance

The Service will continue to work on the implementation of various actions that have the most potential to influence and improve future operational performance. Completions of these initiatives is essential to the Service's ability to manage a permit process that has reached about 13,000 applications received annually and up to 40,000 active permits at any given time. As a result of the delisting of the bald eagle (from the of list of threatened and endangered species), the number of new applications for bald eagle and golden eagle permits can only be estimated at this time. However, there are some strong indicators that point toward about 1,200 new applications for eagle permits per year. Initially, applications could be much higher. The Program will work with other Divisions of the Service to respond to the expected increase in permit applications.

Program Performance Overview

Performance Goal / Measure	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Plan	2007 Actual	2008 Plan	2009 President's Budget	Change from 2008 Plan to 2009	Long-term 2012 Target
Resource Protection - Sustaining Biological Communities								
CSF 6.3 Percent of migratory bird permits issued within 30 day of receipt of a completed application	50% (7,500 of 15,000)	62.4% (8,143 of 13,046)	56.8% (6,360 of 11,188)	74.4% (7,474 of 10,051)	58.6% (5,855 of 9,988)	58.6% (5,855 of 9,988)	0.0%	58.6% (5,855 of 9,988)
CSF Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$3,280	unk	$2,750	$2,206	$2,259	$53	$2,259
CSF Program Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$2,255	unk	$2,149	$2,201	$2,253	$53	$2,253
Actual/Projected Cost Per Permits (whole dollars)	unk	$403	unk	$368	$377	$386	$9	$386
Recreation								
CSF 15.7 Percent of migratory bird species that may be harvested for sport hunting or falconry (according to the migratory bird treaties) for which harvest is authorized by regulation	59.0% (161 of 273)	59.0% (161 of 273)	58.6% (160 of 273)	58.6% (160 of 273)	59.0% (161 of 273)	59.0% (161 of 273)	0.0%	59.0% (161 of 273)
CSF Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$4,200	unk	$4,567	$4,705	$4,818	$113	$4,818
CSF Program Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$2,995	unk	$4,263	$4,365	$4,470	$105	$4,470
Actual/Projected Cost Per Species (whole dollars)	unk	$26,085	unk	$28,541	$29,226	$29,928	$701	$29,928
CSF 15.8 % of adult Americans participating in wildlife-associated recreation	unk	unk	unk	unk	38% (385 of 1,000)	38% (385 of 1,000)	0.0%	38% (385 of 1,000)

Activity: Migratory Bird Management
Subactivity: Migratory Bird Hunting & Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp)

	2007 Actual	2008 Enacted	2009 Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-)	2009 Program Changes (+/-)	2009 Budget Request	Change From 2008 (+/-)
Federal Duck Stamp Program ($000)	570	579	+10	-2	587	+8
FTE	*4*	*4*	-	-	*4*	-

Summary of 2009 Program Changes for Federal Duck Stamp Program

Request Component	($000)	FTE
Travel and Relocation Expense Reduction	-2	-
TOTAL Program Changes	**-2**	-

Justification of 2009 Program Changes

The 2009 request for the Federal Duck Stamp program is $587,000 and 4 FTE, a program decrease of -$2,000 and 0 FTE from 2008 Enacted.

Program Overview

The Federal Duck Stamp program, an internationally recognized and emulated program, supports the conservation of important migratory bird habitat through the design and sale of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (the Duck Stamp). In June 2008 the Service will release the 75th Federal Duck Stamp. The 2007-2008 Duck Stamp features Delaware artist Richard Clifton's painting of a pair of ringed-neck ducks. Clifton's winning design topped 296 other entries and retains the pictorial heritage of the first Duck Stamp created in 1934 by political cartoonist and conservationist J.N. Ding Darling.

Aligned with the Department's "Resource Protection" mission, sales of Federal Duck Stamps since 1934 have raised more than $725 million for the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) enabling the conservation of over 5.2 million acres of prime waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. In fiscal year 2007, sales of Duck Stamps totaled nearly $25 million, approximately 50 percent of the total annual revenue of the MBCF.

The Junior Duck Stamp program, reauthorized by President Bush on January 12, 2006, teaches conservation through the arts to American school children. As increased urbanization and development makes it difficult for millions of American children to interact with nature, environmental education such as that supported through the Junior Duck Stamp Program, will play a key role in preparing the next generation to become the future stewards of this country's irreplaceable wild places and treasured outdoor heritage. Thanks to a new partnership with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park hosted the 2007 National Junior Duck Stamp Contest, won by Paul Willey, a high school senior from Conrad, Arkansas, with his painting of two American widgeons entitled "An Elegant Pair." Under

this partnership, future National Junior Duck Stamp Contests will be sponsored by different zoos throughout the country in order to build interest in and grow the program.

2009 Program Performance

The Duck Stamp program directly supports the Department of the Interior's Strategic Mission of Resource Protection and the End Outcome Goal of "Improving the Health of Watersheds, Landscapes, and Marine Resources that are DOI Managed or Influenced." The Duck Stamp program also contributes to the program's long-term outcome measures: the percent of all migratory bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels (FWS Ops Plan CSF 6.1), and the percent of adult Americans who participate in bird-related recreation (FWS Ops Plan 15.6.22).

In 2009 the Duck Stamp program will continue to focus on its two long-term objectives: increasing the amount of revenue available for migratory bird habitat conservation through the sale of Federal Duck Stamps, and promoting conservation education by increasing the number of students participating in the Junior Duck Stamp Program. To further the first goal, the Administration proposes to increase the cost of the Duck Stamp as outlined in the Migratory Bird Conservation Account section.

In 2007, the Fish and Wildlife Service expanded its efforts to highlight the importance of the Duck Stamp to the conservation community. The annual First Day of Sale ceremony took place at Bass Pro Shops headquarters in Springfield, Missouri and at 40 additional Bass Pro retail outlets throughout the United States. These concurrent First Day of Sale ceremonies afforded more conservationists, hunters, and Duck Stamp collectors the opportunity to participate locally, rather than having to incur travel expenses to Washington, DC, resulting in increased attendance and better customer service. In addition, local partnerships were forged among the regional Fish and Wildlife Service personnel, the U.S. Postal Service, community leaders, and local conservation groups, hunters, stamp collectors and birders, marking one of Duck Stamp program's most innovative partnerships and successful outreach events. As part of the plan to grow its constituency by making the program more widely accessible throughout the country, the 2007 Federal Duck Stamp Contest, was held on October 12th and 13th on Sanibel Island, Florida at the Service's J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

In 2006, President Bush signed into law the Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-266). This Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a 3-year pilot program under which up to 15 States may issue electronic Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps as part of their State hunting and fishing licensing program. The Fish and Wildlife Service has currently signed partnership agreements with 9 States to participate in the program beginning on September 1, 2007.

Incorporating scientific and wildlife management principles into visual arts curricula, the Junior Duck Stamp program provides fact sheets, a website, and other educational resources that teachers can use to educate students about the importance of wetlands conservation. Through this education program, schoolchildren come to understand the value that healthy wetlands provide to wildlife as well as to people. Teachers also have access to information that will help students learn about the negative impact invasive species have on wetland habitats, waterfowl, other migratory birds, and numerous wetland-dependant species. Each year the program culminates in the national Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest, during which students compete to have their art selected to grace the next year's stamp. Nearly 34,000 entries were received for the 2007 contest, with awards given to the best artwork at the State and national level. Thousands of students took part in the wetlands conservation curriculum but chose not to enter the contest.

In 2006-2007, sales of the $5 Junior Duck Stamp generated more than $100,000, all of which was returned to the program to provide educational materials for the program, fund awards for students, and support and promote the program's growth.

Activity: Migratory Bird Management
Subactivity: North American Waterfowl Management Plan/Joint Ventures

	2007 Actual	2008 Enacted	2009			
			Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	Change From 2008 (+/-)
NAWMP/Joint Ventures $(000)	10,873	10,893	+99	+3,891	14,883	+3,990
FTE	*45*	*45*	-	*+6*	*51*	*+6*

Summary of 2009 Program Changes for NAWMP/Joint Ventures

Request Component	($000)	FTE
Birds Forever Initiative: Conserving Priority Habitat Through Joint Ventures		
• New Joint Ventures	+1,500	+4
• Existing Joint Ventures	+2,438	+2
• Travel and Relocation Expense Reduction	-38	-
• Contract Reduction	-9	-
TOTAL Program Changes	**+3,891**	**+6**

Justification of 2009 Program Changes

The 2009 Service request for North American Waterfowl Management Plan/Joint Ventures is $14,883,000 and 51 FTE, a net program change of +$3,891,000 and +6 FTE from 2008 Enacted.

Birds Forever Initiative –

Conserving Priority Habitat through Joint Ventures

Joint Ventures play a key role in the President's Migratory Bird Initiative announced in October 2007. In June 2007, the National Audubon Society issued the report, Common Birds in Decline, based on an analysis of the Society's Christmas bird counts and breeding bird surveys of the U.S. Geological Survey. The report indicates a significant decline occurring in 20 common species which have lost at least one-half their population in just four decades. On average, populations of common birds have plummeted 70 percent since 1967. Although many factors lie behind declines in wild bird populations, habitat loss is number one. Accordingly, protection, conservation, and restoration of habitat on which birds rely for breeding, feeding, and other life stages, is a major component of this initiative. The Secretary's Birds Forever initiative will coordinate efforts under existing programs that can deliver on-the-ground results in improved habitat conditions for diverse species. One of these programs is Joint Ventures for which the Service requests an additional $3.9 million to increase habitat conservation for declining bird species.

Multiple new joint ventures will be supported in regions containing vital migratory bird stopover habitat bringing important new areas of the continental U.S. under the joint venture framework for bird conservation. This will benefit a variety of endangered, threatened, and declining bird species such as the Black-capped vireo, Golden-cheeked warbler, Cerulean warbler, Long-billed curlew, Painted bunting, Reddish egret, and Snowy plover. Funding for these new joint ventures will initiate biologically driven conservation actions similar to the successful efforts of the existing joint ventures, which are more advanced in the implementation of their strategic conservation plans. A portion of the increase will be provided to existing joint ventures, to accelerate habitat conservation efforts in response to increasing habitat losses.

As habitat loss and degradation continues due to a variety of factors including agricultural expansion, energy development, forest fragmentation, and suburban development, the need for increasing the joint ventures' strategic habitat conservation efforts becomes urgent. Investment in habitat conservation will become more costly in the future, in both dollars and other social costs. The additional joint venture funding will support planning and project development processes and will encourage partner agencies and organizations to focus their resources on the priority landscapes and habitat conditions most vital for sustaining healthy migratory bird populations. Priority will be given to those joint ventures that can expand their capacities to integrate joint venture planning and delivery with U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs, State wildlife action plans, and other major landscape influences. This will maximize benefits to birds by influencing the targeting and delivery of the most widespread and significant programs.

New Joint Ventures ($1,500,000/+4FTE)
The Service is requesting $1,500,000 to support recently developed joint ventures in important migratory bird stopover habitat areas as described above. Four new joint ventures (Rio Grande, East Gulf Coastal Plain, Oaks and Prairies, and Appalachian Mountains) have been initiated by States and other organizations to provide partner-based conservation planning and delivery to those areas of the country without an established joint venture. New funding will support planning and project development processes consistent with guidance from the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and other bird conservation initiatives such as Partners in Flight. This will encourage partner agencies and organizations to focus their resources on the priority landscapes and habitat conditions most vital for sustaining healthy migratory bird populations and will compliment the efforts of existing joint ventures across North America. Two additional joint ventures (Northern Great Plains and Central Hardwoods) have been approved by the Service and received initial minimal funding in FY 2006. In FY 2009 the Service proposes to provide these two maturing joint ventures with additional funds to bring them up to an operations level comparable to the other existing joint ventures. The Service will allocate remaining funds, up to $300,000 each, among the four new joint ventures described above according to their progress in the fulfillment of the established administrative criteria. The President's Migratory Bird Initiative highlighted the additions of the Rio Grande, Appalachian Mountains, and Northern Great Plains Joint Ventures in 2008.

- *Rio Grande Joint Venture (RGJV)* – The Rio Grande Joint Venture encompasses two very different habitat types along the southern U.S. border with exceptionally high bird diversity. Many bird species found here occur nowhere else in the U.S. The RGJV will increase its capacity to conduct the biological planning and conservation design for the priority migratory birds of the Chihuahuan Desert and Tamaulipan Brushlands Bird Conservation Regions.

- *Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture (AMJV)* – This emerging joint venture partnership will focus on Neotropical migrants and other woodland birds in this largely forested mountainous region. Funds will be used to develop a strong biological foundation and diverse partnership for the Appalachian Mountain region to address the needs of breeding and migrating birds and foster collaborative efforts between States, Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, the forest and mining industries, and others. The AMJV will work with these partners to develop consistent and complementary habitat mapping and modeling efforts for birds and other priority species, including aquatic species under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

- *Northern Great Plains Joint Venture (NGPJV)* – The NGPJV is minimally funded and currently striving to support a very small staff. Additional funding will allow the joint venture to meet all the critical functions necessary to fully engage in strategic habitat conservation. Joint venture partners have pooled resources and contributed to completion of an Implementation Plan and with additional resources implementation of this landscape scale approach will be accelerated.

Existing Joint Ventures ($2,438,000/+2FTE)
The Service will direct $2,438,000 of the requested program increase to existing joint ventures for the immediate impact these mature joint ventures can have on bird populations. The older joint ventures have better developed strategic habitat conservation capacities and are best positioned to use increased funding to target conservation actions upon high priority habitats already identified through their biological planning and conservation design. The requested increase will also be used for increasing joint venture capabilities by expanding habitat and species modeling, monitoring of birds and their habitats; and for using remote sensing and other resources to detect and assess net landscape change. New and expanded information will be used to update existing habitat objectives, focal areas, and conservation strategies to produce more comprehensive landscape designs (i.e. quantitative, spatially explicit descriptions of desired habitat conditions). The Service will allocate increases among existing joint ventures based on their demonstrated ability to impact bird populations and the findings and recommendations from the 2007 North American Waterfowl Management Plan Assessment Report. Some specific examples include:

- *Atlantic Coast Joint Venture (ACJV)* – The Atlantic Coast Joint Venture will provide region-wide support for mapping habitats, setting population and habitat objectives for migratory birds, and developing statistical approaches to landscape design. Additional capacity will be directed to four focal areas identified by the Service (St. Lawrence River Valley, Chesapeake Bay Watershed, Coastal Carolina, and South Florida) and use bird habitat conservation as a model for all fish and wildlife conservation in these ecoregions. Furthermore, the ACJV will work with State partners, the U.S. Geological Survey, and non-governmental organizations to develop consistent and seamless habitat classification and mapping in the Atlantic Flyway based on Ecological Systems and Regional Gap Analysis; to deliver consistent monitoring approaches for birds and other indicator wildlife species; to develop databases that integrate multiple State Wildlife Action Plans; and to develop decision support tools to help guide State and local land use decision making and other efforts.

- *Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV)* – The strategic planning and conservation action process developed in the Prairie Pothole Region is one of the best examples of strategic habitat conservation in the Service. Additional funding for the PPJV will allow the joint venture to increase performance accountability by translating habitat gains into estimated numbers of migratory birds actually produced on those acres, thus completing an adaptive management cycle through evaluation and feedback. Key landscape level habitat and biological information will be developed by expanding the Four Square Mile survey of waterfowl productivity and other aspects of planning into central Montana, which is not currently included in the PPJV's adaptive modeling framework. The biological data and models developed by the PPJV will support State agencies in addressing threats to species of greatest need identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. Additionally, this increased capacity will be available to other Federal agencies such as Bureau of Land Management and Farm Services Agency for use in developing and implementing agency planning efforts thus ensuring that these agencies can fully consider impacts and benefits to Service trust resources.

- *Intermountain West Joint Venture* – Several of the most intact, native ecosystems remaining in the Intermountain West are found in Wyoming, including sagebrush steppe, mixed mountain shrub, aspen, and riparian community types. However, habitat degradation, exacerbated by drought and expansive energy resource development, is having an unprecedented impact on the fish and wildlife dependent on these habitats. In response, key State, Federal, and non-governmental organization partners have committed to supporting various aspects of the joint venture strategy via an interagency approach referred to as the Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, which emphasizes the Green River Basin as a focal area. Additional funding will support strategic and long term conservation of critical wildlife habitat resources that balance

wildlife needs and traditional wildlife uses with energy development, livestock grazing and other land uses. With increased funding the joint venture will launch science-based species and habitat monitoring; facilitate reclamation and mitigation practices for areas impacted by current natural gas development, and conduct habitat enhancement in all habitat types with a special focus on sagebrush, mountain shrub, aspen, and riparian communities.

- *Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV)* – The proposed increase will support an ordered and comprehensive set of steps to increase the protection and conservation of playa wetlands and surrounding prairie grasslands. The project addresses habitat objectives established in the PLJV Area Implementation Plan as well as the State Wildlife Action Plans for Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas. This work is designed to conserve playas and associated wildlife through strategic enrollment of playas currently surrounded by cropland into the Conservation Reserve Program. The evident need for playa conservation has been demonstrated through the latest PLJV biological planning. In this project, PLJV planning is used to target playas via efficient conservation design, delivery and monitoring and evaluation. Conservation design and delivery steps include creating a Decision Support Tool that uses biological models in concert with GIS-based targeting of Farm Bill programs and human dimensions information to target conservation to playa landowners, as well as implementing an aggressive marketing campaign to create landowner "consumers" of playa conservation.

- *Pacific Coast Joint Venture* – The Pacific Coast Joint Venture has expanded from its original borders to include Hawaii and coastal Alaska. The goal of the joint venture partners in Hawaii is the removal of five endangered waterbirds from the Endangered Species List. In Alaska, the joint venture will focus on the expansion of National Wildlife Refuges and State wildlife areas, and the protection of high priority wilderness areas from the threat of development. Through coordination with Federal, State and local governments and national and local conservation organizations, the joint venture is embarking on a science-based initiative to determine population objectives and habitat protection and restoration strategies for all migratory bird species. This will be accomplished by developing models through the use of a Geographic Information System with existing and targeted bird population and habitat data. The complexity of this cooperative planning effort will be increased with the necessity to take predicted long-term climate and other environmental changes into consideration.

- *Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture* – Increased funding will enable the joint venture partnership to develop biological models and other information necessary to integrate population-based habitat objectives for colonial wading birds into the existing conservation design for waterfowl, landbirds, and shorebirds. The joint venture will prioritize resources to improve access to products and decision-support tools arising from landscape conservation planning activities to the well-developed conservation delivery infrastructure working on private, State, and Federal lands. Also, the partnership will further the capacity to track, monitor, and assess predicted biological outcomes resulting from the numerous protection, restoration, and enhancement projects implemented over the last decade through traditional and non-traditional partners (e.g., energy companies-carbon sequestration projects). Finally, the initiative will allow the partnership to consider how its population-based approach to landscape conservation could be used to assess the potential impacts of global climate change on the sustainability of migratory birds in these ecological systems.

Program Performance Change

Performance Goal	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Actual	2008 Plan	2009 Base Budget (2008 Plan + Fixed Costs)	2009 Plan	Program Change Accruing in 2009	Program Change Accruing in Outyears
Resource Protection - Sustaining Biological Communities								
CSF 6.4 Percent of habitat needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds - cumulative (PART)	40.5%	45.9% (31,038,128 of 67,673,168)	51.5% (229,656,269 of 445,882,181)	52.1% (233,127,859 of 447,161,217)	52.1% (233,127,859 of 447,161,217)	55.6% (248,601,118 of 447,161,217)	3.5% (6.6%)	
CSF Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$7,963	$29,861	$31,039	$31,039	$33,894	$2,855	
CSF Program Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$5,338	$29,224	$29,925	$29,925	$30,643	$718	
Actual/Projected Cost Per Acres (whole dollars)	unk	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	
6.4.1 % of habitat needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds - cumulative (PART)	40.5%	45.9% (1,038,128 of 67,673,168)	51.5% (229,656,269 of 445,882,181)	52.1% (233,127,859 of 447,161,217)	52.1% (233,127,859 of 447,161,217)	55.6% (248,601,118 of 447,161,217)	3.5% (6.6%)	
6.4.1.1 cumulative # of acres of habitat need met (PART)	25,700,000	31,038,128	229,656,269	233,127,859	233,127,859	248,601,118	15,473,259 (6.6%)	
Comments:	The additional $3.99M requested in 2009 will result in a habitat needs met increase because established joint ventures will continue to deliver results. This increase will allow new joint ventures to achieve habitat needs met accomplishments in out years. This out year increase might be up to an additional 30 million acres but is difficult to estimate.							
6.4.1.2 total # habitat acres identified (PART)	63,500,000	67,673,168	445,882,181	447,161,217	447,161,217	447,161,217	0	
Comments:	The acres identified will remain the same as the 2008 Plan primarily because increased funding to new joint ventures will not result in increased habitat needs identified until out years. This increase is difficult to estimate.							
6.4.5 # of BMC with habitat management needs identified at eco-regional scales	unk	201	191	222	222	363	141 (63.5%)	
Comments:	BMCs with management needs will increase because of funding received in previous years. However new BMCs does not necessarily mean more habitat acres will be identified in existing joint ventures. New joint venture funding will result in another increase in this number in out years. Although difficult to estimate the increase in out years could be an additional 30-40 BMCs with habitat needs identified.							

Program Overview

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) is considered one of the most successful conservation initiatives in the world. The purpose of the NAWMP is to sustain abundant waterfowl populations by conserving landscapes, through partnerships, guided by sound science. Joint ventures are the partnerships that were originally formed to implement the NAWMP. They are regional, self-directed organizations involving Federal, State, and local governments, corporations, and a wide range of non-governmental conservation groups, and have proven to be successful means for developing cooperative conservation efforts to protect waterfowl and other bird habitats. The Service currently provides base operations support for 17 joint ventures to address multiple local, regional, and continental goals for sustaining migratory bird populations by developing scientifically based landscape conservation plans and habitat projects that benefit migratory birds and other wildlife populations.

The Service has adopted a science-based, adaptive framework for setting and achieving cross-program habitat conservation objectives at multiple scales that is particularly well suited to strategically address the problems migratory birds face on their breeding, migration (stopover), and non-breeding grounds. This framework, called Strategic Habitat Conservation is based on the principles of Adaptive Management and uses the best available scientific data, ecological models, and focused monitoring and assessment efforts to develop and implement habitat conservation strategies that result in measurable bird population outcomes. The components of Strategic Habitat Conservation have long been used by joint ventures in their conservation planning for birds. This planning uses the best available scientific information to predict how bird populations respond to habitat conservation and other management activities. The products of biological planning, often maps or models, are used by joint venture partners to create landscape conservation designs that can direct individual habitat management expenditures to where they have greatest effect and lowest relative cost. Joint ventures use these conservation designs to enable and encourage partners to focus their conservation programs and resources on the highest priority areas in the amounts needed to sustain healthy populations of migratory bird species. Furthermore, remote sensing and migratory bird population monitoring will be increasingly important to assess the impacts of climate change; for example, to detect and monitor any geographic shift of available wetlands and other important habitats. As the joint venture partnerships implement Strategic Habitat Conservation, they create the biological science and the conservation partnership base which will allow States and other partners to pool resources for regional projects in critical habitats, such as stopover locations, for priority bird species.

In 2007, the NAWMP Committee completed a comprehensive assessment of cumulative progress toward NAWMP goals made by the joint ventures and other partners. The Assessment Report contains recommendations based on the key findings of the review, including:

- Joint ventures should develop improved methods and capabilities for tracking program accomplishments and assessing net landscape change in ways that correlate to waterfowl population goals.
- More resources should be directed to the Prairie Pothole Region and other breeding areas where most waterfowl populations are most limited by current and anticipated landscape conditions.
- To improve NAWMP effectiveness, additional new resources must be allocated to joint venture monitoring and evaluation programs.

Joint Ventures and the NAWMP are important ingredients to the President's Migratory Bird Initiative. The President's October 2007 speech specifically mentioned adding three new Joint Ventures in the Rio Grande, Appalachian Mountains, and Northern Great Plains areas. Without the

efforts of Joint Ventures, it is likely that the goal of improving the status of five more migratory bird species to healthy and sustainable levels would not be met.

The Service will work with the NAWMP Committee and other partners to make the implementation of these and other recommendations a priority in FY 2009 and in the next NAWMP update document.

Use of Cost and Performance Information
NAWMP/JV -

Cost-effective fish and wildlife conservation is attained by achieving the desired population impacts at the lowest relative cost to management and society. Joint Ventures have increasingly invested in biological planning as part of a Strategic Habitat Conservation framework to identify priority actions for specific conservation landscapes. This planning uses the best available scientific information to predict how bird populations respond to habitat conservation and other management activities. The products of biological planning, often maps or models, are used by joint venture partners to direct their individual habitat management expenditures where they have greatest effect and lowest relative cost. In 2004, the Migratory Bird Program participated in a PART review. As part of that process, the program developed new long-term and annual performance measures. These measures are designed to gauge joint venture planning and implementation activities directly with healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds, which is the long term outcome goal for the Migratory Bird Program. Use of these new measures over time will help managers improve program performance, link performance to budget decisions, and provide a basis for making recommendations to improve results.

2009 Program Performance

Two performance measures are in place to assess joint venture results. The measures are: number of birds of management concern with habitat needs identified at ecoregional scales and percent of habitat needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds. These measures record performance results at the endpoint of a planning, development, implementation cycle that is often several years in length. Hence, funding in a particular fiscal year will not fully yield results attributable to that funding for at least 2-3 years. This is especially true for new joint ventures, which are just beginning the cycle described above. For the four new joint ventures the requested increase will be used to initiate the planning and project development processes preparing them to deliver measurable performance results in upcoming years.

The FY 2006 Interior Appropriations Conference Committee Report directed the Service to base future funding increases for joint ventures on the results of ongoing program assessments. Accordingly, the Service will administratively allocate future funding for individual JVs based on their attainment of existing performance targets and their ability to contribute to the long term outcome goals of the Migratory Bird Program. The 2007 NAWMP Assessment Report provides information on joint venture performance and the future needs for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the joint ventures are responding to the recommendations provided to them through this assessment.

The requested increase will allow existing joint ventures to expand their biological planning to address 141 additional Birds of Management Concern. This planning and development will encourage partners to focus their conservation resources on the priority landscapes and habitat conditions most vital for sustaining healthy migratory bird populations. The 141 species and corresponding joint ventures selected for the proposed increase will be determined by assessing the capability of candidate joint ventures at the time of budget allocation. Migratory Bird Program focal species, a subset of the Birds of Management Concern, will be given priority for inclusion in joint venture planning. The habitat needs of those additional species will then be integrated with existing

joint venture habitat objectives and conservation strategies. Improvements in habitat performance measures will occur in out-years as resulting impacts to habitat conditions develop over time.

Program Performance Overview

Performance Goal / Measure	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Plan	2007 Actual	2008 Plan	2009 President's Budget	Change from 2008 Plan to 2009	Long-term 2012 Target
Resource Protection - Sustaining Biological Communities								
CSF 6.4 Percent of habitat needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds - cumulative (PART)	40.5%	45.9% (31,038,128 of 67,673,168)	58.0% (217,596,079 of 375,386,194)	51.5% (229,656,269 of 445,882,181)	52.1% (233,127,859 of 447,161,217)	55.6% (248,601,118 of 447,161,217)	3.5% (6.6%)	58.4% (278,433,252 of 477,161,217)
CSF Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$7,963	unk	$29,861	$31,039	$33,894	$2,855	$33,894
CSF Program Total Actual/Projected Cost($000)	unk	$5,338	unk	$29,224	$29,925	$30,643	$718	$30,643
Actual/Projected Cost Per Acres (whole dollars)	unk	$0	unk	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
6.4.1 % of habitat needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds - cumulative (PART)	40.5%	45.9% (31,038,128 of 67,673,168)	58.0% (217,596,079 of 375,386,194)	51.5% (229,656,269 of 445,882,181)	52.1% (233,127,859 of 447,161,217)	55.6% (248,601,118 of 447,161,217)	3.5% (6.6%)	58.4% (278,433,252 of 477,161,217)
6.4.1.1 cumulative # of acres of habitat need met (PART)	25,700,000	31,038,128	217,596,079	229,656,269	233,127,859	248,601,118	15,473,259 (6.6%)	278,433,252
Comments:	The additional $3.99M requested in 2009 will result in a habitat needs met increase because established joint ventures will continue to deliver results. This increase will allow new joint ventures to achieve habitat needs met accomplishments in out years. This out year increase might be up to an additional 30 million acres.							
6.4.1.2 total # habitat acres identified (PART)	63,500,000	67,673,168	375,386,194	445,882,181	447,161,217	447,161,217	0	477,161,217
Comments:	The acres identified will remain the same as the 2008 Plan primarily because increased funding to new joint ventures will not result in increased habitat needs identified until out years. This increase is difficult to estimate.							
6.4.5 # of BMC with habitat management needs identified at eco-regional scales	unk	201	200	191	222	363	141 (63.5%)	400
Comments:	BMCs with management needs will increase because of funding received in previous years. However new BMCs does not necessarily mean more habitat acres will be identified in existing joint ventures. New joint venture funding will result in another increase in this number in out years. Although difficult to estimate the increase in out years could be an additional 30-40 BMCs with habitat needs identified.							