

Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds Charter

Introduction

Migratory birds are of great ecological and economic value to the United States and other countries. They are important components of biological diversity and their conservation and management helps sustain ecological integrity as well as the growing demand for outdoor recreation such as wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities. Recreational activities focused on birds also provide financial support to local communities and businesses.

The United States has recognized the importance of this resource through the ratification of migratory bird conventions with Great Britain on behalf of Canada (1916), Mexico (1936), Japan (1972), and Soviet Union (1978). These conventions, together with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, impose substantive obligations on the United States for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitat.

The Goals of the Council are to:

- promote coordination and collaboration of migratory bird conservation amongst the Federal agencies whose actions may affect migratory bird populations.
- improve opportunities for Federal activities to more effectively protect and conserve migratory birds and recognize positive impacts Federal agencies are having on migratory bird populations.
- ensure that each representative agency to which Executive Order 13186, “Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds” (Executive Order) is applicable successfully implements its migratory bird conservation responsibilities, as described in their respective Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) in accordance with the Executive Order.

The Objectives of the Council are to:

- foster partnerships between other Federal and State agencies, tribes, and non-governmental entities to further the goals of the Executive Order.
- increase migratory bird conservation both nationally and internationally through the actions of Federal agencies.
- share the latest resource information to assist in the conservation and management of migratory birds.
- develop an annual report of accomplishments and recommendations related to the Executive Order and implementation of the Federal agency MOUs.
- select an annual recipient of a Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award for contributions to the protection of migratory birds.

Membership

Participation in the Council is open to all Federal agencies whose activities may directly or indirectly affect migratory bird populations. Participation will include, but is not limited to, those agencies to whom the Executive Order applies. The Council will serve an advisory role to provide input that will be considered in high-level policy decision-making by the Secretary of the Interior regarding the implementation of the Executive Order.

The Secretary of Interior will establish a Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds to oversee the implementation of the Executive Order. The Council shall include representation, at the bureau director/administrator level, from the Departments of the Interior, State, Commerce, Agriculture, Transportation, Energy, Defense, and the Environmental Protection Agency and from such other agencies as appropriate.

This Council will meet the intent of Executive Order 13186, which directs executive departments and agencies to take certain actions to protect migratory birds. The responsibilities of the Council will be implemented to the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations and within Administrative budgetary limits, and in harmony with agency missions.

Meetings

Council meetings will be held annually. Regular agenda items will include presentation and discussion of accomplishments relative to implementation of the Executive Order by each represented Federal agency, selection of a Stewardship Award recipient, addressing any concerns pertaining to implementation of agency responsibilities in the MOUs, and developing appropriate recommendations. Each agency will confirm their official representatives to the Fish and Wildlife Service three weeks before the meeting.

At the Council's discretion, portions of the annual meetings will be open to the general public and/or Council member invitees. Stewardship Award selections and other confidential topics will not be open to the public. If Council meetings, or portions thereof, will be open to the public, they will be announced in the Federal Register at least 15 days prior to each meeting.

Staff

The Fish and Wildlife Service Council Coordinator will serve as the staff person for the Council. The duties of the Coordinator will include:

- 1) supporting the Co-chairs in developing Council meeting agendas, distributing materials prior to meetings, and facilitating discussions of issues,
- 2) compiling and distributing minutes of Council meetings and reporting on progress of action items identified by the Council,
- 3) maintaining a website that provides annual updates on the Stewardship Award recipient, copies of the annual accomplishment reports, and any important updates on data inventory. This website will be based on the Service web page,

- 4) coordinating with the Staff Committee as necessary for implementing the Council's goals and objectives,
- 5) serving as liaison between the Council and agencies who are MOU signatories as appropriate and necessary, and
- 6) keeping a current list of contact information of Council members and others interested in the successful implementation of the MOUs.

Amendments

This charter can be amended by the Council at the annual meeting. Amendment proposals should be provided to the Chair at least four weeks prior to the meeting.

Expenses

Unless there is prior agreement, Council representatives and other meeting attendees are responsible for their travel and per diem expenses.

Staff Committee

Council members will authorize staff representatives to represent their respective agencies on the Staff Committee. This committee will meet at least once in person between Council meetings to conduct tasks as assigned by the Council. Additional meetings may be held as needed in person or via teleconference or webinar.

Examples of tasks that may be assigned to the Staff Committee include:

- Development of Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award
- Development of conservation measures process
- Data sharing
- Annual accomplishments format

The Staff Committee will support and assist the Council in its oversight role of the implementation of the Executive Order. Additional standing and ad hoc committees may be formed in the future if deemed necessary.

Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award

The Staff Committee will be responsible for establishing the criteria and guidelines for the Stewardship Award, distributing nomination packet information to interested parties, reviewing nomination packages, and submitting an award nominee to the Council for final review and approval. An award recipient will be chosen annually.

Conservation Measures Development Process

The Staff Committee will advise the Council on the development of conservation measures/best management practices to further the implementation of the Executive Order and individual MOUs. This will include guidance on how to approach conservation measure development within their respective agencies and in partnership with appropriate stakeholders, as well as tools and other resources.

Accomplishment Report

The Staff Committee will develop guidelines for the Accomplishment Report, which will include:

- Objective of Reports
- Submittal by each agency on the Council
- Discussion of successful attainment of Executive Order requirements
- Format, specific topics to be reported, and level of detail
- Timeline for report coverage and submittal process to the committee
- Audience and recipients