

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Strategic Plan The Coastal Program

*Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife  
Through Voluntary Conservation*

October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2010





***MESSAGE from the DIRECTOR***

I am pleased to present the *Vision Document* of the Strategic Plan for the *Coastal Program*.

The first part of this Plan describes our vision of the Program as we see it in today's mix of assets within the Fish and Wildlife Service and, importantly, what we see as its role over the next five years. As Director, I see that role as illustrative of the shifts we are seeing in the organizational culture and operational focus of the Service. To be responsive to evolving national priorities and austere Federal budgets, we must expect change and manage for it. While we can take pride in the Service's past accomplishments, we must be prepared to meet new challenges in natural resource management and new standards of efficiency and accountability in how we operate.

The public we serve has changed and expects that we can accomplish more of our goals through partnerships and voluntary incentives, instead of relying on regulations and land acquisition to protect natural resources. Over the past few years we've also seen greater public demand for government agencies to more stringently account for their accomplishments and to be more efficient. Therefore, we must excel in both resource management and business management in order to put as much of our limited resources into on-the-ground conservation programs as we possibly can.

I believe that we must continue to emphasize working cooperatively with others and expand our use of collaborative approaches to resource conservation. We must also develop a more Service-wide integrated approach to problem solving and share resources to get the job done.

The *Coastal Program* resonates with these ideals and is serving as a vanguard for change. As detailed in the second part of this Plan, we are identifying regional geographic areas in which to focus local projects in order to realize the greatest benefit to those fish and wildlife resources most in need. The third part of the Plan is a national summary or overview of priority areas and the expected benefits of our future actions.

Most importantly, the Plan reaffirms the *Coastal Program's* commitment to building and strengthening our partnerships for shared stewardship of our fish and wildlife resources. Working together, we can lead change and continue our Nation's proud tradition of conservation leadership.

*A Dale Hall*



***MESSAGE from the ASSISTANT DIRECTOR***

I am pleased that so many of our highly valuable partners and stakeholders assisted us in preparing this *Vision* for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program. The shores of our Nation are special places that attract us to live, work and recreate. These coastal estuaries, wetlands, barrier islands, coral reefs, tidal flats and rocky shores are also vital to a myriad of fish and wildlife species, as well as, to the well-being of nearly half of the U.S. population who live and work in coastal communities. The Coastal Program and its highly skilled, locally-based staff offers the Service a means to focus attention on high priority coastal ecosystems along our Nation's shores.

The Coastal Program is an important tool in achieving our goals for recovery of endangered species and maintaining populations of at-risk species, as nearly half of the Federally-listed species are found in coastal areas. Service field staffs work to control invasive species, remove barriers for fish passage, restore habitat for migratory birds, protect or restore coastal wetlands, and support the National Wildlife Refuge System, 40 percent of which occurs in coastal counties. The Coastal Program will also be integral in implementing the National Fish Habitat Initiative along with State agencies and other stakeholders.

As noted in this Strategic Plan's Vision Document, the Coastal Program's philosophy is based on integrating Service activities in high-priority coastal watersheds and bringing the Service's biological expertise to help solve local natural resource problems. We will build on these strengths and capabilities to achieve new levels of efficiency within the Service and in meeting the needs of our coastal partners and stakeholders.

***Healthy Fish and Wildlife, Healthy Habitats, Healthy People, and a Healthy Economy***

Read on,

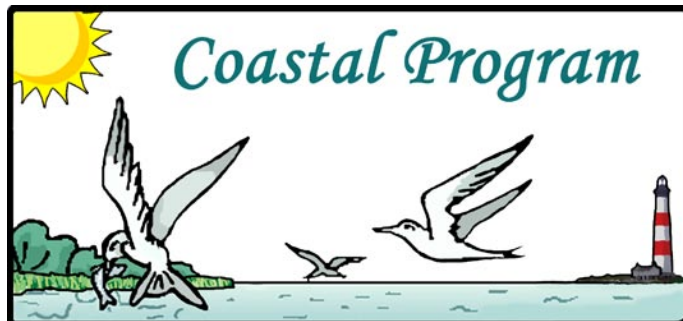
*Ma Parker*

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**Vision Document  
Part 1 of 3**





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# I. Executive Summary

The Strategic Plan for the Coastal Program (Program) consists of three parts, each developed cooperatively by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) headquarters, regional, and field office staffs and, most importantly, our stakeholders and partners. Part 1, the “Vision Document” describes our Program and five major goals that will guide program operations for the next five years. These five goals are intended to lead to the ultimate end outcome of increasing and maintaining Federal Trust Species populations.

Part 2, the “Regional Step-down Plans” will identify geographic focus areas in each region, provide estimated annual project accomplishment targets and describe anticipated benefits to Federal Trust Species. Part 3, the “National Summary Document” will use regional plans as a base to describe a national

overview of habitat priorities and 5-year performance targets.

The Program is the Service’s vanguard for non-regulatory, voluntary, citizen and community-based stewardship efforts for fish and wildlife conservation. It is based on the premise that fish and wildlife conservation is a responsibility shared by citizens and government. We provide willing partners with financial and technical assistance to accomplish stewardship projects that benefit Federal Trust Species.

Five major goals have been identified as core components of our vision for the Program. First, and foremost, is our goal to **conserve habitat** for the benefit of priority fish and wildlife species. To enhance our mission capabilities we need to **broaden and strengthen**

**partnerships; improve information sharing and communication; and, enhance our workforce.** To **increase accountability**, we need to measure progress toward Department of the Interior (DOI), Service, and Program strategic goals and ensure that our actions are efficient and effective.

We will continue to work as a partner with other Federal programs, State agencies, Tribal and local governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses, industry, land trusts and non-profit groups, and private landowners. We will also work closely with other Service programs to assist in implementing national conservation plans for Federal Trust Species. Most importantly, the views and involvement of our stakeholders will continue to provide valuable guidance.



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS



## II. Introduction

The Coastal Program works toward achieving the mission of the Service which is “working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

At the heart of the Service’s mission are the conservation and management of the Federal Trust Species: migratory birds; threatened and endangered species; inter-jurisdictional fish; certain marine mammals; and, species of international concern. In turn, this is the ultimate objective of the work done by our Program. While the Service works under an array of statutory authorities and resource management programs to meet its mandates, our Program serves as a bridge to the owners and managers of Federal and non-Federal lands to develop partnerships that directly benefit fish and wildlife with a particular focus on Federal Trust Species. Our voluntary, cooperative conservation Program is based on the premise that fish and wildlife conservation is a responsibility shared by citizens and their government. Our approach is to engage willing partners, through non-regulatory incentives, to conserve and protect valuable fish and wildlife habitat on their property and in their communities. We do this by providing the funding support and technical and planning tools needed to make on-the-ground conservation affordable, feasible, and effective.

The Program has grown in size and scope since its beginning and has gained national recognition as a vanguard in the new era of cooperative conservation. As a result, the public investment in the Program has increased along with a commensurate requirement for accountability.

The Strategic Plan will address these important issues: how we identify needs and opportunities to serve our mission; how we strive for efficiency and effectiveness in our Program



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

operations; and how we measure and account for our accomplishments. Five major goals have been identified as core components of our vision:

- Conserve Habitat
- Broaden and Strengthen Partnerships
- Improve Information Sharing and Communication
- Enhance Our Workforce
- Increase Accountability

To help achieve these goals, the views of our stakeholders have and will continue to provide valuable guidance. At the outset of the strategic planning process, an outreach effort was conducted throughout the country to provide stakeholders the opportunity to reflect on the internal and external factors impacting the Programs’ current performance and future accomplishments. That input provided valuable direction for the design and content of this document. Of note, the vast majority of the more than 400 stakeholders involved expressed strong support for the Program citing on-the-ground accomplishments, flexibility,

technical expertise, and responsiveness to the needs and values of property owners and local communities as important strengths.

This external guidance has been coupled with the experience, knowledge, and dedicated foresight of the staff of the Coastal Program to produce this Vision Document, which articulates our philosophy, goals, and desired operational outcomes.

*“Our responsibility to the Nation is to be more careful stewards of the land; we must be a constant catalyst for positive change.”*  
- Gifford Pinchot



# III. Overview of the Coastal Program

The Coastal Program is one of the Service's most popular and effective programs for voluntary, community-based fish and wildlife conservation. The Coastal Program focuses on watershed-scale, long-term collaborative resource planning and on-the-ground projects in high-priority coastal areas.

The Program has joined with many partners nationwide to conserve fish and wildlife habitat in very significant ways. Through our partnerships, we have worked to conserve wetlands, streams and rivers, marshes and estuaries, coral reefs, and coastal lowlands and forests. The power of our partnerships is clearly demonstrated by our accomplishments.

As of 2005, the Program has:

- Restored over 125,000 acres of coastal wetlands
- Restored over 31,000 acres of coastal upland habitat
- Restored over 1,300 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat
- Protected over 1,700,000 acres of habitat
- Leveraged Federal tax dollars at least 3:1 through partnerships

*Our mission is to efficiently achieve voluntary habitat conservation, through financial and technical assistance, for the benefit of Federal Trust Species.*

The Service's Coastal Program evolved from the establishment of the Chesapeake Bay/Estuary Program in 1985. In 1991, the Program took on a national focus with the addition of three new coastal areas and, with gradually increasing budgets, has expanded its presence over the years and is now active on all U.S. coasts, including the Great Lakes, Pacific Islands and the Caribbean, focusing the Service's efforts in bays, estuaries, coastal

streams, near shore and terrestrial habitats within high-priority coastal watersheds.

As human population and development on our coasts increase, stresses on coastal fish and wildlife resources increase commensurately. Many of these coastal areas are heavily urbanized where citizens depend on coastal natural resources to make a living. Major environmental challenges include water quality and quantity, and concerns that affect human and animal health.

Coastal areas are vitally important to fish and wildlife. Coastal areas support 40 percent of the Service's National Wildlife Refuges, 40 percent of the Federally-listed endangered species (including 75 percent of the listed mammals and birds), 50 percent of the Service's fisheries activities, 25 percent of the Nation's wetlands, and at least 30 percent of North American wintering waterfowl. These Federal Trust Species habitats are clearly a Service priority.

The Program promotes large-scale ecosystem-based policies, seeks

partnerships to carry out the on-the-ground projects, and catalyzes public action to solve problems in the Nation's coastal areas. This has been accomplished by integrating the activities of an array of Service programs addressing habitat conservation, fisheries, migratory bird and waterfowl management, endangered species, environmental contaminants, law enforcement and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Program is organized around locally-based field coordinators who can provide a broad range of technical and financial assistance to help identify, develop, and implement unique, local conservation strategies. Coastal Program coordinators assist communities in conserving coastal resources through fish and wildlife habitat assessment, ecological restoration, technical assistance regarding lands in need of protection, and outreach and education. Our technical assistance and leadership skills have helped catalyze coastal conservation projects on private and public lands, as well as Tribal lands. The large variety of partners we work



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

with reflects the high population density and the complexity of ownership and governance of the Nation's coastal areas.

The Program is guided by the following ecological planning principles:

- Maintain natural ecosystem diversity, functions and productivity;
- Promote self-sustaining populations of Federal Trust Species within their historic ranges; and
- Provide for ecologically sound levels of public use, economic benefits, and the enjoyment of natural values.

The Program was built on a framework of four interdependent major functions that have been proven successful. These are:

- Integrating Service activities in high-priority coastal watersheds to identify the most important natural resource problems and solutions;
- Bringing the Service's biological expertise to the planning and decision-making processes of other Federal, local and State agencies;



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

- Forming partnerships to implement on-the-ground solutions; and
- Using focused outreach to instill a stewardship ethic and catalyze the American public to help solve problems, change behaviors, and promote ecologically sound decisions for the benefit of Federal Trust Species.

Partnerships resulting in voluntary on-the-ground actions are the Program's foundation. As our partners recognize, on-the-ground implementation of habitat conservation plans is crucial to supporting fish and wildlife resources.

Other functions of the Program are also integral to coastal habitat conservation. In addition to the work described above, the Coastal Program co-administers (with the Service's Federal Assistance Program) the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program, which provides grant monies to States through the Sport Fish Restoration Fund to protect and restore vital coastal wetlands.

The Program also helps administer the Coastal Barrier Resources Act. The Act takes a market-based approach to conservation that restricts certain Federal funding that encourages development in hazard-prone and biologically-rich coastal habitats.

*“The Coastal Program is flexible and adaptable in the way it addresses different coastal resource needs. It has the ability to deal with regional level coastal issues and to react rapidly to needs. The Coastal Program is very straight forward and clear as to ways that funds can be accessed and expectations. Interaction with Coastal Program staff is greatly valued and works well in our partnerships.”*

*- Point Reyes Bird Observatory Representative*

## IV. Our Conservation Challenge

Our coastal areas are under acute pressure from population growth. Comprising less than 25 percent of America's land area, coastal counties are home to more than 50 percent of our total population—a share projected to swell to 75 percent by the end of this decade.

More than 50 percent of the Nation's wetlands have been destroyed; more than 70 percent of the Nation's riparian habitats have been lost or significantly degraded; and, coral reefs and submerged coastal vegetation continue to decline. Further, less than one percent of the Nation's rivers remain free flowing. These are just a few examples of habitat types impacted by human activities, as we live, work, and build our economy. Consequences of habitat loss include decreases in wildlife populations and many other natural, social, and economic impacts and, ultimately, a diminished quality of life.

We work closely with other Service programs to help implement national plans such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, North American Landbird Conservation Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, Coral Reef Action Plan, National Fisheries Strategic Plan, National Wildlife Refuge System Strategic Plan, Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plans, Partners in Flight, and Endangered Species Habitat Conservation and Recovery plans. Because of these and related experiences, our Program will become increasingly active in integrated Trust Resource conservation planning, such as the National Fish Habitat Initiative, that will provide for Service-wide integrated management strategies for fish and wildlife conservation. Likewise, in this era of cooperative conservation, we will continue to provide biological and technical expertise to other Federal agencies to

complement their habitat initiatives, as well as to States in implementing State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans.

The success of the Program relies on building trust and credibility with our partners. We achieve this by providing accurate information and being available to assist our partners in a timely manner, by leveraging resources, and by helping implement cost-shared projects. Our staff is experienced at helping people come together to forge and implement collaborative solutions that meet local and regional needs for fish and wildlife stewardship.



*Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS*

## V. Getting the Job Done: Our Goals

The Program and our partners operate in a constantly changing natural, economic, social, and political environment. In the face of these challenges, we seek to strategically allocate our resources, while remaining flexible to quickly adapt and respond to change. Using the input from our partners and stakeholders, this plan describes where we envision the Coastal Program to be in the future using five national-level goals. In Part 2, “Regional Step-down Plans” each region will develop performance measures under each of these goals.

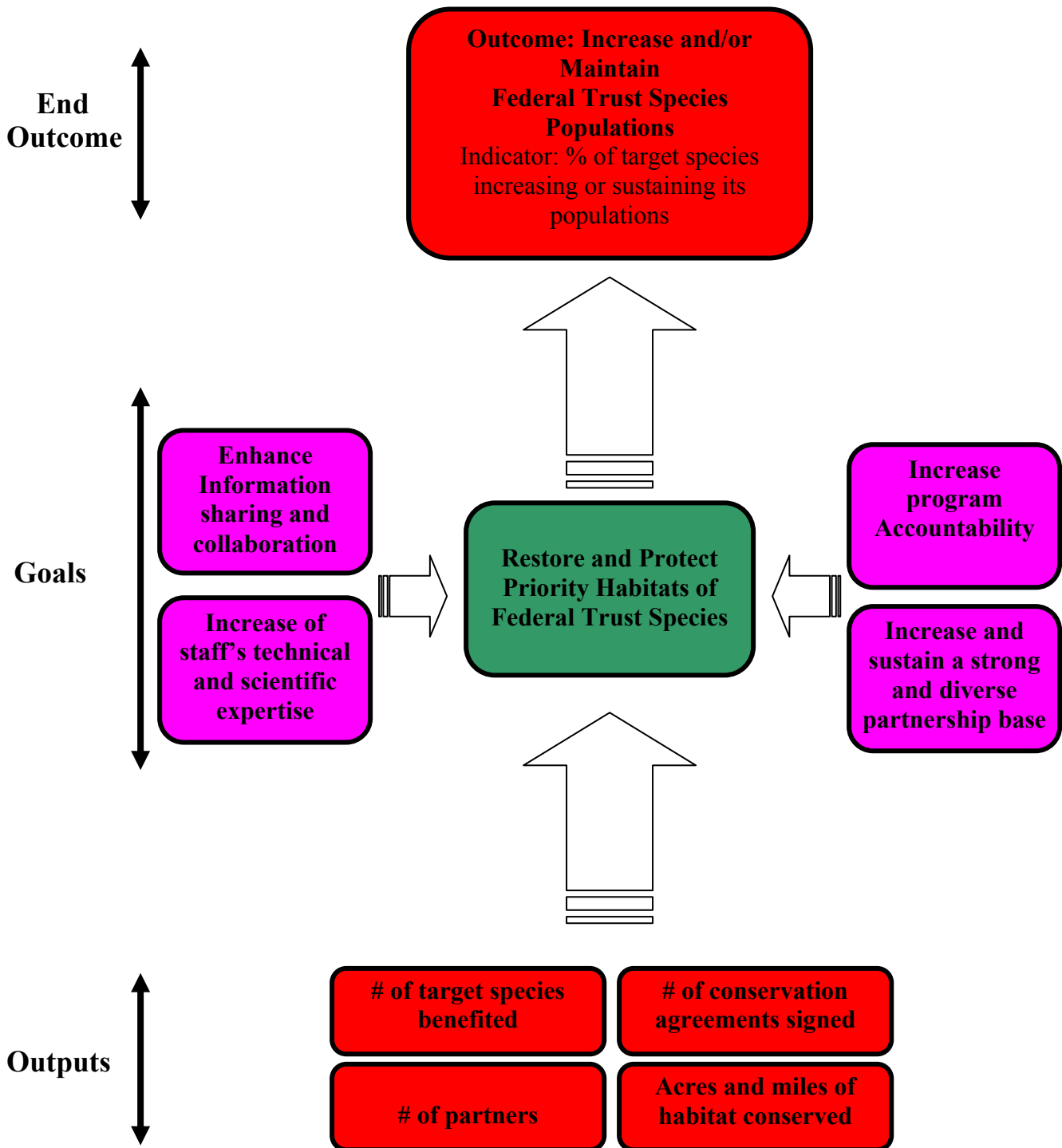
These five goals are designed to support the ultimate outcome of the Program: increasing and/or sustaining Federal Trust Species populations.

Progress towards this outcome will be measured by an outcome indicator that is the percentage of sustained or increasing target species populations. This indicator is derived from information assessed by the Program as well as other Service species-oriented programs and/or by our partners.



*Photo by Robert Owens, USFWS*

# Coastal Program Conceptual Strategic Model



## Goal One: Conserve Habitat

*Restore and Protect Priority Habitats to Increase and Maintain Federal Trust Species Populations*

Over the past two centuries, many of the natural communities upon which our Trust Species depend have been lost or degraded. These areas were degraded incrementally over many years, and time will be needed to restore them to a healthy condition. In addition, we need to protect key remaining natural habitats and the areas we restore. Protection can be achieved through tools such as landowner agreements, conservation easements, and acquisition. These on-going conservation measures require strategic planning and investment of labor and funding. Whether implementing on-the-ground projects ourselves, or providing assistance to others, we deliver the Coastal Program to protect and restore priority habitats. Cumulatively, these acres contribute significantly to the sustainability of Federal Trust Species.

Regional habitat priorities will be developed by the Program. These priorities will be determined in coordination with our partners and stakeholders through a region-by-region assessment of needs and opportunities, and will determine what we deem most critical to benefit the fish and wildlife species we are entrusted to conserve. We will step down these priorities to on-the-ground project planning and implementation, and use a series of national, regional and local filters to help focus our efforts to ensure that Program funds are spent wisely.

To achieve results at the local level, we conduct community education and outreach, establish habitat-based partnerships, and provide technical and financial assistance to implement projects. Our technical assistance to our partners includes habitat assessment, project design, consultation and coordination throughout project implementation, identification of additional potential project partners, grant writing and assistance with permits, as necessary. Our technical assistance to agencies and organizations often results in policy and decision-making that have positive ecological and economic effects on tens of thousands of acres.

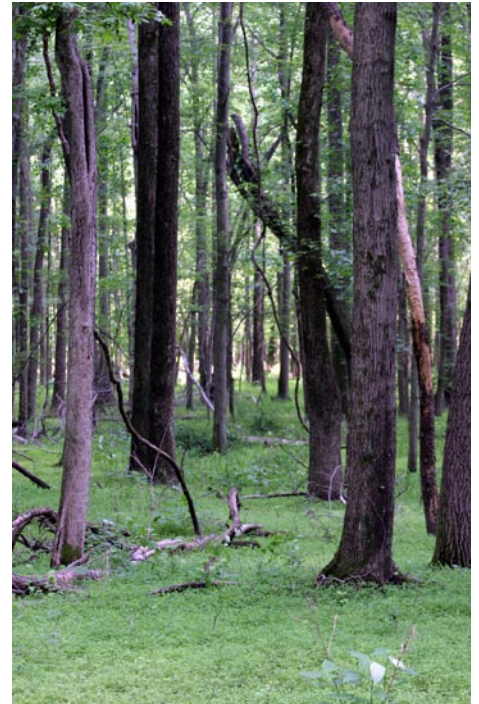
## Goal Two: Broaden and Strengthen Partnerships

*Accomplish our work through voluntary partnerships*

This goal supports an important component of the Service's mission "to work with others" by engaging external partners and other Service programs in stewardship activities that restore, enhance and protect fish and wildlife habitats. A shared interest in habitat conservation is the foundation of our partnerships.

Our partners include Federal, Tribal, State and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private corporations, foundations, land trusts, and individual landowners. The Program develops partnerships taking into consideration the priorities and opportunities in their geographic areas.

We are more effective as a partner when we can contribute to shared conservation goals. One of our primary contributions is "state-of-art" species and habitat information that we use to promote conservation and stewardship. In our partnership role, we can also use funding and/or technical assistance to influence the design and scope of plans and projects. The Service's biological expertise and field presence help ensure that projects are targeted to benefit important fish and wildlife resources.



*Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS*



*Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS*



Photo by Nova Development

### Goal Three: Improve Information Sharing and Communication

*Collaborate and share information and concerns with our partners, stakeholders, future partners, decision-makers, and others to protect, restore, and enhance Trust Resources*

Effective communication is key to engaging, recruiting, and enlisting the many stakeholders and decision makers required for successful conservation. Therefore, achieving this goal is essential to meeting our expectations for Goal Two. Likewise, improving information sharing is essential to Goals One and Five.

We must promote and increase awareness and understanding of the Programs' stewardship vision to encourage voluntary participation and expand community support for the Program and habitat conservation. It is important to reach out and establish trusting relationships with partners that will foster a shared sense of stewardship necessary for successful collaboration. We use many opportunities to communicate including: one-on-one communication with partners; public meetings; media exposure; brochures and other written material; and, an Internet presence via the world wide web. In addition, we foster intra- and inter-agency exchange of information to enhance the success of projects.

On a national level, the Program will actively participate in Service efforts to give the general public access to information on Service priorities and

strategies for habitat conservation. The Program will work with current Service initiatives to increase overall Service effectiveness and customer service. The Program will also work with interagency and State agency efforts to assess and describe the biological response that is occurring as a result of our habitat restoration and protection activities. In particular, the Program will work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other DOI bureaus to quantify the benefits derived from various incentive-based approaches to habitat conservation.

### Goal Four: Enhance Our Workforce

*The staff of our Program is our most important resource. Maintaining and supporting the staff are the keys to the success of the Program in achieving on the ground results for Federal Trust Species.*

Successful implementation of the Program requires a diverse, highly skilled, and motivated workforce. The Service is committed to developing highly capable employees who are results-focused, act with integrity, and seek creative solutions in the conservation of Trust Species habitat. Within budgetary constraints, the Service will strive to provide adequate staffing to address national, State, regional and local resource priorities, and to meet the needs of the public.

Employees will also have access to the technical and financial tools necessary to meet the demands of the Program. The Service will also ensure adequate training to field and support staff in a variety of habitat conservation tools and team building techniques necessary to address the resource



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

priorities, maintain excellent customer service, and deliver a diverse array of habitat conservation projects. Team building includes the Service, our partners and other stakeholders.

### Goal Five: Increase Accountability

*Measure, assess, and report on the effectiveness, efficiency and fiscal integrity of our habitat conservation programs and activities*

Accountability is an important responsibility of all government programs. Historically, our Program reports acres and miles of wetlands, uplands, riparian lands and streams, either restored or protected, as annual actual or projected accomplishments. In addition, the Program reports the number and type of partners engaged in on-the-ground projects and the amount of cost-share, including in-kind contributions, leveraged from non-Service sources to support each project. We also report on numbers of fish barriers removed and acres treated for invasive species. These accomplishments are recorded by project managers in our Habitat Information Tracking System (HabITS) database which is the most reliable and important tool for meeting accountability requirements.

However, new and expanded accountability standards are emerging from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the DOI that are reflected in the vision for this goal. While acres and miles of habitat restored or protected remain central to measuring program accomplishments, we now will be responsible for describing the value of the acres and miles to Trust Species. In other words, we will be accountable for ensuring that our level of effort is producing measurable contributions to the Federal Trust Species we work with. Initially, we will describe the value or contribution of our projects to the quantitative goals of existing, peer-reviewed conservation plans that have already identified expected benefits from conservation actions in specific geographical areas. Linking our efforts to these existing plans will assist in measuring anticipated biological responses to or benefits of our actions.

The Program will direct its effort to geographic focus areas (identified in Part 2, "Regional Step-down

Plans”) and prioritize projects based on the level of contribution to the conservation of Federal Trust Species. Consideration will also be given to State species of concern and related habitat needs as identified in the most recent “State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.”

[Note: The ability of the Program to meet targeted levels of performance is influenced by several key factors over which the agency has no control, such as unpredictable adverse weather conditions that preclude completion of projects, contract or labor disputes, availability of non-Service cost-share requirements, etc. Each regional step-down plan in Part 2 will identify external factors which might influence the achievement of targeted performance goals.]



*Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS*



## VI. Next Steps: From Vision to Results

In this Vision Document we have described our vision of what is expected of the Coastal Program. The remainder of the Strategic Plan will describe how and where we will operate to meet these expectations. Part 2, “Regional Step-down Plans” identifies geographic focus areas, estimated performance targets and a description of anticipated benefits to Federal Trust Species, as developed by our regional and field offices, through collaboration with stakeholders. Part 3, is a compilation of regional priorities into a “National Summary Document” identifying priorities and performance targets for FY2006 through FY2010.

*“All acts of government...are of slight importance to conservation except as they affect the acts and thoughts of citizens.”*  
— Aldo Leopold



Photo by L. Miranda-Castro, USFWS

**To learn more about our Program and how to find a local contact go to our web sites:**

**Coastal Program:** <http://www.fws.gov/coastal/CoastalProgram>  
**Coastal Grants Program:** <http://www.fws.gov/coastal/CoastalGrants>

**Coastal Barrier Resource System:**  
[http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/coastal\\_barrier.htm](http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/coastal_barrier.htm)

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Branch of Habitat Restoration  
Division of Fish and Wildlife Management and Habitat Restoration  
4401 N. Fairfax Drive  
Arlington, VA 22203  
(703) 358-2201**

## VII. Defining the Terms We Use: Glossary

**Biological Response:** The reaction of fish, wildlife, plants and other living indicators to a project or series of projects.

**Conservation:** Any single or group of actions or decisions that are made to support the fish and wildlife values of a habitat. For the purposes of this document, it is intended to be an all-inclusive term including (but not limited to) restoration, enhancement, establishment, maintenance, protection, preservation, monitoring, outreach, assessment, and education for fish and wildlife habitat values.

**Enhancement:** The manipulation of physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of existing habitat to improve specific functions.

**Establishment:** The manipulation of physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a habitat to create and maintain habitat that did not previously exist.

**Federal Trust Species:** The group of species including migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, inter-jurisdictional fish, marine mammals, and species of international concern, for which the Service has a specific legal mandate.

**Federal Trust Resources:** The trusteeship responsibilities of the Department of the Interior include Trust Species; Federally-owned minerals; National Wildlife Refuges; National Fish Hatcheries; National Parks and Monuments; and, Tribal resources, in cases where the U.S. acts on behalf of the Indian Tribe.

**Habitat Improvement:** Any habitat restoration, enhancement, or establishment intended to increase the suitability of an area for a species or community.

**Incentive-based:** The provision of goods or services, such as financial or technical assistance, for the purpose

of motivating the entity to make a favorable decision that might not be made otherwise.

**Maintenance:** The periodic additional work involving the manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics present that is critical for the continuing success of a restoration process.

**Monitoring:** The collection and assessment of repeated observations or measurements over time to evaluate the effectiveness of actions. The following types of monitoring are recognized:

**Baseline:** Characterizes existing conditions before an action begins. Establishes a benchmark against which the success of the activity or project can be measured.

**Implementation or Compliance:** Assesses whether the activity or project was carried out in accordance to the contract, plan, or guidance.

**Effectiveness:** Determines whether the activity or project has had the desired effect on selected indicators or performance criteria.

**Validation:** Establishes a cause and effect relationship between the project or activity and one or more selected biological indicators (e.g. the population size of the targeted species the project was intended to benefit).

**Partnership:** A group of people and/or organizations that have formed a relationship to promote an activity or idea.

**Protection:** A long-term action to safeguard habitats of significant importance to fish and wildlife species.

**Restoration:** The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of returning the natural functions to lost or degraded landscapes.

**Science-based:** Founded in

information that has been subject to the application of an objective scientific methodology, generally assumed to include rules for concept formation, observation, experimentation, and the validation of hypotheses, and enhanced by review of peers with expertise in the subject matter.

**Stakeholder:** An individual, group of people, and/or organization that have an interest in an activity or idea.

**Target Species:** An individual or group of Federal Trust Species for which we expect to directly benefit when developing and implementing our projects.

**Technical Assistance:** Collaboration, facilitation, or consultation that relates to a habitat conservation, restoration, or enhancement initiative.

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
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