

COUNCIL FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS

STATUS REPORT





The Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds was established in 2009 by the Secretary of the Interior to oversee the implementation of Executive Order 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds.

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Cover photos: Barn Owl by Dr. Thomas Barnes; Golden-winged Warbler by Mike Sweet; Harlequin Duck by USFWS; Laysan Albatross by David Pattee USFWS; Rufous Hummingbird by USFWS; American Avocet by Eric Kershner. Inside photo: Indigo Bunting by Steve Maslowski. Back photo: Osprey by USFWS.



PHOTO: BALD EAGLE USFWS

Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds Status Report 2011

GOAL AND PURPOSE

To fulfill the reporting requirements set forth in Executive Order 13186: Responsibilities of Federal Agencies To Protect Migratory Birds (66 FR 3853, Jan 17, 2001), the Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds (Council) developed this annual report to highlight the progress made by the Federal Agencies participating in the Council during 2011. This report provides an overview of how Council members are implementing their responsibilities in Section 3 of the EO.

Purposes of the Report are to:

- Report activities associated with implementation of the EO and associated Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) for the current year;
- Report agencies' additional accomplishments related to migratory bird conservation;
- Identify opportunities within agencies and areas for improvement related to migratory bird conservation; and
- Identify recommendations regarding improvements in implementation of the EO.

SUMMARY

In 2011, agencies worked independently and with other federal and state agencies and private organizations on large and small projects to promote the conservation of migratory bird populations and their habitats. For example, agencies surveyed birds after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and created emergency habitat for shorebirds and waterfowl along the Gulf Coast.

Some agencies and their partners surveyed migratory birds on millions of acres of private and public land throughout the country and studied migratory birds in areas targeted for energy development. New technologies were used to study the breeding, migration, and wintering ecology of raptors, to remotely sense migratory birds offshore, and to use geolocators to identify wintering grounds and migratory pathways. In addition, agencies worked with other countries to reduce seabird bycatch in longline fisheries and to develop pesticide risk assessments for birds.

Taken together, these accomplishments represent a significant achievement for conserving migratory birds and their habitats. However, there is still much work to do. The Council will focus on the areas that need the most improvement, as well as those where significant opportunities exist that can be achieved in the upcoming year. Subcommittees will play a key role making the Council an effective voice for advancing bird conservation in Federal agencies by:

- Identifying potential voids in bird data repositories;
- Developing comprehensive conservation measures and making these available to agencies; and
- Promoting the Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award to continually challenge agencies to excel in seeking highly effective and innovative methods of conserving migratory birds throughout the range of their annual life cycles.

Photo: Florida Scrub-Jay
Eric Kershner



BACKGROUND

Executive Order 13186, "Responsibilities of Federal Agencies To Protect Migratory Birds", was signed in January 2001. The EO identified responsibilities of Federal agencies pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and other pertinent statutes. Per the EO, "each Federal agency taking actions that have, or are likely to have, a measurable negative effect on migratory bird populations is directed to develop and implement... a MOU with the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that shall promote the conservation of migratory bird populations." It further stated that "each MOU shall establish protocols for implementation of the MOU and for reporting accomplishments." Through the end of 2011, seven MOUs were signed and five MOUs were under development.

The EO also established the interagency Council to oversee the implementation of the EO, and identified four duties for the Council:

1. Share the latest resource information to assist in the conservation and management of migratory birds;
2. Develop an annual report of accomplishments and recommendations related to this order;
3. Foster partnerships to further the goals of this order; and
4. Select an annual recipient of a Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award for contributions to the protection of migratory birds.

The Council meets annually, with the meetings chaired by the Director of the USFWS. Staff for each agency on the Council (Staff Committee) meet as needed throughout the year. Much of the Council's work is carried out by task-oriented subcommittees. To date, 20 agencies have participated on the Council.

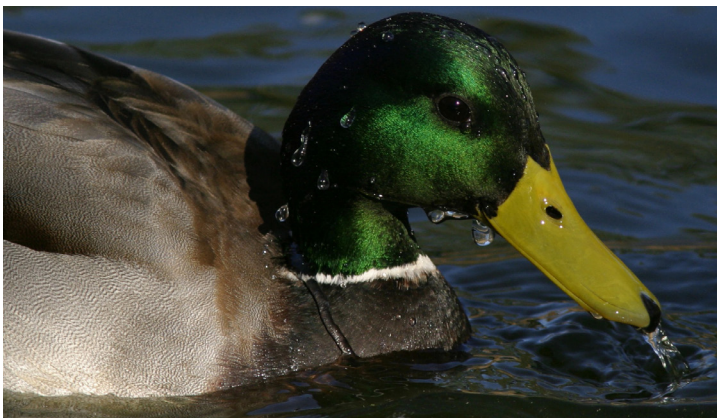


Photo: Mallard
Eric Kershner

SUBCOMMITTEES

During 2011, several subcommittees of the Staff Committee worked on tasks requested by the Council. Subcommittees are appointed by the Council as needed for specific tasks.

AVIAN RESOURCES

The Avian Resources subcommittee was formed due to Council inquiries regarding where to access "bird data" that can be used when evaluating proposed actions that may impact birds. Based on this request, the subcommittee is investigating the various types of available bird data and where to obtain these data. The subcommittee will look at what resources are available and how to make bird data repositories and resources accessible to Council members.

CONSERVATION MEASURES

The Conservation Measures Subcommittee is compiling a comprehensive list of conservation measures (best management practices) that can be implemented during agency actions, with the goal of avoiding or minimizing impacts to migratory bird populations. Conservation measures are largely driven by legislation such as the National Environmental Policy Act, and can be integrated into and implemented through agency plans and guidance. The subcommittee is also working with the Avian Resources subcommittee on the best mechanism for making this resource available to Council agency personnel.

PRESIDENTIAL AWARD

The Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award Subcommittee is responsible for the call for nominations, compiling the results, and presenting the evaluated nominations to the full Council for their discussion and vote. The subcommittee develops the award criteria and evaluation rubric for the award. The subcommittee will continue to evaluate award criteria and the overall process to identify and implement improvements for the award.



Photo: Song Sparrow
Eric Kershner

IMPLEMENTATION

MOU STATUS

To date, the following Memoranda of Understanding with USFWS have been finalized in accordance with the EO.

Department of Defense

Department of Energy

Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

National Park Service

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

TRACKING PROGRESS

In an effort to track how well Federal agencies participating on the Council are implementing the various elements of the EO, each agency completed a survey based on elements in Section 3 (“Federal Agency Responsibilities”) of the EO. Participation in the survey contributes to the understanding of how the EO is being implemented and allows for improvements in implementation and conservation of migratory birds.

The elements listed in this Section were grouped into five categories:

1. Policy and Planning (6 questions)
2. Conservation Actions (5 questions)
3. Partnerships (4 questions)
4. Bird Conservation Training (3 questions)
5. International Conservation (2 questions)

A total of 1,720 individuals from 17 agencies responded to the survey. Responses from each agency were aggregated and then all scores were averaged for each question and across category. Each survey question had response values ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (always). A response of “N/A” was also available for respondents who felt the question did not apply to their specific agency. Values were calculated for each of the five categories based on the aggregated survey responses. Only responses with a value from 0 to 4 were used for the aggregated scores. Responses of “N/A” were not included in the aggregated score tabulations.

To provide a concise visual display of the aggregated score for each category, a color-coded scoring system was used. The Council considered a score of 3 or higher to be consistent with an action being “implemented”; a score of 2 is “partially implemented”; a score of 0 or 1 is “not yet implemented”. The aggregated scores reflect this range as noted below. The results reveal that in 2011 the Council, as a whole, has partially implemented the responsibilities outlined in the EO for four categories. The Council did not participate in or fund international conservation actions at a level to be considered partial implementation.

Results for each of the five categories are shown on the next two pages.

Category	Aggregated Score
Policy and Planning	2.99
Conservation Actions	2.81
Partnerships	2.66
Bird Conservation Training	2.03
International Conservation	1.55

Green: Implemented (score range 3.00 - 4.00)

Yellow: Partially Implemented (score range 2.00 – 2.99)

Red: Not Yet Implemented (score range 0.00 – 1.99)

Photo: Royal Tern
Eric Kershner





Photo: Black-necked Stilt
Eric Kershner

SURVEY RESULTS

The Council expected scores for this first report to fall within the partially implemented range, considering the Council first met in December 2009 and not all Council agencies have signed MOUs. As discussed above, the Council will focus on how overall success improves from year to year across categories, rather than scrutinize the score of any specific category in a given year. This first year illustrates that there is room for improvement within every category, particularly support for International Conservation. As additional agencies complete the MOU process, awareness and support of migratory bird conservation within the Council should correspondingly improve.

The Council is pleased to note that all agencies have at least partially implemented actions related to Policy and Planning, Conservation Actions, Partnerships, and Bird Conservation Training. During the next year, the Council will review the survey results in more detail and focus on the areas of greatest concern so that the responsibilities in the EO are better implemented in the future. In addition, individual agency scores were provided to each agency with information on specific areas for improvement.

To measure the Council's overall success in meeting the directives set forward in the EO, answers to the following statements were ranked on a zero to four scale representing always to not applicable.

POLICY AND PLANNING

1. Agency plans and planning processes include considerations for migratory bird habitat conservation.
2. Agency plans and planning processes include considerations for migratory bird conservation.
3. Agency plans and actions promote and incorporate (as appropriate) goals and objectives of comprehensive migratory bird planning efforts (e.g., U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Partners in Flight Landbird Conservation Plan, North American Waterfowl Management Plan).
4. Effects of agency actions on migratory birds and habitat are evaluated through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or other established review process.

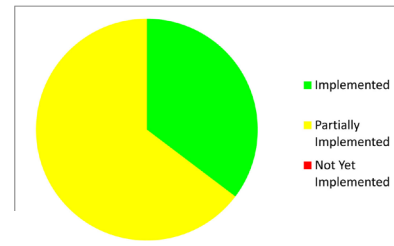
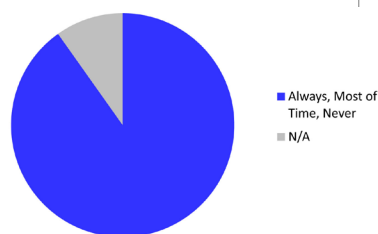
5. Environmental review analyses identify actions where unintentional take may have a short- or long-term negative effect on migratory bird populations.

6. Provides advance notice or annual reports to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on actions intended to take migratory birds (e.g. through banding, scientific collecting, taxidermy, depredation control, construction etc.).

Aggregated Score

2.99

Response Proportion



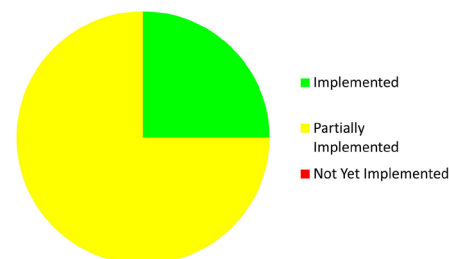
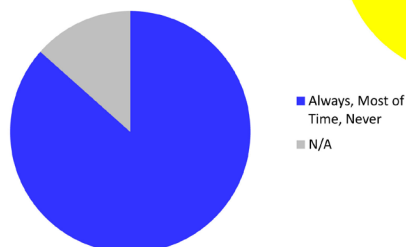
CONSERVATION ACTIONS

1. Measures that avoid or minimize adverse impacts on migratory birds and their habitat are implemented when conducting agency actions.
2. Migratory bird habitat restoration and/or enhancement are included in agency actions.
3. During agency actions, measures are implemented to prevent or abate the pollution of migratory bird habitat.
4. Within the scope of its statutorily-designated authorities, the agency controls the import, export, transport, and establishment in the wild of live exotic animals and plants that may be harmful to migratory birds or their habitat and food resources.
5. The agency minimizes the intentional take of species of concern by delineating standards and procedures for such take and developing procedures for the review and evaluation of take actions.

Aggregated Score

2.81

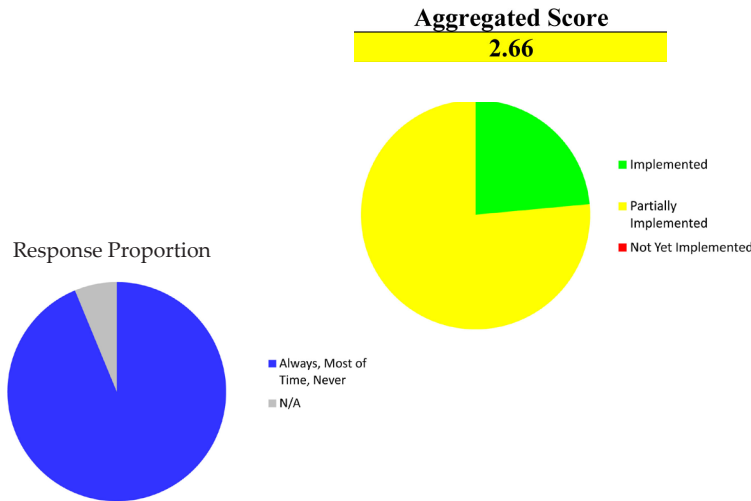
Response Proportion



PARTNERSHIPS

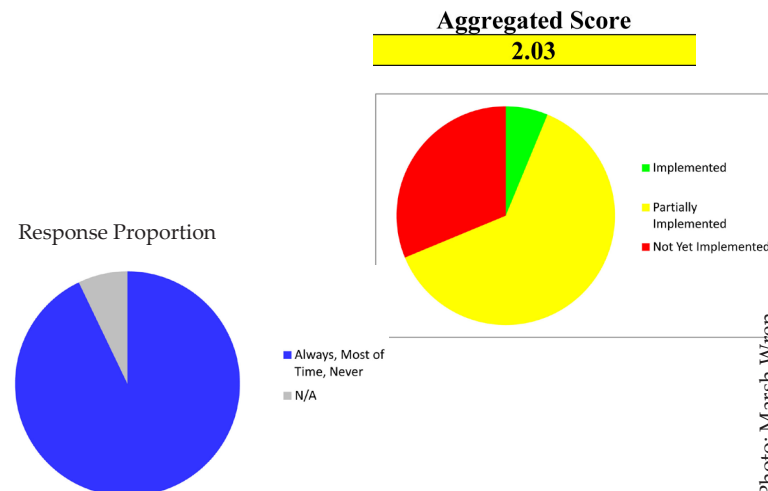
Partnerships are considered all entities that are associated with an action through monetary and in-kind support.

1. Develops partnerships and coordinates with other agencies and nonfederal entities in agency management planning for the conservation benefit of migratory birds.
2. Promotes information and data exchange as well as research related to the conservation of migratory bird resources.
3. Recognizes and promotes economic and recreational values of birds.
4. Provides funding opportunities for partners to promote conservation, research, or recreational opportunities, as appropriate.



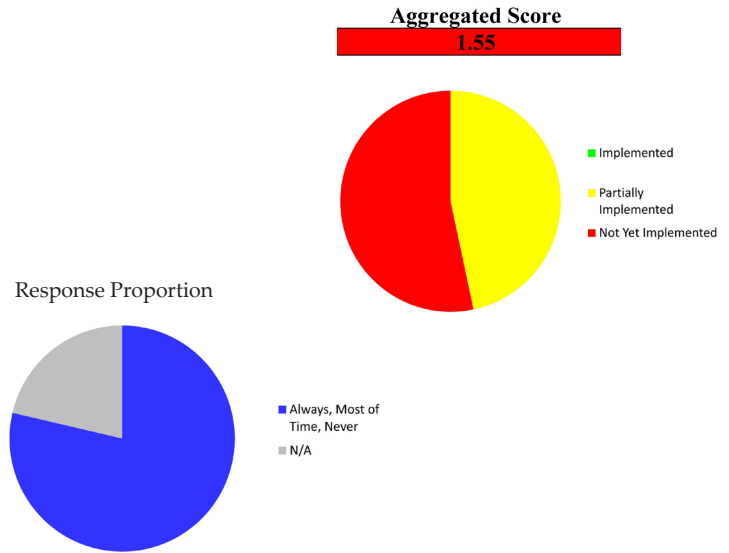
BIRD CONSERVATION TRAINING

1. Provides training opportunities for appropriate employees for the implementation of Migratory Bird Treaty Act and/or agency MOU.
2. Provides training and information to appropriate employees on methods to avoid or minimize the take of migratory birds.
3. Provides training and information to appropriate employees on methods for the conservation, enhancement, and restoration of migratory bird habitat.



INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION

1. Participates in international migratory bird conservation partnerships (partners are associated with the action through monetary and in-kind support).
2. Provides funding for international migratory bird conservation.



The Figures represent the distribution of scores from 17 Federal Agencies that responded to the Council survey. The first pie chart shows the percentage of agencies who have Implemented (green), Partially Implemented (yellow), or Not Yet Implemented (red) the respective category. Only responses with a "value" (excludes any response of "N/A") were used to compute the aggregated scores. The second pie chart shows the total number of responses, from all respondents across all agencies, with "values" of zero to 4 (blue) and responses of "N/A" (gray) for that category. Two charts are used since each agency typically had some respondents answer "N/A" in every question. It was therefore not possible to present a category of "N/A" for an agency as a whole in any category.

Photo: Marsh Wren
George Gentry USEWS





USDA FOREST SERVICE

Mission: To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Photo: Saw-whet Owl USFS



The United States Forest Service (USFS) manages approximately 193 million acres of forests and grasslands through the National Forest System. These lands provide essential habitat for hundreds of species and millions of birds. In addition to managing habitat for birds on National Forest System lands, the USFS is helping to develop a strong science based foundation for conservation actions through its Research and Development Branch and is collaborating with partners across the western hemisphere through the International Program 'Wings Across the Americas'.

Policy and Planning

Some USFS Regions have been working to align the Regional Forester's Sensitive Species List with the USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern in order to ensure that both agencies are working together on the same priority species when improving habitats and reducing adverse impacts.



Photo: USFS

Partnerships

The USFS is working with partners across the western hemisphere to achieve conservation objectives for migratory birds. The Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions Partnership Program was developed by the USFS and its partners in the western U.S. to implement the objectives outlined in the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative report "Opportunities for Improving Avian Monitoring". In 2011, this partnership leveraged almost one million dollars for bird monitoring across approximately 276 million acres of public and private lands. These data are used to generate robust population density and occupancy estimates at a variety of spatial scales, from individual management units to entire bird conservation regions, and to develop conservation planning tools.

International Conservation

USFS International Programs' Wings Across the Americas supports international work throughout the Western Hemisphere, from boreal forest birds in Canada to boreal-breeding grassland birds that winter in Argentina. The Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative is currently supporting a population survey of Western Sandpipers throughout their winter range from British Columbia to Peru. The Western Hummingbird Partnership collects information on flower use by hummingbirds from Canada, USA, and Mexico.

The International Program "Wings Across the Americas" provides important coordination and assistance for international conservation of migratory birds that depend on lands outside the U.S. for part of the year.

Conservation Actions

Enabled by broad partnerships and informed by a strong scientific foundation provided through research and sophisticated monitoring efforts, the USFS is developing tools to inform the targeted delivery of conservation actions for priority bird species. Grassland birds on their breeding grounds have benefited by research and monitoring informing improved management approaches for National Grasslands. These same birds that also winter on the Chihuahuan Desert grasslands in Mexico are welcomed by increased conservation planning, education and improved management.

Research Serving Conservation

USFS scientists conduct a wide range of research to inform the conservation of migratory bird populations and their habitats. Examples include impacts of forest fragmentation by oil and gas development on songbirds in the Appalachians; how grazing practices affect the European Starling, a ubiquitous exotic species that usurps nest sites from native migratory birds; projected responses of Blackpoll Warblers to climate change; and effects of forest management on Wood Thrushes, Prairie Warblers, and Brown Creepers.



Critical habitat for endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers is maintained through prescribed burning and thinning of long-leaf pine forests. Photo: USFS

Department of Defense



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE



Photo: Cerulean Warbler
USFWS

Mission: To ensure that all military departments have access to the land, sea, and air resources necessary to ensure realistic testing and training.



DoD

Partnerships

DoD cooperates with many public and private partners to identify and protect key habitats and species (longleaf pine, shortgrass prairie, Sonoran Desert; Rusty Blackbird, Cerulean Warbler, Northern Bobwhite) in the most cost efficient ways possible. These efforts, plus regional partnerships (Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability and Western Regional Partnership), help DoD maintain maximum flexibility to use its lands for mission testing and training while also ensuring the long-term health of its natural resources.

International Conservation

DoD collaborated with BirdLife Caribbean to identify where priority species breeding on DoD lands spend the non-breeding months in the Caribbean. Burrowing Owls have provided opportunities to work with Canadian and Mexican partners on identifying movements of owls following the breeding season. Work has involved radio telemetry, geolocators, and will begin to use new, smaller satellite tracking devices.

Conservation Actions

DoD continues to explore innovative tools and technologies (satellite, radar, acoustic monitoring, stable isotopes, geolocators) to monitor birds in inaccessible or unsafe habitats and better understand migratory connectivity to non-breeding habitats outside the U.S.

Research and Training

DoD and USFWS held a joint Migratory Birds: A Trust Responsibility course at Marine Corps Base Hawaii-Kaneohe Bay. This third offering of the joint course, provided an emphasis on military activities and DoD case studies. In addition, DoD has hosted several one-day short courses at national Sustaining Military Readiness Conferences.

Policy and Planning

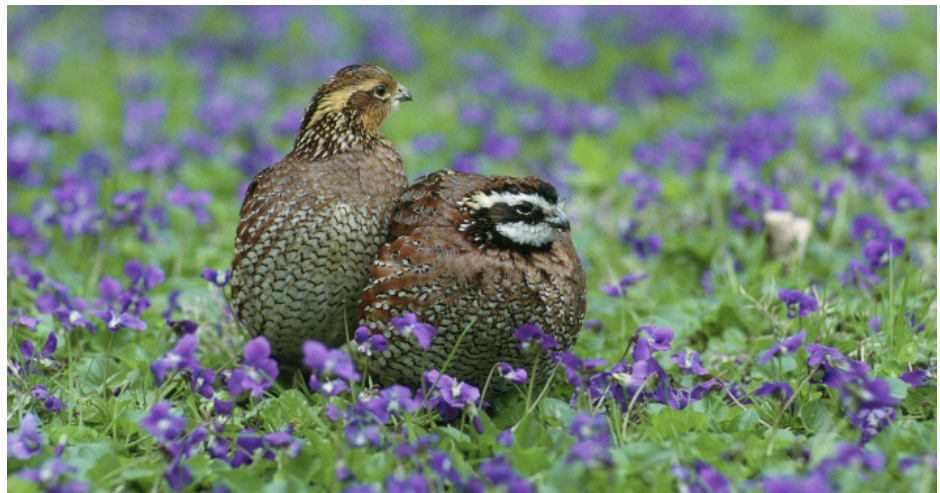
To ensure compliance with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act following the release of draft wind energy guidelines, DoD initiated a dialogue with USFWS regarding military activities and eagles to determine if specific guidance for DoD is required.

The Department of Defence (DoD) has more endangered and imperiled species per acre than any other federal agency. DoD's natural resources managers enable the military combat readiness mission by helping to ensure continued access to realistic training conditions, while meeting DoD's legal compliance mandate to protect all listed species and its stewardship responsibility to keep at-risk species from being listed.

The Sikes Act requires the development and implementation of Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs) for all military installations with significant natural resources. These plans, prepared in cooperation with the USFWS and state fish and wildlife agencies, integrate DoD's natural resources management program with military testing and training requirements, as well as with other installation programs such as master planning and cultural resources management.

DoD cooperates with many public and private partners to identify and protect key habitats and species such as the Rusty Blackbird, Cerulean Warbler, and Northern Bobwhite.

Photo: Northern Bobwhite
USFWS





US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Mission: Working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.



Photo: Marbled Godwit Eric Kershner

As the lead Federal agency for managing and conserving migratory birds in the United States, many USFWS programs are actively involved in migratory bird conservation activities. Although these activities are generally developed within a specific USFWS Program, the success of these activities is also dependent upon close intra-USFWS coordination in addition to building and sustaining vital partnerships with other Federal and State agencies, tribes, and private entities.

Conservation Actions

Today, the National Wildlife Refuge System is the nation's most extensive network of public lands and waters with the primary mission to conserve wildlife and natural habitats. Fifty-nine National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) have been established primarily to conserve threatened or endangered species; examples include Attwater's Prairie-Chicken NWR (Texas), Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR (Mississippi), and Aransas NWR (Texas), which supports the only naturally occurring overwintering population of Whooping Cranes.

Because of its key role in conserving migratory birds on all U.S. lands, the USFWS administers habitat grant programs through a variety of mechanisms.

As the lead Federal agency for managing and conserving migratory birds in the United States, many USFWS programs are actively involved in migratory bird conservation activities.

The USFWS administers the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as "Migratory Bird/Duck Stamps." Originally created in 1934 as federal licenses required for hunting migratory waterfowl, these stamps have generated more than \$750 million to help purchase or lease more than 5.3 million acres of waterfowl habitat, now protected within the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act has generated more than \$1.08 billion in grants, plus another \$2.24 billion in partner contributions to improve 25.9 million acres of habitat in North America. Similarly, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act supports projects through grants that leverage matching funds. These funds have been used to conserve over 2 million acres of bird habitat throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Policy and Planning

The USFWS has Congressional authority to conserve and protect migratory birds on all U.S. lands and waters through several legislative mandates. Among the first and most important is the MBTA, which provides federal protection for 1,007 migratory bird species.



Photo: USFWS

Partnerships

The USFWS also administers the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, a national network of self-directed partnerships that implement bird conservation in ecoregions around the nation. Since the program's inception in 1986, Joint Ventures have invested \$4.5 billion to conserve 15.7 million acres of migratory bird habitat.

Training

USFWS holds the Migratory Bird Conservation: A Trust Responsibility course at least twice yearly. In addition, several one-day short courses have been held at in the DC area. Regular Webinars are offered throughout the year on a variety of topics. In 2011, the USFWS assisted with training of multiple federal agencies including BLM and FERC. Training content included understanding MBTA regulations and tools and guidance to assist agencies in MBTA compliance.



Photo: Northern Gannet Eric Kershner



Photo: Black-footed Albatross
Eric Kershner

Mission: BOEM manages the exploration and development of the nation's offshore resources. It seeks to appropriately balance economic development, energy independence, and environmental protection through oil and gas leases, renewable energy development and environmental reviews and studies.

A recently-completed Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) study focused on risk to Roseate Terns, Piping Plovers and Red Knots from offshore wind energy development and showed that risk is minimal and very limited in time each year. A satellite telemetry study of Long-tailed Ducks around Nantucket, MA showed that they do not use Horseshoe Shoals, the site of the proposed Cape Wind project. Given the paucity of information about birds on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), BOEM's research is the absolutely critical foundation that supports all BOEM decision-making. As a result, BOEM has been and continues to be a world leader in ocean science. Every penny BOEM currently spends on bird studies on the Atlantic OCS is aimed at helping to identify areas where birds aggregate and areas where there are the fewest birds. This will enable BOEM to choose ocean blocks to lease that will have the least possible effect on birds.

Policy and Planning

The BOEM authority extends to submerged lands from beyond three nautical miles from the coast (9 nm off Texas and the west coast of Florida) out to the 200 nautical mile limit of the Exclusive Economic Zone. Thus, BOEM can affect migratory bird conservation in three ways: 1) selection (or elimination) of ocean blocks to be considered for potential leasing to developers for energy development or sand/gravel/mineral extraction, 2) lease stipulations regulating actions of the developers, and 3) funding scientific research to close information gaps and to allow BOEM to wisely choose the appropriate ocean blocks to lease and the appropriate lease stipulations.

Research and Training

BOEM is working to develop new technologies to allow remote sensing of birds and bats offshore and to improve the safety, accuracy and efficiency of offshore surveys by using high-altitude aerial surveys with high-definition imagery and with experimental use of unmanned aerial vehicles to conduct the surveys.



Photo: Roseate Tern
Kirk Rogers USFWS

Conservation Actions

With the dramatic rise in interest in offshore wind energy development off our Atlantic coast, BOEM has placed strong emphasis on understanding how birds use the Atlantic OCS. BOEM initiated an ambitious research program by first working with federal partner agencies to synthesize existing information and knowledge of migratory birds in the Atlantic Ocean from Maine to Florida. The data dates back more than 30 years and is being compiled, synthesized and incorporated into a comprehensive GIS database to assist agency scientists and decision makers regarding potential impacts from wind energy development on the Atlantic OCS.

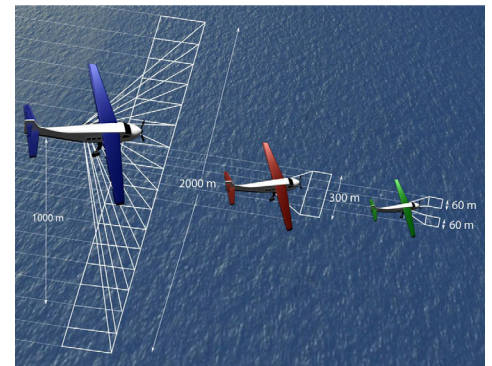


Photo: Red Knot USFWS

BOEM is working to develop new technologies to allow remote sensing of birds



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Mission: To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.



Photo: Western Meadowlark
Hollingsworth USFWS

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages more migratory bird habitat than any other federal agency. With more than 245 million acres under BLM management, wildlife habitat (including that for migratory birds) is a high priority under the BLM multiple-use mandate.

As the State of the Birds 2011 report demonstrated, many species of birds depend on aridlands, grasslands, and arctic and alpine habitats under BLM administration. The BLM is also a major habitat manager in western forests and boreal forests. In fact, as many as 300 species of migratory birds depend on BLM lands. Many of these species are also dependent on BLM habitat management efforts to maintain sustainable populations.



Photo: Aplomado Falcon
BLM

Partnerships

The BLM achieves nearly all of its migratory bird accomplishments through a variety of partnerships that include the USFWS, the USFS, the individual states where BLM manages lands, and non-government organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, the National Audubon Society, various bird observatories, and the numerous colleges and universities in Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units across the U.S. Through these crucial partnerships the BLM can reach its goals and successfully address the special needs of areas of high conservation value.

Working with its many partners, the BLM is addressing migratory bird species that use sagebrush habitats. Collaborative efforts will assess the effects of Greater Sage-grouse habitat work on other sagebrush dependent species in the same region.

International Conservation

In southern New Mexico, the BLM continues to work with the NRCS, grazing permittees, and the Jornada Experimental Range to monitor wintering grassland bird response to range improvement activities and invasive shrub removal. Best management practices have been developed for ranchers in both the U.S. and Mexico through a Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory project funded by BLM and its partners in 2011. Implementation of these practices is expected to help winter survival of grassland birds wintering in the U.S. and Mexico.

Working with its many partners, the BLM is addressing migratory bird species that use sagebrush habitats including Sage Thrasher, Green-tailed Towhee, Brewer's Sparrow, Sage Sparrow, Ferruginous Hawk, Black-tailed Towhee, and Gray Flycatcher.

Conservation Actions

In Oregon, the BLM partnered with the Klamath Bird Observatory to develop the Great Gray Owl Conservation Assessment, which includes a complete literature review and summary of known locations for the species on BLM lands. Once completed, this document will provide information about the status of Great Gray Owls in the region.

Training

In 2011, the BLM partnered with the USFS and the USFWS to conduct two migratory bird training courses in Cheyenne, WY. These courses are multiple-use, agency-adapted versions of the USFWS course: Migratory Bird Conservation; A Trust Responsibility.

Policy and Planning

In order to comply with the 2009 Rule for Bald and Golden eagles, the BLM continues its policy implementation efforts and close coordination with the USFWS to develop Golden Eagle guidance. The BLM looks forward to finalizing its Golden Eagle policy and guidance development efforts.



Photo: Sage Thrasher
USFWS

Department of Agriculture



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Mission: NRCS provides products and services that enable people to be good stewards of their soil, water, and related natural resources.



Photo: Alicia King
USFWS

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) envisions a productive, sustainable agricultural sector in balance with a high-quality environment. Productive use of the Nation's cropland, grazing land, and forest land is essential to the Nation's security and the health and well-being of its citizens. These lands form the foundation of a vibrant agricultural economy that provides food, fiber, forest products, and energy for the Nation. These lands also produce environmental benefits that people need - clean and abundant water, clean air, and healthy ecosystems.

Partnerships

Over the past 20 years, NRCS has worked with more than 11,000 landowners to voluntarily enroll over 2.3 million acres of wetlands and associated habitats on private lands through the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). For example, the Whooping Crane population has increased from 21 birds by 1941 to over 400 birds, many of which are documented using WRP wetlands in Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Texas, and Florida.

Conservation Actions

Ducks Unlimited presented their 2011 Wetlands Conservation Achievement Award to NRCS, spotlighting achievements in creating bird habitat in the Gulf of Mexico flyways and delivering a record-setting year in WRP enrollments.

In the face of disaster, NRCS challenged the threat of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to migratory shorebirds and waterfowl through its Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI). The MBHI offered landowners cost-share and technical assistance to provide emergency habitat for migratory birds. Farmers and partners created habitat for migratory birds on over 471,000 acres in targeted states.

Research

The NRCS has funded studies such as a habitat patches study which indicates maintaining and grouping Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands in larger than 40-acre blocks will be most beneficial to grassland birds. In addition to the Northern Harrier, five other species (Sharp-tailed Grouse, Willet, Marbled Godwit, Upland Sandpiper, and Wilson's Phalarope) were detected and seemed to prefer larger patches.



Photo: Northern Harrier
USFWS



Photo: Whooping Cranes
USFWS

NRCS's Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative offered landowners cost-share and technical assistance to provide emergency habitat for migratory birds.



ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE



Photo: Micronesia Starling
Eric Kershner

Mission: To protect the health and value of U.S. agricultural, natural, and other resources.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) responds to issues involving animal and plant health, conflicts with wildlife, and animal well-being. Together with customers and stakeholders, APHIS promotes the health of animal and plant resources to facilitate their movement in the global marketplace and to ensure abundant agricultural products and services for U.S. consumers.

Policy and Planning

It is APHIS's policy to identify, preserve, and protect fish and wildlife populations and habitat on property owned or operated by the Agency and consult with the USFWS and state fish and game agencies in developing, implementing, managing and evaluating plans for fish and wildlife management, as appropriate. The Agency works actively to prevent or minimize damage to fish and wildlife populations and their habitat resulting from construction or other activities or operations on Agency property.

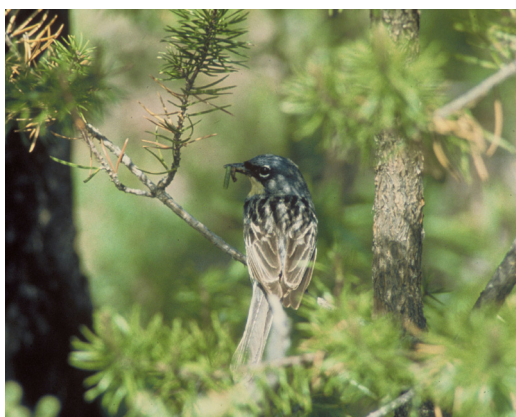


Photo: Kirtland's Warbler
USFWS

Partnerships

APHIS and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) partnered to minimize the risk of unlawful bird take by managing birds on transportation projects. The success of this strategy resulted in the Federal Highway Administration awarding ODOT with an Environmental Excellence Award in Migratory Bird Management and Conservation.

APHIS partners with USFWS and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to protect federally-listed endangered Kirtland's Warblers. APHIS removes Brown-headed Cowbirds which parasitize Kirtland's Warbler nests. Cowbird removal improves the success of Kirtland's Warbler nests and is a key component in Kirtland's Warbler recovery projects.

Conservation Actions

APHIS and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources partnered to reduce the impacts of non-native Mute Swans on state-listed threatened Trumpeter Swans in Michigan. With support from an Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant, APHIS was able to remove Mute Swans from 40 sites and protect an estimated 3,036 acres of natural habitat.

APHIS is partners with USFWS and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to protect federally-listed endangered Kirtland's Warblers.

APHIS provided technical and operational support for development of biosecurity protocols and implementation of rodent eradication on Cocos Island, which is located near Guam. The project culmination was the release of Guam Rails on the island in 2009. In 2011, Cocos Island was declared rodent-free, and the rail, seabird, and Micronesia Starling populations are now flourishing.

Research

A research effort led by APHIS' National Wildlife Research Center and supported by the U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD) Legacy Resource Management Program used satellite telemetry technologies to study the breeding, migration, and wintering ecology of Osprey. DoD planners incorporated study findings into military training flight operations along the eastern seaboard, reducing the risk of osprey-aircraft collisions.



Photo: Osprey USFWS

Department of Commerce



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION



Photo: Black-footed Albatross NOAA

Mission: Science, Service, and Stewardship. To understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts, To share that knowledge and information with others, and To conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) protects, preserves, manages, and enhances the resources found in 3.5 million square miles of coastal and deep ocean waters. The system includes 13 sanctuaries and one Marine National Monument. These publicly owned, federally managed areas provide important habitats for some of the world's largest concentrations of birds.

NOAA manages coastal and oceanic habitats that are vitally important for a variety of birds including albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters, storm-petrels, pelicans, cormorants, murrelets, puffins, and skimmers.

NOAA Fisheries is responsible for the management, conservation and protection of living marine resources within the United States Exclusive Economic Zone. NOAA Fisheries also plays a supportive and advisory role in the management of living marine resources in coastal areas under state jurisdiction and provides scientific and policy leadership in the international arena and implements international conservation and management measures as appropriate.



Photo: Bird Release NOAA

Partnerships

NOAA manages coastal wetlands and intertidal habitats in cooperation with the USFWS, NPS, BLM, and others, to protect vital habitat for coastal waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds. NOAA Fisheries also provides support to the World Wildlife Fund's Smart Gear Competition. The 2011 Grand Prize winner was the "Yamazaki Double-Weight Branchline", which increases the sinking rate of fishing gear and makes it more difficult for seabirds to chase baited hooks. Used in conjunction with other devices, the "Yamazaki Double-Weight Branchline" can reduce seabird mortality by almost 90%. Gear innovations like this are especially important in tuna fisheries managed by Regional Fishery Management Organizations. NOAA Fisheries coordinates with many member countries to address seabird bycatch reduction.

International Conservation

NOAA Fisheries partners with USFWS and the Department of State in the United States' participation at meetings of the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP). ACAP is a multilateral agreement that seeks to conserve albatrosses and petrels by coordinating international activity to mitigate known threats to albatross and petrel populations.

NOAA manages coastal and oceanic habitats that are vitally important for a variety of birds including albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters, storm-petrels, pelicans, cormorants, murrelets, puffins, and skimmers.

The three albatross species (Short-tailed, Black-footed, and Laysan) that breed on islands in the North Pacific and overlap with U.S. fisheries are listed under ACAP's Annex 1 of protected species.

Conservation Actions

The NOAA Fisheries' National Seabird Program monitors and reduces seabird bycatch in U.S. marine fisheries, works to reduce seabird interactions in International fisheries, and promotes the importance of seabirds as ecosystem indicators and a vital component of healthy oceans. In 2001, NOAA Fisheries began implementing the National Plan of Action or Reducing the Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries. Commercial fishermen using longline gear in NMFS-managed fisheries off Alaska and off Hawaii employ mandatory seabird avoidance measures (streamer lines, nightsetting, weighted branch lines, etc.) to keep seabirds such as Northern Fulmars, gulls, shearwaters, albatrosses, from taking baited hooks or becoming entangled in the fishing gear.

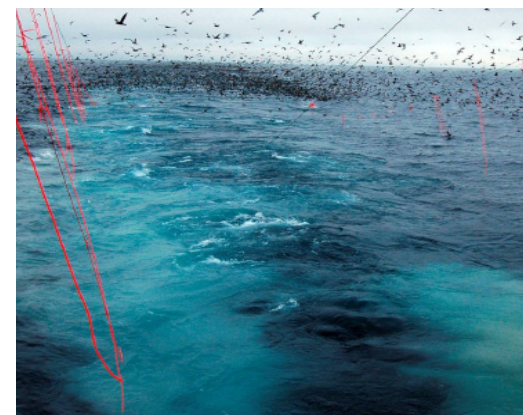


Photo: Paired streamer lines in action: Washington Sea Grant. NOAA

Department of the Interior



OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING



Photo: Cerulean Warbler
USFWS

Mission: To carry out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in cooperation with States and Tribes.

The Office of Surface Mining (OSM) is responsible for establishing a nationwide program to protect society and the environment from the adverse effects of surface coal mining operations, under which OSM is charged with balancing the nation's need for continued domestic coal production with protection of the environment. OSM and its partners are also responsible for reclaiming and restoring lands and water degraded by mining operations. OSM works with colleges and universities and other State and Federal agencies to further the science of reclaiming mined lands and protecting the environment, including initiatives to promote planting more trees and establishing much-needed wildlife habitat.

Policy and Planning

To promote proper mine land reforestation on active mine sites, Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) (created in 2004) advocates using a set of best management practices called the Forestry Reclamation Approach - a five step process on all ARRI planting sites. A variety of native, high-value hardwood seedlings are planted, which often include disease-resistant American chestnut trees.



Photo: OSM receives the Presidential Award for 2012 USFWS

Partnerships

Major ARRI partners include notable bird conservation organizations such as the American Bird Conservancy, the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture, the Cerulean Warbler Technical Group, the Golden-Winged Warbler Working Group, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, The Trust for Wildlife, and many other conservation /environmental groups and international associations.

International Conservation

ARRI signed an MOU in 2008 with the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) establishing a goal to plant 38 million trees on reclaimed coal mines in three years. This was part of a larger UNEP goal to plant 300 million trees in North America and seven billion trees worldwide. The commitment by OSM through ARRI was the largest North American pledge for the UNEP Campaign.

Conservation Actions

The focus of ARRI is restoring forests where deforestation by surface coal mining has occurred, which coincides largely within the Appalachian breeding range of neotropical migratory song birds, notably the Cerulean Warbler. Virtually all of the land being surface mined for coal in Appalachia was woodland or forest at the time it was mined. The resultant forest fragmentation has environmental impacts, reduces carbon sequestration, limits the land's economic value, and reduces habitat for neotropical migratory songbirds that depend on intact interior forests. The positive results of ARRI's actions in reducing existing and potential adverse impacts to migratory birds and their habitats have been nationally and internationally recognized.



Photo: OSM

OSM and its partners are responsible for reclaiming and restoring lands and water degraded by mining operations.

Federal Aviation Administration



FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Mission: To provide the safest, most efficient aerospace system in the world.

Photo: USFWS Kodiak Plane
USFWS



The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for providing a safe and efficient airspace. The FAA strives to address conflicts between aviation safety and wildlife. FAA's wildlife hazard management program has been in place for more than 50 years. This program focuses on working with airport sponsors to mitigate wildlife hazards on or near airports through habitat modification, exclusion techniques, harassment technology, strike reporting and research. In short, proactive techniques to reduce wildlife attractants on and near an airport that provide some level of food, water or shelter means fewer wildlife hazards that require reactive mitigation.

The FAA continues to coordinate with the USFWS to protect wildlife when possible and to study migratory bird species. FAA tries to preserve habitat for migratory birds that do not present a hazard for aviation safety including non-flocking small grassland birds. Wherever possible, FAA encourages airport sponsors to minimize maintenance in these areas when these birds are present.

Partnerships

As part of the FAA's public outreach and education effort to increase awareness within the aviation community about wildlife hazards, FAA co-sponsors the Bird Strike Committee USA, a volunteer organization which consists of members from FAA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, aviation industry, airlines, and airports. The Bird Strike Committee USA facilitates the exchange of information, promotes the collection and analysis of accurate wildlife strike data, promotes the development of new technologies for reducing wildlife hazards, promotes professionalism in wildlife management programs and is a liaison to similar organizations in other countries.

FAA entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, EPA, USFWS, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to address Aircraft-Wildlife Strikes. The MOA establishes procedures necessary for each agency to coordinate their missions to more effectively address existing and future environmental conditions contributing to aircraft-wildlife strikes throughout the U.S. The FAA is expanding its partnership with the USFWS through an MOU regarding implementation of the EO.

Conservation Actions

FAA routinely works with other agencies and private entities to research efforts to encourage the coexistence of aviation and migratory birds. In 2009, FAA began a study on how lights on towers, required for aviation purposes, affect migratory birds. The study looked at various types of lights and their effects on not only aviation safety but also how migratory birds were affected. FAA is working on developing standards that will provide the necessary aviation safety, but limit the effects on migratory birds.

The FAA is currently engaged in an extensive research effort to determine the efficacy of using radar and other sensors to detect and track birds. Radar systems are deployed at Seattle Tacoma International Airport, Chicago O'Hare International Airport and John F. Kennedy International Airport as part of the overall study to assess the performance of commercially available bird detection radar systems. Additional sensors are also being studied for the potential to provide augmented capabilities to the radar systems.

The research partnership between the FAA and USDA at the National Wildlife Research Center in Sandusky, Ohio is currently investigating avian visual perception and the efficacy of various light schemes on aircraft to reduce bird strikes. Preliminary data indicates pulsating lights can be detected more quickly by avian species than non-pulsating lights. Earlier detection provides more avoidance time and thus reduces strikes.



Photo: Mallard USFWS



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



Photo: Scripps's Murrelet
Eric Kershner

Mission: To conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

The National Park Service (NPS) Organic Act of 1916 states that "the Service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of Federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations . . . by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The NPS still strives to meet those original goals, while filling many other roles as well: guardian of our diverse cultural and recreational resources; environmental advocate; world leader in the parks and preservation community; and pioneer in the drive to protect America's open space.

Partnerships

The NPS Migration Conservation Effort works collaboratively with other federal agencies and universities to develop technologies to identify migration routes, design and implement monitoring and research projects necessary for effective management strategies, and create policy and partnerships to ensure responsible stewardship of our shared species.



Photo: NPS

Research for Conservation

NPS is collaborating with the Wildlife Conservation Society to help conserve migratory grassland birds. To facilitate a complete life-cycle, landscape level conservation project, a pilot research project was initiated in 2011 to test the efficacy of using geolocators to identify wintering grounds for the Sprague's Pipit and the Chestnut-collared Longspur. Such information will help identify key areas to focus conservation efforts.

International Conservation

As part of a technical assistance project, National Park Service staff prepared a Birdwatching Action Plan for Nyungwe National Park in Rwanda. The project included conducting an assessment on the current birdwatching opportunities and guide training skills, providing recommendations on how to improve birdwatching opportunities within the park, developing an overall birdwatching management plan that included needed training, and conducting a review of the existing birdwatching trail network and signage.



Photo: NPS

Conservation Actions

Channel Islands National Park implemented a suite of restoration actions that have resulted in protection of designated critical habitat, expansion of suitable habitats previously degraded by non-native species, and reestablishment of species that were extirpated or substantially reduced. For example, the elimination of non-native rats from Anacapa Island has resulted in the recovery of populations of nesting Scripps's Murrelets and Cassin's Auklets; the removal of feral cats from San Nicolas Island is leading to recovery of populations of the federally threatened western Snowy Plover, Brandt's Cormorant, and Western Gull; and restoration of habitat on Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz islands has supported increased nesting of Ashy Storm-petrels, Cassin's Auklets, and Scripps's Murrelets.

National Parks contribute to the conservation of migratory species by conserving quality habitat for species as they traverse the continents and seas during and on the endpoints of their migration.

Department of Energy



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Mission: To ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions.



Photo: Bald Eagle USFWS

The Department of Energy (DOE) catalyzes the transformation of the nation's energy system and secures U.S. leadership in clean energy technologies; maintains a vibrant U.S. effort in science and engineering as a cornerstone of our economic prosperity; and enhances nuclear security through defense, nonproliferation, and environmental efforts.

DOE manages approximately 2.28 million acres of land, of which a substantial amount is undeveloped and includes wetlands, shrub-steppe, shortgrass prairie, desert, and forested areas. Much of these lands provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, including many species of migratory birds. DOE advocates an environmental management system approach, conforming to the ISO 14001:2004 (E) International Standard, towards compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations, and preservation of natural and cultural resources.

Partnerships

DOE continues its sponsorship and participation in the National Wind Coordinating Collaborative, including its Wildlife Workgroup, to identify, define, discuss, and address wind-wildlife and wind-habitat interaction issues to promote the shared objective of developing commercial markets for wind power in the United States. This includes access to DOE's Wind-Wildlife Impacts Literature Database (WILD), a searchable bibliographic database of documents, including Avian Reports that focus on the effects of wind energy development on wildlife.

Policy and Planning

DOE utilizes NEPA to examine the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of planned projects, including the conservation of migratory birds. For example, DOE used the NEPA process to evaluate the potential impacts from constructing, operating, and decommissioning a 550-megawatt photovoltaic solar energy generating facility located at a private site in California. Activities included a Biological Assessment to provide information regarding wildlife species, those protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty

Act and those currently listed, candidate, or proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act; general wildlife surveys to record all wildlife species observed; and general conservation measures that include biological monitoring during all construction activities, a worker environmental awareness training program, a Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, and implementation of the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidelines.

Conservation Actions

DOE conducts migratory bird research on western Burrowing Owls; surveys of plots for wintering and migrating raptors; radio-tracking of Swainson's Hawks; banding of Purple Martins; and development of a computer model to utilize radar images for locating roosts through an automated system.

DOE is working to resolve environmental issues that may hinder acceptance of renewable energy technologies. This includes evaluation of the effects of wind energy development on migratory birds; initiation of pre- and post-turbine monitoring of migratory birds; and identification of corresponding mitigation strategies.



A device to protect raptors from electrocution installed on new utility poles at DOE's Pantex Plant. Photo: DOE



Photo: DOE

Wildlife biologist at DOE's Pantex Plant in Texas releases a radio-marked Swainson's Hawk south of the facility.

Environmental Protection Agency



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mission: To protect human health and the environment.



Photo: Rough-legged Hawk
USFWS

Within the context of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) broad mission, the Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) protects human health and safeguards the environment from potential risks associated with the use of pesticides. OPP carries out its specific responsibility for regulating pesticides through a variety of licensing and review processes and associated support activity. By controlling insect pests, plant diseases, and invasive species, pesticides can be beneficial for a variety of reasons, including (but not limited to) the following: increasing food production, controlling household pests, protecting rights-of-ways, keeping waterways navigable, restoring native habitats, and protecting human health (e.g., disease vector control)

Policy and Planning

EPA is an active participant on the Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds and the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission. OPP is the first EPA office to draft a Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) with the USFWS for the conservation of migratory birds. USFWS and OPP are actively engaged in discussions to finalize this MOU.



Photo: Black-crowned
Night-heron USFWS

Partnerships

EPA's Office of Research and Development is working with OPP and the European Union to develop an avian population model for use in pesticide risk assessments for birds. OPP supports the Raptor Research Forum providing travel funding and staff expertise. OPP works with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement research, demonstration, and education programs to support nationwide adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM is intended to provide pest control through non-chemical and chemical techniques and helps to ensure selection of pesticides is carefully considered in light of the nature and extent of the pest pressure.

OPP assists USFWS and other Federal agencies in applying IPM techniques and approaches for pest management activities and supports efforts to promote IPM through Federal procurement and regulatory policies. OPP promotes a variety of partnerships related to pesticide use, including the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program a voluntary private and public partnership dedicated to reducing pesticide use and risk, and the IPM in Schools Program.

Conservation Actions

OPP routinely conducts ecological risk assessments that consider the potential risks to wildlife, including birds, from pesticide exposures. OPP's risk assessments have resulted in the cancellation of products containing the following pesticides: azinphos-methyl, carbofuran, disulfoton, fenamiphos, methamidophos, methidathion, aldicarb, endosulfan, lindane, methyl parathion, and molinate. EPA has issued a draft notice of intent to cancel a class of rodenticide products whose manufacturers have not adopted new safety measures intended to protect children, pets, and wildlife. OPP's proposed actions to remove these pesticide products from the market place is intended to benefit migratory birds and all wildlife.



Photo: White Ibis
Eric Kershner

OPP routinely conducts ecological risk assessments that consider the potential risks to wildlife, including birds, from pesticide exposures.

Department of Homeland Security



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Missions: Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security; Drug Interdiction; Aids to Navigation; Search and Rescue; Living Marine Resources; Marine Safety; Defense Readiness; Migrant Interdiction; Marine Environmental Protection; Ice Operations; and Law Enforcement.



Photo: Piping Plover
USFWS

As the world's premier maritime service and steward of the United States' marine environment, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) goal is to manage the land, sea, and air resources under its cognizance in an environmentally responsible manner reflective of its role as an environmental regulatory agency. The USCG is responsible for contributing to the preservation of marine biodiversity and preventing marine ecosystem degradation by its own actions and those it regulates. In support of these missions and strategic objectives, the USCG's environmental goal is to ensure that all USCG operations, facilities, equipment, and vessels comply with Federal, State, and local environmental requirements, including the MBTA and EO 13186, in the most cost effective manner.

Conservation Actions

The beaches along the southern boundary of the USCG Training Center (TRACEN) Cape May, New Jersey are designated nesting areas for Piping Plover and Least Tern. In cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, City of Cape May, and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, USCG conducted a project that pumped

over 620,000 cubic yards of sand onto the TRACEN's beach during the winter of 2011 due to the worst coastal erosion in the past 20 years. USCG TRACEN has continuously maintained the beach property and has continuously incorporated special actions toward the conservation of migratory birds and preservation and restoration of their habitat.

Partnerships

At the USCG Academy in New London, the Academy's Cadet Sustainability Club is a cadet run and oriented organization founded in 2006 by cadets. Its mission is to serve as an organized means of directing the Corps of Cadet's recycling and sustainable activities, as well as to serve as a liaison for sustainable activities throughout the Academy and beyond. The Club welcomes the opportunity to assist with stewardship efforts involving imperiled and endangered species. In 2011, the USCGA Club participated in partnership programs with other agencies working for the conservation of migratory birds and preservation and enhancement of their habitats.

Stewart McKinney National Wildlife Refuge encompasses 10 different barrier beaches, tidal wetlands and island habitats along the shoreline of Connecticut. During major power outages caused by Tropical Storm Irene, USFWS staff used Academy facilities. Academy staff and cadets learned from USFWS personnel that the storm destroyed all special nesting boxes that were critical to the survival of the Roseate Tern, a federally listed endangered bird. The Cadet Sustainability Club and Academy staff immediately coordinated with USFWS personnel and planned, coordinated, organized, and partnered with Connecticut Audubon, USFWS

personnel, and students from Connecticut College, and New London Magnet School to replace the special nesting boxes. Cadets, students, and staff built 200 new nesting boxes in November 2011. During spring 2012, Sustainability Club Cadets, Academy and USFWS staff went to Falkner Island, part of the Stewart B. McKinney NWR, cleaned up the nesting area by removing litter and debris, and then placed the new nesting boxes at specific locations for the returning Roseate Terns.

Milford Point, part of the Stewart B. McKinney NWR, is a barrier beach and potentially good habitat for Piping Plovers, a federally threatened shorebird. Tropical Storm Irene washed up tons of sand onto the dune on Milford Point, creating a "washover habitat" perfect for Piping Plover. USFWS staff hoped that Piping Plover will nest at Milford Point but the beach area was littered with plastic bottles, old syringes, large items such as chairs and kids' toys, and styrofoam. The Sustainability Club recruited other cadets and staff and partnered with students from Connecticut College to assist USFWS personnel to clean up Milford Point in order to improve and protect the potential habitat for Piping Plovers.



Photo: Least Tern Hillebrand
USFWS



Photo: Academy Cadets build
nest boxes



Photo: Green Jay USFWS



Photo: Common Yellowthroat Gentry USFWS



Photo: Long-billed Thrasher Gentry USFWS

Bird Lists

The USFWS utilizes a number of different lists to direct actions and priorities to manage and protect migratory birds.

Birds Protected by the MBTA

The USFWS regulates the taking, possession, transportation, sale, purchase, barter, exportation, and importation of migratory birds. An accurate and up-to-date list of species protected by the MBTA is essential for regulatory purposes. The bird species protected by the MBTA are found in 50 CFR 10.13. This list is based on the species and families covered by the Migratory Bird Conventions with Great Britain, Japan, Mexico, and Russia. The species protected by the MBTA can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/RegulationsPolicies/mbta/mbtandx.html>

Birds of Conservation Concern:

The 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act mandates the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to "identify species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973." Birds of Conservation Concern 2008 (BCC 2008) is the most recent effort to carry out this mandate. This list can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/NewReportsPublications/SpecialTopics/BCC2008/BCC2008.pdf>

Focal Species:

The USFWS initiated the Focal Species strategy to better measure its success in achieving its bird conservation priorities and mandates.

The Focal Species strategy involves campaigns for selected species to provide explicit, strategic, and adaptive sets of conservation actions required to return the species to healthy and sustainable levels. The list of focal species and links to select focal species conservation plans can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Management/FocalSpecies.html>

Bird Conservation Initiatives

The USFWS collaborates with other federal and state agencies, Tribes, and other organizations to manage migratory bird species through the support of partnerships that deliver regional, national and international management plans that conserve habitat for migratory birds.

Shorebird Initiative:

Shorebird related activities are coordinated to develop and implement monitoring efforts, support shorebird management training and identify and protect critical shorebird habitat. The U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/shorebirdplan/>

Waterbird Initiative:

The Waterbird Initiative is engaged in a variety of activities to ensure colonial nesting waterbird populations remain healthy including monitoring of nesting colonies, conducting or funding research, and restoring nesting habitats. The North American Waterbird Conservation Plan can be found at: <http://www.waterbirdconservation.org/nawcp.html>

Partners in Flight:

Partners in Flight is a broad partnership of Federal and State agencies, non-governmental organizations, industry, academia, and individuals in the U.S. that works for the conservation of landbirds in the Western Hemisphere. Species assessment, planning, monitoring, research, land management recommendations, and various needs assessments are prepared for all lands in the United States, and in cooperation with international partners, for lands in Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America. More information regarding Partners in Flight can be found at: <http://www.partnersinflight.org/>

Joint Ventures:

Joint Ventures are collaborative, regionally-based partnerships of agencies, non-profit organizations, corporations and Tribes that work to implement bird conservation plans within a specific geographic area. Eighteen Joint Ventures in the U.S. address bird conservation issues based on the habitats and bird species within their areas, and three species-based Joint Ventures work to further the scientific understanding needed for effective management of specific bird species or groups of species. For more information see: <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/JointVentures/index.shtm>



Photo: Brown Pelican Eric Kershner

PRESIDENTIAL MIGRATORY BIRD FEDERAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

2011 PRESIDENTIAL AWARD

The Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award annually recognizes a single project or action conducted by or in partnership with a Federal agency that meets the intent and spirit of the EO by focusing on migratory bird conservation. Actions may involve reducing existing or potential adverse impacts to migratory birds and their habitats, restoring or enhancing migratory bird habitat, and incorporating conservation of migratory birds and their habitat into agency plans, guidance, or other activities. The action should demonstrate leadership in inspiring others to further migratory bird conservation. This could include developing and implementing best-management practices, a policy action, or research.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) was the recipient of the first Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award in 2011 in recognition of OSM's Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI).

Created by OSM in 2004, the ARRI focuses on restoring forests where deforestation by surface coal mining has occurred. These areas include the Appalachian breeding range of neotropical migratory song birds, notably the Cerulean Warbler, which depends on intact interior forests.



Photo: Cerulean Warbler
USFWS

Under the leadership of OSM and the ARRI, the surface mining industry has planted about 70 million trees on approximately 103,000 acres of mined land that might otherwise have been reclaimed to grasslands with dense ground cover. "I am honored to accept this first-ever Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award on behalf of OSM, the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative and our partners," said OSM Director Joseph Pizarchik. "ARRI's work clearly demonstrates how government agencies working cooperatively can create effective environmental protection programs that benefit everyone. More importantly, programs like ARRI also develop the talents of hard-working volunteers, many of whom have chosen careers in the environmental field."

The ARRI has attracted significant international attention. It is serving as an organizational model for other groups across the world seeking to restore disturbed landscapes with reforestation on a regional scale, and involves more than 200 different organizations.



Photo: OSM

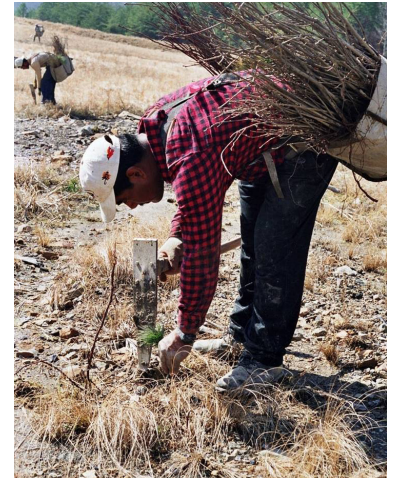


Photo: Volunteers Planting Trees OSM



Photo: OSM and partners receive 2011 Award Alicia King



Photo: Volunteers Planting Trees OSM

