

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's mission is, working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.



The Marbled Godwit breeds primarily in the grasslands of the northern Great Plains and winters in large numbers along the coast of southern California and western Mexico. It is one of many grassland breeders threatened by habitat degradation. /Karen Hollingsworth

geographic scales, taxonomic groups, shared habitats and landscapes, and human cultural experiences. The Migratory Bird Program will update this plan in 2008 based on scientific and technical advances, environmental changes, and results achieved.

Every three years, beginning in Fiscal Year 2005, the Migratory Bird Program will develop action plans that describe those specific priority tasks that it will undertake in the short-term to accomplish the long-term goals of this plan. The Service's seven Regional Offices and Washington Office will play important roles in carrying out these actions as well as coordinating and collaborating with partners within and outside the Service. Working with other Service programs, public and private organizations, and individuals is essential to secure a future for migratory birds. State wildlife agencies play special roles by working with the Service to assume co-management responsibilities for migratory birds, in addition to managing the resident game bird species which have been entrusted to their care.

II. Migratory Bird Program Direction

This section presents the overall vision for the Migratory Bird Program which is firmly grounded in the mission of the Service. The vision is followed by a pair of operating principles which underpin the administration of Migratory Bird Program. Following the operating principles are sets of priorities and goals that break down the vision into specific components. The Migratory Bird Program will work to achieve these priorities and goals using implementation strategies in five areas of responsibility, presented in the third section of this plan.

A. Mission of the Service for Migratory Birds

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has the legal mandate and the trust responsibility to maintain healthy migratory bird populations for the benefit of the American public. The Service is authorized by more than 25 primary conventions, treaties, and laws to ensure the conservation of more than 800 species of migratory birds and their habitats (see Appendix 3). Many of the treaties extend beyond

the borders of the United States. The Service works with many foreign governments, state and other federal agencies, tribes, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, industry, and private individuals, both within the United States and abroad, to meet these mandates.

B. Vision of the Migratory Bird Program

Through careful management built on solid science and diverse partnerships, the Service and its partners restore and sustain the epic sweep of bird migration and the natural systems on which it depends — fostering a world in which bird populations continue to fulfill their ecological roles while lifting the human spirit and enriching human lives in infinite ways, for generations to come.

C. Operating Principles

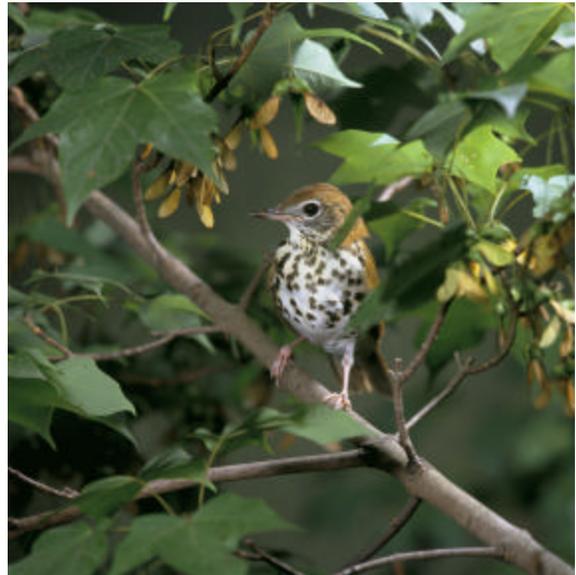
To meet the migratory bird conservation challenges of the twenty-first century, the Migratory Bird Program will consistently adhere to the principles of sound science and collaborative partnerships in its migratory bird conservation and management activities.

1. Science

The success of the Service and its partners depends on creating a solid scientific foundation for conserving and managing migratory bird populations. The Migratory Bird Program will strengthen and expand its internal scientific capabilities in monitoring and assessment, as well as increase the use of research results generated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), academic institutions, and others, in an adaptive resource management framework. To realize its vision for migratory bird conservation, the Migratory Bird Program commits to obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of how priority bird populations respond to human caused threats and environmental stressors, such as habitat loss and alteration, and to corrective actions such as habitat restoration and enhancement. Generating and using scientific information within an adaptive

Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.

Vincent Van Gogh



The Wood Thrush has declined significantly across its breeding range since the mid-1960s. Like other deciduous forest habitat specialists, it faces continuing degradation and destruction of both its North American breeding grounds and Central American wintering grounds. /Steve Maslowski

Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of many minds.

Alexander Graham Bell



From Alaskan and eastern Siberian breeding grounds, the Western Sandpiper migrates southeast to wintering areas on both coasts of North and South America. Like many shorebird species, it remains vulnerable because of declining numbers and dependence on a relatively few critical stopover sites, such as the Copper River Delta in Alaska. /Karen Hollingsworth

management context will enable the Service and its partners to make more cost-effective policy, management, and regulatory decisions that meet migratory bird conservation goals and objectives at continental, national, and landscape scales.

2. Partnerships

To achieve our shared migratory bird conservation vision and goals, the Migratory Bird Program will cultivate enduring partnerships. Because migratory birds inhabit a variety of landscapes as they move across state lines and international borders, virtually all nations, organizations, and individuals can influence migratory birds and their habitats. The Migratory Bird Program will take a more active leadership role in coordinating and communicating among all stakeholders to carry out the most comprehensive and cost-effective strategies to protect, restore, and manage migratory birds. A lasting legacy of migratory birds for future generations is only possible through the mutual stewardship that results when partners work together.

D. Program Priorities

The Service and its partners in migratory bird conservation face not only environmental, but also fiscal, technical, and administrative challenges. Therefore, the Migratory Bird Program must use its resources strategically and effectively to realize the far-reaching vision stated in this plan.

With the help of partners and constituents at the Migratory Bird Conservation Forum in January 2004, and during the strategic plan's consultation in the fall of 2003, the Service identified the following top three priorities for the Migratory Bird Program:

- **Address the loss and degradation of migratory bird habitats.**
- **Increase and improve scientific information on migratory bird populations.**
- **Strengthen and expand regional, national, and international partnerships to achieve comprehensive bird conservation.**

The Service will focus its limited resources on the bird species or populations in greatest need of

conservation and management. The Migratory Bird Program has developed a list of Birds of Management Concern to provide important focus for the Service's migratory bird conservation efforts over the next ten years and will periodically revise this list to reflect changes in species status (see Appendix 4).

E. Program Goals

To fulfill its many legal responsibilities for migratory bird conservation and to address the mission, vision, and priorities stated above, the Service will expand both the breadth and depth of its Migratory Bird Program to address the full range of species in need of conservation.

The Migratory Bird Program will work to accomplish the following three overarching goals which are stepped down into quantifiable long-term goals and annual performance goals and measures through the process established by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). These goals flow from the Department of the Interior's Strategic Plan and the Fish and Wildlife Service's GPRA Implementation Plan (see Appendix 5).

Goal 1: Protect, restore, and manage migratory bird populations to ensure their ecological sustainability and increase their socioeconomic benefits.

Goal 2: Protect, restore, and manage migratory bird habitats to ensure long-term sustainability of all migratory bird populations.

Goal 3: Improve hunting, birdwatching, and other outdoor bird-related experiences and opportunities, and increase awareness of the value of migratory birds and their habitats for their intrinsic, ecological, recreational and economic significance.

To work on behalf of the wild is to restore culture.

Gary Snyder



Breeding from Maine north to the arctic, the Common Eider, like other sea ducks, is one of the least well-studied species of waterfowl. It is particularly vulnerable to oil spills because it congregates in large, dense, flocks during winter, molting, and migration. /Glen Smart