

### Habitat Conservation

**Program Code** 10003734

**Program Title** Fish and Wildlife Service - Habitat Conservation

**Department Name** Department of the Interior

**Agency/Bureau Name** United States Fish and Wildlife Service

**Program Type(s)** Direct Federal Program

**Assessment Year** 2006

**Assessment Rating** Adequate

| Assessment Section Scores | Section                        | Score |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|
|                           | Program Purpose & Design       | 80%   |
|                           | Strategic Planning             | 63%   |
|                           | Program Management             | 100%  |
|                           | Program Results/Accountability | 53%   |

| Program Funding Level<br>(in millions) | FY2007 | FY2008 | FY2009 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
|  | \$95   | \$101  | \$97   |

- Ongoing Program Improvement Plans
- Completed Program Improvement Plans
- Program Performance Measures
- Questions/Answers (Detailed Assessment)

### Ongoing Program Improvement Plans

| Year Began | Improvement Plan  | Status                                 | Comments   |
|------------|---|--|--|
| 2006       | <p>Develop, in coordination with other Service programs, but especially the ESA program, a long-term outcome-oriented ESA performance goal and measure. By March 15, 2007 have draft outcome-oriented ESA measure to share with OMB.</p>  | <p>Action taken, but not completed</p> | <p>PART Reference: 2.1 Does the program have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program? Draft measure developed and provided to ESA program in meeting with Migratory Birds in February 2007. Additional coordination is ongoing as Endangered Species completes its Strategic Plan in FY 2008</p>  |
| 2006       | <p>The Habitat Conservation Program will link individual employee performance plans with specific goal-related performance targets for each year. Seventy-five percent of all projects leaders' FY2007 individual performance plans will include specific, measurable program performance measures for FY 2007 that cascade from program goals (including specific targets). Expected completion date is June 30, 2007.</p> | <p>Action taken, but not completed</p> | <p>PART Reference: 3.2 Are Federal Managers and program partners (including grantees, subgrantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners held accountable for cost, schedule, and performance results? FWS Director's memo of December 12, 2006 requested inclusion and alignment of goal-related performance in employee performance plans. Review of representative plans in June 2007 demonstrated incomplete compliance.</p> |
| 2006       | <p>Coordinate at the Directorate level and with other FWS programs to identify the distinct roles of the Habitat Conservation Program and other FWS programs in accomplishing HC program and FWS-wide goals. By February 15, develop a plan for FY2009 identifying the role and specific, measurable contribution of the HC program in achieving the bureau-wide goals.</p>   | <p>Action taken, but not completed</p> | <p>PART Reference: 1.3 Is the program designed so that it is not redundant or duplicative of any other Federal, state, local or private effort? Coordination at the staff level among programs has begun. The FY 2009 plan has been completed.</p>   |

|      |  |                                 |  |
|------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 2006 | Coordinate with USDA, and specifically NRCS and FSA, and NOAA on developing common goals and agreeing on the roles of each program in accomplishing those goals. By September 30, 2007, develop draft common measures, goals, and program roles with USDA and DOC. | Action taken, but not completed | PART Reference: 1.3 Is the program designed so that it is not redundant or duplicative of any other Federal, state, local or private effort? Actions to include coordination on the President's wetlands initiative report and interagency collaboraton on DOC NERE database.  |
| 2006 | Finalize, by September 15, 2007, outcome-oriented ESA measure to share with OMB.   | Action taken, but not completed | PART Reference: 2.1 Does the program have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program? This will be completed as the Endangered Species Program finalizes its Strategic Plan in FY 2008.  |
| 2006 | A final program evaluation process will be delivered to OMB by June 1, 2007.   | Action taken, but not completed | PART Reference: 2.6 Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need? The final process is not expected to deviate from the draft process OMB has concurred with. The independent Evaluation Team is expected to confer with OMB at the start of the review in FY 2008.  |
| 2006 | The Service, in consultation with OMB, will determine whether the new newly-created "Sporting Conservation Council" (a FACA group to the Secretary of the Interior) is an appropriate source for independent evaluations by March 1, 2007.                         | Action taken, but not completed | PART Reference: 2.6 Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need? This is a milestone under OMB Follow-up Action 4.0. The Service's Office of Conservation Partnerships spoke to the Council and select members will participate in this evaluation to be led by the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council.                |
| 2006 | Develop a draft performance-based budget allocation methodology to share with OMB by July 31, 2007.  | No action taken                 | PART Reference: 2.7 Are Budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program??s budget? Work is ongoing to improve HC performance based budget justifications built on performance output, measures and outcome oriented accomplishments. The Director has approved a performance-based revision of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program allocation method. |
| 2006 | Coordinate with Migratory Birds, Endangered Species, and Fisheries to  | Action taken, but not completed | PART Reference: 4.1 Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term goals? Informal discussions with Migratory Birds and Endangered Species are ongoing. The HC programs continue to work  |

|      |  |  |   |
|------|--|--|---|
|      | <p>establish outcome targets and to integrate them into program performance activities.</p> <p>By January 31, 2007, the program's habitat conservation achievements and contributions to long-term outcome-oriented goals of other Fish and Wildlife Service programs will be included into Service Annual Operational Plan.</p> |  | <p>with the Budget and Planning Office to facilitate improvements to the Service's Operational Plan via the Enterprise Planner system.</p>  |
| 2006 | <p>Develop and complete a plan, by September 30, 2007, that identifies steps to show program results and adequate progress in achieving its long-term goals are clearly defined.</p>   | <p>Action taken, but not completed</p> | <p>PART Reference: 4.1 Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term goals? A summary progress report with all completed work items will be completed by February 1, 2008.</p>  |
| 2006 | <p>The Program will ensure that the first independent evaluation will begin no later than September 30, 2007.</p>  | <p>Action taken, but not completed</p> | <p>PART Reference: 4.5 Do independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality indicate that the program is effective and achieving results? The Service is anticipating formal approval by the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council in December 2007 of the Director's request to lead this review in FY 2008.</p> |

**Completed Program Improvement Plans**

| <b>Year Began</b> | <b>Improvement Plan</b>  | <b>Status</b>    | <b>Comments</b>   |
|-------------------|--|------------------|---|
| 2006              | <p>Better integrate Habitat Conservation component programs into a unified Habitat Conservation Program with each component identifying its role in achieving HC program goals. By January 15, develop a plan for FY2009 identifying the role and specific, measurable contribution of each component program in achieving the HC program goals.</p> | <p>Completed</p> | <p>PART Reference: 1.3 Is the program designed so that it is not redundant or duplicative of any other Federal, state, local or private effort? FY2009 Plan completed on January 26, 2007.</p>        |
| 2006              | <p>Identify specific target levels of performance at a specified time or period for each long-term performance measure. Targets should</p>   | <p>Completed</p> | <p>PART Reference: 2.2 Does the program have ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures? FY2008 target levels of performance completed and posted to PARTWeb on December 8, 2006</p> |

|      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
|      | <p>be expressed as a tangible, measurable outcome, against which actual achievement can be compared and be incorporated, along with annual output targets, into the Service's Operational plan by Jan 31, 2007.</p>   |   |
| 2006 | <p>The Habitat Conservation programs will develop a process for independent program evaluations program wide, and facilitate independent evaluations to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, where opportunities of improvement could be identified. These evaluations are expected at all levels of management (i.e., field, state, regional, national) and will meet the PART criteria for scope, quality, independence, and frequency. A draft of the program evaluation process will be provided to OMB by January 31, 2007.</p> | <p>Completed PART Reference: 2.6 Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need? Draft program evaluation process provided to OMB on February 2, 2007. Proposed evaluation tasks and milestone schedule for FY2008 has been drafted. Coordination and correspondence with the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council is ongoing.</p> |
| 2006 | <p>Develop a clear, complete schematic and explanation of the relationship between the specific annual goals and the long term goals (including targets) by March 15, 2007.</p>   | <p>Completed PART Reference: 2.7 Are Budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program??s budget? A draft schematic with explanation has been completed.</p>  |
| 2006 | <p>Baseline data for new long-term outcome goals will be finalized by November 1, 2007.</p>   | <p>Completed PART Reference: 4.1 Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term goals? Baseline data submitted by the Regions via the Service Enterprise Planner system was completed in the fourth quarter of FY 2007.</p>  |
| 2006 | <p>Incorporate Habitat Conservation long-term outcome and annual output targets into the Service's OPS plan by July 31, 2007.</p>   | <p>Completed PART Reference: 2.1 Does the program have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program? FY 2008 output targets provided to the Division of Budget Planning. Long-term outcome and output targets will be continually updated and entered into Enterprise Planner, the Departments MITS database, and PART Web.</p>   |

## Program Performance Measures

| Term   | Type     |  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
|--------|----------|--|------|--------|--------|------|----------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|--|------|---------|--|------|---------|--|
| Annual | Output   | <b>Measure:</b> Number of wetland acres of restored/enhanced.  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
|        |          | <i>Explanation:</i>  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
|        |          | <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Target</th><th>Actual</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2004</td><td>baseline</td><td>54,394</td></tr><tr><td>2005</td><td>33,482</td><td>56,693</td></tr><tr><td>2006</td><td>30,472</td><td>121,652</td></tr><tr><td>2007</td><td>35,442</td><td>141,002</td></tr><tr><td>2008</td><td>35,442</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2009</td><td>35,442</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2010</td><td>35,442</td><td></td></tr></tbody></table>         | Year | Target | Actual | 2004 | baseline | 54,394  | 2005 | 33,482  | 56,693  | 2006 | 30,472  | 121,652 | 2007 | 35,442  | 141,002 | 2008 | 35,442  |  | 2009 | 35,442  |  | 2010 | 35,442  |  |
| Year   | Target   | Actual   |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2004   | baseline | 54,394   |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2005   | 33,482   | 56,693   |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2006   | 30,472   | 121,652  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2007   | 35,442   | 141,002  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2008   | 35,442   |  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2009   | 35,442   |  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2010   | 35,442   |  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| Annual | Output   | <b>Measure:</b> Number of acres of upland habitat restored/enhanced.   |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
|        |          | <i>Explanation:</i>  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
|        |          | <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Target</th><th>Actual</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2004</td><td>baseline</td><td>264,561</td></tr><tr><td>2005</td><td>191,372</td><td>354,111</td></tr><tr><td>2006</td><td>249,537</td><td>303,874</td></tr><tr><td>2007</td><td>249,574</td><td>432,942</td></tr><tr><td>2008</td><td>249,574</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2009</td><td>249,574</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2010</td><td>249,574</td><td></td></tr></tbody></table> | Year | Target | Actual | 2004 | baseline | 264,561 | 2005 | 191,372 | 354,111 | 2006 | 249,537 | 303,874 | 2007 | 249,574 | 432,942 | 2008 | 249,574 |  | 2009 | 249,574 |  | 2010 | 249,574 |  |
| Year   | Target   | Actual   |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2004   | baseline | 264,561  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2005   | 191,372  | 354,111  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2006   | 249,537  | 303,874  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2007   | 249,574  | 432,942  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2008   | 249,574  |  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2009   | 249,574  |  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| 2010   | 249,574  |  |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |
| Annual | Output   | <b>Measure:</b> Number of riparian/stream miles restored/enhanced.   |      |        |        |      |          |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |  |      |         |  |      |         |  |

*Explanation:*

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Target</b> | <b>Actual</b> |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2004        | baseline      | 529           |
| 2005        | 421           | 839           |
| 2006        | 640           | 977           |
| 2007        | 628           | 914           |
| 2008        | 589           |               |
| 2009        | 589           |               |
| 2010        | 589           |               |

Annual Output **Measure:** Number of wetland acres protected.

*Explanation:*

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Target</b> | <b>Actual</b> |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2005        | baseline      | 163,429       |
| 2006        | 523,373       | 1,733,266     |
| 2007        | 35,997        | 185,954       |
| 2008        | 34,544        |               |
| 2009        | 34,544        |               |
| 2010        | 34,544        |               |

Annual Output **Measure:** Number of upland acres protected.

*Explanation:*

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Target</b> | <b>Actual</b> |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2004        | baseline      | 453,444       |

|      |         |         |
|------|---------|---------|
| 2005 | 70,844  | 461,521 |
| 2006 | 68,136  | 88,292  |
| 2007 | 107,028 | 94,706  |
| 2008 | 102,297 |         |
| 2009 | 102,297 |         |
| 2010 | 102,297 |         |

Annual Output **Measure:** Number of riparian/stream miles protected.

*Explanation:*

| Year | Target   | Actual |
|------|----------|--------|
| 2004 | baseline | 737    |
| 2005 | 1,225    | 3,099  |
| 2006 | 1,890    | 1,403  |
| 2007 | 1,259    | 5,515  |
| 2008 | 1,126    |        |
| 2009 | 1,126    |        |
| 2010 | 1,126    |        |

Long-term Outcome **Measure:** Percentage of migratory bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels.

*Explanation:* This measure reflects the combined efforts to conserve, protect, and manage migratory birds and restore their habitat. The percent of bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels is defined as those species that are not on the Service's Birds of Management Concern List, or in the case of game species, those for which the populations are at desirable management conditions (all game species are considered "of management concern"). Super abundant species are also included. The total number of migratory birds included in the denominator for this percentage measurement is 912. The assessment is done every 5 years.

| Year | Target   | Actual |
|------|----------|--------|
| 2001 | Baseline | 61.8%  |
| 2008 | 63.3%    |        |

Long-term Outcome **Measure:** Percentage of threatened and endangered species habitat needs met.

*Explanation:* Baseline and targets are under development

| Year | Target   | Actual |
|------|----------|--------|
| 2007 | baseline |        |

Long-term Outcome **Measure:** Percentage of populations of native aquatic non-threatened and endangered species that are self-sustaining in the wild.

*Explanation:*

| Year | Target | Actual |
|------|--------|--------|
| 2005 | n/a    | n/a    |
| 2006 | 24%    | 16%    |
| 2007 | 24%    | 23.5   |
| 2008 | 25%    |        |

Annual Efficiency **Measure:** Acres of land digitally updated per million dollars expended.

*Explanation:*

| Year | Target    | Actual     |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 2005 | baseline  | 2,833,574  |
| 2006 | 4,249,609 | 16,278,782 |
| 2007 | 6,219,458 | 15,981,037 |

|      |           |
|------|-----------|
| 2009 | 8,985,861 |
|------|-----------|

Annual Efficiency **Measure:** Number of wetland acres restored per million dollars expended.

*Explanation:*

| Year | Target   | Actual |
|------|----------|--------|
| 2004 | baseline | 1497   |
| 2005 | 1500     | 1570   |
| 2006 | 1500     | 1928   |
| 2007 | 1500     | 1690   |
| 2008 | 1500     |        |
| 2009 | 1500     |        |
| 2010 | 1500     |        |

**Questions/Answers (Detailed Assessment)**

**Section 1 - Program Purpose & Design**

| Number | Question | Answer | Score |
|--------|----------|--------|-------|
|--------|----------|--------|-------|

|     |                                      |     |     |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| 1.1 | <b>Is the program purpose clear?</b> | YES | 20% |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|

*Explanation:* The Mission of the Habitat Conservation Program is, working with others to conserve, restore, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plant habitats of Federal trust species, on public and private lands and waters for the continuing benefit of the American people. This Program was created to promote the protection, conservation, and restoration of our Nation's fish and wildlife resources. The program captures that activities of several separate Service programs and, in conjunction with other Service programs such as Refuges, Fisheries, and Migratory Birds, are working to slow, and where possible, to reverse, the decline of Federal trust species by protecting and restoring habitat. These consolidated capabilities include working with the public, private landowners, industry, and other agencies to restore and enhance all types of natural habitats, from the coasts to the mountains. This

variety of "tools" to conserve habitat for trust species includes: recommending improvement to proposed development projects to avoid and minimize harm to trust species (Project Planning branch); providing financial and technical assistance to achieve voluntary habitat restoration on private lands (Partners and Coastal branch); identifying and mapping wetlands and other aquatic habitats (National Wetlands Inventory branch); and minimizing the damage to natural resources associated with coastal barriers (Coastal Barrier Resources Act branch).

*Evidence:* The Program's purpose supports the 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." Branch fact sheets describe individual functions. The authority and responsibility for conserving habitats is provided through delegation by the Director under multiple Federal laws and regulations, including: Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Clean Water Act; Coastal Barrier Resources Act, 16 USC Chapter 55, 3501(b); National Environmental Policy Act, Section 102(C)(v) and implementing CEQ regulations at 1501.6, 1503.2, and 1507.2; and Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. Further direction is provided to the Program in the Department of Interior Manual at 516 DM 6, Appendix 1; the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual Parts 505 FW 1 to FW 4, 550 Chapters 1 and 2, 640 FW 1, and 905 FW 1; and the National Wetlands Inventory Strategic Plan (2002); Partners for Fish and Wildlife Strategic Plan, Vision Document and Part 2 Guidance Document, March 2006; Coastal Program Vision Document (Strategic Plan, Part 1 of 3); NWI Wetland Status and Trends Stepdown to the National Strategy; Region 5 Stepdown to NWI strategy; and the Project Planning Strategic Plan (2006 draft).

1.2

**Does the program address a specific and existing problem, interest, or need?**

YES 20%

*Explanation:* Loss or degradation of habitat is a leading cause of declining Federal trust species populations, i.e., migratory birds, inter-jurisdictional fish, and threatened and endangered species. Nationwide, 53% of all wetlands have been lost, 90% of native tall grass prairie and longleaf pine forest are gone, 66% of riparian (streamside) habitat has been lost (however in some areas the loss of riparian habitat has been even greater, e.g., California: 90-95% lost; Arizona and New Mexico: 85 to 95% lost), and 3.6 million miles of streams have been degraded. Evidence that the need for Habitat Conservation Program capabilities will continue is apparent in coastal areas where development is increasing at the

same time that coasts are under greater threat from natural events such as global warming, sea level rise, and strengthening hurricanes. Coastal areas support 40% of the Service's National Wildlife Refuges, 40% of Federally-listed endangered species (including 75% of the listed mammals and birds), 50% of the Service's fisheries activities, 25% of the Nation's remaining wetlands, and at least 30% of North American wintering waterfowl.

*Evidence:* Documentation of habitat loss and degradation includes: U.S. Geological Survey 1998 report on the status and trends of the nation's biological resources; National Academy of Sciences 2002 Report on Riparian Areas; Status and Trends of Wetlands in the Conterminous US 1986-1997, and 1998-2004; Environmental Protection Agency National Coastal Condition Report 2 (2005); and U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan. Examples of agreements and Memoranda of Understanding illustrating interest and need are also included. For NWI: Updating NWI maps; Report to the Office of Management and Budget , OMB Circular A-16 Guidance on GIS Activities; and Region 5 Report on Uses of NWI Digital Data.

1.3

**Is the program designed so that it is not redundant or duplicative of any other Federal, state, local or private effort?**

NO 0%

*Explanation:* There are numerous Federal, state, and private programs that address the loss of habitat problem that Program addresses. The Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service administer many programs that either directly or indirectly address this problem. For example, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. The WHIP program managers have adopted national priorities that focus WHIP dollars at benefiting Federal trust species, despite having a much broader authorization. Other Service programs, such as the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS), also address the problem of habitat loss. While the NWRS focuses on federally owned land, the habitat problem cannot be solved solely by relying on federal lands, and the decisions made on the NWRS lands require working with neighboring land owners. Many state agencies and private organizations, such as Ducks Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy, also work with private landowners to conserve, protect, and restore lands for trust species. In many instances projects that the Program is working on also receive funding from one or more of these and other Federal, state, or private programs. Service has principal trust responsibility to protect and conserve migratory birds, threatened and

endangered species, certain marine mammals, and inter-jurisdictional fishes. Whereas other Service programs deal with habitat related to specific species (Endangered Species), groups of species (Fisheries), or Service-managed land areas (Refuges), the design of the Habitat Conservation Program addresses all aspects of fisheries and wildlife conservation. Some other Federal, State, and local agency programs overlap the Habitat Conservation Program, but they either address only a single aspect of fish and wildlife conservation that is not their main agency purpose, deal with fish and wildlife only on their agency's lands, and/or do not deal specifically with Federal trust species. As examples, the Partners program promotes and funds private lands conservation practices that focus on conserving Federal trust species while benefiting multiple natural resources, including fish passage projects, while the Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service focus is on creating wildlife habitat to protect soil and water quality. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) grants program for coastal communities focuses solely on restoration of fishery habitats for NOAA trust species, and makes project funding decisions at the National level, whereas the Program's Coastal branch addresses comprehensive habitat conservation for Service trust species and makes decisions to fund at the local level. State resident wildlife programs improve habitat, but do not focus on Federal trust species. These other Service and non-Service programs and the Habitat Conservation Program complement each other and increase benefits to the public, but are not duplicative.

*Evidence:* The Program is the only fish and wildlife entity delegated responsibility for review of all environmental documents produced by all other Federal agencies (Fish and Wildlife Service Manual Part 505 FW 1.6 C - G), and to participate in other agencies' project reviews (FW 1.3). The Program is named as a participant in Memoranda of Understanding with Federal Highways Administration (transportation planning), Bureau of Land Management (oil and gas), U.S. Forest Service (sustainable forest management), Department of Defense (military lands management); U.S. Department of Agriculture (Partners), and Department of Energy under the Energy Policy Act (Section 265, pilot projects). Its wetlands responsibilities are found in the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986; Certification of Cowardin as National Wetlands Standard; and State laws codifying NWI. See also FY 2007 Budget Justifications and information provided by HabITS.

1.4

**Is the program design free of major flaws that would limit the program's effectiveness or efficiency?**

YES 20%

*Explanation:* The Program design contains no major flaws that limit effectiveness or efficiency. The design has evolved over time to include numerous elements established by various pieces of generic and specific enabling legislation. In some instances, Program elements could benefit from specific enabling legislation, but this limitation does not hinder the program's performance. The Program consists of a network of multi-function Field Offices under the jurisdiction of Regional offices to deliver services directly to its beneficiaries at the local level. The design promotes opportunity for early involvement with other entities involved in habitat-altering activities, which is more efficient and effective both physically and financially in conserving and enhancing resources than later modification and/or recovery efforts. Legal authorities provide directives for locating, mapping, and describing habitats and tracking habitat changes to help determine program effectiveness. The decentralized nature of the Program, with most authority delegated to Regional and Field Offices, aids in effective allocation of limited resources. The Program's central theme of participation by and coordination with diverse private and public organizations and agencies maximizes effectiveness and efficiencies at Federal, State, and local levels. In order to increase efficiency, the Program is moving toward an ecosystem level integrated planning approach that targets entire watersheds and all aspects of potential habitat alterations that are being planned or might occur there.

*Evidence:* Enabling legislation includes the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 1501.7; and the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual at 550 FW 2.5. The National Strategy to Restore Coastal and Estuarine Habitat (2002), the Ocean Commission Report (2005) and subsequent U.S. Ocean Action Plan support the approach utilized in the Program. The move toward an integrated ecosystem level approach is supported by the Department of Interior Strategic Plan FY 2003-2008, Executive Summary; comprehensive FY 03 Ecosystem Team Activity Guidance; and Executive Order 13274, Integrated Planning Work Group. Also see Shaping Our Future Workshop Report; NWI Restructuring Plan; NWI Center Management Review; and Technical Standards for Wetlands Status and Trends Analyses.

1.5

**Is the program design effectively targeted so that resources will address the program's purpose directly and will reach intended beneficiaries?**

YES 20%

*Explanation:* Loss or degradation of habitat is a leading cause of declining Federal trust species populations, and the Program is effectively designed to improve habitat conditions

for trust species on both public and private lands and waters. This is accomplished by: providing technical assistance and/or financial assistance early in the planning process to ensure that fish and wildlife are considered in large landscape-level development projects on public or private lands and waters to prevent or slow the rate of habitat loss (Project Planning branch); voluntarily restoring habitat on private lands (Partners and Coastal branches); identifying and mapping wetlands and other aquatic habitats (National Wetlands Inventory branch); and minimizing the damage to natural resources associated with coastal barriers (Coastal Barrier Resources Act branch). The majority of the Program's personnel are in multi-function Field Offices in each state. This concentration of resources at the field level maximizes the habitat gain per dollar expended. Some other Fish and Wildlife Service programs have no or few personnel to actively deliver expertise or products at the local level, and depend on Habitat Conservation personnel to implement their strategic plans and other priorities (e.g., Migratory Birds Program). Financial assistance is provided directly to partners using a flexible approach that also maximizes matching investments with other parties, thus leveraging dollars to achieve mutual habitat conservation targets. Monitoring provides information on the success of projects in some facets of the Program, but requires improvement in Project Planning.

*Evidence:* The Fish and Wildlife Service Mission Statement identifies the American people as the beneficiaries of all Service programs, including Habitat Conservation. Multiple local agreements are established to target resources at the local level, including Memoranda of Understanding with mitigation bank operators, Scopes of Work with Army Corps of Engineers District Offices, and landowner/cooperator agreements. Numerous local alliances have been formed to leverage funding and effort to achieve ecosystem level habitat conservation, such as the Chicago Wilderness and Houston Wilderness. Regional Work Activity Guidance documents provide direction for resource allocation. Financial and related technical assistance efficiency is tracked through the Habitat Information Tracking System (HabITS) database. See also the 2006 Partners and Coastal Step-down Plan Guidance; 2001 report to Office of Management and Budget on National Wetlands Inventory project selection; Partners Virginia Office Work Activity Guidance; Wildlife Extension Agreement; and Request for wetlands update proposals to the Field.

**Section 1 - Program Purpose & Design**    Score    80%

**Section 2 - Strategic Planning**

| Number | Question  | Answer | Score |
|--------|---|--------|-------|
| 2.1    | <p data-bbox="337 289 1214 365"><b>Does the program have a limited number of specific long-term performance measures that focus on outcomes and meaningfully reflect the purpose of the program?</b></p> <p data-bbox="337 432 1214 1222"><i>Explanation:</i> During the PART process, specific long-term outcome measures were developed to assess the effectiveness of the various Program components. These measures incorporate a habitat component that provides a link between the Program's specific duties and the ultimate desired outcome of our actions. The measures are: (1) percentage of migratory birds at healthy and sustainable levels; and (2) percentage of threatened and endangered species with habitat needs met. The migratory bird measure is an outcome measure that is shared with other Service programs. The Program's efforts help to accomplish this outcome by focusing on habitat activities that can lead to healthy and sustainable species. The endangered species measure is an output measure because an appropriate outcome measure is still being developed. This output measure, however, will help accomplish whatever outcome measure is decided upon since addressing habitat needs and threats are necessary to recover species. The Program's measures support the mission of the Program and the Service, and are consistent with the outcome goals of the Department of Interior Strategic Plan. The new measures will be incorporated into the individual branches' draft or completed strategic plans. In addition, the Program has a complement of output performance measures that quantify Program activities and contribute to outcomes.</p> <p data-bbox="337 1289 1214 1415"><i>Evidence:</i> See the Performance measures developed during the PART process and Department of Interior Strategic Plan. Output performance measures for all branches of the program are found in the FY 2007 President's Budget (Green Book).</p> | YES    | 13%   |
| 2.2    | <p data-bbox="337 1495 1214 1520"><b>Does the program have ambitious targets and timeframes for its long-term measures?</b></p> <p data-bbox="337 1587 1214 1759"><i>Explanation:</i> Two of the Program's long-term measures were developed during the PART process and measure the program's contribution to outcome goals shared by other Service programs. The Program will establish ambitious targets and timeframes in over the next year.</p>   | NO     | 0%    |

*Evidence:* Targets and timeframes for long-term measures will be developed in FY2007.

2.3

**Does the program have a limited number of specific annual performance measures that can demonstrate progress toward achieving the program's long-term goals?**

YES 13%

*Explanation:* Annual performance measures are included in the FY 2006 and 2007 budget justifications and the Service Operational Plan. Since outcome goals of the Program are unlikely to be accomplished within any single year, the annual performance measures are output-oriented. The annual performance measures encompass habitat conservation activities and information that are directly linked to the Program's progress towards meeting the Program's long-term goals (referenced in 2.1 and 2.2). The Partners, Coastal and Project Planning branches express annual performance measures in acres and miles of Federal trust species habitat protected, restored or enhanced. Tools to assist the goals of habitat conservation are provided by the National Wetland Inventory branch and the Coastal Barrier Resources Act branch performance measures, whose annual performance include acres of habitat digitally mapped or updated. Annual performance measure data have been collected since 2004. These annual targets are also directly linked to the Service Operational Plan and the Department of Interior Strategic Plan's outcome-based resource protection goal of "Improved health of watersheds, landscapes, and marine resources", and "Sustain biological communities on DOI managed and influenced lands and waters in a manner consistent with obligations regarding the allocation and use of water."

*Evidence:* Annual performance measures and data are found in the PART Performance Measure Table; FY 2006 and 2007 Budget Justifications; and the Service Operational Plan.

2.4

**Does the program have baselines and ambitious targets for its annual measures?**

YES 13%

*Explanation:* Annual performance measure data have been collected since 2004, and are used to establish baseline data and targets for all annual performance measures. Baseline data and ambitious targets are developed by working closely with each of the seven Fish and Wildlife Service regions (eight including California Nevada Office) to incorporate their accomplishments and anticipated accomplishments. This process provides the flexibility necessary to adjust to changing priorities, needs, and budgets. Programs estimate annual targets by using previous years' performance and anticipated completion of new or on-going projects. Anticipated staffing and funding levels are also factored into targets. Discrepancies

between the targets and actual accomplishments may occur for numerous reasons. For PFW and the Coastal Program, accomplishments can be variable, depending upon our ability to develop new partnerships and our partners' interest, availability, willingness, and resources to work with us. For instance in 2005, our target of 70,844 upland acres protected was exceeded by 390,677 acres. This was due largely to an unforeseen contribution from a partner. Many projects are multi-year but are accounted for in the year they are completed. Partners may not be able to meet their initial timeline for completing a project but do so at a later date, which could impact when accomplishments are reported and the extent of accomplishments. Additional factors that could impact our ability to meet our targets include Congressional earmarks directing us toward unplanned activities, new priorities superseding planned projects, and external factors such the type and amount of development in a region. A Project Planning example occurred in 2006, with an exceptionally high target of protecting over 500,000 acres of wetland habitat. This is due to the anticipated completion of a land management plan associated with proposed oil and gas development on Alaska's North Slope. This target is externally driven, and may not be realized in 2006, thus potentially making the target over 15 times too high.

*Evidence:* Baseline data and targets are established and/or contained in the FY 2006 and FY 2007 Budget Justifications. The FY 2006 and 2007 Budget Justifications also illustrate linkage of annual targets with funding. Opportunity for regional input to target-setting is illustrated by the FY 2006 Operational Plan and in annual performance reports.

2.5

**Do all partners (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) commit to and work toward the annual and/or long-term goals of the program?**

YES 12%

*Explanation:* Partners that contribute to projects are required to sign an agreement where the outputs, location, activities, time table, habitats, expected species benefits, contributions, monitoring, and reporting needs are identified in direct support of the long-term goals. Project delivery and performance is evaluated by the project officers and/or by the partners as stipulated in the signed agreements. The Habitat Information Tracking System (HabITS) is used by the programs as a mechanism to assess, track, and evaluate individual project obligation dates, status, and completion dates.

*Evidence:* Program procedures for the Partners and Coastal Barrier Resources Act

branches are detailed in the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual at Part 640 FW1 and 651 FW 1. Cooperative efforts with U.S. Geologic Survey are contained in the USGS coordination memorandum and Cooperative Agreement for Digital Map System and Technical Support. Other examples of local, regional, and national agreements include the Memorandum of Understanding between the Service, Sand County, and CALFED (California) Bay-Delta Program, and Cropland Reserve Program Note #93 (November 1999). See also the Ducks Unlimited Lowcountry Initiative and Wisconsin Monitoring Report and performance tables from budget documents.

2.6

NO 0%

**Are independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality conducted on a regular basis or as needed to support program improvements and evaluate effectiveness and relevance to the problem, interest, or need?**

*Explanation:* The Program is planning to seek outside evaluations, but currently does not conduct or commission regular independent or in-house evaluations other than the in-house Wetlands Status and Trends Report, which is conducted at 5-year intervals. Independent evaluations are conducted periodically by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) and non-governmental entities such as the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the National Research Council (NRC). Findings of those evaluations are used by the Program to assist in identifying opportunities to improve performance.

*Evidence:* Evaluations of the Partners/Coastal branch include: (1) Stakeholder Input: Perspectives on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for the Partners and Coastal Programs; (2) Blair Island Native Oyster Habitat Restoration Project; and (3) Ford-Thompson Evaluation of Partners for Fish and Wildlife Wetland Restoration Efforts in the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Independent evaluations of topics in which the Program plays a major role can be found in GAO-05-906, Wind Power: Impacts on Wildlife and Government Responsibilities for Regulating Development and Protecting Wildlife and GAO-05-376, Status of Federal Data Programs That Support Ecological Indicators. Numerous research papers evaluate National Wetlands Inventory data effectiveness, including: (1) a comparison with the Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory; (2) National Wetlands Inventory Verification. Professional Surveyor 18:43-46, 2000; (3) National Park Service Assessment of NWI accuracy in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks; (4) Natural Resources Council 2001, Compensating for Wetland Losses Under the Clean Water Act; and (5) A Strategic Look at

NWI Regional Operations.

|  |  |     |     |
|--|--|-----|-----|
| 2.7  | <b>Are Budget requests explicitly tied to accomplishment of the annual and long-term performance goals, and are the resource needs presented in a complete and transparent manner in the program's budget?</b> | NO  | 0%  |
| <p><i>Explanation:</i> The FY 2006 and FY 2007 Budget Justifications and Operational Plans generally link Program budgets to performance measures and targets that contribute to annual and long-term goals through the Fish and Wildlife Service's Operational Plan to the Department of Interior's Strategic Plan. There is no explanation defining the relationship between the annual and long-term performance targets and the funding requested. The performance tables in the Budget Justifications and the Operational Plan table do not show what the original FY2007 goals were or how the FY2007 requested amount will ensure the long-term goal is achieved. The performance-planning and budget-planning processes are not yet integrated so that budgets reflect amounts necessary to achieve performance goals and the effects on goals due to changes in funding levels or other policy changes are not evident. Full costs of the program are captured through the Service-wide implementation of Activity Based Costing/Management which began in January 2004.</p> <p><i>Evidence:</i> FY 2006 and FY 2007 Budget Justifications and Operational Plans, the FY 2007 budget justification performance measures table, and a personnel timesheet example.</p> |  |     |     |
| 2.8  | <b>Has the program taken meaningful steps to correct its strategic planning deficiencies?</b>  | YES | 12% |
| <p><i>Explanation:</i> Four of the branches within Habitat Conservation (National Wetlands Inventory, Coastal, Partners, and Project Planning) have initiated development of individual program strategic plans. The individual plans describe overall priorities and strategies required to accomplish measurable resource outcomes, and Regional step-down plans are being or will be developed for each program. The strategic plans are either undergoing or have undergone review by all Fish and Wildlife Service Regions and stakeholders. All branches have developed annual and long-term performance goals and targets which have been included in the strategic plans. All of these plans support the long-term measures of percent of migratory birds at healthy and sustainable levels and threatened/endangered species</p>  |  |     |     |

habitat needs met.

*Evidence:* Steps taken to correct planning deficiencies are outlined in current draft Project Planning, draft Coastal/Partners, and final National Wetlands Inventory individual strategic plans and guidance, and in Regional step-down plans. See also the Partners/Coastal Step-down Plans referenced in 1.2; guidance memo from the Fish and Wildlife Service Director; Regional Review Team Summaries and Reports from the Bayou Cocardie and North Mississippi Refuges; and Partners Management Control Reviews.

**Section 2 - Strategic Planning**      Score      63%

**Section 3 - Program Management**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Question</b> | <b>Answer</b> | <b>Score</b> |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|

|     |  |     |     |
|-----|--|-----|-----|
| 3.1 |  | YES | 16% |
|-----|--|-----|-----|

**Does the agency regularly collect timely and credible performance information, including information from key program partners, and use it to manage the program and improve performance?**

*Explanation:* The Habitat Conservation Program systematically collects annual work performance accomplishments that are certified correct by the Regional Director and entered into web-based accomplishment tracking databases. In addition, each year reported accomplishments are compared to the performance estimates for that year and explanations for not meeting or exceeding the estimates are documented. These data are integrated into the Fish and Wildlife Service Operations Plan and FY 2006 and 2007 Budget Justifications. Performance information from partners is documented in cooperative agreements or reimbursable agreements that require corresponding accomplishment reports or confirmation of work completed. These reports quantitatively and qualitatively describe project accomplishments. All accomplishment reports identify partners' roles and responsibilities, their contributions, and conservation performance. These reports are used by the Program to track progress toward goals and to adjust or adapt activities. For instance, data indicate that aquatic species are declining at an alarming rate. Consequently, the Assistant Director directed all programs to increase emphasis on conserving aquatic habitats. In addition, the Director directed the Directorate to use Activity Based Costing to make decisions on priority management activities. Internal reviews of Regional operations in the National Wetlands Inventory branch are used to fine-tune operations nationally. Information collected annually from the Regions is used for Program budget allocations,

requests, justifications, and performance reporting. The Coastal Barrier Resources Act branch receives quarterly/biannual status reports from a private mapping contractor to evaluate progress on CBRA boundary delineations, technical correction reviews, and draft digital maps. New performance measures implemented over the past 3 years tie the Program's work to the Department of Interior's Strategic Plan, and more clearly describe results of technical assistance provided. The web-based, nationwide tracking systems such as the Habitat Information Tracking System (HabITS) and the newly developed Tracking and Integrated Logging System (TAILS) track accomplishments, and were initiated to increase efficiency and foster consistency in reporting. These data are used to manage and make budgetary decisions.

*Evidence:* FY 2006 and 2007 Budget Justifications and annual performance measure reports provide insight into performance information collected and used to manage and improve the Program. Examples of Cooperative Agreements and accomplishment reports are attached, along with a copy of the Region 5 National Wetlands Inventory internal review. A copy of the pilot Tracking and Integrated Logging System is provided. Also provided is a copy of instruction from the Director to Directorate directing them to use Activity Based Costing information to determine priorities for management. See also the HabITS reference at 2.5, Quality Assurance of Data entered in the HabITS system, and Project Monitoring Guidelines: Southeast Region. An example of a Coastal Barrier Resources Act branch mapping contract status report is attached. See also an example of an Annual Ecological Services Accomplishment Reporting Memorandum to the Regions, and Fish and Wildlife Service Operations Plan at: <http://www.fws.gov/planning/ABC/index.html>.

3.2

**Are Federal managers and program partners (including grantees, sub-grantees, contractors, cost-sharing partners, and other government partners) held accountable for cost, schedule and performance results?**

YES 14%

*Explanation:* The Assistant Director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, Division Chiefs, Branch Chiefs, Regional Directors, Regional Assistant Directors, Ecological Services Program supervisors and field staff have annual performance plans that include Government Performance and Results Act measures as critical elements. In addition, to ensure that Program goals are met, Work Activity Guidance is provided with the budget allocation to direct the use of funds and to specify expected performance outcomes. The annual Work Activity Guidance provides consistent direction and focus for national Program activities.

Each Region Director certifies that his/her annual performance targets are acceptable and at the end of the year, accomplished. These targets are incorporated into performance plans at all staff levels. The Program also exercises strong contract management, and conducts regularly scheduled reviews and revisions, as necessary, of reimbursable agreements, work orders, tasks, schedules, and deliverables. Cooperative agreements include specific performance measures (acres and miles of habitat to be restored) for signatories, costs, timetables, and agreement duration. Unmet performance by signatories may result in no payment of the cost-share and project cancellation. Cost-share funds are not issued until project completion is certified by Program personnel.

*Evidence:* Supporting documentation for accountability includes cascading Performance Plans; Allocation/Work Activity Guidance Memos; mapping contract status report; and examples of cooperative and reimbursable agreements. See also the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual 640 FW1 at 1.1 and 651 FW1.

3.3

**Are funds (Federal and partners') obligated in a timely manner, spent for the intended purpose and accurately reported?**

YES 14%

*Explanation:* The Program obligates 94-100% of its resource management funds in the fiscal year it is appropriated. To ensure that funds are spent for their intended purposes, the program completed a Risk Assessment Checklist and Risk Rating Worksheet to comply with the Improper Payments and Information Act of 2002. The Program also develops an annual Work Activity Guidance document and allocation memo to establish how allocated funds will be used. The Program uses the Budget Tracking System to ensure that funds are dispersed properly and in a timely manner. Budget allocations are required to be dispersed to the regions within 30 days, and the Regions are required to disperse their funds to field offices within 45 days. Performance is tracked on a monthly basis and funds are re-directed as appropriate from under-performing projects to those that can be accomplished in a specific time period. Audits have demonstrated that the Program's cost share funds are obligated in a timely manner and used for their intended purpose, following best management practices. The Fish and Wildlife Service Manual provides guidance on the appropriate use of funds and follow-up monitoring. Allocation plans and guidance ensure that monies are utilized for their intended purpose. Reviews of payments demonstrate minimal improper payments. Audits of major partners, for example, Restore America's Estuaries, Ducks Unlimited, and The Nature Conservancy, demonstrate that funds were spent appropriately. The Service's Audit

Liaison's review of the past year's referrals concerning audits resulted in no findings associated with the Coastal and Partners branches. The policy of reimbursing landowners for projects upon completion ensures that project funds are spent for the intended purpose.

*Evidence:* Supporting documentation includes FY 2004 and FY 2005 tables showing budget authority and obligated rates, and the Independent Auditor's Report on the Fish and Wildlife Service's Financial Statements for Fiscal Years 2005 and 2004. Guidance provided by the Fish and Wildlife Service Manual is found Part 640 FW1 (see 1.1). The Regional Allocation and Use of Fiscal Year 2006 Partners for Fish and Wildlife Funds Guidance is provided as an example, along with copies of memoranda to the Regions re-directing funds from project to project to enhance on-the-ground effectiveness. Also attached is the Risk Assessment Report of Fisheries and Habitat Conservation, required by Public Law 107-300, the Audits of Findings for Recipients Review by the Service's Division of Policy and Directives Management, and reports on single audits for 3 major partners. New Authority-Payment Processing Procedures are also presented.

3.4

**Does the program have procedures (e.g. competitive sourcing/cost comparisons, IT improvements, appropriate incentives) to measure and achieve efficiencies and cost effectiveness in program execution?**

YES 14%

*Explanation:* The Program has implemented procedures to improve efficiencies in administering the Program and accomplishing the mission. To minimize mid-level and top-management oversight of daily operations, the Program has delegated authorities to the lowest field level whenever possible. The decentralized nature of the Program, with most authority delegated to Regional and Field Offices, speeds project selection and completion, speeds the expenditure of funds, saves salary dollars, and allows for flexibility in terms of taking advantage of short lived opportunities for low cost supplies and/or contracts. For instance, decisions to provide funding or technical assistance for on-the-ground conservation projects are made at the local level. The Program has administrative and clerical positions that are part of a competitive sourcing study. Habitat conservation projects are currently measured by cost per acre. The Project Planning branch has developed new performance measures that address workload volume and efficiency, productivity, and outcome as measured by habitat protection accomplishments in acres and miles. The Program is taking advantage of modeling to determine project effectiveness with respect to waterfowl habitat restoration. "Acres of land digitally updated per million dollars expended" is

an annual efficiency measure used by the National Wetlands Inventory branch. Digital wetland data from the National Wetlands Inventory once cost about \$3,500 per quadrangle to update. Using a new technology developed by the Program in 2002, those same quadrangles now cost \$1,200-\$1,500 to update, a fiscal savings of 58 - 62%. Another technique developed for the Program resulted in a temporal efficiency of 40 % less time to update digital data. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Coastal Programs improve efficiencies through strategic planning and by standardizing project data reporting through the Habitat Information Tracking System (HabITS ) database. In terms of administrative efficiencies, Habitat Conservation is working with multiple entities to "batch" regulatory procedures to minimize investment of time and maximize resource/habitat conservation. Also, the program is using IT to increase efficiency and communication through the National Focus Area Support System.

*Evidence:* Supporting documentation includes pre- and post-2004 performance measures and a memo directing the Service to undertake the competitive sourcing initiative. See also the Director's Workforce Planning Workshop referenced at 1.4 and the HabITS system at 2.5; the Fact Sheet on National Focus Area Support System; the report by St. Mary's University on improved temporal efficiencies in developing National Wetlands Inventory products using a new technique; and Fish and Wildlife Service report on cost savings in using newer technologies. Examples illustrating Program management activities that reflect savings in terms of dollars or time are also included.

3.5

**Does the program collaborate and coordinate effectively with related programs?**

YES 14%

*Explanation:* The Program collaborates and coordinates with other in-house programs, other Federal and State agencies, and the public. The Program is complementary and value added to other conservation programs. The driving force behind Habitat Conservation's activities is the conservation of Federal trust species (i.e., migratory birds, inter-jurisdictional fish, threatened and endangered species, and certain marine mammals). Through dedicating a staff position to Farm Bill activities, the Program combines its fish and wildlife habitat expertise with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) agricultural expertise by funding local partnerships to create and enhance habitat on private lands. The Program works closely with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USDA, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) to implement the Estuary Restoration Act of 2000. Vital technical and financial

support is provided to states and local governments, non-governmental organizations, universities, and private citizens in priority coastal areas. The Program collaborates with other Fish and Wildlife Service programs on joint projects such as development of the Wind Turbine and Communication Tower guidelines, development of a new disturbance definition during delisting of the bald eagle, and to update wetland data for mapping purposes. Other examples of collaboration include formation of the joint Bureau of Land Management/Fish and Wildlife Service energy development permitting office in Wyoming; and development of Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs) with military bases under the Sikes Act. The Program coordinates with other Federal, State and local agencies to conduct Coastal Barrier Resources Act consistency consultations, make property determinations, and create digital CBRA maps. The Habitat and Population Evaluation Team office uses National Wetlands Inventory digital data to focus wetlands acquisition funds on areas of high waterbird nesting density in the Prairie Pothole Region.

*Evidence:* Examples of MOU's with cost share partners are provided, and the Wind Turbine and Communication Tower Guidelines. A copy of the MOU among the Department of Defense, Service, and the States is included. A status update is provided on the compensatory mitigation action items undertaken by the Interagency Mitigation Working Group, and excerpts from the National Report on Sustainable Forests - 2003 (MOU referenced in 1.3). Other references include an MOU between National Resources Conservation Service and Fish and Wildlife Service, and a cooperative agreement between the Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Chicago County, and Trout Unlimited. Other reference material includes the Estuary Restoration Act Council Report to Congress, and examples of Coastal locations cooperative efforts with the National Estuary Program administered by EPA. A list of most-frequent partners from the HabITS database is included. An example of a CBRA consultation letter, property determination letter, Statement of Concurrence of property boundaries, and intra-agency agreement with USGS for CBRA mapping is included.

3.6

**Does the program use strong financial management practices?**

YES 14%

*Explanation:* The program uses strong financial management practices in accordance with requirements established by the Director and implemented through the Division of Financial Management. For the last three years, the Fish and Wildlife Service has received an unqualified audit opinion from independent auditors, identifying no material weaknesses. In

FY 2004, the Service was reported to be non-compliant with portions of the Federal Financial Management Improvement Act; the Service aggressively implemented actions to address these reportable conditions and all were resolved or downgraded in the FY 2005 auditor's report. The Service conducted risk assessments for improper payments under cost share programs in FY 2005, and no program received a high-risk rating for improper payments.

*Evidence:* The Program routinely participates in ongoing financial management controls and practices reviews as scheduled by the Division of Financial Management. Recent financial management reviews include: Independent Auditors Report on the Fish and Wildlife Service's Financial Statements for Fiscal Years 2005 and 2004; allocation guidance for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife for Regions 3 and 4; 2005 Annual Financial Report of the Fish and Wildlife Service; 3/24/05 Memorandum from Deputy Director Marshall Jones to Service Directorate re: Administration of the Financial Controls Questionnaire; 8/8/05 Memorandum from Assistant Director - Fisheries and Habitat Conservation (AFHC) Mamie Parker to Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations (Attention: Chief, Division of Financial Management) re: Results of FY 2005 Evaluation of Internal Financial Controls; 9/8/05 Memorandum from Deputy Director Marshall Jones to Service Directorate re: Enhancing Administrative Fund Controls in the Service's Financial System; and 12/2/05 Memorandum from Acting AFHC Everett Wilson to Director (Attention: Division of Policy and Directives Management) re: FY 2006 Internal Control Review Priorities.

3.7

**Has the program taken meaningful steps to address its management deficiencies?**

YES 14%

*Explanation:* Few management deficiencies have been identified for the Program. Habitat Conservation has systems in place for identifying and correcting management deficiencies. The Habitat Conservation Program Management Team (Team) consists of Assistant Regional Directors for Habitat Conservation from each Region, and the Washington Office Division Chiefs. The Team meets by conference call monthly and more frequently as required, and in person at least three times per year. The Team identifies and addresses management issues, and assigns responsibility for follow-through in a systematic manner. The Assistant Director - Fisheries and Habitat Conservation also convenes a monthly meeting of Division Chiefs to address management issues in the national headquarters. The Assistant Director is required to review the Program and its components annually to prioritize the need for a Management Control Review that identifies and corrects management

deficiencies. Action has been taken to correct deficiencies identified by the 1997 Inspector General's Report on Partners for Fish and Wildlife. Three Regions have undergone the Service's Management Control Review to identify and correct additional deficiencies. The Program plans to reinstate these reviews. Through the development of strategic plans, focus areas will be developed to expend Program resources more effectively and efficiently. In 2005, the Assistant Regional Directors for Ecological Services completed a plan for restructuring the National Wetlands Inventory that substantially reduces the NWI Center in Florida and the Washington Office. Successful plan implementation will increase the amount of program funds for strategic updating by 25%.

*Evidence:* The 2005 NWI restructuring plan and center management review are included, along with the results of a Gallup study. See also the 1997 Inspector General's Report, Management Control Reviews, and Question 3.2 for Performance Plans.

**Section 3 - Program Management**    Score    100%

**Section 4 - Program Results/Accountability**

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Question</b> | <b>Answer</b> | <b>Score</b> |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|

|     |   |                 |    |
|-----|---|-----------------|----|
| 4.1 | <b>Has the program demonstrated adequate progress in achieving its long-term performance goals?</b> | SMALL<br>EXTENT | 7% |
|-----|---|-----------------|----|

*Explanation:* Progress has been made in achieving long-term output goals established in prior-year PART for the Partners program, one of the elements of the Habitat Conservation Program. Improved long-term performance measures for the Habitat Conservation Program were developed during the PART; however, there are no data at present to measure performance. The new long-term performance measures focus on assessing the percentage of migratory birds at healthy and sustainable levels and the percentage of threatened and endangered species habitat needs met. Baseline data for the new long-term outcomes will be obtained in FY 2007, and will involve integrating the program's habitat conservation achievements more directly into the habitat-related goals of the other Fish and Wildlife Service programs.

*Evidence:* See the performance measures developed during the PART process, which illustrate baseline for long-term outcome measures that will be established in 2007, also

see updated Partners PARTweb reports.

4.2

**Does the program (including program partners) achieve its annual performance goals?**

YES 20%

*Explanation:* Annual performance measure data have been collected since 2004, and the Program has consistently achieved its annual performance goals. In addition, program partners meet their annual targets. Although the targets are ambitious, annual performance often greatly exceeds these targets due to a number of factors including unanticipated opportunities to work with partners, large or multiple projects that were not considered when targets were being set, and additional non-Service resources, including in-kind services and funding. Additional information about establishing annual performance targets and specific example are discussed in question 2.4.

*Evidence:* Budget justifications for FY 2006 and FY 2007 and the Service Operational Plan show that the Program is meeting its annual performance goals. Partners agreements showing that they met targets.

4.3

**Does the program demonstrate improved efficiencies or cost effectiveness in achieving program goals each year?**

YES 20%

*Explanation:* The various components of the Program achieve efficiencies in terms of both cost and time. The Program has gained efficiencies and cost effectiveness by developing and implementing improved technologies to produce digital maps of wetland habitats which decreased the cost of updating wetland habitat maps by about 60%. In 2004, the program updated 5,350,000 acres of digital wetlands maps. Using the new technology in 2005, we updated 11,300,000 acres of digital wetlands maps with no increase in program base funding. Use of the new technology saved the program \$513,000 that was applied to additional map updating efforts and to meeting the President's directive to produce a wetland status and trends analysis by December 31, 2005. Those savings continue to be realized by the Program today. Another digital mapping technique implemented by the program resulted in a time savings, reducing the time to update maps by about 40%. This performance measure - acres of land digitally updated per million dollars expended - has been identified as a PART efficiency measure. Other components of the Program gain efficiencies and cost effectiveness through cooperation with partners to leverage funds.

The Program works with partners to implement cost-shared restoration projects that focus on high priority species and habitats to achieve maximum effectiveness. The Program also achieves efficiencies by working with multiple entities to "batch" regulatory procedures, which allows greater resource conservation per unit input of staff time.

*Evidence:* See Performance measures for the PART. See also report by St. Mary's University on improved temporal efficiencies in developing National Wetlands Inventory products using a new technique; examples illustrating Program management activities that reflect savings in terms of dollars or time; and Fish and Wildlife Service report on cost savings in using newer technologies.

4.4

**Does the performance of this program compare favorably to other programs, including government, private, etc., with similar purpose and goals?**

NO 0%

*Explanation:* The Program has the necessary workforce and technical skills to deliver on-the-ground restoration projects and conservation to directly benefit priority federal trust species at a national scale. Most other Federal, State, and local agencies and private programs that deal with conservation issues do so using a broad approach or in a single state or local region. In FY05 99.3 % of all Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program accomplishments (over 200K acres and 600 miles of habitat) focused specifically on priority Federal trust species. Some other programs do not focus on a specific group of species and work with all species including game. By focusing on priority trust species, the Program performance is enhanced. Nevertheless, there are no relevant evaluations or systematically collected data that demonstrate the Program is more effective than the other programs. Such an evaluation would not be too inherently difficult or costly to perform.

*Evidence:* FY05 Accomplishments by Federal trust species HabITS report (June 9, 2006); Wildman 2005 "Estimates of the Economic Benefits from two federal habitat incentive programs" Duke University. Service's 2000 Wetlands Status and Trends Report outlining similarities and differences to USDA's National Resources Inventory. Fairchild 2004. "Private Landowner Perspectives Affecting Retention of Restored Wetlands" University of Minnesota. Federal statutes and regulations listed in 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, and previously cited Fish and Wildlife Service Manual chapters in those sections, NRCS Annual Performance

Report, FY 02.

4.5

**Do independent evaluations of sufficient scope and quality indicate that the program is effective and achieving results?**

SMALL  
EXTENT

7%

*Explanation:* While there has been no comprehensive evaluation of overall program effectiveness, individual aspects of the Program have been evaluated. The Partners and Coastal branches of the Program have been evaluated by a number of outside sources. The 1997 Inspector General's Review of Partners indicated that it was accomplishing its goals. Management control reviews of the Partners branch (2002-2003) evaluated management and administration. An independent audit of the Fish and Wildlife Service's finances demonstrated use of proper financial procedures Service-wide. Partners operation was evaluated by the outside "partners" in a series of meetings in 2003-2004 as a critical component of the strategic planning process. In 2004, an outside contractor was engaged to review the effectiveness of the Partners and Coastal Programs. A series of research studies have illustrated the effectiveness of Partners/Coastal programs in such areas as long-term conservation of restored wetlands, economic benefits, and benefits to trust species. Steps are currently being taken to use the newly formed Sporting Conservation Council to provide advice and guidance. The GAO, academic researchers, and non-governmental organizations have evaluated the effect of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act on coastal development.

*Evidence:* Documentation for the Partners and Coastal reviews include the 1997 Inspector General Audit; management control review reports; a summary of the Service audit; Washington Office stakeholder meetings information, including examples of program review from a partner; Estimates of Economic Benefits from two Federal Habitat Incentive Programs; a Review of Longevity of Wetland Projects; and the paper "Evaluation of Partners for Fish and Wildlife Restoration Efforts in the Saginaw Bay Watershed; for Coastal Barrier Resources Act branch evaluations see the 1992 GAO study "Coastal Barriers: Development Occurring Despite Prohibitions Against Federal Assistance" that is currently in the process of being updated; the 2000 paper "Development on Coastal Barriers: Does the Coastal Barrier Resources Act Make a Difference?"; and the 2000 Heinz Center study "Evaluation of Erosion Hazards." See also question 2.6.

**Section 4 - Program Results/Accountability**

Score 53%

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