

Dear Colleagues and Partners,

Migratory birds connect people to nature in a way that no other wild creatures can, adding beauty, sound and color to our world and providing tangible ecological, economic and recreational benefits to humans and the natural environment.

In 2016, we celebrate the centennial of the most important document to aid in the protection of migratory birds in North America. The Treaty between the United States and Great Britain (for Canada) for the Protection of Migratory Birds was signed on Aug. 16, 1916, codifying the United States and Canada's commitment to protecting our shared bird resources.

The United States is proud of the successful conservation of its wild birds, especially through the 1916 treaty with Canada; the three that followed, with Mexico, Japan, and Russia; and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, signed into law in 1918. There is perhaps no better example of international collaboration than our efforts to support healthy and sustainable migratory bird populations beyond our borders; these treaties also set the stage for many other international wildlife conservation initiatives of the past century.

The treaties connect the Service with our federal, state, tribal and non-government partners – both domestic and international - who share our long, successful history of conserving, protecting and managing migratory bird populations and their habitats.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial is more than just a celebration. It is an opportunity involve all of our Service programs, as well as our current and potential partners, in creating awareness, promoting key actions, increasing support, and expanding opportunities for engagement by our citizens in the conservation of migratory birds. It is an occasion to reflect on a century of successful bird and habitat conservation and look ahead to the future of bird conservation.

We plan to develop and implement the Centennial celebration and associated events as a collective bird conservation community. We hope USFWS regions and programs and our partners will develop their own ideas, find their roles, and identify opportunities to join in the Centennial activities. This "Nestbox" is intended to be a resource for anyone who wants to join the Centennial celebration. Whether you integrate centennial focused events into your already planned activities, create workshops, give presentations, host bird walks, or find other ways of involving citizens in bird conservation efforts – we have useful tools, templates, information, hints and tips to aid and inspire you in your efforts.

However you decide to participate in and honor the Centennial, I hope you will join us in our efforts to conserve America's birds. Together, we are making a difference.

[Jerome Ford]

*Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial Nestbox / August 2015*