

## Migratory Bird Management

Migratory Bird Management		2004 Actual	2005 Enacted	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2006 Budget Request	Change From 2005 (+/-)
Conservation & Monitoring	\$(000) FTE	20,776 150	23,131 155	+399 -	+3,064 +11	26,593 166	+3,463 +11
Permits	\$(000) FTE	918 17	1,521 23	+22 -	+23 +2	1,566 25	+45 +2
Federal Duck Stamp Program	\$(000) FTE	667 3	567 3	- -	+8 -	575 3	+8 -
North American Waterfowl Mgmt Plan	\$(000) FTE	10,225 38	10,232 38	+95 -	+2,573 -	12,900 38	+2,668 -
CAM (See General Business Operation Expenses)	\$(000)	[944]	[13]	-	-	[13]	-
<b>Total, Migratory Bird Management</b>	<b>\$(000) FTE</b>	<b>32,586 208</b>	<b>35,451 219</b>	<b>+516 -</b>	<b>+5,668 +13</b>	<b>41,635 232</b>	<b>+6,184 +13</b>

### Use of Cost and Performance Information

In FY 2005 the Division of Migratory Bird Management will continue to use operational work-plans as a way to prioritize, budget, and manage the division's nationwide workload. This project-based process outlines requirements to the project level of detail including objectives, scope, and estimated cost. Fields in the workbook correspond to fields in the Migratory Bird Project Database which are used to manage the current workload and plan future work for the division. Use of a database facilitates planning by providing a format for submitting new project ideas and allows ranking of prospective projects for implementation. The process incorporates performance reporting and is consistent with Activity Based Costing (ABC) processes.

### Program Overview

The Division of Migratory Bird Management, Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, Regional Migratory Bird programs, Joint Ventures, and the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Office comprise the Service's Migratory Bird Conservation Program. These units work cooperatively to prevent new species from joining those already on the Endangered Species List. Efforts include:

- conduct population surveys, monitoring, and assessment activities for both game and non-game birds;
- manage migratory bird permits and hunting regulations;
- participate in international treaty negotiations related to migratory birds;
- manage overabundant bird populations and restore habitat where populations are declining;
- develop outreach and education materials and follow through with related activities;
- manage grants that implement on-the-ground activities to conserve migratory bird and other wildlife habitats;
- support regional-scale biological planning, project implementation, and evaluation to achieve migratory bird objectives; and

- coordinate efforts to reduce bird mortalities resulting from collisions with communication towers and power-lines, fisheries by-catch, pesticides, and other human-related causes.

The Migratory Bird Management program also supports (1) DOI Resource Protection - Biological Communities Strategy 2, targeted at sustaining biological communities on DOI managed and influenced lands and waters; (2) DOI Resource Protection - Biological Communities Strategy 3, targeted at increasing information and knowledge necessary for decision making; (3) DOI Resource Protection - Cultural and Heritage Resources Strategy 1, targeted at increasing the knowledge base of cultural and heritage resources managed by DOI; and, (4) DOI Recreation - Goal 2 Strategy 1, targeted at increasing the quality of recreational activities involving DOI-managed resources and Strategy 2, provide effective interpretation and education programs.

**Conservation Mission:** Migratory birds constitute one of North America's most highly valued natural resources and require regional, national, and international coordination and communication for their conservation. The mission of the Migratory Bird Management Program is to conserve migratory bird populations and their habitats for future generations, through careful monitoring and effective management. This work is done in partnerships with others, to fulfill U.S. treaty obligations and trust responsibilities. The responsibility for conserving, protecting, and enhancing the populations and habitats of the nation's migratory birds rests with the Service, the lead federal agency for migratory bird conservation. The Service meets its responsibility through a variety of programs, including on-the-ground initiatives and partnerships. The Migratory Bird Management Program's greatest challenge is to continuously increase knowledge of bird population status and trends so that population and habitat management activities are focused properly. In general, the aim is to remove or reduce harmful threats to birds, and to identify and develop appropriate management that will result in healthy and sustainable population levels.

The Service, by treaty and law, is mandated to maintain and enhance more than 900 species of migratory birds for the continued enjoyment of the American public. Birds enrich the lives of Americans in countless ways and their loss would immeasurably diminish the quality of life for a large segment of the public.

According to 2001 Census data compiled in The 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation Report, nearly 82 million adult residents of the United States (39 percent of the adult population) participate in wildlife-related activities, and 88 percent of them pursue activities that focus specifically on migratory birds, such as bird-feeding, hunting, photography, and viewing. Each year, these Americans contribute about \$58 billion to the U.S. economy through expenses directly related to wildlife-related activities, and they expect that recreational opportunities with migratory birds in their natural habitats will continue to be available to their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

A quadrupling of the U.S. population since 1900 has placed tremendous pressures on the habitats and ecosystems upon which migratory birds depend for their survival. As a result, there have been dramatic changes in the landscape mosaic (e.g., 50 percent of wetland habitats drained or altered, 90 percent of the tallgrass prairie converted to agriculture, and 96 percent of original eastern forests logged). Constant changes in the quality, quantity, and distribution of habitats used by migratory birds present major challenges to Federal and State agencies responsible for their management. Largely because of these habitat-related threats, nearly 25 percent of the Nation's migratory bird species are now considered to be at risk of suffering further declines and thus in need of additional conservation measures. Whatever actions are necessary to keep these species common need to begin now to ensure this treasured resource remains an integral part of the everyday lives of the American people.

The Migratory Bird Management Program serves as a focal point for policy development and strategic planning, promoting bird conservation through the implementation of comprehensive migratory bird management plans. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight Landbird Conservation Plans, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and some of the migratory game bird management plans developed by the Flyway Councils are critical to the Migratory Bird Management Program. These plans have been developed by coalitions of Federal and State agencies, tribal entities, foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, industry, academia, and private individuals who are interested in the conservation of birds. The recently established North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) provides an opportunity to integrate these bird plans through regionally-based, biologically-driven, landscape-oriented partnerships that deliver the full spectrum of bird conservation.

**North American Bird Conservation Initiative Update:** Partnerships form the basis of integrated bird conservation/management activities, across species and across landscapes. The Service's Migratory Bird Conservation program is committed to full participation and leadership in the development, planning, and evaluation of national and international bird conservation plans, such as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight plans, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan. Partnerships and integration recently reached a new level with the development of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), a coalition of agencies and organizations whose sole purpose is to coordinate and facilitate the activities of all existing bird plans and partnerships. NABCI provides a forum for concentrated budget and technical coordination among federal agencies and increases the effectiveness of funds through collaborative on-the-ground projects.

**Program Assessment and Rating Tool (PART)** - During FY 2004, the Administration reviewed the Service's Migratory Bird program using the PART. The assessment took a service-wide approach to migratory birds and included the following programs in one assessment: Migratory Bird Management program, the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund program, the Migratory Bird Conservation program, and the Neotropical Migratory Bird program. The assessment found that the program has a clear mission and has undertaken important cooperative strategic management steps with partners. Additionally, the PART found:

- While the program has a strategic plan that identifies three strategic goals and supporting strategies, the program did not have specific long-term outcome or annual output performance goals. Through the PART process, specific long-term outcome or annual output performance goals were developed.
- There are no regular objective, independent program performance evaluations of the entire program.
- Budget requests have not been explicitly tied to long-term performance goals.
- Program regulations have not been systematically reviewed to ensure consistency in accomplishing program goals or if the program is using the least intrusive and most efficient approach.
- While the program is working to incorporate performance goals into specific employee performance plans, the program needs to complete this task to ensure full accountability for achieving specific program goals.

In response to these PART findings, the Administration will:

- Adopt long-term outcome and annual goals developed during PART process. Accomplishment of the outcome goals will depend on the efforts of many and will require the program to continue to work with partners to achieve these goals.

- Request additional funding in the Budget to develop and implement management plans for five migratory bird species to help achieve the program's new long-term goal to increase the percentage of migratory birds that are healthy and sustainable.
- Develop baseline data and revise targets as necessary for new performance measures.
- Schedule and carry out independent program evaluations, including the regulatory part of the program.
- Link individual employee performance plans with specific goal-related performance targets for each year.

In response to that evaluation, and after consultation with OMB and Department of Interior, DMBM adopted the long-term performance measure of attaining healthy and sustainable population levels for 564 of 912 migratory bird populations by 2007, an increase of 5 healthy populations over what is presently the case. DMBM further stipulated that by 2012, the status of another 5 birds will be similarly improved (status is reviewed every five years). The adoption of this measure clarifies that the Migratory Bird Management Program is expected to implement focused management actions that produce desired changes in the status of targeted bird populations. Given the wide range of factors that affect bird populations, many of which are outside of the Program's scope and control, we have determined that the most critical initial action necessary to attain the PART goal is to identify the initial five target focal species, and then to develop detailed management plans that describe, prioritize, and estimate budget requirements for the steps that need to be taken to achieve population status objectives. The supporting budget request is described in the increase justification.

## Migratory Bird Management Conservation and Monitoring

### 2004 Accomplishments

**Operational Workplans:** In FY 2004 the Division of Migratory Bird Management implemented use of operational work-plans as a way to prioritize, budget, and manage the division's nationwide workload. This project-based process outlines requirements to the project level of detail including objectives, scope, and estimated cost. Fields in the workbook correspond to fields in the Migratory Bird Project Database which are used to manage the current workload and plan future work for the division. Use of a database facilitates planning by providing a format for submitting new project ideas and allows ranking of prospective projects for implementation. The process incorporates performance reporting and is consistent with Activity Based Costing (ABC) processes.

**Waterfowl Banding:** Wildlife managers agree that knowledge of the rate at which leg bands are reported is critical to informed management decisions and are therefore committed to continuing this important function. Harvest distribution has been a sensitive and divisive issue among flyways, especially where harvest restrictions have come under considerable criticism over the past several years. The lack of adequate harvest information can require the setting of more conservative annual harvest limits and add uncertainty to future management actions relative to take differences and harvest opportunity among the Flyways. Because the reporting of recovered leg bands is known to differ geographically, reward-banding has been expanded to include a sufficient number of banding sites to ensure complete geographic coverage of all mallard harvest areas in Canada and the U.S. The Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Flyway Councils, the U.S. Geological Survey, and state and provincial wildlife management agencies are working cooperatively to estimate band-reporting rates for selected waterfowl species. This will provide essential information on rates of harvest for key waterfowl species.

**Birds of Management Concern:** The Service's expanded its focus on birds of management concern and on birds that are considered as common, while addressing the issue of overabundant migratory bird species and their impacts on the environment.

**Overabundant Species:** Implemented cooperative management activities on additional problem populations; thereby, helping to reduce conflicts directly related to their overabundance status.

**Population Modeling:** Continued work on the development of reliable population models for use in the Service's ongoing efforts to manage migratory game bird harvests adaptively.

**Conservation Plans:** Continued efforts to support numerous bird conservation plans, permit issuance for migratory bird take, and the successful completion of the Service's core survey program for migratory birds.

**Hunting Regulations:** Promulgated sport hunting and falconry regulations as scheduled, thus continuing to provide important recreational opportunities for the public thereby also supporting the DOI Recreation goal of Ensuring a Quality Experience and Enjoyment of Natural and Cultural Resources on DOI Managed or Partnered Land or Waters.

**Developing New Surveys:** Increased our understanding of the status and trend of important migratory bird populations, such as waterbirds, shorebirds, or land birds, through the design and implementation of a pilot survey.

**Public Awareness:** The Service has a significant role in heightening public awareness of the importance of migratory birds. In partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Service coordinates International Migratory Bird Day, a day of recognition celebrated annually on the second Saturday in May. Festivals, bird walks, seminars, and other activities provide people with an increased awareness of the significance of migratory birds. More than 500 public events and countless private events have assisted in educating hundreds of thousands of people, including students, educators, and political leaders. IMBD is a unique opportunity to educate the American public on the necessity of maintaining natural habitats and reducing threats to birds.

### 2005 Planned Program Performance

Accurate population information is critical to identifying and prioritizing management actions and providing the scientific basis for the Migratory Bird Management Program. Regular monitoring and assessment of status and trends of migratory bird populations are necessary to identify and implement appropriate management actions. In addition to monitoring, the acquisition and analysis of new or existing scientific information may be necessary to provide the basis for addressing and resolving priority migratory bird management issues. Research is needed to address problems or concerns or to determine effective, cost-efficient conservation strategies. The Service is largely dependent upon partners, such as the U.S. Geological Survey, to address research needs.

**Shorebirds:** Almost 24 percent of the world's shorebird species occur in the U. S. and Canada; they can be found in every state and province. There are 74 distinct shorebird subspecies identified in North America, more than one-third (36 percent) have populations that number less than 25,000 individuals. Seven populations of shorebirds are listed, or have been considered for listing, as threatened or endangered in the U.S. and one species is likely extinct. Of 51 shorebird species that breed in North America, 40 species (78 percent) spend their winter in Latin American and Caribbean countries, others travel to wintering grounds in eastern Asia, Australia, Polynesia, and northern Europe. Because preliminary information indicates the majority of shorebirds found in North America are declining, the Service and its partners initiated the Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (PRISM), in 2001, to develop scientific procedures to estimate population sizes and track changes. The Shorebird Sister Schools Program, initiated by the Service in 1993, is designed to deliver education about the conservation of shorebirds and their wetland, shoreline, and grassland habitats nationwide. The program annually engages more than 50 partners throughout Western Hemisphere and Asian flyways to deliver information.

**Waterbirds:** The Service is an important partner in the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative. In 2002, the initiative produced the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, a framework for conservation action for a wide range of bird families, including loons, pelicans, herons, cormorants, puffins, and petrels. Many species of these aquatic birds face significant risks to their populations, habitats, and critical areas. Colonial-nesting waterbirds are particularly vulnerable because they congregate for breeding; this behavior has also made it difficult to assess populations and trends. Prior to the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, there was no comprehensive, collaborative effort to conserve these birds; the Plan is based on the successes of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight, and the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan.

**Managing Overabundant Migratory Birds:** The contemporary phenomenon of managing migratory bird species that are expanding beyond their historic ranges and numbers due to changes in their habitat, improved environmental quality, or other unknown reasons presents a challenge for biologists. Overabundant species require significant management actions to bring populations down to healthy levels. Snow geese, resident Canada geese, cowbirds, and cormorant populations, among the most common species of birds, are increasing at dramatic rates while simultaneously raising numerous public concerns. Crop depredation by Canada geese in the Pacific Northwest or impacts on

aquaculture by double-crested cormorants in the Southeast create economic issues. For example, midwinter counts of Canada geese in the mid-Atlantic and New England regions increased from an average of approximately 29,000 birds during 1966-1970 to nearly 350,000 during 1996-1999, largely due to the growth of resident populations. Management of this diverse and widely distributed resource is increasingly complex. Insufficient information on the status, distribution, and other elemental factors influencing the dynamics of these populations has compromised our ability to resolve critical management issues. However, the Service has already begun to implement the President's 2005 budget which was designed to initiate actions that will address some of these concerns.

The funding level provided for 2005 will allow the Service to implement the following activities for migratory birds.

**EIS Implementation: EISs for three overabundant species will be implemented. These include:**

**Light geese (lesser snow and Ross's geese):** Their feeding activity in portions of the Hudson Bay region of North America destroys vast expanses of fragile arctic and sub-arctic tundra and presents a serious risk to the survival of geese populations and local populations of other migratory birds that depend on the same habitat. The management goal is a 50 percent reduction in numbers of mid-continent light geese.

**Double-crested Cormorants:** The population of double-crested cormorants over a 30-year period has grown from slightly more than 50,000 to almost 400,000. Population research will be provided data essential to support population-level management if localized damage control efforts fail to resolve resource conflicts.

**Resident Canada Geese:** In recent years, the numbers of Canada geese that nest and/or reside predominantly in the within the conterminous United States have undergone dramatic population growth. Populations have grown to levels that are increasingly coming into conflict with people and human activities and causing public and private property damage and human health and safety concerns in many parts of the country. The EIS provides alternative management strategies and a regulatory mechanism for States and other agencies to respond to complaints. Implementation of the EIS is essential to effectively managing the size of the population while considering the socioeconomics, and minimizing the effect on other wildlife species as well as natural, historic, and cultural resources.

**Webless Migratory Gamebirds:** The Service, in corporation with State wildlife agencies and other organizations, will conduct studies on migratory game birds other than waterfowl (i.e., doves, pigeons, cranes, woodcock, rails, and snipe). Six new high-priority projects will be implemented, examples include mourning doves, woodcock, and some rails which have been declining in abundance, and the causes of these declines will be determined and could be used in the development of harvest regulations.

**Harvest Information Program (HIP):** HIP will be fully implemented. HIP is a cooperative program with the States, who are required to collect the names and addresses of all licensed migratory bird hunters and provide them to the Service. The Service uses the names and addresses to select samples for conducting annual national migratory bird harvest surveys.

**Survey and Monitoring:** The Service will be able to comply with mandates in the various migratory bird treaties and other legislation (e.g., *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980*) by addressing core deficiencies in our migratory bird survey, monitoring, and assessment program. The key to effective conservation of our Nation's migratory bird resources is a thorough understanding of the status (distribution and population trends) of each species and an awareness of how our actions affect

that status. Knowledge of status over time is essential to: (1) establish bird conservation priorities, (2) scientifically evaluate the effects of management actions, and (3) assess impacts of other human and environmental factors on migratory bird populations. Because most birds range over large areas, obtaining an accurate, complete picture of their status requires a broad-based, range-wide perspective that is attainable primarily through survey and monitoring projects conducted in coordination with partners. The Service has three priorities for expansion of its existing bird survey and monitoring program: (1) development of standardized procedures for measuring range-wide status for poorly monitored, high priority species; (2) enhanced data collection, analysis and reporting procedures for ongoing surveys; and (3) greater data assessment capabilities to embrace the use of monitoring data in decision-making.

**Implementation of the Migratory Bird Management Project Database:** This system will play a key role in facilitating a project ranking process in support of regional activities in the Branch of Species and Habitat Assessment, or through contracts with State agencies, NGOs, or private vendors. Examples of current projects that will be implemented include: (1) assessment work to revise the northern pintail harvest strategy; (2) assessment work to develop an adaptive management approach for bald eagle disturbance permitting after de-listing; (3) implementation of standardized marshbird monitoring program on a continental scale; (4) implementation of standardized monitoring for key seabird species; and (5) collection of demographic and population data for golden eagles to develop reliable population models that predict effects of harvest by Native Americans.

**Bird Harvest Strategies and Adaptive Management:** The Service will greatly expand its capability in data analysis and assessment with projects that lead to improvements in migratory game bird harvest strategies and adaptive harvest management (AHM) procedures that are important to States and other partners. High priorities for these statisticians/biologists will be improvements in harvest strategies and/or AHM development for American black ducks, canvasbacks, harlequin ducks, northern pintails, wood ducks, mourning doves, and woodcock. These field biologist positions will also play an integral role in future development of population management strategies for double-crested cormorants, in the development of adaptive management models for bald eagles relative to disturbance, and for the management of golden eagles (Native American harvest) and peregrine falcons (falconry harvest).

**Nongame Shorebirds, Waterbirds, and Landbirds:** Field biologists will be assigned activities that focus specifically on shorebird, waterbird, and landbird survey, monitoring and assessment needs, respectively. These biologists will work in close coordination with the existing bird plan coordinators, as well as Service Regional staff, States, NABCI committee, and partners, to develop project proposals for Migratory Bird Management Program survey and assessment funds to address high priority needs.

**Manage bird populations to self-sustaining levels for specific species:** Projects will be implemented that both maintain the Service's focus on birds of management concern as well as on birds that are considered as common, while addressing the issue of overabundant migratory bird species and their impacts on the environment. Specifically, (1) cooperative management activities will be implemented for problem populations that will help to reduce conflicts directly related to its overabundance status; (2) efforts will continue in support of numerous bird conservation plans, permit issuance for migratory bird take, and the successful completion of the Service's core survey program for migratory birds, and (3) sport hunting and falconry regulations will be promulgated as scheduled, thus continuing to provide important recreational opportunities for the public

### Justification of 2006 Program Changes

Migratory Bird Management		FY 2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
Conservation & Monitoring	\$(000)	26,593	+3,064
	FTE	155	+11

#### Conservation and Monitoring (+\$3,074,000)

The task of managing the nation's migratory birds is becoming increasingly complex. For example, modern waterfowl management requires detailed information on the population ecology of waterfowl species and accurate and relatively precise estimation of hunter harvest rates. Today, intricate models of population dynamics are used to guide harvest-management decisions. Reasonably precise estimates of population abundance and other parameters such as survival, harvest, and reproduction rates are required to drive those models. Our needs for information for waterfowl management, as with our data needs for management of other species, have exploded over the past decade.

**FY 06 Highest Priority Activities:** Below are the critical program components that will be implemented with the FY 06 request. These include projects that will be carried out at both regional and national levels.

#### Harvest Surveys (+\$100,000)

This function is among the Service's core responsibilities because estimation of survival and harvest rates is critical to the sound management of waterfowl and other game-bird populations. The process relies solely on information collected from hunters through surveys that must meet rigorous statistical standards. Therefore, it is vital that surveys of sufficient precision are accomplished, evaluated, and expanded or continually improved to allow for the most direct and accurate estimation of harvest. Without this information, management will necessarily be more conservative because uncertainty is explicitly accounted for in the adaptive harvest management process. In many cases we do not know actual harvest rates. Therefore we utilize estimates with poor precision in our modeling/optimization effort. This results in a more conservative decision-making process; consequently, there is the possibility that more restrictive regulations will be used than would be the case if we had more accurate harvest-rate estimates. These funds will be used by the Service to ensure appropriate harvest surveys are continued or expanded, as necessary, for sandhill cranes, snipe, rail, gallinule, coot, and woodcock.

#### Survey and Monitoring (+\$1,704,000)

Aerial surveys are the backbone of the biological assessment procedures the Service uses to determine the status and trends of ducks, geese, and swans. Surveys are conducted on principal breeding grounds and important migration and wintering areas, covering large portions of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Annual surveys count over 90 million ducks of over 15 species and 4 to 6 million geese and swans. These surveys are international in scope. In May the Service's pilot-biologists will fly over 80,000 miles of tree-top level transect surveys during 1,600 hours of flight time, covering over 204,000 flight miles of habitat. The distance flown on these annual surveys is virtually equivalent to the distance from the earth to the moon. This work is tedious, inherently risky, and complicated by bad weather and aging equipment. Waterfowl surveys are accomplished by using sampling techniques that have been proven and refined over several decades. The information gathered is critical to identifying and prioritizing management actions and developing annual hunting regulations. Scientific conservation and monitoring programs are established and comprehensive migratory bird management actions are based on analysis of these data. The funds requested here will ensure that these critical surveys remain funded at levels that will provide data of sufficient quality to adequately inform the regulatory decision-making process.

**Population and Habitat Assessment (+\$520,000)**

Survey and monitoring data are only useful if properly collected, compiled, and analyzed. The Migratory Bird Management Population and Habitat Assessment Branch of DMBM performs these functions. The requested increase would increase our ability to design surveys and analyze survey data, and to assess the effects of management treatments through adaptive resource management procedures.

**Developing and Implementing Processes for Focal Species Management Actions (\$750,000)**

It is difficult to underestimate the significance of migratory birds as indicators of environmental health and ecosystem integrity. Intact environments that harbor a natural diversity and abundance of birds are healthy places for humans to dwell, and environments where birds are declining and at risk are places of concern. With respect to effectively addressing migratory bird declines, there is no argument that early intervention and careful planning, coupled with aggressive implementation of management activities, is the best approach. Preventive management eliminates the need for costly recovery efforts and the associated negative impact on private landowners. Beginning conservation efforts for migratory birds early, before they are depleted to the point of requiring listing as threatened or endangered, has several benefits. Early conservation is better because there are more conservation options available for landowners, and conservation is more likely to be successful. The need to implement costly, last-ditch conservation actions (e.g., captive propagation and reintroduction) is avoided. The Service's goal in this regard is to recover the listed species and prevent further listings.

The Service has always focused its migratory bird conservation actions on declining and at-risk birds. Toward that end, and in fulfillment of mandates in the 1998 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, the Service produced the Birds of Conservation Concern 2002 list in an effort to call attention to migratory birds that might require management attention. While the Program has expended further resources on planning and conservation activities designed to address the needs of these species, focused management aimed at changing the status of Birds of Conservation Concern was viewed as beyond the scope of what the Migratory Bird Management Program could be expected to accomplish.

In 2004, the Migratory Bird Management Program was evaluated using the Program Assessment Rating tool (PART). The Program received a rating of Results not Demonstrated. The PART findings suggest that the program is lacking suitable performance measures to evaluate conservation activities. In response to that evaluation, and in consultation with OMB and Department of Interior staff, the Service adopted the long-term performance measure of attaining healthy and sustainable population levels for 564 of 912 migratory bird populations by 2007, an increase of 5 healthy populations over what is presently the case. We further have stipulated that by 2012, the status of another 5 birds will be similarly improved. The adoption of this measure clarifies that the Migratory Bird Management Program is expected to implement focused management actions that produce desired changes in the status of targeted bird populations. Given the wide range of factors that affect bird populations, many of which are outside of the Program's scope and control, we have determined that the most critical initial action necessary to attain the Program's new outcome goal is to identify the initial five target focal species, and then to develop detailed management plans that describe and prioritize the steps that need to be taken to achieve population status objectives. This portion of the requested budget increase will be used initially to fund the completion of the management plans, and then subsequently to implement, in cooperation with our partners and to the extent possible within the available budget, the highest priority management recommendations that are within our control in those plans.

The Service has developed criteria that will be used to designate focal species. An initial list of 50 – 100 candidates for the focal species list will be drawn from our existing list of Birds of Management

Concern (BMC). This list includes species, subspecies, and managed populations of birds that fall into one or more of the following five categories of concern:

- (1) birds listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (62 birds)
- (2) non-game birds that have been determined to be of conservation concern due to declining populations and other factors (as published in Birds of Conservation Concern 2002; 247 birds, including all National, Regional, and Bird Conservation Region species)
- (3) game-birds that are below desired condition (35 birds)
- (4) game-birds that are at or above desired condition (60 birds), and
- (5) birds that are considered overabundant in part or all of their range and thus potentially damaging to natural ecosystems or human interests (8 birds).

A team of knowledgeable Migratory Bird Program staff, representing all Regional Offices and the major bird planning initiatives, has been tasked with nominating birds from the BMC list that are superlative examples for at least one of the following five characteristics: 1) high conservation need, 2) representative of a broader group of species sharing the same or similar conservation needs, 3) high level of current Migratory Bird Program effort, 4) potential as a unifier for partnerships, and 5) high likelihood that factors affecting status can realistically be addressed. The initial list of birds identified through this process will be further prioritized based on the number of characteristics that apply, and with due consideration to external factors that might affect, either positively or negatively, our ability to manage them. By the end of FY 2005, we will have identified the initial list of focal species, made assignments for the development of management plans, and establish timelines for completion of the plans. If this request is approved, we will begin writing the initial five plans in October 2005.

**Other 2006 Program Changes**

**Vehicle Reduction (-\$10,000)**

The 2006 budget proposes a reduction of \$10,000 in Conservation and Monitoring, Migratory Bird Management program to recognize expected savings to be achieved through improved fleet management within the Service and across the Department of Interior.

**Performance Data**

<b>Proposed PART Annual Output Measures relative to Bird Populations</b>							
<b>Outcome Measure 1: The percent of migratory bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels.</b>							
<i>Population Output Measures</i>	<b>FY 2002 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2005 Plan</b>	<b>FY 2006 Plan</b>	<b>Change in Performance - 2005 to Planned 2006</b>	<b>Long-term Target (2008)</b>
1. Percent of population management needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable populations of migratory birds.				Establish baseline			
2. The percent of Migratory Bird species that may be harvested for sport hunting or falconry according to the Migratory Bird Treaties for which harvest is formally approved.			58.6% (160/273)	58.9% (161/273)	58.9% (161/273)	58.9% (161/273)	58.9% (161/273)
<b>Long-term Output Measures</b>							

1. Percent of all Migratory bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels.				61.8%	61.7%	0	62.3%
2. Percent of adult Americans who participate in bird related recreation.				29.8%	29.8%	0	30%

<b>End Outcome Goal 1.2: Resource Protection. Sustain Biological Communities on DOI Managed and Influenced Lands and Waters in a Manner Consistent with Obligations Regarding the Allocation and Use of Water</b>							
<i>End Outcome Measures</i>	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Plan	FY 2005 Plan	FY 2006 Plan	Change in Performance - 2005 to Planned 2006	Long-term Target (2008)
1. Percent of migratory bird permits issued within 30 days of receipt of a completed application.			10%	50%	50%	0	
2. Number of species authorized to be taken for sport hunting and falconry			158	158	158	0	
3. % of identified population management needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable populations of birds listed on the Birds of Management Concern list.	*		-	-	-	0	

\* 2005 Baseline under development.

**Data Validation/Verification**

All outcome and output measures used by the Migratory Bird Management Program have been redefined through the PART review process. These new measures, as well as those previously described under original GPRA templates can be accessed on the Migratory bird Management Program’s web site at: <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/mbstratplan/MBFY2004GPRA.pdf>.

The key data used to determine which migratory birds are at or above desired condition is the report developed by the Service every five years entitled *Birds of Conservation Concern*. This report will evaluate all quantitative and qualitative indicators of status for all 912 migratory bird populations under the management jurisdiction of the Service, and identifies by inclusion those species and populations judged to be of concern or at risk. For the purposes of performance accounting, birds included on that list are judged not to be at self-sustaining levels. The report is subjected to peer-review before finalization.

Most of the output measures key off of Regional and National office work plans. For most measures, the outputs are relatively clear-cut and discrete (e.g., a report), requiring little cross validation. Some measures are not as easily validated, however, and in these cases we rely on assurances of reporting offices that their reports of measures attained are accurate (see Data Verification and Validation

<i>Performance Measures 1. – 9.</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
<p><b>Status of Data V&amp;V implementation in bureau/office program activity area</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extent to which Data V&amp;V criteria have been disseminated throughout the bureau/office program activity area units</li> <li>2. Extent to which protocols have been implemented in units providing performance data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are collection standards are followed</li> <li>- Are data entry and transfer rules used</li> <li>- Are data security measures implemented</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Does each office unit reporting performance data conduct oversight and certification of data</li> <li>4. Other relevant actions taken to insure credibility of performance data</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Data definitional templates have been distributed to all office providing input data.</li> <li>2. Measures do not all require input of performance data from field units. Protocols are being developed for measures that do.</li> <li>3. Yes</li> <li>4. This is the first year these measures have been used. Reporting standards and protocols are under development.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Data Source(s)</b></p>	<p>Publication entitled <i>Birds of Conservation Concern</i>. Developed every 5 years.</p> <p>National and regional office work plans that identify bird species targeted by conservation measures proposed to be implemented.</p>
<p><b>Data Limitations</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Report evaluates status of all birds, and data are not of equal levels of reliability and rigor for all groups.</li> <li>2. Data on status are not sufficiently quantitative for all birds to preclude the need for qualitative assessments of status in some cases.</li> <li>3. It is not possible to measure changes in status of birds meaningfully on an annual basis. These outcome measures can only be meaningfully assessed on a scale of every five to ten years.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Corrective/Improvement Actions (Needed, In Progress, or Recently Completed)</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improvements in survey design and application for poorly studied birds species are needed. Such improvements are being implemented as funding permits.</li> </ol>

## Permits and Regulations

Migratory Bird Management		2004 Actual	2005 Enacted	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2006 Budget Request	Change From 2005 (+/-)
Permits	\$(000)	918	1,521	+22	+23	1,566	+45
	FTE	17	23	-	+2	25	+2

### Program Overview

Migratory birds are of great ecological and economic value and are an important international resource. Recognizing their importance, the United States has been an active participant in the internationally coordinated management and conservation of migratory birds. This program supports DOI Resource Protection Strategic Goal 2, targeted at sustaining biological communities on DOI managed and influenced lands and waters.

Under the authorities of the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act* (16 U.S.C. 703-712) (MBTA) and the *Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act* (16 U.S.C. 668) (BGEPA), the Service is responsible for regulating activities associated with migratory birds. The BGEPA provides additional protections to the nation's eagles. The MBTA and the BGEPA are the primary legislation in the United States established to conserve migratory birds and prohibits the taking, killing, or possessing of migratory birds unless permitted by suitable regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior.

The regulation of take is a primary and traditional Service activity that integrates data-gathering activities designed to evaluate the status of migratory bird populations. For example, various regulatory options for game-bird species are considered each year during the well-defined cycle of procedures and events that result in the body of rules governing annual sport and subsistence harvest. The take of migratory birds for purposes other than hunting is administered through a permitting system (50 CFR parts 21, 22).

The mission of the Migratory Bird Permit Program is to promote the long-term conservation of migratory bird populations while providing opportunities for the public to study, use, and enjoy migratory birds consistent with the provisions of the MBTA and the BGEPA. Existing regulations authorizing take and possession of migratory birds focus on a limited number of allowable activities. Permits are available for scientific study, depredation control, falconry, raptor propagation, rehabilitation, education, taxidermy, waterfowl sale, religious use (eagles), and other purposes. Currently, approximately 40,000 permits, administered by seven Regional Migratory Bird Permit Offices, are active. Policy and regulations are developed by the Division of Migratory Bird Management in the Washington Office. Sound science is a fundamental component of migratory bird permit policies and permit decisions. Computer technologies such as the Service Permit Issuance and Tracking System database provide a tool for issuing permits and help monitor cumulative impacts to migratory bird populations.

In 2002, the Migratory Bird Management Program completed a comprehensive workload study of the permit program (Division of Migratory Bird Management Workload Study-Migratory Bird Permit Program, August 2002). An operational audit was conducted by measuring the work associated with administering permits at each Regional work center. The Workload Study included recommendations for improvements in the administration and customer service of the program. Among the recommendations were streamlining permit processes and procedures to improve efficiencies; and improving permit administration through development and consistent implementation of policy and regulations.

## 2004 Program Performance Accomplishments

In addition to proceeding with required rules and regulations, the Service used the Migratory Bird Permit Workload Study as a platform for addressing improvements in organization, policies, and procedures. These activities cover a broad spectrum of take issues for migratory birds and consequently are aligned with DOI's Strategic Goal of Resource Protection.

The following actions were implemented in 2004 and are examples of useful indicators of the Service's performance in sustaining biological communities:

- Regulations to exempt the Armed Forces from permit requirements for incidental take of migratory birds during military readiness activities were proposed;
- Regulations to establish specific permit category for rehabilitating sick and injured migratory birds were finalized;
- Final regulations to revise permit processing fees were prepared; implementation is pending;
- A permit exemption was established for collection of birds by public officials for disease monitoring purposes.
- The EIS and depredation orders for allowing take of double-crested cormorants without a depredation permit were finalized.
- Actions were implemented to standardize procedures that facilitate consistency in permit administration;
- Process improvements to realign permit expiration and reporting requirements to streamline the annual reporting and renewal process for permittees, and staggering of permit expirations to better distribute workload throughout the year, continued;
- Permit application and report forms were renewed in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act. As a result of outreach to permittees, numerous improvements were made, including elimination of information previously collected.

## 2005 Planned Program Performance

In FY05 this program received a \$600,000 funding increase. The request for increased funding was based on a comprehensive workload analysis completed in 2001 which identified gaps in funding at various locations based on the level of workload for each permit office. This funding increase will enable Permits to operate with minimal support from other migratory bird program resources for the first time since 1995. However, over the past four years the workload factor, permit applications received, has risen by 15% to around 13,000 new or renewed applications a year. While improvements in administrative processes coupled with the 2005 funding increase will significantly reduce the programs dependence on other program support, the increase in workload is not without consequences. In 2005 and 2006 implementation of additional process improvements such as those mentioned above, along with proposed changes in the permit fee structure, will enable the program to function at near optimal levels; however, any increases in the number of permit applications may require the program to re-evaluate efficiencies, workload priority setting, or staffing levels in the future.

- An electronic permit application process will be implemented which will allow applicants to apply on-line with a simplified format which will simultaneously reduce agency data entry and process delays.
- Regulations to exempt the Armed Forces from permit requirements for incidental take of migratory birds during military readiness activities will be finalized;

- Guidance for administering migratory bird scientific collecting permits will be prepared.
- Regulations to exempt the Armed Forces from permit requirements for incidental take of migratory birds during military readiness activities are proposed;
- Regulations defining “disturbance” under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act will be proposed, in preparation for the delisting of the Bald eagle under the Endangered Species Act. National guidelines for the public for avoiding disturbance will be prepared.
- Regulations revising requirements for falconry and raptor propagation permits will be proposed;
- A list of all nonnative bird species to which the MBTA does not apply will be established, in accordance to the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act. Regulations updating the list of migratory bird species that are protected under the MBTA and clarifying that nonnative species are not protected will be issued.
- Regulations to establish a depredation order to authorize take of birds at airports to reduce risk to public safety will be prepared.

#### Justification of 2006 Program Changes

Migratory Bird Management		FY 2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
Permits	\$(000)	1,566	+23
	FTE	25	+2

The fiscal year 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-447) included two across the board rescissions, netting a 1.3 percent reduction to all Service programs. An increase of \$23,000 will restore those reductions and will allow the Service to maintain performance and base program capability.

## Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp)

### Authorizing Statutes

**Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act**, as amended (16 U.S.C. 718), this Act requires all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older to possess a valid Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamp (commonly known as a “Duck Stamp”). Funds from the sale of this stamp are placed in the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, created by the Act. The Act also authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire waterfowl production areas.

### Other Authorizations

**Migratory Bird Conservation Act**, as amended (16 U.S.C. 715).

Migratory Bird Management	2004 Actual	2005 Enacted	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2006 Budget Request	Change From 2003 (+/-)
Federal Duck Stamp Program \$(000) FTE	667 3	567 3		+8	575 3	+8

### Program Overview

The Federal Duck Stamp program is an internationally recognized program which supports the conservation of important migratory bird habitat through the design and sale of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (the Duck Stamp). In July of 2005 the Federal Duck Stamp Office will release the 72<sup>nd</sup> Duck Stamp featuring South Dakota artist Mark Anderson’s pair of drake hooded mergansers (pictured right). Anderson’s painting, selected out of 224 entries, retains the pictorial heritage of the first Duck Stamp created by political cartoonist and conservationist J.N. Ding Darling in 1934.



Aligned with the Department of the Interior’s Resource Protection mission area, sales of Duck Stamps since 1934 have raised more than \$700 million for the Migratory Bird Conservation Committee (MBCC) to conserve more than 5.2 million acres of prime bird habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. In fiscal year 2003, sales of Duck Stamps totaled nearly \$25 million, approximately 50 percent of the total annual revenue of the MBCC.

### 2004 Program Performance Accomplishments

Emerging from a small pilot program in 1989, the Junior Duck Stamp Program has expanded to include all 50 states, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa. The Junior Duck Stamp Program incorporates scientific and wildlife management principles into a visual arts curriculum designed to educate students about the importance of wetlands conservation. The program culminates in the Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest, where students compete to design the next year’s stamp. Nearly 27,000 entries were received for the 2004 contest, with awards given at the state and national level. Thousands more students were exposed to the wetlands conservation curriculum but chose not to enter the contest.

In 2004 a pair of Fulvous Whistling ducks painted by Adam Nisbett of Missouri was selected to become the 2004-2005 Federal Junior Duck Stamp. Adam, who was home-schooled, represents the increasingly broad reach of the Junior Duck Curriculum, which is being incorporated into more home schools and community organizations' educational programs. In 2003-2004, sales of the \$5 stamp generated more than \$105,000 for the Junior Duck Stamp Program, all of which was returned to the program to fund awards for students and support its growth.

### 2005 Planned Program Performance

After years of managing the licensing program within the Service, in FY 2004 the rights to license the Duck Stamp "products" was opened up to a competitive bid process. This action is designed to transfer the management of licensing of items bearing the stamp's image to a contractor better suited to a marketing and sales environment. The transfer of this function is expected to improve the efficiency of the stamp program, and increase revenues generated from the marketing of items bearing the Duck Stamps image. Eventually this action will result in additional revenues being received for the Migratory Bird Conservation Account for conservation of migratory bird habitat.

The Duck Stamp Program is focused on two long-term goals; increasing the amount of revenue available for migratory bird habitat conservation through the sale of Federal Duck Stamps, and increasing the number of students participating in the Junior Duck Stamp Program. In FY 2005 the Service will continue to pursue initiatives to market the Duck Stamp to the broader public and increase revenues from sales of the stamp to citizens who want to make a difference for the environment.

The Junior Duck Stamp Program, whose authorization expires in 2005, is also critical to the future of conservation. As increased urbanization and development makes it difficult for millions of American children to interact with nature, environmental education such as that supported through the Junior Duck Stamp Program, will play a key role in ensuring that our nation's youth understand the need for wild places and what they can do to preserve them.

### Justification of 2006 Program Changes

Migratory Bird Management		FY 2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
Federal Duck Stamp	\$(000)	575	+8
Program	FTE	3	-

The fiscal year 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-447) included two across the board rescissions, netting a 1.3 percent reduction to all Service programs. An increase of \$8,000 will restore funding and allow the Service to maintain performance and base program capability.

### Program Performance Summary

This program supports DOI Resource Protection Mission – Outcome Goal 2, which aimed at sustaining biological communities on DOI managed and influenced lands and waters (Strategy 1- Create habitat conditions for biological communities to flourish).

## North American Waterfowl Management Plan/Joint Ventures

Migratory Bird Management		2004 Actual	2005 Enacted	Uncontrollable & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	2006 Budget Request	Change From 2005 (+/-)
North American Waterfowl Mgmt Plan	\$(000) FTE	10,225 38	10,232 38	+95 -	+2,573 -	12,900 38	+2,668 -

### NAWMP/JV - Integrating Performance and Cost Information

Cost-effective fish and wildlife conservation is attained by achieving the desired population impacts at the lowest relative cost to management and society. Joint Ventures have increasingly invested in biological planning as a means of identifying priority actions for specific conservation landscapes that effectively and efficiently accomplish their goals. This planning uses the best available scientific information to predict how bird populations respond to habitat conservation and other management activities. The products of biological planning, often maps or models, are used by joint venture partners to direct their individual habitat management expenditures where they have greatest effect and lowest relative cost. In 2004, the Migratory Bird Program was subject to a PART review which resulted in new long-term and annual performance measures. These measures are designed to gauge joint venture planning and implementation activities directly with healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds, which is the long term outcome goal for the Migratory Bird Program. Use of these new measures over time will help managers improve program performance, link performance to budget decisions, and provide a basis for making recommendations to improve results.

On October 6, 2004, the Secretary capped a multi-year effort to revise and renew the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), when she signed the new document on behalf of the United States. The new document includes detailed recommendations for improving the biological foundation of waterfowl conservation through the application of model-based planning and evaluation, continental and eco-regional prioritization of waterfowl conservation needs, and recommendations on future waterfowl monitoring activities. The new plan also proposes a comprehensive assessment of the progress toward NAWMP goals made by Joint Ventures and other partners since inception of the original plan in 1986.

Joint Ventures (JVs) were formed to implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). They are self-directed partnerships involving federal, State, and local governments, corporations, and a wide range of non-governmental conservation organizations that have proven to be successful tools for developing cooperative conservation efforts to protect waterfowl and other bird habitat. The Service provides base operations support for 15 JVs to address multiple local, regional, and continental goals for sustaining migratory bird populations by developing scientifically-based habitat objectives



that benefit waterfowl and other declining wildlife populations. JV partners use their collective resources, including a multitude of federal, state and NGO programs, to design and implement projects that address JV objectives. Since 1986, JV partners have expended approximately \$2.3 billion on habitat conservation projects, leveraging funds from multiple private, State and federal sources to protect, restore, or enhance 8.7 million acres of U.S. wetlands, grasslands, forests, and riparian habitat, more than one-half of the 17 million acres of U.S. habitat objectives under the NAWMP.

In 2004 the entire Migratory Bird Program underwent a Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review. As a result, new annual output measures were established for Joint Ventures and other Migratory Bird Program elements that contribute to long-term program outcomes. These measures, along with performance components that align program activities and objectives with the Secretary's four strategic plan mission components - Resource Protection, Resource Use, Recreation, and Serving Communities, will guide the delivery of Service program implementation, management reform, and budget formulation. The alignment and integration of program performance with budget formulation will provide the context for transparent accountability and the foundation for continual improvement.

### **Habitat Joint Ventures**

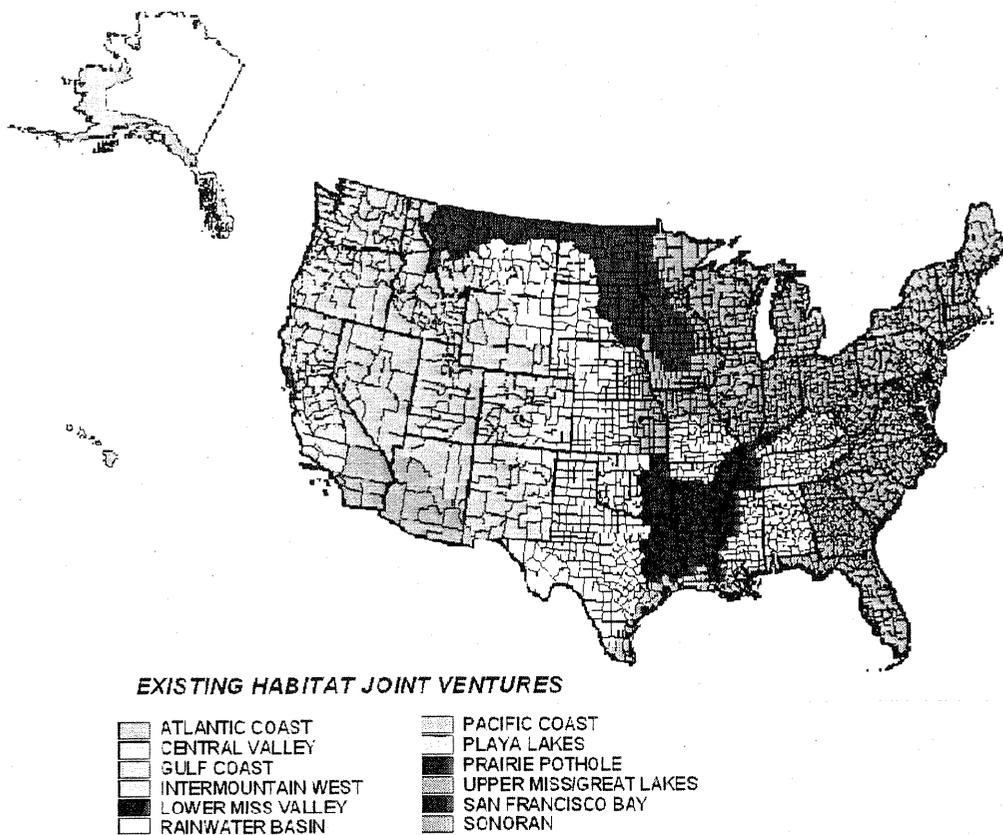
The Secretary's Four C's philosophy is at the very heart of Joint Venture development and operation. Each JV is formed and guided by a unique management board comprised of federal, state, and local conservation and community interests. The objectives and strategies for achieving the JV goal to conserve and restore waterfowl and other migratory birds through science-based habitat conservation are developed by the management boards to fit local and regional needs, resources, and priorities. The Service provides leadership in biological planning, coordination, communications, and assessment, and also serves on the management boards as an equal partner in habitat conservation.

### **Species Joint Ventures**

The Sea Duck, Arctic Goose, and Black Duck JVs promote and coordinate the gathering of scientific information vital to the management of waterfowl. Their primary objectives are to support research and surveys that yield information on population biology, provide reliable indices of population trends, and identify important habitats and threats. This information is vital to identify important limiting factors to these populations so that effective management strategies can be developed, including habitat conservation actions implemented by the Habitat JVs.

### **Joint Venture Administration**

Administration is essential to national and international coordination of joint venture activities. Both Canada and Mexico have similar programs. Coordination with other federal programs and agencies and stakeholder organizations is also a fundamental component of the program. In addition, administrative resources are being used to refine waterfowl population and geographic objectives as called for in the 2004 Update to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.



## 2004 Program Performance Accomplishments

In FY 2004, \$10.225 million was appropriated and allowed the Service to implement the following activities.

- The **Central Valley Joint Venture**, with increased planning capabilities, began facilitating a cooperative effort to integrate multiple agency/organizational habitat planning activities under one umbrella within the Tulare Basin (southern San Joaquin Valley). New partners with interests in this part of the valley have collaborated with existing Joint Venture partners to identify strategies for conservation within identified areas of need.
- The **Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Joint Venture** employed a Science Coordinator to work with the Management Board and Technical Committee on building the science foundation of bird conservation across the JV landscape. The conservation needs of shorebirds, wading birds and landbirds will be incorporated with existing waterfowl objectives to determine best management practices and overall habitat conservation strategies. This information will be used to update the JV Implementation Plan. The Science Coordinator will be co-located with other Service program staff in the field to share data and resources, and realize cross-program science benefits.
- The **Prairie Pothole Joint Venture** began development of a new Implementation Plan. For more than 15 years the JV has successfully worked with partners, particularly private landowners, for sustainable agriculture and abundant wildlife. While prairie landscape has benefited from JV activities, prairie wetlands and grasslands continue to be lost through wetland drainage and native grass conversion to cropland. Joint venture partners, concerned about long term habitat issues and impacts on prairie wildlife, particularly migratory birds,

will use the comprehensive new plan to address waterfowl and other issues of bird conservation with effectual conservation measures for the prairie landscape.

- In support of **Intermountain West Joint Venture** state implementation plans, the JV has used existing data from various partner agencies and newly developed GIS capacity to display and combine land ownership, land cover types, geopolitical features, project locations, and other important planning layers for JV partners. This process has resulted in the identification and mapping of 366 priority Bird Habitat Conservation Areas across the JV. These areas, totaling more than 117 million acres (20% of the entire JV area), represent the best places to focus 'all-bird' conservation efforts as determined by the respective state working groups.

## 2005 Planned Program Performance

In FY 2005 a funding level of \$10.232 million will support the following:

- The Division of Bird Habitat Conservation will continue to work with the NAWMP Committee to implement key recommendations of the 2004 Update of the Plan. These include a comprehensive assessment of the cumulative progress toward NAWMP goals made by JVs and other partners. This will include an update of regional habitat objectives based on evaluation results, identification of additional science support needs, and a refined estimate of the resources needed to accomplish NAWMP objectives. The assessment also will solidify strategic biological planning, implementation and evaluation throughout the waterfowl conservation community and renew the working relationships between the NAWMP Committee, Joint Ventures, and other partners.
- The **San Francisco Bay and Central Valley Joint Ventures** have jointly developed a GIS based project tracking system for use as a planning and reporting tool. The system's data and map layers will enable JV partners to plan project restoration in a more comprehensive way, coordinating with surrounding projects and land uses. The system will enable the JV to track project status and accomplishments as well as provide monitoring and evaluation data.
- The **Sea Duck Joint Venture** will support satellite telemetry studies of sea ducks throughout North America. This new technology allows scientists to track migration of sea ducks on a continental scale. Most studies will focus on eiders and scoters, whose populations have declined rapidly and are of high conservation concern. These studies will allow managers to define populations for more effective monitoring and harvest management, and provide information for accurate, focused habitat conservation programs.
- The restoration of longleaf pine ecosystems is a priority of numerous conservation partners across the Southeastern U.S. To facilitate these efforts, **Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture** partners have initiated a cooperative project with NatureServe and the USGS Southeast GAP project to model the historic and potential distribution of longleaf pine within the West Gulf Coastal Plain (WGCP) Bird Conservation Region. The Joint Venture will cooperate with partners to develop a model applicable to the historic range of longleaf pine and apply the model in the WGCP. Results will allow private, state, federal conservation partners to set long term restoration goals based on the best available science regarding the historic and potential distribution of this increasingly rare ecological system.
- The **Intermountain West Joint Venture** and its partners have initiated a bioenergetics study of water diversions and run-off as it relates to potential effects on waterbird carrying capacity within the Great Salt Lake (GSL). The GSL is the largest interior wetland system west of the Mississippi River and contains over 500,000 acres of emergent marsh, mud flats and associated habitats. Over 250 bird species rely on these wetlands, which have been designated as part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. Understanding the dynamics of this system as it relates to water diversion is vital to successful

implementation of habitat projects within the JV.

- The **Playa Lakes Joint Venture** will work with the USDA Wetlands Restoration Non Floodplain Initiative, the first Farm Bill program specifically designed for playas, to help landowners enroll all 56,600 acres authorized for the playa lakes region. Joint Venture partners will also continue their efforts to adapt other Farm Bill programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and Wetlands Reserve Program, to benefit playas, prairies, and associated wildlife species.

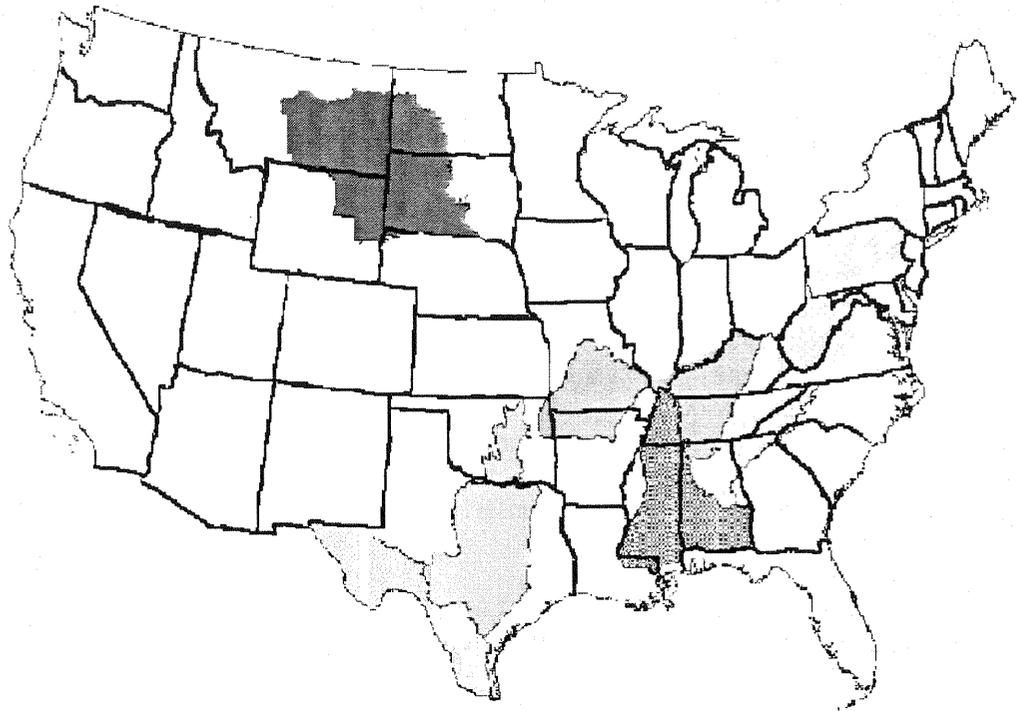
**Justification of 2006 Program Changes**

Subactivity		2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
NAWMP/Joint Ventures	\$(000)	12,900	+2,573
	FTE	38	-

The FY 2006 budget request for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and Joint Ventures is \$ 12,900,000 and 38 FTEs, a net program increase of \$ 2,573,000 and 0 FTEs from the 2005 enacted level to implement the Secretary’s Cooperative Conservation Initiative.

**New Joint Ventures (+\$1,433,000)**

As part of the Cooperative Conservation Initiative, the Service proposes to increase the JV program by providing support for up to six additional joint ventures, many of which have been in development in recent years. One new JV, the Central Hardwoods, completed an implementation plan in 2004 and met other administrative criteria established by the Service for formal recognition and funding. The highest priority in the request is \$400,000 for the Central Hardwoods JV. Additional joint venture partnerships are under development and are expected to submit implementation plans to the Service for approval by 2006. As was the Central Hardwoods JV, these new joint ventures are expected to complete implementation plans and met other administrative criteria prior to receiving Service funding. Currently, five additional partnerships are in active development by States and other conservation organizations. They are the Northern Great Plains, Rio Grande, Appalachian, East Gulf Coastal Plain, and Central Texas/Oklahoma. The Service will administratively allocate available funds, up to \$225,000 each, among these JVs according to their relative needs and timely fulfillment of the established administrative criteria. With the inception of these new joint ventures virtually all of the 50 states and Puerto Rico (with the exception of northern Alaska) will be included in a habitat JV.



**New Joint Ventures (Boundaries Approximate)**

	NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS		CENTRAL HARDWOODS
	CENTRAL TEXAS/OKLAHOMA		EAST GULF COASTAL PLAIN
	RIO GRANDE		APPALACHIAN

**Existing Joint Ventures (including increase to address FY 2005 Rescissions) (+\$992,000)**

Existing Habitat JVs will continue to build capacity for meeting the habitat needs of waterfowl and other bird groups, particularly since these JVs are widely recognized as the principal mechanism for delivering habitat conservation within a dynamic partnership structure. In doing so, they will continue to strengthen their biological planning, implementation and evaluation functions while they also expand partnerships, prioritize project needs, and support effective outreach and communication. The proposed increase will achieve the target funding levels recommended in the FY 2001 Conference Report on Interior Appropriations, and will restore rescissions of \$145,000 and program reductions included in the FY 2005 appropriation. This will allow existing JVs to operate at a level that will achieve their long-term waterfowl population and habitat objectives, and evaluate current management activities. JVs rely on Service support for a minimum operational level of funding for planning, priority setting, habitat implementation, evaluation, and citizen outreach.

**National Administration (+\$121,000)**

The Service proposes to increase its national-level support of joint venture activities. The growing numbers and extent of joint ventures requires more coordination and oversight to ensure the continued involvement of existing and new partners in joint ventures and other bird conservation partnerships such as Partners in Flight and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. The proposed increase will also allow the Service to improve reporting and analysis of performance and cost information from individual JVs for integration into the DOI strategic plan and alignment with the performance goals established for the overall Migratory Bird Program.

**NAWMP Implementation (+\$35,000)**

Under General Program Activities, The Service also proposes to increase its national-level support of

the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) by \$35,000 which will be used to implement recommendations of the 2004 NAWMP Update, including a comprehensive assessment of the progress toward NAWMP goals made by JVs and other partners. This will include revisions of regional habitat objectives based on evaluation results, identification of additional science support needs, and a refined estimate of the resources needed to accomplish NAWMP objectives. These activities were partially funded in FY2005 and the comprehensive assessment has been initiated. The additional funds requested will allow the Service to fully complete these actions in FY2006.

The Secretary of the Interior is a signatory to NAWMP; and, while the Service subscribes to the population and habitat objectives of NAWMP, specific performance goals relating to the Plan have not been established. Joint Ventures are not solely managed or implemented through DOI, but represent dynamic partnerships having a strong DOI/Service presence and funding commitment. Joint Ventures contribute to the new DOI Strategic Plan mission components of Resource Protection. Projects will comply with the Service's legislative mandate to monitor and establish baseline information on migratory bird populations and maintain the health of migratory bird populations. With the proposed increase funding, the Service will be able to accelerate achievement of NAWMP and Service goals, emphasizing habitat conservation on both public and private lands.

**Vehicle Reduction (-\$8,000)**

The 2006 budget proposes a reduction of \$8,000 in the Joint Ventures program to recognize expected savings to be achieved through improved fleet management within the Service and across the Department of Interior.

**Relationship of Program Changes to Performance Goals**

Each JV has a strategic implementation plan. The cumulative objectives of these plans are being organized under the DOI Strategic Goal for Resource Protection- Biological Communities, [Intermediate Strategy - Creating Habitat Conditions for Biological Communities to Flourish]. Service performance goals have been developed that reflect the annual progress made toward achieving the habitat objectives laid out in the JV implementation plans. The current funding level will enable JVs to fully engage their implementation plans and reach their targets within the planned time frame. Specific performance measures are defined below.

**Program Performance Summary**

<b>End Outcome Goal 2.1: Resource Protection.</b> Sustain biological communities on DOI managed and influenced lands and waters in a manner consistent with obligation regarding the allotment and use of water.							
<i>End Outcome Measure</i>	<b>2003 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2004 Actual</b>	<b>2005 President's Budget</b>	<b>2005 Revised Plan</b>	<b>2006 Plan</b>	<b>Change in Performance 2005 to Planned 2006</b>	<b>Long-term Target (2008)</b>
<b>Intermediate Outcome:</b> Create habitat conditions for biological communities to flourish.							
<b>Intermediate Outcome Measures (Key and Non-Key)</b>							
Number of acres of landscapes and watersheds managed through partnerships and networked lands that achieve habitat protection (SP) <b>PIM.2.01.003</b>	8,126,360	9,043,716	9,445,010	9,374,196	10,380,536	1,006,340	12,904,000