

Migratory Bird Management

| Migratory Bird Management | | FY 2005 Actual | FY 2006 Enacted | FY 2007 | | | Change From 2006 (+/-) |
|---|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-) | Program Changes (+/-) | Budget Request | |
| Conservation and Monitoring | \$(000) | 22,821 | 25,351 | +554 | +1,485 | 27,390 | +2,039 |
| | FTE | 140 | 140 | 0 | -1 | 139 | -1 |
| Permits | \$(000) | 1,501 | 1,523 | +27 | -3 | 1,547 | +24 |
| | FTE | 21 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 0 |
| Duck Stamp Office | \$(000) | 563 | 562 | +7 | -2 | 567 | +5 |
| | FTE | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| North American Waterfowl Management Plan | \$(000) | 10,124 | 10,800 | +80 | +955 | 11,835 | +1,035 |
| | FTE | 41 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 41 | 0 |
| User-Pay Cost Share | \$(000) | [13] | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total, Migratory Birds | \$(000) | 35,010 | 38,236 | +668 | +2,435 | 41,339 | 3,103 |
| | FTE | 205 | 205 | 0 | -1 | 204 | -1 |

Summary of FY 2007 Program Changes for Migratory Bird Management

| Migratory Bird Management | Amount | FTE |
|---|---------------|-----------|
| Program Changes | | |
| • Conservation and Monitoring | +1,541 | -1 |
| • North American Waterfowl Management Plan | +976 | 0 |
| • Program Management Savings | -82 | 0 |
| Total Program Change for Migratory Birds | +2,435 | -1 |
| • Internal Transfer – Aviation Funding (Fixed Cost and Related Change) | +250 | 0 |

Program Overview

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 or Threatened Species Lists. Migratory bird staff routinely:

- 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;
- manage grants that implement on-the-ground activities to conserve migratory bird 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.

Migratory birds constitute one of North America’s most highly valued natural resources and require regional, national, and international coordination and communication program for their conservation. The

mission of the Migratory Bird Management Program is to conserve and manage the 913 native species/populations of migratory birds and their habitats, 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.

Nearly 79 million adult residents of the United States (37 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 future generations.

Largely due to 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. The actions necessary to keep these species common must begin now to ensure this treasured resource remains an integral part of the everyday lives of the American people.

North American Bird Conservation Initiative: 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)

In 2004, the program was evaluated by the Administration using the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). The Program was found to be deficient in that suitable performance measures to evaluate conservation activities were not in place. In response to that evaluation, the Service adopted the long-term performance measure of attaining healthy and sustainable population levels for 564 of 913 migratory bird populations by 2007, an increase of 5 healthy populations over what is presently the case. The Service further 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 coordinate with partners and implement focused management actions that produce desired changes in the status of targeted bird populations in addition to the other activities for which it presently is responsible. 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 goal is to identify the first five target focal species, and then develop detailed management plans that describe, prioritize, and estimate budget requirements for the steps necessary to achieve population status objectives.

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, providing effective interpretation and education programs.

Performance Overview

| Measures | FY 2005 Plan | FY 2005 Actual | Change from FY 2005 Plan | FY 2006 Enacted | 2006 Change from FY 2005 Actual | FY 2007 Plan | 2007 Change from 2006 |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6.1 Percent of bird population management needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable populations listed on the Birds of Management Concern list. (PART) | establish baseline | establish baseline | n/a | 100% 119/119 | n/a | 100% 119/119 | 0% |
| 6.5 Percent of habitat needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds. (PART) | 40.0% 25,300,000/ 63,500,000 | 40.5% 25,700,000/ 63,500,000 | +0.5% +400,000 | 42.7% 28,899,619/ 67,673,168 | +2.2% +3,199,619 +4,173,168 | 42.7% 28,899,619/ 67,673,168 | 0% |
| 21.1 Percent of Migratory Bird species that may be harvested sport hunting and falconry according to the Migratory Bird Treaties for which harvest is formally approved. (PART) | 58.9% 161/ 273 | 58.9% 161/ 273 | no change | 58.9% 161/ 273 | no change | 58.9% 161/ 273 | 0% |
| 6.2 Percent of all migratory bird species that are at healthy and sustainable levels. (PART) | 61.4% 561/ 913 | 61.4% 561/ 913 | no change | 61.4% 561/ 913 | no change | 61.4% 561/ 913 | 0% |

Conservation and Monitoring

| | | FY 2005 Actual | FY 2006 Enacted | FY 2007 | | | Change From 2006 (+/-) |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-) | Program Changes (+/-) | Budget Request | |
| Conservation and Monitoring | \$(000) | 22,821 | 25,351 | +554 | +1,485 | 27,390 | +2,039 |
| | <i>FTE</i> | <i>140</i> | <i>140</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>-1</i> | <i>139</i> | <i>-1</i> |

Summary of 2007 Program Changes for Conservation and Monitoring

| Conservation and Monitoring | Amount | FTE |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Program Changes | | |
| • Ivory-billed woodpecker ecological assessment | +396 | 0 |
| • Focal species management | +658 | 0 |
| • Webless Game Birds | +488 | 0 |
| • Program Management Savings | -57 | -1 |
| TOTAL, Program Changes | +1,485 | -1 |
| • Internal Transfer – Aviation Funding (Fixed Cost and Related Change) | +250 | 0 |

The FY 2007, budget request for Conservation and Monitoring is \$27,390,000 and 139 FTE, a net program increase of \$2,039,000 and -1 FTE from the 2006 enacted level.

Justification of FY 2007 Program Changes

The additional funds will enhance Service capabilities to improve the status of migratory bird focal species' populations, and to meet recreational needs of migratory bird hunters and falconers. Specifically, \$658,000 of the increase will be used to implement management recommendations identified as necessary to improve the status of populations in nine focal species action plans. We anticipate being able to address about 42 additional management actions for focal species, based on average costs to address such management needs. Examples of the kinds of projects that may be undertaken include:

- (1) development of sustainable harvest strategies for Painted Buntings in Mexico, in cooperation with Mexican government agencies and States;
- (2) implementation of targeted research and monitoring for King Rails to determine causes of ongoing population declines so that strategies to reverse those trends can be developed and implemented; and
- (3) implementation of actions designed to reduce incidental mortality of albatrosses in association with fisheries operations in the Pacific Ocean.

An additional \$396,000 will be used to address specific population and habitat assessment needs associated with Ivory-billed Woodpecker recovery. Finally, \$488,000 of this increase will be focused on increasing our capabilities for management of webless migratory game birds (doves, pigeons, rails, snipe, woodcock, and cranes). Webless game birds account for the majority of migratory game bird hunting opportunity in the United States; therefore, effective management of these species is critical to meeting our performance objectives to providing sufficient hunting opportunity for the American public. Action plans have recently been developed for the American Woodcock and Mourning Dove, the most popular of the webless game birds, and both plans call for improvements to existing population monitoring, banding, and harvest assessment programs. This increase will enhance our ability to make these necessary improvements for doves and woodcock while allowing us to continue efforts to expand our information

base for other webless game bird species. Overall, these activities will allow us to confidently authorize maximal recreational opportunity consistent with sound stewardship of these important migratory bird resources.

Program Performance Change Table

| | A | B | C | D=B+C | E |
|--|--|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| | Overall Performance Change from 2006 to 2007 | | | | |
| Measure | 2006 Enacted Performance | 2007 Base Performance | 2007 Impact of Program Change on Performance | 2007 Budget Request Performance | Out-year Impact of 2007 Program Change on Performance |
| Performance Measure: Achieve healthy and sustainable levels for 62.3% of migratory birds | | | | | |
| No. of management actions implemented to address needs of Birds of Management Concern | 54 | 54 | 42 | 96 | 42 |
| No. of identified population management needs met for Birds of Management Concern | 119 | 119 | 0 | 119 | 161 |
| Performance Measure: % 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. (PART_ | 58.9% 161/273 | 58.9% 161/273 | 0% | 58.9% 161/273 | 0% |
| % of management actions necessary to support hunting completed successfully | 100% 228/228 | 100% 228/228 | 0% +11 | 100% 239/239 | 0 |

Ivory-billed Woodpecker Ecological Assessment (+396,000)

The Service proposes to increase funding of the Migratory Bird Management Program to provide biological support in development and implementation of recovery plans for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. In response to rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (IBWO) in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley (MAV), an Interagency Ivory-billed Woodpecker Recovery Team has been formed that will formulate an Endangered Species Recovery Plan with leadership by the Ecological Services Program. The Recovery Team and Ecological Services have requested that the Migratory Bird Program provide leadership in applying the science-based conservation framework developed in the MAV to support the North American Bird Conservation Initiative for recovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

As identified in the Recovery Outline, the Migratory Bird program will provide technical support in the areas of 1) population and habitat modeling; 2) landscape characterization and assessment; 3) conservation design and accomplishment tracking; 4) habitat surveys and monitoring; and 5) adaptive research to address assumptions identified in the Recovery Plan. This technical support will be provided at three spatial scales: area of rediscovery in the Cache/White River Basin, MAV, and historic range in the Southeast U.S. Specific products include GIS tools and outputs that support prioritizing habitat

protection and management and link population sustainability to habitat conditions, internet-based conservation mapping and planning applications, web-based forest management tracking systems, and new technologies for forest inventory and monitoring developed in concert with USGS and NASA.

This funding allows the Migratory Bird Management Program in the Southeast to include and coordinate these functions and services to Ivory-billed Woodpecker recovery through a well-established, science-based, partnership that exists for the specific purpose of sustaining bird populations of national and international concern. Funds will be leveraged to take advantage of the scientific and technological capability of key partners to include state and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and universities and ensure that strategic planning maximizes the biological efficiency of on-the-ground conservation actions and aligns IBWO conservation with existing conservation plans developed for other forest-dependent birds of national and international concern.

Focal Species Management (+\$658,000)

The Service has developed this funding initiative to focus on a small set of species already identified as being of management concern and to effect positive changes in the status, through both internal efforts and external partnerships. As a result of the PART, the Service's Migratory Bird Program adopted a new long-term performance measure to attain healthy and sustainable population levels for 564 of 913 migratory bird populations by 2007, an increase of 5 healthy populations over number of healthy populations that currently exist. The Service plans to attain this objective by concentrating management efforts initially on about a dozen "focal" migratory bird species.

In 2005 planning activities were actually launched for nine focal species: Pacific population of Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), the Laysan Albatross (*Diomedea immutabilis*), Black-footed Albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*), King Rail (*Rallus elegans*), Snowy Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*; excluding the Endangered Pacific coast populations), Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*), American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*), Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*), and Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*).

By the end of FY 2005, leadership responsibility for each of these projects were allocated to regional staff based largely on the geographic distribution of species (e.g., Pacific Common Eider campaign will be led from the Alaska Region), and individual coordinators were identified. Activities were either initiated or continued to compile the information necessary to accomplish action plans. The initial phase of the process has included communications with partners to resolve questions of biology and approach (e.g., how to address concerns for the western population of Painted Bunting). In most cases, these campaigns have required or involved generation of new information, via survey planning (e.g., for a range-wide Snowy Plover breeding survey); initiation of surveys (e.g., a project to monitor and assess the response of Cerulean Warblers to forest management treatments) or analyses of new survey data (e.g., to produce singing-ground density estimates or habitat base changes over time for the American Woodcock).

Activities for species by end of FY 2005:

Common Eider: A coordinator has been identified and is beginning the process of satisfying preliminary elements of an action plan, while overseeing surveys to fill in obvious information gaps.

Laysan and Black-footed Albatross: Twenty-five years of population monitoring on the Hawaiian National Refuge Islands (1980-2005) are being analyzed to determine trends, abundance and distribution. These analyses, combined with other status assessment information, will underpin the action plan, now in development. Also finalized new monitoring protocols with USGS to effectively monitor both Laysan and Black-footed Albatross, and tested them this winter.

King Rail: Dedicated funding and identified a coordinator to update and expand a preliminary assessment made in 2004, the first steps in development of the action plan.

Snowy Plover: Dedicated funding and initiated preliminary planning for a range-wide (throughout the U.S. and northeaster Mexico) breeding survey late in 2005, including development of statistically sound methodology. This project will allow the development of a sound action plan.

Although the focal species strategy targets particular species, the Service must also work to ensure that the status of other species does not decline from current levels. Since the performance goal for the Service is a net increase in the percent of migratory species at healthy and sustainable levels, the Service will maintain existing commitments while using the focal species strategy to more tightly link Service activities to measurable outcomes. During FY 2005, the initial list of focal species was identified following extensive discussions within the Program and assignments for the development of management plans made along with timelines for completion of the plans. Focal species were selected based on a suite of criteria from among the pool of 354 migratory birds whose populations are not in desired condition. The Service is actively involved in assembling Action Plans for the conservation and management of focal species to identify actions necessary to improve their status. Implementing these management recommendations will largely occur in the various Regions of the Service. Writing the initial five plans is scheduled to begin during FY 2006.

Webless Game Birds (+\$488,000)

Progress on management of various webless migratory game bird species has been hampered by a lack of basic biological information. Recently, major initiatives have been launched to address the management of two important species, mourning doves and American woodcock.

The mourning dove is among America's more important game birds and is harvested more than all other migratory game birds combined. A survey conducted in 1996 estimated that doves were hunted about 8.1 million days by 1.6 million people (U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 1997). As a result of the PART review referenced above, the Service has adopted two long-term (outcome) performance measures. The first is the percent of all species that are at healthy and sustainable levels, the second is to increase the number of American's who participate in bird-related recreation, including hunting. Keeping mourning dove populations healthy is obviously critical to the Service's ability to meet both of these performance measures. Accordingly, the Service has worked with the four Flyway Councils to develop a National Mourning Dove Harvest Strategy to guide the harvest of this species.

Inputs to the harvest strategy require reliable estimates of dove recruitment, population trends, survival rates, and harvest. To provide these data, various surveys and projects must be completed. The proposed budget increase will fund implementation of the Harvest Strategy, and in particular, the various data collection activities required for its development.

The American woodcock is another important webless migratory game bird, both ecologically and from a recreational perspective. As discussed above, the Program plans to attain the goal of attaining healthy and sustainable population levels for 564 of 913 migratory bird populations by 2007 by concentrating management efforts on about a dozen "focal" migratory bird species. The American woodcock was identified as a focal species based on its need for management, indicator status relative to early successional habitat conditions, and ability to engage management partners from States and NGOs.

American woodcock populations have experienced long-term declines, primarily due to the loss of young forest and shrub habitats. The Service is working with its partners through the IAFWA Woodcock Task Force to develop a national conservation plan for restoring woodcock densities to those observed during the early 1970s. The conservation plan will outline population and habitat goals for each Bird Conservation Region throughout the woodcock's range. The Service will need to work with State agencies to develop step-down plans to deliver habitat management on a local scale. Management of both mourning doves and woodcock require close cooperation between the Service and our partners at USGS. The Service administers the Mourning Dove Call-count and Woodcock Singing-ground Surveys, but we rely on biometricians from U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to analyze raw data and provide trend estimates. Estimates of population trends for these species are critical to the process of promulgating annual hunting regulations. In order to ensure continuity of flow of population data for the regulations process, and to make such information available to the public, the Service will work with USGS on new analytical procedures and development of web-based analytical capabilities if this increase is approved.

In addition to mourning doves and woodcock, this initiative will benefit several other species of webless migratory game birds. Sandhill cranes and several species of rails that are hunted need additional attention and support. An increasing eastern Sandhill crane population has led to a higher incidence of crop depredations as well as interest by some States in implementing a sport harvest season. Development of a comprehensive survey and management plan for these birds is a key requisite to ensure that eastern crane numbers are compatible with desirable population goals and available habitats. Perceived decline in some rail species has prompted increasing concern. One species, the king rail, is also a focal species. With these funds, the Program will implement management plans for the king rail that describe and prioritize the steps that need to be taken to achieve population status objectives.

Webless Migratory Game Bird Research Program (WMGBRP): Since its beginning in 1994, the WMGBR Program has proven to be very successful in providing seed money for priority research that is designed to answer management-related needs and help administrators make more-informed management decisions. To date, over \$1.5 million in WMGBRP funds have supported cooperative research projects for a number of webless species, with a total value of nearly \$6 million. An increase in funding will address high priority research activities, such as those identified above, that will help us meet our treaty and legislative responsibilities for webless migratory game birds.

Program Management Savings (-\$57,000)

To enable the Service to address its highest priorities during constrained fiscal times, the Service proposes reducing program administrative funding by \$1,980,000. Using Activity Based Cost information and other budgetary analyses the Service anticipates achieving a savings of \$57,000 in Migratory Bird Conservation and Management. These savings will be realized by streamlining program administrative support activities.

Internal Transfer – Aviation Funding (+250,000)

Funding for salaries and operations in Aviation Management currently resides in the Central Office Operations subactivity (1660). However, in FY 2003 the lead implementation responsibility and personnel were transferred to the Migratory Bird Management - Conservation and Monitoring (subactivity 1231). The FY 2007 President's Budget requests an internal transfer of these funds (\$250,000) from Central Office Operations to Migratory Bird Management.

Program Overview

The Migratory Bird Management Program serves as a focal point for bird population management. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight, 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.

Survey and assessment information on migratory birds is critical to many conservation management programs. Thousands of managers, researchers and others (both government and non-government) depend upon the Migratory Bird Management Program's survey activities to provide accurate and comprehensive status and trend information. States rely heavily on results of annual bird surveys for management and budgeting activities associated with migratory game and non-game birds. Survey data are critical to identify and prioritize management actions and research needs, and provide a scientific basis for effective migratory bird conservation on a national and international scale. For example:

- The Endangered Species program uses migratory bird population data to identify declining species.
- The Migratory Bird Management Program is responsible for the conservation of recently delisted species such as the peregrine falcon. The likely eventual delisting of the bald eagle will also present new management challenges for the program. In both cases, post-delisting management will require new or expanded survey, monitoring, and assessment work.
- The National Wildlife Refuge System uses information from annual migratory bird surveys to assist in identifying land acquisition priorities.
- Bird population information provides the basis for establishing objectives and monitoring progress towards achieving the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and Joint Ventures plans.

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Use of Cost and Performance Information

Through the PART process, specific long-term outcome or annual output performance goals were developed and implemented.

A migratory bird management (survey, monitoring, and assessment) database has been developed using operational work-plans as a way to prioritize, budget, and manage the division's nationwide workload. This project-based process asks for detailed project-level information, including objectives, scope, and estimated cost. Use of a database facilitates:

- Planning by providing a format for submitting new project ideas
- It allows ranking of prospective projects for implementation
- Tracking of resource allocations at the species level by project
- Cross tabulation of resource allocations by performance measure and ABC code
- Ready calculation of resource allocations according to performance measures and ABC codes
- Performance data are tracked and project status reports will be available
- Project funds are reallocated among regional field components annually
- Investment in MS Project will improve the accuracy of performance tracking
- Regional Offices will have access to both standard and custom reports
- Cost data are tracked allowing managers to redirect surplus funds

Performance measures have been cross-walked with partners such as USGS to improve and expand conservation efforts while avoiding double-counting.

2006 Planned Program Performance

Continued Expansion of 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.

Golden Eagle Surveys: The Service will conduct an aerial survey of golden eagles in the interior of the western United States. This survey is designed to provide a thorough, objective and scientifically rigorous population estimate that will help the Service meet its dual responsibilities of allowing access to eagles for religious and cultural purposes yet maintain healthy populations. Additionally, a telemetry study will be conducted to track migration, wintering, and breeding locations of golden eagles migrating through New Mexico, using satellite transmitters in the Manzano Mountains.

Webless Migratory Gamebird Survey and Monitoring: The Service, in corporation with State wildlife agencies and other organizations, will initiate studies for some migratory webless game birds. Six high-priority projects will be implemented that include mourning doves, woodcock, and some rails which have been declining in abundance. The purpose of the study is to determine cause for declines and information will also be used in the development of harvest regulations.

Implementation of Conservation and Management Plans for 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, and more than one-third (36 percent) have populations that number less than 25,000 individuals. 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. Many shorebird populations are believed to be in decline. Because of these suspected declines and low population sizes, several shorebirds have been identified as migratory bird focal species by the Service. In FY 2005, the Service and its partners formed working groups to develop conservation and management plans for focal shorebird species, such as the marbled godwit and black oystercatcher. The Service and its partners completed a range-wide survey for the long-billed curlew that will provide a basis to develop spatially-explicit conservation actions on their breeding grounds in the U.S. and Canada. Surveys for temperate-breeding shorebirds are part of the Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring and will meet objectives of the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan. Addressing another focal species, the Service funded a study to determine the effects that contaminants may have on buff-breasted sandpipers wintering in southern South America and migrating through the central plains of the U.S. The Service continues to work collaboratively with North American Waterfowl Management Plan habitat joint ventures to conserve shorebird stopover and breeding habitat, and has participated in State-sponsored shorebird management workshops. In FY 2006, the Service will continue to develop and implement conservation and management plans for focal shorebird species. To help develop these plans, the Service is sponsoring an international workshop, "Shorebird Science in the Western Hemisphere."

Waterbird Conservation: 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 of conservation action for a wide range of bird families, including pelicans, herons, cormorants, puffins, and petrels. Many species of these aquatic birds face significant risks to their populations, habitats, and critical areas. The Service is continuing its leadership role in waterbird conservation by expanding planning to loons and secretive marshbirds. The Service is also implementing actions of the Plan by addressing the survey, assessment, and monitoring needs of aquatic birds and through a migratory waterbird focal species approach. In FY 2005, the Service funded the development of a monitoring plan for colonial waterbirds. For FY 2006, the Service will initiate population monitoring of focal albatross species and will develop, in cooperation with partners, a king rail conservation and management strategy.

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 reasons, presents a challenge for biologists. Overabundant species can cause a variety of damages, and require significant management actions to bring populations down to healthy levels. Snow geese, resident Canada geese, and double-crested cormorant populations, among the most common species creating problems due to over abundance, are increasing at dramatic rates while simultaneously raising numerous public concerns. Crop depredations by resident Canada geese in the Pacific Northwest or impacts on aquaculture by double-crested cormorants in the Southeast create significant economic issues. Insufficient information on the status, distribution, and other demographic factors influencing the dynamics of these over abundant populations has compromised our ability to resolve critical management issues.

The population of double-crested cormorants (DCCO) in North America has grown significantly over the last 35 years, with a breeding population increase in the Great Lakes (U.S. and Canada) alone going from 89 pairs in 1970 to more than 112,600 pairs in 2005. Research and monitoring are necessary to evaluate the long-term effects of control activities on DCCO populations and to provide data essential to support regional population management if localized damage control efforts fail to resolve resource conflicts. In 2006, we will continue to oversee the implementation of all existing depredation orders for DCCOs and to monitor populations to ensure their long-term conservation. In early 2006, a summary report giving an overview of management activities in 2004 and 2005 will be produced.

Hunting EIS: In 2006, the Service will conduct a series of scoping meetings, scheduled throughout the country, to provide the public with ample opportunity to consider a range of management issues and options for addressing sport hunting of migratory birds. Following an assessment of suggestions and comments that originate during the open comment period, efforts during the remainder of 2006 will focus on establishing a process and timetable for the preparation of a draft document that will be available for review in 2007.

Fully Implement 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 Populations and Habitat Assessment. 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 a 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.

Expand Bird Harvest Strategies and Adaptive Management Actions: The Service will greatly expand its capability for 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 are (1) harvest strategies for western North American populations the mallard, American black ducks, canvasbacks, harlequin ducks, northern pintails, wood ducks, mourning doves, and woodcock, (2) development of population management strategies for double-crested cormorants, (3) development of adaptive management models for bald eagles relative to disturbance, (4) management of golden eagles (Native American harvest) and peregrine falcons (falconry harvest).

Outreach and Education: Below are three publications developed by migratory bird management that the Service plans to publish as Service Manual Chapters in FY 2006. These documents demonstrate the Service's outreach and education efforts as well as the Service's concerted, scientifically-based attempts to address direct mortality impacts to migratory bird trust resources and to minimize impacts to their habitats. For example, each year, it is estimated that tens of thousands of migratory birds die from electrocutions at bird-unfriendly power lines as well as perhaps several million birds collide with transmission power lines. In addition bird strikes at communication towers conservatively kill 4-5 million birds per year, possibly as many as 40-50 million. Electric wind turbine generation is the fastest growing energy initiative within the United States, with presently some 16,000 turbines installed nationwide. That figure is projected to grow exponentially. With but a few exceptions, bird kills from wind turbines appear to be relatively small. However, as turbines grow in size (some land-based models approaching 500 feet in height), and as bird and bat-unfriendly habitats such as mountain-top ridges are selected for facility sites, direct strike mortality and habitat fragmentation will only increase. These developments create challenges for migratory bird management and the Service is attempting to address them, in part, through our Manual Chapters.

- **Voluntary guidance for the electric utility industry:** The document will provide voluntary guidelines for the electric utility industry to avoid avian strikes and electrocutions at power transmission and distribution lines nationwide and guidance to Service personnel for assisting industry with voluntary compliance.
- **Voluntary guidance for the land-based wind turbine industry:** The document will provide voluntary guidelines for the land-based wind turbine industry to avoid strikes to birds, and habitat fragmentation and disturbance to avifauna nationwide. It also provides guidance to Service personnel for assisting industry with voluntary compliance. The guidelines are currently being updated.
- **Voluntary guidance for the communication tower industry:** The document will provide voluntary guidelines for the communication tower industry to avoid strikes and electrocutions of migratory birds and will provide guidance to Service personnel for assisting industry with voluntary compliance. Results from ongoing tower research, especially related to tower lighting, will be incorporated into the guidance as the results are published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

2005 Program Performance Accomplishments

Operational Work-plans: The program implemented use of operational work-plans as a way to prioritize, budget, and manage work. The project-based process outlines requirements to the project level of detail including objectives, scope, and estimated cost. This process has greatly improved our capacity for planning and tracking performance by providing a format for linking detailed project information with ABC codes and performance measures. The process also allows managers to prioritize program activities to the field level for implementation.

Survey and Monitoring: 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. In FY 2004, the Service had to cancel a number of important surveys, many that are cooperative efforts involving the States and Canada due to realignment of budget resources. The FY 2005 appropriation restored most of the critical surveys allowing Service's pilot-biologists to fly over 200,000 flight miles that covered more than 2.4 million square miles of habitat. The information gathered was used to identify and prioritize management actions necessary to adequately inform the regulatory decision-making process for establishing sport hunting regulations, thus continuing to provide important recreational opportunities for the public in support of program performance goals.

Waterfowl Band Reporting Rate Study: Wildlife managers agree that knowing the probability that hunters will report leg-banded birds is critical for estimating harvest rates and that the lack of adequate harvest information, increases our uncertainty about the effects of harvest regulations and hampers our ability to optimize them. Reward banding studies have been employed in the past to estimate band reporting probabilities and are currently being repeated. Recently, reward-banding has been expanded to ensure complete geographic coverage of all mallard harvest areas in Canada and the U.S., as well as those of black ducks, wood ducks, snow and Ross' geese, and several populations of Canada geese. 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 those selected species, which will in turn allow for better estimation of the harvest rates for many key waterfowl species. More than 170,000 birds have been banded as part of this study from 1998 through 2005. Preliminary plans call for some continuation of reward banding for mallards and black ducks through FY 2007 to meet the needs of Adaptive Harvest Management and other management measures.

Fulfilled Harvest Information Program (HIP) Commitment to States: The HIP is a cooperative program under which States collect the names and addresses of all license migratory bird hunters and provide them to the Service. The Service uses the names and addresses to select samples for conducting national migratory bird harvest surveys. All States except Hawaii have participated in the HIP since 1998. To help defray annual operating costs in State-licensing systems, the Service pays each State 10 cents per name. Prior to FY 2005, State payments were made when budget conditions allowed, but not all States were fully reimbursed each year. With the FY 2005 appropriation, the Service met 100% of its commitment to the States and was able to cover the postage costs associated with the operation of the survey.

Implemented Focal Species Management Actions: As an outgrowth of the 2004 PART review, Migratory Bird Management committed to identify the initial 5 target focal species for action plan development in FY 2005. Using selection criteria developed by Migratory Bird Program staff, we identified 9 species from our existing list of Birds of Management Concern (BMC) for which action plan development has begun.

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 (IMBD), 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.

Hunting EIS: In 2005, the Service advised the public its intent to initiate efforts to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Sport Hunting of Migratory Birds, under the authority of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Permits and Regulations

| | | FY 2005 Actual | FY 2006 Enacted | FY 2007 | | | Change From 2006 (+/-) |
|-------------------------|---------|-------------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-) | Program Changes (+/-) | Budget Request | |
| Permits and Regulations | \$(000) | 1,501 | 1,523 | +27 | -3 | 1,547 | +24 |
| | FTE | 21 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 0 |

Summary of 2007 Program Changes for Permits and Regulations

| Permits and Regulations | Amount | FTE |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Program Changes | | |
| • Program Management Savings | -3 | 0 |
| TOTAL, Program Changes | -3 | 0 |

The FY 2007, budget request for Permits and Regulations is \$1,547,000 and 21 FTE, a net program increase of \$24,000 and 0 FTE from the 2006 enacted level.

Justification of 2007 Program Changes

Program Management Savings (-\$3,000)

To enable the Service to address its highest priorities during constrained fiscal times, the Service proposes reducing program administrative funding by \$1,980,000. Using Activity Based Cost information and other budgetary analyses the Service anticipates achieving a savings of \$3,000 in Migratory Bird Permits and Regulations. These savings will be realized by streamlining program administrative support activities.

Program Overview

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 prohibit 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. The permits are administered by the seven Regional Migratory Bird Permit Offices. The Regional Permit Offices process over 13,000 applications annually. Since most permits are valid for between 1 and 5 years, approximately 40,000 permits are

active (valid) at any given time.

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's Permit Issuance and Tracking System (SPITS) provide a tool for issuing permits and help monitor cumulative impacts to migratory bird populations. Policy and regulation development focuses on clarifying and streamlining regulatory requirements.

Use of Cost and Performance Information

- Through the PART process, specific long-term outcome or annual output performance goals were developed and implemented.
- Performance measures are now tracked and reported through use of the Service's Permit Issuance and Tracking System (SPITS-database). SPITS was designed in cooperation with the Service's other permit programs to ensure consistency for both policy development and operational compatibility.
- Workload based staffing models have been developed for each of eight permit offices and staffing levels and associated costs can be predicted using historical workload trends. Unit costs can be determined using the workload models for various permit types.
- Fees are charged for permit processing to help offset operational costs.
- Implementing an E-reporting capability to enable the public to submit permit reports electronically.

2007 Program Performance Estimates

The Service will plan to finalize regulations and policies proposed in 2006. New regulations, and efficiencies planned for 2007 include:

- Develop educational permit regulations.
- Implement E-reporting to enable the public to submit permit reports electronically.
- Develop a depredation order to facilitate public safety at commercial and military air fields.
- Develop regulations for federal agency incidental take.

2006 Planned Program Performance

The following actions are planned for 2006:

- Falconry permit regulation revisions were proposed to clarify requirements and eliminate the federal permit. Currently, a joint federal/state permitting system exists. (Completed Oct 05)
- Raptor propagation permit regulation revisions were proposed to clarify requirements. (Completed Oct 05)
- A scoping notice was published soliciting input for future educational permit regulations. (Completed Oct 05)
- A final Environmental Impact Statement was issued for regulations to establish depredation orders to eliminate individual permit requirements to control of Resident Canada Geese in certain circumstances. (Completed Dec 05)
- Finalize regulations to establish depredation orders to eliminate individual permit requirements to control Resident Canada Geese in certain circumstances.
- Establish on-line self-registration and reporting for certain Resident Canada Goose activities.
- Implement Web-based electronic permitting to enable the public to apply for permits on-line.
- Finalize regulations to exempt DOD military readiness from take prohibitions
- Revise the List of Migratory Birds (50 CFR 10.13)
- Finalize falconry permit regulations to eliminate federal permit.
- Establish a national falconry database to assist states with administration of state permitting.

- Finalize raptor propagation permit regulations.
- Finalize scientific collecting interim guidance.
- Amend regulations to transfer migratory bird permit appeals to the Director. This is intended to facilitate national consistency.
- Propose regulations to define “disturb” in the eagle regulations. This will coincide with delisting of the Bald Eagle.
- Propose Bald Eagle management guidelines.
- Establish guidance on the use of native raptors for bird abatement.
- Streamline eagle permitting for Indian religious use
- Complete a new workload study on the permitting program

2005 Program Performance Accomplishments

- In 2005, the program proposed or finalized several policies and regulations relating to migratory bird permitting. Connecticut was added to the falconry regulations as a state approved to allow falconry.
 - Guidance on the Use of Pole Traps for Capturing Depredating Raptors was prepared.
- Policy on permitting take of depredating birds at fish culture facilities was added to the Service Manual.

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.

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

| | | FY 2005 Actual | FY 2006 Enacted | FY 2007 | | | Change From 2006 (+/-) |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-) | Program Changes (+/-) | Budget Request | |
| Federal Duck Stamp Program | \$(000) | 563 | 562 | +7 | -2 | 567 | +5 |
| | FTE | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

Summary of 2007 Program Changes for Federal Duck Stamp Program

| Federal Duck Stamp Program | Amount | FTE |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Program Changes | | |
| • Program Management Savings | -2 | 0 |
| TOTAL, Program Changes | -3 | 0 |

The FY 2007, budget request for Permits and Regulations is \$567,000 and 3 FTE, a net program increase of \$5,000 and 0 FTE from the 2006 enacted level.

Justification of 2007 Program Change

Program Management Savings (-\$2,000)

To enable the Service to address its highest priorities during constrained fiscal times, the Service proposes reducing program administrative funding by \$1,980,000. Using Activity Based Cost information and other budgetary analyses the Service anticipates achieving a savings of \$2,000 in Migratory Bird Federal duck Stamp Program. These savings will be realized by streamlining program administrative support activities.

Program Overview

The Federal Duck Stamp program, an internationally recognized and emulated program, 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 June 2006 the Service will release the 73rd Duck Stamp featuring California artist Sherrie Meline's painting of a Ross' goose (pictured right). Meline's painting, selected out of 234 entries, retains the pictorial heritage of the first Duck Stamp created in 1934 by political cartoonist and conservationist J.N. Ding Darling.



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 Commission (MBCC) to conserve more than 5.2 million acres of prime waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. In fiscal year 2005, sales of Duck Stamps totaled nearly \$25 million, approximately 50 percent of the total annual revenue of the MBCC.

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).

2006 Planned Program Performance

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 2006 the Service will continue to pursue these initiatives by holding its First Day of Sale ceremony for both the Federal Duck Stamp and the Junior Duck Stamp in partnership with "Washington 2006," the world's preeminent philatelic show. The Duck Stamp Office will also be on hand not only to market the Duck Stamp but also to educate attendees about how Duck Stamp revenues contribute to conservation.

The Junior Duck Stamp Program, reauthorized by President Bush on January 12, 2006, 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 become the future stewards of this country's wild places and precious natural heritage.

2005 Program Performance Accomplishments

In 2005 the Fish and Wildlife Service increased its efforts to highlight the importance of the Duck Stamp to the conservation community. Preeminent in these efforts was the announcement that excited conservationists worldwide, that the Ivory Billed Woodpecker, long thought to be extinct, had been re-discovered on the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in Arkansas. The documented sighting of an Ivory Billed Woodpecker at Cache River National Wildlife Refuge was a monumental event in the history of wildlife conservation and the Duck Stamp. The Migratory Bird Conservation Fund contributed more than \$38 million to purchase nearly 44,000 acres at Cache River National Wildlife Refuge and in excess of \$5.25 million to purchase more than 10,000 acres at nearby White River National Wildlife Refuge. These refuge lands provide the only currently documented Ivory Billed Woodpecker habitat in the United States. Other program initiatives included holding the First Day of Sale ceremony for the Duck Stamp on Capitol Hill, moving the Federal Duck Stamp Contest out of Washington DC to reach a greater audience and reinvigorate the contest, and working with the stamp printer to develop a stamp product that would be

of interest to collectors as well as conservationists. The ultimate purpose in all of these efforts, to bring additional resources into the MBCF for habitat protection.

Also in 2005, the Service worked to increase interest and awareness in the Junior Duck Stamp Program. From its beginning in 1989 as a small pilot program, the Junior Duck Stamp Program today has expanded to include all 50 states, the U.S. territories and the District of Columbia. On January 12, 2006, President Bush signed into law, H.R. 3179, the Junior duck Stamp Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2005, extending the art and conservation program.

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. Each year the program culminates in the Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest, where students compete to have their art selected to grace the next year's stamp. Nearly 27,000 entries were received for the 2005 contest, with additional awards given at the state and national level. Thousands more students took part in the wetlands conservation curriculum but chose not to enter the contest.

In 2005 a pair of ringneck ducks painted by Kerissa Nelson of Wisconsin was selected to become the 2005-2006 Federal Junior Duck Stamp. Nelson, who was seventeen when she won the contest, was a frequent visitor to nearby Crex Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. It was there she observed wildlife, shot trap, and painted ducks. She now attends the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, MN where she is a communications major.

In 2004-2005 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.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan/Joint Ventures

| | | 2005 Actual | 2006 Enacted | 2007 | | | Change From 2006 (+/-) |
|---|---------|----------------|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-) | Program Changes (+/-) | Budget Request | |
| North American Waterfowl Management Plan | \$(000) | 10,124 | 10,800 | +80 | +955 | 11,835 | +1,035 |
| | FTE | 41 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 41 | 0 |

Summary of 2007 Program Changes for North American Waterfowl Management Plan

| North American Waterfowl Management Plan | Amount | FTE |
|--|-------------|----------|
| Program Changes | | |
| • New Joint Ventures | +528 | 0 |
| • Existing Joint Ventures (net ATB rescission) | +448 | 0 |
| • ABC Savings | -21 | 0 |
| TOTAL, Program Changes | +955 | 0 |

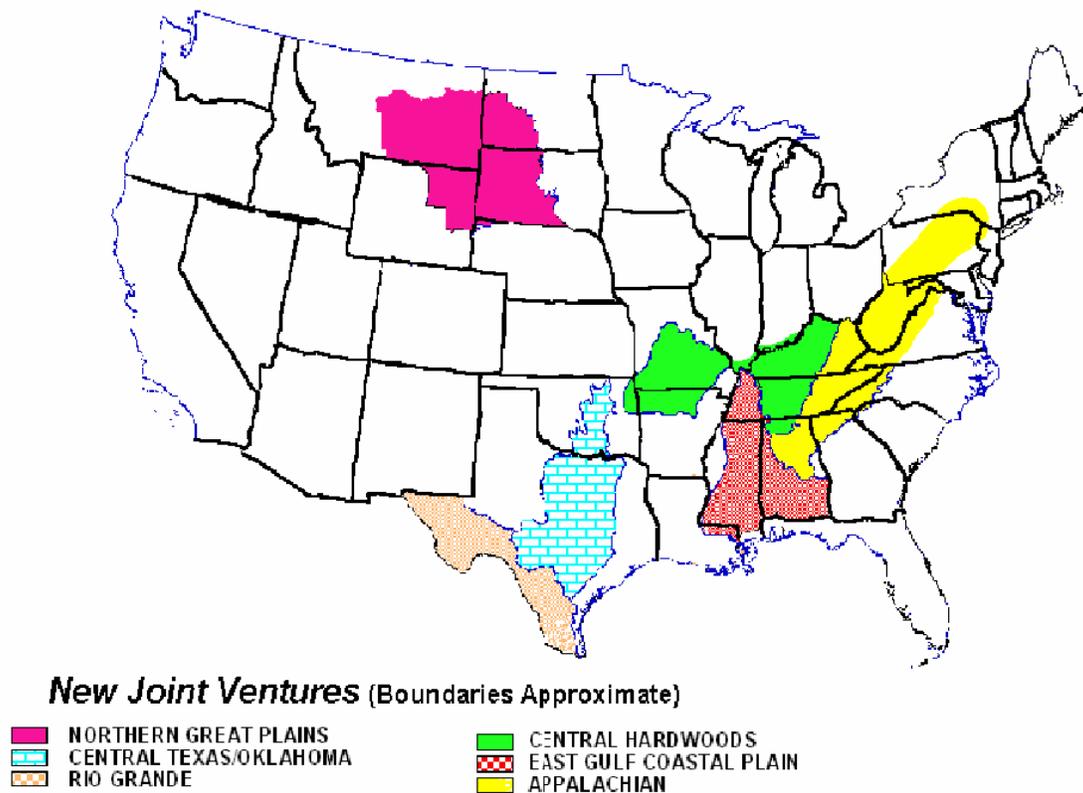
The FY 2007, budget request for North American Waterfowl Management Plan is \$11,835,000 and 41 FTE, a net program increase of \$1,035,000 and 0 FTE from the 2006 enacted level.

Justification of FY 2007 Program Changes

The FY 2006 Interior Appropriations Conference Committee Report directs the Service to base future funding increases for joint ventures on the results of ongoing program assessments. Accordingly, the Service will administratively allocate future funding for individual JVs based on their attainment of existing performance targets and their ability to contribute to the long term outcome goals of the Migratory Bird Program. A continental assessment of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan currently in progress will also provide information on joint venture performance and future needs for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

New Joint Ventures (\$528,000)

The Service is requesting an additional \$528,000 for four new joint ventures and two JVs initiated in FY 2006. These funds will support planning and project development processes that will encourage partner agencies and organizations to focus their conservation resources on the priority landscapes and habitat conditions most vital for sustaining healthy migratory bird populations. The FY 2006 Interior Appropriation provided initial funding for the Central Hardwoods and Northern Great Plains joint ventures. In FY 2007 the Service proposes to provide these two maturing joint ventures with additional funds in order to bring them up to base operations levels comparable to the other existing joint ventures. The remainder of the new joint venture funds will be allocated among other four, (Rio Grande, Appalachian, East Gulf Coastal Plain, and Central Texas/Oklahoma) up to \$150,000 each, according to their progress in the fulfillment of the established administrative criteria at the time of budget allocation. Measurable performance results from funding new joint ventures will not begin to accrue until the second or third year of funding.



Existing Joint Ventures (\$448,000)

The remainder of the requested increase will be allocated to existing joint ventures according to an assessment of their effectiveness in meeting the joint venture responsibilities as established by existing Service policy. Increases will go only to those joint ventures that exhibit superior performance in meeting these responsibilities, which include:

- **Delivery of national or international bird conservation plans. Joint ventures should work to develop the capacity to become the delivery agents for all migratory bird habitat conservation priorities in their geographic areas.** This will be assessed by using established Service performance measures for determining the conservation needs of Birds of Management Concern occurring in the joint venture area.
- **A joint venture management board, comprised of a broad spectrum of representatives from public and private organizations, tribes, institutions, and interests vested in conservation of fish and wildlife habitat within the geographic area of the joint venture, should direct joint venture activities.** This will be assessed, in part, using the findings of the ongoing evaluation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which is examining the effectiveness of joint venture partnerships, including management boards.
- **Development of a strategic or implementation plan, which articulates joint venture goals and strategies and guides the biological planning, conservation implementation, communication, and evaluation activities of the joint venture.** This will be assessed using specific accomplishment measures identified in each joint venture's plan, and also by how well

joint venture goals and accomplishments support established DOI and Service performance measures.

- **Joint ventures should be able to implement conservation actions identified in their implementation plan, including the design, funding, and tracking of conservation projects.** This will be assessed by using established DOI performance measures for managing/protecting landscapes and watersheds.
- **Joint ventures should develop an evaluation strategy to guide monitoring and assessment activities. By evaluating activities, joint ventures can analyze the effectiveness of conservation actions, test the biological assumptions that underlay their strategies, and guide future conservation planning.** This will be assessed, in part, using the findings of the ongoing evaluation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which is examining the sufficiency and effectiveness of joint venture monitoring and evaluation activities and the use of adaptive resource management.

Program Management Savings (-\$21,000)

To enable the Service to address its highest priorities during constrained fiscal times, the Service proposes reducing program administrative funding by \$1,980,000. Using Activity Based Cost information and other budgetary analyses the Service anticipates achieving a savings of \$21,000 in North American Waterfowl Management Plan/Joint Ventures. These savings will be realized by streamlining program administrative support activities.

Program Overview

The Secretary of Interior capped a multi-year effort to revise and renew the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) on October 6, 2004, 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 partnerships (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 17 JVs to address multiple local, regional, and continental goals for sustaining migratory bird populations by developing scientifically-based habitat projects that benefit waterfowl and other declining wildlife populations. Since 1986, JV partners have expended more than \$2.2 billion on habitat conservation projects, leveraging funds from multiple private, State and federal sources to protect, restore, or enhance on more than nine 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.

2007 Program Performance Estimates

Existing joint ventures will make modest overall progress toward long-term performance goals. Significant process is anticipated (8%) in one joint venture habitat conservation measure (acres of landscapes and watersheds managed through partnerships and networked lands that achieve habitat

protection). This is attributable, in part, to the long history of this measure as a joint venture goal and its alignment with traditional joint venture activities in wetland habitat conservation. Additional joint venture measures were developed during the PART review to assess other aspects of joint venture performance such as strategic planning for all bird habitat conservation. These measures, (number of Birds of Management Concern with habitat needs identified at ecoregional scales, and, percent of those habitat needs met) require joint ventures to broaden their accomplishment tracking beyond just the number of acres conserved by joint venture partners. In 2007, joint ventures will incorporate at least 4 more priority bird species into their strategic planning and develop habitat objectives based on those birds' biological needs. The inclusion of this additional habitat into the estimate of total habitat needs required for healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds will increase the long term goal for joint ventures, and so progress toward the percent of habitat needs met will remain static.

In 2007, the Service anticipates granting administrative approval for up to 4 new joint ventures. Developing partnerships exist in all areas of the U.S. not currently covered by a joint venture and as these partnerships mature, the Service will review individual joint venture plans and administrative structures using established criteria. The final determination of which joint ventures are approved and the amount funding allocated to each will depend on the organizational and technical progress of joint venture partners in each joint venture, the total number of approved new joint ventures, and the amount available for allocation. As with all new joint ventures, initial accomplishments will occur largely in coordination and planning activities. Accordingly, quantified performance results for new joint ventures in conserving acres of landscapes and watersheds, and, establishing habitat management needs for Birds of Management Concern are not expected until FY 2008 and beyond.

2006 Planned Program Performance

Planned performance for FY 2006 is 12,491,967 acres of landscapes and watersheds managed through partnerships and networked lands that achieve habitat protection, a 13.0 % increase over the 2005 actual level. In 2004, the Migratory Bird Program was subject to a PART review which resulted in new long-term and annual performance measures. Baselines and goals for these new measures were developed in 2005 and will be integrated with existing strategic goals to improve future analyses of efficiency and effectiveness. 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.

2005 Program Performance Accomplishments

- In 2005, the Division of Bird Habitat Conservation initiated implementation of key recommendations of the 2004 Update of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Foremost was the creation of an Assessment Steering Committee, a small, international body of waterfowl scientists and administrators from academia, government agencies, and partner organizations, who will guide the process and submit findings and recommendations to the Plan Committee on 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 Steering Committee began its work by conducting a series of week-long assessment workshops with individual Joint Ventures to obtain assessment input. The Plan Committee also empanelled a joint task group of waterfowl scientists to develop options for using continental waterfowl population objectives in resolving important outstanding issues for both harvest and habitat management. Findings and recommendations from both of these groups will be finalized in 2006, following review and consultation with partners throughout the waterfowl conservation community.
- The **Central Hardwoods Joint Venture** was approved for administrative support by the Fish and

Wildlife Service following review of that joint venture’s implementation plan and other administrative criteria. Service funding for that joint venture began in FY 2006. The **Northern Great Plains Joint Venture** was reviewed for approval using the same administrative criteria and granted provisional approval, pending submission of a revised joint venture plan incorporating the comments and suggestions for improvement submitted by the Service and other partners on the original plan.

- **The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture** completed work on a revised implementation plan which integrates the conservation of all migratory birds under one landscape level framework. The process involves stepping down the objectives of the four, international species groups plans for waterfowl, shorebirds, waterbirds, and landbirds as they apply to the PPJV. Population and habitat trends, coupled with knowledge of how species respond to landscape change, are then be used to build a biological foundation and set quantifiable goals. This will allow the joint venture to better align its goals with the performance measures and objectives established for the Service’s Migratory Bird Program.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE
North American Waterfowl Management Plan/Joint Ventures

| <i>.Measure</i> | 2005 Plan | 2005 Actual | 2006 Estimated | Change from 2005 (\$ and %) | 2007 Request | Change from 2006 (\$ and %) |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| No. of Birds of Management Concern with habitat needs identified at ecoregional scales (FWS-OP) | Establish baseline | Establish baseline | 136 | n/a | 140 | +4 +2.9% |
| % habitat needs met to achieve healthy and sustainable levels of migratory birds (PART) | 40% | 40% | 42.7% | +2.7% | 42.7% | +0% |
| Preceding Measure Numerator/Denominator | (25,700,000 / 63,500,000) | (25,700,000 / 63,500,000) | (28,899,619/ 67,673,168) | | (28,899,619/ 67,673,168) | |
| No. of acres of landscapes and watersheds managed through partnerships and networked lands that achieve habitat protection. (SP) | 9,334,611 | 9,334,611 | 12,491,967 | +3,157,356 +34% | 13,577,000 | +1,085,033 +8.0% |

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