

People Conserving Waterfowl and Wetlands

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan

A Model for Conservation

More than a quarter century ago, waterfowl populations in North America languished at historic lows. The waterfowl management community in the United States and Canada developed a strategy to restore them through habitat protection, restoration and enhancement—an unprecedented recognition of the need for international cooperation to help recover these shared resources. This strategy became the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (Plan).



Pair of Green-winged Teal in Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska Credit: USFWS

Signed in 1986 by the United States and Canada and in 1994 by Mexico, the Plan is the foundational bird conservation partnership upon which hundreds of others have been built. Its vision of collaborative conservation is just as relevant today as it was 28 years ago.

Continental Vision, Regional Implementation

The Plan is innovative because its scope is international, but its implementation occurs at the regional level. Its success depends on the strength of regional partnerships, called migratory bird joint ventures. These involve federal, state, provincial, tribal, and local

governments; businesses; conservation organizations; and individuals.

Twenty-two habitat-based joint ventures address bird conservation issues and carry out projects within their geographic areas in the United States, Canada and parts of Mexico. Three species-focused joint ventures, all with an international scope, work to further the scientific understanding needed to manage specific waterfowl species. Conservation projects undertaken by the joint ventures not only advance waterfowl conservation,

but also make substantial contributions toward the conservation of all bird species.

Over the past 15 years, joint ventures have received \$132.4 million in appropriated funds. In return, they have leveraged \$4.5 billion in non-federal partner contributions, as well as \$3 billion in federal partner contributions.

The Plan's Goals

Since its creation, the Plan has been updated several times to strengthen its biological foundations, expand and redefine its habitat restoration goals, and forge broader alliances with other bird conservation initiatives. But its focus has remained waterfowl conservation. A 2007 Continental Progress Assessment affirmed that the Plan has been a cohesive force, bringing focus to waterfowl and wetland conservation and management efforts in North America.

Additionally, the Plan emphasizes educating the public about the benefits provided by waterfowl and wetlands. These include recreational activities such as hunting and bird watching, the economic boost provided by the

NAWMP by the Numbers

- ↪ **2.6 million people** in the United States hunt migratory waterfowl, spending an estimated **\$1.8 billion** on trips and equipment annually. **17.8 million people** take trips to observe waterfowl and other birds, spending **\$4.2 billion** on lodging, transportation, food and other trip-related costs.*
- ↪ **22 habitat-based joint ventures** in Canada, the United States and Mexico conserve critical bird habitat along the four major North American flyways.
- ↪ **3 species-focused joint ventures** gather data internationally on the Arctic Goose, Black Duck and sea ducks.
- ↪ Over the past 15 years, joint ventures have received \$132.4 million in appropriated funds. In return, they have leveraged **\$4.5 billion in non-federal partner contributions**, as well as **\$3 billion in federal partner contributions**.

*2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation

The 2012 Plan sets forth three overarching goals for waterfowl conservation:

- Abundant and resilient waterfowl populations to support hunting and other uses without imperiling habitat
- Wetlands and related habitats sufficient to sustain waterfowl populations at desired levels, while providing places to recreate and ecological services that benefit society
- Growing number of waterfowl hunters, conservationists and citizens who enjoy and actively support waterfowl and wetlands conservation

many birding festivals held across the nation, and environmental services like flood water abatement, groundwater recharge, pollution filtration and soil erosion control.

“Re-Visioning Waterfowl Conservation”

In 2012, following several years of consultation with the broad waterfowl conservation community, a revised North American Waterfowl Management Plan was signed by the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The 2012 Plan provides a renewed and energized vision for the future of waterfowl and wetlands conservation. It presents three overarching goals: an adaptable strategy to ensure abundant waterfowl populations and habitat to support hunting and other recreational uses; citizens connected to the outdoors and committed to conserving the special places they value; and a clean environment that sustains nature’s

ecological functions, human health and wildlife. A companion Action Plan provides guidance and ideas for implementing the 2012 Plan, with specific recommendations to achieve each of these three goals.

People Conserving Waterfowl and Wetlands

Officially subtitled “People Conserving Waterfowl and Wetlands,” the 2012 Plan recognizes the key role played by hunters, conservationists and other citizens who are connected to the outdoors and committed to conserving the ecosystems and species they value.

It also recognizes the importance of people to the success of waterfowl and wetlands conservation—the notion that the Plan can only succeed with broad public support for these three interrelated goals.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee Members

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Mallards on the move in Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge, Iowa Credit: USFWS

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