

About the Document

Title – A Comprehensive Assessment of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Type of Review – Individual letters

Short Description - The need for a comprehensive continental assessment of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (Plan) was a major recommendation of the Plan's most recent update in 2004. This assessment report will examine what has been accomplished since 1986 to determine the extent to which waterfowl populations in North America have benefited from efforts conducted under the Plan's guidance. Every aspect of waterfowl conservation under the Plan will be investigated, from the current knowledge of waterfowl biology to the conservation planning, implementation, and evaluation techniques used by partnerships that put waterfowl habitat on the ground. The assessment also will help to identify the Plan's top priorities for future waterfowl conservation efforts. We have determined the assessment report to be "influential information" as identified in the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review

Estimated Peer Review Timeline

Peer review to be initiated by: September, 2006

Peer review to be completed by: December, 2006

Document to be finalized by: January, 2007

About the Peer Review Process

In accordance with the requirements of the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review, we will work with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee to initiate peer review of the science relevant to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Assessment and our use of said science.

PEER REVIEW PLAN – The North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee, an international body of agencies (including the Fish and Wildlife Service) and organizations that oversees the Plan, engaged a panel of waterfowl scientists from a variety of universities, agencies, and organizations in Canada, Mexico and the U.S. to conduct a scientific assessment. That panel, called the Assessment Steering Committee, will deliver a draft report of findings and recommendations to the Plan Committee. The Plan Committee will review and revise the draft report and then issue a final draft report for public review and comment. During public review, we will solicit letters of peer review of the draft report from each of the four Flyway Councils, administrative bodies that coordinate cooperation on migratory bird management among public wildlife agencies. Each Flyway Council will select a reviewer, or panel of reviewers, from their respective technical advisory committees. Selection of peer reviewers will consider the following criteria:

- **Expertise:** The reviewer should have knowledge, experience, and skills in one or more of the following areas: wildlife management, conservation biology, or ecology; and have extensive experience in waterfowl or wetlands conservation.
- **Independence:** The reviewer should not be employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or other agencies within the Department of Interior. Academic and consulting scientists should have sufficient independence from the Service or Department if the government supports their work.

- **Objectivity:** The reviewer should be recognized by his or her peers as being objective, open-minded, and thoughtful. In addition, the reviewer should be comfortable sharing his or her knowledge and perspectives and openly identifying his or her knowledge gaps.
- **Advocacy:** The reviewer should not be known or recognized for an affiliation with an advocacy position regarding the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.
- **Conflict of Interest:** The reviewer should not have any financial or other interest that conflicts or that could impair his or her objectivity or create an unfair competitive advantage. If an otherwise qualified reviewer has an unavoidable conflict of interest, the Service may publicly disclose the conflict.

In order to maintain independence of the peer review, Flyway Councils must not select reviewers who participated in the preparation of the assessment report or had any substantive input to it. The estimated start date of peer review of the draft report is September 1, 2006. We anticipate sending the document to the peer reviewers at that time with responses requested approximately 90 days later. We will not provide financial compensation to peer reviewers. We will obtain reviews from at least three qualified experts. Peer reviewers will be advised that their reviews will be made available for public viewing when the process is complete. We will summarize and respond to the issues raised by the peer reviewers in the final document.

About Public Participation

The public is currently being provided an opportunity to comment on this planned peer review process. Comments must be received by August 31, 2006. Send comments on this peer review plan to: Seth Mott, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., MSP 4075, Arlington, VA 22203. Comments on this plan may also be submitted by electronic mail to: seth_mott@fws.gov . The subject line should read "Peer Review Plan for the NAWMP Assessment."

Peer reviewer comments will be made available for public viewing on the webpage cited below. The final draft of the Assessment report will be available for public review concurrently with the peer review described above. Copies of the draft report will be circulated electronically to individuals, organizations, and agencies known to have an interest in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and will also be made available for download on a Fish and Wildlife Service webpage - <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/NAWMP/index.shtm>

Contact

Further information regarding this peer review can be obtained by contacting Seth Mott, Branch Chief of Science and Planning, Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., MSP 4075 Arlington, VA 22203
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