

Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds

Annual Report Production Process

Questions and Answers

Why does the Council produce an Annual Report?

Executive Order 13186: *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds* (Order) states that the Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds (Council) must develop an annual report of accomplishments and recommendations related to the Order.

What has changed in 2016 with the new report production process?

The annual reports through 2014 consisted of detailed analyses of Council activities each calendar year, including individual agency accomplishments, overarching Council goals and achievements, and results from a survey designed to track agency progress related to key activities identified in the Order. The annual reports were developed with a complex approval and production process that culminated in a highly illustrated paper report accessible on the Council's existing website.

The 2015 annual report, and future reports, will include the same components as in previous years, with the exception of the interagency survey. Additionally, the annual report will now be separated into two components: (1) a website illustrating individual Council member agency accomplishments and recommendations; and (2) a paper report outlining annual Council goals and achievements. The existing Council website will be augmented to include this information, and will continue to be maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with input and review from Council member agencies. The website will also be updated regularly to reflect new accomplishments within the current calendar year. The paper report will be more concise than previous paper annual reports, and will not go through a complex production process. The paper report will, however, be subject to the same review process as in previous years.

Why did the Council approve this change in the report production process?

At the annual Council meeting in May of 2016, the Council members from each agency voted to change the production process so that the annual report required less time to produce, review, and approve, and continued to provide the same high quality information.

To improve the process, the Council voted to maintain the production of a paper report, but to revise it so that it is shorter, more concise, and easier to produce. Additionally, the Council voted to move much of the highly illustrated content of the report to a webpage that is easier to maintain in a timelier manner. The previous annual report development and production process typically lasted 2-3 years from beginning to completion. This length of time can be attributed to several factors, including primarily, the review and approval process required for an interagency report produced by over 20 federal agencies. In addition, the previous annual reports, though beautifully illustrated, were lengthy, which presented challenges for Council staff to review under current workloads.

The Council also approved the removal of the interagency survey. The annual survey required several months of preparation for review and approval within Council agencies, and several months of staff time for analysis prior to incorporation into the report. In addition, the survey was not widely administered across agencies due to security constraints and historical low participation. The survey also required

financial obligations for the use of an on-line platform for survey distribution. After a few years of less than successful implementation, the Council decided the survey did not yield the benefits necessary to justify the financial sustainment or the amount of staff time needed to continue the use of it.

When will the 2015 Annual Report be available?

The paper portion of the 2015 annual report entered the official approval process of all Council agencies on November 2, 2016. Agencies completed their review and approval of the report in mid-December. It is now being routed to the Service's Director, the Department of Interior, and ultimately, the Council on Environmental Quality for final approval before publishing the paper report on the Council website. That routing process typically takes 2-6 months, depending on staff availability. Therefore, we anticipate the paper report for 2015 to be available in mid-2017.

The website components of the 2015 annual report are already available on the annual report website, which can be found at: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/management/bird-conservation-partnership-and-initiatives/council-for-the-conservation-of-migratory-birds/council-annual-report-2015.php>.

What information does the paper portion of the Annual Report contain?

The paper portion of the annual report includes: (1) an executive summary, (2) a list of participating Council member agencies from the applicable calendar year, (3) the status of Memoranda of Understanding, (4) a description of the winner of the Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award, (5) a description of how the Council is implementing its tri-annual theme, and (6) all other relevant Council accomplishments and recommendations. These topics are also displayed on the Council website (<https://www.fws.gov/birds/management/bird-conservation-partnership-and-initiatives/council-for-the-conservation-of-migratory-birds.php>).

What information does the Annual Report website contain?

The website illustrates agency accomplishments in each of the overarching categories specified in Executive Order 13186, including: (1) conservation actions; (2) partnerships; (3) policy and planning (4) international conservation, (5) training; and (6) how an agency implemented the Council theme for the applicable report year.¹ Actions that are identified by each agency are initiated during the applicable calendar year.

When will production of the 2016 Annual Report begin?

The production process of the 2016 annual report will begin in February of 2017. Future report production processes will begin soon after the end of each calendar year so that annual reports become available within one year following the report year.

¹ The Council theme is not a component of Executive Order 13186, but is a tri-annual focus of concentration on a topic relevant to current issues in migratory bird conservation. The Council votes every three years on a new theme in order to strategically develop and implement bird conservation solutions.