

Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award Nomination

Department of Energy's Pantex Plant: Studying Migratory Birds Domestic and Abroad

The Department of Energy (DOE)/National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Pantex Plant and co-applicant initiated, and continue to build, a migratory bird program with a strong focus on research through partnerships. Program accomplishments represent leadership in contributing to migratory bird conservation and outreach, elevating them to a level beyond agency mandates. These accomplishments demonstrate initiative and build credibility for environmental programs at the Pantex Plant. The research projects are the result of program initiatives and are in the forefront of regional conservation efforts.



Migratory bird research initiated by Pantex has included banding and tracking work on Purple Martins (*Progne subis subis*), the study of the year-round ecology of Swainson's Hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*), the effects of wind turbines on migratory birds, and studies on Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) and other birds that utilize prairie dog colonies. A comprehensive literature review of the impacts of wind energy on wildlife has been developed and shared with Federal and state natural resource agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Region 2 Office.

The scale of Pantex's projects varies by project. Most projects are regional (Southern Great Plains) but geolocator technologies (deployed on Purple Martins) and Platform Transmitter Terminal (PTT)/satellite technologies (deployed on Swainson's Hawks) extend the research through Central and South America, and are global in scale. The Purple Martin geolocator data will be pooled with data from other sites across eastern North America. Research on the effects of wind energy on wildlife can have global implications.

The projects involve many partners including Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Pantex, LLC; Texas Tech University, Natural Resources/Biological Sciences; USGS Texas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit/Texas Tech; West Texas A&M University, Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences; private landowners; banding site cooperators; York University; the Purple Martin Conservation Association; and volunteers.

The Pantex Plant's migratory bird program and its collaborators make it a priority to provide research summaries and results to NNSA and DOE, the public, and the outside wildlife

community. Data are incorporated into site and agency plans, and thus address the original research needs.

To date, research information has contributed to five Master of Science degree theses, and has been published in two peer-reviewed technical journals, four semi-technical journals, and a popular article is currently in press. Presentations have been made at 33 professional meetings across the United States and are also provided locally to organizations such as church, civic, and study groups, as well as schools and the general public. The Pantex Plant's work is featured regularly in the local media and is often picked up and carried in national outlets and the social media. The co-applicant's past and current "outside" affiliations, and the abundant additional publications and presentations that relate to, and promote, migratory birds, fit well within the spirit of Executive Order 13186.

