



# Migratory Bird Program

## *Focal Species Strategy*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Program initiated a Focal Species strategy for migratory birds to better measure its success in achieving its bird conservation priorities and mandates. The Focal Species strategy involves campaigns for selected species to provide explicit, strategic, and adaptive sets of conservation actions required to return the species to healthy and sustainable levels.

The Service remains committed to landscape-scale, integrated bird conservation for the full array of species of management concern. The Focal Species approach is just one component of the Migratory Bird Program and complements other work on migratory birds and their habitats.

The goal of the Focal Species strategy is to measure the success in achieving bird conservation and to increase accountability.



Red Knot  
Photo Credit: Greg Breese USFWS

### Selection of Focal Species

The list of Birds of Management Concern (BMC) is a subset of the species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that pose special management challenges due to a variety of factors. The BMC list consists of species, subspecies, or populations of the over 1000 bird species found in North America.

The BMC list reflects the results of extensive consultations with partners and processes and criteria established over many years. This list is dynamic and is revised as new information concerning species status becomes available. To select Focal Species, the Migratory Bird Program identifies species from the BMC list that need investment because they: 1) have high conservation need, 2) are representative of a broader group of species sharing the same or similar conservation needs, 3) act as a potential unifier for partnerships, and/or 4) have a high likelihood that factors affecting status can be realistically addressed.

Considering a combination of characteristics possessed by the species, status of management planning, and expert opinion, and with due consideration to external factors that might affect, either positively or negatively, the Service's ability to enhance migratory bird populations, Focal Species are identified over the short term to receive specific attention. These species/populations are not the only ones that meet the criteria, but are species the Migratory Bird Program will focus conservation efforts over the next five years.

### Focal Species Campaigns

Focal Species campaigns entail compilation or identification of comprehensive management/conservation strategies into an action plan (a species-specific mix of monitoring, research, assessment, habitat and population management, and outreach) necessary to improve the conservation status; a clear statement of the responsibilities for actions within and outside the Program; a focus of Service resources on implementing those actions; and communications to



Lesser Scaup  
Photo Credit: Dave Menke USFWS

solicit support and cooperation from partners inside and outside the Service.

### Partner Support

The engagement of partners and stakeholders is essential for creation and implementation of action plans and for existing work in support of maintaining or increasing the number of species of migratory birds at healthy and sustainable levels. Contact the Regional Migratory Bird Offices, the Division of Migratory Bird Management, or the website <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Management/FocalSpecies.html> for more information on the Focal Species strategy and the Focal Species campaigns now underway.



*The King Rail (*Rallus elegans*) has been identified as a focal species due to severe population declines in the northern, central, and eastern parts of its range in North America.*

Photo Credit: USFWS

**FY2012 – FY2016 Focal Species**

Emperor Goose  
 Brant (Pacific Black)  
 Canada Goose (Dusky)  
 Trumpeter Swan (Rocky Mountain population)  
 American Black Duck  
 Mottled Duck  
 Northern Pintail  
 Greater Scaup  
 Lesser Scaup  
 Common Eider (American and Pacific)  
 White-winged Scoter  
 Yellow-billed Loon  
 Laysan Albatross  
 Black-footed Albatross  
 Black-capped Petrel  
 Great Shearwater  
 Audubon's Shearwater  
 Reddish Egret  
 Golden Eagle

Bald Eagle  
 Yellow Rail  
 Black Rail  
 King Rail  
 Snowy Plover (Interior U.S. and Gulf Coast populations)  
 Wilson's Plover  
 Mountain Plover  
 American Oystercatcher  
 Black Oystercatcher  
 Upland Sandpiper  
 Long-billed Curlew  
 Hudsonian Godwit  
 Marbled Godwit  
 Red Knot (*C. c. rufa* and *C. c. roselaari*)  
 Semipalmated Sandpiper (Eastern population)  
 Dunlin (*C. a. arctica*)  
 Buff-breasted Sandpiper  
 American Woodcock (Eastern and Central management unit)

Black Tern  
 Gull-billed Tern  
 Common Tern (Great Lakes population)  
 Kittlitz's Murrelet  
 Burrowing Owl  
 Bicknell's Thrush  
 Wood Thrush  
 Bendire's Thrasher  
 Sprague's Pipit  
 Golden-winged Warbler  
 Cerulean Warbler  
 Grasshopper Sparrow  
 Henslow's Sparrow  
 Painted Bunting  
 Bobolink  
 Tricolored Blackbird  
 Rusty Blackbird  
 'Iwi



Golden Eagle  
 Photo Credit: Dave Menke USFWS



Wood Thrush  
 Photo Credit: Steve Maslowski USFWS



Laysan Albatross chick  
 Photo Credit: Brad Bortner USFWS



Tricolored Blackbird  
 Photo Credit: Dave Menke USFWS

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Migratory Birds Program  
[www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/dmbmbhc.html](http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/dmbmbhc.html)**

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