



The Migratory Bird Treaty resulted from concern during the early 1900's over rapidly decreasing populations of migratory birds, particularly waterfowl. The problem was one of international interest and on August 16, 1916, the "Convention Between the United States and Great Britain for the Protection of Migratory Birds in the United States and Canada" was signed. Ratification soon followed and on December 8, 1916, the Treaty was proclaimed by President Woodrow Wilson.

This unique Treaty provided international protection to named migratory game and non-game birds common to both Canada and the United States for the first time. The Treaty covers nine family classifications of migratory birds and 33 families of insectivorous and other non-game species. Under its provisions, each Nation is responsible for enacting its own laws to implement the Treaty.

Other activities authorized by the Treaty and subsequent implementing legislation are law enforcement and migratory bird research by Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. The Bureau conducts continent-wide surveys during summer to determine populations of various species. This data is then used to set the annual migratory game bird hunting regulations.

The Bureau also operates the International Bird Banding Center at Laurel, Maryland, which is the focal point for a single system of bird banding on the North American Continent. Records at the Bird Banding Center are maintained through automatic data processing systems to support studies of migratory birds by both professionals and amateurs.

Canada, through the Canadian Wildlife Service, carries out research, establishes hunting regulations, and provides law enforcement in implementing the Treaty. A comprehensive Canadian wetlands preservation program is now in the planning stages.

Because of the effectiveness of the Migratory Bird Treaty, a similar agreement with Mexico was concluded in 1936 to extend this protection.

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MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY  
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