



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

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### U.S. AND CANADA ISSUE DRAFT NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The United States and Canada have issued a draft plan outlining cooperative international efforts needed to conserve ducks, geese, and other waterfowl through the year 2000, William P. Horn, Interior Department Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, announced today.

"Waterfowl are an international resource," Assistant Secretary Horn said. "Many waterfowl nest in Canada, but migrate and winter in the United States. The draft North American Waterfowl Management Plan is a major step forward in international cooperation to ensure that abundant populations of these birds continue to survive into the next century."

The draft North American Waterfowl Management Plan provides information on the status of waterfowl populations, identifies major waterfowl conservation problems, and proposes objectives and strategies for resolving the problems. The plan focuses especially on protecting key waterfowl habitats in both countries through a combination of programs ranging from acquisition and easements to providing incentives for landowners to help conserve and manage waterfowl habitat. It also stresses the need for private conservation organizations, corporations, and individual citizens to participate in carrying out the expanded programs needed to conserve waterfowl.

"Great efforts have been made on behalf of waterfowl since the early 1900's," Horn continued. "The United States and Canada have a long record of cooperation on waterfowl conservation. Nevertheless, biologists from both countries have identified major conservation problems affecting waterfowl, such as the continuing loss of habitat, that have resulted in alarming declines in some species. These problems require expansion of present programs and new initiatives on the part of both countries. The draft North American Waterfowl Management Plan is our effort to set the course that we believe waterfowl conservation should take for the next 15 years."

The plan is written on a 15-year time-frame with provisions for review every 5 years. It focuses on waterfowl issues where international cooperation is essential, leaving issues that are geographically limited to be addressed by existing mechanisms, such as the four flyway councils comprised of State and federal waterfowl experts who recommend policies covering the four major migratory flight routes followed by waterfowl. Although the plan does not yet include Mexico, both the United States and Canada hope to work with Mexico in carrying out the waterfowl conservation programs.

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The plan establishes acreage goals for protection of waterfowl habitat in various regions of Canada and the United States, such as mallard and pintail breeding habitat in the midcontinent region; mallard and pintail migration and wintering habitat in the lower Mississippi River - Gulf Coast region; wintering habitat for pintails and other species in the Central Valley of California; breeding and migration habitat for black ducks and other waterfowl in the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence region; and migration and wintering habitat for black ducks on the east coast of Canada and the United States. To help achieve habitat conservation goals in Canada, the plan recommends that the United States develop the means to contribute funds for preserving habitat in Canada. This action is seen as in the interest of the United States because the majority of ducks harvested by U.S. hunters are produced in Canadian nesting areas.

The habitat conservation goals are designed to achieve specified population levels for various species of waterfowl. The population goals identified in the draft North American plan are based on average waterfowl populations during the 1970's.

The draft plan does not change the means by which sport hunting regulations for waterfowl are established in either the United States or Canada. The plan does state that stabilized hunting regulations--under which hunting regulations are established for a period of several years, with provisions for change within that time if waterfowl populations drop to very low numbers--are desirable.

The plan calls for establishment of a North American Waterfowl Technical Coordinating Committee that will monitor and update the plan, coordinate work, and review new proposals and joint ventures. The committee will suggest recommendations for actions within the scope of the plan to the federal wildlife agencies of Canada and the United States, but will not consider regulatory matters or supersede actions taken by flyway councils. The committee will be composed of representatives from federal, State, provincial, and territorial wildlife agencies.

"The task of carrying out this plan is too great to be borne by any one nation or even by the federal governments of Canada and the United States," Assistant Secretary Horn concluded. "States, provinces, territories, private conservation organizations, corporations, companies, and individual citizens must contribute. This plan is a challenge to all who enjoy and benefit from waterfowl to contribute to securing a future for this splendid resource."

Following a 60-day period when public comments are invited, the draft will be put in final form and distributed for implementation.

Copies of the draft North American Waterfowl Management Plan are available for public review and comment by writing to the Director (MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Room 536 Matomic Building, Washington, D.C. 20240. Comments must be received by February 3, 1986.