



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

For Release: June 24, 1994

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**CANADA SIGNS WETLANDS CONSERVATION ACCORD,
PLEDGES \$30 MILLION AND EXPANDED COMMITMENT**

With Canada's signature on the "1994 Update," completing the signing earlier by Mexico and the United States, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan has now been renewed for another five years, with an expanded vision for achieving its original 1986 goals and conserving biodiversity on a continental basis.

Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Minister of the Environment Sheila Copps signed the 1994 "Update" to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan on June 9, 1994, pledging \$30 million in funding over the next five years and extending Canada's commitment to the Plan to the year 1999.

The updated agreement had been signed a month earlier, on May 9 in Mexico City, by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Carlos Rojas Gutierrez, Mexico's Secretary of Social Development and Environment. This marked the first time Mexico had signed the agreement, making it a full partner with the other two countries in what Secretary Babbitt and Minister Copps have called the "most extensive and successful wetlands and wildlife conservation program ever."

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Minister Copps signed the agreement as part of a series of Environment Week activities in Canada. She called the Plan an "excellent example of how sustainable development and conservation of biodiversity can be put into action as well as a model for continental environmental cooperation."

Wetlands in Mexico, Canada, and the United States provide the basis for many sustainable development activities including fishing and tourism, as well as providing improved water quality and flood control. Conservation of wetlands often proves to be the most cost-effective, long-term strategy.

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan, originally signed in 1986, is an agreement to reverse the continent's loss of wetlands and stem the decline in populations of waterfowl and other migratory birds. Recognizing that these goals exceeded the capability of government wildlife agencies alone, the Plan calls for unprecedented partnerships and the pooling of resources by public and private agencies, corporations, landowners, and others.

To date, such partnerships have invested \$500 million towards the protection, restoration, or enhancement of two million acres of wetlands, providing vital habitat for a rich diversity of wildlife species. The Plan is recognized in the United States as a model for ecosystem management and conservation partnerships.