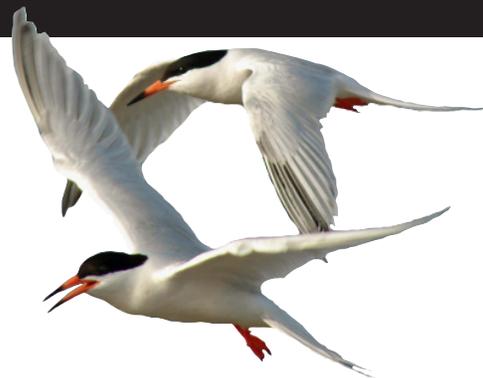


Northeast Region Division of Migratory Birds

Fiscal Year 2015 Accomplishments



Roseate Tern. Jorge Saliva

The Division of Migratory Birds in the Northeast Region maintained a swift pace in moving bird conservation forward within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and with its many partners. The Division of Migratory Birds team of dedicated biologists and examiners provided leadership in developing initiatives and plans, progressing the science of bird conservation, and enabling the public to enjoy migratory birds.

Conserving Migratory Birds Populations

Conserving birds means understanding and managing populations and focusing on species of highest concern. Much of our work is directly involved in developing and working in large conservation partnership initiatives that conserve priority bird populations through research, monitoring, biological planning, and outreach.

Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative

A multi-year effort to develop the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Business Plan was completed in 2015. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation took the landmark step of soliciting proposals for funding conservation projects in the Business Plan. Major accomplishments of the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative in support of the Business Plan are:

- appointed an Executive Committee to oversee implementation of the Business Plan;



Jeff Nadler

Bicknell's Thrush

- established threat Working Groups to foster collaboration;
- created an Executive Summary that lays out the priorities of the Initiative for the next two years; and
- established a regional implementation team to help coordinate and leverage Service resources; and
- developed an accomplishment storymap to highlight successes of the Initiative partners.

Urban Partnerships

In 2015 five cities in the Northeast Region were awarded National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Five Star Grants to support their efforts to initiate and continue Urban Bird Treaty Cities (Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New Haven, and Washington D.C.). Three of these cities are also Service Urban Refuge Partnerships. The Urban Bird Treaty cities work with partners to conserve migratory birds through education, hazard reduction, citizen science, conservation actions, and habitat improvements in urban areas.

International Conservation and Engagement

To implement full life-cycle conservation for high priority birds in the Atlantic Flyway, the Division of Migratory Birds has started to develop country-to-country engagement and collaboration to implement high priority conservation of northeastern migratory birds. For example, a delegation of Region 4 and 5, and Headquarters staff recently met with the Dominican Republic's Interior Ministry of the Environment leaders to discuss habitat conservation in critical wintering habitat for Bicknell's Thrush. Additionally, the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative is engaging partners throughout the Atlantic Flyway.

Tracking Offshore Movements of Conservation Focal Species

Since 2013, Division of Migratory Birds has coordinated a pilot study,

in partnership with the University of Massachusetts, and funded by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, to track the movements of conservation focal species using light-weight digital VHF transmitters (nanotags) and an array of automated radio telemetry stations. The results of the study will assist BOEM and partners in determining the potential effects of offshore wind energy development on migratory bird populations. This year the study expanded from tracking Common Terns and American Oystercatchers to track the movements of Federally



USFWS

Pam Loring DMB biologist

endangered Roseate Terns and Federally threatened Piping Plovers. Study partners captured and nano-tagged a total of thirty Roseate Terns and thirty Common Terns from the nesting colony on Great Gull Island in eastern Long Island Sound, and a total of fifty Piping Plovers from nesting areas in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Working with landowners from various federal, state, and non-profit entities, at sites from Cape Cod, MA, to Long Island, NY, we installed an array of twenty automated radio telemetry stations that monitored the movements of tagged birds around-the-clock at distances of up to forty km offshore. In

addition, we conducted boat-based and aerial telemetry surveys to search for tagged birds across extensive offshore areas of the southern New England continental shelf. Our 2015 study has revealed new information about the offshore flight paths of Piping Plovers and Roseate Terns throughout southern New England, addressing an important information gap for siting and monitoring offshore wind energy facilities in the region.

Northwest Atlantic Seabird Catalog

The Division of Migratory Birds hired a Marine Bird biologist to coordinate our marine bird conservation efforts. We also hired a database manager and statistician to help manage the Northwest Atlantic Seabird Catalog, recently renamed from the Atlantic Seabird Compendium. They have been entering new datasets; are providing quality control of existing datasets; and developing initial analysis of high priority marine bird distribution and abundance for use in siting and evaluating the potential impacts of offshore wind development. These two positions were funded by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

Habitat Conservation & Joint Ventures:

The Atlantic Coast Joint Venture (ACJV) and Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture (AMJV) are partnerships focused on the conservation of habitat for native birds in the Atlantic Flyway and Appalachian Mountains, respectively. The ACJV partnership consists of the 17 states and commonwealths from Maine south to Puerto Rico; the AMJV covers the Appalachian portions of 11 states and commonwealths, from southern New York to northeastern Alabama. Both partnerships also work with key federal and regional habitat conservation agencies and organizations in their joint venture areas. The ACJV and AMJV

focus on the conservation of habitats for all birds consistent with major national and continental bird conservation plans and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.

Grant Updates in the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture

North American Wetland Conservation Acts (NAWCA)

ACJV partners protected or conserved well over 32,719 acres of habitat in eight states in Fiscal Year 2015 including twenty-three approved North American Wetland Conservation Act standard and small grants for a total of \$12.5 million in grant funds matched by \$31.3 million in partner funds.

National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant (NCWCG)

In FY15 the NCWCG program provided \$7.9 million in funding for ten projects in seven states within the ACJV. These projects conserved (protected, restored, enhanced) over 7,000 acres. ACJV works extensively with NCWCG partners and serves on the National Ranking Committee.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Treaty Act Grants (NMBCA)

In FY15 the NMBCA grant program provided over \$500,000 for three projects and leveraged over \$2.5 million dollars in match to protect Atlantic Coast migratory birds in their critical wintering areas.

Puerto Rico and US Virginia Islands (BCR 69) Plan Complete

The bird conservation plan for BCR 69 is now available for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (PR/USVI) geography of the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture. BCR 69 is an extremely important area for the conservation of birds, a region that has been historically

impacted by deforestation, agriculture, and development. With tourism being the current primary activity in the region, conservation priorities and opportunities are highlighted for both PR/USVI. There are more than 284 bird species here including 17 endemics. Some important species in the region are Puerto Rican Parrot, Elf-woods Warbler, White-cheeked Pintail, Piping and Snowy Plover, Yellow-breasted Crake, Black Rail, and American Flamingo. The Plan can be viewed at: <http://acjv.org/planning/bird-conservation-regions/bcr-69/>

Migratory Bird Take

The objective of the Permits Branch is to enable the public to collect, possess and otherwise take migratory birds for a variety of purposes. Permit examiners and DMB biologists use the best available science and expertise to make permitting decisions that consider the risks and benefits of proposed activities. The examiners collectively issued 69% of all migratory birds permits within 30 days of receipt of a completed application, a great achievement for the three dedicated examiners. Examiners issued 1,478 migratory bird permits in 2015. The Northeast Region has approximately 600 registrants in the National Resident Canada Goose Registration website, which was developed to enable landowners to better control the damage caused by resident Canada Geese.



Puerto Rican Parrot

USDA

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