

CITATION FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

HAROLD P. LASKOWSKI

In recognition of his significant contributions to the conservation mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Harold P. (Hal) Laskowski envisions the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) as a system to provide quality habitat for fish and wildlife and to support healthy ecosystems; and he has spent 30 years of his career achieving these goals. This vision has shaped how the NWRS biological program has evolved and grown to meet current and emerging ecological threats. Understanding the interdependence between biology and complex refuge management decisions, he has effectively raised the quality of biology and biological management within the NWRS while working with others to develop policies that continue to shape the future of refuge biology. Pursuing a vision of efficient and effective refuge biology, Hal implemented “monitoring to inform management decisions” by partnering with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and initiating multi-refuge studies. His idea to address biological needs with shared resources among Regions led to the development of the joint Region 3 & 5 Biological Monitoring and Database Team (BMDT). Today, the NWRS Inventory and Monitoring Initiative (I&M) is using the lessons learned by the BMDT to create a nationally coordinated I&M system. As a respected leader of the Integrated Waterbird Management and Monitoring approach, he has fostered partnerships and the development of an adaptive management framework that integrates local, regional and flyway-scale decisions for waterfowl, shorebird, and marsh bird management throughout the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways. Understanding the need for effective data management, Hal developed CENSUS, the first standardized biological database used on all refuges throughout a Region. He has worked with others to identify the data needs of the NWRS and produce recommendations which are being implemented today with the I&M approach. Recognizing the need for standardized data collection, storage, and analysis, Hal has been instrumental in the initiation, development, and implementation of national databases that assist with analyzing the biological response to refuge management.

Hal serves as a role model to young biologists, a trusted colleague to Regional biologists and refuge managers, a visionary to policymakers, a humble leader to teammates, and a beacon of encouragement for all that strive to improve the NWRS. Those that have had the opportunity to be supervised by Hal, speak of his openness, his wise and gentle guidance, his thoughtful development of the employee, and his flexibility and sense of humor. Hal Laskowski has dedicated his career to improving “the way we do biology” on refuges, and we do biology better today because of Hal’s vision, discernment, ideas, perseverance, patience, professionalism, and passion for improving the quality and efficiency of refuge biology. For his excellence and outstanding contributions, Harold P. Laskowski is granted the Meritorious Service Award from the U.S. Department of the Interior.