

A photograph of two sparrows perched on a green vine. The bird in the foreground is facing right, with its beak open as if singing or calling. The second bird is behind it, also facing right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with green foliage and a light sky. The text is overlaid on the top right of the image.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

*Draft Comprehensive Conservation  
Plan and Environmental Assessment*

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July 2009



*This goose, designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling, has become the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.*

The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service* is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 97-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 548 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service’s best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.

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