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# News Release



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## City of Portland, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sign Urban Bird Treaty

In a ceremony May 10, 2003, at the World Forestry Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director Dave Allen and City of Portland Commissioner Jim Francesconi signed an Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds signifying the City's commitment to future bird conservation projects.

Twenty-one local interest groups signed a separate treaty with the Service and the City to reiterate their long-term commitment to bird conservation. The treaty brings together a diverse set of partners around the shared vision of conserving and appreciating the birds that migrate through the greater Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area.

Portland is the fifth city in the nation since 1999 to sign such a treaty with the Service. Others include New Orleans, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Houston. The Service hopes to use these treaties as models for future bird conservation projects in other cities.

"We recognize that cities have an important role to play in conserving birds that migrate long distances," said Allen. "Portland occupies a pivotal place in the Pacific flyway and its backyards, parks and greenspaces provide critical resting, feeding and nesting areas for birds."

The Service will provide technical assistance and a \$50,000 grant, to be matched at least 1:1 in local partner contributions, for a variety of projects to conserve migratory birds in four categories: 1) education and outreach, 2) habitat improvement, 3) hazard reduction and 4) invasive species management. These projects will help to ensure that migratory birds and their habitats are conserved by building on the existing-protection, restoration and educational programs currently underway throughout Portland and the greater metropolitan region.

The Portland area provides habitat for more than 200 bird species, including 47 long-distance migrants and 23 species considered "at-risk." The treaty and grant were announced in conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of International Migratory Bird Day, which is celebrated nationally to draw attention to birds and their ecological, social and scientific values.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving,

protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.