

# USFWS Migratory Bird Program

## Updates for the Bird Conservation Committee

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Meeting  
September, 2019

Presented by Ken Richkus



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird Program  
*Conserving America's Birds*





# Personnel Changes

## *Headquarters Office - Staffing*

- **Retirements**

- **Paul Padding - Atlantic Flyway Representative (Aug)**
- **Diana Whittington – NEPA Specialist (July)**
- **Ron Kokel - Regulations Specialist (end of Sept)**

- **New Positions**

- **Ken Kriese, National Joint Venture Coordinator (went to NRCS)**
- **Rachel Levin, Senior Communication Coordinator, (went to DOI)**
- **Laurel Barnhill, SE Regional Chief (to CoS for SE Regional Director)**



# Personnel Changes

## *Other USFWS/DOI - Staffing*

- **Mike J. Johnson, Deputy Assistant Director for Migratory Birds – passed away in May 2019**



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# Personnel Changes

## *Headquarters Office - Staffing*

- **Hires**

- **Duck Stamp Office: Suzanne Fellows, Duck Stamp Program Coordinator**
- **BADS Assessment Biologist: cert being considered**
- **Pilot/biologist: advertised, cert being considered**
- **MF Rep (Vice Jim Kelley), cert being considered**

- **Key Vacancies**

- **Chief, DBHC (vice Sarah Mott) **announced Aug. 22, closed Sept. 12****
- **Deputy Chief, DMBM (vice Ken Richkus)**
- **AF Representative (vice Paul Padding)**
- **Deputy, AD (Vice Mike Johnson)**
- **Regulations Specialist (vice Ron Kokel)**
- **7 other vacancies across the Program in the process**

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# DOI Personnel

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George (Robert) Wallace confirmed as Assistant Interior Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, and Parks

Aurelia Skipwith (currently Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, and Parks) re-nominated as USFWS Director



# Program Strategic Plan

*Released May 2019*

## What the plan does:

- Implement the Interior Secretary's priorities
- Focus program's limited resources
- Work more effectively with stakeholders and partners
- Coordinate the program's efforts on priorities
- Address broad geographic responsibilities
- Work within our authorities

## Current efforts:

- Working across regions and with partners to implement national priorities

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# Program Strategic Plan

*Released May 2019*

## Four Goals:

- Provide Leadership in Migratory Bird Conservation
- Conserve and Manage Sustainable Populations of Birds of Management Concern
- Conserve Habitat for Migratory Birds of Management Concern
- Manage Bird Data and Information for Use in Decision Making
- <https://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/strategicplan.php>

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# Provide Leadership in Migratory Bird Conservation

## *10.13 List*

- Proposed rule published in November 2018 - no substantial comments received
- To better align with most current 2019 American Ornithological Society updates...
- An amended proposed rule is expected to publish in fall
  - Expecting 30 day comment period Fall -Winter 2019
- Concurrent with the updated Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act (MBTRA) notice for species not protected by MBTA
- If there are no comments for species that overlap with the Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) list, the revised BCC list can be published at the close of the comment period







# Conserve and Manage Sustainable Populations

## *Hunting Regulations*

- 2019-20 Season:
  - Final Frameworks published August 19
  - State Selections published August 28
  - Mostly unchanged from last year
  - Pintail bag limit decreased
  - AF Mallards also decreased
- Tribal Regulations:
  - Final rule for 2019-20 published August 27
- 2020-21 Season
  - Next SRC meeting Oct. 8-9, Minnesota

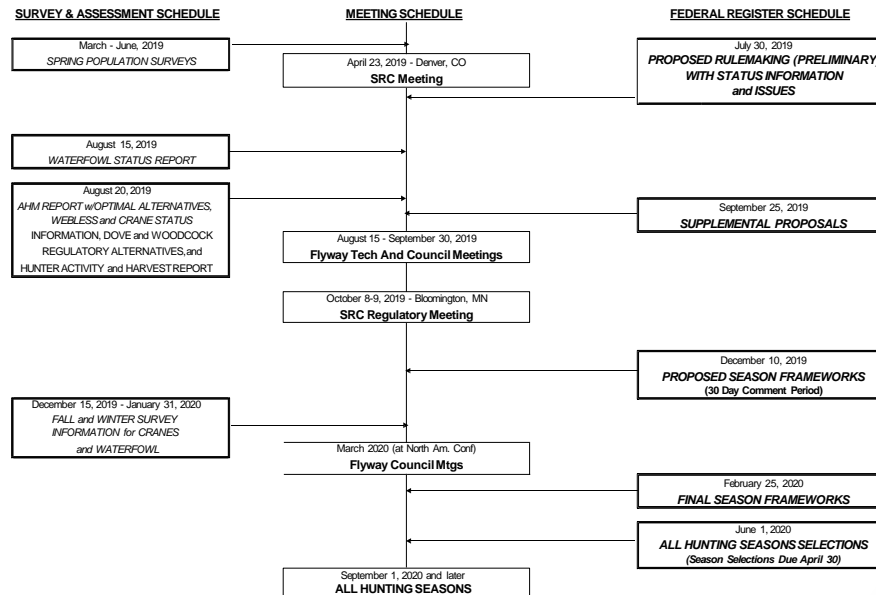




# Conserve and Manage Sustainable Populations

## 2020-21 Hunting Season Establishment Process

### SCHEDULE OF BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION AVAILABILITY, REGULATIONS MEETINGS AND FEDERAL REGISTER PUBLICATIONS FOR THE 2020-21 SEASONS





# Conserve and Manage Sustainable Populations

## *Double-crested Cormorants – Brief History*

- August 2018: FWS held four Regional Meetings
- December 2018 : Summary report from meetings.
  - Available at:  
<https://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/double-crested-cormorants.php>
- March 2019: FWS hosted a meeting to summarize information gathered
  - Representatives from AFWA Bird and Fish Related Conflict Working Group and USDA Wildlife Services attended





# Conserve and Manage Sustainable Populations

## *Double-crested Cormorants – Next Steps*

- Spring 2019: FWS identified possible management alternatives for consideration internally
- Summer 2019: Options under review
- ★ FWS is unable to release management options or speak to a proposed process until the Department of Interior review is complete



# Conserve and Manage Sustainable Populations

## *Common Ravens – Status of Process*

- Common Raven conflicts in the western United States have reached a level should be addressed in a more comprehensive, programmatic fashion.
- A core team has been assembled comprising HQ and Regional leadership, APHIS, USGS, DOD, and States
- The team is currently discussing the appropriate stakeholder process to pursue
- Due to the complexity and the extent of the raven conflicts, it is anticipated this process will be lengthy
- Team is ramping up efforts over the next year



# Conserve Habitat for Migratory Birds of Management Concern

## *Duck Stamp*

### **2019 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest**

- Sept. 27-28, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, MD
- 190 entries
- Livestream at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)
- Look for the new stamp image online after the contest!
  - [www.fws.gov/birds](http://www.fws.gov/birds)



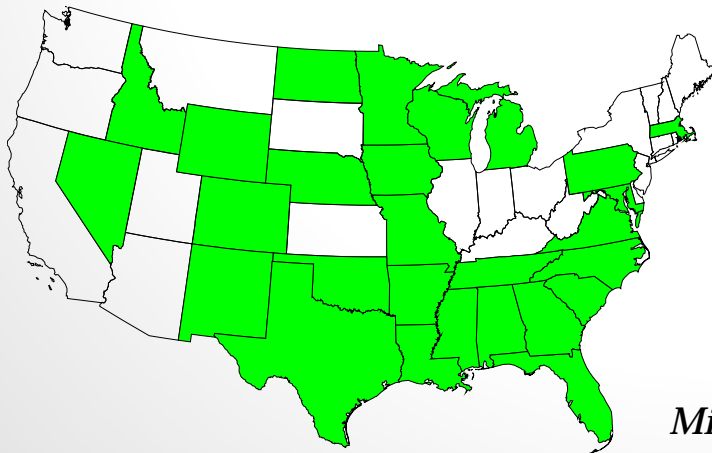
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# Federal Duck Stamp Program

- E-stamp program:
  - 27 states currently participate
  - Applications due December 1 (see me for copy or online at <https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/get-involved/ApplicationPackageElectronicFederalDuckStamp.pdf>)
  - States will not receive stamps at any of their individual licensing locations (safeguard States from financial and accounting liability)



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# Conserve Habitat for Migratory Birds of Management Concern

## *DOI Financial Assistance Interior Regulation*

- DOI Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR)
  - Supplements OMB Uniform Guidance
  - Final Rule published on August 30
  - Effective October 29
  - Applies to all DOI grants and cooperative agreements (NAWCA, NMBCA, etc.)
- Highlights
  - real property reporting schedule
  - real property appraisals
  - foreign entities
  - conflict of interest
- For more information - [doi.gov/grants](https://doi.gov/grants)



# Manage Bird Data and Information for Use in Decision Making

## *Avian Knowledge Network*

- Launched the Federal Avian Data Center
  - a node funded by Federal Agencies - development led by FWS Migratory Bird Program
  - goal to provide tools to improve responsibilities for migratory birds
  - tools are applicable to wider audience than just federal agencies
  - e.g., geographical summary data tools, repository of BMPs and other guidance docs
- AKN - new look webpage, improved function and useability
  - quickly becoming a one-stop tool for data and information for migratory bird conservation community
- For more information and to see these tools in action - request a web demo and training

**<https://data.pointblue.org/partners/fedadc/>**

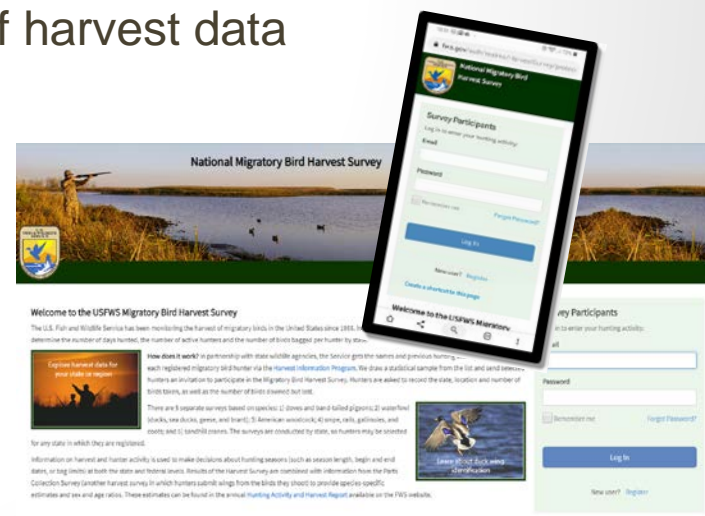


# Manage Bird Data and Information for Use in Decision Making

## *Harvest Surveys Modernization*

### On-line hunter diary survey deployed 2019-20 hunting season

- Limited deployment: 10 states, 9000 hunters invited/state
- Comparison of response rates, bag/hunter between paper and online survey (also paper vs. email invitations)
- Continue full paper survey for 3 years to provide overlap in harvest estimates
- Also, new web pages with visualization of harvest data ([www.fws.gov/harvestsurvey](http://www.fws.gov/harvestsurvey))
- Advantages:
  - Reduce cost
  - Improve hunter experience:
    - optimized for mobile (field use)
    - download/print hunt log
  - Improvement in response rates and data quality





# Manage Bird Data and Information for Use in Decision Making

*May Survey Review*



## Objectives:

- Identify appropriate spatial extent and temporal period for priority species/populations
- Provide recommendations to improve survey design and estimation methodology
- Address biases in observation with recommendations of improved field protocols
- Identify optimal multi-species sampling effort allocation

## Progress to date:

- IAA with USGS to provide statistical and analytical support
- Drs. John Sauer and Emily Silverman, co-PIs
- 2 post-docs: Spatial analysis (Mar-Dec 2019); Modeling and optimization (Oct 2019-Sep 2020).





# Budget

## Updates

	Enacted FY 2019	FY 2020 President's Budget	House Mark- up FY 2020
Conservation & Monitoring **	\$29,301,000	\$28,845,000	\$29,095,000
Permits	\$3,424,000	\$3,699,000	\$3,699,000
Duck Stamp	\$556,000	\$564,000	\$564,000
Joint Ventures/NAWMP	\$13,140,000	\$13,140,000	\$16,140,000
North American Wetlands Conservation Act	\$42,000,000	\$40,000,000	\$50,000,000
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act	\$3,910,000	\$3,900,000	\$4,910,000
<b>Total – Migratory Bird Program</b>	<b>\$92,331,000</b>	<b>\$90,148,000</b>	<b>\$104,408,000</b>

*\*\* National Aviation Management funding omitted*

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# Thank you!



[www.fws.gov/birds](http://www.fws.gov/birds)

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