

Frequently Asked Questions



1. **What is the Southern Wings Program?** It is a mechanism to facilitate state agency's voluntary participation in conservation actions and projects in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean that helps conserve shared priority species.
2. **When did the Southern Wings Program start?** The Program was endorsed both by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (the Association) Bird Conservation Committee and the governing body of the Association in 2009. That was also the year the Program started accepting funds.
3. **Why was the Southern Wings Program established?** Increasing and rapid loss of wintering ground habitat require immediate conservation action to protect migratory species. The science also tells us that conservation of migratory species must occur throughout the annual life cycle of a species. State wildlife agencies invest a significant amount of resources in the conservation of migratory birds within their states and recognize the need to support annual life cycle conservation.
4. **Why Should a State Agency consider participating in conservation projects in Mexico, Central and South America and Caribbean for shared priority species?** The science also tells us that conservation of migratory species must occur throughout the annual life cycle of a species. State wildlife agencies invest a significant amount of resources in the conservation of migratory birds within their states and recognize the need to support annual life cycle conservation.
5. **What role does the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association) play?** The Association facilitates and coordinates the Program on behalf of the state wildlife agencies. The Coordinator is an Association staff member. The Coordinator supports the Leadership and Technical Committees, works with the domestic and in-country partners, administers the Program, and promotes the Program.
6. **How does the Program assure state agencies their money is being used wisely and effectively?** The Program only recommends high quality projects, in critical locations, that are implemented by successful NGOs with the capacity to deliver the conservation outcomes. The Program requires a project proposal that outlines the actions to be taken to address the largest threats to the species and habitat. We also require twice a year reporting and hold our domestic partners accountable for ensuring the actions are implemented on the ground. The Programs domestic partners and when possible the state agencies and Program coordinator meet with the in-country partners and visit the sites.

7. **How many states are participating in the Program?** - As of August 2015, 29 states (16 individual states and the 13 states of the North East Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) participate in the Program.
8. **What types of projects are funded?** The Southern Wings Programs focuses on working with high quality partners that have a proven track record of success. The projects are typically ongoing projects that state agencies join as one of many partners. We also strive to support on-the-ground conservation actions such as restoration, management, monitoring, and acquisition. However any conservation action that is needed can be supported as long as the state agency approves it.
9. **Are there species or areas of focus?** The Program developed a 10 Year Vision in January 2012. The Program has focused on some high priority species and locations such as Bicknell's Thrush, Golden-Winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, grasslands bird species, northern Mexico grasslands, the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica, and the Sierra Caral in Guatemala.
10. **Are state agencies funds leveraged?** State agency contributions to a project are matched at least 1:1. This is either cash or in-kind contributions from domestic partners, foundations, or in-country partners.
11. **How are state contributions moved to projects?** States voluntarily enter into agreements with and contribute funds through a Regional Association, a third party NGO, or directly with a project partner in Mexico, Central America, South America or the Caribbean. Those entities collect, hold and disseminate funds for approved projects. The Regional Association, state agency, or an NGO that is U.S.-based, and manages the project can transfers funds to the in-country partner, usually an NGO, for on-the-ground project implementation. The Regional Association or a U.S.-based NGO is responsible for providing technical support and contributing to or managing project design and implementation. The Program remains flexible in this regard to accommodate the challenges unique to each state.
12. **What funding mechanisms are available?** Contributions can be from any funding source that the agency has at its disposal. Examples of potential funding sources include State Wildlife Grant monies, PR funds, tax check offs, general funds, non-consumptive User Fees, etc. Monies designated as non-federal in origin can be used to match Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act projects.
13. **How can partners participate in the Program?** Partners can participate in the Program by being an in-country or domestic partner of the state wildlife agencies that develops or implements a project. State level partners (e.g, Wildlife Society Chapter, local birding clubs, state Audubon Chapters, etc.) can work with their state agency partners to match state funds and participate in the conservation projects.
14. **Why should I partner with State Wildlife agencies in the Southern Wings Program?** Many state level partners such as Audubon Chapters, TNC Chapters, Ornithological Societies, Birding Clubs, Wildlife Society chapters, zoos, etc. often have a shared interest in the conservation of priority species or locations. The Program is one way to partner and have a larger impact on conservation.
15. **What can I do to learn more about the Program?** To find out more, please 1) visit the website (www.fishwildlife.org under focus areas, Southern Wings) or 2) contact Deb Hahn at 202-838-3458 or dhahn@fishwildlife.org