

USFWS Migratory Bird Program

Updates for the Bird Conservation Committee

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Meeting
Tampa, Fla.~ September 10, 2018

Presented by Ken Richkus



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





Priorities

- Continued focus on Administration & DOI priorities
 - Access to public lands
 - Regulatory reform
 - State & tribal relationships
- Implementing three related Secretarial orders



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Secretarial Orders

- SO 3355
 - Streamlining/modernizing NEPA process
- SO 3356
 - Hunting, fishing, recreational shooting & wildlife conservation activities on DOI lands
 - Coordination with states & tribes
- SO 3366
 - Increasing recreational opportunities on DOI lands & waters



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Personnel Updates

Recent & Anticipated Migrations and Other News

- DMBM Chief – to be posted shortly
- National Permit Coordinator – (Vice Jerry Thompson) Waiver in review
- Biologist/Pilot – (Vice Jim Bredy) – Waiver in review
- Mississippi Flyway Rep – (Vice Jim Kelley) – Wavier in review
- Assessment Biologist – Waiver in review
- Regulations/NEPA Specialist – Wavier in Preparation

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Migratory Game Birds

2018 Status Reports Available

- Waterfowl
- Woodcock, sandhill crane, mourning dove, band-tailed pigeon
- Hunter activity and harvest
- Adaptive harvest management
- Online at:
www.fws.gov/birds/surveys-and-data/reports-and-publications.php





SRC & Hunting Regs

Updates

- 2018-19 proposed frameworks published in February
 - Final rule expected to publish later this spring
 - Mostly unchanged from last year
 - Pintail bag limit increased to two
- Service Regulations Committee
 - June 6: Videoconference
 - October 16-17: Face-to-face meeting in Minneapolis
 - Will review Flyway proposals for the 2019-2020 migratory bird hunting seasons.



Grants & Cooperative Agreements

Update

- DOI reviews all grants and cooperative agreements
 - Grants: NAWCA has been waived from review; NMBCA has not
 - Coop. agreements: JVs have not been waived



North American Wetlands Conservation Act

FY18 Grants

Approved by MBCC Sept. 2017:

- 22 U.S. Standard grants: \$21,935,047

Approved by MBCC April 25:

- 25 U.S. Standard grants: \$24,643,095
 - 9 Mexico grants: \$2,729,547
 - 9 Canada grants: \$23,247,456

Approved by MBCC Sept. 2018:

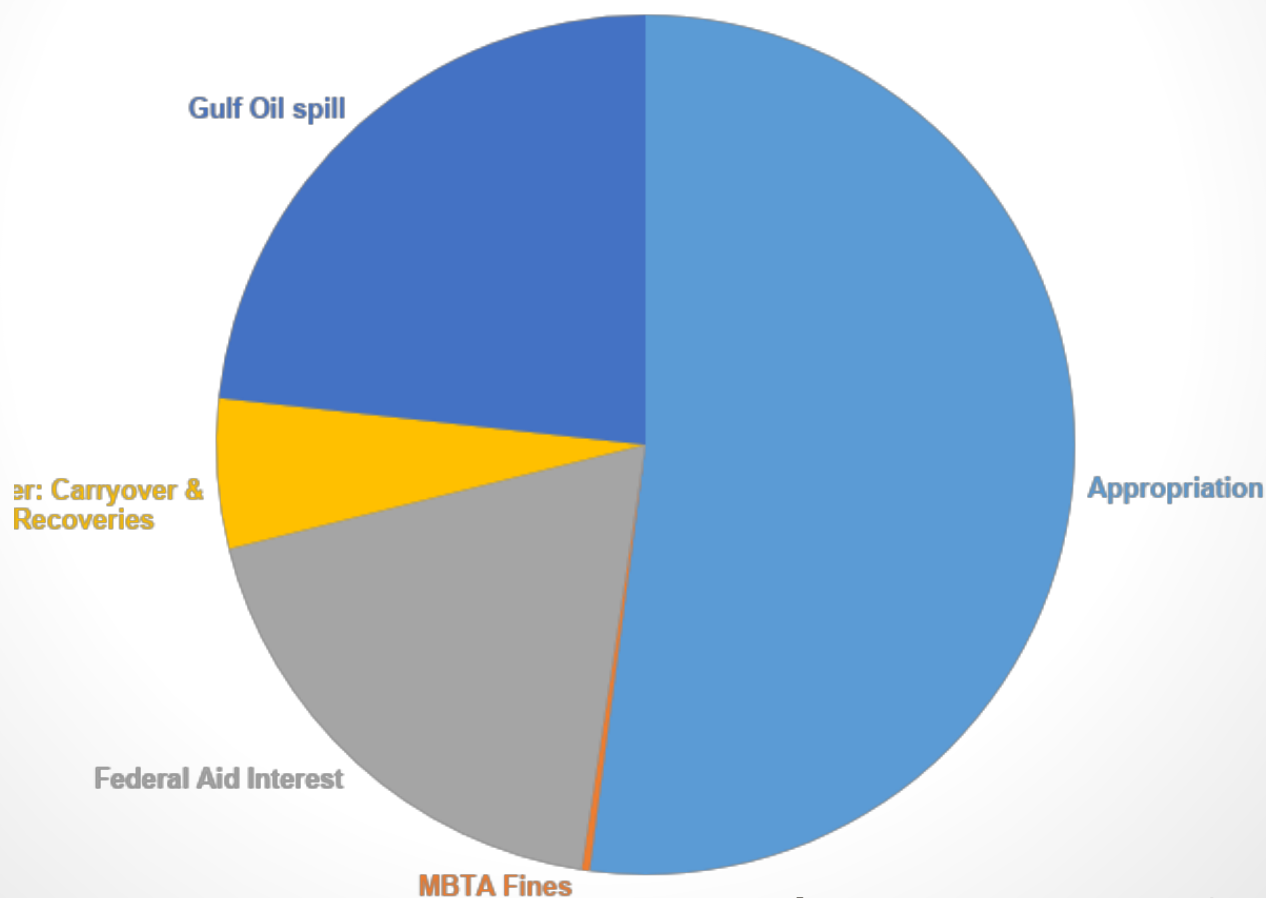
- 24 U.S. Standard grants: \$23,867,903
- Also reported, 37 small grants: \$3,424,722



NAWCA FY 19 Funding Summary

- Estimated total available=\$72.8M
 - \$23.8M of this approved by MBCC on Sept. 5 for 19-1 projects

Funding sources



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Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

FY18 Grants



- **29 projects announced in August**
 - Awarded **\$3,838,922**
 - Match **\$14,237,193**
- **North America grants: \$1,828,924**
 - U.S.: \$435,189
 - Canada: \$407,679
 - Mexico: \$986,056
- **Central & South America & Caribbean grants: \$2,009,998**



Federal Duck Stamp

Current stats:

- \$1+ billion raised since 1934
- 6 million acres conserved
- 1.5+ million 2017-2018 stamps sold to date
- No drop in sales due to price increase



2018 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest

- Sept. 14-15, Springs Preserve, Las Vegas
- “Celebrating Our Waterfowl Hunting Heritage”
- Livestream at www.fws.gov
- Look for the new stamp image online after 9/15!
 - www.fws.gov/birds



Quick Updates

Ongoing Migratory Bird Program Issues

- **Bald & Golden Eagles**
 - Eagle falconry: Flyway councils determining allocation process for placing 6 golden eagles w/falconers annually
 - 2018 Bald Eagle nesting survey: Atlantic & Pacific/Central flyway surveys complete; poor weather, gov't shutdown, etc., delayed MS Flyway until 2019



Quick Updates

Ongoing Migratory Bird Program Issues

- Harvest Surveys Modernization
- Permitting
 - New online falconry database operational
 - State Administrator training coming this fall
 - Permit issuance system modernization continues; goal to streamline permit issuance timelines
- MBTA (10.13) & Birds of Conservation Concern lists
 - Updated 10.13 list undergoing internal (FWS/DOI) review
 - BCC update to follow



Quick Updates

Ongoing Migratory Bird Program Issues

- **Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds:**
 - After review by DOI, the Council has been cleared to resume meeting
 - No date set for next meeting



Double-crested cormorants

Updates & Current Situation

- EA & FONSI published in Nov. 2017
- Scope of EA issue depredation permits for:
 - control damage to aquaculture facilities
 - protect health & human safety
 - T&E species
 - alleviate property damage
- Affects 37 states & D.C.



Double-crested cormorants

Stakeholder Engagement

Regional meeting objectives:

Gather available information and data regarding the impacts cormorants have on free-swimming fish populations

Better understand the scope and magnitude of cormorant impacts on recreational and commercial fishing

Better understand the social and economic importance of the issue from your perspective

Develop a model process for addressing avian predation conflicts with other species



Double-crested cormorants

Stakeholder Engagement

Meeting outcomes and major themes

- Must work together
- Short term solution needed now
- Long term solution
- Conflict differs across the country –
- Definitions
 - “free-swimming” fish
- Information (data)
 - How do we use what have -- hypotheses



Double-crested cormorants

Next steps

- Meeting summary to participants
- Requesting data from States and Tribes
 - Website to collect data & reports:
 - <https://djcase.com/cormorant>



Solicitor's M-Opinion 37050

New Interpretation of MBTA

- Incidental take of migratory birds (i.e., unintentional take as a result of an activity but not the purpose of the activity) *not* enforceable under MBTA
- FWS provided guidance to program/regional leadership on incorporating M-Opinion into day-to-day activities
- ESA, BGEPA, NEPA, as well as state laws and regulations, still apply to certain species



Solicitor's M-Opinion 37050

New Interpretation of MBTA

- Nest Destruction Memo revised - Good Samaritan Policy expanded
- FWS continues to work with any interested partner who voluntarily wishes to avoid take
- Continue to partner w/industry, states, tribes & others to develop BMPs

Thank you!



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