

USFWS Migratory Bird Program

Updates for Bird Conservation Committee

North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference
Denver, CO - March 6, 2019

Presented by Ken Richkus



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





Personnel Changes

Department of Interior

Secretary Zinke resigned Jan. 2, 2019; Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt recently nominated as new Secretary of the Interior

Margaret Everson (formerly Chief Policy Officer for DU) replaced Greg Sheehan as Principal Deputy Director of USFWS

Migratory Bird Program

- **Ken Richkus selected as DMBM Chief**
- **Jim Kelley, MS Flyway Rep, retired at the end of August**
 - **Finalizing Position Description, should be posted soon**
- **Sarah Mott retired as DBHC Chief at end of 2018**
 - **Dave Gordon is acting**

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Staffing Changes

- Priority vacancies
 - Duck Stamp Program Manager - selection made
 - Mississippi Flyway Rep - to be posted shortly
 - Population Ecologist – to be posted shortly
 - Pilot-biologist - to be posted shortly
 - National Permit Coordinator - PD being revised
 - DBHC Division Chief - wavier submitted
 - DMBM Deputy Division Chief - wavier submitted



Budget

Updates

	Enacted 2016	Enacted 2017	Enacted 2018	Enacted 2019
Conservation & Monitoring **	\$29,201,000	\$29,301,000	\$29,301,000	\$29,275,000
Permits	\$3,346,000	\$3,371,000	\$3,424,000	\$3,447,000
Duck Stamp	\$556,000	\$556,000	\$556,000	\$559,000
Joint Ventures/NAWMP	\$13,139,000	\$13,139,000	\$13,140,000	\$13,140,000
North American Wetlands Conservation Act	\$35,145,000	\$38,145,000	\$40,000,000	\$42,000,000
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act	\$3,910,000	\$3,910,000	\$3,910,000	\$3,910,000
Total – Migratory Bird Program	\$85,297,000	\$88,422,000	\$90,331,000	\$92,331,000

*** National Aviation Management funding is omitted*

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Grants & Cooperative Agreements

Update

- DOI continues to review all grants and cooperative agreements
 - Grants: NAWCA has been waived from review; NMBCA, USAID, and Webless program have not
 - Coop. agreements: JVs have not been waived
 - Alaska grants and cooperative agreements also reviewed by Special Assistant for Alaska



North American Wetlands Conservation Act

FY18/19 Grants

Approved by MBCC April 2018 (2018-2):

- 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 (2019-1):

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

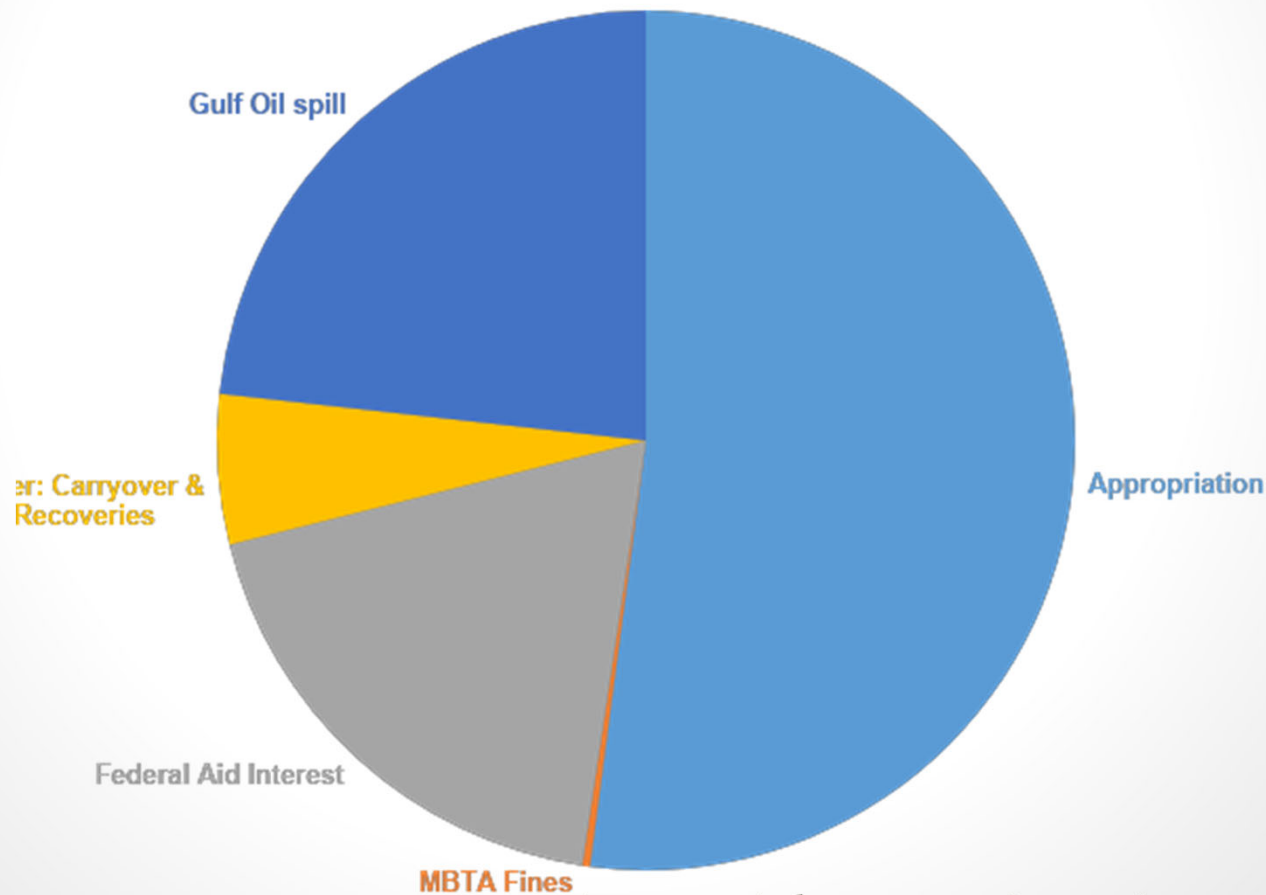
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NAWCA FY 19 Funding Summary

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

Funding sources

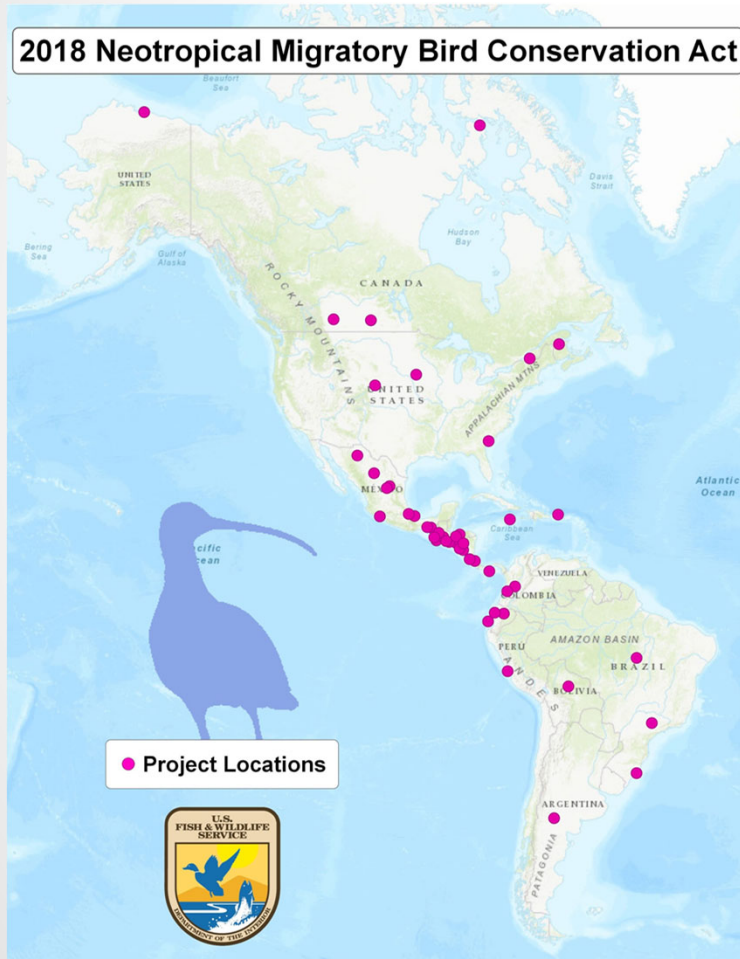


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Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

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**

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Federal Duck Stamp

Current Status:

- \$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
- 25 states set up for e-stamp sales in 2019-2020 - still accepting state applications
- 2019-2020 stamp available by July 1; “Celebrating Our Waterfowl Hunting Heritage” with wood duck and decoy art by Scot Storm



2019 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest

- Sept. 27-28, Patuxent Research Refuge, Laurel, MD

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FWS and MBP Priorities

- Continued focus on Administration & DOI priorities
 - Access to public lands
 - Regulatory reform
 - Incidental take under MBTA, streamlining permits under BGEPA, streamlining NEPA, ESA reform,
- Implementing three related Secretarial orders
 - SO3355 – Streamline/modernize the NEPA Process
 - SO3356 - Hunting, fishing, recreational shooting & wildlife conservation activities on DOI lands
 - SO 3366 – Increased recreational opportunities on DOI lands

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2019-20 Hunting Regulations

Updates

2019-20 Season:

- Atlantic Flyway
 - Will implement duck multi-stock management
 - Eastern mallard daily bag limit reduced to 2
- Pintail daily bag limit reduced to 1 in all Flyways
- Closing duck framework date of Jan. 31 in all Flyways
- Final Rule likely won't publish until after season selection letters are due (Apr. 30)

Tribal Regulations:

- Target date for publishing Final rule for 2019-20 is Apr. 1



2020-21 Hunting Regulations

2020-21 season

- Target date for submitting Preliminary Federal Register to OMB is Apr. 1
- Informational SRC meeting Apr. 23, 2019 in Denver
- Recommendations for 2020-2021 season will be approved at the fall SRC Meeting
 - Dates to be determined (tentatively planned for Denver)



Harvest Assessments

Harvest Management Working Group

- Mid-continent Mallard AHM Revision
- Pintail Harvest Strategy Update
- Woodcock Harvest Strategy Update
- Development of an Eastern Mallard Harvest Strategy



Monitoring Updates

Harvest Surveys Modernization

- Transitioning from a paper diary survey for migratory bird harvests to an online form
 - Reduce costs in long-term
 - Will improve response rates
 - Improvement in data quality and accessibility
- Development of prototype complete
- Tested with random sample of HIP registrants in Feb.
- New web pages so hunters can visualize harvest data (www.fws.gov/harvestsurvey)



Double-crested cormorants

Next Steps – Address Free-Swimming Fish Conflicts

- Four Regional Meetings held in August, 2018
 - Summary Report is now available:
<https://djcase.com/DCCO>
- Cormorant/Fisheries Technical Core team meeting rescheduled to March 26-27
 - Meeting objective: assess biological information and evaluate possible management options
- Exploring increasing the 2017 EA allocation of allowable take of cormorants.
 - The scope of the 2017 EA cannot change without a new environmental analysis.



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 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

- Meetings:
 - Working to reschedule meetings cancelled during lapse
 - NAWMP Committee, CCMB, DCCO, SRC, HMWG, others
- A webinar on the falconry database previously scheduled for January 9 was cancelled due to the government shutdown
- Permit issuance has been impacted by the 35 day lapse in funding, but getting back on track



MBTA Updates

- A proposed rule is in development- there are two components to the rule
 - Establish regulations that define the scope of the MBTA to be consistent with the December 2017 M-opinion
 - Revise 50 CFR 21.12 (permit exceptions) by modifying existing language and proposing new permit exceptions
 - Fast Act – Swallow nesting on bridges



MBTA Updates

Proposed Rule To Revise the 10.13 List

- Comment period for the proposed rule closed Jan. 28
- Next step to address comments and finalize the list
 - Expect final revised 10.13 list to publish in April or May
 - Notice of MBTRA list of species not protected on same timeline



Eagle Low Risk Incidental Take Permits

Expedited permit process in low-risk areas

- Service intends to present a proposed low-risk eagle incidental take permit option for notice and public comment in the near future.
- The proposed process identifies areas of the lower 48 states where available data suggest bald and golden eagle abundance is low enough that projects that might incidentally take eagles will not pose a risk to eagle populations.
- Projects in these areas would still obtain an incidental eagle take permit, and they would still monitor and report their take, but pre- and post-construction monitoring requirements would be reduced from that for standard permits.
- The Service will consider comments, including those from states, before implementing this new permit option.
- Link to the low risk framework webinar

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/eagle-management.php>

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Thank you!

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