

USFWS Migratory Bird Program

Updates for National Flyway Council

North American

Omaha, NE ~ March, 2020

Presented by Ken Richkus



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





Personnel Changes

Headquarters Office - Staffing

DMBM

- **Acting Mississippi and Atlantic Flyway Representatives**
 - Tom Cooper (MF) and Pat Devers (AF) acting
- **Branch of Assessment and Decision Support (old PHAB)**
 - Guthrie Zimmerman left to join the Raptor Team
 - Will have 1 or 2 new Assessment Biologists in a couple of months
- **Pilot Biologists**
 - Garret Wilkerson is a new Pilot/Biologist stationed in Minneapolis
- **Regulatory Specialist**
 - Ron Kokel retired last September;
 - National Permits Coordinator (vice Jerry Thompson) position interviews in progress



Personnel Changes

Headquarters Office - Staffing

Other Migratory Bird Program

- **Chief, Division of Bird Habitat Conservation (vice Sarah Mott)**
 - Kari Duncan recently selected (formerly Grants Branch Chief)
- **Duck Stamp Office**
 - Temporary Program Assistant – Jennifer Chen
- **Communication Coordinator**
 - Valerie Fellows (vice Rachel Levin)



Filling Positions

All done under the newly formed JAO

- **Priority given to “batch” hires (e.g., groups of same position type)**
- **Each program also allowed to submit 5 other priorities**
 - **Deputy Assistant Director (vice Mike Johnson)**
 - **DMBM Deputy Chief (vice Ken Richkus)**
 - **Mississippi Flyway Representative (vice Jim Kelley)**
 - **Atlantic Flyway Representative (vice Paul Padding)**
 - **Grants Branch Chief, NAWWO (vice Kari Duncan)**



Budget

Updates

	Enacted FY 2019	Enacted FY 2020	President's Budget FY 2021
Conservation & Monitoring	\$29,301,000	\$28,837,000	\$31,355,000
Permits	\$3,424,000	\$3,424,000	\$3,763,000
Duck Stamp	\$556,000	\$556,000	\$578,000
Joint Ventures/NAWMP	\$13,140,000	\$14,640,000	\$13,297,000
North American Wetlands Conservation Act	\$42,000,000	\$46,000,000	\$40,000,000
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act	\$3,910,000	\$4,910,000	\$3,900,000
Total – Migratory Bird Program	\$92,331,000	\$98,367,000	\$92,893,000

Migratory Bird Program - Conserving America's Birds



Cormorants

- Increased Depredation Permit Allocation take allocation under the 2017 EA—51k to 74k
 - Human Health and Safety
 - Aquaculture
 - Protection of Threaten and Endangered Species
 - Property Damage
- January 22, 2020: FWS published advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR), and Notice of Intent to prepare a draft EIS pursuant NEPA.
- Public scoping for the ANPR and NOI open for 45 days closed on March 9, 2020.



Process and Next Steps

January 22, 2020

rulemaking; intent to prepare a National Environmental Policy Act document. Public Scoping Period begins. February 11th and 12th.

2020 March 2020: Public Scoping Period concludes March 9, 2020; USFWS then reviews Public Scoping comments and analyzes information

March-April 2020: Develop alternatives, analyze impacts, and write the Draft EIS

Spring –Summer 2020: Draft EIS and Proposed Rule available for public review and comment

Fall 2020: USFWS prepares Final EIS, Record of Decision, and Final Rule



How can YOU be Involved?

- Follow the project online at: <https://fws.gov/regulations/cormorant>
- Send Comments by March 9, 2020
 - Electronically: Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments to Docket No. FWS-HQ-MB-2019-0103.
 - By hard copy: Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-HQ-MB-2019-0103; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: JAO/1N, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.
- We do not accept email or faxes. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide.



MBTA

Governing Take of Migratory Birds

- Clarifying the Scope of the MBTA
- Proposed Rule and NOI for Environmental Impact Statement published on February 3
- Public Comment Period and Public Scoping Process open through March 19
 - 5 webinars held, one more on March 16th @ 3:00pm ET
 - Have received over 6,500 comments thus far



Duck Stamp Regulation

- Proposed a permanent change by adding a hunting element to the stamp
- Would require Art Contest entries to include one or more visual elements that reflect the theme “celebrating our waterfowl hunting heritage.”
- This was done for the 2018 contest, which is the current stamp
- Public Comment Period is open until Monday, March 16





Federal Duck Stamp

Current Status:

- \$1.1+ billion raised since 1934
- 6 million acres conserved
- 1.5+ million 2017-2018 stamps sold
- 2020-2021 stamp available by July 1



2020 Events

- First Day of Sale on June 26 at Bass Pro in Spanish Fort, AL
- Art Contest is September 25-26 in Des Moines, IA



Other Regulations/Notices

MBTA protected species list (10.13 list)

- Update incorporates AOS updates 2011-2019
 - 1,093 species
 - Also published list of unprotected species
 - Updated Birds of Conservation Concern list expected to post this spring
- Eagles
 - Low Risk Permitting Process
 - Updated Collision Risk Models



Black Vultures

- *What's the issue?*
 - Black vulture populations have increased and range has expanded
 - Black vultures cause conflicts with the livestock industry
 - There is strong Congressional interest in finding solutions to the conflict
 - FWS initiated a pilot project in Kentucky and Tennessee to streamline permitting process of black vultures when appropriate
- *What's the status?*
 - FWS is currently reviewing an external evaluation of the pilot program with the potential of expanding to other states
 - FWS is nearing completion of a programmatic Environmental Assessment for the issuance of depredation permits



Common Ravens

- In November 2019, members of the Raven Core Team had a 2-day workshop to review conflicts and the state of the science in raven management
- The team is drafting a Strategy to address these conflicts
- Webinars for stakeholders and tribes are planned for late Feb/early March that will:
 - Describe the Service process to address raven conflicts
 - Request information and comments to help inform management options.
- Interested parties will be able to submit this information through an online form until March 31, 2020.
- A 3-day workshop is planned in April for the Raven Core Team to review new information and comments from the public and tribes that might inform the Services' short- and long-term management options.



Grants & Cooperative Agreements

Update

GrantSolutions

- April 17, 2020 - Service go-live date
- Recipients will receive information about training and access from GrantSolutions

Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR)

- Final rule effective October 29, 2019
- Applies to all grants and cooperative agreements



NAWMP

- Developed priorities and associated tasks aligned with the 8 recommendations of the 2018 Update
- New Integration Committee established and coordinator hired to continue advancing integration of people goals into waterfowl management decisions
- Joint Ventures leading regional implementation efforts that are cutting-edge examples of approaches to integrating multiple objectives (waterfowl populations, habitat, and people)
- Updated NAWMP Committee Roles and Responsibilities will be published as an Addendum to the 2018 Update
- Expected release to waterfowl community April 2020 at www.nawmp.org



North American Wetlands Conservation Act

FY20 Grants

Approved by MBCC Sept. 2019 (2020-1):

- 24 U.S. Standard grants: \$23,997,028
- Also reported, 31 Small grants: \$3,054,127

Celebrating 30th anniversary with partners (passed Dec. 1989)

- Since then: over \$5 billion grant and matching funds, conserving 30 million acres
- <https://nawmp.org/nawca30>



Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

FY19 Grants

- 24 projects announced in July
 - Awarded \$3,860,490
 - Match \$16,281,303

20th anniversary of NMBCA—nearly \$7 billion in grants with \$265 million match

Thank you!



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