

# USFWS Migratory Bird Program

## Updates for the Bird Conservation Committee

North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference  
Norfolk, Va. ~ March 28, 2018

Presented by Sarah Mott & Ken Richkus



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





# Priorities

- Focused on meeting Administration & DOI priorities
  - Access on public lands
  - Regulatory reform
  - State & tribal relationships
- Also focused on implementing two related Secretarial orders





# Secretarial Orders

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



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# MBP Strategic Priorities

## *What We Do*



*Through professional public service, we serve the American public to achieve the following goals:*

- Provide leadership in migratory bird conservation
- Conserve & manage sustainable populations of birds of management concern
- Conserve habitat for migratory birds of management concern
- Manage bird data & information for use in decision making

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/about-us/strategicplan.php>



# Budget

## *Updates*



- **FY 2018**
  - March 23, 2018: Congress passed and President signed funding bill
  - Increases for Permits (\$53K) and NAWCA grants (+\$1.86M)
- **FY 2019**
  - 2019 President's request builds on the President's FY 2018 request



# Budget

## Updates

	Enacted FY 2017	Enacted FY 2018	FY 2019 President's Budget
Conservation & Monitoring **	\$29,301,000	\$29,301,000	\$26,992,000
Permits	\$3,371,000	\$3,424,000	\$3,295,000
Duck Stamp	\$556,000	\$556,000	\$558,000
Joint Ventures/NAWMP	\$13,139,000	\$13,140,000	\$12,208,000
North American Wetlands Conservation Act	\$38,145,000	\$40,000,000	\$33,600,000
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act	\$3,910,000	\$3,910,000	\$3,900,000
<b>Total – Migratory Bird Program</b>	<b>\$88,422,000</b>	<b>\$90,331,000</b>	<b>\$80,553,000</b>

*\*\* National Aviation Management funding omitted*

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# Grants & Cooperative Agreements

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- DOI reviewing 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*

### **FY18 grants approved by MBCC, Sept. 2017:**

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

### **FY18 grants pending MBCC approval April 25:**

- 23 additional U.S. Standard grants for \$21,643,095
  - (+\$3,072,000 with final FY18 appropriation; 3 grants)
- 9 Mexico grants for \$2,729,547
  - (+\$307,200; 1 grant)
- 9 Canada grants for \$19,500,000
  - (\$2,764,800; budgets adjusted)
- 37 small grants for \$3,424,932 (approved in Feb.)





# Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

## FY17 Grants



- **31 projects announced July 2017**
  - Amount Awarded **\$3,802,084**
  - Match Leveraged **\$14,167,369**
- **North America grants: \$2,055,487**
  - U.S.: \$615,858
  - Canada: \$255,587
  - Mexico: \$1,184,042
- **Central & South America & Caribbean grants: \$1,746,597**
- **FY18 recommendations under review**

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# Migratory Bird Joint Ventures

## *Updates*

- Integrate human dimensions with conservation design & habitat protection, enhancement & restoration
- Collaborate with PIF to identify capacity gaps for advancing priority species conservation
- NRCS – JV collaboration continues to expand



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# NAWMP

## *2018 Plan Update*



- **Content:**
  - Summarize progress toward 2012 Revision goals
  - Offers further recommendations for implementing Revision
- **Status:**
  - NAWMP Committee reviewing draft update
  - Flyways, JVs, FoW2 organizations reviewing draft recommendations
- **Timeline:**
  - April: PC approval of draft & final review by Flyways & others
  - May: PC approval of final text
  - June: layout (English/French/Spanish)
  - September: Secretary/Minister signing



# Federal Duck Stamp

## Sales

- Over \$1 billion raised since 1934
- 1.5+ million 2017-2018 stamps sold to date
- No drop in sales can be attributed to the price increase that took effect with the 2015-2016 stamp

## Conservation

- 5.7+ million acres protected

## E-Stamp

- 23 states participating



*Winning art, 2017 Federal Duck Stamp Contest, by Robert Hautman*





# Federal Duck Stamp



**2018 Contest Theme:** “Celebrating Our Waterfowl Hunting Heritage”

## **2018 Events**

- Jr. Duck Stamp Contest: April 20, Bismarck, ND
- First Day of Sale: June 29, Hanover, MD  
(Bass Pro)
- Federal Contest: Sept. 14-15, Las Vegas  
(Springs Preserve)



# Personnel Updates

*Recent & Anticipated Migrations and Other News*

- Brad Bortner “flew the coop” on Dec. 31
  - Ken Richkus acting Division Chief
  - We have applied for a hiring waiver and we hope to advertise to fill this position
- Impending departures (March 31):
  - Permits Chief Jerry Thompson
  - SDJV Coordinator Tim Bowman



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# Personnel Updates

*Re-organization of Staff at Patuxent*



- Re-aligned Harvest Survey & Population & Habitat Assessment branches
- 2 new branches:
  - Monitoring & Data Management
  - Assessment & Decision Support
- Purpose:
  - Address current high-interest issues
  - Integrate major monitoring functions
- No changes in staff; some staff/functions shifted



# 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
- Recommendations for 2019-2020 season will be approved at October SRC Meeting
  - June 6: Videoconference
  - October 16-17: Face-to-face meeting in Minneapolis



# Eagle Surveys

## *2018 National Bald Eagle Nesting Population Survey*

- Update breeding population estimates for EMUs
- 19 states
- January-April 2018
- Due to weather & staffing, survey will be concluded & estimate produced in April 2019
- Will be conducted every 3 yrs





# Eagle Falconry

## *Update*

- Removal of six (6) golden eagles from the wild for falconry determined to be compatible with eagle preservation
- Eagles may come from depredation areas or permitted rehabilitators
- Flyway Council chairs asked to develop allocation process



# Double-crested cormorants

## *Environmental Assessment*

- Availability of final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact published in Federal Register Nov. 15, 2017
- Scope is to issue permits to:
  - manage cormorant damage to aquaculture facilities
  - protect human health and safety
  - protect threatened and endangered wildlife
  - alleviate property damage
- Applies to 37 states and District of Columbia



# Double-crested Cormorants

## *Environmental Assessment*

- Caps number of cormorants that can be lethally taken in each flyway annually to 51,571 total
- "Potential Biological Removal Methods" adjusted based on anticipated need & previous experience





# Double-crested cormorants

## *Current & Next Steps*

- Concerns remain about damage to free-swimming fish
  - Working to understand full scope and extent of conflict
  - Recreational and commercial fishing
- Engaging states & others to:
  - Gather available available data
  - Quantify impacts of implemented management actions
- Planning stage
  - Regional meetings (Great Lakes, Atlantic Coast, Central, Western)
  - Summer 2018
  - State fish and wildlife agencies, APHIS WS, Tribes, USGS, FWS
  - Facilitated gatherings to address specific information needs



# 10.13 List (MBTA list)

## *Update*



- Last revision was in 2013
  - Incorporated American Ornithological Society (AOS) taxonomic updates through 2010
- Current proposed revision will:
  - Increase list from 1,026 to 1,095 species
  - Include AOS taxonomic updates from 2011 to 2017
  - Recognize cackling goose as a separate species from Canada goose
- Proposing to revise final list of species not protected by MBTA to update taxonomy, remove two species, add one species



# 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 receiving additional input & guidance to incorporate M-Opinion into day-to-day activities
- ESA & BGEPA, as well as state laws and regulations, still apply to certain species

# Thank you!



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

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