



The Migratory Bird Program's Focal Species Strategy

Measuring success in achieving our existing bird conservation priorities and mandates

The USFWS's Migratory Bird Program Strategic Plan 2004-2014 "A Blueprint for the Future of Migratory Birds" describes the mandates, mission, vision and operating principles which underline the program's conservation activities. This framework and the administration of the program were subsequently evaluated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) using the Program Assessment Rating tool (PART). The PART findings suggest that the program was lacking suitable performance measures to evaluate its mandated conservation activities. In response to the PART evaluation, the Migratory Bird Program developed two outcome goals, with Long-term Outcome 1 being: *Increase the percent of species of migratory birds that are at healthy and sustainable levels.* The target for the percent increase was agreed upon to be equivalent to five species by FY2007 and another five species after each subsequent five-year increment (e.g., five more species by FY2012).

The performance emphasis on changing status requires specific accounting of our actions by the Program, so the strategy proposed to and accepted by OMB was to select focal species to represent systematic, cross-programmatic campaigns. Note that while the focal species strategy targets particular species, the overall PART Long-Term Outcome 1 also requires that the status of other species does not decline, e.g., the goal is a net increase in the percent of migratory species at healthy and sustainable levels. Thus, the efforts on focal species cannot

preempt the Strategic Plan; rather the focal species strategy is representative of the larger, ongoing Strategic Plan, specifically in the context of landscape-scale, integrated bird conservation.

Selection of focal species was undertaken by a team of representatives from across the Program. The basis for determining "healthy and sustainable," was the list of Birds of Management Concern (BMC), which was described in the Migratory Bird Strategic Plan as the Program's "priority emphasis," and reflects the results of extensive consultations with partners and processes and criteria established over many years. From the BMC list, the team identified species that are examples for at least one of the following five characteristics that represents actions of the entire Program: 1) high conservation need, 2) representative of a broader group of species sharing the same or similar conservation needs, 3) high level of current Migratory Bird Program effort, 4) potential as a unifier for partnerships, and 5) high likelihood that factors affecting status can realistically be addressed. Considering a combination of characteristics possessed by the species, status of management planning, and expert opinion, and with due consideration to external factors that might affect, either positively or negatively, the Program's ability for management, the team recommended species to represent the Program's focal species strategy, serving as performance indicators for FY2007 and FY2012 (See Table 1).

The Program is committed to launching campaigns for eight species in FY2005. Campaigns will entail:

- compilation or identification of comprehensive management/conservation documents into an Action Plan (a species-specific mix of monitoring, research, assessment, habitat, outreach, etc.) necessary to accomplish desired status;
- a clear statement of the responsibilities for actions within and outside the Program;
- a focus of Program resources on implementing those actions; and
- communications to solicit support and cooperation from partners inside and outside the Service (as stakeholder and partners assistance is in most cases fundamental for management/conservation actions to be successfully undertaken).

The intent of the focal species strategy is to allow the Program to make genuine progress on returning species to desired conditions by providing an explicit, strategic, and adaptive set of conservation actions to be implemented. Stakeholder and partner assistance is essential for creation and implementation of Action Plans and for existing work in support of maintaining or increasing the number of species of migratory birds at healthy and sustainable levels.

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Table 1. Recommended USFWS Migratory Bird Program focal species (139 species or populations)^{1,2}

Greater White-fronted Goose (Tule)	Black-capped Petrel	Marbled Godwit	Gilded Flicker
Emperor Goose	Hawaiian Petrel	Red Knot (Atlantic)	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Snow Goose (Wrangel Island)	Christmas Shearwater	Dunlin (Arctic)	Buff-breasted Flycatcher
Snow Goose (Lesser)	Townsend's Shearwater (Newell's)	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Loggerhead Shrike
Brant (Atlantic)	Audubon's Shearwater	American Woodcock	Gray Vireo
Brant (Black)	Ashy Storm-Petrel	Wilson's Phalarope	Florida Scrub-Jay
Canada Goose (Southern James Bay)	Band-rumped Storm-Petrel	Red-legged Kittiwake	Brown-headed Nuthatch
Canada Goose (N. Atlantic population)	Tristram's Storm-Petrel	Gull-billed Tern	Sedge Wren
Canada Goose (Resident populations)	Brown Pelican	Caspian Tern	Bicknell's Thrush
Cackling Goose (Cackling)	Double-crested Cormorant	Elegant Tern	Wood Thrush
Canada Goose (Dusky)	Red-faced Cormorant	Common Tern	Bendire's Thrasher
Trumpeter Swan (Interior)	Lesser Frigatebird	Arctic Tern	Sprague's Pipit
Trumpeter Swan (Rocky Mountain)	Reddish Egret	Least Tern (Interior)	Golden-winged Warbler
Wood Duck	Swallow-tailed Kite	Least Tern (California)	Blackpoll Warbler
American Wigeon	Ferruginous Hawk	Aleutian Tern	Cerulean Warbler
American Black Duck	Peregrine Falcon	Black Tern	Elfin-woods Warbler
Mallard	Yellow Rail	Blue-gray Noddy	Prothonotary Warbler
Mottled Duck	Black Rail	Marbled Murrelet	Swainson's Warbler
Northern Pintail	Clapper Rail	Kittlitz's Murrelet	Bachman's Sparrow
Greater Scaup	King Rail	Xantus's Murrelet	Grasshopper Sparrow
Lesser Scaup	Sandhill Crane	Cassin's Auklet	Baird's Sparrow
Steller's Eider	Whooping Crane	Least Auklet	Henslow's Sparrow
Spectacled Eider	American Golden-Plover	Whiskered Auklet	Le Conte's Sparrow
Common Eider (Pacific)	Snowy Plover²	White-crowned Pigeon	Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Common Eider (Atlantic)	Wilson's Plover	Band-tailed Pigeon	Seaside Sparrow
Surf Scoter	Piping Plover	Mourning Dove	Smith's Longspur
White-winged Scoter	Mountain Plover	Black-billed Cuckoo	Chestnut-collared Longspur
Black Scoter	American Oystercatcher	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	McKay's Bunting
Long-tailed Duck	Black Oystercatcher	Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl	Painted Bunting
Red-throated Loon	Black-necked Stilt (Hawaiian)	Burrowing Owl	Bobolink
Yellow-billed Loon	Upland Sandpiper	Short-eared Owl	Tricolored Blackbird
Laysan Albatross	Bristle-thighed Curlew	Northern Saw-whet Owl	Eastern Meadowlark
Black-footed Albatross	Long-billed Curlew	Red-headed Woodpecker	Rusty Blackbird
Short-tailed Albatross	Hudsonian Godwit	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Audubon's Oriole
Herald Petrel	Bar-tailed Godwit	Red-cockaded Woodpecker	

¹This list includes species (and subspecies and managed populations) of birds that fall into one or more of the following five categories of concern: 1) Endangered or Threatened under the Endangered Species Act; 2) non- game birds that have been determined to be of conservation concern due to declining populations and other factors (as published in Birds of Conservation Concern 2002; 3) game-birds that are below desired condition; 4) game-birds that are at or above desired condition; and 5) birds that are considered overabundant in part or all of their range and thus potentially damaging to natural ecosystems or human interests.

² Formatting indicates the proposed order in which species would be the subject of campaigns under the approach to satisfying

PART Long-term Goal 1. Species in shaded cells will be addressed first (beginning in FY05), followed by species in **underlined bold**, followed by species in **bold**.

² except Pacific Coast populations (Listed under ESA).