

March 2000



*North American Waterfowl
Management Plan*

*Plan nord-américain de
gestion de la sauvagine*

*Plan de Manejo de Aves
Acuáticas de Norteamérica*

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The North American Waterfowl Management Plan in Canada

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Joint Ventures

Pacific Coast

Prairie Habitat

Eastern Habitat

Arctic Goose

Black Duck

Sea Duck

***North American Bird
Conservation Initiative***

Phone: (819) 997-2392

E-mail: nawmp@ec.gc.ca

www.nawmp.ca



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Pacific Coast



David Dekosa

Consistent with the international trend, the Pacific Coast Joint Venture has been working to integrate our wetland conservation program with other bird conservation initiatives. These efforts are being pursued on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border for shorebirds, seabirds, landbirds and seaducks. This fact sheet highlights these efforts on the Canadian side.

Shorebirds – On the Pacific coast, shorebirds stage and winter using much of the same estuarine habitat as waterfowl. The PCJV has thus been providing for much of the critical shorebird habitat within its boundaries. Nevertheless, regional shorebird conservation plans are being finalized by PCJV partners in both countries. These plans identify issues, habitats and conservation actions necessary to ensure that the needs are met for all shorebirds in all stages of their life cycle. In British Columbia, the plan will be incorporated into the PCJV Implementation Plan to ensure full integration.

Project highlight – Through studies conducted by university and government researchers, in cooperation with PCJV partners and the local farming community, the importance of agricultural fields to shorebirds is becoming more clear. This work has greatly assisted wildlife agencies in working with municipal governments, agricultural agencies and the farming community on the development of

Pippa Shepherd



sustainable land-use practices, guidelines and by-laws. Although the importance of these areas to waterfowl has been widely documented, this new information has resulted in a broadening of the interest statement of PCJV partners and will be used to develop new farm stewardship initiatives focused on shorebirds.

Seabirds – The boundary of the PCJV has always included the marine environment and selected projects in the past have considered seabird colonies. The PCJV will more formally integrate the needs of seabirds into its delivery, particularly with respect to ensuring the protection of seabird colonies.

Project highlight – In B.C., PCJV partners have assisted with the development of a regional seabird conservation plan that identifies issues, habitats and conservation actions. Relevant actions identified through this plan will be incorporated into the implementation plan for B.C. In addition,



**For more
information
contact**

Trish Hayes
PCJV Coordinator
Canadian Wildlife Service
5421 Robertson Road, R.R. #1
Delta, British Columbia V4K 3N2
Phone: (604) 940-4658
Fax: (604) 946-7022
E-mail: trish.hayes@ec.gc.ca
www.nawmp.ca

funding from PCJV partners has provided opportunity to further the dialogue on the importance of issues such as climate change, oil spills and introduced predators to seabird populations.

Landbirds – The Partners in Flight program on the Pacific Coast is well underway through the Western Working Group and links to the PCJV are being forged. British Columbia is pleased to be the first Canadian region to hire a PIF coordinator. To strengthen efforts to link the implementation of the PIF program with that of the PCJV, partners helped fund the new coordinator working for Ducks Unlimited Canada out of the Canadian Wildlife Service office. This arrangement will ensure collaboration and coordination of PIF, the PCJV and the regional landbird conservation plan.

Project highlight – The landbird and PCJV programs have begun to develop joint projects in wetland and riparian areas. Research and monitoring, supported in part by the PCJV, is helping to identify needs of breeding and migrating songbirds in riparian areas. This information will be used by PCJV partners in the development of land-use and environmental assessment guidelines, best management practices and agriculture stewardship initiatives to ensure that the needs of songbirds are considered in decisions.

Seaducks – The PCJV Board has taken a keen interest in seaduck conservation,

wanting to ensure that habitat conservation needs resulting from SDJV efforts, are closely tied to the PCJV. To accomplish this, the Board has agreed that habitat conservation activities arising from the SDJV will be delivered through the PCJV. The PCJV has a representative on the SDJV Board and technical committee. The creation of the SDJV has also resulted in renewed efforts on these species along the B.C. coast. Supported in part by the PCJV, monitoring of moulting and wintering seaducks has been stepped up to provide much needed data on seaduck distribution.

Project highlight – A potential emerging issue related to seaducks in B.C. is the anticipated expansion of the mariculture industry. Mariculture operations are often located in key estuaries along the coast. Currently, PCJV partners are supporting two related initiatives to provide tools to support sustainable decisions regarding this industry. One is the preparation of provincial guidelines and the other is working with the Important Bird Areas Program and the B.C. Shellfish Growers Association to add a chapter on wildlife to their best management-practices guide.

This fact sheet outlines a few examples of how the PCJV is expanding to cooperate and integrate with other bird conservation initiatives. We will continue to explore these partnerships both at the broad landscape-planning level and at the level of individual securement, stewardship and enhancement projects.

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Prairie Habitat

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**For more
information
contact**

Deanna Knudson
PHJ V Coordinator
Canadian Wildlife Service
Room 200 – 4999-98th Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T6B 6X3
Phone: (780) 951-8652
Fax: (780) 495-2615
E-mail: deanna.knudson@ec.gc.ca
www.nawmp.ca

Habitat is our Link

This past year, the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture has been addressing the challenge of its broadened vision of prairie and parkland landscapes capable of sustaining bird populations in harmony with human use of the environment. With over 10 years of numerous conservation achievements in Prairie Canada, 1.5 million acres of important upland and associated wetlands conserved, a network of active and successful partnerships, moving towards conservation of all birds and their habitats is a natural progression. But not an easy one! How do we move forward without compromising our original waterfowl efforts?

The answer is in the habitat itself. It is our common link between waterfowl, shorebirds, landbirds and colonial waterbirds in Prairie Canada—indeed, the entire Prairie Pothole Region of North America. Understanding the habitat requirements of each bird group becomes an important first step. The Prairie Canada Shorebird Conservation Plan will be finalized in April. The conservation plans for landbirds and colonial waterbirds are well underway. Partners are eager to overlay these new plans with our refined waterfowl conservation plan to develop a comprehensive habitat map for Prairie Canada. This will be an important step towards comprehensive ecosystem management.

Joining up with the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, we are erasing our borders to influence a limited geographic area based on the ecological qualities of the habitat rather than political boundaries. The Coteau Grasslands Initiative will test our broadened approach in an area with compelling features and unique opportunities. The extensive grasslands, interspersed with millions of glacial-formed potholes, provide critical breeding and migration habitat for all prairie birds. Despite our successful conservation efforts to date, large tracts of prairie grasslands are becoming fragments or disappearing altogether. Arresting and hopefully reversing this loss will benefit many declining species, including the northern pintail, long-billed curlew and Sprague's pipit, and the overall health of the prairie

ecosystem. Our first formal joint meeting last December began the process of piecing together the science needs for all bird groups, examining the social, environmental and economic issues, exploring new approaches on the landscape and new partnerships.

Many interesting challenges are springing up as we move forward, but the dedication to achieve conservation of all birds coupled with the prairie habitat vision as our common link will ultimately lead to fulfillment of our conservation goals.

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Stewardship programs within the EHJV are fundamental tools for wetland and wildlife habitat protection and conservation. These programs develop good land-use ethics and sustainable land-use practices across landscapes. Ranging from single agreements covering several acres to hundreds of thousands of acres, programs involve both private landowners and multinational corporations. Some of these stewardship programs include:

Municipal agreements were initiated by the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador with the signing of the first Canadian Municipal Stewardship Agreement between the province and the town of Whitbourne. Under the Province's new Municipal Government Act, municipalities, through planning strategies and bylaws, control land use and development within their jurisdictions. A Municipal Stewardship Agreement is a binding agreement wherein the municipality pledges to be a good natural resource steward. Other provinces are in the process of adopting municipal stewardship programs.

Corporate stewardship programs are a quick and efficient method for protecting large tracts of land under corporate ownership. The first corporate stewardship agreement for wetland conservation in Canada was signed between the Province of Nova Scotia and Bowater Mersey Paper Company Ltd. Under this agreement the EHJV inventoried and developed wetland



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management plans for the paper company's holdings. More recent corporate programs include the Ontario Riparian Management Initiative directed towards beaver habitat maintenance and protection.

Community involvement is integral to successful stewardship programs. New Brunswick has several community-based stewardship initiatives, including the Hampton-Kennebecasis Marsh project, where the community is involved in project development and implementation.

Agricultural stewardship programs that encourage wildlife-friendly farming practices and benefit farm operations, are very active and successful throughout the EHJV. Prince Edward Island has led this initiative with well-received riparian, soil conservation and alternate watering projects. Other programs, such as Ontario Land CARE and the Ontario Wetland Habitat Fund, are being

Eastern Habitat



For more
information
contact

Reg Melanson
EHJV Coordinator
Canadian Wildlife Service
17 Waterfowl Lane
Sackville, New Brunswick E4L 1G6
Phone: (506) 364-5036
Fax: (506) 364-5062
E-mail: reginald.melanson@ec.gc.ca
www.nawmp.ca

enthusiastically adopted by the agricultural community. These programs provide staff to work with landowners on project implementation as well as to assist in the development of management plans tailored to their farm. The work done on the land is promoted through literature and group tours to foster the implementation of these sustainable practices by other landowners.

Extension programs are increasingly important to raise landowner awareness of sustainable land-use practices. These programs promote conservation ethics in communities and across landscapes. Québec is developing an educational and promotional program encouraging farmers to include wildlife habitat conservation on their farms and in their land-management plans.

Coastal habitats (salt marshes, eel grass beds, mud flats, etc.) are critical to migrating, breeding and wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Many of these coastal systems have been lost or degraded due to human impacts. Without local government and landowner support, many wetlands will continue to be lost. Coastal initiatives are now being developed by the EHJV partners. The Newfoundland Coastal and New Brunswick Southeastern Coastal Project are two currently being implemented.

The long-term protection and maintenance of wetlands and waterfowl populations depends on effective conservation efforts throughout North America. The best way of accomplishing this is to promote the participation of the local residents in the use and protection of their resource.

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Arctic Goose



**For more
information
contact**

Deanna Knudson
AGJV Coordinator
Canadian Wildlife Service
Room 200 – 4999-98th Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T6B 6X3
Phone: (780) 951-8652
Fax: (780) 495-2615
E-mail: deanna.knudson@ec.gc.ca
www.nawmp.ca

D. Kellett, Canadian Wildlife Service



The overabundant snow goose issue has been causing much concern in the conservation community over the past few years. Scientists and wildlife managers have been exhaustive in their efforts to examine all information and explore all options for arresting the rapid rise in some white goose populations and the subsequent destruction of fragile habitats in the Arctic. International Arctic Goose Joint Venture partners have been instrumental in setting

into place conservation measures, special seasons and hunting regulations to address this critical issue. The table on the next page details the results of the first year these measures were introduced. The significant increases in harvest in this trial year provide a measure of confidence to our Arctic Goose Joint Venture partners that traditional conservation measures will work.

G.W. Beyersbergen, Canadian Wildlife Service

1998/1999 Light Goose Harvests (Lesser & Greater Snow and Ross' Geese)

Arctic Goose

JURISDICTION	REGULAR	% of Total Flyway Harvest	SPECIAL HARVEST PROVISIONS			% of Total Flyway Harvest	Total
	SEASON* (w/o sp. prov.)		Regular Season*	Conservation Order**	Subtotal		
CENTRAL FLYWAY STATES & PROVINCES WITH LIGHT GOOSE HUNTING							
Montana	1,488		na	na	na		1,488
New Mexico	10,072		na	na	na		10,072
Wyoming	1,711		na	na	na		1,711
Kansas	7,410		5,746	na	5,746		13,156
Nebraska	3,114		18,425	na	18,425		21,539
North Dakota	73,355		na	24,890	24,890		98,245
Oklahoma	5,185		na	6,650	6,650		11,835
Texas	163,866		na	53,541	53,451		217,317
Colorado	11,489		7,502	13,417	20,919		32,408
South Dakota	10,049		7,796	39,339	47,135		57,184
Saskatchewan	92,071		na	na	na		92,071
CENTRAL FLYWAY	379,810	68%	39,469	137,837	177,216	32%	557,026
MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY STATES & PROVINCES WITH LIGHT GOOSE HUNTING							
Minnesota	2,196		na	na	na		2,196
Wisconsin	433		na	na	na		433
Louisiana	194,136		na	155,900	155,900		350,036
Iowa	13,001		2,831	12,043	14,874		27,875
Illinois	2,582		369	2,504	2,873		5,455
Missouri	42,285		40,085	17,319	57,404		99,689
Arkansas	90,892		13,817	17,168	30,985		121,877
Manitoba***	55,594		na	563	563		46,157
MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY	401,119	60%	57,102	205,497	262,599	40%	663,718
ATLANTIC FLYWAY STATES & PROVINCES WITH LIGHT GOOSE HUNTING							
Connecticut	107		na	na	na		107
Delaware	47,167		na	na	na		47,167
Maine	494		na	na	na		494
Maryland	20,146		na	na	na		20,146
Massachusetts	58		na	na	na		58
New Jersey	14,645		na	na	na		14,645
New York	2,242		na	na	na		2,242
North Carolina	7,834		na	na	na		7,834
Pennsylvania	13,611		na	na	na		13,611
Rhode Island	26		na	na	na		26
South Carolina	425		na	na	na		425
Vermont	3,323		na	na	na		3,323
Virginia	812		na	na	na		812
Québec	103,781		na	44,171	44,171		147,952
ATLANTIC FLYWAY****	214,671	83%	0	44,171	44,171	17%	258,842
TOTAL FLYWAYS*****	903,529	67%	96,571	387,505	483,986	33%	1,479,586

* U.S. Federal Harvest Survey Estimates

** State Harvest Survey Estimates

*** Harvest of Ross' Geese Not Permitted

**** Regular Season Harvest (without special measures) is 85% Greater Snow Geese

***** Total represents Flyways (States/Provinces) involved in additional harvest initiatives in 1998/99

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Canadian *HabitatMatters* Black Duck

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Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Black Duck

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Springtime in Eastern Canada means it's time to survey black duck breeding grounds again. In an effort to provide statistically reliable indices of population trends and relative densities of black ducks and other waterfowl, the Black Duck Joint Venture survey program consists of regional helicopter plot surveys as well as range-wide fixed-wing surveys.

Regional Estimates

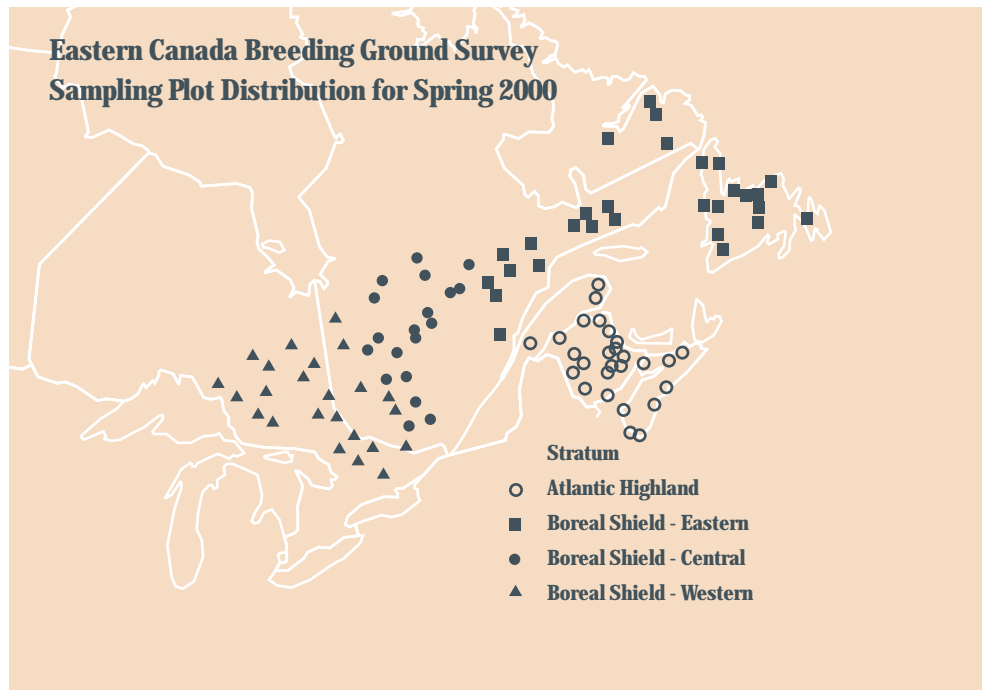
During the first few weeks of May, the Canadian Wildlife Service conducts helicopter surveys of 25-square-kilometer plots across Ontario, Québec and the Atlantic provinces to assess changes in regional densities that relate

to various habitat characteristics. In 1996, the helicopter plot survey was re-designed to increase its representativeness by increasing dispersion of plots throughout waterfowl habitats. The revised survey is based on a rotating sample from a total of 302 plots (5 kilometer by 5 kilometer). The yearly distribution of plots is as follows: Stratum 1 = Atlantic Highlands (39 plots); Stratum 2 = Eastern Boreal Shield (40 plots); Stratum 3 = Central Boreal Shield (40 plots) and Stratum 4 = Western Boreal Shield (32 plots). See Figure on next page.



For more
information
contact

Brigitte Collins
BDJV Coordinator
Canadian Wildlife Service
49 Camelot Drive
Nepean, Ontario, K1A 0H3
Phone: (613) 952-2408
Fax (613) 952-9027
E-mail: brigitte.collins@ec.gc.ca
www.nawmp.ca



Range-Wide Estimates

Also in May, four U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service crews will be conducting the fixed-wing transect survey of strata 50 through to 69 to obtain a range-wide population index. This spring marks the second year of georeferencing all waterfowl observations via on-board global positioning systems. Helicopter surveys of selected transect segments in Stratum 51 will be undertaken to develop a visibility correction factor for the fixed-wing data.

In 1999, the combined data from all strata and transects indicated a general increase in black duck numbers across Eastern Canada. The Black Duck Joint Venture Technical Committee is hopeful that this trend will continue.

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Sea Duck

Gaining Momentum

Building the partnerships and designing the organizational structure for a joint venture is a time-consuming process, but one that is essential to its success. The Sea Duck Joint Venture is now able to turn its efforts from organization to operations.

A management board is in place with its third meeting scheduled for March 23, 2000. A Continental Technical Team has been appointed, held a three day workshop and is completing species status reports, a draft strategic plan and an information needs document for management board review. A communications plan and draft funding strategy are also high on the board's agenda.

The 2000 field season will include several research and survey projects aimed at filling key information gaps in the population delineation, population trends and ecology of sea ducks. The State of Alaska will continue to implant radio satellite transmitters in surf and white-winged scoters in Prince William Sound in April to determine range and breeding grounds. Late winter harlequin surveys will be conducted to monitor recovery from the Exxon Valdez spill. Aerial and boat surveys will be conducted in Kachemak Bay, similar to 1994 and 1999, to provide trend data. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and other agencies, will continue to survey molting



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oldsquaw sites to assess potential impacts of near-shore oil development. Annual aerial surveys of spectacled and king eider will be conducted on the Arctic Coastal Plain as well as a new initiative to develop an operational breeding survey for scoters and other late nesters in the Alaskan interior.

In the Pacific Region of Canada, the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) has been investigating the breeding ecology of Barrow's goldeneye and bufflehead in interior British Columbia and the winter/molt ecology of harlequins in the Strait of Georgia since 1995. In conjunction with students at Simon Fraser University, CWS is also investigating various aspects of population demographics on these species. Large-scale aerial and ground surveys of seaducks are also being conducted on the east and west coasts of Vancouver Island. Recently an aerial census of molting seaducks along the entire coastline of B.C.



**For more
information
contact**

Keith McAloney
Canadian Wildlife Service
17 Waterfowl Lane
Sackville, New Brunswick, E4L 1G6
Phone: (506) 364-5013
Fax: (506) 364-5062
E-mail: keith.mcaloney@ec.gc.ca
www.nawmp.ca

was completed. Finally, CWS is capturing surf scoters in the Strait of Georgia to investigate toxics levels and to monitor movements and habitat use.

In the western Canadian Arctic, CWS, the USFWS and USGS will continue to work on king eider, including satellite radio telemetry to determine molt and wintering areas, continuation of the breeding ecology and survival study at Karrak Lake and population delineation using genetic techniques. Feasibility of conducting a breeding ecology and survival study of Pacific common eider will be assessed at Bathurst Inlet in the central Arctic.

On the Atlantic Coast, the USFWS and USGS are cooperating on a winter ecology study of sea ducks in Chesapeake Bay and will use radio satellite telemetry to track male black scoters from the wintering area to their breeding and molting sites. The winter sea duck survey was conducted from Nova Scotia to Georgia to provide trend data and work continues on Isle Haute, Maine, to band, color mark and record previously marked harlequins during winter. Additionally, CWS has started color marking projects of wintering harlequins in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and will be observing known molting areas this summer to record these and Maine-banded birds. Extensive surveys of southern common eider nesting colonies in Labrador are planned for July. The Province of Nova Scotia will continue to band nesting female and molting male

common eider along the eastern shore. In Québec Region, CWS will start a breeding ecology study of Barrow's goldeneye and band females on their molting sites. Breeding harlequin surveys will be flown on the rivers of the lower north shore and ground surveys will be conducted at previously identified scoter molting areas along the St. Lawrence. In the eastern Canadian Arctic, three CWS regions along with aboriginal and NGO partners, are planning to repeat northern common eider breeding colony surveys last done in the mid 1980's to determine changes in numbers and distribution. Cooperative radio telemetry projects are planned with Greenland to determine the extent of common eider exchange between the two countries. Work continues into the effects of heavy metals on arctic nesting eiders where cadmium levels in common and king eiders are among the highest ever recorded for sea ducks. A long-term research project has been initiated to collect information on adult survival and reproduction of eiders at Southampton Island, Nunavut.

The formation of the Sea Duck Joint Venture marks the beginning of exciting times for sea duck research and management across the continent.

Sea Duck

Canadian *HabitatMatters* North American Bird Conservation Initiatives

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NABCI



The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) concept has been embraced by wildlife directors and ministers in the federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada. Stemming from this government endorsement, NABCI in Canada will be administered through a national council that evolved from the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada). In addition to governments, members represent the four main bird initiatives (North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), Partners in Flight-Canada (PIF), Canadian Shorebird

Conservation Plan (CSCP), and Wings Over Water (Seabird/Colonial Waterbird Conservation Plan), and the three existing habitat Joint Ventures. The council is currently open to representation from key non-government organizations, including Ducks Unlimited Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Bird Studies Canada, the Canadian Nature Federation, Wetlands International and the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Efforts to include important groups (such as aboriginal peoples) not currently among the membership are ongoing.



**For more
information
contact**

Secretariat
NABCI / NAWCC Canada Council (NNCC)
Suite 200, 1750 Courtwood Crescent
Ottawa, ON
K2C 2B5
Phone: (613) 228-2601
Fax: (613) 228-0206
Email: nawcc@igs.net
www.nawmp.ca

The challenge for the existing bird conservation initiatives will be to integrate their efforts for greater efficiency and effectiveness, and to embark on conservation action plans that embrace the ecoregional approach of NABCI. To assist conservation planning, ecoregions (known as Bird Conservation Regions) will be described in a joint Canada/U.S. publication to be prepared in 2000. Implementation of NABCI is expected to occur through joint venture partnerships based on the successful model of the NAWMP joint ventures. Existing joint ventures may expand their partnerships and geographic scope to deliver conservation of all bird species, and new joint ventures may form in areas not covered by these partnerships.

In the near-term, NABCI in Canada needs to build a network of partners and ensure that these can deliver programs for all groups of birds. Discussions underway could lead to one or more cross-border NABCI joint ventures. The development of this first phase of NABCI depends on establishing conservation priorities and new funding to support the initiative. The tremendous support behind this new approach to bird conservation in Canada bodes well for its success in coming years.

NABCI