



*North American Waterfowl  
Management Plan*

*Plan nord-américain de  
gestion de la sauvagine*

*Plan de Manejo de Aves  
Acuáticas de Norteamérica*

## **North American Waterfowl Management Plan 2011/12 Plan Revision**

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP or Plan), first signed in 1986, has remained a leading model for other international conservation plans. In large measure, this is because it is a living and evolving document that is updated periodically with engagement of the broad waterfowl conservation community. This important work is underway again with a target date of January 1, 2012 for completion.

Today we face greater pressures on waterfowl populations and habitat than ever before, including expanding human populations; increased urbanization; global demands for food, energy and fresh water; and climate change. It is urgent, given these challenges, that waterfowl managers review and re-establish their fundamental conservation goals – something that has not been done in a quarter-century. This is our opportunity to provide the framework for a more coherent waterfowl management system that will enable us to achieve essential conservation goals.

The Plan Committee is committed to accomplishing this revision in a timely manner while using a measured process to ensure that we do not sacrifice stakeholder consultation in this important undertaking. In March 2009, the Plan Committee formed the NAWMP Revision Steering Committee to serve as a focal point for gathering, vetting and synthesizing ideas from the waterfowl management community and to advise the Plan Committee on the content of the Plan Revision. As a first step in meeting that charge, the Steering Committee prepared a scoping report for the Plan Committee's consideration. At its August 26, 2009 meeting, the Plan Committee reviewed the Scoping Report and committed to engaging stakeholders in generating initial fundamental goals for the Revision using a facilitated process to ensure consistency in approach across stakeholder groups.

### ***Why Change? Why Now?***

#### *We need to*

- Address the environmental challenges of our time
- Harness recent advancements in science and public policy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our conservation actions
- Improve the allocation of resources within the waterfowl management enterprise
- Be more accountable and responsive to the values and goals that are important to stakeholders and funders
- Contribute to advancements in wildlife management in North America

Addressing the above needs will require greater clarity on the fundamental objectives of waterfowl management, a thoughtful plan for achieving those objectives, and adjustments to the waterfowl management system so that stakeholders are working together towards common goals.

## ***An Expanded Purpose***

In 2004, the Plan community agreed to the following over-arching statement:

*The purpose of the Plan is to sustain abundant waterfowl populations by conserving landscapes, through partnerships that are guided by sound science.*

Abundant waterfowl populations were thus described as the Plan's ultimate goal, to be accomplished through science-based habitat conservation. In the 2011/12 Plan Revision, a more inclusive purpose for waterfowl conservation will reflect the broad range of fundamental goals of Plan stakeholders. In the interim, the Plan Committee proposes the following expanded purpose statement, which we believe is consistent with the intent of the original 1986 Plan (i.e. achieving waterfowl population goals to meet public demand)

*The purpose of the Plan is to sustain abundant waterfowl populations while preserving the traditions of wildfowling and achieving broad benefits to biodiversity, ecosystem processes and the people of North America. Plan goals will be accomplished by partnerships that conserve habitats and sustain populations, guided by sound science.*

## ***A Vision for Integrated Waterfowl Management***

This revision of the Plan will seek to implement **a unified system of waterfowl conservation** that features explicit and coherent objectives to guide habitat and harvest programs, and the means for coordinated actions to realize those objectives. Such a management system would feature:

1. a set of widely supported fundamental goals for waterfowl conservation that clearly reflect stakeholder values;
2. a decision framework that allows managers to understand and balance tradeoffs among these multiple fundamental goals; and
3. managers using that decision framework to efficiently allocate resources to achieve those goals.

Derived from those broad fundamental goals and underpinning such a system would be:

- Population objectives that are attainable and will satisfy hunters and other stakeholders.
- Habitat objectives that support the population sizes and stakeholder experiences we desire, along with other ecological values from conserved habitat.
- Levels of public participation and satisfaction that will sustain societal support for habitats, populations, and conservation activities at desired levels.

The decisions supported by this framework would guide allocation of human and financial resources for the attainment of agreed-upon goals. Such decisions would be made at multiple scales – local, regional, state/provincial, national and international. Developing the means to inform such decisions at all these levels will take time and both technical and administrative support. Full realization of this ambitious vision cannot be fully accomplished during this Plan Revision. We can, however, make important strides in this direction, and we recommend, therefore, that Plan partners commit to the following:

## ***Desired Outcomes for the 2011/12 Revision***

1. Achieve broad consensus on the fundamental goals of waterfowl conservation.
2. Reach collective agreement on the desired future state of waterfowl management, including clearly articulated objectives and a general integrated framework for making population, habitat, harvest, and hunter management decisions.
3. Create the momentum needed to finalize and implement the decision framework by developing an informed estimate of the timeline, resources, and institutional support needed for completion.
4. Review progress made on the recommendations presented in the 2007 NAWMP Continental Assessment and define actions needed to further advance any recommendations that remain of high priority.

## ***Process***

A critical step for the 2011/12 Plan Revision is to achieve consensus about the fundamental goals of waterfowl management: ***At the highest level, what does the waterfowl conservation community want to achieve for waterfowl populations, habitats, and people?*** To achieve broad consensus, a fundamentally different approach to the consultation process than has been used in past updates (in which writing teams produced drafts for peer review) will be followed. This process will be iterative, highly transparent, and well documented. It will include an essential array of waterfowl conservation stakeholders (e.g., flyway councils, joint ventures, and many others). It will draw upon well-developed decision processes that allow stakeholders to collectively identify and clarify fundamental goals and available management actions at the highest strategic level. This process should result in broadly supported goals for waterfowl management that lead to development of an effective suite of integrated conservation actions for achieving those goals.

This process will be multi-staged, beginning with a series of 8-hour workshops to elicit goals and objectives for waterfowl management and to identify broad-scale alternative strategies for achieving objectives. The Revision Steering Committee will then be responsible for synthesizing workshop results, drawing on technical resources as needed. The synthesis will include a proposed objectives hierarchy, initial prototype model(s), and a decision framework that can predict the consequences of alternative actions and help to identify and evaluate tradeoffs in pursuing multiple objectives. This product will be distributed to the waterfowl conservation community and serve as the foundation for a second round of consultation workshops. Results of the second round will be used to guide preparation of the first draft of the Plan Revision document.

## ***You Are Invited:***

Waterfowl managers, technicians, and administrators are encouraged to participate in one of the workshops scheduled for early 2010. A list of dates and locations, along with other background and logistical information, will be made available on the NAWMP Revision webpage:

[www.nawmprevision.org](http://www.nawmprevision.org)

