

2018 NAWMP UPDATE: ASSESSMENT/IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

DATE: 06/16/2017

PREPARED BY: David Fulton, Kristina Slagle, & Andy Raedeke

TITLE OF ACTIVITY: NAWMP Bird Watcher Survey

Overview of purpose/issue: The purpose of the NAWMP birdwatcher survey included: 1) identifying the key attributes important to birding experiences; 2) assessing the knowledge, preferences, levels of use and support for waterfowl and wetlands conservation; 3) assessing importance of ecological goods and services provided by wetlands; 4) assessing decisions to participate in birdwatching and level of identity as birdwatcher, hunter and conservationist; and 5) examining the social, political, economic and human capital capacity for conserving waterfowl and wetlands.

Summary of Key Results:

- Total of 33,071 completed surveys from bird watchers in 49 states (25% response rate)
- Respondents tended to be older (60), white, 55% female, highly educated and took trips away from home specifically to watch birds (75%).
- High levels of participation in non-motorized, non-hunting nature-based activities
- Most (70%) strongly or very strongly identified as birdwatchers and conservationists but not as hunters (<15%)
- Travel distance, chance to see rare/unusual species, and degree of naturalness, and wetlands are important to birdwatching choices, with large increases in utility for traveling <100 miles, a chance to see rare species, and visiting natural areas with waterfowl/wetland bird species.
- Relatively high levels of trust for birding and conservation organizations and university researchers, with lower trust for state and federal agencies and waterfowl hunting/cons. organizations
- Low involvement in organizations and conservation activities, but more than a third donated money to bird and wetland conservation
- Concern for losing wetland benefits with most concern for losing wildlife habitat and clean water and lower concerns about losing hunting

Initial implications for the 2018 Update:

- Survey results provide clues about the size of population and distribution/amount of habitat needed to provide desired viewing experiences.
 - Having places to view birds in close proximity is important
 - The overall size of the waterfowl populations may be less important to viewers than to hunters.
- We can now populate conceptual participation models pertaining to recruitment (decisions to bird watch), retention (identity formation), and support (conservation contributions) and data to help set viewer objectives and complete GAP analysis to identify limiting factors.
- The average age of bird watchers suggests that we may need to pay even more attention to this group than hunters.