

North American Waterfowl Professional Plan (NAWPEP) Progress Summary

Reporting period: July 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021

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The Steering Committee of NAWPEP works to advance recommendation #7 of North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) 2018 Update: “Bolster training programs for future waterfowl management professionals.” The goal of NAWPEP is to: *Engage and assist universities, colleges, and all NAWMP partners with establishing, sustaining, and enhancing academic and experiential programs in waterfowl science and management, in order that sufficient numbers of professionals representing human diversity from across North America are supported, available, and employed to sustain professional capacity and excellence of future waterfowl science and management.* Specific objectives of NAWPEP and the current membership of the steering committee are presented in the [NAWPEP Strategic Plan](#).

The following summarizes actions of the steering committee related to its planning and operation:

- Steering Committee met quarterly by Zoom, 9 July 2020, 23 October 2020, 4 February 2021, 27 April 2021, 27 July 2021; and held a special meeting on 8 June 2021
- Developed [NAWPEP Strategic Plan](#)
 - Solicited, received, and incorporated input from stakeholders and partners
 - Presented final draft to NAWMP Committee
 - Plan Committee endorsed strategic plan
 - Distributed final strategic plan and made available online: [NAWPEP Strategic Plan](#)
 - Developed work plan and priorities
- Developed [Terms of Reference](#) for Steering Committee, which described member responsibilities and elements of committee operation
- Sent survey to university waterfowl faculty to get feedback on strategic plan and suggestions for how NAWPEP can help them

The following reports progress toward the objectives of the strategic plan:

Objective 1: Obtain information on academic and practical credentials perceived necessary by waterfowl professionals for success in the profession.

- Prepared, distributed and posted [Waterfowl Professionals Credentials](#), a summary of professional qualifications and attributes desired by hiring agencies and organizations, based on Hernandez-Rubio (Clemson Univ.) [dissertation](#)
- Provided Zoom seminar to steering committee by Hernandez-Rubio on dissertation results

Objective 2: Determine numbers of graduates with baccalaureate and post-graduate degrees required to fill anticipated employment needs related to waterfowl science and management in 2025. Thereafter, subsequent projections will be updated on 5-year intervals.

- Developed and implemented a survey of public and private-sector employers to assess current and future personnel needs

- Results will be available by end of 2021
- Distributed and made available report, [Estimates of Waterfowl and Wetland Professionals Trained in University Waterfowl Programs 1980-2020](#)
 - Surveyed current and retired university professors to assess the annual graduation rate of students (supply) who acquired waterfowl-wetland positions

Objective 3: In collaboration with universities/colleges, agencies, and other NAWMP partners, and the larger natural resources conservation profession, engage with and implement efforts to train, recruit, and hire an inclusively diverse group of North Americans working in waterfowl science and management programs in all of the administrative Flyways by 2025.

- Explored diversity and inclusion efforts of agencies and organizations (e.g., AFWA Relevancy Roadmap, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission)
 - Held special steering committee meeting on this topic, 8 June 2021
- Discussed how to connect with other efforts, remove barriers and better recruit nontraditional students
- Interacted with National Association of University Fish and Wildlife Programs and The Wildlife Society to learn of their efforts to improve diversity and inclusion
- Contacted National Program Coordinator for Direct Hire Authority for the Department of Interior to connect with minorities who may be interested in university education or careers related to waterfowl and wetlands

Objective 4: Promote and facilitate institutional educational and skills capacity to meet projected needs per Objectives 2 and 3.

- Began compiling inventory of fellowships, internships, etc. to help identify gaps and needs
- Met with and advised university department staff potentially interested in endowed chairs
- Sent summary of desired qualifications and attributes of waterfowl professionals to faculty list
- Establishing a memorandum of understanding between Clemson University and Ducks Unlimited-Mexico (DUMAC) to offer a course in Spanish to DUMAC and other Latin American professionals
 - Clemson University currently offers this online course, WATERFOWL ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT, taught by Drs. Rick Kaminski and Lauren Hernandez-Rubio
- Planned NAWMP webinar to promote awareness and expansion of university-based hunting R3 efforts, with a focus on promoting diversity and inclusion (also for Objective 3)
- Communicated findings and progress to the waterfowl and wetland management community via the NAWMP Committee and its working groups, AFWA's Waterfowl Working Group, flyways, and faculty
- Prepared and submitted short article describing NAWPEP to The Wildlife Professional, a publication of The Wildlife Society
- Conducted survey of university waterfowl faculty seeking input on barriers, opportunities, specific actions, and communication needs related to NAWPEP
 - Results will be summarized by end of 2021