

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

BLM STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION

A Commitment to Migratory Bird Conservation as Part of
BLM's Multiple-use Mission

4/16/2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose.....	2
Background.....	2
Mission.....	3
Context for the BLM.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Definitions.....	5
Emphasis Areas and Goals.....	8
EMPHASIS AREA 1: Migratory Birds in NEPA Documentation and Planning.....	8
EMPHASIS AREA 2: Migratory Bird Conservation Measures.....	10
EMPHASIS AREA 3: Habitat Management.....	11
EMPHASIS AREA 4: Coordinated Inventory and Monitoring.....	12
EMPHASIS AREA 5: Education/Outreach.....	12
EMPHASIS AREA 6: Reports and Milestones.....	15
EMPHASIS AREA 7: Internal/External Coordination.....	15
EMPHASIS AREA 8: Partnerships/Data and Information Sharing.....	15
EMPHASIS AREA 9: Research and Science Related to Migratory Birds and Their Habitat.....	16
EMPHASIS AREA 10: Migratory Bird Take Permit Compliance and Monitoring.....	17
APPENDICIES	

BLM STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR

MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION

Purpose

On April 12, 2010, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the purpose of strengthening the conservation of migratory birds (see Appendix A). The MOU is a requirement of compliance with Executive Order (EO) 13186 - Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds. The two agencies discussed various ways to implement the MOU during the drafting of the MOU. Both agencies consulted past and present BLM employees, other personnel from agencies with signed MOUs, and past BLM bird conservation strategy documents. The USFWS and the BLM thereupon agreed that a migratory bird Strategic Plan would be the most useful tool for implementing the MOU between the two agencies. In the MOU, the BLM agreed to finalize and implement a Migratory Bird Conservation Strategic Plan within two years of signing the MOU. At the same time, the USFWS agreed to finalize raptor conservation measures. Both of these conservation measures will help the BLM implement the MOU.

Past and current BLM planning efforts, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses, BLM conservation policies, and education and outreach activities have addressed migratory birds. However, the need for consistency across the agency necessitated the creation of a single guiding document that allows uniformity for the BLM to 1) define and direct its compliance with EO 13186, and 2) demonstrate the agency's commitment to migratory bird conservation as part of its multiple-use mission.

This Strategic Plan further defines the BLM's responsibilities and provides guidance to strengthen migratory bird conservation, comply with the EO and address each element agreed upon by the BLM with the USFWS in the MOU.

Background

Migratory birds have enjoyed special legal protection nationally and internationally for more than 90 years. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended, identifies prohibited acts and protected species along with regulations on how take of certain migratory birds is permitted. Public enjoyment of migratory birds commands a multi-million dollar value in the United States (U.S.) alone. The 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (<http://www.doi.gov/news/pressreleases/upload/FWS-National-Preliminary-Report-2011.pdf>) reports that hunting in the U.S. accounted for \$34 billion spent by 13.7 million hunters in that year. Migratory

bird hunters made up 2.6 million of these hunters. Wildlife watching by 71.8 million people, 46.7 million of whom were bird watchers, contributed to \$55 billion of expenditures in the U.S. economy.

The BLM, a sister agency of the lead trust agency for migratory birds, the USFWS, manages more habitat, more than 245 million acres, than any other agency. Because the BLM manages more migratory bird habitat than any other Federal agency, the BLM has recognized and taken up migratory bird responsibilities in land use plans, and when performing project specific environmental reviews as required by the NEPA of 1969. Land use plans that cover areas with concentrations of raptor and waterfowl habitat have most often addressed migratory birds. More recently, plans with managed riparian areas and aspen stands have addressed migratory song birds and their habitat. And finally, upland migratory non-game birds in arid habitats such as sage-brush, have been in some planning documents identified as part of the affected environment. Migratory birds, however, often travel great distances and cover large landscapes to complete lifecycle needs. To more completely address the migratory bird conservation needs, the BLM Strategic Plan and policy supporting it must be consistent across the landscape.

The EO 13186 (Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds), signed in January 2001(<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2001-01-17/pdf/01-1387.pdf>), sets forth actions for Federal agencies to advance consistent treatment of migratory birds and their habitats on BLM lands and during BLM permitted activities. This Strategic Plan includes emphasis areas, goals, and activities to achieve consistent treatment of migratory birds. While the plan calls for no additional funding, it may be used to support current and future activities and justify additional funding.

Partnerships in migratory bird conservation have a rich heritage in the U.S. This Strategic Plan will guide the BLM to strengthen existing partnerships, foster new partnerships, and leverage existing dollars for conserving migratory birds through public lands management. The ultimate goal of the Strategic Plan is consistent guidance to address regulatory responsibilities, strengthen migratory bird conservation, and optimize the enjoyment and economic benefits of migratory birds for the American people.

BLM Mission

The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Context for the BLM

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) (<http://www.blm.gov/flpma/FLPMA.pdf>) mandates that the BLM manage “public lands in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric water resources, and archeological values; that, where appropriate, [the BLM] will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; [and] that [the BLM] will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife ...” In addition, FLPMA directs the BLM to establish goals and objectives as guidelines for public land use planning “on the basis of sustained yield unless otherwise specified by law.” With specific regard to migratory birds, FLPMA states, “Nothing in this Act shall

modify or change any provision of Federal law relating to migratory birds or to endangered or threatened species.”

Nine years later, in 1985, the BLM policy, through the National Strategy Plan Series *Fish and Wildlife 2000* established goals and focus on waterfowl habitat, raptor habitat, and upland game birds, including migratory upland game birds. Strategies supporting these goals followed responsibilities from FLPMA (“provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife” and “sustained yield”) and MBTA. In addition, a multi-agency partnership formed in 1990, Partners In Flight, addresses non-game migratory land bird conservation (<http://www.partnersinflight.org/>). In 1992, the BLM developed a non-game migratory land bird conservation strategy; however, to this date, BLM manual policy has not been updated to incorporate the strategy.

Currently, the BLM has not developed a management strategy for migratory birds. Individual BLM field offices have analyzed impacts to migratory birds in NEPA documents, conducted migratory bird research and monitoring, and undertaken outreach and education for the public about migratory birds.

Over the last 20 years, the USFWS has led bird conservation efforts in addressing migratory birds in the following major groups of interest to the BLM:

- North American Waterfowl Management Plan (<http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/NAWMP/index.shtm>)
- U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (<http://www.fws.gov/shorebirdplan/>)
- North American Waterbird Conservation Plan / Waterbird Conservation for the Americans (<http://www.waterbirdconservation.org/nawcp.html>)
- Partners In Flight North American Landbird Conservation Plan (http://www.partnersinflight.org/cont_plan/)
- Seabird Conservation Plan: Pacific Region (<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/migratorybirds/PDF/Seabird%20Conservation%20Plan%20Complete.pdf>)

The EO 13186 refers to these conservation plans as migratory bird conservation plans to be addressed as appropriate in complying with the EO promoting programs and recommendations of comprehensive migratory bird planning efforts such as Partners-in-Flight, U.S. National Shorebird Plan, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, North American Colonial Waterbird Plan, and other planning efforts.

To ensure compliance with EO 13186, the BLM issued an interim instruction memorandum (IM) that outlined policy related to NEPA, planning, and conservation related to migratory birds (IM 2008-50 Migratory Bird Treaty Act – Interim Management Guidance). The IM was policy until the BLM signed the MOU with the USFWS on April 12, 2010.

Acknowledgements

Migratory bird conservation over many years has always been most successful through partnerships, teamwork, and collaboration. The MOU speaks to partnerships and collaboration. Teamwork has been and will be critical to wildlife (including migratory birds) conservation in the BLM and across the

American landscape. This Strategic Plan would not have been possible without the inspiration and valuable input from a small team of BLM personnel that includes:

Cara Staab, BLM Alaska State Office
Barbara Bresson, (BLM/FS) Hood National Forest, Oregon
James Weigand, BLM California State Office
Elroy Masters, BLM Arizona State Office
Marcia Radke, AZ BLM, San Pedro Office
Katie Benzel, MT BLM, Dillon Field Office
Lisa Belmonte, CO BLM, White River Field Office
Carrie Hugo, ID BLM, Couer D'lene Field Office
Gail Martinez, formerly CO BLM, presently Athen, GA FWS, Ecological Services
Marikay Ramsey, NM BLM State Office
Dennis Saville, WY BLM State Office
John Sherman, NM BLM State Office
Melissa Siders, CO BLM, Umcompahgre Field Office
Todd Thompson, OR BLM State Office
David Waller, UT BLM, Price Field Office
Sherri Whitfield, UT BLM, Cedar City Field Office
Pilar Ziegler, NV BLM, Carson City Field Office
Geoffrey Walsh, BLM Washington, D.C., Washington Office
John Carlson, MT BLM, Montana State Office

Definitions:

Action – any action, permit, authorization, collaborative effort, program, activity, project, official policy, rule, regulation or formal plan directly carried out by the agency.

Birds of Conservation Concern – published by the USFWS Division of Migratory Bird Management, refers to the list of migratory and non-migratory birds of the U.S. and its territories that are of conservation concern. The 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act requires the identification of “species, subspecies, and populations of migratory non-game birds that, without further additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.”

Comprehensive Planning Efforts for Migratory Birds – includes Partners in Flight North American Landbird Conservation Plan, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and other planning integrated through the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI).

Conservation Measure – an action undertaken to improve the conservation status or to minimize or avoid take of one or more species of migratory birds. Examples include surveys and inventories, monitoring, status assessments, land acquisition or protection, habitat restoration, disturbance avoidance, population manipulation, research, and outreach.

Conservation Planning – strategic and tactical planning of agency activities for the long-term conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.

Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds – an interagency council established by the Secretary of the Interior to oversee the implementation of EO 13186.

Ecological Condition – the composition, structure, and processes of ecosystems over time and space. This includes the diversity of plant and animal communities, the productive capacity of ecological systems and species diversity, ecosystem diversity, disturbance processes, soil productivity, water quality and quantity, and air quality. Often referred to in terms of ecosystem health, which is the degree to which ecological factors and their interactions are reasonably complete and functioning for continued resilience, productivity, and renewal of the ecosystem.

Effect (adverse or beneficial) – “effects” and “impacts,” as used in this MOU are synonymous. Effects may be direct, indirect, or cumulative, and refer to effects from management actions or categories of management actions on migratory bird populations, habitats, ecological conditions and/or significant bird conservation sites.

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) – a network of sites that provide essential habitat for the long-term conservation of birds. In the U.S., the IBA network is administered by the American Bird Conservancy and the National Audubon Society (<http://www.audubon.org/nird/iba/>).

Joint Venture – an ecoregional self-directed partnership of Federal, State and local agencies, tribes, non-government organizations, corporations and individuals that has formed to deliver the objectives of national or international bird conservation initiatives.

Management Action – an activity by an agency that could cause a positive or negative impact on migratory bird populations or habitats. Conservation measures to mitigate potential negative effects of actions may be required.

Migratory Bird – an individual of any species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; a list of protected migratory birds can be found in 50 CFR 10.13, (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>).

National Environmental Policy Act – a Federal statute that requires Federal agencies to prepare a detailed analysis of the environmental impacts of a proposed action and alternatives, and to include public involvement in the decision-making process for major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment (42 U.S.C. § 4321, *et. seq.*).

North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) – an initiative to align the avian conservation community to implement bird conservation through regionally-based, biologically driven, landscape-oriented partnerships across the North American continent. The NABCI includes Federal agencies of Canada, Mexico and the U.S., as well as most landbird, shorebird, waterbird, and waterfowl conservation initiatives (<http://www.nabci-us.org>).

North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (NAWCP) – a partnership of Federal and State Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private interests focusing on the conservation of waterbirds, primarily including marshbirds and inland, coastal, and pelagic colonial waterbirds (www.nacwcp.org/pubs/). The vision of the partnership is that the distribution, diversity and abundance of populations and breeding, migratory, and nonbreeding waterbirds are sustained throughout the lands and waters of North America, Central America, and the Caribbean.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) – a partnership of Federal and State agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private interests focusing on the restoration of waterfowl populations through habitat restoration, protection, and enhancement (<http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NAWMP/nawmphp.htm>).

Partners in Flight (PIF) – a cooperative partnership program of more than 300 partners including Federal and State Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, conservation groups, foundations, universities and industry focusing on the conservation of landbirds.

Population – a group of distinct, coexisting, conspecific individuals, whose breeding site fidelity, migration routes, and wintering areas are temporarily and spatially stable, sufficiently distinct geographically (at some time of the year), and adequately described so that the population can be effectively monitored to discern changes in its status.

Seabird Conservation Plan, Pacific Region – defines the status of, and research, monitoring, and conservation actions needed for the long-term conservation of seabirds foraging in near-shore and offshore waters in the Pacific, and nesting on the Pacific Islands under U.S. jurisdiction (<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/migratorybirds/conservation.htm>).

Species of Concern – refers to those species listed in the periodic report *Birds of Conservation Concern*; priority migratory bird species documented in the comprehensive bird conservation plans (North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plans); species or populations of waterfowl identified as high, or moderately high, continental priority in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan; listed threatened and endangered bird species in 50 CFR 17.11, and game birds below desired condition as identified by the Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management.

Take – to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect or attempt to pursue, hunt, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect (50 CFR Section 10.12). The EO further defines take to include intentional take, meaning take that is the purpose of the activity in question, and unintentional take, meaning take that results from, but is not the purpose of, the activity in question. Both intentional and unintentional take constitute take as defined by the regulation.

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (USSCP) – an effort undertaken by a partnership of Federal and State Government agencies, as well as non-governmental and private organizations to ensure that stable and self-sustaining populations of all shorebird species are restored and protected (<http://www.fws.gov/shorebird>).

EMPHASIS AREAS, GOALS, AND ACTIONS

This BLM Strategic Plan consists of 10 areas of emphasis, 14 goals, and 28 actions to achieve agency compliance with EO 13186. The BLM Washington Office (WO), Division of Fish and Wildlife Conservation, is the principle lead group responsible for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Cooperating offices are identified under the actions.

The timeline for actions proposed under the Strategic Plan begins from the date of finalization and approval of this Strategic Plan.

The goals and actions are focused on a five-year time frame. In that time, the BLM, through the actions and achievement of goals, will realize the vision of this strategic plan.

EMPHASIS AREA 1: Migratory Birds in NEPA Documentation and Planning

The most important factor in addressing impacts to migratory birds is an understanding of when and where such impacts are likely to occur. This means developing knowledge of migratory bird habits and life histories, including their migratory paths and stopovers as well as their feeding, breeding, and nesting habits. This basic inventory data provides the basis for the bird conservation in NEPA during land use planning and project planning on public lands. This strategic plan does not address migratory birds listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Those species are addressed by different laws and BLM policy.

The BLM Priority Migratory Birds Table (Appendix B) of migratory bird species of concern that are likely to occur on public lands is the first resource to consult to help determine the birds you should focus on. This table includes USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) from the periodic report, current 2008 (http://library.fws.gov/Bird_Publications/BCC2008.pdf), cross-referenced with more than 10 years of bird observational data to determine species use of BLM land. As this report is periodically revised, BCCs may be added or subtracted for consideration. The BCCs from the USFWS report are derived from priority migratory bird species documented in the comprehensive bird conservation plans (North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plans, North American Waterfowl Management Plan). The BCCs locally documented (by the BLM or partners) to utilize the area of concern (planning or project area) **not encountered in Appendix B, shall also be considered (see report referenced above for regional lists)**. These species shall be considered the **priority migratory birds** for the BLM. Secondly, Game Birds Below Desired Condition (<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/status04/GBBDC%20LIST.pdf>) should be considered. Depending on the available habitat and priorities of State and local interests, habitat improvements and maintenance for other migratory birds such as raptors, upland migratory game birds, and waterfowl should be considered in plans.

Goal 1: Address BLM priority migratory birds during the NEPA and planning process, including consistent consideration of national and regional conservation goals and objectives.

Action 1: Within six months of plan approval, the BLM WO shall establish a national template for addressing migratory birds and their habitats in NEPA documents. This will include BLM priority migratory birds, Game Birds Below Desired Condition, and other migratory birds.

Cooperating Office: Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA

In order to address migratory birds in land use planning, BLM offices shall identify and understand the bird conservation goals and habitat protection objectives for the planning area's Bird Conservation Region, promoted through the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, contained in the comprehensive bird conservation plans. Then, as appropriate, incorporate these into the Resource Management Plan (RMP)s, implement identified actions and, with partners, monitor the results of these management actions.

- North American Bird Conservation Initiative (<http://www.nabci-us.org>)
- Partners in Flight (<http://www.partnersinflight.org>)
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan (<http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/NAWMP/index.shtm>)
- North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (<http://www.waterbirdconservation.org>)
- U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (<http://shorebirdplan.fws.gov/>)

Goal 2: Address national and regional conservation goals and objectives for migratory birds.

Action 1: Within one year of plan approval, the BLM WO shall incorporate consideration of national and regional bird conservation plan goals in every Land Use Planning document.

Action 2: Within one year of plan approval, the BLM WO shall develop metrics for determining the effectiveness of plan implementation and guidance on outcomes to migratory birds.

Action 3: Within one year of plan approval, the BLM WO shall complete a draft of the handbook for migratory bird conservation on BLM public lands. The Handbook will increase awareness and use of third-party "best available knowledge" as information to support planning decisions and NEPA analyses. **(Division of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Lead)**

- **Cooperating Office: Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA**

EMPHASIS AREA 2: Migratory Bird Conservation Measures

An understanding of when and where take of migratory birds is likely to occur is the most important factor in being able to avoid and minimize take of migratory birds. Understanding the potential for proposed actions to impact (or take) migratory birds is also very important for developing conservation measures or Best Management Practices (BMPs) for modifying activities or projects to avoid or minimize take of migratory birds.

Goal 2: Identify and implement feasible measures, in coordination with the USFWS, to avoid or minimize unintentional take of migratory birds that may result from conducting BLM authorized activities (Appendix E).

Action 6a: Within six months of plan approval, the BLM WO shall identify and compile all conservation measures (BMPs, etc.) that the BLM has analyzed through NEPA, and subsequently incorporated into mitigation measures, stipulations, or other guidance for authorized activities in a BLM field office.

Action 6b: Within six months of plan approval, the BLM WO shall identify and compile all conservation measures (BMPs, etc.) that have been analyzed through NEPA and subsequently incorporated into mitigation measures, stipulations, or other guidance applicable to the BLM authorized activities in all field offices.

Action 7: Within two and a half years of plan approval, the BLM WO shall identify additional conservation measures (BMPs) for at least 10 of all BLM permitted activities where presently conservation measures do not exist and migratory birds are affected.

Action 8: Within five years of plan approval, the BLM WO shall identify at least one conservation measure (BMPs) for every BLM permitted activity.

- **Cooperating Office: All BLM Offices**

Goal 3: Identify all BLM-authorized activities intended to have positive effects on wildlife habitat, where the activity itself may result in take of individual migratory birds, and modify the activity to have a resultant desired outcome that has a positive effect on populations of migratory birds that are birds of conservation concern (Appendix F).

Action 9a: Within six months of plan approval, the BLM WO shall identify all BLM-authorized activities with intended positive effects for habitat restoration or improvement, including activities likely to have short-term negative effects to individuals or portions of populations of wildlife.

Action 9b: Within one year of plan approval, the BLM WO shall determine the effects on migratory bird populations over the long-term from BLM-authorized activities with intended positive effects on wildlife.

Action 9c: On an ongoing basis, the BLM field offices shall work with project proponents to insure net positive effects on birds of conservation concern.

Action 9d: On an ongoing basis, the BLM field offices shall work with project proponents and partners to insure no net negative effects on birds of conservation concern when improving or maintaining habitat for waterfowl or other migratory game birds or other wildlife.

- **Cooperating Office: Fire planning and fuels management and Rangeland Resources (including riparian, native plant, and forestry programs)**

EMPHASIS AREA 3: Habitat Management Maintenance/ Enhancement /Restoration)

Habitat management to implement the MOU includes habitat protection, restoration, and conservation for migratory birds. The MOU also states that the BLM shall consider special designations during the NEPA planning process, that apply to all or part of the planning area, such as Important Bird Areas (IBAs), in appropriate plan documents. In addition to IBAs, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), Watchable Wildlife, Habitat Management Plan Areas, and Habitat Management Areas have been identified and designated in the planning process. These should continue to be used in the planning process to elevate conservation of migratory bird habitat. Appendix G, an example, identifies Audubon IBAs with BLM administered land. Appendix H provides descriptions and some quantification of migratory bird habitat on BLM land.

The following address migratory bird habitat:

Goal 4: Identify at the BLM district level at least one focal area for BLM priority migratory bird habitat management, based on (1) conservation priorities of Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) or parts of BCRs within each District, and (2) the number of BLM priority species benefitted by the habitat management. (See Appendix G for BCR map.)

Action 10a: Within one year of plan approval, BLM district offices shall coordinate with their state offices to identify and compile district focal areas and submit them via the state offices to the Washington Office. These focal areas would be compiled to identify the BLM opportunities and participation in national migratory bird conservation.

Action 10a: District focal areas for migratory bird conservation shall include areas important for BCC, Game Birds Below Desired Condition, and other game birds where the BLM can realize opportunities (including with partners) to enhance or maintain habitat for species conservation and recreational enjoyment of those species.

- **Cooperating Office: All BLM Offices**

EMPHASIS AREA 4: Coordinated Inventory and Monitoring

As stated in the MOU, FWS and the BLM will adopt the recommendations in the North American Bird Conservation Initiative monitoring sub-committee 2007 report “Opportunities for Improving Avian Monitoring” when developing and implementing migratory bird conservation activities that warrant monitoring. In addition, the BLM is one of the many members of the U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) Committee that signed an MOU to adopt the goals, recommendations, and action items stated in the 2007 report of the NABCI monitoring sub-committee, “Opportunities for Improving Avian Monitoring” in May of 2007

<http://www.nabci-us.org/aboutnabci/monitoringreportfinal0307.pdf>.

The BLM, with the other members, agreed to support and participate in coordinated inventory and monitoring. Coordinated partnership monitoring of migratory birds rather than ownership of any migratory bird monitoring or databases is preferred. The BLM will accomplish this through participating in local or regional breeding bird surveys and Christmas bird counts, supporting and using information gathered in the Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions and the Partners In Flight Species Assessment Database, and partnering with the Avian Knowledge Network and member nodes (Klamath Bird Observatory, Great Basin Bird Observatory, Point Reyes Science Center, etc.) of the network to answer resource management questions on a local and regional basis.

Goal 5: Coordinate BLM monitoring of priority migratory bird species associated with conservation-based vegetation treatments for effectiveness across the BLM public lands.

Action 11: Within one year of plan approval, the WO shall identify migratory bird monitoring needs on BLM public lands for all large-scale land treatments completed or planned to be completed in the next five years. The BLM WO would coordinate this work with staff implementing the BLM Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) Strategy. The needs will be updated every year as new treatments are anticipated.

Action 12: Within three years of plan approval, the BLM WO shall identify and establish policy to consistently assess effectiveness-monitoring of conservation measures. The BLM WO will coordinate this work with staff implementing the BLM Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) Strategy. The needs will be updated every year as new treatments are anticipated.

Cooperating Office: All BLM State Offices

EMPHASIS AREA 5: Education/Outreach

To effectively implement the MOU, education of BLM personnel, and education of the public must be addressed. Education of BLM personnel should address awareness of laws, regulations, policies, partnerships, and other conservation tools to be as effective as possible in migratory bird conservation

within the BLM's multiple-use construct. This will include education and outreach to BLM personnel on EO 13186, the MOU with FWS, and this Strategic Plan.

For effectively conserving migratory birds in the field, BLM training will also include use of tools that are managed or generated by partners in migratory bird conservation. Tools will include use of habitat and population survey techniques as well as use of existing databases such as the Species Assessment Database (at the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory); E-bird data analysis from Cornell University; and other databases that may be a part of the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN). In addition to those tools, it is critical that the BLM is an effective bird educator to its public(s).

As part of the MOU implementation, the BLM will recognize and promote the value of migratory birds to the public through support of, and participation in, International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) events; through development of Watchable Wildlife viewing sites that focus on bird conservation; and by sponsoring bird watching and appreciation activities (e.g., bird festivals that draw visitors to the BLM lands). In concert with the recently initiated BLM Education, Interpretation, and Youth Engagement Strategy, the BLM will advance migratory bird education through communications and social media that will help reach key audiences, strengthen the capacity of the BLM's education and other staff to deliver quality education, expanding the BLM's Hands on the Land program, expanding the BLM's capacity for interpretive program and product delivery, expanding the Take it Outside program, and providing career opportunities for young people and strengthening their connections to the outdoors.

The following address both the BLM need for education and continuing education and the public education needed to enhance migratory bird conservation.

Goal 6: Increase education and awareness among BLM personnel about MBTA responsibilities, partnerships, and conservation plans through joint training with USFWS or through other partnerships.

Goal 7: Increase the capabilities of BLM personnel to connect youth and other members of the public with migratory birds for initiating and supporting long-term conservation partnerships in local communities.

Action 13 (applies to goals 6 and 7): Within one year of plan approval, each BLM state office shall implement migratory bird training and education for at least one BLM staff person per field office in the following courses from the USFWS National Conservation Training Center:

- a. Migratory Bird Conservation: *A Trust Responsibility*
- b. Connecting People with Nature Through Birds

Action 14 (applies to goals 6 and 7): Within three years of completing initial training for at least one BLM staff person per field office, each BLM field office shall implement local/regional migratory bird training and education for BLM employees that addresses local/regional migratory bird issues.

This training may occur in collaboration with state, non-government organizations, or environmental education partners. To account for personnel turnover, the training schedule shall reflect the need to maintain expertise and knowledge gained from these courses at each field office.

- **Cooperating Office: All BLM Offices**

Goal 8: Promote awareness of migratory birds through youth programs and local community events (IMD, Audubon Bird Walk, etc.)

Action 15: Within two years of plan approval, each BLM state office shall complete and initiate implementation of a migratory bird training and education plan. The plan shall address personnel education as well as promotion of awareness of migratory birds through various programs. Each plan will also identify reasonable goals for migratory bird awareness promotion such as two annual events per every two field offices.

- **Cooperating Office: Division of Education, Interpretation and Partnerships**

The training and education plan shall also address ongoing or planned education and education partnerships that include public education expertise and public education activities. The BLM sponsored programs such as Hands on the Land and Take it Outside should incorporate and identify migratory bird education components as part of curriculum/program. Activities may be BLM-sponsored or part of a larger BLM partnership for migratory bird education activities. A list of BLM education activities shall be entered into the IMBD explorer's map at <http://www.birdday.org/birdday/explorers-map?id=100>

Goal 9: Increase the technical skills of wildlife biologists and vegetation ecologists to oversee complex, multidisciplinary restoration and enhancement projects that benefit migratory birds.

Action 16: Within one year of plan approval, individual field offices shall incorporate into Individual Development Plans of field office personnel training opportunities for gaining needed technical skills for migratory bird conservation.

- **Cooperating Office: All BLM Offices**

EMPHASIS AREA 6: Reports and Milestones

Presently, the USFWS and the BLM participate in the Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds established by the EO to evaluate the implementation of this MOU. This includes council duties to "Report annually on the accomplishments and recommendations related to the EO." The following addresses this on the part of the BLM:

Goal 10: Contribute at all levels of BLM administration to reporting accomplishments for migratory bird conservation for inclusion in the annual report of the Conservation Council on Migratory Birds and periodic BLM Fish and Wildlife accomplishment reports.

Action 17: Annually, each BLM state office shall report accomplishments in migratory bird conservation to the Washington Office. Each state office shall contribute information that pertains to their state, reporting accomplishments in relevant quantifiable units.

Action 18: Annually, each BLM state office shall submit at least three success stories in migratory bird conservation to contribute to the annual report. Activities may address inventory, monitoring, habitat treatment, post-treatment habitat assessment (*e.g.*, effectiveness monitoring), and outreach/education. This will be facilitated through a computer based survey and follow-up by the WO Migratory Bird liaison.

- **Cooperating Office: State Migratory Bird Liaisons**

EMPHASIS AREA 7: Internal/External Coordination

There is a need for ongoing communications and information transfer by assigned personnel in the BLM's WO and state and field offices. The strategic plan team developed this additional goal 11, and associated actions, to address this need.

Goal 11: Establish internal communication to transfer information on migratory bird conservation among all management levels of the BLM.

Action 19: Within six months of plan approval, the BLM WO and BLM state and field offices shall appoint at least one liaison staff person in respective offices for migratory bird communications to address networking and updating staff on laws, policies, science, partnerships and educational opportunities regarding migratory birds. The BLM WO staff liaison shall schedule regular meetings at least quarterly for this new national migratory bird liaison team.

Action 20: Within six months of plan approval, the BLM WO shall establish communications between the WO 230 migratory bird liaison and other BLM programs whose permitted actions may affect migratory birds.

- **Cooperating Office: All BLM State Offices**

EMPHASIS AREA 8: Partnerships/Data and Information Sharing

In addition to the partnership established between the USFWS and the BLM, the MOU states the BLM shall promote participation in NABCI, PIF, training of international students at the National Training Center, international joint ventures, and resource personnel exchange programs.

The MOU states that, for data sharing, both parties shall promote and contribute migratory bird population and habitat data to interagency partnership databases including the: National Biological Information Infrastructure, the Breeding Bird Research and Monitoring Database (BBIRD), AKN, Waterbird Monitoring Partnership Database, Natural Resources Monitoring Partnership, and other databases that meet the needs of the Parties.

Goal 12: Improve and maintain two-way data and information sharing between the BLM and its partners in migratory bird conservation.

Action 21: All BLM administrative offices shall, to the extent appropriate, work with partners to improve data formatting to address maintaining and continually improving data sharing and communicate to other offices through liaisons.

Action 22: The BLM WO shall establish procedures for timely data sharing, with at least annual updating to other offices through liaisons.

- **Cooperating Office: Division of Education, Interpretation and Partnerships**

EMPHASIS AREA 9: Research and Science Related to Migratory Birds and Their Habitat.

Research and science needs shall be identified to improve migratory bird conservation. The BLM shall support applied research and management studies to identify the habitat conditions needed to conserve migratory birds and to evaluate the effects of management activities on habitats and populations of migratory birds.

Goal 13: Identify and support annual science research projects that serve to enhance migratory bird conservation and utilize migratory birds as indicators of healthy landscapes.

Action 23: Within six months of plan approval, the BLM WO shall identify priority migratory bird research and science works in the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS). The NLCS units provide unique opportunities as outdoor laboratories to meet the science and research mission of the NLCS.

Action 24: Within one year of plan approval, the BLM WO shall identify priority migratory bird research and science work on non-NLCS BLM lands to address BLM managers' questions concerning impacts of the multiple-use spectrum of management activities on migratory bird conservation needs in landscapes and ecoregions.

Action 25: As priority research and science work is identified, the BLM WO shall continually promote the highest priorities in migratory bird conservation from additional or opportunistic funding opportunities through annual funding cycles.

- **Cooperating Office: National Landscape Conservation System and the Division of Decision Support, Planning and NEPA**

EMPHASIS AREA 10: Migratory Bird Take Permit Compliance and Monitoring

If a migratory bird take permit is needed for a particular activity or by a BLM permittee or authorized user, the BLM or permittee needs to address the requirements for activities subject to 50 CFR Part 21. While working through the permitting process with USFWS, the BLM will, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize the intentional take of species of concern and, if necessary, develop standards and procedures to minimize or avoid such take.

Goal 14: Follow all migratory bird permitting requirements for authorized activities.

Action 26: The BLM WO shall identify procedures for following migratory bird permitting requirements for authorized activities as part of the implementation handbook for this Strategic Plan.

Action 27: Within six months of plan approval and annually thereafter, all BLM field offices shall compile a list of all known migratory bird take permits applied and issued for the BLM authorized activities.

Action 28: Within one year of plan approval and annually thereafter, the WO Migratory Bird Liaison shall compile a report of all known migratory bird take permits applied for and issued for the BLM authorized activities.

- **Cooperating Office: All BLM State Offices**