

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Pact Signed

A Memorandum of Agreement for a Federal Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Committee was signed on May 14, 1991 by the USFWS, the USFS, the BLM, NPS, the Agency for International Development (AID), and EPA, and soon will be signed by the Department of the Navy.

The agreement establishes a Committee to identify priority conservation needs for neotropical migratory birds and to coordinate cooperative programs developed to address those needs. It also provides for establishment of affiliated working groups of technical experts from public and private sectors to determine needs for and to coordinate research, international population and habitat monitoring, information and education, and management programs being conducted by partnerships of federal, state, and local governments in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America, working together with private entities.

Neotropical migratory birds, those that nest in North America and winter in Latin America and the Caribbean, are in an overall state of population decline. Some species are so depleted they have been federally listed as threatened or endangered. These declines are the result of human activities – fragmentation of breeding grounds in the U.S. and Canada, and loss of wintering habitat in Latin America and the Caribbean.

A December 1990 workshop involving state and federal government agencies and a large number of conservation organizations proposed the conservation program and discussed activities and approaches similar to those already underway in an NPS pilot activity. This activity has been conducted for several years in the Southeast and Western NPS regions, aimed at establishing a Migratory Bird Watch that links park research, monitoring, and educational programs both nationally and internationally, according to the migratory birds shared by the parks.

The NPS has designated two Committee members and nine working group representatives, who will meet with two others in mid-July to draft an action plan for Service participation in the conservation program. NPS personnel include Mike Ruggiero, John Dennis, Ted Simons, Paul Buckley, Milford Fletcher, Richard Cunningham, Kyle Jones, John Peine, Rick Wilt, A. R. Weisbrod, Mike Britten, Norm Reigle, Jr., and Susan Savage.

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