

NORTH AMERICAN

WATERFOWL

MANAGEMENT PLAN

fact sheet

## North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee May 2004 Meeting Highlights

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (Plan) Committee recently met in Rosemont, Illinois, with its Science Support Team and joint venture coordinators. The meeting's purposes were to develop a framework for a comprehensive assessment of regional and continental progress toward the Plan's goals and of the effectiveness of the Plan's institutional relationships and to conduct other Plan business.

**2004 Plan** The Plan's co-chairs agreed to proceed concurrently to secure Ministerial and Secretarial signatures for the 2004 Plan update and to publish the Strategic Guidance document soon thereafter. The more technical Implementation Framework document will be published on Plan Web sites later in 2004.

**Continental Assessment** The Plan Committee believes the assessment is needed to document past progress, clarify top priority needs for future action, and identify additional support needed to implement recommendations found in the 2004 Plan update. To be successful, this assessment must involve the entire Plan community and will best be conducted by the joint ventures and other partners working together with the Plan Committee and the Science Support Team. Outcomes expected from the assessment include the following:

- Accounting of regional and continental progress towards biological goals since the Plan's inception in 1986,
- Updating of regional and continental assessments of habitat conditions and of the future landscape conditions needed to achieve the Plan's waterfowl population goals,
- Expanding the use of strategic biological planning, implementation, and evaluation processes throughout the Plan community, and
- Improving the effectiveness of the Plan's institutional structures and relationships.

The framework adopted for conducting the assessment consists of a series of specific questions associated with each of the above listed outcomes. The questions will be addressed using a variety of measures and data sources and through dialogues with joint venture and other Plan partners. The Plan Committee will establish an Assessment Steering Committee that will be charged with using responses to the questions and other analyses that may be commissioned to develop a report. The Plan Committee also will seek an individual to serve as an assessment coordinator, whose primary responsibility will be the conduct of the project and preparation of the report. The coordinator will work with the Steering Committee. The Plan Committee expects to name Steering Committee members and select the coordinator by mid summer 2004. The assessment is expected to begin in early fall 2004 and to be completed by fall 2005.



As part of the progress assessment, the Science Support Team and Plan partners will clarify enduring uncertainties about Plan population goals for midcontinent ducks. Since 1986, Plan goals have been linked to “average environmental conditions,” but average environmental conditions have never been defined. This ambiguity and the lack of any explicit assumptions about associated harvest rates greatly limits the value of existing Plan goals as performance measures. For example, Plan partners are unable to adjust expectations of annual population levels for actual wetland conditions or harvest rates and, thus, cannot measure progress toward Plan goals by simply monitoring population trends. The Plan community has recognized this situation for some time, but has not dealt with it. Clarification of Plan population goals also is vital to enable consistent translation of population goals into habitat objectives by the joint ventures.

The Science Support Team provided the Plan Committee with a proposed strategy for identifying comprehensive waterfowl population and habitat monitoring needs. The 2004 North American Waterfowl Management Plan calls for increased waterfowl monitoring capabilities, and the upcoming Plan assessment will likely identify unmet information needs that limit the Plan’s effectiveness. The proposed strategy provides Plan partners with a method to identify and prioritize outstanding monitoring needs so that resources can be directed to monitoring protocols that best serve managing agencies, joint ventures, and other Plan partners. The Plan Committee accepted the proposed strategy and asked the Science Support Team and joint venture coordinators to use it as guidance during the Plan assessment.

**Awards** The Awards Subcommittee met to consider nominations it received for the Plan Committee’s International Canvasback and National Great Blue Heron Awards. The Plan Committee accepted the subcommittee’s recommendations. Canadian Art Martell will receive the 2004 International Canvasback Award. Canada will present a National Great Blue Heron Award to Environment Saskatchewan. The new National Great Blue Heron Award, cast in pewter, was on display.

**Plan Committee Work Plan** The Plan Committee will continue to revise its work plan that guides activities over the next 3 years.

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