

Morning Post –
Wilson's Snipe, from the
2007 Canadian Wildlife
Habitat Conservation
Stamp Series
Nigel Shaw, Innisfil, Ontario

Canadian *HabitatMatters*



Wilson's Snipe
Ducks Unlimited Canada

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Canada continues to make notable advancements in its international commitment to conserve wetland habitat. Since the 1986 signing of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) partnership between Canada, the United States and Mexico, over \$1.3 billion Cdn. has been invested in securement and management of 2.4 million hectares (5.9 million acres) of Canadian wetland and associated upland habitat for the benefit of wildlife and people. Sound science, partnerships and an integrated landscape approach to conservation attribute to NAWMP's success. Expertise and support from government, non-governmental organizations, Aboriginal groups, industry, academia, landowners and individuals have been elemental to the planning, implementation and evaluation of this great continental conservation partnership.

In 2006, NAWMP achieved two significant milestones – its 20th anniversary and completion of a 20-year assessment that will become the foundation for NAWMP's 2009 Update. The NAWMP Assessment, initiated by the NAWMP International Committee and conducted by an Assessment Steering Committee of waterfowl experts, examined all aspects of NAWMP planning and delivery over the past 20 years.

Canada is home to 25 percent of the world's wetlands and provides breeding habitat for about 80 percent of the continental waterfowl population and 310 other breeding bird species.

Preminent results of the assessment from each of the four Canadian habitat joint ventures included recommendations on science, policy, communications and sustained funding. Canadian partners are responding to the challenge and addressing these recommendations.

Across the country, NAWMP partners are exploring ways for improving program delivery. In the Pacific Coast Joint Venture, partners have undertaken a prioritization process that includes the development of landscape conservation plans that identify priority habitats, key locations, habitat goals and funding issues. Prairie Habitat Joint Venture partners continue to refine and apply the Waterfowl Productivity Model and the Pintail Productivity Model as a primary basis for their conservation planning.

continued on page 3



North American Waterfowl
Management Plan
Plan nord-américain de
gestion de la sauvagine
Plan de Manejo de Aves
Acuáticas Norteamérica

National Overview

Terminology

Securement:

The protection of wetland and/or upland habitat through land title transfer or binding long-term (minimum 10-year) conservation agreements with a landowner.

Enhancement:

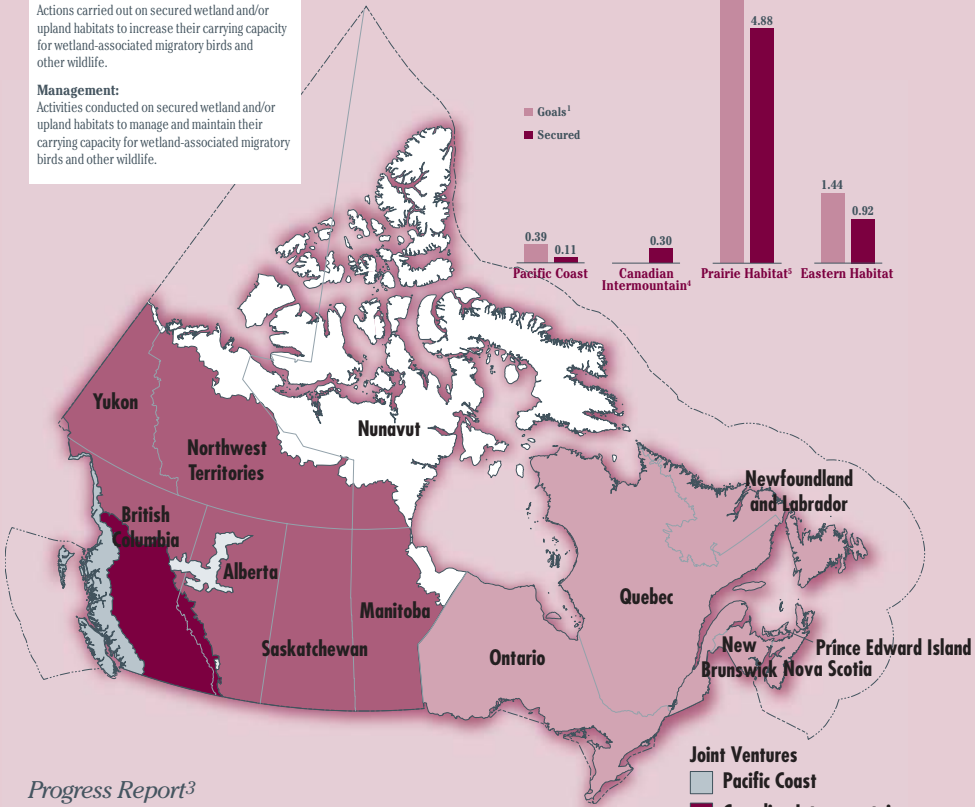
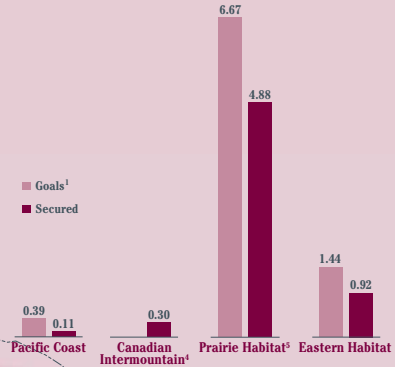
Actions carried out on secured wetland and/or upland habitats to increase their carrying capacity for wetland-associated migratory birds and other wildlife.

Management:

Activities conducted on secured wetland and/or upland habitats to manage and maintain their carrying capacity for wetland-associated migratory birds and other wildlife.

NAWMP and NAWCA-funded Habitat Conserved

(Million Acres) – 1986 to 2006



Joint Ventures

- Pacific Coast
- Canadian Intermountain
- Prairie Habitat (includes Western Boreal Program)
- Eastern Habitat

Progress Report³

Accomplishment Goal = 8.5M secured acres¹



Achieved: 5.9M acres (69%)

Expenditure Goal = \$Cdn. 2.8B^{1,2}



To date: \$Cdn. 1.11B (39%)

1. These goals are under revision as per the 2004 NAWMP Update.

2. Based on \$Cdn. = \$U.S. 0.86.

3. Data includes PHJV, PCJV and EHJV only.

4. Habitat goals are being developed on a focus area specific basis within the CIJV.

5. Secured acres include habitat conserved prior to 1986.

These models estimate the difference in annual duck productivity between the 1970s and present. In the east, the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture has established a Scientific and Technical Standing Committee to provide partners with a sound scientific basis for their programs and ensure that adaptive management becomes an embedded principle in joint venture management activities.

In the upcoming years a number of large-scale issues will significantly influence landscapes upon which waterfowl depend. These include agriculture, energy, climate change, transportation and water quality and quantity issues. To the extent that direct conservation programs alone cannot meet NAWMP objectives, major advances in wildlife-friendly management strategies and policies are either being planned or are well underway. Canadian NAWMP partners have established linkages with other programs, such as the federal Agricultural Policy Framework, which

In 2006, NAWMP achieved two significant milestones – its 20th anniversary and completion of a 20-year assessment that will become the foundation for NAWMP's 2009 Update.

encourages the agricultural sector to put in place Environmental Farm Planning and use Best Management Practices (BMPs) that directly benefit waterfowl conservation. NAWMP partners are involved in the development of provincial watershed-based landscape planning and management plans, such as the PEI Department of Environment Energy and Forestry, Watershed Management Section, who are working with local community watershed enhancement groups and the agricultural community. Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and other partners will work with these groups to develop the wetland components of these watershed management plans.

The NAWMP International Committee will address the policy-related findings and recommendations in the Assessment Report by convening a workshop in late 2007 to explore and discuss policy development mechanisms for policy influence and policy evaluation tools.

The NAWMP assessment also identified a need for partners to improve all levels of communications regarding accomplishments, challenges and opportunities. As a means of working toward this target, the PHJV recently formed a communications committee and the EHJV has an approved communications strategy. Comprehensive presentations and workshops, such as the June 2006 one-day science workshop for the U.S. North American Wetlands Conservation Council Staff, will be increasingly adopted in future years to deliver information to the partners and stakeholders. A special edition of *Canadian Habitat Matters* that focuses on corporate conservation partnerships has also been published.

This publication of *Canadian Habitat Matters* highlights Canada's accomplishments for 2006. The continued support of NAWCA and other U.S. and Canadian partners is essential for the conservation of waterfowl and other wetland-dependent migratory birds in North America.

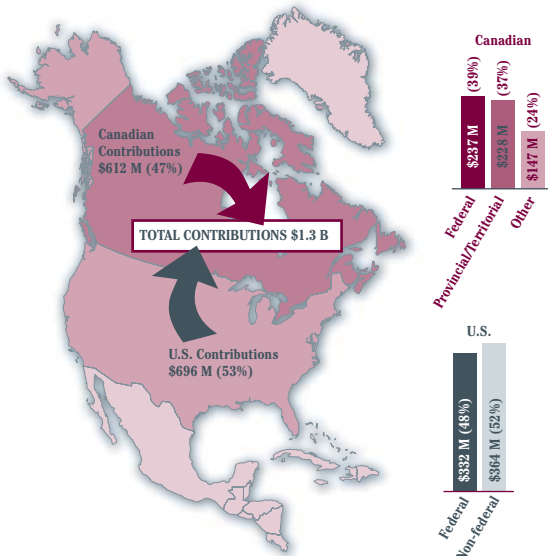
Maintaining current funding and securing new funding sources is a perpetual challenge. The DUC Habitat Project Operation Fund is a major means for off-setting management costs. The purpose of this fund is to ensure the proper management of lands that have been secured and enhanced under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Another substantial new recent source of funding is through the Agricultural Policy Framework. These funds are being used to support programs that include securement, enhancement and evaluation and monitoring within agricultural landscapes. In addition, the Western Boreal Program, under the PHJV, has attracted 20 new partners that include various levels of government, non-governmental organizations and the corporate sector.

Partners are also considering information relating to bird species other than waterfowl. For example, a recent PHJV-level update was completed for each major bird group: establishing priority species, population objectives, landscape conditions and specific locations of key breeding, moulting and migratory habitats (approximately 30 percent of identified priority species are listed as potentially endangered). Applying this information will strengthen the PHJV Implementation Plan update, permitting a more thorough assessment of wetland-associated migratory bird benefits resulting from NAWMP delivery.

New amendments to the Migratory Bird Convention Act emphasize ensuring sustainable populations of migratory birds. These amendments provide the legal authority to support an authorization or permit framework that would allow for a limited amount of incidental take of migratory birds. The Canadian Wildlife Service is developing a new regulatory framework that will provide for long-term migratory bird conservation. Achieving this goal is a Canadian priority and it is projected that Environment Canada will have a draft implementation plan by mid-2007 and new regulations will be published by late-2008. Environment Canada recognizes that broad-scale landscape conservation and population management measures are essential to achieving stable and robust populations of migratory birds, including waterfowl.

This publication of *Canadian Habitat Matters* highlights Canada's accomplishments for 2006. The continued support of NAWCA and other U.S. and Canadian partners is essential for the conservation of waterfowl and other wetland-dependent migratory birds in North America. Bird conservation initiatives, such as NAWMP, are helping to conserve continental wildlife species and the habitats on which they depend.

Total NAWMP and NAWCA Contributions to Canada 1986 to 2006 (\$Cdn.)





Local school children gather at Surrey, BC's Black Spit Pier to help Ducks Unlimited Canada's researcher Kim Houghton with DUC's 'Operation Orange' - the release of the drift cards, which are made of paper thin plywood and non-toxic paint. A batch of 100 orange drift cards is tossed into the sea at Mud Bay as part of a year-long scientific study to investigate the invasive *Spartina* plant that is choking the Pacific shoreline and endangering habitat and native species. When a member of the public discovers an orange drift card on shore, they are being asked to retrieve it, and report where and when they found the card(s) by calling the toll free number printed on the cards or by logging on to the website www.spartina.ca. The information is being gathered to determine the drift and spread of the pesky plant, *Spartina*.

Ducks Unlimited Canada

Habitat

Joint Ventures

Pacific Coast Joint Venture

The Pacific Coast Joint Venture (PCJV) of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan is an international joint venture between Canada and the U.S. This summary reflects the Canadian portion of the joint venture.

Set in British Columbia's portion of Bird Conservation Region 5 (Northern Pacific Rainforest), the Canadian component of the PCJV includes the forests, agricultural fields, islands and wetlands that surround 27,000 kilometres (17,000 miles) of meandering coastline. The area is bordered by coastal mountains in the east, the Pacific Coast 200-mile Economic Exclusion Zone in the west and the international borders of Alaska and Washington State.

British Columbia's coastal areas, rich tidal rivers, estuaries, mudflats and inlets support millions of waterfowl and other species. Over one million ducks, geese and swans winter along the coast. Wintering numbers of several species represent significant portions of their worldwide populations: Barrow's goldeneye (30 percent of global population); surf scoters (sizeable portion of continental population); 50 percent of the Wrangel Island snow geese (50,000-70,000); American wigeon (four percent of continental population) and northern pintail (two percent of continental population). In addition, there are significant Pacific Flyway populations of wintering

The Pitt River flowing south from Pitt Lake into the Fraser River is bordered by substantial wetlands. Wetlands in the lower Fraser Valley are under increasing pressure from development and population growth.

Saul Schneider, PCJV

British Columbia's coastal areas, rich tidal rivers, estuaries, mudflats and inlets support millions of waterfowl and other species.

trumpeter swans (40 percent), migrating Pacific Brant (2,000) and Western High Arctic Brant (700) within the Joint Venture. Other abundant species include mallard, white-winged scoter and bufflehead. These Pacific Flyway waterfowl and other species that depend on the critical coastal ecosystems are the focus of the PCJV partnership.

Estuaries continue to be priority areas where conservation is delivered within the PCJV. While there are over 442 estuaries along the coast, only about 0.15

percent of the coastline is estuarine habitat. The combination of moderate climate, low elevation topography and fertile soils create a complex of intertidal wetlands and adjacent floodplain upland habitats (e.g., islands and agricultural lands). These areas provide a key source of foraging habitat for both wintering and migrating waterfowl. In areas such as the Fraser River Delta, over 80 percent of wetlands have been lost to development and significant amounts of agricultural land have been converted from traditional vegetables crops, grains and perennial forage to berries, nurseries and greenhouses. From 1980 to 2001, an estimated



To fight spartina, small growth is removed manually with shovels and then incinerated. Larger patches are removed with mechanical excavators and then buried deep in the mudflats.

Ducks Unlimited Canada



habitat for waterfowl. Remaining wetlands in the Fraser Valley are important for staging waterfowl that forage in adjacent agricultural fields during the day.

Science and landscape planning continue to guide the delivery of PCJV conservation programs. Using a foraging model in 2000, the amount of agricultural habitat required in the Fraser River Delta was estimated. A science-supported landscape-level plan was developed and subsequently endorsed by PCJV partners. The plan guides the delivery of habitat in the Fraser Delta. To improve the confidence of the model, and evaluate long-held PCJV assumptions, the Fraser Delta North Puget Sound Research program, a cross-border project between the Fraser Delta and the Skagit Delta (Washington State), was established. Using both radio telemetry and habitat sampling, partners are improving their knowledge of waterfowl foraging in the area to refine initial modeling exercises and provide crucial information for other priority areas such as the East Coast Vancouver Island and Puget Sound. The Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC) coastal forests and mountains ecoregional assessment processes and the resulting plans also guide the prioritization of program and project work within the PCJV.

Barrow's Goldeneye
Ducks Unlimited Canada



876 hectares (1,870 acres) were lost to waterfowl use each year through agricultural intensification, (approximately four percent annually).

In addition to the Fraser River Delta and Fraser Valley, a second PCJV Priority area is the East Coast of Vancouver Island. These landscapes constitute the majority of PCJV estuarine habitat. The recent BC Estuary Ranking Project undertaken by Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) indicate that there are additional areas along the BC Coast that warrant future attention and which function as key stepping stones during the fall and spring migration for many Pacific Flyway waterfowl.

Due to the significant size of the Fraser River Delta (30 percent of BC's intertidal wetlands), efforts continue to build on previous success in using a diversity of securement tools such as conservation covenants (easements), acquisitions and Crown Land designations. Supplementing the securement activities is the PCJV enhancement program, which consists of restoring tidal inundation, enhancement of freshwater wetlands and improving the productivity of agricultural crops (e.g., vegetables, grains, perennial grasses, etc.), thereby providing more foraging

Partnership continues to be the key to successful delivery of North American Waterfowl Management Plan objectives in the PCJV as together partners provide capacity, funding and expertise that could not be derived from one agency alone. Canadian PCJV partners include DUC, CWS, Province of British Columbia, NCC, The Nature Trust of British Columbia and The Land Conservancy of BC.

For more information, contact Saul Schneider, Pacific Coast Joint Venture Coordinator, (604) 666-2342, saul.schneider@ec.gc.ca.

Contributions (\$/CN)

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
U.S. Federal	2,495,123	20,690,069
U.S. Non-Federal	803,318	19,927,110
Canadian	2,113,969	127,707,367
Total	5,412,410	168,324,546

Accomplishments (Acres)

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
Secured	1,373	108,579
Enhanced	906	89,352
Managed	1,264	85,962
Total*	1,373	108,579

* Secured, enhanced and managed acres are not additive. Acres are first secured, may then be enhanced and are subsequently placed under management.



Members of the joint U.S./Canada North American Wetlands Conservation Council met in July 2006 near Cranbrook, British Columbia to discuss continental waterfowl matters.

Larry Halverson, Parks Canada

Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture

The Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture (CLJV) includes the Canadian portions of the Great Basin and Northern Rockies Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs 9 and 10). Within the CLJV there are over 150,000 permanent and semi-permanent wetlands, the most productive of which are in fertile valley bottoms and low elevation native grasslands. These wetlands, riparian areas and adjacent uplands provide critical habitat for millions of waterfowl and other migratory birds.

An estimated 8 million waterfowl (38 species) stage and migrate through the Intermountain, and hundreds of thousands of waterfowl winter on the large lakes in southern BC, including over 1,500 trumpeter swans.

Twenty-four species of waterfowl breed in the CLJV, an estimated 1.6 million birds, representing 70 percent of British Columbia's breeding waterfowl population. For mallard, bufflehead and Barrow's goldeneye, a significant proportion of their continental populations (2%, 10% and 60%, respectively) breed in the CLJV. An estimated 8 million waterfowl (38 species) stage and migrate through the Intermountain, and hundreds of thousands of waterfowl winter on the large lakes in southern BC, including over 1,500 trumpeter swans.

The delivery of North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) objectives in the CLJV is focused on six priority watersheds: the Okanagan River, the Salmon River, the Cariboo-Chilcotin, the Nechako Lowlands, the Upper Columbia Basin and the Creston Valley. For each area, a landscape-level plan



Background Image:

Canvasback

Dr. John Innes,

University of British Columbia

Chilanko Marsh is a joint project between The Nature Trust of BC and DUC involving almost 900 hectares of prime Chilcotin habitat, including over 260 hectares of wetlands. The marsh complex provides ideal breeding sites for over a dozen species of waterfowl, and its diverse mix of forests, shrublands, grasslands and wetlands supports a myriad of wildlife species year-round, from moose to salamanders.

Ducks Unlimited Canada



is in place or under development to set quantitative habitat objectives and to define specific delivery zones and actions as well as key breeding, moulting, staging and wintering habitats.

CLIV efforts are directed at wetlands and associated habitats which combine high waterfowl values with a high threat of loss or degradation. In the CLIV, habitat loss/degradation primarily derives from four sources: urban expansion, intensive agriculture, ranching and forestry.

CLIV programs continue to be guided by sound science and adaptive management. Ongoing waterfowl survey programs have enabled the development of both CLIV-wide and landscape-specific computer models which are used to define the habitats which support the highest densities of breeding waterfowl. This knowledge is supplemented with other information, including socioeconomic data,

to help determine which conservation programs best fit a given area. Key wetlands can be secured using purchase, conservation covenants (easements) or conservation agreements, but not all tools are appropriate in all areas. In areas dominated by perennial cover, programs will promote environmentally friendly farm management with an emphasis on waterfowl habitat enhancement and restoration.

A CLIV highlight this year was the hosting of the joint Canada /U.S. North American Wetlands Conservation Council and North American Bird Conservation Initiative meetings at the St. Eugene Mission Resort near Cranbrook, BC, in early July.

The Columbia Valley Wetlands are Canada's newest Ramsar site and are comprised of 15,070 hectares (37,238 acres) that provide critical waterfowl breeding and staging habitat.

Larry Halverson, Parks Canada

Following the meetings, CLIV partners showcased some of the many conservation projects accomplished in the Columbia Valley. Council members were taken on a site visit sponsored by CLIV partner Teck Cominco which concluded with a paddle down the Upper Columbia River.

Project highlights of the tour included the 1,800 hectare (4,448 acre) Bummer's Flats Complex of wetlands, Wasa Slough, Kootenay River Ranch, Thunderhill Ranch, West Columbia Lake, Hoffert Hoodoos, Dutch Creek Hoodoos, the Columbia National Wildlife Area and the Columbia Wetlands – Canada's newest Ramsar site of international importance.

For more information, contact Saul Schneider, Canadian Intermountain Joint Venture Coordinator, (604) 666-2342, saul.schneider@ec.gc.ca.

Contributions (\$CN)

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
U.S. Federal	245,383	4,029,764
U.S. Non-Federal	57,325	4,057,569
Canadian	1,544,213	12,623,283
Total	1,846,921	20,710,616

Accomplishments (Acres)

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
Secured	8,460	303,894
Enhanced	63,112	104,362
Managed	80,318	142,345
Total*	8,460	303,894

* Secured, enhanced and managed acres are not additive. Acres are first secured, may then be enhanced and are subsequently placed under management.





Boreal forest wetlands support wildlife populations on which the region's inhabitants strongly depend.

Ducks Unlimited Canada



Prairie Habitat Joint Venture Program (Includes Western Boreal Program)

Over the past year, the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV), including the Western Boreal Program, continues to be successful in moving towards the goals and objectives outlined in the PHJV 2005-2010 Strategic Plan. Traditional securement programs in the settled areas of the PHJV continue to perform well with most secured acres resulting from cooperative land-use agreements and, increasingly, conservation easements. Conservation easements are being signed at unprecedented rates throughout the more settled areas of the PHJV.

The PHJV partnership continues to gain critical knowledge about species of concern. In the settled PHJV landscapes, more is being learned about the northern pintail, its habitat needs and the relationship between habitat and population vital rates. Population surveys indicate that scaup and scoters are experiencing their greatest declines in

the Western Boreal Forest. Research is preliminary but scientists are starting to understand some of the parameters that regulate scaup productivity in their northern habitats.

Throughout the PHJV, increased emphasis is being placed on indirect programs such as extension, industry and government relations. From grazing clubs in the east to wetland policy in the west, these indirect programs are helping PHJV member agencies achieve their habitat objectives. One of the most promising extension programs is the promotion of winter wheat planting and conversion. Since the early 1990s, winter wheat production has increased from less than 81,000 hectares (200,000 acres) to over 486,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) in 2006. Corporate funding has been instrumental in the promotion of this program to landowners and producers – over 17,000 landowners deliver habitat conservation programs on their lands. A cooperative program has also been set up with the University of Saskatchewan wherein researchers are working toward developing hardier winter wheat varieties.

With inclusion of the Western Boreal Forest, the PHJV will become North America's largest Joint Venture.

Throughout the Western Boreal Forest current inventory and science initiatives are providing key information on waterfowl and wetlands which is being integrated into ongoing conservation programs and partnerships with industry, including protected areas initiatives, land-use planning and watershed-based approaches to forestry management.

The concept of an Ecological Goods and Services (EGS) Program for Canada is a PHJV priority complemented by the Joint Venture's many pilot projects and new watershed planning initiatives currently underway. At the same time, wetland policies which also support EGS, are either under review or are being written for each PHJV province. Advancing Canada's EGS program is a PHJV priority.

The PHJV's 2005-2010 Strategic Plan calls for the renewal of provincial implementation plans. The drafting of these new implementation plans, which has not been done in a formal manner since the late 1980s, is expected to produce new provincial draft plans by spring 2007. The PHJV's coordinated approach to building these plans will allow consolidation at the Joint Venture level resulting in a new PHJV implementation plan.

PHJV Highlights

- Targeting of delivery of long-term securement activities (primarily conservation easements) continues to be refined by the results of PHJV evaluation activities.
- Winter wheat acreage took a big jump in 2006, due in part to cropping conditions the previous year. Winter wheat yielded excellent crops, which bodes well for expanding acreage in the future.
- Within the Western Boreal Forest the awareness of wetland conservation is strengthening and the partnership base with industry, governments and aboriginal communities continues to grow.
- New provincial implementation plans will be completed early 2007.
- The PHJV has a new Communications Committee that has developed an innovative communications plan.

Background image:

The northern pintail, perhaps more than any other waterfowl species, relies on nesting cover provided by annual cropland.

Ducks Unlimited Canada



Winter wheat provides improved waterfowl nesting cover over conventional spring-seeded wheat.

Ducks Unlimited Canada

2.4 million hectares (5.7 million acres) of conserved habitat. The PHJV's conservation efforts have helped to set the stage by putting relevant conservation programs and practices in place. Waterfowl have responded accordingly with increased numbers noticed by PHJV partners, the general public and hunters alike.

Tracking the acres associated with extension and government relations initiatives has been challenging; however, PHJV partners are taking steps to better track these acres with increased precision in the future. In fact, considerable modifications toward that goal are underway to help better track accomplishments against objectives. Plans are also underway to have habitat objectives clearly stated in the National Tracking System with each province and/or Joint Venture reporting against these objectives once the new implementation plans are finalized.

The PHJV is always looking ahead to ensure its continued success. For example, the Advisory Board will soon be discussing how to better integrate the Western Boreal Program with the traditional PHJV area. This is a critical step in ensuring that there is a coordinated approach to addressing the habitat needs of species common to both areas. The PHJV is also working with universities and other partner agencies to develop better tools for predicting the effects of climate change. Ultimately, this will better position the Joint Venture for adapting to predicted changes before they occur. The PHJV is challenged to

maintain an effective communications campaign to ensure that interested parties throughout North America are knowledgeable about PHJV efforts and accomplishments. NAWMP's success depends on the success of the PHJV. With inclusion of the Western Boreal Program, the PHJV will become North America's largest Joint Venture.

For more information, contact Deanna Dixon, Prairie Habitat Joint Venture Coordinator, (780) 951-8652, deanna.dixon@ec.gc.ca.

Contributions (\$CN)

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
U.S. Federal	15,571,776	225,833,252
U.S. Non-Federal	15,500,504	240,242,734
Canadian	11,904,229	254,107,621
Total	42,976,509	720,183,607

Accomplishments (Acres)

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
Secured	136,264	4,878,625
Enhanced	134,236	1,978,976
Managed	334,536	4,032,524
Total*	136,264	4,878,625

* Secured, enhanced and managed acres are not additive. Acres are first secured, may then be enhanced and are subsequently placed under management.

The PHJV supported and actively participated in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's (NAWMP) Continental Assessment. The exercise produced results that were enlightening to internal and external partners. The Assessment exercise reconfirmed that the PHJV is essential to the success of NAWMP, and that the PHJV is on track with its goal to conserve waterfowl populations and their wetland and associated upland habitats. One of the most promising recommendations from the Continental Assessment Report was that additional emphasis should be placed on funding the breeding habitat Joint Ventures. This is important for achieving habitat objectives and to address some of the PHJV's underdeveloped program areas. The PHJV needs to find additional resources to deal with issues around climate change and to fully integrate the Western Boreal Program potential so that it contributes to PHJV goals and objectives.

Wet conditions returned to the majority of the PHJV area during spring 2006. With these improved conditions followed improved breeding duck populations. Ducks returning to the PHJV last spring were able to take full advantage of the more than



Natural wetlands are a valuable water source to grazing systems throughout the Prairie Habitat Region.

Ducks Unlimited Canada



Left to right: Jamie Fortune, Ducks Unlimited Canada; Lynn McIntyre, Wildlife Habitat Canada; James Duncan, Nature Conservancy of Canada; Tod Wright, Ducks Unlimited Canada; Rita Kalmback, Mayor, Norfolk County; Kevin Wilson, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; Donna Stewart, Canadian Wildlife Service-Ontario Region.

Courtney Price, Canadian Wildlife Service

Significant gains in habitat conservation have been made through wetland and related upland securement, enhancement, restoration, management and overall habitat stewardship.



Eastern Habitat Joint Venture

In 2006, significant progress was made in the review and assessment of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) and in the development of its next generation Implementation Plan. These efforts have helped EHJV partners to review their activities and structure, and to take steps to improve the scientific foundations for future planning, implementation and evaluation. It is with the continued support and commitment of the EHJV Board and partners, that the Joint Venture is increasing its understanding of waterfowl, wetlands and landscapes. The ongoing importance of the EHJV program and partnership to waterfowl, wildlife and people in eastern North America is increasingly being recognized.

In response to the preliminary results from the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Assessment, the EHJV Board established a Scientific and Technical Standing Committee. There was clear recognition that the overall EHJV program must be based on sound science and that it should also have well developed biological foundations. The Board felt that the shift to a strong science agenda would also serve to strengthen EHJV activities and to raise its profile among partners and within the international conservation community.

Over the past several months, EHJV partners have identified staff and financial resources to support the Science and Technical Committee, and to ensure that the scientific foundations for EHJV programs, at both local and regional scales, are sound and that adaptive

management becomes an EHJV principle. An inaugural work plan has also been established with the following objectives:

1. Establish waterfowl population objectives by:
 - a. identifying key EHJV waterfowl species;
 - b. establishing numeric objectives for key species;
 - c. justifying these goals biologically, socially and politically; and
 - d. linking EHJV goals to NAWMP goals where applicable.
2. Assess limiting factors for the EHJV's key waterfowl species.
3. Based on limiting factors, assist implementation planning teams in habitat development.
4. Work with implementation planning teams in the development of evaluation components (research, monitoring and evaluation) of the new provincial implementation plans.
5. Develop the linkage of EHJV waterfowl habitat goals to NAWMP outcomes.

An important first step for the Science and Technical Committee was to meet in Toronto in July 2006. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss and make recommendations on several key elements in the development of the new provincial implementation plans. The meeting also focussed on establishing EHJV waterfowl population objectives and identifying factors limiting waterfowl populations.

The meeting provided a framework for continued advancement of the EHJV's broad suite of conservation efforts, and ultimately the sustainability of waterfowl and wildlife populations and habitats throughout eastern North America.

Left to right: Louis Aubry and Norbert Morin, Quebec Ministry of Natural Resources and Wildlife; and Black Duck Award winners Paul Messier – Individual category and Hubert Chamberland, COVABAR, Organization Category; Mr and Mrs Paul-Émile Caron, landowners; Marcel Laperle, Black Duck Award recipient, Long-term Contribution; Bernard Filion, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Yvon Mercier, Canadian Wildlife Service-Quebec Region.

Claudie Lessard, Ducks Unlimited Canada

EHJV Program Delivery

On-the-ground delivery of the EHJV program was again important in 2006. Significant gains in habitat conservation have been made through wetland and related upland securement, enhancement, restoration, management and overall habitat stewardship.

In Ontario, conservation partners gathered on the north shore of Lake Erie at Big Creek National Wildlife Area last fall to celebrate a significant milestone in the history of Long Point in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of NAWMP and the EHJV.

Since NAWMP was first signed, EHJV partners have contributed to the conservation of nearly 3,845 hectares (9,500 acres) or 37 percent of all public and/or privately owned wetland habitat in the Long Point area (10,182 hectares/25,160 acres). Combined with land protected through federal and provincial legislation, and through the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, nearly 50 percent (5,522 hectares/13,645 acres) of wetlands are now fully protected from ever being drained or filled.

Members of the EHV Stewardship Association of Municipalities attending the Spring 2006 meeting in Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador.



In Quebec, program delivery focused on the conservation of wetlands and adjacent uplands in the St. Lawrence watershed. Critically important habitats for waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife have been secured and enhanced. Worth mentioning is the inauguration of Pointe-à-Caron conservation area on the north shore of Lake Saint-Pierre. Lake Saint-Pierre wetlands are exceptionally rich in biodiversity and are part of a World Biosphere Reserve. During the inauguration ceremony, winners of the 2005 Quebec EHV Black Duck Awards were also announced.

In New Brunswick, EHV partners secured close to 1,012 hectares (2,500 acres) and restored some 647 hectares (1,600 acres) of privately owned critical wetland and associated buffer habitat. A 728-hectare (1,800-acre) property transfer represented the single largest land acquisition ever made by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) in New Brunswick.

In Nova Scotia, NCC secured 36 hectares (90 acres) of coastal habitat. The properties secured are located in Port Joli and Economy Point Natural Areas and encompass large coastal complexes consisting of extensive tidal flats, beaches, dunes, salt marshes, bogs and shrub wetlands. These areas are important migration and wintering habitat for Canada Geese and feeding grounds for staging shorebirds.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Wetland Stewardship Program was the subject of an academic paper "Ducks, Bogs and Guns" by Catherine M. Roach et al. published in the spring 2006 issue of the journal *Ethics and the Environment*. The authors examine three strategies for the protection of habitat and species, land acquisition, government legislation and regulatory agencies and stewardship programs. Their concluding statement is "we put forward this Canadian program as a test case of a practical and powerful public policy that can engage people in the care of their local ecosystems and as a model to encourage more such environmental ethics initiatives worldwide."

The Stewardship Association of Municipalities was presented the 2006 EHV Partner Award in recognition of its significant contribution to the conservation of waterfowl and other migratory birds and their habitats. Member municipalities have protected 12,536 hectares (31,124 acres) of wetland and associated uplands through the use of the municipal planning process and have influenced another 126,404 hectares (312,353 acres) within their jurisdiction. The award was presented by the Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Environment and Conservation during the national conference "Valuing Nature: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada 2006."

In Prince Edward Island (PEI), 2006 was the second year delivering wetland programs through the Canada PEI Agricultural Stewardship Program. Wetland programs were delivered through two Beneficial Management Practices (BMP), constructed wetlands and wetland restoration. A total of nine projects were completed on PEI farms restoring, constructing and conserving 14 hectares (35 acres) of wetland and upland habitat. In addition, seven wetland restoration projects were completed through traditional programs, such as the Small Marsh Program.

Land acquisition continues to be the most cost effective way to conserve and protect PEI's coastal wetlands. In 2006, 12 hectares (30 acres) of coastal wetland habitat were acquired through the EHV program. In addition to land acquisition, coastal conservation agreements were signed on privately owned lands with approximately 81 hectares (200 acres) secured.

For more information, contact Raymond Sarazin, Canadian Wildlife Service, (418) 649-6138, raymond.sarazin@ec.gc.ca.

Contributions (\$CN)

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
U.S. Federal	4,616,045	61,583,757
U.S. Non-Federal	3,279,096	61,124,938
Canadian	7,735,975	152,605,739
Total	15,631,116	275,314,434

Accomplishments (Acres)

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
Secured	11,176	917,627
Enhanced	3,688	545,760
Managed	21,424	549,523
Total*	11,176	917,627

* Secured, enhanced and managed acres are not additive. Acres are first secured, may then be enhanced and are subsequently placed under management.

Background Image:
Mallard flock
Ducks Unlimited Canada



The 728-hectare (1,800-acre) New Brunswick "Business" property has been transferred to NCC to protect the Musquash River Estuary.

Nature Conservancy of Canada



Snow Geese
Tye Gregg,
Ducks Unlimited Canada

Species Joint Ventures

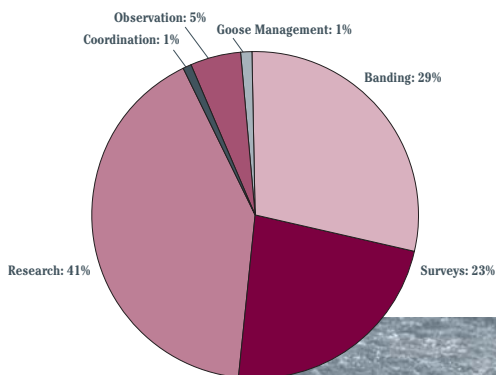
Arctic Goose Joint Venture

Most geese in North America nest and raise their young in Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of Canada. The Arctic Goose Joint Venture (AGJV) was initiated in 1986 as a component of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) to facilitate goose conservation, monitoring, and research. This partnership effort by the governments of Canada, the United States, Mexico and more recently in cooperation with Russia, has led to programs that monitor the status and productivity of Arctic geese, ensure important habitats are protected, and maintain goose populations.

The AGJV encourages multi-partner and multi-jurisdictional programs designed to understand goose populations and their ecosystems. Directly enhancing the management of North America's goose resources remains the primary function of the AGJV.

The AGJV continues to set research and monitoring priorities, and to provide grants to scientific investigations pursuing the AGJV vision of better understanding and management of Arctic-nesting geese. To date, the AGJV has leveraged \$28 M for banding, research, surveys and habitat management programs. Eighty four projects have been endorsed and 64 projects have been financially supported. Only one percent of funding has been spent on coordination. (Figure 1). The AGJV encourages multi-

AGJV Expenditures by Activity (1989/90 to 2005/06)



partner and multi-jurisdictional programs designed to understand goose populations and their ecosystems. Directly enhancing the management of North America's goose resources remains the primary function of the AGJV.

The AGJV recently approved an expansion in the scope of the joint venture. Originally encompassing only goose populations shared between Canada and the United States activities, the new scope will also include non-shared populations. This means that a number of goose populations breeding in Alaska and wintering in the U.S. (by-passing Canada) are now included, as are eastern high arctic (EHA) brant. The EHA brant are thought to have a breeding range that includes suitable locations throughout the eastern Queen Elizabeth Islands from eastern Melville Island in the west to Devon Island in the east, as well as



Axel-Heiberg and Ellesmere islands to their north. During migration these EHA brant use staging areas in Greenland and Iceland and wintering areas in Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and France.

Consistent monitoring of goose populations in the Canadian Arctic has been logistically and financially challenging. Recent experimental surveys in the Central Arctic using helicopters and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service turbine fixed-wing aircraft have shown promising results. A multi-partner and multi-year program is being developed in the Canadian Central Arctic to assess the feasibility of an operational population monitoring program for small Canada geese and white-fronted geese. This monitoring program will also target sea ducks and other migratory birds on their breeding grounds.

Several evaluation efforts are currently underway. The overabundance of white goose populations has been a high priority issue of the AGJV, with the Joint Venture having initiated and supported a number of related long-term projects. The evaluation of these initiatives is now being addressed. An AGJV light goose working group has been formed to work on an evaluation of lesser snow goose management programs. An evaluation report regarding the greater snow goose management program has been completed and approved by the AGJV Board and is being prepared for publication.

For more information, contact Deanna Dixon, Arctic Goose Joint Venture Coordinator, (780) 951-8652, deanna.dixon@ec.gc.ca.

Contributions (\$Cdn)*

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
U.S. Federal	753,550	5,479,817
U.S. Non-Federal	342,237	7,502,735
Canadian	888,656	15,679,904
Total	1,984,443	28,662,450

* These contributions contain no NAWCA funding.



A male harlequin duck is captured and banded during moult at White Rock, B.C.

Sean Boyd, Canadian Wildlife Service

Sea Duck Joint Venture

Sea Ducks are the least studied group of North American waterfowl. Problems with sea duck populations are widespread within the northern hemisphere and have become internationally recognized. Initial steps toward addressing these problems have been taken with the formation of a Sea Duck Joint Venture (SDJV) in 1999. The mission of the SDJV is to promote the conservation of North American sea ducks by providing greater knowledge and understanding to effectively manage sea duck populations. The SDJV is an exemplary model for international research cooperation and success between Canada and the U.S.

The SDJV participated in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan assessment, receiving high marks for its scientific approach to filling information gaps in sea duck knowledge.



Canadian Wildlife Service biologists herd a flock of surf scoters towards the capture site for banding and measuring.

Scott Gilliland, Canadian Wildlife Service

Eastern High Arctic Brant, Devil Island, Nunavut
Norm North, Canadian Wildlife Service



A mixed group of Barrow's goldeneye off the Stanley Park seawall, Vancouver, British Columbia.
Sean Boyd,
Canadian Wildlife Service

The 15 species of sea ducks for which the Sea Duck Joint Venture was formed:

- Common Eider
- King Eider
- Spectacled Eider
- Steller's Eider
- Black Scoter
- White-winged Scoter
- Surf Scoter
- Barrow's Goldeneye
- Common Goldeneye
- Bufflehead
- Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw)
- Harlequin Duck
- Common Merganser
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Hooded Merganser

2006 was a banner year for the SDJV. Two new agencies were added to the Management Board. The first is Bird Studies Canada which provides a presence on the Great Lakes for winter surveys, and the second is Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, an active partner in research on the U.S. Atlantic Coast. The SDJV participated in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan assessment, receiving high marks for its scientific approach to filling information gaps in sea duck knowledge. 2006 was also the first year that funds were set aside for monitoring projects with \$100,000 (US) available as matching funds.

Canadian research projects receiving support from SDJV included year two of a 3-year study of common eider population dynamics in Newfoundland and Labrador; moult ecology studies of surf scoters in Labrador; third year of Barrow's goldeneye winter habitat use in St. Lawrence River estuary and moult ecology of red-breasted mergansers in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Other studies included ecological and behavioural monitoring of common eiders in Quebec, survival rates of common eiders in Quebec and spring migration ecology of surf scoters in British Columbia.

Monitoring projects receiving funding from SDJV included surveys of common eiders in Nunavut, surveys of moulting black scoters in James Bay, Lake Ontario wintering duck surveys and a joint survey to develop sea duck population estimates for the British Columbia/Washington State coastline.

For more information, contact Keith McAloney, Sea Duck Joint Venture Coordinator, (506) 364-5013, keith.mcaloney@ec.gc.ca.

Contributions (\$CN)*

	2006	Total (1986-2006)
U.S. Federal	270,833	1,760,072
U.S. Non-Federal	31,600	218,954
Canadian	1,079,737	4,275,764
Total	1,382,170	6,254,790

* These contributions contain no NAWCA funding.

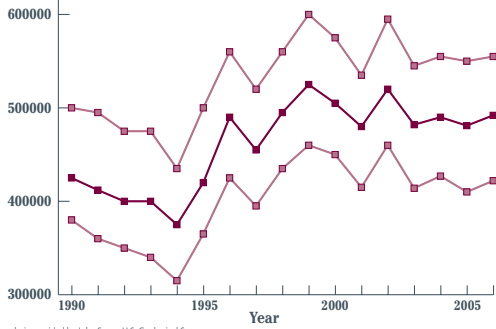
Black Duck Joint Venture

There is growing concern for the status of black duck populations in the western portion of their range. The concern arises as a result of counts of American black ducks during the U.S. midwinter survey in the Mississippi Flyway combined with the steady decline of individuals being captured for banding. The concern has prompted an evaluation funded by the Black Duck Joint Venture (BDJV). The evaluation will investigate this apparent negative trend by focusing on black duck harvest and productivity data.

Recent midwinter surveys in the Mississippi Flyway indicate black duck declines from about 80,000 birds in the mid-1990s to 20,000 currently. However, results of BDIV breeding ground helicopter surveys did not show any significant change in breeding numbers in the western portion of the black duck's range.



1990-2006 American Black duck breeding population estimates and 95% confidence intervals for the Eastern Survey Area



Data analysis provided by John Sauer, U.S. Geological Survey.

The apparent decline in the midwinter Mississippi Flyway surveys may be the result of a northward shift in the black duck's traditional wintering range to areas that are not as well covered by the midwinter survey. A relatively strong negative correlation between the decline in the Mississippi black duck count and an increase in the Canadian midwinter count (1984 to 2005 along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario) suggests black ducks are wintering farther north. Also, trends based on Christmas Bird Counts in the U.S. show a consistent decline for black ducks, but these counts in Canada indicate a positive trend. This implies that the decline in the U.S. midwinter survey may not be as dramatic as suspected. Results of the evaluation mean that an improved midwinter index of the black duck population would require a more complete survey of potential wintering habitats in both Canada and the U.S.

For more information, contact Rod Brook, Waterfowl Population Specialist, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, (705) 755-1503, rod.brook@ontario.ca.

Contributions (\$CN)*

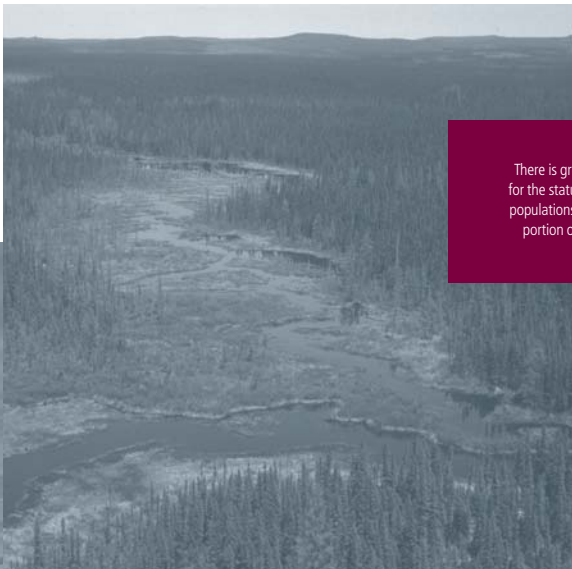
	2006	Total (1986-2006)
U.S. Federal	78,600	1,464,460
U.S. Non-Federal	259,100	3,572,950
Canadian	369,200	6,597,007
Total	706,900	11,634,417

* These contributions contain no NAWCA funding.



A navigator writing observations during black duck helicopter surveys.
Daniel Bordage,
Canadian Wildlife Service

Black duck pair
Gary Kramer



There is growing concern for the status of black duck populations in the western portion of their range.

Black duck habitat
Black Duck Joint Venture

Thank you to all our partners who supported the Canadian program by contributing in 2006:

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Background Image:

Northern Shovelers

Ducks Unlimited Canada

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North American Waterfowl Management Plan

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