



LETTER OF INTENT RELATED TO THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS IN THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA

BACKGROUND

Migratory birds connect people with nature and add beauty, sound, and color to our world. They provide countless opportunities for enjoyment by birders, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts and have cultural and spiritual importance. Birds also contribute environmental benefits, including pollination, insect and rodent control, and seed dispersal. They are good indicators of environmental health because they are sensitive to environmental changes and yet are visible and relatively easy to study. Migratory birds also play a key role in the U.S., Canadian, and Mexican economies, supporting recreational opportunities that create jobs and generate billions of dollars in revenue.

This year marks the centennial anniversary of the Convention Between the United States and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada) for the Protection of Migratory Birds, signed on August 16, 1916 (also called the Migratory Bird Treaty). This year also marks the 80th anniversary of the Mexico-United States Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Game Mammals, signed on February 7, 1936. These treaties, along with other conventions the United States, Canada, and Mexico have signed with other countries, form the cornerstones of our collective efforts to conserve birds that migrate across international borders.

The treaties connect our three nations – not just the federal governments but also state, provincial, and territorial governments, tribes and indigenous people, non-government organizations, and businesses and individuals who care about migratory bird conservation. Several collaborative mechanisms have been developed by the three nations, including the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight, Waterbird Conservation for the Americas, and the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. These fora promote and enhance coordinated efforts to conserve our shared resources and protect migratory birds at international, national, regional, and local levels.

Conservation efforts over the past century have resulted in many significant gains for birds. Effective management of hunting following the signing of these treaties allowed populations of many exploited species to recover. Wetland management efforts have helped to protect and restore habitat for many species of waterbirds. Controls on pesticide use combined with active management activities allowed many species to recover from poisoning by DDT.

Nevertheless, migratory birds continue to face myriad threats and many bird species are now declining due to loss of habitat and increased mortality. Urban and industrial development is encroaching on natural habitats throughout their ranges. Marine pollution, over-fishing, and

invasive species threaten seabird populations. Coastal development and pollution are affecting key stopover sites for migratory shorebirds. Conversion of grasslands to croplands is impacting grassland bird species in both their breeding and wintering areas. Hundreds of millions of birds are killed through collisions with windows, vehicles, or other human-made structures. New pesticides are impacting the availability of prey for insectivorous birds. Climate change is altering habitats throughout the ranges of all migratory birds.

Renewed conservation efforts are needed to build upon the successes of the past to address the current and emerging challenges to migratory birds. Prime Minister Trudeau and President Obama at their meeting in March 2016 committed to develop “a vision for migratory bird conservation for the next 100 years.”

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Letter of Intent is to demonstrate that the Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales from the United Mexican States (SEMARNAT); the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), hereinafter "the Agencies," do renew and reaffirm their efforts to collaborate on the conservation, protection, and restoration of migratory birds and their habitats in Canada, the United States of America, and the United Mexican States. By this Letter of Intent, the Agencies pledge to strengthen collaboration among our three nations, to address bird and habitat conservation both within and beyond our borders and to work together to build this vision.

FORMS OF COOPERATION

Desiring to promote collaboration in the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats throughout North America and beyond, the Agencies have reached the following understanding:

1. The Agencies intend to continue and expand cooperation in regional, bilateral and trilateral activities in support of migratory bird and habitat conservation.


The areas of cooperation may include, but are not limited to:

- Strengthening institutional capacities in migratory bird and habitat conservation;
- Exchanging information on best practices and lessons learned for conservation;
- Promoting cooperative and coordinated monitoring and research programs on migratory birds and their habitats to provide a sound scientific basis for conservation planning and actions;
- Encouraging technological cooperation, including research and development to improve technologies, and the transfer of new technologies and information on mutually agreed terms;
- Promoting mechanisms to improve the protection of the environment and natural resources, such as incentives for conserving, restoring, or enhancing the environment; public/private partnerships; and endangered species conservation;
- Developing strategies for conservation investments to bring together stakeholders;
- Improving natural resource management;
- Supporting environmental education and outreach; and
- Identifying and securing funds to support projects and initiatives related to migratory bird conservation, research, and monitoring.

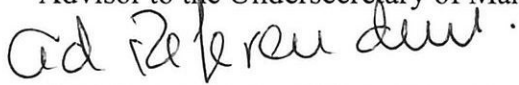
2. The Agencies intend to continue to participate in and support collaborative initiatives related to bird and habitat conservation including but not limited to the Migratory Birds Working Table at the Trilateral Committee, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the Commission on Environmental Cooperation, and Joint Ventures.
3. In the course of current activities or the development of specific new cooperative activities, the Agencies may invite the participation of other government agencies, educational and research institutions, as well as any other stakeholders considered relevant and pertinent for the development of the referenced activities, and non-government organizations with experience and interest in conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.
4. Recognizing the importance of conservation of all native bird species and their habitats throughout Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, the Agencies intend to work cooperatively to seek mechanisms to improve communication and coordination with agencies and organizations throughout the Western Hemisphere with responsibility for and interest in bird and habitat conservation.
5. To support this approach, the Agencies also intend to work together with other countries in the Western Hemisphere to develop a shared vision and strategy for migratory bird conservation in the Americas over the next 100 years.
6. All activities of cooperation are subject to the availability of funds and to the applicable laws and regulations of the respective governments, with the understanding that:
 - a. Each Agency is expected to provide for its own expenses;
 - b. This Letter of Intent is not legally binding and cannot give rise to any liability or claim for damages by the Agencies or any third party;
 - c. This Letter of Intent does not obligate funding nor allocation of resources, assets or personnel from the Agencies; and
 - d. There is no obligation on the part of the Agencies to enter into any agreements or contracts associated with this Letter of Intent.
7. The Agencies intend to make all non-proprietary technical information obtained through their collaboration available to the public to the extent permissible under their respective laws and regulations.
8. Cooperation under this Letter of Intent may commence upon signature by the Agencies and may continue indefinitely. Any Agency may discontinue its cooperation at any time by notification in writing to the other Agencies.
9. The Letter of Intent may be modified by joint consent of the Agencies in writing.

Signed in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, the 18 day of the month of May of the year two thousand sixteen.

FOR LA SECRETARÍA DE MEDIO AMBIENTE Y RECURSOS NATURALES DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS MEXICANOS



/s/ Dra. Yolanda Aurora Alaniz Pasini
Advisor to the Undersecretary of Management for Environmental Protection



FOR THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



/s/ Dan Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE CANADA



/s/ Sue Milburn-Hopwood
Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Canadian Wildlife Service