



Canadian Wildlife Service



Strategic Plan 2000

The Path Forward for Environment Canada's Wildlife Conservation Program

The Wildlife Quilt

Often, in bygone days, a patchwork quilt was made to commemorate some special occasion in the life of a family. The 50th Anniversary of the Canadian Wildlife Service in 1997 inspired Leslie Van Patter and Robert Lyon to explore this traditional Canadian form. Their design, composed of many interlocking pieces, is a fitting symbol of the range of CWS programs, from habitat management to environmental monitoring and the protection of endangered species. Its many images depict Canada's biological diversity, as represented by some of our best-known birds and mammals. The living tapestry of wildlife is a treasured part of our national heritage, to be passed down from generation to generation. The task of caring for it never really ends.

Canadian Wildlife Service Strategic Plan 2000



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Introduction



Photo: Kathryn Dickson

Northern Pintail banding



Photo: Bob Milko

Nesting Atlantic Puffins



Photo: CWS

Arctic Tern

The need for a strategic plan

This document sets the direction and scope for Environment Canada's wildlife program for the period 2000—2010. It reflects the challenges and opportunities presented by the department's legislated mandates and authorities, the expectations of partners and the public, resource needs and limitations, and of ultimate importance, the increasing urgency of Canadian wildlife conservation concerns.

Setting the strategic direction

This plan sets the broad strategic direction for the Canadian Wildlife Service for the coming decade and outlines the strategies and opportunities to meet the corresponding objectives. As such, it serves as a tool for guiding our decision making, focusing human and financial resources, and demonstrating our key roles in Canada's wildlife conservation to departmental staff, our partners, and the Canadian public.

Value of the CWS name

The term "Canadian Wildlife Service" (CWS) is formally used for a component of Environment Canada in Headquarters and informally for the department's wildlife programs throughout the regions. The name is well recognized worldwide to denote Canada's wildlife conservation agency and has enormous value both within and beyond the department for its connotation of a long history of scientific expertise, commitment, leadership, and partnerships. It is used here in an inclusive way that builds on these associations to describe all staff and programs of Environment Canada that are involved in and support the department's wildlife conservation activities.

Conservation Challenges in the Coming Decade

Photo: CWS



Boreal fen in Nova Scotia

Photo: Bob Milko



Newborn Vancouver Island Marmot

Increasing concerns for dramatic population changes

Many conservation challenges that have faced CWS and its conservation partners are increasing in severity, scope, and impact on wildlife resources. By 1999, 340 species in Canada, including 52 birds, had formal national designation in several categories as species at risk, and three of the twelve species confirmed as extinct in Canada were birds. The rates of both listing and extinction continue to increase globally. In North America, many species are subject to ongoing and often precipitous population declines, almost invariably as a result of human action. As more is learned about many poorly monitored species, additional population declines are often documented. At the other end of the spectrum, some human activities that upset ecological balances have led to burgeoning populations of several species now considered overabundant, again presenting conservation challenges. Many of these ecological changes also increase the susceptibility of our wildlife to

disease and other population health effects, particularly those species in seasonal concentrations.

Habitat quantity and ecosystem quality

Many concerns reflect human impacts on wildlife habitats from a diverse range of human land use, including urbanization, agricultural intensification, forest harvesting, and other resource extraction industries. These have increasingly led to overall habitat loss, fragmentation of remaining habitats, conversion to other types of systems, and general habitat degradation. In addition to these direct effects, less immediate impacts on wildlife and habitats include long-term effects of acid precipitation, widespread and expanding use of pesticides and other toxic chemicals, and increasing and largely unknown impacts of global climate change. All these ecosystem-based effects can only be addressed by new landscape-level approaches.

Photo: CWS



Northern Pintails

Photo: CWS



Redhead

Photo: CWS



Song Sparrow

Climate change

The effects of climate change on wildlife, and on the ecosystems of which they are part, are potentially far-reaching, and CWS will require focused attention to assess specific impacts at various scales. These effects may include changing species distribution and effects on their health, directly or indirectly, and an understanding of these will have to be integrated into habitat conservation, species recovery plans, monitoring strategies, and the setting of population targets. It is critically important that the wildlife response to climate change be understood and considered in future wildlife conservation decision making.

Human use of wildlife

Traditional uses of wildlife, such as hunting for food and sport, bird watching, and nature enjoyment, as well as increasing chronic pressure on animals and their habitats from other human recreational activities, add to the impacts on our wildlife populations. These uses must be carefully considered and managed to minimize their contribution to the cumulative negative pressures on these species.

Cumulative impact

Increased international human movement and trade have led to new threats from introduced disease and exotic species. As biotechnological breakthroughs affect the lives of Canadians, wildlife are exposed to threats as diverse as impacts on the genomes of native populations from release of genetically modified individuals, increased competition from exotics or genetically enhanced species, and the replacement of native trees on which wildlife depend by new “super species.” Many impacts considered alone may themselves merely affect individuals at sublethal levels. However, because they combine with other threats to individual survival and population health, the cumulative effects of a range of sublethal impacts often combine to deplete our wildlife and the ecosystems on which they depend.

Influencing Factors – The Changing Canadian Context

Photo: CWS



American Kestrel

Photo: CWS



White-crowned Sparrow

Photo: CWS



Greater Yellowlegs

Changing social and cultural expectations

The Canadian public has high expectations that its government will conserve the wildlife for which this country is famous and which has played such an integral role in our history. The value that we place on our wildlife and nature is reflected in the images we see each day on our currency. In this electronic age, Canadians are much better informed about the global plight of species at risk and are distressed to find that these problems exist in Canada too. This concern for nature is increasingly translated into high expectations for conservation action, often transmitted through membership in strong nongovernment conservation organizations.

A shift towards nonconsumptive wildlife use

Canadians have increasing time, disposable income, and desire to see and experience Canadian nature and wildlife. This has led to a widening of Canadian expectations for access to and availability of wildlife. In addition, although the number of hunters in Canada continues to decline, related regulatory requirements and associated public consultations have become

increasingly complex. Overall, there is a gradual shift in focus towards these nonconsumptive uses, adding correspondingly to the pressures that both wildlife and resource management agencies are under.

The changing mandate for CWS

Environment Canada's wildlife conservation mandate continues to derive largely from the *Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA)*, the *Canada Wildlife Act (CWA)*, the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRIITA)*, and components of a range of federal environmental legislation and commitments such as the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy (1995) and the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)*. It is also driven by international treaties such as the Migratory Birds Convention (MBC, 1916) with the United States, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention, 1971), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, 1975), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992). The Parkville Protocol to amend the Migratory Birds

Photo: CWS



Northern wetlands

Photo: CWS



Northern Gannets

Convention (1999) clarifies and expands the department's obligations in relation to migratory birds. A further evolution is expected with the passing of the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* to address the protection and recovery of species at risk, formally expanding the department's mandate.

Renewed federal-provincial-territorial and international cooperation

Because various components of the jurisdiction for wildlife and its habitat fall to either the federal or provincial and territorial governments, and are sometimes shared, practical approaches for governmental cooperation, as laid out in the Wildlife Policy for Canada (1990) and the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, are essential. They have been demonstrated for the past fifteen years under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) and various collaborative approaches commonly used among provincial and federal wildlife enforcement agencies. This cooperative approach is increasingly necessary as costs rise, resources dwindle, and the valuable synergies of collaborative action becomes more evident. Two recent cooperative ventures central to mandates

of the Canadian Wildlife Service that bring it together in constructive partnerships with provincial and territorial counterparts in a continental context are the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk (1996) and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (1999).

Aboriginal comanagement opportunities

With redefined treaty obligations and the development of aboriginal government systems and wildlife management boards, a new framework enabled by implementing the Parksville Protocol must be developed to enter into effective comanagement of wildlife with aboriginal people throughout Canada. New regulatory and conservation regimes must be developed that accommodate traditional harvests of aboriginal peoples and allow for their active participation in the management of wildlife resources, including migratory birds and species at risk.

Changing roles for nongovernment partners

As wildlife conservation partnerships have matured, nongovernment organizations are increasingly recognized as integral partners bringing expertise, resources, and alternative

Photo: CWS



Prothonotary Warbler

Photo: CWS



Evening Grosbeak

approaches to the table. Some have carved out essential roles in conservation activities, such as the functions of Bird Studies Canada in national and regional bird surveys and volunteer monitoring projects. Many universities have similarly moved towards applied wildlife research, often in networks with CWS, such the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre, the Atlantic Cooperative Wildlife Ecology Research Network (ACWERN), and the Simon Fraser University Cooperative Research Unit. CWS can play a larger role as coordinator and catalyst, in order to take full advantage of these increasingly complex collaborations, and to develop further productive relationships.

Influencing the landscape

There is an increasing challenge to resolving landscape-level pressures on wildlife and habitat that reflect complex environmental, social, and economic factors. Population-level approaches are seldom appropriate in dealing with these issues, and ecosystem-level initiatives that influence landscape evolution for the benefit of wildlife must be followed instead. The NAWMP model of influencing these broad-scale land-use practices

and decisions, by developing diverse partnerships with the land managers themselves, has been a major influence throughout the 1990s. CWS must continue to apply many of the same joint-venture approaches, with different combinations of partners, to meet other complex ecosystem-level challenges to our wildlife.

Impact mitigation arrangements

A new challenge is emerging in assessing the impacts on wildlife of industrial and commercial activities, such as mining, forestry, commercial fishing, energy development, or transportation. The need to develop arrangements that allow for ongoing environmentally sustainable industrial activities, while protecting priority bird populations and habitat, will pull CWS in a challenging but important new direction of population-level management and habitat conservation.

Increasing international concerns

The freer flow of goods across borders brings increasing challenges in the control of wildlife movement, involving the balancing of rights to trade with the conservation of wildlife. Increased

Photo: D. Muir



Whooping Crane on nest

Photo: Kathryn Dickson



Arctic Tern chick

Photo: Bob Milko



Pond Lilies

likelihood of colonization by exotic species, together with increasing threats to migratory species when they are outside Canada, particularly through loss of winter habitat, also add to international concerns. However, recognition of the need for better global cooperation in conservation has led to new working arrangements with many countries, including circumpolar nations, the United States, and the Americas. International conventions and treaties now have significantly more influence on CWS's activities, including the revised Migratory Birds Convention, the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, CITES, the Convention on Climate Change, the Arctic Council agreement on the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, and the North American Trilateral Commission on Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, all of which bring new opportunities and obligations.

Changing critical mass to address biodiversity conservation

The increasing concern about and obligation to conserve all species has become more apparent in the past decade. The ability of Canadian scientific institutions—governments, universities, and

natural history museums—to respond to this concern within present capacity has been challenging. Only about one-half of the species in Canada have been identified, and perhaps fewer than five percent have been described in a manner sufficient to understand needs, ecology, and threats to those species. CWS can facilitate the augmentation of critical mass in species identification and monitoring throughout the country to contribute to the overall and specific comprehension of biota and ecological interactions at grand and small scales.

Limited resources and capacity

Although conservation challenges and obligations have already expanded dramatically over the past decade and will continue to grow, the resources available to CWS to meet them have not increased correspondingly. The gaps are particularly obvious in science, policy, and enforcement, where lack of recruitment of young staff and lack of modern equipment are hampering our ability to cope in a rapidly changing technological world. Our scientists must now deal with impacts as diverse as the effects of endocrine-disrupting chemicals, genetic engineering, and global ecosystem change.

Guiding Principles for the Canadian Wildlife Service



Photo: Bob Milko

Common Murre



Photo: Simon Nadeau

Observing birds

The activities of the Canadian Wildlife Service will be influenced by four overarching principles that build on the culture of the organization and epitomize its effectiveness. By reflecting these principles in all our programs, we will maintain and even strengthen our broad influence and leadership.

Building on sound science

Our strong record of conducting focused wildlife science, including both research and monitoring, and applying the results directly to address conservation concerns, is a major strength of the Canadian Wildlife Service. This method of basing policy, management, and conservation decisions on sound science has laid a solid foundation for our programs. Our research into the ecology of key species, their role in ecosystems, and the effects of human activities on them provides the basic understanding needed to evaluate issues and take appropriate action. Our programs to monitor trends in populations and habitat availability as well as changes in the nature and severity of human impacts reflect the practical need to

understand the status of Canada's wildlife, as well as our jurisdictional responsibility. CWS expertise in areas such as wildlife toxicology, implications of habitat change, and the use of birds as bio-indicators has enabled us to lead science-based partnerships with other governments, universities, and conservation organizations. As the complexity of our conservation challenges increases, our managers and partners look increasingly to CWS scientists to lead in these science partnerships.

Collaborative conservation of biological diversity

The expectations, expertise, reputation, and roles of the Canadian Wildlife Service effectively position it to contribute significantly to the conservation of biodiversity in Canada. Indeed, the guiding principles of the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy recognize that no single jurisdiction is responsible for conserving biodiversity in Canada—it requires local, regional, provincial, territorial, aboriginal, national, and international cooperation and sharing. In contributing to the conservation of Canadian biodiversity, CWS will facilitate national capacity-building and will



Peregrine Falcon



Trumpeter Swans



Banding Murres

concentrate its activities in areas that reflect its key roles. If these actions are effective, CWS will also provide for the collateral conservation of many other species of plants and animals. Simply put, what is good for Canada's birds and species at risk and their habitats is good for many other components of our native biological diversity.

Utilization of the ecosystem approach

As a leader in Canadian wildlife conservation, the Canadian Wildlife Service subscribes to the holistic ecosystem approach of identifying, interpreting, and responding to wildlife conservation concerns. This approach, defined as *a strategy for the integrated management of land, water, air, and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way*, considers birds and all wildlife as components of ecosystems rather than as single species. By expanding the successful NAWMP experience of implementing conservation actions in an ecosystem context, CWS will ensure that the impacts of its activities on other components of affected ecosystems are positive. It will also demonstrate to others the practical value of

taking such a broad-based perspective, in line with the department's other ecosystem-level initiatives.

Communication for wildlife

As the federal wildlife agency, the Canadian Wildlife Service acts as a credible voice for wildlife in Canada and abroad. It has carried important information to the public through its pan-Canadian *Hinterland Who's Who* series of brochures and television clips, which are immediately recognized by Canadians of all ages. The need to communicate with and listen to Canadians on an increasing range of wildlife concerns, including our consultations on regulatory changes, must now be a major component of all CWS activities. CWS continues to represent Canadian wildlife interests internationally and represent global wildlife interests in Canada. CWS will continue to carry out the responsibility it shares with its partners for speaking for wildlife, while influencing and reflecting Canadian attitudes to nature.

Our Mission and Vision

Photo: Kathryn Dickson



Common Loon, Pontoon Lake, NT

Photo: Bob Milko



Shallow water marsh in northern Ontario

The vision

The Canadian Wildlife Service contributes to achieving the broad vision set out in the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy (1995):

A society that lives and develops as part of nature, valuing the diversity of life, takes no more than can be replenished, and leaves future generations a world rich in biodiversity.

The mission

The specific mission of the Canadian Wildlife Service, as the national wildlife conservation agency charged with facilitating the nature conservation program in Canada, is to:

Conserve wildlife and the ecosystems of which they are a part, with a particular focus on migratory birds and species at risk.

The Roles of the Canadian Wildlife Service



Scarlet Tanager



Mallard

Three key roles

As the national wildlife conservation agency promoting and applying the ecosystem approach to the conservation of wildlife and biological diversity in Canada, the Canadian Wildlife Service:

- 1 Works nationally and internationally to ensure the conservation of migratory bird populations.
- 2 Serves as the lead agency in Canada for the protection of species at risk, with a particular focus on those species under federal jurisdiction.
- 3 Leads in the conservation, protection, and rehabilitation of habitats of significance to migratory birds and species at risk in Canada.

Facilitating a broader wildlife conservation agenda

As Canada's national wildlife conservation agency, the Canadian Wildlife Service is also expected to play a coordinating role with respect to other broad issues. The development of and

influence on a shared agenda among Canadian and international partners to conserve biodiversity in general and specific species and habitats in particular is one of many ancillary roles of CWS. Included are the conservation of wildlife that crosses provincial, territorial, or national borders or is subject to other international agreements, such as certain caribou herds or polar bears. CWS's responsibility for certain aspects of other federal legislation and international agreements adds to its involvement in such important fields as wildlife toxicology and the conservation of wetland biodiversity. These extra responsibilities provide strong support for the three essential CWS roles.

Program Objectives

Photo: CWS



Polar Bear

Photo: CWS



Tundra Swans

Objectives

As the national wildlife conservation agency responding to the challenges and opportunities at hand, the Canadian Wildlife Service will direct its activities to meet the following objectives or targets:

Migratory birds

- Migratory bird populations are sustained at healthy levels by the year 2020.
- Access to migratory birds in a fair and equitable manner is ensured.

Species at risk

- Species at risk are protected through continuing implementation of the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk in Canada by all jurisdictions.
- Threatened or endangered species populations under federal jurisdiction meet the objectives of recovery strategies and action plans within 15 years.
- No species of special concern under federal jurisdiction is listed as threatened or endangered.

Habitat

- Habitats are conserved, protected, and rehabilitated to meet the objectives of CWS's conservation plans for migratory birds and species at risk within 15 years.
- Ecosystem approach principles are used when making resource management decisions

Our Strategic Direction

Photo: G.W. Bevensbergen



King Eider

Photo: Lu Cathyn



Swift Fox

Two new initiatives that encompass the major roles of the Canadian Wildlife Service and many of its partners in wildlife conservation together will provide the broad direction to meeting Environment Canada's wildlife conservation objectives, by combining prevention and cure. The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), which brings together a wealth of government and nongovernment partners in Canada, the United States, and Mexico for the coordinated conservation of birds, seeks to prevent populations from declining or becoming endangered. The Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk (the Accord), an agreement among federal, provincial, and territorial governments for a collaborative approach to the identification, protection, and recovery of species at risk, serves as a cure for existing critical population concerns. Effective participation in and leadership of these initiatives in Canada will provide the strategic envelope for future Canadian Wildlife Service activities.

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative

NABCI is a continental partnership of Canada, the United States, and Mexico designed to achieve regionally based, biologically driven, and landscape-oriented partnerships delivering the full spectrum of bird conservation programs, coordinated among all partners. It builds on the success of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in supporting simultaneous, collaborative, on-the-ground conservation action for all bird species, by increasing the effectiveness of new and existing programs and initiatives. By coordinating all key partners at regional levels through cooperative initiatives based on NAWMP joint ventures, it will ensure that partners bring their unique combinations of expertise and resources to bear in addressing one commonly accepted set of priorities for all bird species. In short, NABCI will focus our attention on the essential role of keeping our common birds common.

The implementation of NABCI is based on four bird species groups: waterfowl, landbirds,

Photo: G.W. Bevensbergen



Hudsonian Godwit

Photo: G.W. Bevensbergen



Red Phalarope

Photo: G.W. Bevensbergen



Great Blue Heron

shorebirds, and seabirds and colonial waterbirds. Conservation actions for these NABCI “pillars” will be coordinated in Canada by four main programs:

- North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) for waterfowl,
- Partners In Flight (PIF) for landbirds,
- Canadian Shorebird Conservation Plan (CSCP) for shorebirds,
- Wings Over Water (WOW) for seabirds and colonial waterbirds.

Each plan sets out national priorities, objectives, and direction for its group of species, to be implemented by regional action plans developed cooperatively by key partners. The action plans will follow the landscape-level approach used successfully by NAWMP joint ventures for 15 years and will be implemented in a practical, complementary, and coordinated fashion. In this country, overall coordination will be carried out by NABCI-Canada, a multipartner council chaired by Environment Canada.

The Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk

This Accord acknowledges that in a country as vast and diverse as Canada, with different levels of jurisdiction, no one government can protect all species and their habitats. The federal government’s broad strategy to protect species at risk therefore has three basic components:

- partnership with provinces and territories through the Accord,
- promotion of stewardship and incentives programs,
- federal legislation to afford protection to species at risk.

In the Accord, the federal, provincial, and territorial governments agree to legally protect all threatened and endangered species and their habitats, to work together to recover these species, to cooperate in ensuring that no species “falls through the cracks” between jurisdictions, and to monitor the status of wildlife species in Canada. In the upcoming decade, CWS will

Photo: Chuck Gordon



Common Snipe

Photo: CWS



Yellow Warbler

Photo: Kathryn Dickson



Snow Goose banding drive

devote considerable effort to the critical priority of reversing population trends for those species already on the brink.

CWS will play a lead role in conserving species at risk by working with other jurisdictions, implementing effective legislation, and using stewardship and incentives as the preferred means to protect critical habitat. The signatory governments will establish complementary conservation programs and legislation, and many have reviewed their regulatory mechanisms and developed new endangered species acts. Environment Canada has worked with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Parks Canada, and many of its other partners to develop the proposed federal *Species At Risk Act (SARA)*. This far-reaching legislation will provide the mechanism to implement federal action and direction and complement provincial and territorial legislation. Related initiatives will provide essential new resources to make these plans a

reality. They will enable CWS to play its agreed-upon role in a renewed Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and lead in implementing the Recovery of Nationally Endangered Wildlife (RENEW) process, effectively responding to the needs of species at risk within federal jurisdiction.

Strategies for CWS in the New Decade

Photo: Stephen Wendt



Richardson's Canada Geese

Photo: G.W. Bejersbergen



American White Pelicans

Photo: CWS



Peregrine Falcon

Evolving strategies

The Canadian Wildlife Service must follow five strategies to meet its objectives, based on those that have traditionally enabled it to have far-reaching success in so many areas, despite its relatively small size and limited resources.

These key strategies will be to :

- 1 Renew commitment to wildlife conservation priorities.
- 2 Enable an adaptive Canadian Wildlife Service institutional capacity.
- 3 Strengthen Canadian Wildlife Service science capacity.
- 4 Apply diversified policy and regulatory approaches.
- 5 Use partnerships.

Strategy 1 – Renew commitment to wildlife conservation priorities

Together with our partners, evaluate national and regional conservation needs for migratory birds, species at risk, habitat conservation, and

supporting programs and determine the roles of CWS in meeting these priorities.

This strategy will lead to:

- a common set of bird conservation priorities for species, habitats, and sites of concern, with our continental, national, and regional NABCI partners,
- a common set of recovery priorities for species at risk and critical habitats, with our federal, provincial, territorial, and nongovernment partners,
- a focused set of directions within the CWS mandate that relates priorities for bird conservation, recovery of species at risk, and habitat protection to those of the department's programs for ecosystem initiatives, enforcement, biodiversity conservation, and administrative support, and
- commitment of CWS staff, the department, our partners, and the public to the priorities that CWS will pursue.

Photo: Bob Milko



Razorbills and Atlantic Puffin

Photo: G.V.L. Beijersbergen



Northern Pintails

Strategy 2 – Enable an adaptive Canadian Wildlife Service institutional capacity

Assess and refocus existing programs to reflect new expectations and address and communicate agreed-upon CWS priorities, including the implementation of NABCI, species at risk programs, and related responsibilities, and adjust the required institutional capacity and resources to implement them.

This strategy will lead to:

- objective justification for revitalized programs and for the resources to implement them, which position CWS to encompass new and existing jurisdictional obligations, comanagement frameworks, and increasing conservation concerns,
- relevant, flexible, and funded CWS programs in place nationally and regionally adapted to play lead roles in the implementation of NABCI, and developed to support the Accord through SARA,
- support for CWS involvement in other federal wildlife concerns, including wildlife health and toxicology, transboundary wildlife issues, and international wildlife agreements,
- understanding and support among departmental wildlife conservation program staff for the new alignment of our programs,
- a renewed ability to communicate our scientific findings, management and enforcement activities, and conservation messages effectively within the department, among our partnerships, and to Canadians,
- relevant partnerships to strengthen wildlife enforcement to achieve compliance and deter noncompliance, and
- reduced stress among staff, matched by increased confidence that CWS is moving forward with sufficient critical mass to address its conservation priorities.

Photo: CWS



Sandhill Crane

Photo: CWS



Northern Gannet

Photo: G.W. Beyerbergen



Red-breasted Merganser

Strategy 3 – Strengthen Canadian Wildlife Service science capacity

Rejuvenate our scientific expertise and capacity to focus renewed resources on essential wildlife research and monitoring needed to address conservation priorities.

This strategy will lead to:

- a consensus among staff on how to strengthen, broaden, and apply our scientific expertise, with the increased capacity to do so, enunciated through the departmental science agenda,
- new scientific staff strategically hired to provide expertise in fields such as community ecology, landscape ecology, conservation biology and taxonomy, and wildlife health, and new capacity in fast-changing disciplines such as genomics, telemetry, and ecotoxicology,
- current staff trained to implement realigned programs and able to maintain the CWS tradition of leading partnerships on the basis of their recognized scientific expertise,
- scientific and resource management expertise that is current and sufficient to deal with new challenges and that can ensure that management decisions continue to be based on sound science,
- access to equipment and tools purchased or obtained through partnerships to ensure that our activities are not limited,
- allocation of resources that permit adequate research, monitoring, and conservation action in all priority areas, including remote areas where logistical costs are high, such as the north, the offshore, and neighbouring partner countries, and
- a resulting improved understanding of the ecology and biological requirements of migratory birds, species at risk, their habitats, and the threats they are exposed to.

Photo: Kathryn Dickson



Geese on the Canadian southern prairies, in fall

Photo: CWS



Black Guillemot

Photo: CWS



Atlantic Puffin with Capelin

Strategy 4 – Apply diversified policy and regulatory approaches

Diversify the mix of legislative, regulatory, and policy tools and use and enforce them to direct and influence activities of those whose activities affect Canada's wildlife.

This strategy will lead to:

- adequate contemporary federal legislation implemented and maintained to provide effective jurisdictional context for conservation action,
- the regulations implementing the *MBCA*, *CWA*, *WAPPRIITA*, and *CEAA* being reviewed and adjusted to cover emerging requirements,
- implementation of a protected areas strategy that applies securement and stewardship approaches to key habitats in terrestrial, freshwater, and marine areas,
- the resulting regulatory and compliance approaches, combined with those based on stewardship and influence, positioning CWS to play its lead role in the implementation of NABCI and the Accord,
- building wildlife conservation priorities into implementation plans for other departmental ecosystem initiatives,
- at the national policy level, CWS working to ensure that federal incentives to support wildlife conservation are created and disincentives are removed, and
- CWS implementing policies that support the national implementation of related international initiatives, such as the Ramsar Convention, CITES, the agreement on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, the Trilateral Commission on Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Photo: CWS



Northern wetland

Photo: Kathryn Dickson



Atlantic Brant banding drive

Strategy 5 – Use partnerships

Strengthen existing partnerships and invest in new ones with nontraditional partners and land managers, using the joint-venture approach to implement common priorities.

This strategy will lead to:

- renewed synergy in existing partnerships as new resources, rejuvenated staff, and novel approaches are focused on shared priorities,
- increased interest and participation of Canadians in wildlife conservation, with broader involvement of volunteer naturalists in CWS programs,
- improvement in shared understanding between CWS and those whose activities influence populations and habitats of migratory birds and species at risk, with broad buy-in for consensus solutions,
- changing governance under native land claims that will provide opportunities to build effective comanagement initiatives,
- augmenting the incorporation of aboriginal traditional knowledge into wildlife science and conservation management,
- strategic liaisons with university research networks to increase opportunities for the study of applied conservation issues,
- distribution of information on critical species, migratory birds, and habitats increasingly undertaken through conservation data centres and internet-based networks, and
- effective international arrangements developed with countries that share migratory bird populations, within North America and among circumpolar nations and the Americas.

Setting our Priorities

Photo: Kathryn Dickson



Lesser Scaup nest

Photo: CWS



Ducks

A common set of conservation priorities

This document sets the broad strategic orientation for Environment Canada's wildlife conservation program, on which specific priorities will be based. These priorities will be set as part of the Departmental planning process, and reviewed and revised annually. They will build on the results of specific priority-setting exercises being conducted by CWS along with other partners implementing the Accord and NABCI, thus ensuring that Canadian Wildlife Service priorities will be in step with those ranked high by these consensus processes.