

## **Joint Ventures and Bird Conservation Regions: evolving roles for bird conservation delivery**

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) has prompted a need and desire to develop bird conservation delivery systems that build on both Joint Venture partnerships and the biological foundation of Bird Conservation Regions. At its February 1, 2000 meeting, the U.S. NABCI Committee agreed to promote conservation delivery via existing and new Joint Ventures as “one layer of carpet” nationwide, thus eliminating redundant partnership structures and separate biological planning processes.

The key to realizing a nationwide concept lies in assuring a network exists among the individual pieces. Communication links between Bird Conservation Region staff and Joint Ventures will bind the “one layer of carpet” together. Collectively this network of biological expertise organized along Bird Conservation Regions, combined with the implementation capacity of dynamic partnerships organized in Joint Ventures, can best deliver integrated bird conservation.

### *Framework for growth*

Joint Ventures can expand and integrate with Bird Conservation Regions in a variety of ways, any of which may be an effective and efficient system to deliver bird conservation. Joint Venture Management Boards must develop the capacity to objectively evaluate project integrity and seek funding for projects addressing all priority birds across all habitats within the Joint Venture area.

Bird Conservation Regions should function as the primary unit within which biological foundation issues are resolved, the landscape configuration of sustainable habitats is designed, and priority projects originate.

### *Tentative roles and responsibilities*

Some existing Joint Ventures may expand and new Joint Ventures will be created to completely cover the United States. Partnerships of States, Non-government Organizations (NGOs), regional representatives of Federal Agencies, management boards, and others, will ultimately decide the number and geographic configuration of Joint Ventures. New funding for Joint Venture operations should be directed to the greatest needs among all Joint Ventures.

Priority should be given to:

1. Supporting a Joint Venture Coordinator position in each existing Joint Venture,
2. Establishing base capacity for biological planning, implementation, and evaluation,

3. Joint Ventures that are addressing the full spectrum of bird conservation, and
4. A Joint Venture Coordinator position for each organizing Joint Venture.

Bird Conservation Regions completely cover the United States, but very few have the capacity to initiate work on biological foundation issues or conservation planning. New funding for integrated bird conservation should be directed to staff in Bird Conservation Regions to oversee future growth and organize planning, implementation, and evaluation for Management Boards.

Priority should be given to:

1. Developing the biological foundation for all priority bird species within the Bird Conservation Region, including coordination and prioritization of inventory, monitoring, and research,
2. Developing the necessary landscape design and specific habitat objectives to sustain bird populations (requires development of GIS capabilities),
3. Coordinating a technical committee to solicit, review, and prioritize project proposals that relate to population and habitat objectives, and
4. Presenting projects to the Joint Venture Management Board or other opportunities for funding.

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