

B. Conservation Strategies

Waterfowl, Shorebirds, Waterbirds, and Landbirds

Habitat Protection

1. Fee title acquisition: Acquisition of lands to be owned by a conservation agency or organization and managed for wildlife conservation in perpetuity, especially in focus areas and in areas where acquisition of lands builds upon networks of contiguous existing protected lands. Major partners include the state fish and wildlife and land conservation agencies, National Wildlife Refuges, national Forests, The Nature Conservancy, land trusts, and state Audubon chapters.
2. Conservation easements: Conservation easements with private landowners and local governments will be used to acquire legal interests to conserve and manage important wetlands and associated upland habitats and limit development while allowing some use by the landowner consistent with the easement conditions.
3. Cooperative agreements: Agreements with corporations, government agencies, private landowners, and other organizations will be used to protect wetlands and integrate compatible land use practices that benefit wetlands and associated upland habitats.
4. Leases: Long-term leases with private landowners, corporations, and other private entities can be used to implement wetland protection and management activities.
5. Financial incentives: Develop state and local legislation that would provide financial benefits, i.e., alteration in property taxes to individual landowners, to encourage protection and conservation of wetlands and associated upland habitats.

Habitat Restoration

6. Restore tidal wetland hydrology: Restore flow to tidal creeks and marshes that has been cutoff or reduced by placement of roads, dikes, and undersized culverts resulting in a major change in the marsh structure and often resulting in the invasion by *Phragmites*.
7. Restore drained wetlands : Restore drained and ditched freshwater wetlands by eliminating drains and ditches, restoring hydrology and planting or seeding wetland plants where needed.
8. Restore Riparian Systems: Restore the natural flow of streams and floodplain wetlands that have been straightened or altered.

Habitat Enhancement and Management

9. Improve water level management on managed wetlands: Upgrade existing federal, state, and other managed wetlands areas by providing adequate water control structures, dikes, etc., to maximize management opportunities and improve the quality of waterfowl breeding, wintering, and migration habitats as well as to provide for seasonal waterfowl, waterbird and shorebird needs. Impoundment management is particularly important in the southeast Atlantic Coastal Plain where there are thousands of acres of former rice plantations;
10. Restore vegetation to impacted wetlands: Implement measures to restore natural vegetation and improve the health and productivity of wetland habitats that have deteriorated due to human impact and overgrazing by snow geese and other impacts resulting in loss of vegetation;
11. Restore converted wetlands: Where appropriate, restore forested wetlands that have been converted to other wetland types through planting and management;
12. Open marsh water management: Implement management measures to improve water surface and tidal exchange in salt marsh ecosystems by plugging ditches and creating ponds and channels for the benefit of waterfowl and waterbirds as well as the control of mosquitoes.
13. Restore and Manage Riparian Buffers: Establish and restore riparian buffers through planting, stream bank fencing and other techniques.
14. Beaver management: Where applicable, encourage, develop, and support state beaver management policies and programs that would manipulate beaver populations to improve habitat for black ducks, other waterfowl, and wildlife. Also, install devices that allow for beaver-enhanced wetlands but prevent flooding of roads.
15. Control exotic and invasive vegetation: Eliminate or suppress the spread of invasive and exotic plants in wetlands through the use of physical, biological, or chemical agents.
16. Prescribed burning: Use prescribed fire to restore natural fire-dependent ecological communities such as coastal grasslands and heathlands.
17. Implement Farm Bill: Work with NRCS to implement Farm bill conservation programs including Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Wetland Reserve Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program and others to enhance wetlands and buffers in agricultural areas of the ACJV.
18. Enhance habitats on Federal lands: Work with federal agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Defense to develop

and assist in the implementation of programs that would better manage and enhance waterfowl habitats on federal lands.

Seabirds

19. Seabird conservation efforts should develop partnerships with fishery industries and sport anglers.
20. Impacts to seabirds from offshore and inshore fisheries and should be addressed in all future fishery plans.
21. The policy of elimination of waterbird bycatch in fisheries should be embraced by all fisheries management entities.
22. Oil effects on seabirds should be minimized through increased enforcement of shipping activities, safe operational procedures, spill clean up, and rehabilitation of oiled birds.
23. Dumping of debris, line, and nets should be prohibited and strictly enforced.
24. Non-persistent lined, nets, and traps should be developed.
25. A state colonial waterbird coordinator should be appointed within each state of the SAMBI planning area.
26. Death and morbidity of seabirds should be monitored wherever it occurs.
27. Important foraging, migrating, and wintering seabird areas should be identified and monitored.
28. Increase monitoring of seabird bycatch.
29. Seasonal population estimates, distribution, and abundance of seabirds are needed in the Southeast Continental Shelf and Gulf of Mexico.

Other Conservation Actions

30. Review regulatory legislation and enforcement: Evaluate existing wetland protection legislation and work with ongoing programs to strengthen or improve existing federal-state wetland protection efforts and to facilitate wetland management activities. Coordinate with the EPA, the Corps of Engineers, and appropriate state agencies to implement wetland protection provisions of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.
31. Streamline regulations for beneficial projects: Encourage and support measures that would facilitate implementation of management actions in wetlands to benefit waterfowl, waterbirds, shorebirds, landbirds, and other wildlife.

32. Mitigation: Work with federal and state regulatory agencies to ensure mitigation policies and mitigation actions resulting from development projects result in enhanced wetland management opportunities.
33. Information and education: Develop informational-educational leaflets/brochures, audio-visual programs, and other techniques to generate public interest and support for waterfowl and wetlands conservation.
34. Extension education on best management practices: Develop “how to” information for private landowners. Utilize existing network or develop and implement an extension education program to encourage private individuals to conserve and manage wetlands and associated habitats and utilize best management practices.
35. Public use management: Carry out public education efforts and provide public use opportunities in a manner compatible with reducing or eliminating disturbance to feeding or loafing waterfowl during critical winter periods.
36. Watershed protection and management: Eliminate degradation of wetland health and productivity by municipal waste, agricultural runoff, sedimentation, and industrial contaminants by developing guidelines and providing input to watershed management and estuary plans.
37. Predator management: Monitor predator populations on federal and state waterfowl management areas and implement appropriate programs to reduce depredation in problem areas. The impact of feral cat populations upon many populations of birds needs to be addressed.
38. Eliminate mallard release: To reduce unnecessary competition between black ducks, mottled ducks and released mallards, improve feeding opportunities for black ducks during the winter season; eliminate state and private mallard release programs to reduce the chances of pair bonding and hybridization between mallards and mottled or black ducks.
39. Work closely with beach managers and communities (to include sea turtle monitoring crews) and educate them on ways to minimize plover nest disturbance and to avoid running over plover chicks where use of vehicles are allowed on beaches.
40. Provide specific guidance for both private and public land managers to slow the timing of spring draw-downs and build in habitat recommendations involving teal considerations in autumn to closely match peak shorebird habitat needs in their respective areas.
41. Provide proper incentives for private cooperating landowners to delay planting for about a month.

42. When it is necessary to conduct beach re-nourishment projects, work with communities, State and Federal agencies, on the timing and design of the project to minimize disturbance and impacts on shorebird food base. ([Workshop on Dredging, Beach Nourishment and Birds on the South Atlantic Coast](#))
43. Assess individual managers' current contribution as well as their capacities to help achieve habitat objectives outlined in this report, to include the potential to close beaches where excessive public use is shown to be detrimental to important nesting habitat.
44. Work with all interested parties to improve freshwater inputs, in terms of both flows and quality, into estuarine systems.