



# Biological Foundation Plan Executive Summary

*Strengthening the Biological Foundation of Our Conservation Efforts*

The purpose of the Biological Foundation Plan is to articulate the need and describe a framework and next steps for the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture's biological foundation in the context of the joint venture's activities of planning, implementing and evaluating conservation actions. The joint venture recognizes the need for a stronger biological foundation to address increasingly complex and urgent threats to birds and habitats by targeting conservation actions, being transparent and accountable, being efficient with limited resources and providing information to influence a broad range of partners. This plan is guided by several documents and initiatives including the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture Strategic Plan, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manual Chapter on Joint Ventures, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and Continental Assessment and the Strategic Habitat Conservation approach articulated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey.

There are four elements in the joint venture's biological foundation, biological planning, conservation design, monitoring and research, that operate within an adaptive resource management framework to improve future delivery of conservation actions. Through the process of biological planning, the joint venture systematically assesses the needs for sustaining bird populations. Conservation design encompasses a series of steps that use the results of biological planning to guide decisions about where and how much of what habitat to deliver in order to be efficient in restoring and sustaining bird populations. Monitoring involves assessment of the status and trends of populations and habitats and evaluation of the effectiveness of conservation actions. Research is focused on evaluating assumptions made in the biological foundation steps. By applying the results of research, monitoring and evaluation, uncertainties are lessened over time and conservation delivery becomes more effective.

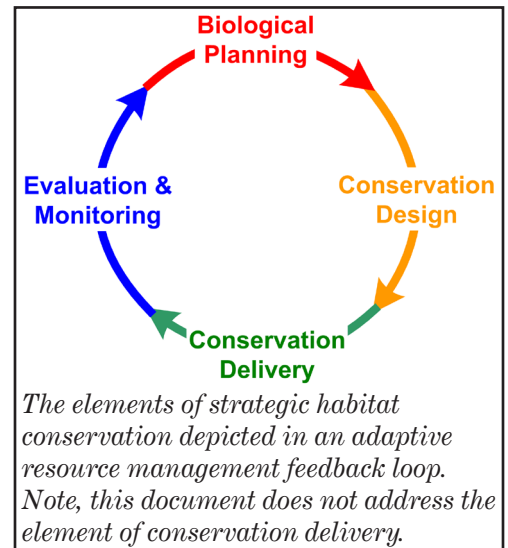
The plan describes each element in the biological foundation, describes the need for that particular element, lists the next steps needed in the joint venture and indicates what resources are available and what projects have been completed or are underway. Priorities for future projects under each element will be part of a database that will be kept current on the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture's web site. This list will be comprised of priority information needs identified in this document and derived from relevant bird plans, state plans and initiatives with input from the joint venture technical committees.

Implementation of the joint venture's biological foundation will require full participation of all joint venture partners. Atlantic Coast Joint Venture staff will provide a coordinating role to ensure effective execution of this framework but success can be achieved only if all partners are fully engaged. In some cases that will mean the contribution of funds and staff to help with specific priority projects. In other cases, it may mean being strong advocates for change in management actions or policies that can affect land use and other conservation decisions.



Prothonotary Warbler. *Photo courtesy of Bill Majoros*

A strong biological foundation will allow the joint venture to be more effective, efficient and accountable in sustaining bird populations in the Atlantic Flyway of the United States.



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