



Introduction to Pacific Coast Joint Venture Planning

The Pacific Coast Joint Venture has been involved in conservation planning at many different geographic levels since its creation in 1991. The following introduction provides a brief overview of these planning efforts, as well as an introduction to the PCJV's current planning effort, which is being done at the ecoregional level.

Joint Venture Background

The Pacific Coast Joint Venture is a broad-based partnership that brings together and supports public and private organizations implementing a shared regional vision for bird habitat conservation.

Habitat Joint Ventures trace their origin to adoption of the *North American Waterfowl Management Plan* (NAWMP) in 1986. The NAWMP called for biological, institutional, and strategic changes in the business of waterfowl conservation that were as fundamental as they were unprecedented – changes that have since been reiterated, refined, and reinforced by an increasingly complex private-state-federal bird conservation community. Today bird conservation is driven by many other statewide, regional, national and international programs and planning efforts that define conservation objectives from a continental and even hemispheric perspective.

The PCJV was established in 1991 as the first international habitat joint venture. It is now one of 18 habitat joint ventures working across North America to pursue the conservation goals and objectives of the NAWMP—not just for waterfowl, but for many other species of migratory birds and other wildlife. Today, Joint Ventures do not simply leverage resources for waterfowl conservation, but are effective vehicles for delivering increasingly complex and comprehensive approaches to the whole business of bird conservation.

History of PCJV Planning

The PCJV adopted its first Strategic Plan in 1993. The plan covered wetland habitats in coastal areas of Washington, Oregon and part of northwestern California, as well as the Fraser River Valley and other important coastal areas of British Columbia. The plan included wetland habitat and waterfowl population objectives that were based on previous plans, as well as the collective professional judgment of biologists, policy makers and wildlife managers from the agencies and conservation organizations making up the original PCJV Management Board.

The 1993 plan focused mainly on waterfowl conservation in wetland habitats, with limited or no development of biological objectives for other species or other habitats. Since then the scope of the PCJV has been expanded beyond ducks, geese and other waterfowl to include many other avian species and habitats.

The PCJV has also expanded geographically, which resulted in the development of new implementation plans for southeast Alaska (2003), the Willamette Valley of Oregon (2004), coastal northern California (2004), and Hawaii (2005). The Washington component of the 1993 plan was updated in 1996. The rest of Alaska was added to PCJV territory in 2010, and planning is in the developmental stages.

The original 1993 Strategic Plan was structured along 13 Focus Areas extending from the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia to the Northern California Coast—which worked well for the first 20 years of the PCJV. However, in 2005 the North American Waterfowl Management Plan was updated and Joint Ventures were encouraged be more strategic in their approach to habitat conservation. Updated joint venture plans were encouraged to not only articulate habitat objectives but to identify species of management concern and develop bird population objectives.

To meet new guidelines and promote consistency and modern ecological concepts, new Focus Areas are being established for implementation planning in 2011 and beyond. The first of these new PCJV planning units, based on Level III Ecoregions designated by the US Environmental Protection Agency, are the Puget Lowlands, Coast Range, Willamette Valley and Klamath Mountains. (See map on page 12.)

On-the-ground context for PCJV Planning

Wetland Habitats

Coastal wetlands are among nature's most productive ecosystems, essential to internationally significant populations of migratory birds and a wide diversity of other wildlife and fish species, including a number of depressed stocks of Pacific salmon, some listed under the Endangered Species Act and the Canadian Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife. These coastal habitats are also economically significant, supporting a wide range of recreational and commercial activities. Four important coastal wetland ecosystems are described below. A more detailed classification system, adopted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies, is discussed in *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States* (Cowardin *et al.*).

Tidal Wetlands And Estuaries

Tidal wetlands are areas where the land is either continuously under water or flooded during only a portion of the tidal cycle. Included are important estuarine habitats such as eelgrass beds, salt marshes and mudflats.

Estuaries are generally considered to be the richest and most imperiled ecosystems on the Pacific Coast. They not only provide essential habitat for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife, but are critical transitional areas for anadromous fish, and the main source of waterborne nutrients for adjacent ocean environments. PCJV partners place a high priority on conserving tidal wetlands and estuaries because they are critical habitat, and because most have been lost or degraded over the years from various types of development activities and invasive plants.

Marine Areas

Marine systems include the open Pacific Ocean, vast inland waterways such as Puget Sound and Georgia Basin, and many large and small bays, sheltered inlets, and associated nesting cliffs and islands. A wide variety of marine life, including marine mammals, fish, seabirds, shorebirds, and many species of waterfowl, shorebirds and other waterbirds rely on the habitat provided by these marine areas for all or part of their lifecycles. Although many of these marine areas are under the administration of government agencies and not threatened by direct habitat loss, many others, particularly shoreline areas, are vulnerable to permitted but relentless development activities that threaten their value as habitat. Marine areas, regardless of ownership, are subject to

habitat degradation through increased marine traffic, pollution, and sometimes-destructive methods of harvesting wildlife and fish resources.

Freshwater Wetlands

Freshwater wetlands include rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, marshes, seasonally flooded meadows, and riparian areas. Their role in providing breeding habitat for waterbirds, songbirds, amphibians, and spawning salmon is complemented by their ability to filter pollutants and assist in flood control.

Over the last century, habitat loss and degradation has resulted from draining and filling, dredging, channel clearing and alignment, creation of impoundments, pollution, erosion and run-off from adjacent land uses.

Associated Upland Habitats

Associated upland habitats include farmlands, forests, and other lands adjacent to wetlands, as well as riparian zones along rivers and streams. They provide critical habitat for many species of land birds and waterbirds, as well as wildlife movement corridors. They are also critically important for maintaining water quality. Riparian habitats in the PCJV include North Pacific Hardwood Conifer Swamp and North Pacific Lowland Riparian Forest and Shrubland.

Farmland often provides critical feeding and resting areas for overwintering and migrating waterfowl, making it important for PCJV partners.

Urbanization is one of the greatest contributors to habitat loss of upland habitat, although non-sustainable agriculture and certain forestry practices can also destroy or degrade upland habitats and adjacent wetlands.

Upland Landbird Habitats

The following additional upland habitats have been identified as a priority for the PCJV. Although not necessarily associated with coastal wetlands, they are found within the coastal area of the PCJV and are important or potentially important for the survival of priority and focal landbird species

Riparian

Riparian habitats are defined as those adjacent to rivers, streams and standing aquatic freshwater systems. Riparian habitat occurs along rivers and streams at all elevations, from valley bottom floodplains to alpine torrents, and vegetation varies from cottonwood gallery forests. Riparian

areas are often dominated by deciduous trees and shrubs, such as bigleaf maple, alder, cottonwood, dogwood, willow and Oregon white ash, although conifers may dominate some riparian woodlands at higher elevations.

Grasslands

Grassland habitats are areas dominated by grasses or grass-like vegetation, including upland prairies, coastal bluffs, and montane grasslands. In general, they occur on dry slopes or plateaus and have well-drained sandy or loamy soils. In all but the most shallow rocky soils, grasslands are maintained through disturbances such as periodic fire, soil upheaval by rodents or salt spray. Dry prairies, including those in the Puget Sound region, are typified by the occurrence of diagnostic grasses, sedges and forbs. Oak savannas found in western Washington and the Willamette Valley of Oregon are composed of grasslands with scattered oak trees, generally one or two large trees per acre.

Oak Woodlands

Oak woodlands are characterized by an open tree canopy dominated by Oregon white oak, which usually obscures between 30 and 70 percent of the sky while looking up at it. Depending on site characteristics, oak woodlands may be mixed with other tree species, including California black oak, Douglas fir and on steep slopes, canyon live oak. In general, the understory of oak woodlands in Oregon and Washington is relatively open, with shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. Oak habitats are maintained through fire, which removes small conifers and maintains a low to moderate shrub cover.

Relationship of PCJV Planning to Other Conservation Plans

Although the PCJV is tied closely to the goals and objectives of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, it is now driven or influenced by many other conservation programs which have evolved over the last 20 years. In 2011, the PCJV and other habitat joint ventures are increasingly regarded by funders and policy makers as effective mechanisms for delivering all-bird conservation. That expansion in scope has also resulted in an expansion of the overall partnership and funding available for bird conservation.

Some of the plans and programs that have evolved over the last 20 years that influence current PCJV planning include the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), Partners in Flight, US Shorebird Conservation Plan, North

American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and the State Wildlife Action Plans of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington, all which were completed in 2005. Links to NAWMP and these other plans can be found at http://www.pcjv.org/funding/biological_basis.html.

Species Priorities

The Pacific Coast Joint Venture is a public-private partnership. As such it has not established species priorities or objectives independently of its partners. However, many migratory birds and other species associated with coastal wetlands and associated habitats have been identified as management priorities by other plans and programs, and these priority and focal species do in fact drive the habitat conservation priorities and programs of the PCJV and its partners.

Priority and focal species have been identified within the boundaries of the PCJV by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight Conservation Strategy, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, and the State Wildlife Action Plans of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington. A number of these “species of conservation concern” are displayed in the table at the end of this document.

Each PCJV focus area plan will also identify priority habitats and species for that particular focus area or ecoregion, starting with the Puget Lowlands Ecoregion Plan <http://www.pcjv.org/home/implementation/puget.html> .

Habitat Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the Pacific Coast Joint Venture is to ensure long-term maintenance of avian wildlife habitat, and to sustain natural ecological processes within coastal wetland and associated upland ecosystems.

The 1993 Strategic Plan established broad but measureable habitat objectives for coastal wetland habitats, including securement, restoration, enhancement and management of habitats. For a snapshot of conservation successes, see <http://www.pcjv.org/home/accomplishments/>

New habitat objectives for the PCJV will consist of the aggregate total of the habitat objectives from each Focus Area, when all focus area plans are completed.

Conservation Strategies

The PCJV uses a number of conservation strategies to accomplish habitat and species objectives. Effective application of these strategies requires partnerships and approaches that transcend political boundaries, agency jurisdictions, and public and private ownership. These partnerships and cooperative approaches have evolved and thrived over the last twenty years through the successful catalyst of the Pacific Coast Joint Venture partnership.

Securement

Securement ensures that key coastal wetlands are protected for the long term through fee title acquisition, easements, conservation covenants, government land transfers and management agreements. Each transaction involves landowners willing to sell, exchange, or donate land, followed by management and stewardship agreements to protect the land's wildlife and fisheries values.

Restoration

Restoring degraded or converted wetlands attempts to re-establish ecological relationships that more closely represent the site's original conditions. In some cases, former agricultural land, tidal marshes, and riparian communities are restored by PCJV partners. In other situations, agricultural lands are maintained for their importance as habitat for migratory birds.

Enhancement

Enhancement projects increase the wildlife values of specific habitats on secured lands. This is accomplished through projects such as livestock fencing, control of invasive, non-native plants, and installation of nesting or water control structures.

Management and Stewardship of Private Lands

Management and stewardship provide benefits to wildlife through a voluntary commitment by landowners to sound land management. While conservation agencies manage habitat on public lands, private landowners take responsibility for wildlife and fish on their own property.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research

Monitoring activities measure the progress towards population and habitat goals, and can flag emerging conservation issues such as species in decline. Evaluation determines program or project success in meeting habitat objectives, and provides insight into future directions. PCJV partners are

encouraged or in some cases required to monitor and evaluate projects approved and funded by the PCJV Management Board.

Communications and Education

The Pacific Coast Joint Venture maintains a website that serves as a conservation information portal for partners. State and provincial coordinators conduct regular partner meetings focused on collaborative planning, funding and information-sharing. Joint Venture discretionary funding is awarded annually on a competitive basis for partner projects that increase public awareness, promote sustainable resource management and land use planning, and encourage public support for habitat conservation policies and programs.

Implementation Resources

There are many implementation resources available to PCJV partners working to implement the goals of the Pacific Coast Joint Venture, including technical assistance, information and data resources, and most importantly, public and private funding programs. Over the last twenty years, the two most important sources of federal matching funds for wetland habitat conservation in the United States have been the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and the National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grants, both administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. These and many other federal, state, provincial and private programs are explained, along with application material, at <http://www.pcjv.org/funding/>.

SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN FROM BIRD CONSERVATION PLANS

Aggregate List from Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska and Hawaii. Includes priority and focal bird species found within the PCJV area. Includes species found in more than one state, as well as some found in only one state like the Hawaiian Goose or Bristle-thighed Curlew. Does not include accidentals or local endemic subspecies such as Alameda Song Sparrow or San Francisco Common Yellowthroat.

Waterfowl

Mallard
Northern Pintail
Cinnamon Teal
Wood Duck
Canvasback
Redhead
Harlequin Duck
Barrow's Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser
Lesser Scaup
Greater Scaup
Ruddy Duck
American Wigeon
Green-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Long-tailed Duck
Surf Scoter
White-winged Scoter
Black Scoter
Common Eider
King Eider
Stellar's Eider
Spectacled Eider
Pacific Brant (Black & Western High Arctic)
Wrangel Island Snow Goose
Greater White-fronted Goose
Ross' Goose
Emperor Goose
Aleutian Cackling Canada Goose
Dusky Canada Goose Tundra Swan
Trumpeter Swan
Hawaiian Duck (Koloa)
Hawaiian Common Moorhen
Hawaiian Coot
Hawaiian Goose (Nene)
Hawaiian Laysan Duck.

Shorebirds

Snowy Plover
American Golden Plover
Black-bellied Plover
Black Oystercatcher
Marbled Godwit
Hudsonian Godwit
Bar-tailed Godwit
Red Knot
Ruddy Turnstone
Black Turnstone
Sanderling
Surfbird
Whimbrel
American Avocet
Wilson's Snipe
Dunlin
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Killdeer
Red Phalarope
Red-necked Phalarope
Rock Sandpiper
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
Solitary Sandpiper
Red Knot
Short-billed Dowitcher
Long-billed Dowitcher
Long-billed Curlew
Bristle-sided Curlew
Wandering Tattler
Surfbird.

Waterbirds and Seabirds

Common Loon
Yellow-billed Loon
Red-throated Loon
Red-faced Cormorant
Western Grebe
Black Oystercatcher
Willet
Arctic Tern
Aleutian Tern
Caspian Tern
Ivory Gull
Red-legged Kittiwake
Common Murre
Marbled Murrelet
Ancient Murrelet
Kittlitz's Murrelet
Cassin's Auklet
Whiskered Auklet
Brown Pelican
Fork-tailed Storm Petrel
Leach's Storm Petrel
Black Storm Petrel
Ashy Storm Petrel
Tufted Puffin
Short-tailed Albatross
Black-footed Albatross
Short-tailed Albatross
Least Bittern
Hawaiian Stilt
Great Blue Heron
Black-crowned Night Heron (in Hawaii).

Landbirds

Blue Grouse
Red Ptarmigan
Spruce Grouse
Mountain Quail
Bandtailed Pigeon
Black Swift
Vaux's Swift
Rufous Hummingbird
Allen's Hummingbird
Lewis' Woodpecker
White-headed Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker

Pileated Woodpecker
Acorn Woodpecker
Willow Flycatcher
Hammond's Flycatcher
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Pacific Slope Flycatcher
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Cassin's Vireo
Hutton's Vireo
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Black-throated Gray Warbler
Hermit Warbler
Townsend's Warbler
MacGillivray's Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Black-headed Grosbeak
Band-tailed Pigeon
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Oregon Vesper Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Western Meadowlark
Streaked Horned Lark
Purple Martin
Vaux's Swift
Black Swift
Yellow Chat
Black-capped Chickadee
Slender-billed Nuthatch
Smith's Longspur
Sandhill Crane
House Wren
Common Nighthawk
Purple Finch
Western Wood-pewee
Swainson's Thrush
Varied Thrush
McKay's Bunting
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Western Bluebird
Rusty Blackbird
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Bald Eagle
Golden Eagle

Peregrine Falcon
Northern Goshawk
Swainson's Hawk
Northern Spotted Owl
Short-eared Owl
White-tailed Kite.

Hawaiian Land Birds

Hawaiian Short-eared Owl
Hawaiian Hawk
Small Kauai Thrush
Crested Honeycreeper
Hawaii Creeper
Kauai Creeper
Maui Parrotbill
Oahu Elepaio
Palila
Akakane
Akekee
Akiapola'au.



PACIFIC
COAST
JOINT
VENTURE

Pacific Coast Joint Venture Level 3 Ecoregions in Washington, Oregon, and California

