

First Meeting of the Americas Flyways Task Force

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AMERICAS FLYWAYS FRAMEWORK

**AMERICAS FLYWAYS FRAMEWORK:
A FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY BIRDS
IN THE AMERICAS**

Preamble

Recalling CMS Resolution 10.10 to develop “in close partnership with existing flyway organizations and initiatives in the Americas, and in particular the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI), an overarching conservation Action Plan for migratory birds in the Americas, recognizing especially the established programmes of work and taking into account existing instruments”;

Taking note of the CMS Flyways Working Group and WHMSI Americas flyways experts meeting (Jamaica, March 2014) to progress the development of an overarching conservation framework for migratory birds in the Americas;

Aware of the global Programme of Work on Migratory Birds and Flyways 2014-2023 being developed by CMS and that a framework for the Americas will make a significant contribution to delivering major parts of this Plan;

Recalling Article VII of the Convention on Nature Protection and Wild Life Preservation in the Western Hemisphere (the Western Hemisphere Convention) which states that “The Contracting Governments shall adopt appropriate measures for the protection of migratory birds of economic or aesthetic value or to prevent the threatened extinction of any given species.”;

Recalling the Ramsar Convention’s Resolution X.22 “Promoting international cooperation for the conservation of waterbird flyways” that “Strongly encourages Contracting Parties and other governments to actively support and participate in relevant international plans and programmes for the conservation of shared migratory waterbirds and their habitats”;

Acknowledging the work of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) and the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management to coordinate international efforts to conserve birds in North America; and acknowledging the increasing number of regional instruments for the conservation of migratory birds in Latin America and the Caribbean;

Acknowledging the large number of other initiatives that promote the conservation and management of migratory birds across the Americas, including the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, Waterbird Conservation for the Americas, Partners in Flight, Joint Ventures and other collaborative efforts to protect migratory birds;

Taking note of the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Conservation Business Strategy and an increasing number of other conservation business plans in development that have the potential to deliver effective flyway scale conservation of priority migratory birds;

Taking note of the Plan of Action adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the III Summit of the Americas (Quebec City, 2001) that calls for “the development of a hemispheric strategy to support the conservation of migratory wildlife throughout the Americas, with the active engagement of civil society”;

Taking note of the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development, which calls upon the Organization of American States (OAS) and member states “to explore the development of the Western Hemisphere Migratory Initiative (WHMSI), in a manner that reflects the interests and priorities of all member states”;

Acknowledging the work of the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI) to bring together governments and civil society from throughout the Americas to advance the conservation of shared migratory species, and in particular the action plan developed for “Integrating Migratory Bird Conservation Initiatives in the Americas”; and

Therefore, it is recommended by the WHMSI Steering Committee that the following framework be adopted by the relevant Parties of CMS and other interested stakeholders, and pursued by them in collaboration with WHMSI to conserve migratory birds and their habitats throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Americas Flyways Framework

The Americas Flyways Framework is provided to assist governments, non-profit organizations, research institutions, corporations and citizens in the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats in the Western Hemisphere.

The Americas Flyways Framework builds upon the five goals of the CMS Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2015-2023:

- Goal 1: Address the underlying causes of decline of migratory species by mainstreaming relevant conservation and sustainable use priorities across government and society
- Goal 2: Reduce the direct pressures on migratory species and their habitats
- Goal 3: Improve the conservation status of migratory species and the ecological connectivity and resilience of their habitats
- Goal 4: Enhance the benefits to all from the favourable conservation status of migratory species
- Goal 5: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building

These goals are based on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Targets approved by Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and in particular Aichi Targets 11 and 12.

The Strategic Goals of the Americas Flyways Framework comprise both aspirations for achievement at the hemispheric level, and a flexible framework for the establishment of national and regional targets. Governments and other stakeholders are invited to set their own targets within this flexible framework to advance the conservation of migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere, taking into account the interconnectedness of migratory bird life cycles and also bearing in mind national contributions to the achievement of hemispheric targets.

Flyways of the Americas seeks to harmonize the conservation efforts of governments and all relevant partners and stakeholders by advancing the following:

Strategic Goal 1: Mainstream biodiversity and migratory bird protection and conservation across government and society

- **Action 1. Ensure active cooperation, coordination and reporting among migratory bird instruments, initiatives and partnerships**

Encourage and facilitate closer cooperation among those instruments, initiatives and partnerships relating to migratory birds, and the habitats upon which they depend, seeking efficiencies, minimizing redundancies, and focusing on and addressing specific threats to halt the decline in the populations of migratory birds. Promote and integrate biodiversity values and the value of migratory birds into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and incorporate into national accounting, as appropriate and reporting systems.

- **Action 2. Promote collaboration with other environmental instruments**

Encourage and facilitate closer collaboration with other environmental instruments (not focused on migratory birds), to build upon synergies and ensure that the requirements of migratory birds are integrated within appropriate policies, tools and initiatives. Develop and apply positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and migratory bird, consistent and in harmony with relevant international obligations.

- **Action 3. Promote collaboration with other sectors**

Promote the collaborative conservation of migratory birds by working with other bodies whose prime objective is not wildlife conservation, including the private sector, to ensure that the requirements of migratory birds are integrated into land-use and maritime policies, operational guidance, safeguard and mitigation policies, and to identify and promote best practices in protection, management and sustainable use.

- **Action 4. Build awareness**

Promote, communicate and raise awareness of the ecological, economic and cultural importance of migratory birds throughout the hemisphere among all governments and society as a whole. Ensure that people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use them sustainably. Promote public awareness campaigns and other relevant activities to increase the participation of civil society in the conservation of migratory birds.

Strategic 2: Reduce the direct pressures and threats on migratory birds and promote sustainable and productive landscapes, seascapes, land use and ocean use that benefit migratory bird populations

- **Action 5. Promote sustainable and productive landscapes and seascapes that are compatible and beneficial to migratory bird populations**

Work with private landowners, governments, producers and land and marine use planners to promote sustainable and compatible land and seascapes. Ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and fisheries are managed sustainably, ensuring the conservation of biodiversity and migratory birds. Develop regulations, ecosystem service payment mechanisms, corporate engagement and beneficial incentives to promote bird-friendly landscapes.

- **Action 6. Assess and mitigate significant human-caused threats to bird migration**

Identify and assess the significant threats to migratory birds and promote and foster efforts to reduce or eliminate these threats, especially in relation to enforcement regarding illegal killing, taking and trade, poisoning, and energy production, transmission and distribution.

- **Action 7. Promote sustainability of hunting harvests and other uses and takes of migratory birds, when they may occur**

Develop sustainable and controlled hunting management when hunting is permitted, and ensure other takes of migratory birds, eggs, and bird resources are sustainable and guided by sound scientific research and regulations.

- **Action 8. Mitigate and adapt to impacts of climate change on migratory bird species**

Support efforts to reduce emissions and capture carbon, and take action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change on migratory bird species, including enhancing the resilience of sites to climate change and planning for the potential for shifts in the range of bird species.

Strategic Goal 3: Protect migratory birds and the phenomenon of migration by safeguarding species, genetic diversity, ecosystems and critical habitat areas

- **Action 9. Halt extinctions by addressing the needs of the most imperilled migratory bird species**

Prevent the extinction or extirpation of migratory bird species by developing conservation programs and initiatives for those species most known to be threatened, including bird species on the IUCN Red List (including those listed as Alliance for Zero Extinction species) and other species in dramatic decline.

- **Action 10. Foster the conservation of high priority sites and habitats, including networks of protected areas**

Identify and protect effective ecological networks of sites and habitats critical for the conservation of migratory bird species. Ensure that information on migratory bird species, high-priority sites and habitats is readily available. Encourage the use of formal designations, voluntary measures and agreed site management plans as appropriate to protect and manage all critical sites. Foster trans-boundary collaboration, flyway networks, effective coalitions of partners and sound and effective site management. Work with conservation initiatives and conservation business plans to guide conservation and deliver results to key sites and habitats. Recognize the interconnectedness and transnational nature of migratory bird conservation and encourage coordination between countries and all parties.

Strategic Goal 4: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity, ecosystem services and migratory birds

- **Action 11. Promote livelihoods that are consistent with and enhance migratory bird conservation**

Promote the development of livelihoods (for example: ecotourism, sustainable and bird-friendly agriculture, agroforestry, etc.) that will lead to a productive economy and contribute positively to the protection and preservation of migratory bird populations and the phenomenon of hemispheric-wide migration. Encourage governments, businesses and other stakeholders to take steps to implement plans for sustainable production and consumption of natural resources. Ensure that ecosystems that provide essential services, including services relating to water and climate regulation, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

- **Action 12. Empower local communities to conserve their resources**

Empower local people and communities (including indigenous and traditional peoples) and provide them with the tools, knowledge and means to enable them to protect and manage their natural resources for the benefit of mankind, their communities, birds, and biodiversity as a whole.

Strategic Goal 5: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building

- **Action 13. Promote comprehensive biological planning**

Promote the identification of priority bird species and sites for conservation action; develop/update full lifecycle conservation business plans as appropriate; foster the building of coalitions of partners to implement priority actions.

- **Action 14. Improve/increase and share knowledge**

Ensure that knowledge, the science-base and technologies relating to migratory birds, their values, functions, status and trends, and the consequences of their loss, are improved, widely shared, transferred, and applied. Enhance and strengthen monitoring of the status of migratory bird populations and migratory bird habitats and sites; ensure that regular reporting is made widely available. Support targeted research to understand the ecology of priority migrants throughout their lifecycles, identifying the limiting factors barriers and threats and the policies and prescriptions necessary to address these.

- **Action 15. Build capacity**

Strengthen collaboration and support between local, national and regional partners and build capacity for flyway-scale conservation including the strengthening of local and national capacity along critical points on the flyways. Share best practices, lessons learnt, relevant scientific and technical issues, international initiatives and processes, and provide guidance and input to the conservation and management of flyways at local, national, regional and flyways levels.

- **Action 16. Help guide funding to priority needs**

Seek new and expand existing funding sources (both public and private) to generate the funds needed to resource migratory bird conservation at the flyway scale. Mobilize financial resources for the effective implementation of the Americas Flyways Framework.

Implementation and Participation

The Americas Flyways Framework is being promoted by WHMSI, an overarching framework to guide and coordinate conservation effort for the protection of migratory birds and the phenomenon of migration in the Americas. The framework will require cooperation and collaboration of governments, corporations, non-profits and other interested stakeholders.

All interested parties are encouraged to use the Americas Flyways Framework to guide their work to protect migratory birds. To establish a specific mechanism to advance the framework, WHMSI proposes to establish a voluntary, collaborative partnership: “**The Partnership for the Americas Flyways Framework**” (PAFF) and will formally invite the participation of CMS and its signatories, the governments of the Western Hemisphere, and national and international non-profit organizations and other leading stakeholders to join this partnership.

The basic principles of PAFF are still under development, but are currently proposed as follows:

Legal Status: PAFF will be informal and voluntary.

Purpose, Goals and Objectives: PAFF will provide a mechanism to promote dialogue, cooperation, collaboration and coordination among a wide range of stakeholders, both public and private, to advance the Strategies and Actions of the Framework. Such actions will include sharing information, developing strategies and collaborative work efforts to advance implementation of the Framework, and report on successes, needs and opportunities over time.

PAFF will develop an implementation document that outlines periodic priorities. Additionally, governments can be invited to develop national implementation plans; NGOs can be invited to participate and develop plans as appropriate. Convention Secretariats can be invited to update their joint work plan and other frameworks to support its implementation. International initiatives can be invited to develop implementation plans; and Corporations can be invited to develop plans, either individually or jointly.

Membership: Membership and participation in PAFF is voluntary and Partners can withdraw with notice.

CMS may join PAFF or adopt this Framework by endorsing the text and supporting the objectives and actions of the Americas Flyways Framework. Governments, NGOs, and other interested stakeholders may join this Partnership and Framework by endorsing the text, supporting the objectives and actions of the Americas Flyways Framework and notifying WHMSI. Membership is open to new participants and new members are encouraged. WHMSI will alert all exiting Partners of any new applicants and if no issues or objections are raised within 60 days of the participant's application, the applicant will be added to the list of Partners.

Administration: Initially, *WHMSI* will oversee the establishment and administration of PAFF, including through the appointment of an initial team of coordinators to act on behalf of PAFF.

A Steering Committee will be formed to assist WHMSI and oversee the operations of PAFF. The Steering Committee will be composed of representatives from governments as well as the non-profit and private sectors, as determined by PAFF in its initial meeting.

Communication between and among Partners will be encouraged, and an *annual meeting*, will be organized either virtual or in-person, by WHSMI and the Steering committee.

The Partners will elect a *Chair* and *Vice-chair* to a term of two years. Positions for other officers may be identified and created by the Steering Committee.

PAFF will establish *advisory groups* and *ad hoc working groups* to develop action plans and address issues as needed. These advisory and working groups will provide a key mechanism for implementing action, recruiting new participants and supporters to the Framework, communicating among Partners, and identify new needs and opportunities to protect migratory birds in the Western Hemisphere.

Finance: Partners are encouraged to provide or secure resources to support the activities of PAFF and to advance the Framework.