



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) Declaration of Intent for the Conservation of North American Birds and Their Habitat

May 25, 2005

Q. What is the NABCI Declaration of Intent?

A. The NABCI Declaration of Intent for the Conservation of North American Birds and Their Habitat (heretofore "DOI") is a formal pronouncement by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to cooperate in conserving the continent's bird species and the landscapes upon which they depend for their survival. The DOI was signed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior on May 17, 2005, and is soon to be signed by the Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales de Mexico and the Minister of Environment Canada. This important document will serve as a public expression of support for trilateral cooperation to deliver comprehensive bird conservation in North America.

Q. Why develop the DOI?

A. Many of North America's more than 1,100 bird species require immediate conservation attention as their populations continue to decline, some moderately, some precipitously, and their habitats continue to be degraded or lost. Partnerships among state, provincial, federal, and private organizations and individuals are working at all levels to protect, restore, and enhance habitats and broad landscapes for birds, but they need the help of additional partners and financial resources to succeed. The DOI is a means of increasing the profile and recognition of these partnerships so that they can garner additional resources to turn the tide for the many species that are losing ground in North America.

Q. Who developed the DOI?

A. A trilateral drafting team, comprised of representatives from the three governments, states and provinces, and non-governmental organizations, developed the DOI with input from the U.S., Mexican, and Canadian Committees of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) and other cooperators. The idea for this international declaration originated from discussions among participants of the second trilateral conference of NABCI in Querétaro, Mexico in February 2001.

Q. When did the DOI get signed?

A. The Secretary of the Interior signed the NABCI DOI on May 17, 2005 in Washington, D.C. The Canadian Minister and Mexican Secretary will soon sign it.

Q. How can I get a copy of the DOI?

A. Visit the U.S. NABCI web site at <http://www.nabci-us.org> to download a copy of the DOI.

Q. What happens next?

A. Within 18 months, NABCI plans to host a trilateral meeting of about 75 leading conservationists from each country (25 invited from each country) to develop an Action Plan based on the 12 objectives listed in Section II of the DOI.

Q. What is NABCI?

A. Initiated formally in the U.S. in 1999, NABCI is a partnership forum to enhance collaboration and communication among bird conservation partners and the broader conservation community to work more effectively and increase resources for critical needs at the national and international levels. Internationally, NABCI is a coalition of representatives from public and private organizations, bird initiatives, academia, and private industry working across geopolitical borders, landscapes, conservation interests, programmatic and organizational divides, and social and cultural boundaries to secure the future for North America's wild birds. The goal of NABCI is to deliver comprehensive bird conservation through regionally based, biologically driven, landscape-oriented partnerships. The main objective of NABCI is to increase resources for these partnerships and make them more effective by fostering integrated bird conservation, which is based on sound science, effective management, and efficient use of resources.

Q. How does the DOI relate to NABCI?

A. The idea for this DOI originated at the second trilateral NABCI meeting in Querétaro, Mexico in February 2001, and was developed with input from the many initiatives and organizations that participate in NABCI. As a result, much of the substance of the DOI is analogous to the vision, goals, and principles of NABCI, as stated above. For example, the DOI recognizes the value, plight, and conservation needs of North American birds and their habitats. It emphasizes the need for signatory nations to work more effectively to conserve North America's birds by improving coordination, expanding partnerships, and strengthening science and management, as expressed in the vision and goal of NABCI. A trilateral committee, three national committees, and various subcommittees and working groups administer NABCI and provide forums for coordination and communication at the international and national levels. These forums, and the partner agencies and organizations that comprise them, will be the primary entities involved in administering and employing the DOI.

Q. Which bird species does the DOI cover?

A. The DOI applies to all the native birds of North America, including both migratory and resident species, approximately 1,100 species. If additional countries become signatories to the DOI, their native bird species will be added to the list of species covered by the DOI.

Q. Can additional countries sign onto the DOI in the future?

A. Yes, if additional countries wish to become signatories, their migratory and resident bird species and conservation concerns could be incorporated into the DOI.

Q. How will the DOI aid in the conservation of North American birds?

A. The DOI has the potential to help solidify and expand voluntary national and international partnerships and programs working on-the-ground to accomplish its ambitious goal. By increasing the profile and recognition of bird conservation partnerships and programs in North America, it can expand public support for increased funding, thus overcoming one of the greatest barriers to conservation. Specifically, the DOI will help build support and funding for the bird conservation initiatives and their plans, such as Partners In Flight, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Waterbird Conservation for the Americas, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), regional plans for game species, as well as government agencies, conservation organizations, and the academic community. The DOI also will provide an opportunity for other countries of the hemisphere to join this important, collaborative effort for bird conservation.

Q. How can people use the DOI to advance bird conservation?

A. Organizations can use the Secretarial and Ministerial support for continental bird conservation represented by the DOI as a magnet to attract additional funding. They can use the DOI to foster habitat conservation along an entire flyway rather than within only a few important sites, and to promote landscape-based partnerships that extend across nations, states, provinces, agencies, and sociocultural boundaries. In addition, organizations can use it to facilitate the sharing of scientific, policy, and conservation-related information for capacity building, particularly in Mexico and other Latin American and Caribbean nations that may become signatories.

Q. How does the DOI differ from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act?

A. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act implements various treaties and conventions between the U.S. and Canada, Japan, Mexico and the former Soviet Union for the protection of migratory birds. Under the Act, taking, killing, or possessing migratory birds is unlawful. The DOI is a formal, albeit non-binding declaration among the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to cooperate under voluntary partnerships for the conservation of all birds, not just migratory species, and their habitat. It does not deal directly with regulatory issues.

Q. How does the DOI differ from the North American Waterfowl Management Plan?

A. The NAWMP is an agreement among Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. to conserve waterfowl populations and the landscapes upon which they depend. The DOI is a pronouncement by the three countries to cooperate to conserve all of native North American birds and their habitats. Unlike the NAWMP, it does not include specific details such as population and habitat objectives for priority species, which are being published by the other bird conservation initiatives, such as Partners In Flight, the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Waterbird Conservation for the Americas, and the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative.

Q. How does the DOI relate to other international conventions, treaties, and agreements, such as the Western Hemisphere Convention, etc.?

A. The Western Hemisphere Convention (1940) is an agreement among many of the countries of this hemisphere to preserve all species and genera of native American flora and fauna from extinction, and to preserve areas of extraordinary beauty, striking geological formations or aesthetic, historic or scientific value. Unlike the DOI, which is linked to NABCI and its Trilateral Committee, the convention has no administrative or organizational body with which it is affiliated.

Q. How can I find out more about the DOI?

A. Contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Bird Habitat Conservation at 703-358-1784 or Division of International Conservation at 703-358-1754.