

SONORAN JOINT VENTURE

Binational Bird Conservation



Strategic Plan

Version 1.0

Sonoran Joint Venture
738 N. 5th Ave. Suite 215
Tucson, AZ 85705
520-882-0047
www.sonoranjv.org

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Sonoran Joint Venture (SJV) is a partnership of diverse organizations and individuals from the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico that share a common commitment to bird conservation within this region. The Strategic Plan presents a regional overview of our approach to protect, conserve, restore, and enhance bird populations and their habitats within the boundaries of the SJV. It will be updated on a regular basis using a dynamic process of adaptive conservation planning and delivery based on the latest information developed by and provided to the SJV through its staff and partners.

1.1 PLAN PURPOSE AND CONTENTS

The Strategic Plan guides the overall direction of the SJV. It provides a framework not only for biological planning, but also for other elements essential for a successful and sustainable conservation program. The constituent elements of the Strategic Plan are Conservation Coordination and Delivery, Biological Foundation, Education and Outreach, Funding, and Evaluation. These basic areas are supported by functions such as: coordination, species assessment, conservation design, training, research, technical assistance, and communication. The Elements and Strategies section includes goals, objectives, strategies, and measures of achievement. A Conservation Plan that addresses the biological foundation of the SJV's actions and an Education and Outreach Plan that will guide communication that support the goals and objectives of the SJV will be written separately. An Inventory and Monitoring Plan is also envisioned, as well as other functional area plans, if appropriate. The intended audience for the Strategic Plan is the SJV Management Board, committees, staff, and partners. Introductory sections describe the history of the SJV and the ecological importance of the SJV region. Next, the goals and objectives of the SJV are developed, along with a list of strategies to achieve each goal. Finally, the structure of the SJV is discussed including the roles of the Management Board, Technical Committee, Education and Outreach Committee, and staff.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 A COALESCING OF BIRD INITIATIVES

In 1999 at the request of The Nature Conservancy of Arizona, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a meeting of interested individuals and agencies from the United States and Mexico was convened to discuss the development of a new Joint Venture to address bird conservation needs of the Sonoran Desert region. The opinion of the participants was that if a “new” bird conservation delivery model was to be created, it should be an international effort between the United States and Mexico because of shared species and habitats. Participants also agreed that it should be “all bird” and not based solely on waterfowl, as were previous Joint Ventures. The SJV was initiated at a time when existing and new bird initiatives were moving toward coordination and integration. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan was undergoing its 1998 Update; Partners in Flight was beginning to roll out its plans; the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan and the North American Waterbird Plan were under development; Audubon’s Important Bird Area Program was intensifying its work in the U.S.; and Mexico was about to publish its land mark book, *Áreas de Importancia para la Conservación de las Aves en México*. Other conservation forces at work at the time included The Nature Conservancy’s Sonoran Ecoregion Plan, the Arizona Partners in Flight Plan, the challenge by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to create a “new” bird conservation delivery model for upland birds, and the genesis of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI).

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), signed by the United States and Canada in 1986 and by Mexico in 1994, was written to address declining waterfowl populations by conserving, restoring, and enhancing wetland habitats throughout North America. The NAWMP seeks to restore waterfowl populations in Canada, United States, and Mexico to their 1970 levels. This pioneering document has served as a model for other bird conservation initiatives. Joint Ventures that evolved from NAWMP are the regional delivery mechanisms for waterfowl conservation.

Similarly, concern raised by declining trends shown in Breeding Bird Survey results from 1966 to the late 1980s brought neotropical migratory birds to the attention of wildlife managers. As a result, Partners in Flight (PIF) was initiated in 1990 to focus resources on the improvement of monitoring, research, management, and education programs to benefit neotropical migratory birds and their habitats. PIF soon became the champion for both resident and migratory nongame landbirds. PIF’s guiding principles are to restore populations of species at risk and to keep common birds common. The 2004 PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan summarizes priority species and habitat needs and gives population objectives for these species.

The United States Shorebird Conservation Plan is a partnership committed to shorebird conservation. On a regional scale, the goal of the Plan is to ensure an adequate quantity of good quality habitat is identified and maintained to support the different shorebirds that breed in, winter in, and migrate through each shorebird region. On a national scale, the Plan’s goal is to stabilize populations of all shorebird species known or suspected to be in decline due to limiting factors occurring within the United States. At the same time, it strives to ensure that common species are protected from future threats. On a hemispheric scale, the goal is to restore and maintain populations of all shorebird species in the Western Hemisphere through cooperative international efforts.

The North American Waterbird Conservation Plan is a partnership of researchers, private individuals, academics, and federal and state agencies that works to develop a strategy to advance the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats. Its mission is to create a cohesive, multi-national partnership for conserving and managing waterbirds (seabirds, wading birds, gulls, terns, pelicans, and marsh birds) and their habitats throughout North America. Its goal is to produce healthy populations and habitats for waterbirds in North America in their breeding, migratory, and wintering ranges.

United States Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and Áreas de Importancia para la Conservación de las Aves en México (AICAs) are programs that nominate and work to conserve a collection of sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds, including sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. IBAs/AICAs include a few acres or thousands of acres, but are usually discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape. IBAs may include public or private lands and may be protected or unprotected. The goals of the U.S. IBA Program are: identify IBAs in all fifty states; increase the protected status of all IBAs; promote sensible management of IBAs; involve local communities, conservation groups, landowners, and the general public; maximize the use and dissemination of IBA data; and monitor IBAs to understand changes and provide feedback for conservation initiatives. Mexico's AICA program is equivalent to the U.S. IBA program and has a similar mission and goals.

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) is not a plan, but rather a vision. Its role is to support and facilitate on-the-ground delivery of conservation of all native North American birds by increasing the effectiveness of existing and new programs and initiatives. It also works to enhance coordination and foster greater cooperation among the nations and peoples of the continent. It is the umbrella under which the aforementioned major bird conservation plans will come together to address the bird conservation needs of North America. NABCI partners have developed a consistent ecological spatial framework, dividing North America into 67 Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs).

The SJV Strategic Plan and actions of the SJV in general will include close coordination with those working with the aforementioned plans and programs to integrate their conservation recommendations on a regional level.

3.0 THE SJV REGION

3.1 GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The SJV region includes much of Arizona, southern California, the Mexican states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Baja California, and Baja California Sur, and the Gulf of California and its endemic-rich islands (Figure 1). The boundaries were determined by partners in the U.S. and Mexico. Aligning boundaries to NABCI BCR lines could be an option in the future in order to include the entire ranges of endemic birds and entire extents of habitats of interest.



Figure 1. The Sonoran Joint Venture with state, country and BCR boundaries.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The SJV region includes in whole or part ten BCRs (Figure 1). Elevation in the SJV ranges from below sea level at the Salton Sea (-97 meters), to sea level coast line and islands, to relatively flat desert areas, to high plateaus and mountain ranges (9,900 feet/3,194 meters). The climate is largely desertic, with extremely low rainfall occurring in high intensity late summer storms or low intensity winter storms. The topography and climate produce a diversity of habitats including: desert shrublands, riparian, Madrean pine-oak, pine, mixed conifer, fir, chaparral, pinyon-juniper woodlands, desert grassland, rock outcrops, tropical deciduous forest, desert thorn-scrub, palm

groves, semi-deciduous forest, freshwater wetlands, coastal dunes, coastal shrublands, mangroves, estuarine, brackish and salt water wetlands, coastal lagoons, rocky islands, and halophytic brushlands. Of these, the Sonoran/Mohave desert shrublands and grasslands, Madrean pine-oak, coastal shrub and chaparral, and various other coastal environments are the most unique biota. Including the Gulf of California marine ecosystem sheltered between the Baja Peninsula and the western coast of Mexico, this region holds the fourth-greatest level of biological diversity on earth.

The avifauna is diverse, with approximately 744 bird species breeding in, wintering in, and/or migrating through the region. This is nearly two-thirds of all bird species that occur in northern Mexico, the United States, and Canada. There are sixteen endemic or near endemic species, including: Xantu's Hummingbird, Gray Thrasher, Belding's Yellowthroat, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Le Conte's Thrasher, Abert's Towhee, Gilded Flicker, Five-striped Sparrow, California Gnatcatcher, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Black-vented Shearwater, Black Storm-Petrel, Least Storm-Petrel, Yellow-footed Gull, Elegant Tern, and Craveri's Murrelet. Additionally, there are several endemic subspecies such as: Arizona Grasshopper Sparrow, Large-billed Savannah Sparrow, Sonoran Yellow Warbler, San Lucas Robin, Baird's Yellow-eyed Junco, Guadalupe Dark-eyed Junco, and Cape Pygmy-Owl. A high percentage of the world's population of twenty additional species occur within the SJV. In addition, seventeen U.S. listed bird species common to the U.S. and Mexico are found within the SJV. Unfortunately, there are two species that are presumed extinct: the Guadalupe Storm-Petrel from Isla Guadalupe and the Imperial Woodpecker of the Sierra Madre Occidental.

A comprehensive national species assessment for landbirds and ducks has been conducted for the U.S. region of the SJV. The process identified several landbird species that have declining population trends and/or high threats including: Bendire's Thrasher, Brewer's Sparrow, Bell's Vireo, Black-throated Sparrow, Verdin, Curve-billed Thrasher, Thick-billed Parrot, Pinyon Jay, White-throated Swift, and Baird's Sparrow (as determined by Partners in Flight). The same process has recently been completed for the Mexican SJV region. The SJV also has stewardship responsibility to maintain another group of birds which have their centers of abundance in or are characteristic species of the SJV's habitats, such as Phainopepla, Lucy's Warbler, and Elf Owl.

This SJV region includes 11% of Mexico's protected areas, eight Ramsar wetlands of international significance, four Western Hemispheric Shorebird Network Reserve sites, sixty-seven Important Bird Areas and sixty Áreas de Importancia para la Conservación de Las Aves en México, all or parts of ten NABCI Bird Conservation Regions, and four major bi-national watersheds. The Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and Organ Pipe National Monument (both in Arizona), along with four protected areas in the northernmost part of the Mexican Sonoran Desert, form the second largest protected drylands matrix in North America.

Threats to the region's ecology are as diverse as the species found in the region. Land use in the SJV area is varied and long-standing. Humans have been using the area for approximately 10,000 years. Species composition and successional progression underwent significant, large-scale changes due to grazing and mining from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. Since the early 1900s, significant effects on the biota have come from urban and agricultural development, ground water pumping, surface-water diversion, overgrazing, non-native plant invasions, aquaculture, military activities, and recreational pressures.

The SJV region is not only biologically diverse, but culturally diverse, as well. The SJV is committed to respecting and complementing the cultural diversity found in the SJV region. Along with the Hispanic and Anglo cultures, the area is also home to many indigenous cultures. Working bi-nationally and in an area of great cultural diversity presents both unique challenges and opportunities. The SJV hopes that it will be a model for future conservation partnerships in areas of human diversity.

4.0 MISSION, GOAL, AND PRINCIPLES



The SJV is based on the principles of a strong biological foundation, a landscape approach to conservation, and strong and diverse partnerships.

4.1 MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve the unique bird populations and habitats of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico.

4.2 GOAL

Through partnerships, integrate the strategies, goals, and objectives of existing regional, national, and international bird conservation plans and programs into a single strategic effort that will conserve the unique regional avifauna of the SJV through:

1. collaboration with partners within and outside the SJV to conserve, restore, and enhance wintering, migration, and breeding habitat for all birds within the SJV;
2. coordination of planning and activities to maximize effectiveness of bird conservation efforts;
3. sharing of information in an open forum;
4. working with partners in developing bird conservation proposals and programs;
5. increasing public awareness of bird conservation issues,
6. using the best scientific information available; and
7. increasing funding and support for projects and programs.

4.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Conservation actions will be biologically sound and defensible.
2. Projects implemented will be voluntary and cooperative.
3. Actions will consider and be sensitive to the social, cultural, and economic needs of the region.
4. Initiatives will be pursued using non-regulatory strategies.
5. Organizations and/or individuals interested in bird conservation will be welcome to participate in the SJV.
6. Equal representation from the United States and Mexico in our structure and conservation initiatives will be maintained.
7. Publications, studies, and reports will be published in English and Spanish when appropriate.
8. Education and training of students and conservation professionals will be encouraged and supported.

5.0 ELEMENTS AND STRATEGIES

This section describes five constituent elements that are critical to the protection, conservation, restoration, enhancement, and investigation of bird populations and their habitats within the SJV; Conservation Coordination and Delivery, Biological Foundation, Education and Outreach, Funding, and Evaluation. Each element has a program goal, followed by objectives and strategies that will accomplish the goal and measureables to confirm progress. Measureables will be detailed in separate One-Year Action Plans. The strategies are collectively intended to be a five-year overview of action, but will be reviewed and updated every year based on accomplishments.

Crucial to the delivery of the five constituent elements will be partner participation. The SJV will provide an open forum for close collaboration among its program partners which include, but are not limited to; the Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative, Tucson Audubon Society, Sonoran Institute, The Nature Conservancy, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Instituto del Medio Ambiente y el Desarrollo Sustentable de Sonora (IMADES), Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada (CICESE), Pronatura Noroeste Mar de Cortés, Secretaría de Medio Ambiente de Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT), Centro de Investigación en Alimentación y Desarrollo (CIAD), Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP), and others.

5.1 CONSERVATION COORDINATION AND DELIVERY

The SJV provides a forum for coordination among partners that are planning and implementing bird conservation. Through coordination, partners can be effective and efficient, work on shared priorities, and combine projects to achieve the greatest effect. The SJV also provides the step down of national and international bird conservation priorities to regional and local scales. The SJV works through its staff, board, and committees to provide this coordination.

Goal: Provide the structure, forum for coordination, and assistance to attract partners, leverage and generate funding, and support, implement, and maintain conservation programs, and projects.

Objective 1. Structure: Maintain an open working forum and increase capacity to facilitate partnerships.

Strategies:

1. Maintain a Management Board and conduct two meetings per year.
2. Maintain the operation of a Technical Committee and conduct at least two meetings per year.
3. Encourage participation in SJV by informing and working with existing and new partners and partner organizations, agencies, and institutions.
4. Maintain an SJV staff that responds to goals, needs, and partners.
5. Initiate, facilitate, and/or assist working groups that address specific topical or geographical conservation needs or issues of concern.
6. Develop and execute a Strategic Plan for the SJV and update it every five years.

- Measurables:**
1. Expand the Management Board to include participation of key stakeholders in the United States and Mexico.
 2. Communicate SJV goals and objectives by participating in meetings, workshops, symposium, conferences, our website, electronic newsletter, listserver, and other means.
 3. Increase the number of participating partners.

Objective 2. Coordination: Work with partners to produce efficient, effective, and sound conservation projects and programs.

- Strategies:**
1. Communicate information to partners regarding priority species, habitats, and sites.
 2. Work with partners to prioritize and improve ongoing and new projects and programs.
 3. Disseminate SJV conservation plan and other scientific, conservation, and management information to partners to facilitate coordination of projects and programs.
 3. Stay current on conservation issues affecting the SJV and, when appropriate, share this information with the board, committees, partners, and the public.

- Measurables:**
1. Hold or attend meetings, symposiums, workshops, and conferences to communicate SJV goals and objectives.
 2. Encourage partner projects and programs consistent with the SJV goals and objectives.
 3. Distribute and promote the SJV conservation plan and conservation tools.

Objective 3. Assistance: Improve development, maintenance, execution, and evaluation of partner projects or programs.

- Strategies:**
1. Provide guidance or assistance to partners as requested on development, maintenance, execution, and evaluation of projects or programs.
 2. Develop and maintain a competitive awards program which contributes to the SJV mission and objectives, is partnership-driven, and encourages matching funds or cost share.

- Measurables:**
1. Consultations on partner projects
 2. Complete partner projects consistent with the SJV goals and objectives.
 3. Projects funded through SJV awards program.

5.2 BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

A strong biological foundation is critical to the SJV. This is accomplished by identifying the highest priority bird populations and habitats at multiple scales, translating between the scales, determining the highest priority sites and projects, and assessing the effectiveness of these projects on bird populations.

Goal: Develop, maintain, and communicate a strong scientific foundation through conservation planning, monitoring, applied research, training, and communication in coordination with partners and experts.

Objective 1. Biological Planning and Conservation Design: Use species and habitat assessment and analysis and existing bird initiative and other conservation plans to determine SJV biological objectives; use the biological objectives and other factors to design a landscape approach to bird conservation that will be applied at the species, habitat, community, and/or site level. Develop a planning and evaluation cycle that drives integrated and efficient delivery of projects.

- Strategies:**
1. Assess status of bird species breeding in, wintering in, and/or migrating through the SJV region and determine priority species from this assessment.
 2. Calculate population objectives for priority species.
 3. Compile conservation recommendations for priority species.
 4. Analyze priority species by habitat and determine priority habitats from this analysis. Assess status of SJV habitats.
 5. Calculate objectives for priority habitats.
 6. Compile conservation recommendations by habitat type.
 7. Use priority species and habitats to identify Focus Areas (targeted conservation areas).
 8. Prioritize Focus Areas based on their biological value, threats, conservation opportunities, and other appropriate factors.
 9. Write a bird conservation plan for individual Focus Areas, if needed.
 10. Write the SJV Conservation Plan based on the above assessment, analysis, and recommendations.
 - II. Continue to update and refine assessments, analyses, and recommendations in the conservation plan.

- Measurables:**
1. Complete the Species Assessment.
 2. Develop population objectives.
 3. Complete the avifaunal analysis.
 4. Generate habitat objectives and recommendations.
 5. Complete Focus Area Conservation Summaries.
 6. Write the SJV Conservation Plan.

Objective 2. Inventory and Monitoring: Develop an inventory and monitoring program by performing a needs assessment that outlines a baseline inventory and trend monitoring program, and a project-based monitoring program to ensure that an adaptive management approach is taken.

- Strategies:**
1. Write an assessment of monitoring needs.
 2. Develop an inventory of current monitoring projects.
 3. Develop an SJV monitoring program in coordination with the bird initiatives and NABCI's monitoring programs.
 4. Support, coordinate, and/or facilitate short- and long-term trend- and project-

based monitoring.

5. Coordinate with and contribute to national and international bird monitoring programs (e.g., Breeding Bird Survey, PRBO Conservation Science, Institute for Bird Populations, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, NABCI, Coordinated Bird Monitoring) to improve methodology, analysis, information dissemination, data contribution, coordination, etc.

- Measurables:**
1. Write the SJV Inventory and Monitoring Plan.
 2. Initiate and/or facilitate monitoring projects that meet SJV needs.

Objective 3. Applied Research: Increase the knowledge of SJV bird populations and habitats by assessing and prioritizing research needs; communicating those needs to partners; and encouraging, facilitating, and coordinating with partners to accomplish needed research to improve conservation design and delivery.

- Strategies:**
1. Complete a research needs assessment to support conservation planning and delivery.
 2. Prioritize research needs.
 3. Post research needs on SJV website.
 4. Encourage partners to conduct research that applies to SJV bird needs.
 5. Maintain a directory of completed and ongoing research on the SJV website.
 6. Work with regional, national, and international groups to standardize, coordinate, and improve research efforts.
 7. Coordinate with and participate on the NAWMP Science Support Team, the PIF International Science Committee, and other bird initiative science teams.
 8. Incorporate research results and science teams' information into SJV plans and work.

- Measurables:**
1. Post research needs on website.
 2. Make contacts with researchers to fulfill SJV needs.
 3. Improve SJV plans by incorporating new data.

Objective 4. Training: Increase the number of trained ornithology professionals and citizen scientists.

- Strategies:**
1. Develop, conduct, and/or sponsor monitoring, research, and other biological training for conservation professionals, professional-track students, and citizen scientists.

- Measurables:**
1. Provide training workshops.

Objective 5. Information Transfer: Ensure that biological information and data are available to partners and easily understood.

- Strategies:**
1. Summarize and disseminate monitoring and research assessment results to



partners and managers in a user-friendly format, including presentations and website (work with Education and Outreach Coordinator).

Measurables: 1. Summarize results for distribution.

5.3 EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

The long-term success of the SJV will depend on effective communication with existing partners, potential partners, and the public. With the large size, biological complexity, and cultural diversity of the SJV region, regular communications are critical. Education is important to set the stage for an informed citizenry in the future.

Goal: Develop an education and outreach program that will effectively communicate the biological, social, cultural, and economic value of birds and their habitats and support the biological objectives and recommendations of the Conservation Plan. This program will include both internal and external communication and avitourism.

Objective 1. Partners/Internal Communications: Improve the effectiveness of partner actions throughout the SJV region by establishing an Education and Outreach Program to regularly communicate and exchange information on bird populations, their habitats and related conservation issues.

Strategies:

1. Present SJV goals objectives and program information at partners' meetings and events.
2. Improve internal communications among partners, including developing and maintaining a listserver, electronic newsletter, and website.
3. With partners, provide (sponsor or facilitate) training to professionals and professional-track students on conservation education, outreach, habitat management, avitourism, and other appropriate topics.

Measurables:

1. Develop and maintain a website, electronic newsletter, and listserver.
2. Make contacts and presentations.
3. Build and maintain a contacts database.
4. Provide training opportunities.

Objective 2. Public/External Education and Communication: Inform our external audiences of SJV goals and objectives, including the U.S. Congress.

Strategies:

1. Develop and carry out an SJV Education and Outreach Plan, including defining target audiences.
2. Support the development and distribution of habitat-based materials, such as best management practices handbook that encourages landowners and land managers to take active stewardship of birds and their habitats.
3. Support existing education and outreach programs that advance the goals and objectives of the SJV (e.g., International Migratory Bird Day).
4. Develop and distribute education and outreach materials to appropriate

- audiences as determined by the Education and Outreach Plan.
5. Support SJV efforts to seek funds by developing various types of informational materials.

- Measurables:**
1. Develop Education and Outreach Plan.
 2. Develop and distribute materials, including a general SJV brochure.
 3. Produce handbooks or other education and reference materials.

Objective 3. Avitourism: Increase the number of birding trips to the SJV area and assist with improving the economic effects of avitourism to local communities.

Strategies:

1. Support the development of avitourism in the SJV area.

- Measurables:**
1. Assist ongoing or incipient avitourism efforts.

5.4 FUNDING

In order to be effective over a large area, at multiple scales, and with our broad mission, the SJV will need increased funding for both capacity and implementation. The SJV should clearly document its need and strive to increase the funds provided by Congress through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and funding through other sources.

Goal: Increase funds available for SJV program and conservation projects.

Objective 1. Seek additional SJV funds from Congress.

- Strategies:**
1. Participate in Annual Joint Venture Management Boards Association “Hill Visit” to lobby Congress for an increased appropriation for Joint Ventures.
 2. Develop a budget tracking system and database for Congress and partners.

- Measurables:**
1. An increase in SJV budget.

Objective 2. Seek additional funding sources.

- Strategies:**
1. Approach participating partners, institutions, and individuals for funding to support SJV projects and programs.
 2. Submit SJV proposals to known granting institutions.
 3. Develop information database on known funding sources
 4. Provide advice to partners about funding sources appropriate for specific projects.
 5. Seek out new sources of funding.
 6. Announce funding opportunities on website, electronic newsletter, and listserver.

- Measurables:**
1. Number of grants awarded to the SJV and its partners.
 2. Number of contributions to SJV and its partners.



5.5 EVALUATION

The SJV reports accomplishments to many entities including: funders, conservation organizations, state and federal agencies, media, and Congress. It is essential that the SJV be able to quickly and accurately measure and report accomplishments. In some cases the metrics to measure success are simple such as reporting that a particular activity was completed. In other cases, success can be far more difficult to measure and requires significant time and effort (e.g., examining long-term trends in bird populations).

Goal: SJV personnel, Management Board, and committees will conduct an annual review to determine progress made in the elements and measures of the current Strategic and One-year Action Plans.

Objective 1. Accomplishments will be tracked annually.

Strategies: 1. Develop and use a database to track accomplishments and measurables.

Measurable: 1. Develop and maintain tracking database.

Objective 2. Annual progress reports: Accomplishments will be reported to the Management Board and partners annually.

Strategies:

1. Prepare an annual progress report with input from the Management Board and Committees for each element of the Strategic Plan, detailing progress made and suggested changes.
2. Review reports and approve or disapprove suggested changes. The One-Year Action Plan will be redrafted to reflect changes.
3. Evaluate SJV staff.
4. Management Board and Committees will conduct a “self-evaluation.”

Measurables:

1. Prepare annual progress report.
2. Update Strategic Plan and One-Year Action Plans.
3. Complete evaluations.

6.0 STRUCTURE

The following section outlines the roles and responsibilities of the various units of the SJV structure, the Management Board, committees, and staff. All of these units must work together to accomplish the goals and objectives outlined in the preceding sections of this Plan.

6.1 Management Board

The SJV is guided in policy and planning by a Management Board (Board). The primary responsibility of the Board is to maintain leadership, guidance, resources, commitment, and support to accomplish the goals and objectives of this Strategic Plan. The Board will do this through the following:

1. Provide guidance on organizational policy, program priorities, and long-range planning;
2. Review, provide input, and approve the organizational plans;
3. Identify and help secure potential partnerships and funding sources;
4. Approve the list of SJV Awards and proposals submitted to NAWCA.
5. Endorse significant budget changes;
6. Endorse significant changes in the duties of SJV staff and new SJV staff positions;
7. Recruit new board members and select new chairpersons;
8. Appoint members from their agencies/organizations to various committees;
9. Determine how the members' agencies/organizations can contribute to the SJV partnership;
10. Work with staff and committees to ensure that SJV partnership accomplishments of their agencies/organizations are reported to the SJV;
11. Keep Congressional (U.S.) members informed of accomplishments and needs; and
12. Revise and update this plan every five years.

The Board will meet three times a year in March, July, and November and more frequently if determined necessary by the Board and/or the Chairperson. Board meetings will rotate between the United States and Mexico and the Board will strive to meet within each of the states participating in the SJV at least once every two years. The Board will strive to maintain representation from each state participating in the SJV. At any meeting of the Board a quorum shall be more than one-half of the total number of members at that time.

Members of the Board will include volunteer representatives from federal, state, corporate, non-profit conservation organization partners, and private individuals interested in the conservation of birds and their habitats within the boundaries of the SJV. Individual Board members agree to:

1. Serve a two year term;
2. Attend 3 board meetings a year;
3. Designate an alternate to act in their behalf in the event of absence; and
4. Step down if they miss an excessive number of meetings.

6.1.1 Chairperson

The Chairperson will be elected by simple majority vote by the Board and serve a two year term with an optional second two year term if desired and approved by the Board. The Board will strive to

rotate the Chairperson position between Mexico and the United States. The Chairperson leads Board meetings, and facilitates and participates in the decision-making process of the Board.

6.1.2 Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson will also be elected by a simple majority vote of the Board. He or she will become the Chairperson at the end of the sitting Chair's term. The Vice-Chairperson will act as Chairperson in the event of the Chair's absence and will lead the Executive Committee. If possible the Vice-Chairperson will be from the opposite country as the sitting Chairperson to help facilitate the regular exchange between countries.

6.1.3 Executive Committee

The primary function of the Executive Committee is to facilitate important SJV issues which require a definitive action in the time between Board meetings. The Executive Committee will include at the least the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, Past Chairperson(s), and committee chairs, as well as the Coordinator. Issues resolved by the Executive Committee will be submitted to the Board as soon as possible by email or at the next Board meeting.

6.2 Technical Committee

The primary responsibility of the Technical Committee is to provide the Management Board and JV staff with technical expertise regarding biological planning, recommendations, prioritization, and evaluation. The Technical Committee's responsibilities include the following:

1. Develop, maintain, and communicate a strong scientific foundation for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating bird conservation;
2. Identify and prioritize species, habitats, and focus areas;
3. Assist partners in identifying and developing bird conservation projects and programs;
4. Provide technical advice to partners developing bird conservation proposals;
5. Assist in the development and implementation of the SJV Conservation Plan and the SJV Inventory and Monitoring Plan;
6. Review and rank proposals submitted to the SJV Awards Program;
7. Review documents/issues and providing feedback to the appropriate entity; and
8. Monitor and evaluate the progress of the objectives of the Conservation Plan.

The Technical Committee will have two co-chairs, one from Mexico and one from the United States (Science Coordinator). They will set the committee's agendas, report findings to the Management Board, and represent the SJV on the NSST, PIF Technical Committee, NABCI monitoring group, and other national science initiatives.

The Technical Committee will generally be open to program or field level biologists with a vested interest in regional bird conservation and who are knowledgeable about specific habitat types, geographic areas, species, or taxonomic groups. The Technical Committee may have subcommittees working on more narrowly defined issues. The size and makeup of the Technical Committee may vary according to the current needs of the SJV. The SJV will strive to have equal representation from the U.S. and Mexico. We will seek representation from each state, from each bird initiative, and from conservation-based agencies and NGOs. The Technical Committee will serve as a forum of exchange of information on bird conservation, research, and monitoring. The committee will

translate goals and objective of the bird initiatives to meaningful goals and objectives at the JV, BCR, state, and local scales. One of the committee's prime functions will be to help write and implement the Conservation, Inventory, and Monitoring Plans.

6.3 Education and Outreach Committee

The primary responsibility of the Education and Outreach committee is to support the goals and objectives of the SJV through its education and outreach projects, programs, and activities. This is accomplished by the following:

1. Develop, maintain, and communicate a strong foundation for planning, designing implementing, and evaluating the education and communication efforts of the SJV;
2. Provide feedback and suggestions for the development and revisions of the Education and Outreach Plan;
3. Identify priority needs and audiences for SJV Education and Outreach efforts;
4. Assist partners in identifying and developing bird education projects and programs;
5. Provide technical advice to partners developing education, outreach, and communication proposals and/or programs;
6. Develop ranking criteria for education, outreach, and communications proposals submitted to the SJV Awards Program;
7. Review and rank education, outreach, and communications proposals submitted to the SJV Awards Program;
8. Monitor and evaluate the progress of the objectives of the Education and Outreach Plan; and
9. Recognize partners for outstanding contributions toward achieving the goals of the SJV by soliciting nominations and recommending finalist(s) to the Management Board for approval.

6.4 SJV Coordinator

The primary responsibility of the JV Coordinator is to facilitate the execution of the SJV Strategic Plan. This will be accomplished by the following:

1. Support all committees through their respective chairpersons;
2. Coordinate the development and implementation of SJV partnerships;
3. Provide guidance to partners in the development of projects and programs;
4. Generate and leveraging funds for SJV projects and programs;
5. Work with the Technical Committee and Science Coordinator to administer the SJV Awards Program;
6. Work closely with the Management Board, organizing Board meetings, providing SJV briefings, tri-annual updates, and annual progress reports; and
7. Track accomplishments and evaluate progress towards the goal and objectives of the SJV.

6.5 Science Coordinator

The primary responsibility of the Science Coordinator is to maintain the biological foundation of the SJV and ensure its continuous improvement by the following:

1. Facilitate the execution of the SJV Conservation Plan;
2. Cooperatively lead the Technical Committee with the SJV Mexican co-chair;
3. Act as the SJV liaison to all existing and future major bird initiatives and partner

- organizations involved in conservation within the SJV;
4. Represent the SJV on the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Science Support Team (NSST) and the Partners in Flight (PIF) Technical Committee;
 5. Represent the SJV on the U.S. NABCI Coordinated Bird Monitoring group;
 6. Provide leadership to a variety of federal, state, and local conservation groups in the development of SJV Conservation Plan;
 7. Develop and maintain SJV science databases;
 8. Review and rank SJV Awards Proposal projects;
 9. Monitor and evaluate the progress of SJV conservation projects; and
 10. Assist the JV Coordinator with other duties of the JV and representing the JV as needed.

6.6 Education and Outreach Coordinator

The primary responsibility of the Education and Outreach Coordinator is to support the goals and objectives of the SJV through education and outreach projects, programs, and activities. This is accomplished by the following:

1. Lead the Education and Outreach Committee;
2. Develop an Education and Outreach Plan and facilitate its implementation;
3. Develop and maintain the SJV website and listserver;
4. Develop and distribute SJV educational and outreach materials to SJV partners and the general public;
5. Implement and/or facilitate SJV education and outreach activities;
6. Work with JV and Assistant JV coordinators to facilitate communication and sharing of information among SJV partners; and
7. Represent the SJV at meetings.

