



## Waterbird Conservation Council Terms of Reference

January 2007

### Introduction

The Waterbird Conservation Council (Council) of the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative promotes the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (NAWCP) and associated sub-continental scale (regional) plans. It has the responsibility for coordinating, supporting, and communicating implementation of NAWCP, other waterbird plans, updating the plans, and facilitating actions for waterbird conservation throughout the Americas.

### Vision

The vision of Waterbird Conservation for the Americas is that the distribution, diversity, and abundance of populations and habitats of breeding, migratory, and nonbreeding waterbirds are sustained or restored throughout the lands and waters of the Western Hemisphere.

### Council Operation

The Waterbird Conservation Council is a voluntary board that accomplishes tasks and objectives primarily through participation in topical committees dedicated to advancing waterbird conservation through management, research, education, and policy activities. In addition, Council members participate in and/or liaise with regional working groups implementing waterbird conservation strategies at the regional or sub-continental scale.

Committee operations are facilitated by an Executive Committee composed of standing committee chairs and regional representatives, an international coordinator as well as other part-time coordinators, liaisons and staff. Standing committees are self-appointing, include non-Council members, and are led by 1-2 chairs. Committees report to the Council as a whole through the generation of reports and recommendations for Council action.

Committees meet through conference calls and/or in person approximately quarterly. The Council meets as a whole annually (usually January). Regional working groups are generally active year-round. All Council members are expected to contribute their skills and knowledge-base, and to the degree possible, their affiliated institution's resources, to the advancement of waterbird conservation through participation and/or leadership in Council committees and through facilitating the work of regional groups.

### Standing Committees

1. **Regional Planning and Implementation Committee**—facilitates effective waterbird conservation planning and implementation at the regional or sub-continental scale. Ensures that regional and continental-scale activities are linked and mutually beneficial to furthering the waterbird initiative vision.
2. **Technical Services Committee**—provides leadership and guidance on technical topics of interest to the Initiative including research, monitoring, and adaptive management.
3. **Communications Committee**—provides communication services to support the work of the Initiative.
4. **Policy and Critical Issues Committee**—fosters awareness and actions to meet the urgent needs of waterbird conservation.



## Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

5. **Membership Committee**—ensures the on-going vigor of the Council through recruitment, promoting participant benefits and capacity-building.
6. **Funding and Support Committee**—acquires resources to fund the work of the Council and support the implementation of NAWCP and similar efforts.

### **Committee Chairmanship**

Standing committees will select chairs from among Council and non-Council committee members. Chairs are expected to ensure the annual functioning of the committee, progress toward objectives, and engagement of Council members. Co-chairmanship is encouraged. Regardless of status as a Council member, committee chairs serve on the Executive Committee and are expected to attend annual meetings.

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee oversees and facilitates the work of the standing committees, and provides leadership to the Council as a whole. The Executive Committee forms ad hoc committees and task groups to respond to Council needs outside the purview of standing committees.

The Executive Committee currently has twelve seats. Six are “geographic” Vice-Chairs representing Canada, U.S., Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. The Chair and Chair-Elect of the Council are selected from these six Vice-Chairs by the Executive Committee as a whole. Each geographical vice-chair is selected from and by Council members from that geographical region.

The six additional members of the Executive Committee are the immediate Past Chair of the Council as well as the chairs of five standing committees (all but Membership which is chaired by the Council Chair). The Executive Committee members serve two-year renewable terms.

### **New Members**

The Council is envisioned as autonomous and approves its own members. Adequate representation of the Plan's breadth of geography, taxonomy, and issues requires continual recruitment and thus a nominating process. The Membership Committee presents names to the full Council for consideration (see Principles of Membership).

### **Decision-making**

The Council will strive to obtain consensus on all issues and to work cooperatively to advance waterbird conservation, as outlined in the Council document “Approach to Decision Making.” When decisions lacking full Council support are made, objections and abstentions will be documented. The Council's approach to advocacy and voicing positions with regard to public policy actions is outlined in the Council document “Involvement in Advocacy and Public Policy.”

### **Reporting**

Standing committees will report on accomplishments and identify annual tasks and objectives through the development of work plans to be presented to Council at the annual meeting. The Council will produce an annual report of its activities.