



Department of Defense Partners in Flight

Fact Sheet #21
November 2011

Department of Defense Partners in Flight Program

Mission

To conserve migratory and resident birds and their habitats on Department of Defense lands.



The Strategic Plan and detailed Annual Report can be found at www.dodpif.org, or through the contact information on the next page.

2010 Annual Report

DoD Partners in Flight Program

Conserving Birds and Their Habitats

The Department of Defense (DoD) Partners in Flight (PIF) program sustains and enhances the military testing, training, and safety mission through proactive, habitat-based management strategies that maintain healthy landscapes and training lands. DoD PIF representatives assist installation natural resources managers in improving their monitoring and inventory, research and management, and education programs involving birds and their habitats. Bird conservation actions can be incorporated into installation Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans and integrated into Bird/Animal Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) plans, where it does not create a mission conflict or safety hazard. DoD PIF works beyond installation boundaries to facilitate cooperative partnerships, determine the current status of bird populations, and prevent the listing of additional bird species as threatened or endangered. DoD PIF provides a scientific basis for maximizing the effectiveness of resource management, enhancing the biological integrity of DoD lands, and ensuring continued use of these lands to fulfill military training requirements. Participating in partnerships, such as PIF, also helps DoD to more effectively meet its trust responsibility to conserve our nation's biodiversity.

The DoD PIF Strategic Plan identifies actions that support and enhance the military mission while also achieving the overall PIF goal of maintaining secure populations of priority birds. Regional and Technical Working Groups pursue additional priorities, and a series of Fact Sheets identifies emerging programmatic priorities. An annual planning workshop of the DoD PIF Representatives provides guidance to monitoring strategies, priority species and ongoing bird conservation priorities for DoD. The



The Kirtland's Warbler population now exceeds the biological recovery goal. The Michigan National Guard plays an active role in developing and implementing a strategy to remove this conservation-reliant species from the Endangered Species List. Photo: Chris Eberly

species of concern database helps installation managers identify priority bird species on every military installation to better focus monitoring efforts.

Partnerships and Leadership

DoD is a member of the US Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), making DoD directly involved in tri-national conservation planning involving Canada, the US, and Mexico. DoD is actively involved in the newly formed Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds, created through Executive Order 13186 (*"Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds"*). The DoD PIF Program Coordinator served as President of the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA). The Program Coordinator and members of the DoD PIF Program represented DoD at national, regional, and state steering committee meetings of Partners in Flight, as well as relevant committees of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

Accomplishments

The DoD PIF Program Coordinator worked with US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to customize and teach the course, “Migratory Bird Conservation – A Trust Responsibility” at Marine Corps Base Hawaii-Kaneohe Bay. Case studies in the course focused on DoD issues, and included participants from USFWS, DoD, and the State of Hawaii. Members of the DoD PIF Program and NMFWA worked together to initiate the new Military Lands Working Group within The Wildlife Society.

DoD PIF Representatives developed a list of migratory bird species considered to be of highest “concern” to DoD (exclusive of Federally-listed and Hawaiian species). The emphasis was on those species having the highest potential to impact the future military mission should they become listed under the Endangered Species Act, with a secondary focus on those species with significant conservation concern on DoD lands during breeding, non-breeding, and/or migration. The list of 67 species is now available as a Fact Sheet on the DoD PIF web site.

One of the major contributions of DoD PIF to the Legacy Program is the review process to evaluate all pre-proposal and full proposal submissions to the annual Legacy funding cycle. The network of DoD PIF Reps reviewed 30 bird-related pre-proposals for the 2011 Legacy funding cycle to see if each one meets required criteria to warrant a full proposal submission. Of these, 23 full proposals were then requested and reviewed in detail and scored in each of 10 criteria developed by the DoD PIF Program. Due



Wedge-tailed Shearwater is one of many species benefitting from active management, including removal of introduced predators, on DoD lands in Hawaii. Photo: Chris Eberly

to severe budget limitations, only 6 projects were approved, totaling \$984,000 in funding. Legacy funding for bird conservation projects has now exceeded \$34 million, and also provides the funding for management of the DoD PIF program.

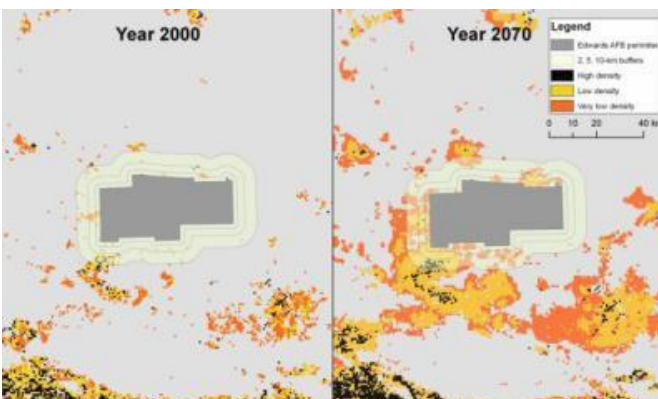
Migratory Bird Legislation

USFWS published a Final Eagle Permit Rule in 2009 under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. This Rule authorizes limited issuance of permits to take Bald and Golden Eagles where the take is associated with, but not the purpose of, an otherwise lawful activity. The Eagle Protection Act has prohibited take of Bald Eagles since 1940 and Golden Eagles since 1962. Since publication of the Eagle Rule, the planned

development of wind-power facilities has increased dramatically in the core range of Golden Eagles in the western United States. Golden Eagles, in particular, are vulnerable to collisions with wind turbines. Draft Eagle Conservation Plan Guidance explains USFWS’s approach to issuing programmatic eagle take permits and provides guidance to applicants and biologists for conservation practices and adaptive management necessary to meet standards required for issuance of these permits and to be in compliance with the Eagle Act. Since the intent of this was originally for the wind energy industry, DoD PIF initiated discussions between USFWS and DoD about specific guidance for military activities, which have significantly less impact to eagles than wind energy.

Getting the Word Out

Educating both the military and the public is a vital function of the DoD PIF program. Outreach materials were produced, presentations and briefings were given, and articles were written. Ongoing support of International Migratory Bird Day links international outreach materials and events with local military communities. Consultations with DoD natural resource professionals on integrating bird habitat conservation into management plans are one of the most significant contributions of DoD PIF.



Encroachment from urbanization surrounding DoD lands places increasing pressures on DoD resource managers. DoD PIF helps coordinate conservation planning with sister agencies close to DoD lands. Maps courtesy PRBO from Legacy project #10-465.

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For more information on the DoD Partners in Flight Program:

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