



Birds of Management Concern

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Program
2024

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Birds of Management Concern (BMC) are a subset of species protected by the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act \(MBTA\)](#) that require special management attention because of a variety of factors (e.g., too few, too many, societal demands, legal mandates). While the FWS maintains responsibility for the over [1100 species](#) of birds protected by the MBTA, the Birds of Management Concern are used to focus our work to maximize our effectiveness. The Birds of Management Concern include the following four categories of birds:

- [Migratory game birds for which we hold hunting seasons](#)
- [Birds of Conservation Concern](#)
- [Migratory bird species in conflict with people](#)
- [Bald and Golden Eagles](#)

Why do these groups of species require special management attention?

Migratory game birds for which we hold hunting seasons: One of the primary reasons the United States signed migratory bird treaties with Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia and the passage of the MBTA was to cooperatively manage and regulate the purposeful take of migratory birds used for recreational and subsistence hunting. Because birds migrate across state and international boundaries and are subject to international and federal law, the Fish and Wildlife Service is the only entity in the United States that has the authority to open hunting seasons for migratory birds. We approach this responsibility by relying on quality information to inform decisions and in close partnership with treaty partners, states, and Tribes.

Birds of Conservation Concern: The migratory bird provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act ([16 U.S.C. § 2912](#)) direct the Fish and Wildlife Service to (1) monitor and assess population trends and status of all migratory nongame birds; (2) identify the effects of environmental changes and human activities on all migratory nongame birds; (3) identify migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act (i.e., Birds of Conservation Concern); (4) identify conservation actions to assure Birds of Conservation Concern do not reach the point at which the measures provided pursuant to the Endangered Species Act become necessary; and (5) identify lands and waters in the United States and other nations in the Western Hemisphere whose protection, management, or acquisition will foster the conservation of migratory nongame birds. These required activities are intended to stimulate coordinated, collaborative and proactive

conservation actions among international, federal, state, tribal and private partners. If a Bird of Conservation Concern becomes a formal candidate for listing or is listed as threatened or endangered, or as ESA-listed birds are recovered and are removed from the threatened or endangered species list, they may continue to be a focus of Migratory Bird Program management attention during these transitions over a period of time. The Migratory Bird Program will collaborate with Ecological Services to clarify roles and responsibilities during these transitions in species status to ensure the continued conservation of these species.

Migratory bird species in conflict with people: When a protected migratory bird species is perceived to be negatively affecting a human economic or ecological interest (e.g., agriculture) to the extent that intervention is necessary to reduce the effects, the Migratory Bird Program employs a systematic approach to promote consistency and coordination with stakeholders in identifying and implementing management solutions. We promote comprehensive approaches to solving these problems, coordinating extensively across regions, programs, and often agencies more than a typical issue that would warrant a depredation permit (e.g., Double-crested Cormorants) because of the complexity and/or scale of the issue. Because one tool to managing these conflicts is the potential use of lethal control, the FWS is the only entity that can authorize the take of migratory bird species.

Bald and Golden Eagles: While Bald and Golden Eagles are protected by the MBTA, they are afforded additional protections under the [Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#). Eagles have been of particular management concern to the Migratory Bird Program ever since bald eagles were delisted from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 2007. The FWS is responsible for managing eagles to ensure the preservation of both eagle species. Bald eagles and golden eagles are both species of importance to the American public and many Native American Tribes.

Disclaimer: Birds of Management Concern is not a legal designation and does not convey any additional requirements or responsibilities beyond existing law. Birds of Management Concern are an internal tool to help prioritize the Migratory Bird Program's work.