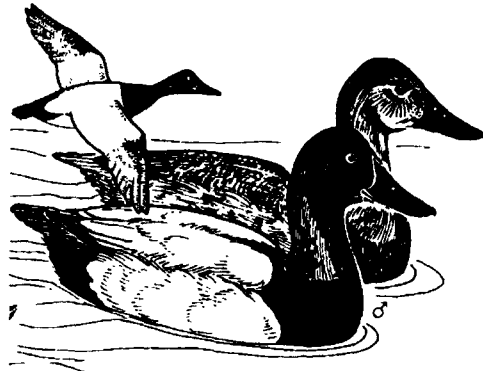


# CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

## *Annual Progress Report*

Department of Environmental Protection  
Living Resources  
1000  
Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17107

**The Waterfowl  
Workgroup  
Living Resources  
Subcommittee**



**1991**

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# Waterfowl Workgroup Living Resources Subcommittee

## Annual Progress Report

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### Chesapeake Bay Program

**1991**

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**Annual Report of the Waterfowl Workgroup  
Living Resources Subcommittee, Chesapeake Bay Program - 1991**

This report outlines the major accomplishments of the Waterfowl Workgroup in 1991. The workgroup consists of biologists from both state and Federal agencies representing the various interests in waterfowl management in the Chesapeake Bay Region. The names of the members and agencies involved with the workgroup are listed in Table 1.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

The Waterfowl Management Plan was completed in December of 1990. Unfortunately, the signing of the Plan at the Executive Council Meeting scheduled for early January was canceled due to inclement weather. When the signatures of the Executive Council are obtained the plan will be printed and distributed.

The Workgroup met on three occasions in 1991. The meetings of the Workgroup have been kept to a minimum to allow members time to work on projects related to the Plan. Two members of the workgroup resigned; David Krementz transferred, and Pete Poulos was unable to make the commitment of time. The following three members were added to the Workgroup: Hal Laskowski, the Regional Biologist for USFWS Refuges in Maryland and Virginia, Gary Costanzo of Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and Roland Limpert of Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage.

The major accomplishments of the Workgroup are listed below and all work is listed in Appendix 1 in a tabular format.

**Waterfowl Concentration Database** - Biologists from all three states collected data on the location and numbers of waterfowl concentrations during the Mid-winter Waterfowl Surveys. The data was entered into a computerized database. Computerized mapping capabilities have been developed. Additional data will be collected in 1992 and incorporated in an atlas which will be completed in the spring of 1992.

**Impact of Hydraulic Clam Dredging on SAV** - The waterfowl workgroup is cooperating with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's study to determine if the use of hydraulic clam dredges is having a negative effect on SAV. Preliminary results indicate that further study is warranted. As funds or personnel become available a study will be initiated. The study will focus on three areas. 1. Determination of the areas and severity of light reduction caused by suspended sediments; 2. Comparison of SAV distribution and abundance in areas where clamming occurs and areas where it is prohibited; 3. Determine the extent and effect of disturbance by hydraulic dredges on SAV tubers throughout the year.

**Develop Guidelines for Wetland Management and Farming Practices that Benefit Waterfowl** - A draft manual on creation of impoundments for dabbling ducks was written and is being reviewed.

**Develop New Educational Materials** - Fact sheets on the Waterfowl Plan, Canvasbacks, and Canada Geese were prepared. A fact sheet on limiting the spread of Phragmites is in preparation.

**Status and Trends Report** - A database was developed from the Mid-winter Waterfowl Surveys which covers 1950 to 1991. This database will be used to produce a status and trends report of Chesapeake Bay waterfowl with maps, graphics, and color photographs.

**Determine the Effects of Releasing Game Farm Mallards on Wild Waterfowl Populations** - A study was initiated by Dr. Frank Rohwer to determine the survival rate of released game farm mallards. The study was funded by the State of Maryland, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and The Grand National Hunt Club.

## **OUTLOOK FOR 1992**

The workgroup will proceed with the above projects and take on additional tasks as time allows. Most projects are behind the schedule set by the Plan. With the current funding levels and limited personnel it is clear that the implementation schedule was far too optimistic. It is doubtful that the schedule can be gained upon, and most likely that we will fall further behind.

Table 1. Members of the Waterfowl Workgroup.

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Doug Forsell, Chair	USFWS - Chesapeake Bay Estuary Program
Carin Bisland	USEPA - Chesapeake Bay Program
Gary Costanzo	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
John Dunn	Pennsylvania Game Commission
Dick Dyer	USFWS - Regional. Coordinator. NAWMP
Steve Funderburk	USFWS - Chesapeake Bay Estuary Program
John Gill	USFWS - Division of Ecology Service
Mike Haramis	USFWS-Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
Fred Hartman	Pennsylvania Game Commission
Bill Harvey	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Larry Hindman	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Dick Jachowski	USFWS - Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
Dennis Jorde	USFWS - Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
Hal Laskowski	USFWS - Division of Refuges
Roland Limpert	Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
Jerry Serie	USFWS - Office of Migratory Bird Management
Fax Settle	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN

APPENDIX 1 , page 1

Waterfowl Management Plan Implementing Tasks

Implementation Date Status

Task	Implementation Date	Status
WMP-1.1.A. Complete the revision of "Habitat Requirements for Chesapeake Bay Living Resources", particularly for the canvasback, redhead, wood duck, and black duck.	December 1990	Completed
WMP-1.1.B. Conduct literature synthesis on habitat requirements for the tundra swan, Canada goose, and oldsquaw. Identify where inadequate habitat information exists, and recommend appropriate research.	July 1991	No funds available
WMP-1.1.C. Develop new management strategies based on new habitat information acquired via Tasks 1.A. and 1.B.	June 1991	Delayed until WMP-1.1.B Completed
WMP-1.1.D. Determine the optimum and maximum sustained levels of nitrogen and phosphorus that must be maintained to promote growth of submerged aquatic vegetation; rely on efforts of SAV Workgroup.	December 1990	Completed: SAV Technical Synthesis
WMP-1.1.E. Develop a plan for conducting research on acute and chronic impacts of contaminants such as heavy metals and organics on waterfowl and their food resources. Plan will include time schedules and budget support.	May 1991	Toxics Subcommittee held workshop; report in preparation available
WMP-1.1.F. Ensure that the information derived from Task E is used by EPA and States in developing criteria and standards for water quality.	Undetermined	NA
WMP-1.2.A. Develop guidelines on wetland management practices that benefit waterfowl and are known to have little or no detrimental effects on non-target species.	August 1991	One draft completed: waiting on literature review in WPM-1.2.B
WMP-1.2.B. Conduct a literature review and synthesis on known impacts of wetland habitat manipulation for benefiting waterfowl (with particular attention to impoundments and marsh burning). Literature should be reviewed with an emphasis on the assessment of impacts on wetland dependent fish and wildlife species and ecosystem functions.	December 1991	No funds available
WMP-1.2.C. Base on literature review in 2.B., research should be identified, planned, funded, and conducted.	Plan by 3/92 Begin Research by 1/93	No action
WMP-1.2.D. Revise guidelines based on information obtained via 2.B. and 2.C.	Ongoing	No action
WMP-1.3.A. Provide a Waterfowl Workgroup representative to SAV Workgroup to coordinate the Waterfowl Plan with the SAV Plan.	December 1990 Ongoing	Steve Funderburk is representative

Waterfowl Management Plan Implementing Tasks

Waterfowl Management Plan Implementing Tasks	Implementation Date	Status
WMP-1.3.B. Refine existing knowledge on the life history requirements of SAV to promote management of these species.	December 1990	SAV Technical Synthesis is being completed by the SAV Workgroup
WMP-1.3.C. Determine the need for research on the impacts of contaminants (heavy metals, organics) and herbicides on the abundance and distribution of SAV.	Per SAV Plan	SAV Workgroup action
WMP-1.3.D. Assess the impact of commercial clamming on SAV survival, distribution, and abundance.	December 1991	CBC is conducting a survey with GIS support from FWS and EPA. Level of future studies dependant on funding.
WMP-1.4.A. Support the efforts of the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture to protect and enhance waterfowl habitat.	Ongoing	Joint ventures are beginning in the states, will need funding support from states and private organizations to match federal funds.
WMP-1.4.B. Promote the use of new and existing programs to protect and enhance habitats for waterfowl on private lands. Programs may include:	December 1991	Activities supported by members of Workgroup, but no specific actions taken.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Conservation Reserve Program under the Food Security Act.</li> <li>o Financial or Tax Credit Incentives for leaving crops unharvested for waterfowl, and for leaving fallow fields adjacent to wetlands.</li> <li>o Promote hardwood forest buffer strips along wetlands and streams.</li> <li>o Financial or tax credit incentives for creation of waterfowl habitat.</li> <li>o Develop "give-away" programs that provide private landowners with plants that benefit waterfowl.</li> <li>o Preserve agricultural land via zoning or legislation.</li> <li>o Promote stream fencing programs similar to the program in Pennsylvania.</li> <li>o Encourage full use of best management practices on agricultural lands to benefit waterfowl.</li> </ul>		

Waterfowl Management Plan Implementing Tasks	Implementation Date	Status
<p>WMP-1.4.C. Determine the impacts of existing government programs that adversely affect waterfowl and wetlands, and summarize in a report the changes which might be beneficial or lessen the adverse affects on waterfowl. The determination should consider the full range of Federal and State cost-share and assistance programs that influence land use, and programs that regulate land use activities.</p>	<p>Per Schedule of Wetlands Plan</p>	<p>Activity of Wetlands Workgroup, Waterfowl Workgroup will aid</p>
<p>WMP-1.5.A. Develop a means to monitor invasive species; incorporate monitoring into a five year Status and Trends survey called for by Wetlands Implementation Plan.</p>	<p>Per Wetland's Plan</p>	<p>Activity of Wetlands Workgroup</p>
<p>WMP-1.5.B. Determine which method or combination of methods will effectively control Phragmites in the Chesapeake Bay Region, while minimizing adverse effects on non-target species of plants and animals. Methods to be investigated include burning, herbicides, flooding, and further research into the life history dynamics of Phragmites.</p>	<p>June 1991</p>	<p>Methods are available, new methods may require extensive research, which is doubtful to provide methods which differ from Delaware.</p>
<p>WMP-1.5.C. Inform the public about negative habitat qualities of phragmites and recommend ways the public can reduce the spread of this plant. Two examples are to discourage the use of Phragmites as camouflage on duck blinds and to discourage its sale in local nurseries.</p>	<p>May 1991</p>	<p>Brochure and letter to nurseries being prepared by FWS</p>
<p>WMP-1.6.A. Develop maps or reports that identify waterfowl habitats of concern and needing permanent protection. Use and expand technique of MFPWS to record waterfowl concentrations by latitude/longitude coordinates.</p>	<p>December 1991</p>	<p>In progress - funds for computer technician not available</p>
<p>WMP-1.6.B. Provide information and technical assistance to local governments and municipalities to direct population growth and land development away from valuable waterfowl habitat, or to reduce potential adverse effects of approved development.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Dependant on WMP-1.6.A</p>
<p>WMP-1.6.C. Assess the need for open water sanctuaries that would offer protection from boating activities and/or hunting; summarize findings in a report.</p>	<p>October 1991</p>	<p>May require study; no staff funds available to work on project to date</p>
<p>WMP-2.1.A. Inform the Atlantic Flyway Council and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of priority concerns regarding harvest management proposals for species using the Bay.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Numerous members of the Workgroup attended the Atlantic Flyway Technical Section Meeting in March</p>

## Waterfowl Management Plan Implementing Tasks

	Implementation Date	Status
WMP-2.1.B. Assess the need to impose greater restrictions on harvest of sea ducks (oldsquaw and scoters), including zoning restrictions designed to offer open water sanctuaries for sea ducks.	June 1991	Need surveys and adequate funding unavailable
WMP-2.2.A. Determine whether special migratory bird regulations for harvest of captive-raised mallards allowed by Federal Law (50 CFR 21.13) pose threats to wild populations in the Chesapeake area.	June 1991	National issue being reviewed by the USFWS
WMP-2.2.B. Determine if RSA's increase or decrease hunting pressure on wild populations at the local level (e.g. decoying wild birds or reduce pressure on wild birds). WW should ensure research efforts address this information need.	June 1992	Study underway by Dr. Frank Rower Univ. of MD funded by State of MD, Grand National Hunt Club, and USFWS.
WMP-2.2.C. Determine if and how released mallards affect migration and wintering habitat availability for wild birds. WW should ensure research efforts address this information need.	June 1992	Study underway by Dr. Frank Rower Univ. of MD funded by State of MD, Grand National Hunt Club, and USFWS
WMP-2.2.D. Determine the extent of hybridization between released mallards and wild black ducks, and other possible impacts to black duck reproductive potential. FWS and MFPWS should ensure research efforts address this need.	June 1992	Study underway by Dr. Frank Rower Univ. of MD funded by State of MD, Grand National Hunt Club, and USFWS
WMP-2.2.E. Determine if there is a disease threat to wild birds from interaction of captive-raised mallards with wild stock. WW should ensure that research efforts address this information need.	June 1992	Study underway by Dr. Frank Rower Univ. of MD, funded by State of MD, Grand National Hunt Club, and USFWS
WMP-2.2.F. Determine the impact of released mallards on Atlantic Flyway winter surveys and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service harvest estimates.	June 1992	Study underway by Dr. Frank Rower Univ. of MD funded by State of MD, grand National Hunt Club, and USFWS
WMP-2.2.G. Based on research findings, the State of Maryland should assess the spending of funds from the sale of the State Duck Stamps to ensure an appropriate balance between the release program and habitat enhancement efforts.	June 1992	Delayed until study completed
WMP-2.3.A. Support the creation and maintenance of habitat diversity by providing a wide spectrum of waterfowl habitats including natural wetlands, moist soil areas, impoundments, and a variety of buffer forest and agricultural areas. Present progress in WW annual report.	Ongoing	No specific actions necessary at this time



## Waterfowl Management Plan Implementing Tasks

	Implementation Date	Status
WMP-2.3.B. Distribute management activities over broad geographic areas through the acquisition of state/federal wildlife areas, cooperative/easement areas, and management on private lands. Present progress in WW annual report.	Ongoing	No specific actions necessary at this time
WMP-2.3.C. Design waterfowl harvest management programs to disperse bird concentrations by adjusting season dates, season lengths, and bag limits; present progress in WW annual report.	Ongoing	No specific actions necessary at this time
WMP-2.3.D. Discourage artificial feeding that is harmful to waterfowl through educational programs. Some feeding causes unnatural concentrations of waterfowl which can result in a dependency on people, the spread of disease, and poor nutrition. Investigate forms of feeding that may benefit waterfowl and inform the public of the proper foods and areas.	Ongoing	USFWS brochure was obtained. Is distributed in some federal facilities. Workgroup will seek wider distribution.
WMP-2.4.A. Assess strengths and weaknesses of existing survey methods and summarize in a report; incorporate recommendations for improvement.	April 1991	In progress
WMP-2.4.B. Based on WMP-2.4.A. report, design necessary new surveys and seek agency support to accomplish the surveys.	December 1991	New surveys designed, funding being sought
WMP-2.4.C. Promote acquisition of waterfowl concentration data from Mid-winter Survey, model approach after existing effort of MFPWS.	December 1990	Completed in 1991 survey, will continue in future years
WMP-2.5.A. Summarize in a brief report research priorities that are aimed at enhancing management techniques. Submit to Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee via the Living Resources Subcommittee.	March 1991, Annually Thereafter	Report in progress
WMP-2.5.B. Determine the feasibility of artificial island creation using clean dredge spoil material for waterfowl habitat.	March 1991	Completed: Plan for Bodkin Island completed and requires funding to implement the construction. Workgroup is seeking funds to evaluate the success of the project.
WMP-2.5.C. Locate and recommend former dredged or borrow areas (e.g. abandoned quarries) for restoration through the creation of waterfowl habitat by partially filling them with clean spoil from dredging of the Bay.	March 1991	Report written by COE

Waterfowl Management Plan Implementing Tasks

	Implementation Date	Status
WMP-2.5.D. Host special conferences as necessary to solve general and specific waterfowl problems. Invite recognized experts and summarize findings.	As Necessary	No funding available at this time
WMP-3.1.A. Develop a plan identifying new ways to educate the public, including product descriptions, audience, time frames, equipment, and budget needs.	July 1991	FWS Staff time unavailable until Spring
WMP-3.1.B. Develop educational materials for use in agricultural extension programs to create or improve waterfowl habitat.	December 1991	No progress
WMP-3.1.C. Generate public interest and support for conservation of waterfowl in Chesapeake Bay through production of posters, fact sheets, status and trends report, and other educational materials.	July 1991	Status and Trend report in progress, Canada Goose and Canvasback fact sheet completed. Poster in progress.
WMP-3.1.D. Produce educational materials to promote public support for measures to minimize disturbance of wintering waterfowl flocks, including support for marine sanctuaries.	July 1991	Delayed until reports from WMP-1.6.C. and WMP-2.6.B. are completed.

