

# NORTH AMERICAN



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**Conserving birds and their habitats  
throughout North America**

**Capitol Visitor Center**

**March 25, 2014  
Washington, D.C.**

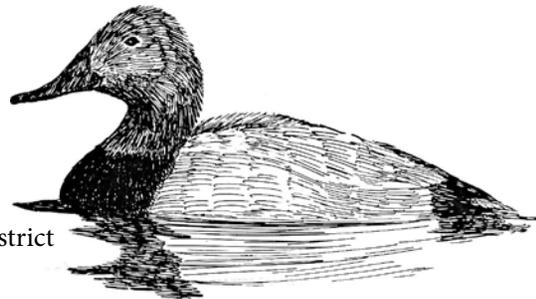
This year, 2014, marks the 27 years of partnership-driven bird and habitat conservation led by the North American Migratory Bird Joint Ventures. Since the North American Waterfowl Management Plan called for their creation in 1986, the Joint Ventures have become widely accepted as the model for cooperative conservation. Joint Ventures share a vision of a North American landscape where people work together to help birds thrive. In these challenging times, Joint Ventures are more important than ever to ensure a sustainable future for wildlife and people.

Thank you for joining us this evening as we celebrate the Joint Ventures' innovative conservation efforts; strong, effective partnerships; and work to protect the wild resources upon which we all rely.

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**Hosted by:**

- Association of Joint Venture Management Boards
- American Bird Conservancy
- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- National Audubon
- California Rice Commission
- California Waterfowl Association
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Ducks Unlimited
- Grassland Fund
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Pheasants Forever
- Pacific Gas & Electric Company
- River Partners
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Conservation Fund
- The Trust for Public Land
- Suisun Resource Conservation District
- Wildlife Management Institute



**South Carolina Working Group of the South Atlantic Migratory Bird Initiative**

Partners in South Carolina have exemplified how a diverse set of agencies and NGOs can establish mutual priorities and accomplish more working together than any of them could have achieved individually. Through the ACE Basin Focus Area Task Force and similar Task Forces focused on Winyah Bay and the South Lowcountry, Audubon South Carolina, Ducks Unlimited, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge Program have worked together—and engaged many more partners—to protect the most critically-important landscapes for birds and other wildlife. Their collaboration has involved significant contributions by a host of different partners, including scores of private landowners, timber companies, foundations, local governments, and regional land trusts. These efforts were organized around the most important habitats identified in specific Focus Areas for bird conservation (including waterfowl, waterbirds, shorebirds, and landbirds), established by the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture through its South Atlantic Migratory Bird Initiative (SAMBI) and Waterfowl Implementation Plan. Since the beginning of SAMBI partners have received \$79 million in federal conservation grant awards, leveraging more than \$365 million from over 450 partners, to conserve over 378,000 acres of important habitat. Efforts within South Carolina have resulted in more than 200,000 acres (two-thirds of which is private land) of the 350,000-acre ACE Basin becoming permanently protected, along with 135,000 acres in the South Lowcountry (Savannah River) region, and 56,000 acres of coastal habitat around Winyah Bay. Other key landscapes protected include the Francis Beidler Forest, a 16,000-acre protected area recognized both as an International Important Bird Area and one of 23 Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance in the US.

For their exemplary leadership and dedication to bird conservation at local, regional, national, and hemispheric scales, we are honored to present the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Regional Partnership to the South Carolina Working Group of the South Atlantic Migratory Bird Initiative.

## **Pennsylvania Golden-winged Warbler Habitat Initiative**

The Pennsylvania Golden-winged Warbler Habitat Initiative began in 2011 to enhance and create habitat for the Golden-winged Warbler, one of the Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture's highest priority species. This partnership's effort has resulted in 39,108 acres of potential Golden-winged Warbler breeding habitat on private and public lands. Partners of this initiative include the Pennsylvania Game Commission; USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service; Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources-Bureau of Forestry, USFWS-Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program; American Bird Conservancy; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; Pheasants Forever; National Wild Turkey Federation; Wildlife Management Institute, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy and Indiana University of Pennsylvania-Research Institute.

During 2012 and 2013, this partnership reached out to over 6,500 private forest owners. Ultimately, this outreach and increased on-the-ground capacity resulted in 1,652 acres of Golden-winged Warbler breeding habitat being enrolled in Natural Resources Conservation Service-Working Lands for Wildlife in 2012, and 4,053 acres being enrolled in 2013. This allowed Pennsylvania to account for more than 81% of all Golden-winged Warbler breeding habitat acres enrolled across the nine Appalachian states eligible to participate in the WLFW program. In the first two years, this partnership has enrolled a total of 5,705 acres belonging to 122 private land owners.

From 2011-13, the partnership has accounted for over 32,000 acres of potential Golden-winged Warbler habitat on Pennsylvania's public lands. These included areas managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission (12,503 acres) and DCNR-Bureau of Forestry (20,900 acres). Additionally, the partnership created the first ever Golden-winged Warbler Cooperative Management Area, located in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Management area comprises 60% private lands and 40% public lands (State Game Lands and the Delaware State Forest). The partnership works closely with public land managers and private forest owners to demonstrate successful landscape-scale conservation implementation that transcends ownership boundaries.

For their innovative approach to protecting public and private lands for priority species we are honored to present the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Regional Partnership to the Pennsylvania Golden-winged Warbler Habitat Initiative.



### **Program**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Mingling and refreshments**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Welcome**

Barth Crouch, Playa Lakes Joint Venture

**Remarks**

Dan Ashe, US Fish and Wildlife Service Director

Jimmy Anthony, Association of Joint Venture Management Boards

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### **2014 North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champions**

**Legislators**

Congressman Raúl Grijalva, Arizona

Congressman John Fleming, Jr., Louisiana

**NGO**

Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory

**Professional**

Joe Kramer

**Regional Partnerships**

Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition

Pennsylvania Golden-winged Warbler Habitat Initiative

South Carolina Working Group of the South Atlantic Migratory Bird Initiative

## The North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award

Over their twenty-seven year history, the North American Migratory Bird Joint Ventures have worked with over 5,700 non-governmental organizations; local, state, and federal agencies; private landowners; tribes; corporations; universities; and other partners.

These collaborations have translated into an array of success stories, including the conservation of millions of acres of critical habitat for birds and other wildlife, leveraging millions of matching and in-kind dollars; innovative partnerships to protect at-risk species, strategic communications and outreach to deliver important messages to target audiences, cutting-edge scientific research to fill gaps in knowledge, and science-based planning to guide resource management actions.

Today, in celebration of these diverse partnerships, we honor key organizations and individuals who have demonstrated a long-term commitment and dedication to the important work of the Joint Ventures and present them with the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award.

In the following pages you will read about the remarkable achievements of these honorees, without whose efforts the success of the Joint Ventures would surely be diminished. We thank them for their leadership, dedication, support, innovation, and participation and look forward continued thriving partnerships.



## Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition

The Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition is a group of partners that has operated like a joint venture within the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, coordinating conservation planning and collaborating on habitat conservation within the State of Maine. Their cooperative spirit and dedication to protecting Maine's important coastal habitats for migratory birds has resulted in Maine partners receiving more than 80 North American Wetlands Conservation Act and more than fifteen National Coastal Wetland Grants over the last 25 years. This has led to more than \$150 million worth of conservation work that has permanently protected over a million acres of wildlife habitat. These partners all have taken a "resource first" approach, focusing their collective efforts on the most important habitats for migratory birds and other wildlife, and relying on each partner to contribute their expertise or resources to a portion of their mutual goals. Their success is partly a function of the number and hard work of Maine's many local and regional land trusts. Maine ranks second in the nation in acres conserved by land trusts (close behind California, which is nearly five times larger). Maine's 88 land trusts have conserved more than twice as much land as any other Northeastern state over the last ten years.

Partners in the Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition have worked closely with dozens of land trusts across Maine, many of which have taken lead roles in individual projects within their own delivery area. This, in turn, has resulted in significant contributions to the goals of all the major bird initiatives at local, regional, national, and hemispheric scales.

For their leadership and dedication to conservation through partnerships, we are honored to present the North American Migratory Bird Conservation Champion Award for a Regional Partnership to the Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition, led by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services's Gulf of Maine Coastal Program, The Nature Conservancy, and Maine Coast Heritage Trust.



## Joe Kramer

Raised in Great Bend, Kansas, Joe Kramer developed a passion for waterfowl at Cheyenne Bottoms. He began his professional career upon completion of his degree Wildlife Biology from Kansas State University in 1976 and was soon employed as a wildlife area technician with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. In just 11 years, Joe rose to Chief of Wildlife and Fisheries Division where he remains an important leader 27 years later.

Joe recognized early the need for the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures. He also wholeheartedly worked to bring together and sustain the crucial partnerships needed to make Joint Ventures fully functioning conservation implementation vehicles that foster landscape-wide response to habitat needs for birds, especially those that need wetlands. He was a founding board member of the Playa Lakes Joint Venture and was at the first Management Board meeting in 1989, served as chairman from 1991 to 1993, and continues to be active on the board today. He was also a key player in bringing Playa Lakes JV into the non-profit world, which increased funding opportunities.

Joe has been an exemplary leader outside of Kansas throughout his career and is committed to advancing the science and management of wetlands and waterfowl. He has served on the Central Flyway Council since 1991 and was the Council's representative to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee for 10 of those years. Joe currently serves on the Kansas NRCS State Technical Committee and Board of Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams.

Joe has also been a leader in fostering wetland conservation partnerships. One shining example is McPherson Valley Wetlands, which now spans 4,500 acres in central Kansas and provides a critical anchor for waterfowl and other migratory birds. This project was built on partnerships taking almost 20 years to fully accomplish. Joe personally encouraged each of 15 partners to focus on common goals and stay engaged over the long haul, as he knew each brought important resources, expertise, and funding. His resolve can be witnessed at the Jamestown Wildlife Area, where acquisition efforts have grown the area by 25% in eight short years, and at Cheyenne Bottoms where a Visitor Center is completed and a \$1.5-million water conservation project will increase supplies from the Arkansas River to the wetland area.

For his 34 years of contributions to the people and places so vital to the wildlife and wetlands we love, we are honored to present the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for an Individual to Joe Kramer.

## Congressman Raúl Grijalva

Congressman Raúl Grijalva serves on the House Committee on Natural Resources, which has jurisdiction over legislation addressing conservation, wildlife, public lands, and Native Americans. As a member of the committee the Congressman has worked toward fair and consistent implementation of the Endangered Species Act, comprehensive mining reform, the creation of a renewable energy portfolio, and improving relations with Indian Country.

Congressman Grijalva is the Ranking Member and former Chairman of the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulations. As Chairman during the 110th and 111th Congresses, he presided over hearings on wildfire preparedness, carbon sequestration, and land-use issues in oil and gas leasing development. He also oversaw multiple hearings on the designation or enlargement of National Parks and Heritage Areas around the country. He is a member of the Congressional Climate Change Caucus, the Congressional National Parks Caucus, the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition, and the Congressional National Wildlife Refuge Caucus, and serves as the co-chairman of the Congressional National Landscape Conservation System Caucus.

During the 113th Congress, Representative Grijalva is advancing a Natural Resources policy portfolio focused on responsible environmental stewardship and a recognition of the importance of ecological conservation. He is pushing to reconcile the need for robust border security with the importance of protecting our border regions' rare ecological and historical resources.

Congressman Grijalva also serves on the Subcommittee on Indian and Alaskan Native Affairs and the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources. He conducted vigorous oversight of the response to the BP Gulf Coast oil spill as Chairman of the Public Lands Subcommittee in 2010. He joined the Energy Subcommittee at the beginning of the 113th Congress to continue to monitor the progress of oversight, cleanup and regulatory efforts.

For his dedication and commitment to natural resource conservation and his sponsorship and support of critical legislation for bird and habitat conservation, we are honored to present Congressman Grijalva with the North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Conservation Champion Award for a Legislator.

## U.S. Representative John C. Fleming, M.D.

As a member of the House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee and Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs, Representative Fleming has steadfastly supported migratory bird initiatives, legislation, and funding since his election to Congress in 2008. Representative Fleming supports the goals and principals of the Joint Venture Program and conducts oversight of federal agencies to make sure their contribution has maximum impact. He has supported the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), and the Electronic Duck Stamp Act. Congressman Fleming has also allowed members of the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards the opportunity to testify at his committee hearings in support of these bills, as well as other bills of national significance.

For his support of the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures and bird and wetland conservation, we are honored to present Congressman Fleming with the 2014 North American Migratory Bird Joint Venture Champion Award for a Legislator.

## Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory

Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) works tirelessly with the Joint Ventures in the western and central United States and northern Mexico to support bird and habitat conservation priorities.

In the Rio Grande Joint Venture, RMBO has been a driving force in grasslands conservation in the Chihuahuan Desert, providing data on wintering bird distribution and habitat selection. They have also determined rates of grassland loss through remote sensing and are implementing on the ground conservation actions to stem those losses. RMBO projects include radio tracking of selected species to determine over-winter survival, restoration of Aplomado Falcon nests, and outreach to ranchers and landowners.

In the Playa Lakes Joint Venture, RMBO has been an integral partner in conservation in the shortgrass and mixed-grass prairie, supporting species including Lesser Prairie-Chicken and other grassland birds. They work closely with the Playa Lakes Joint Venture and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to host Farm Bill biologist positions that have increased enrollment in wetland and grassland conservation programs. RMBO has also worked with the Joint Venture to complete essential research on playas and grassland birds in the region, providing important planning data to the Joint Venture about the densities of birds found in various habitats.

RMBO's Stewardship Program has worked closely with the Intermountain West Joint Venture to build the capacity needed to strategically implement Farm Bill conservation programs and address the needs of priority birds. RMBO has collaborated with the Joint Venture to establish cost-shared Private Lands Wildlife Biologist positions in NRCS Offices in Colorado and Wyoming. These positions have catalyzed millions of dollars of Farm Bill conservation program investments in priority habitats. Notably, RMBO was one of the first NGOs to commit resources to the Joint Venture's landmark \$14.7 million Sage Grouse Initiative Strategic Watershed Action Team partnership with NRCS which included field delivery, science, and communications capacity for the Initiative. RMBO's leadership in this arena has spurred investments by other bird observatories and conservation organizations that likely would not have materialized without the foresight and focus of this extraordinary organization.

RMBO also manages and serves the data in the Partners in Flight Species Assessment Database, a huge accomplishment in its own right, and serves on the Management Board for the Sonoran Joint Venture. For their unwavering commitment to the Joint Ventures and bird conservation, we are honored to present the North American Migratory Bird Conservation Champion Award for an NGO to Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory.

