

Ontario

Eastern Habitat Joint Venture



Executive Summary

The Ontario Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (OEHJV) is pleased to present its Progress Report for Fiscal Year (FY)¹ 2005-2006. The OEHJV continues to grow and to broaden its reach delivering conservation programs in Ontario, and its success is based on an active, dedicated partnership. The conservation partners currently involved in OEHJV activities are Environment Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Wildlife Habitat Canada. The partnership is supported by many other organizations and individuals.

The OEHJV was created in 1989 to deliver programs in Ontario to support the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). This remains a key focus, with more than 10,000 acres secured, and almost 10,000 acres enhanced and managed in FY 2005-2006. Much of this work was supported through funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and other US sources under the *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* (NAWCA).

Recently, the OEHJV broadened its mandate to address wider issues of biodiversity, in part by incorporating the principles of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). Partnership activities now address the conservation of all avian species and their habitats in Ontario. Partners in the OEHJV coordinated the further development of Partners in Flight (PIF) Landbird Conservation Plans for Ontario, supported the development of the "The Landbird Habitat Program" to implement objectives of those plans, and explored the implementation of waterbird conservation with waterbird experts. In agricultural landscapes, the OEHJV supported the adoption of Beneficial Management Practices through the Agricultural Policy Framework, and Environmental Cost-Share Opportunities for Ontario Farmers through Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plans as well as extension materials, namely beneficial management practices books.

In 2005, OEHJV partners signed a new Implementation Agreement. This agreement re-commits partners to OEHJV goals in Ontario. A new five-year Implementation Plan (2006-2010) is now under development, with input from all partners. It will be based in part on the results of several processes completed over the last year, including the continental NAWMP Assessment of the OEHJV, a review of the last Implementation Plan and four comprehensive OEHJV planning workshops. The Plan will also take guidance from the 2004 NAWMP update and from other bird conservation plans as they are completed. It will include an evaluation of current program objectives and strategies for improving program delivery.

¹ Fiscal Year corresponds to activities occurring between April 1st 2005 to March 31st 2006.

By the nature of its partnership and mandate the OEHJV is linked with many government priorities and contributes to the success of several programs and initiatives. The past year saw explicit linkages being drawn between OEHJV programs and a number of federal and provincial programs including the conservation of Species at Risk and biodiversity, and the maintenance of healthy environments and clean water.

This year celebrates a significant achievement for OEHJV partners in the Long Point area. The Long Point wetland complex is a Globally Important Bird Area, a Provincially Significant Wetland, a globally significant site under the Ramsar Convention and a World Biosphere Reserve. The most recent accomplishment is the purchase of a registered conservation easement on 552 acres of the Murray Marsh Farm. The easement will ensure the long-term protection and integrity of this continentally important coastal wetland and its associated values for waterfowl. In order to celebrate the many achievements and partnerships that contributed to long-term habitat conservation in the Long Point area, a historical plaque was unveiled at the Big Creek National Wildlife Area on September 7, 2006.

The success of the OEHJV can be measured in the amount of habitat that has been secured, the continued and growing funding support, the number of program participants and the progress on many fronts. These are a testament to the commitment of all partners.



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Note: All photos courtesy of Ducks Unlimited Canada except where noted.

Cover: Mallard Takes Flight courtesy Rebecca M. Zeran

Introduction

The Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) was formed in 1989, to implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) in eastern Canada. It covers the six eastern provinces – Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador – and is one of 17 habitat joint ventures in North America that deliver conservation initiatives to meet NAWMP objectives. The NAWMP was developed in response to serious concerns about critically low numbers of waterfowl in North America. It was signed by Canada and the United States in 1986 and by Mexico in 1994, becoming a truly continental effort. It aims to ensure the survival of waterfowl populations through a number of strategies, primarily related to the conservation of waterfowl habitats.

In the EHJV, each province develops and implements its own EHJV programs, guided by continental-level planning. The Ontario EHJV (OEHJV) partners have been working together since 1989 to coordinate the delivery of programs to meet NAWMP objectives in that province. OEHJV partners, along with a wide range of agencies and organizations, developed a Strategic Plan in 1991 and an Implementation Plan in 1994 to guide the development of waterfowl and habitat conservation goals, objectives and actions. An Implementation Agreement signed in 1994 established the working arrangements for the partnership. The delivery of partner programs has been achieved primarily through partner-driven funding proposals under the U.S. *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* (NAWCA).

In the late 1990s, planning for other bird initiatives (shorebirds, waterbirds and landbirds) was initiated on a continental scale under the auspices of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). In 2005, a NABCI Declaration of Intent (DOI) was signed by Canada, the United States and Mexico. The DOI is the formal pronouncement by the three countries to cooperate in the conservation of the continent's bird species and the landscapes upon which they depend. The DOI serves as the public expression of support for trilateral cooperation to deliver comprehensive bird conservation in North America. The OEHJV will continue to use its well-developed partnerships and synergy to coordinate programs that meet the various bird conservation objectives.

By 2004, Ontario EHJV partners had reached approximately

- 65% of the habitat securement objective,
- 74% of the habitat enhancement objective
- 87% of the policy or influence objective from the 1994 OEHJV Implementation Plan

Accomplishments

Since 1986, through the efforts of all partners, almost 500,000 acres of wildlife habitat have been conserved. Over 130 million dollars have been spent in Ontario to conserve, restore, enhance and protect wetland and associated upland habitats in the province. The majority of these accomplishments took place in the Lower Great Lakes / St. Lawrence Plain (North American Bird Conservation Region 13).

Matchedash Bay- An Ontario EHJV Flagship Project



Environment Canada

In 1988, in order to get the NAWMP underway and to demonstrate international partnerships in action, First Step Projects were initiated all across Canada. Matchedash Bay, an area located at the southeast end of Severn Sound on Georgian Bay was selected as the Ontario EHJV First Step project. It was chosen because of the high risk for wetland habitat loss, its high potential for production of waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife and its importance as staging area for migrating waterfowl. The goal of the project was to *secure and manage wildlife habitat in the area and to perpetuate and increase waterfowl and other wetland-dependant wildlife, while integrating other important resource interests.*

A Unique Canadian Landscape

Although several features have combined to produce the beautiful, dynamic landscape at Matchedash, one distinctive feature of the area is its geology. This area is located in the contact zone of the granitic bedrock of the Canadian (Precambrian) Shield and the southern Ontario limestone. The combined effect of Earth-shaping weathering processes exposed rolling granite, and a thin soil cover results in a sparsely vegetated and rocky upland. At the same time, these forces deposited abundant soil material from surrounding uplands onto the poorly drained flat limestone floodplain, giving rise to the rich wetlands and waters of the bay. The net result is extensive habitat diversity. Marshes, swamps, fens, beaver ponds, as well as upland hardwood forests and open grass fields support breeding populations of waterfowl such as Mallards, Wood Ducks, and the Blue-winged Teal. Other wetland bird species such as Least Bittern, American Bittern, Sora, Virginia Rail, Black Tern, American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, Marsh and Sedge Wren, and the Common Moorhen are found in the Matchedash Bay area. Apart from bird species, many other species depend on the habitat diversity of Matchedash, including the provincially rare map turtle, Blanding's turtle and five-lined skink which benefit from the area's abundant wetland and upland resources. The area has a wide range of fish, waterfowl and wildlife including the greatest diversity of amphibians and reptiles known in Canada.

By 1995, partnerships had secured over 1,840 Ha (over 4500 acres) and enhanced over 800 Ha (2000 acres) of habitat for breeding and staging waterfowl. Ongoing monitoring and management of the area by partners continues to direct OEHJV conservation activities at this First Step Project site.



Wood Duck

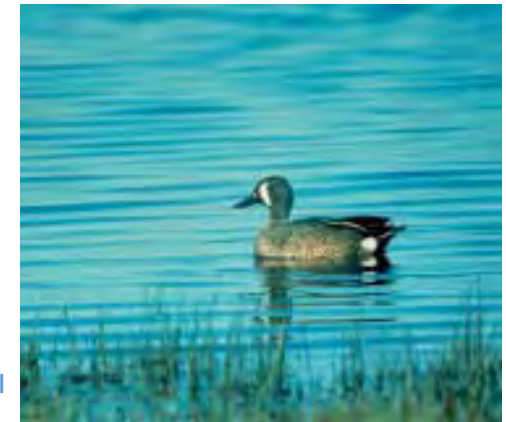
Structure, Goal, and Principles

Partners of the OEHJV represented on the OEHJV's Ontario Steering Committee include the government of Canada (through Environment Canada), the government of Ontario (through the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs), Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Wildlife Habitat Canada. There are currently two standing committees that support the Steering Committee: the Technical Committee and the Fiscal Committee (Appendix 1).

The OEHJV goal is to deliver avian conservation programs in Ontario that support NAWMP and NABCI, recognizing the following:

- Delivery of NAWMP goals will remain a priority.
- The partners are committed to the NABCI vision that bird populations and habitats are protected, restored, and enhanced through coordinated efforts at all levels, guided by sound science that results in effective protection and management.
- The partners share a common concern for the conservation of wetland, wetland-associated upland and other upland habitats to support biodiversity and the sustainable use of those habitats and resources.
- The securement, enhancement, management and stewardship of wetlands and their associated uplands are fundamental actions required for maintaining and enhancing waterfowl and other avian populations.
- Wetland and upland conservation activities of Ontario OEHJV partners make a distinct and significant contribution to other parties' efforts to conserve biological diversity and ecological integrity in Ontario.
- The adoption of sustainable land use and management practices are essential to maintaining the ecological integrity of wetlands and wetland-associated uplands.

A range of activities are necessary to deliver OEHJV goals. These include science and evaluation programs that provide the biological foundation for conservation work; on-the-ground actions such as securement and enhancement; management of habitat; and communication, education and policy activities.



Blue-winged Teal

Key Program Activities

The past two centuries of settlement in Ontario have degraded or eliminated many wetlands. By the 1980's, 68 per cent of the original wetlands south of the Precambrian Shield had already been lost as a result of urbanization, drainage, and other anthropogenic activities. Losses are even more extreme in parts of southwestern Ontario, where over 90 per cent of the original wetlands have been converted to other uses. Wetland losses have continued. To counter these impacts, a range of habitat securement, enhancement, management and stewardship activities are undertaken to conserve and improve wetland and wetland-associated habitats in the province.

Habitat Securement

Securing existing wetland and associated habitat is critical to sustaining breeding and migrating bird populations in the province. Ontario EHJV partners use a variety of techniques including fee simple acquisition, land donation, conservation easements and agreements to ensure the long-term conservation of the most important habitats within priority landscapes.

Habitat Enhancement

Habitat enhancement programs include a range of techniques aimed at improving wetland and associated habitats for waterfowl and wildlife.



Nest Box



Tractor with flushing bar

- The installation of nesting structures such as wood duck nest boxes increases the carrying capacity of wetlands, and replaces the requirement for a ready supply of large cavity filled trees – a vanishing component in many parts of Ontario
- The enhancement of wetlands in some areas by excavation, or by constructing earthen berms to imitate the rolling topography required for small ephemeral and vernal ponds for pairing habitat. These areas are always associated with more permanent wetlands to provide secure nesting and brood rearing habitat.
- The securement of upland areas in farming communities, in conjunction with wetlands as well as enhancing nesting areas through modified agricultural techniques such as conservation tillage practices, livestock grazing practices and alternate watering systems. The use of flushing bars on hay mowing equipment to minimize hen loss provides opportunities for hens to re-nest and clutch again. Grass and legume establishment on marginal lands provides dense nesting cover, and native tree and shrub planting increases habitat diversity and buffer quality to improve nesting success.

Habitat Management

Projects undertaken by the OEHJV require ongoing management to help ensure maximum benefits for the long term. Management activities include:

- water level management,
- repairing fences and equipment,
- maintaining water control structures,
- managing beaver activity,
- replanting vegetation,
- cleaning and repairing nesting structures, and;
- cleaning debris from spillways.

For many secured lands, property-specific management plans are developed. OEHJV partners assist in the development and review of such plans and, where appropriate, assist with the implementation of management activities (in some cases with the assistance of

volunteers). Management planning includes a review of historic vegetation communities and assessment of the feasibility of restoring habitat to historic conditions. Traditional recreational use is also reviewed to assess the feasibility of continuing or restoring traditional uses as part of the overall enhancement or restoration process, and to manage native and non-native species.



Cleaning a water control structure

Stewardship, including extension services

Stewardship activities either promote (through communication and education) or directly result in the sustainable use of land for the purposes of conserving wildlife and the habitats on which they depend. OEHJV extension services provide information and professional habitat advice to private landowners who learn about the impacts of land use on wetlands, watersheds and natural areas. This information helps to foster a conservation ethic and can influence landowners to take direct action (without legal or binding agreements) to conserve, enhance and protect the natural values on their property. For example, the voluntary use of best management practices such as excluding cattle from watercourses or planting permanent vegetative cover along a watercourse to enhance water quality are stewardship activities that result in more sustainable land use—ultimately enhancing and conserving wildlife habitat. The OEHJV partners work in a landscape dominated by private land ownership, therefore our stewardship activities are essential to engage landowners in planning, securement, restoration and enhancement.

Policy Activities

A number of large-scale issues significantly influence landscapes upon which waterfowl depend. These include agriculture, energy, pollution, climate change, transportation, urban development and water supply. To the extent that OEHJV direct conservation programs alone cannot meet objectives in Ontario, efforts to influence or modify the existing legislation, programs and policies of federal, provincial or municipal governments pertaining to preservation of watersheds, wetlands and wildlife, sustainable water-use practices and sustainable land-use practices are equally important.

Evaluation

The overall success of OEHJV programs depends on effective planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of our conservation actions on waterfowl populations and habitat. The main objectives of our evaluation program are to assess whether conservation programs are contributing to the conservation of waterfowl populations and their habitats. Program activities such as research and assessment will also help to validate the biological assumptions used in developing conservation programs and test the efficacy of specific conservation activities.

Project Profile:

Long Point Wetland Complex and Murray Marsh Farms

The Murray Marsh Farms project in the Long Point Wetland Complex is an excellent example of the key strategies used in the OEHJV.

The Long Point Wetland Complex is recognized and designated by many organizations and initiatives including:

- designation as a Globally Important Bird Area (IBA) by Birdlife International,
- identification as a Provincially Significant Wetland by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources,
- protected as a Provincial Park by Ontario Parks,
- listing as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and;
- designation as a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations.

Situated within Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 13 under the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) and identified as a priority in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the North American Colonial Water Bird Conservation Plan and the Canadian Shorebird Conservation Plan, this area is recognized as vital to North American bird populations.

This conservation easement purchase further exemplifies the width and breadth of the OEHJV partnership with the participation of six key funding agencies – Ducks Unlimited Incorporated, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (through NAWCA), The Nature Conservancy of Canada, Environment Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources – as well as that of additional private sources.

The Complex includes the Long Point Marshes, Big Creek Marsh, Inner Bay and Turkey Point Marsh. This area is recognized as the most important waterfowl staging area in Ontario, receiving almost 12 million waterfowl use days annually (8.7 million fall and 3.1 million spring). Approximately 25 percent of North America's canvasbacks migrate through Long Point, as do large numbers of black ducks, mallards, redheads and scaup, and more than 100 other species of migratory birds. Canada geese from Mississippi Valley populations migrate through this complex, while Tundra swans from the Arctic also stop en route to the Atlantic seaboard. Although the Long Point Wetland Complex is used primarily by migrants, several species (mallard, blue-winged teal, wood duck, northern



pintail, American wigeon, northern shoveler, redhead, green-winged teal and giant Canada geese) are common breeders in this area.

The Murray Marsh Farms project, situated within the Complex, involved the purchase of a registered conservation easement of 552 acres on the property. Under the easement, the private landowners agreed to restrictive covenants that will ensure the long-term protection and integrity of this continentally important coastal wetland habitat. Sustainable practices on existing agricultural land combined with the protection of existing wetland, riparian and forest habitats will reduce future human impacts on the Long Point ecosystem. The securement of this property consolidates critical waterfowl migration habitat, resulting in a large, contiguous parcel of habitat along Big Creek totaling more than 2,333 acres.

This project resulted in the securement of an additional 7 percent of Big Creek Marsh and 1 percent of the Long Point Wetland Complex marshes, which increases the overall protected wetland area to almost 85 percent and 46 percent respectively.

What's New in the OEHJV?

The past year has seen a number of changes and several significant advances in the OEHJV, related to administration and to program planning and implementation. Some of these have been completed while others are ongoing. Key changes include:

Re-commitment of the OEHJV Partners

The OEHJV partners signed a new Implementation Agreement in 2005 which re-committed the partners to coordinating the implementation of EHJV activities in the province over the next 10 years. It also defined the governance structure and agency roles.

Revitalization of the Ontario EHJV Technical Committee

To inform our planning processes, the Technical Committee (TC) was revived and new members were invited to participate along with the appointment of a new Chair from Environment Canada (Appendix 1). The TC provides sound scientific advice and guidance with respect to the activities of the OEHJV partnership, including setting research, monitoring and evaluation priorities.

Development of a New Implementation Plan

The OEHJV TC began to develop a new 5-year Implementation Plan in 2005. When complete, it will guide activities and priorities for the next five years. The new plan is guided by and incorporates:

- Recommendations from the continental NAWMP Assessment process, particularly with respect to science (research, monitoring and evaluation) priorities and species population and habitat objectives;
- Recommendations resulting from an extensive evaluation of the existing (1994-present) implementation plan;
- Recommendations resulting from comprehensive discussions at OEHJV workshops focused on planning for the next five years;
- Priorities and guidance from the 2004 NAWMP Update, *Strengthening the Biological Foundation*;
- Priorities and guidance from other bird plans (regional and provincial) for waterbirds, shorebirds and landbirds;
- Direction from the EHJV Board and from the EHJV Strategic Document (2004-2009); and,
- Partner agency priorities and current activities.

While recognizing the importance of existing program strategies, the new Implementation Plan will also focus on a number of other key elements:

Clear and measurable objectives

The new Plan will establish habitat and population objectives that are linked with each other and can be measured on a regular basis. The population objectives will be based on long-term surveys conducted in the province. Habitat objectives will focus on implementing program activities that aid in achieving population objectives.

Integration of objectives of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative

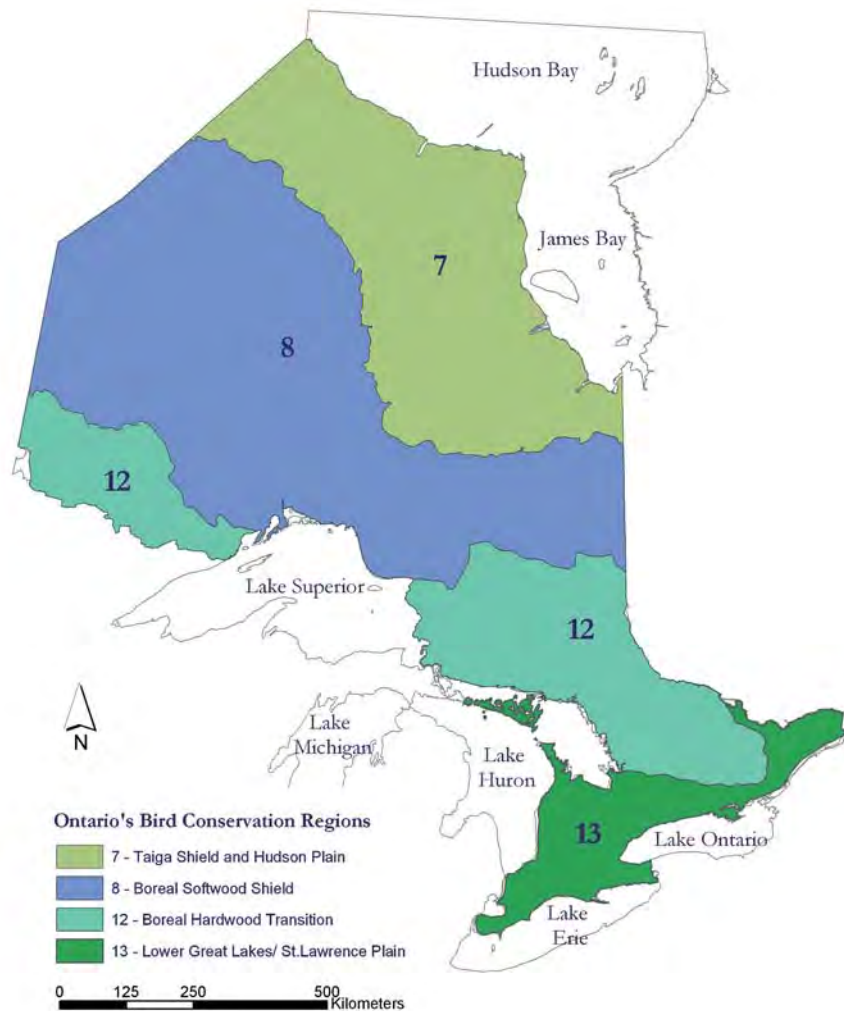
The new Implementation Plan will focus predominantly on waterfowl and wetland habitat. However, it will also integrate objectives of and recognize benefits to the other bird groups under NABCI where guidance from existing plans is available.

Continued emphasis on the Biological Foundation

The new Implementation Plan will identify specific scientific priorities, commitments and actions that will address significant information gaps, particularly those related to waterfowl and wetland habitat.

In order to strengthen its biological foundation, the Ontario EHJV Implementation Plan (2006-2010) will:

- Identify and incorporate key waterfowl breeding and staging areas;
- Identify priority species and link species objectives to surveys;
- Link habitat objectives to priority areas of highest importance continentally and regionally;
- Highlight the importance of biological models that relate priority species populations to their habitats and to management activities,
- Identify science objectives and requirements, including research, evaluation and monitoring, for species and habitats;
- Have a strong focus on program evaluation to determine the impacts of the program on species and landscape;
- Highlight the importance of continued monitoring of species and habitats;
- Identify the importance of and commitment to adaptive management to improve management performance. (Adaptive management tests our assumptions, and requires: clear, quantifiable objectives; specific biological outcomes of management actions; an evaluation process to compare outcomes with objectives; and a commitment to respond to new knowledge in future program development.);
- Commit to monitoring and assessment to test model assumption and predictions; and
- Assess the quality of information guiding decision-making



The OEJV has fully committed to strengthen its biological foundation to ensure that sound science guides all program activities.

The Ontario EJV partnership is helping to further the conservation of all birds through coordinated and integrated bird conservation planning activities throughout the province:

Landbird Conservation Planning

Partners in Flight (PIF) is the landbird conservation component of NABCI. PIF's Mission is to sustain the distribution, diversity and abundance of landbirds throughout their natural geographic ranges. In 2004, PIF produced the North American Landbird Conservation Plan, which provides a continental synthesis of priorities and objectives to guide landbird conservation at the regional, national, and international scales. In 2003, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment Canada and Bird Studies Canada, initiated the development of Ontario regional landbird conservation plans to provide science-based priorities for conserving landbird species and their habitats.

Conservation plans which set out priority species, objectives and conservation actions are in progress for three of four bird conservation regions (BCRs) in Ontario (BCRs 7, 8, 12 and 13).

- *BCR 13 – Lower Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Plain*

The BCR 13 Ontario Landbird Conservation Plan has been peer reviewed and is targeted for publication in the fall of 2007.

- *BCR 8 – Boreal Softwood Shield and BCR 12 – Boreal Hardwood Transition*
The BCR 8 and BCR 12 Ontario Landbird Conservation Plans have been circulated for peer review and are currently being revised to incorporate reviewer comments. Target date for publication is the spring of 2008.

- *BCR 7 – Taiga Shield/Hudson Plain.* Conservation planning has been initiated.

In addition, the OEJV supported the development of "The Landbird Habitat Program", a pilot program that establishes conservation agreements and conducts habitat projects on private lands in southern Ontario.

For more information on PIF in Ontario, see: <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/pif/PIFOntario.html>

Waterbird Conservation Planning

Waterbird planning in Ontario is guided by the priorities identified in continental, national and regional and provincial conservation plans:

- The North American Waterbird Conservation Plan was published in 2002; it provides an overarching continental framework and guide for conserving waterbirds at nesting sites, during migrations, and during non-breeding periods.
- Wings Over Water, Canada's Waterbird Conservation Plan, was published in 2003 and established conservation goals and priorities for waterbirds in Canada. Regional waterbird conservation plans have been drafted to address conservation needs of waterbirds at the regional scale.
- The Upper Mississippi Valley/ Great Lakes Waterbird Conservation Plan¹ was recently published in draft form to address the conservation needs of waterbirds within the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi Valley.
- Environment Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources have recently initiated a project to draft an Ontario-specific Waterbird Conservation Plan. The plan is targeted for publication in the spring of 2008.

The OEHJV goal is to help deliver waterbird conservation throughout the province. Proposed actions include identifying priority areas for waterbirds, monitoring secretive marsh birds and identifying key habitats for species of high conservation concern.

¹ <http://www.fws.gov/birds/waterbirds/UMVGL/>

² <http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/plans/>



Black Tern Nest

Shorebird Conservation Planning

The province of Ontario provides vitally important staging and breeding habitat for Western Hemisphere shorebirds. Of 29 shorebird species commonly occurring in Ontario, major staging concentrations of 14 species amass in the hundreds of thousands. Of 40 species of shorebirds that breed routinely in Canada, 22 regularly breed in Ontario, including significant proportions of the populations of seven species.

In 2003, Environment Canada chaired a committee representing a range of government and non-government organizations, including several OEHJV partners, to produce the Ontario Shorebird Conservation Plan². The Plan was developed using existing information and expert opinion in order to define the state of the shorebird resource in Ontario, to identify critical information gaps and science needs, and to identify conservation measures.



American Coot



American Bittern

Delivering Results on Government Priorities

By the very nature of the OEHJV partnership and the work it performs, the OEHJV contributes to the success of numerous government programs and initiatives at both the provincial and federal levels. Formal and informal links between the OEHJV and various initiatives provides benefits in both directions, as the OEHJV provides expertise and guidance to and is informed by government priorities and programs.

Biodiversity

The maintenance of biodiversity has been identified as a high priority at both the federal and provincial levels. The OEHJV delivers on key actions of Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy³ and the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy⁴. The OEHJV helps to improve understanding of the state of biodiversity, and helps conserve it through an iterative approach to conservation that includes monitoring of habitats and species and the evaluation of programs. An ecosystem approach to management and conservation is employed, and biodiversity goals are integrated into land use planning. The OEHJV takes a preventive approach to conserving biodiversity by ensuring the conservation of natural systems linkages through the securement of key habitats. Working together in partnerships to coordinate efforts and to strengthen communication has also proven effective. Such efforts have included: promoting stewardship by engaging private landowners, promoting the sustainable use of biological resources, and promoting the importance of biodiversity conservation through outreach programs.

Programs on the Agricultural Landscape

Agricultural activities undertaken by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in relation to the OEHJV pertain to stewardship, enhancement, and extension. There are several focus areas for this work: nutrient and pest management, land and water management and biodiversity management. These are captured by the cost-share programs found under the Environment Pillar of the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) in Ontario and the rest of Canada. Canada's APF seeks to reduce agricultural risks and provide benefits to the health of soil, water, air and biodiversity.

The APF provides cost-share funding for farmers to implement beneficial management practices (BMPs) that promote the maintenance and improvement of biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. Examples of BMPs that provide benefits to wetlands and

associated uplands include riparian area management, erosion control, grazing management, safe application of pesticides enhancing wildlife habitats while minimizing wildlife damage to crops and livestock and shelterbelt establishment. OEHJV partners can work with agricultural producers to help implement the BMPs.

OEHJV partners can identify cost-share opportunities for Ontario farmers to help them participate in conservation-friendly practices; these opportunities are available through the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan. Eligible producers must have an Environmental Farm Plan deemed appropriate in order to participate in programs such as The Canada Ontario Stewardship Program, Green Cover Canada and Canada-Ontario Water Supply Expansion Program. Funding for these programs is provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs under the APF. The APF is an agreement among federal, provincial and territorial governments to make Canada's agricultural sector a world leader in environmentally sustainable production. Agricultural support for the programs is led by the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition and the local program delivery is carried out by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.



³ Protecting what sustains us: Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, 2005

⁴ Canadian Biodiversity Strategy: Canada's Response to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 1995.

OEJV Events in 2006

The following are some of the events undertaken in 2006.

Minesing Swamp Event (October 13, 2006)

The Nature Conservancy of Canada and Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority marked the addition of 1,000 acres to Minesing Swamp. The secured area, almost 10,000 acres of which over 8,400 acres were secured by OEJV, now includes over 15,000 acres of world class wetlands. Partners who have supported the conservation of habitat include the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources,



Minesing Swamp (Graham Bryan)

Environment Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, The Nature Conservancy, Bulrush Foundation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (through the *North American Wetlands Conservation Act*), and many others.

Minesing Swamp was designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. The area supports a diverse assemblage of flora and fauna, including migrating waterfowl, herons, sandhill cranes, and the eastern prairie white fringed orchid. This event celebrates the culmination of many years of acquisition and stewardship work in the Minesing Swamp area.

Long Point Partnership Event (September 7, 2006):

This Ducks Unlimited led event celebrated the addition of a conservation easement of 580 acres on the Murray Marsh Farms property to the Long Point area, and also recognized the partnership of several organizations working together to preserve the most significant marsh complex on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes. The event also marked the 20th anniversary of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and involved the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to the Ontario EHJV partnership.

Ohio State Dedication

The Ohio State wetland dedication was held at the DUC Jeanette's Creek project on the south-east shore of Lake St. Clair to recognize the remarkable support for waterfowl habitat provided by the Ohio Division of Wildlife. The 62 acre EHJV partnership wetland project enhanced the long term quality and securement of the marsh for waterfowl and a myriad of other wildlife in an area heavily impacted by human activity. Through the State Grant Program in the United States (US), the state of Ohio contributes nearly \$170,000 (US) annually to Ducks Unlimited Inc (DUI). DUI then matches the state funds, and together, these funds are then used to match US NAWCA funds which flow to Ducks Unlimited in Canada to support Eastern Habitat Joint Venture habitat conservation in Ontario. To date the State of Ohio has provided nearly \$2.6 million dollars to help protect and manage Ontario's critical wetland habitats.



Rebecca M. Zeran

Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan Workshops

The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) in affiliation with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) continued to be involved in delivery of the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan to Ontario farmers. Ontario farmers continue to demonstrate a strong interest in the environment, with over 5,400 farmers voluntarily participating in one of over 330 local Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) workshops using the Third Edition Workbook between April 18, 2005 and March 31, 2006. Between April 2005 and March 31, 2006, over \$20 million dollars of APF cost share funding has been allocated for approximately 4,500 on-farm environmental improvement projects including riparian area management and projects encouraging the safe management and application of nutrients and pesticides. During this period over 80 workshops were delivered to Ontario farmers in partnership with the OSCIA.

Report on Expenditures and Accomplishments

The EHJV has been delivering programs to meet NAWMP objectives since 1986, with the OEJV being directly involved since 1989. While many successful activities were undertaken in the early years, delivery accelerated with funding proposals under the U.S. *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* (passed in 1989). This allowed for the flow of U.S. federal funding through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with matching U.S.-sourced non-federal funds and additional contributions from Canadian sources, to support the conservation of wetlands and associated upland habitats, primarily for the delivery of NAWMP.

The following two tables show OEJV provincial accomplishments (by activity) and related expenditures.



Table 1. Accomplishments and Expenditures by OEJV Partners (2005-2006)

Program Activity	Wetland Acres	Wetland Associated Upland Acres	Total Acres	Expenditures
1. Habitat Securement				
Total Acquisition				
Fee-simple purchase	653	492	1145	\$1,071,746
Land donation	0	0	0	\$0
Total Acquisition	653	492	1145	\$1,071,746
b) Other than acquisition				
Conservation agreement	5406	4046	9452	\$308,725
Conservation easement	0	0	0	\$16,010
Crown designation	0	0	0	\$0
Cooperative land use agreement	92	0	92	\$400
Other	104	4	108	\$754,900
Total Other Than Acquisition	5,602	4,050	9,652	\$1,080,035
Common Activities	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$318,234
Total Securement	6,255	4,542	10,797	\$2,470,015
2. Habitat Enhancement	5,921	3,965	9,886	\$1,272,017
3. Habitat Management	5,910	3,965	9,875	\$1,586,196
4. Continuing Habitat Project Operation	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$149,600
5. Stewardship	4,667	0	4,667	\$359,297
6. Communication and Education	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$99,471
7. Coordination	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$919,157
8. Evaluation				
Assessment	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$44,302
Directed Studies	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$137,310
Monitoring	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$902,516
Total Evaluation	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$1,084,129
9. Policy Adjustment	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$119,901
10. Reconnaissance and Design	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$79,000
TOTAL	*	*	*	\$8,138,782

*Note that acres are not additive; enhanced and managed acres have been previously secured.

Table 2. Cumulative Accomplishments and Expenditures by OEJV Partners (1986-2004)

Program Activity	Wetland Associated			Expenditures
	Wetland Acres	Upland Acres	Total Acres	
1. Habitat Securement				
Total Acquisition				
Fee-simple purchase	37492	9206	46698	\$22,677,459
Land donation	1094	681	1775	\$790,769
Total Acquisition	38,586	9887	48473	\$23,468,228
b) Other than acquisition				
Conservation agreement	59725	60635	120360	\$16,309,609
Conservation easement	661	337	998	\$1,673,189
Crown designation	112265	210015	322280	\$5,847,439
Cooperative land use agreement	207	1349	1556	\$26,000
Other	0	0	0	\$0
Total Other Than Acquisition	172,858	272,336	445,194	\$23,856,237
Common Activities	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$6,152,000
Total Securement	211,444	282,223	493,667	\$47,324,465
2. Habitat Enhancement	176,937	275,388	452,325	\$23,365,167
3. Habitat Management	153,714	262,522	416,236	\$4,605,281
4. Continuing Habitat Project Operation	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$2,095,000
5. Stewardship	16,449,520	657,193	17,106,713	\$35,526,949
6. Communication and Education	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$2,731,908
7. Coordination	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$8,872,232
8. Evaluation				
Assessment	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$422,833
Directed Studies	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$1,904,940
Monitoring	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$930,538
Total Evaluation	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$3,258,311
9. Policy Adjustment	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$657,397
10. Reconnaissance and Design	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$4,113,000
TOTAL	*	*	*	\$132,549,710

*Note that acres are not additive; enhanced and managed acres have been previously secured.



Rebecca M. Zeran



Rebecca M. Zeran

Thanks to our Contributors!

The partners of the OEHJV wish to thank the many contributors who share our vision and support our conservation programs.

Contributing Partners

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
BHP (Broken Hill Proprietary)
Billiton
Bird Studies Canada
Bulrush Foundation
Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting
the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem
Canadian Cattlemen's Association
Couchiching Conservancy
Donner Foundation
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The Ontario Aggregate Resource Corporation
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Rural Lambton Stewardship Network
Shell Canada Environment Fund
John S. Speakman
TD Friends of the Environment
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
(under the *North American Wetlands Conservation Act*)
U.S. State Governments
(States of Alabama, Ohio, South Carolina and Indiana)

For more information please visit our website at <http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/ehjv/oejhv-e.htm>.

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Appendix I

Ontario EHJV Committee Membership (2005-2007)

Ontario EHJV Steering Committee

Jim Mackenzie / Lois Deacon, Co-chair
Manager, Biodiversity Section
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Peterborough)

Ken Ross, Co-chair
Head, Population Management
Environment Canada (Ottawa)

James Duncan
Program Manager, Southwestern Ontario
Nature Conservancy of Canada (London)

Ron Maher
Manager Provincial Operations (Ontario)
Ducks Unlimited Canada (Kingston)

Lynn McIntyre
Director of Stewardship
Wildlife Habitat Canada (Ottawa)

Peter Roberts
Environmental Management Specialist, Water Management
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Guelph)

Steering Committee support staff

Sandra Orsatti/ Scott Poser
Coordinator, Biodiversity/Habitat Unit
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Peterborough)

Cynthia Pekarik/ Brigitte Collins
Development Biologist
Environment Canada (Ottawa)

Julie Simard/Rebecca Zeran
Conservation Biologist, Biodiversity Section
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Peterborough)

Ontario EHJV Technical Committee

Ken Ross, Chair
Head, Population Management
Environment Canada (Ottawa)

Ken Abraham
Research Scientist, Wetlands Wildlife – Wildlife Research and
Development Section
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Peterborough)

Cynthia Pekarik/ Brigitte Collins
Development Biologist
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Patrick Hubert
Wildlife Policy Advisor – Wildlife Section
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Peterborough)

Joel Ingram/ Shawn Meyer
Wetlands Monitoring Biologist
Environment Canada (Downsview)

Dan Kraus
Conservation Science Manager – Ontario Region
Nature Conservancy of Canada (Guelph)

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Environment Canada (London)

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Research Director, Long Point Waterfowl and Wetlands
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Bird Studies Canada (Port Rowan)

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Aquatic Ecologist - Wetlands, Biodiversity Section
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Environmental Management Specialist, Water Management
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Owen Steele
Head Conservation Planning – Ontario Region
Ducks Unlimited Canada (Barrie)

Steve Timmermans
Aquatic Surveys Scientist
Bird Studies Canada (Port Rowan)

Ontario EHJV Fiscal Committee

Rick Haigh, Chair
Ontario Head of Finance
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Luther Marsh (Rebecca M. Zeran)

