

Draft

Sonoran Joint Venture Iniciativa Conjunta Del Sonorense

Strategic Plan Version 1.4



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INTRODUCTION

The Sonoran Joint Venture (SJV) is a partnership of diverse organizations and individuals from the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico that share a common commitment to the conservation of all bird species and their habitats within this region. The Strategic Plan presents a regional strategy to protect, conserve, restore, and enhance bird populations and their habitats within the boundaries of the Sonoran Joint Venture. This version of the Strategic Plan will be regularly updated in a dynamic process of adaptive conservation planning and delivery based on the latest information developed by and provided to the SJV through its partnerships.

Plan Purpose and Contents

The Strategic Plan guides the overall direction of the SJV. It provides a framework not only for biological planning, but also for other elements essential for a successful and sustainable conservation program. The basic elements of the Strategic Plan are Conservation Coordination and Delivery, Biological Foundation, Education and Outreach, Funding, and Evaluation. These basic areas are supported by functions such as: coordination, species assessment, conservation design, training, research, and website development. The Elements and Strategies section includes, goals, objectives, strategies, and measures of achievement. A Conservation Plan that will address the biological foundation of our actions will be written separately. An Inventory and Monitoring Plan is also envisioned, as well as other functional area plans, if appropriate. The intended audience for the Strategic Plan is the SJV Management Board, committees, staff, and partners. Introductory sections describe the history of the SJV and the ecological importance of the Sonoran area. Next, the goals and objectives of the SJV are developed, along with a list of strategies to achieve each goal. Finally, the structure of the SJV is discussed including the roles of the Management Board, Technical Committee, and staff.

BACKGROUND

A Coalescing of Bird Initiatives

In 1999 at the request of The Nature Conservancy of Arizona, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a meeting of interested individuals and agencies from the United States and Mexico was convened to discuss development of a new Joint Venture to address bird conservation needs of the Sonoran Desert region. The opinion of the participants was that if a "new" bird conservation delivery model was to be created, it should be an international effort between the United States and Mexico because of species and habitats shared between the two countries. Participants also agreed that it should be "all bird" and not based solely on waterfowl, as were previous Joint Ventures. The SJV was initiated at a time when existing and new bird initiatives were moving toward coordination and integration. The North American Waterfowl Management Plan was undergoing its 1998 Update; Partners in

Flight was beginning to roll out its plans; the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan and the North American Waterbird Plan were under development; Audubon's Important Bird Area Program was intensifying its work in the U.S.; and Mexico was about to publish its land mark book, Áreas de Importancia para la Conservación de las Aves en México. Other conservation forces at work at the time included The Nature Conservancy's Sonoran Ecoregion Plan, the Arizona Partners in Flight Plan, the challenge by International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to create a "new" bird conservation delivery model for upland birds, and the genesis of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). The NABCI is the umbrella under which the aforementioned major bird conservation plans come together to address the bird conservation needs of North America.

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), signed by the United States and Canada in 1986 and by Mexico in 1994, was written to address declining waterfowl populations by conserving, restoring, and enhancing wetland habitats throughout North America. The NAWMP seeks to restore waterfowl populations in Canada, United States, and Mexico to their 1970 levels. This pioneering document has served as a model for other bird conservation initiatives. Joint Ventures that evolved from NAWMP are the regional delivery mechanisms for waterfowl conservation.

Similarly, concern raised by declining trends shown in Breeding Bird Survey results from 1966 to the late 1980s brought Neotropical migratory birds to the attention of wildlife managers. As a result Partners in Flight (PIF) was initiated in 1990 to focus resources on the improvement of monitoring, research, management, and education programs involving Neotropical migratory birds and their habitats. Soon PIF became the champion for both resident and migratory nongame birds. PIF's guiding principles are to restore populations of species at risk and to keep common birds common. The 2004 PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan summarizes priority species and habitat needs, and gives population objectives.

The United States Shorebird Conservation Plan is a partnership committed to the conservation of shorebirds. On a regional scale, the goal of the Plan is to ensure that adequate quantity and quality of habitat are identified and maintained to support the different shorebirds that breed in, winter, and migrate through each region. On a national scale, the Plan's goal is to stabilize populations of all shorebird species known or suspected to be in decline due to limiting factors occurring within the United States. At the same time, it strives to ensure that common species are also protected from future threats. On a hemispheric scale, the goal is to restore and maintain populations of all shorebird species in the Western Hemisphere through cooperative international efforts.

The North American Waterbird Conservation Plan is a partnership of researchers, private individuals, academics, and federal and state agencies that works to develop a strategy to advance the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats. Its mission is to create a cohesive, multi-national partnership for conserving and managing waterbirds (seabirds, wading birds, gulls, terns, pelicans, and marsh birds) and their habitats throughout North America. Its goal is to produce healthy populations and habitats for waterbirds in North America in their breeding,

migratory, and wintering ranges.

Important Bird Areas (IBAs; U.S.)/Áreas de Importancia para la Conservación de las Aves en México (AICAs) are programs that nominate and work on conserving a collection of sites that provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds, including sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. IBAs/AICAs may have a few acres or thousands of acres, but are usually discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape. IBAs may include public or private lands and may be protected or unprotected. The goals of the U.S. IBA Program are: identify IBAs in all 50 states; increase the protected status of all IBAs; promote sensible management of IBAs; involve local communities, conservation groups, landowners, and the general public; maximize the use and dissemination of IBA data; and monitor IBAs to understand changes and provide feedback for conservation initiatives. Mexico's AICA program is equivalent to the U.S. IBA program and has a similar mission and goals.

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) is not a plan, but rather a vision. Its role is to support and facilitate on-the-ground delivery of conservation of all native North American birds by increasing the effectiveness of existing and new programs and initiatives. It also works to enhance coordination and foster greater cooperation among the nations and peoples of the continent. It is the umbrella under which the aforementioned major bird conservation plans will come together to address the bird conservation needs of North America.

The Strategic Plan and actions of the SJV in general will include close coordination with those working with the aforementioned plans and programs to integrate their conservation recommendations on a regional level.

THE SJV REGION

Geographic Scope

The SJV includes southern Arizona, southern California, the Mexican states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Baja California, and Baja California Sur, and the Gulf of California/Sea of Cortez (Figure 1). The boundaries were determined by partners in the U.S. and Mexico. Aligning boundaries to NABCI Bird Conservation Region (BCR) lines might be an option in the future in order to include the entire ranges of endemic birds and entire extents of habitats of interest.

Description of the Area

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Figure 1. The Sonoran Joint Venture with state, country and BCR boundaries.

The SJV covers in whole or part ten Bird Conservation Regions (BCR; Figure 1). Elevation in the SJV ranges from below sea level at the Salton Sea (-300'), to sea level coast line and islands, to relatively flat desert areas, to high plateaus and mountain ranges (9,900'). The climate is

largely desertic with extremely low rainfall occurring in late summer, high intensity storms or low intensity, winter storms. The topography and climate produce a diversity of habitats including: desert shrublands, riparian, Madrean pine-oak, pine, mixed conifer, fir, chaparral, pinyon-juniper woodlands, desert grasslands, rock outcrops, tropical deciduous forest, desert thorn-scrub, palm groves, semi-deciduous forest, freshwater wetlands, coastal dunes, coastal shrublands, mangroves, estuarine, brackish and salt water wetlands, coastal lagoons, rocky islands, and halophytic brushlands. Of these, the desert shrublands and grasslands, Madrean pine-oak, and various coastal environments are the most unique biotas.

The avifauna is diverse, with more than 650 bird species breeding in, wintering in, and/or migrating through the region. This is nearly two-thirds of all bird species that occur in northern Mexico, the United States, and Canada. There are 15 endemic or near endemic species, including: Xantu's Hummingbird, Gray Thrasher, Belding's Yellowthroat, Rufous-winged Sparrow, Le Conte's Thrasher, Abert's Towhee, Thick-billed Parrot, Five-striped Sparrow, California Gnatcatcher, Black-capped Gnatcatcher, Black-vented Shearwater, Least Storm-Petrel, Yellow-footed Gull, Elegant Tern, and Craveri's Murrelet. Additionally, there are several endemic subspecies such as: Arizona Grasshopper Sparrow, Large-billed Savannah Sparrow, Sonoran Yellow Warbler, San Lucas Robin, Baird's Yellow-eyed Junco, Guadalupe Dark-eyed Junco, and Cape Pygmy-Owl. A high percentage of the world population of 20 additional species also occur here. Unfortunately, there are two species that are presumed extinct: the Guadalupe Storm-Petrel from Isla Guadalupe and the Imperial Woodpecker of the Sierra Madre Occidental.

A comprehensive national species assessment for landbirds and ducks has been conducted for the U.S. portion of the SJV. The same process will be accomplished in the Mexican portion in 2004. The process identified several landbird species that have declining population trends and/or high threats including: Bendire's Thrasher, Brewer's Sparrow, Bell's Vireo, Black-throated Sparrow, Verdin, Curve-billed Thrasher, Thick-billed Parrot, Pinyon Jay, White-throated Swift, Baird's Sparrow, and Sprague's Pipit (as determined by Partners in Flight). The SJV also has stewardship responsibility to maintain another group of birds which have their centers of abundance in or are characteristic species of our area's habitats, such as Phainopepla, Lucy's Warbler, Five-striped Sparrow, and Elf Owl.

Threats to the area's ecology are as diverse as the species found in the region. Land use in the SJV area is varied and long-standing. Humans have been using the area for approximately 10,000 years. Species composition and successional progression underwent significant, large-scale changes due to grazing and mining from the late 1800's to the early 1900's. Since the early 1900s, significant effects on the biota have come from urban and agricultural development, ground water pumping, surface-water diversion, overgrazing, non-native plant invasions, aquaculture, military activities, and recreational pressures.

The SJV is not only biologically diverse, but culturally, as well. The SJV is committed to respecting and complementing the cultural diversity found in our region. Along with the Hispanic and Anglo cultures, the area is home to more than 20 indigenous cultures. Working bi-

nationally and in an area of great cultural diversity presents both unique challenges and opportunities. The SJV hopes that it will be a model for future conservation partnerships in areas of human diversity.

MISSION, GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

The SJV is based on the principles of a strong biological foundation, a landscape approach to conservation, and a strong and diverse partnership.

Mission Statement

The SJV is a regionally based, biologically driven, landscape-oriented partnership that works to protect, conserve, restore, and enhance bird populations and their habitats within the boundaries of the SJV.

Goal

Through partnerships, integrate the strategies, goals, and objectives of existing regional, national, and international bird conservation plans and programs into a single strategic effort that will conserve the unique regional avifauna of the SJV, through:

1. collaboration with partners within and outside the SJV to conserve, restore, and enhance wintering, migration and breeding habitat for all birds within the SJV;
2. coordination of planning and activities to maximize effectiveness of bird conservation efforts;
3. sharing of information in an open forum;
4. working with partners in developing bird conservation proposals and programs;
5. increasing public awareness of bird conservation issues; and
6. increasing support for projects and programs.

Guiding Principles

1. Our conservation actions will be biologically sound and defensible.
2. Projects implemented will be voluntary and cooperative.
3. Our actions will consider and be sensitive to the social and economic needs of the region.
4. Our initiatives will be pursued using non-regulatory strategies.
5. Any organization or individual interested in bird conservation will be welcome to participate in the SJV.
6. Equal representation from the United States and Mexico in our structure and conservation initiatives will be maintained.
7. When appropriate, publications, studies, and reports will be published in English and Spanish.
8. The education and training of students and conservation professionals will be encouraged and supported.

ELEMENTS AND STRATEGIES

This section describes five constituent elements that are critical to the protection, conservation, restoration, and enhancement of bird populations and their habitats within the SJV. The elements are: Conservation Coordination and Delivery, Biological Foundation, Education and Outreach, Funding, and Evaluation. Each element has a program goal, followed by objectives and strategies that will accomplish the goal and measureables to confirm progress. Measureables will be detailed into separate One-Year Action Plans (not included here). The strategies are collectively intended to be a five-year overview of action, but will be reviewed and updated every year based on accomplishments.

Crucial to the delivery of the five constituent elements will be partner participation. The SJV will provide an open forum for close collaboration with its program partners which include: the Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative, Audubon Society, Sonoran Institute, The Nature Conservancy, Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Instituto del Medio Ambiente y el Desarrollo Sustentable (IMADES), Centro de Investigación Científica y de Educación Superior de Ensenada (CICESE), Pronatura Noroeste Mar de Cortés, Secretaría de Medio Ambiente de Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT), Centro de Investigación en Alimentación y Desarrollo (CIAD), Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP), and others.

Conservation Coordination and Delivery

The joint venture offers the opportunity to coordinate among many partners that are planning and implementing bird conservation. By coordinating partners can be effective and efficient, work on shared priorities, and tie projects together for greatest effect. The joint venture also provides step down of national and international priorities to regional and local scales. The joint venture works through its staff, board, and committees to provide this coordination.

Goal: Provide structure, coordination, and assistance that attracts partners, leverages and generates funding, and implements and supports goals and projects.

Objective 1. Structure: Maintain an open forum and capacity to facilitate partnerships.

Strategies:

1. Maintain the Management Board and conduct 3 meetings per year.
2. Maintain operation of the Technical Committee and conduct at least 2 meetings per year.
3. Encourage participation in SJV by working with and informing existing and new partners and partner organizations, agencies, and institutions.
4. Maintain an SJV staff that responds to goals, needs, and partners.
5. Initiate, facilitate, or assist working groups that address specific topical or geographical needs or issues of concern as needed.
6. Develop and follow a Strategic Plan for the SJV and update it every 5 years.

7. Submit the Strategic Plan to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee.

- Measurables:
1. Expand the Management Board to increase participation of key stakeholders in the United States and Mexico.
 2. Increase communications to partners on SJV goals and objectives by participating in meetings, maintaining our website, and via other means.
 3. Increase the number of participating partners.

Objective 2. Coordination: Work with partners to produce efficient, sound, and effective conservation projects.

- Strategies:
1. Communicate to partners information regarding priority species, habitats and sites and work with partners to prioritize and improve projects.
 2. Disseminate the SJV Conservation Plan to partners in order to facilitate coordination of projects and programs.

- Measureables:
1. Acres impacted, protected, restored, and enhanced.
 2. Meetings held or attended to communicate goals.
 3. Progress toward 30-year species population targets.
 4. Projects initiated by partners consistent with the SJV mission and objectives.

Objective 3. Assistance: Improve development, delivery, results, and evaluation of partner projects or programs.

- Strategies:
1. Provide guidance or assistance to partners as requested on development, delivery, and evaluation of projects or programs.

- Measurables:
1. Project consultations provided.
 2. Projects completed by partners consistent with the SJV mission and objectives.

Biological Foundation

A strong biological foundation is critical to the SJV. This is accomplished by identifying the highest priority bird populations and habitats at multiple scales, translating between the scales, determining the highest priority sites and projects, and assessing the effectiveness of these projects on populations.

Goal: Develop, maintain, and communicate a strong scientific foundation through conservation planning, monitoring, applied research, training, and communication in coordination with partners and experts.

Objective 1. Biological Planning and Conservation Design: Use a species and habitat assessment and analysis and existing bird initiative and other conservation plans to determine SJV biological objectives; use the biological objectives and other factors to design a landscape approach to bird conservation that will be applied at the species, habitat, community, and/or site level.

Strategies:

1. Assess vulnerability and responsibility factors of bird species breeding in, wintering in, and/or migrating through the SJV and determine priority species from this assessment.
2. Calculate population objectives for priority species.
3. Compile conservation recommendations for priority species.
4. Analyze priority species by habitat and determine priority habitats from this analysis.
5. Calculate habitat objectives.
6. Compile conservation recommendations by habitat type.
7. Use priority habitats to identify Focus Areas.
8. Prioritize Focus Areas based on their biological value, threats, conservation opportunities, and other appropriate factors.
9. Write a bird conservation summary plan for each Focus Area, if needed.
10. Write SJV Conservation Plan that is based on the above assessment, analysis, and recommendations.

Measurables:

1. Complete the Species Assessment.
2. Develop population objectives.
3. Complete avifaunal analysis.
4. Generate habitat objectives and recommendations.
5. Complete Focus Area Conservation Summaries.
6. Write SJV Conservation Plan.

Objective 2. Applied Research: Increase the knowledge of SJV bird populations and habitats by assessing and prioritizing research needs; communicate needs to partners; and encourage, facilitate, and coordinate partners to accomplish needed research to improve conservation design and delivery.

Strategies:

1. Complete a research needs assessment to support planning and conservation delivery.
2. Prioritize research needs.
3. Post research needs on website.
4. Encourage partners to conduct research that applies to SJV bird needs.
5. Maintain a directory of completed and ongoing research on the SJV web site.
6. Work with regional, national, and international groups to standardize, coordinate, and improve research efforts.

7. Coordinate with and participate on the National Science Support Team for NAWMP, the PIF International Science Team, and other bird initiative science teams.
8. Incorporate science team information into SJV plans and work.

- Measurables:
1. Post research needs on website.
 2. Make contacts with researchers to fulfill SJV needs.
 3. Improve SJV plans incorporating new data..

Objective 3. Inventory and Monitoring: Develop a program of inventory and monitoring by performing a needs assessment; outlining a baseline inventory and trend monitoring program and a project-based monitoring program to ensure that an adaptive management approach is taken.

- Strategies:
1. Develop an assessment monitoring needs and an inventory of current monitoring projects.
 2. Develop an SJV monitoring program in coordination with the bird initiatives and NABCI's monitoring programs.
 3. Support, coordinate, and/or facilitate short- and long- term trend and project-based monitoring.
 4. Coordinate with and contribute to national and international bird monitoring programs (e.g., Breeding Bird Survey, Point Counts, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Institute for Bird Populations, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, NABCI, Coordinated Bird Monitoring) to improve methodology, analysis, information dissemination, data contribution, coordination, etc.

- Measurables:
1. Write the SJV Inventory and Monitoring Plan.
 2. Initiate and/or facilitate monitoring projects that meet SJV needs.

Objective 4. Training: Increase the number of trained ornithology professionals and citizen scientists.

- Strategies:
1. With partners, develop and/or sponsor monitoring, research, and other biological training for professionals, professional-track students and citizen scientists.

- Measurable:
1. Provide training workshops.

Objective 5. Information Transfer: Ensure that biological information and data to partners available and easily understood.

- Strategies:
1. Summarize and disseminate monitoring, research, and assessment results to managers in a user-friendly format, including presentations and website. (work with Outreach Coordinator)

Measurable: 1. Summarize results for distribution.

Education and Outreach

The long-term success of the SJV will depend on effective communication with existing partners, potential partners, and the public. With the large size, biological complexity, and cultural diversity of the SJV region, regular communications are critical. Education is important to set the stage for an informed citizenry in the future.

Goal: Develop an education and outreach program that will effectively communicate the biological, social, cultural, and economic value of birds and their habitats and support the biological objectives and recommendations of the Conservation Plan. This program will include both internal and external communication, and avitourism.

Objective 1. Partners/Internal Communications: Improve the effectiveness of partner actions throughout the SJV region by establishing an Education and Outreach Program to regularly communicate and exchange information about bird habitat and conservation issues.

Strategies:

1. Present SJV goals objectives and program information at partners' meetings and events.
2. Improve internal communications among partners, including developing a listserv and website.
3. With partners, provide (sponsor or facilitate) training to professionals and professional-track students on conservation education, outreach, habitat management, and avitourism.

Measurables:

1. Develop and maintain website; launch listserv.
2. Make contacts and presentations.
3. Maintain a contact database.
4. Provide training opportunities.

Objective 2. Public/External Education and Communication: Inform our external audiences of SJV goals and objectives, including the U.S. Congress.

Strategies:

1. Develop and carry out an SJV Education and Outreach Plan, including defining target audiences.
2. Support the development and distribution of habitat-based materials, such as a best management practices handbooks that encourage land owners and land managers to take active stewardship of birds and their habitats.
3. Support existing education and outreach programs that advance the goals and objectives of the SJV.
4. Develop and distribute education and outreach materials to appropriate audiences as determined by the Education and Outreach Plan.

- Measurables:
1. Education and Outreach Plan developed.
 2. Materials developed and distributed, including a general SJV brochure.
 3. Produce handbooks or other reference materials.

Objective 3. Avitourism: Increase the number of birding trips to the SJV area; and assist with improving the economic effects of avitourism to local communities.

Strategies:

1. Support the development of avitourism in the SJV area.

- Measurables:
1. Assist ongoing or incipient avitourism efforts.

Funding

In order to be effective over a large area, at multiple scales, and with our broad mission, the SJV will need increased funding for both capacity and implementation. The SJV should clearly document its need and strive to increase the funds provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, partners should also strive to increase funding to SJV priority projects through other sources. The SJV needs to continue to be actively involved and successful with the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, but also needs to expand its success in other funding arenas.

Goal: Increase funds available for conservation projects and programs within the SJV.

Objective 1. Sonoran Joint Venture Funds: Seek additional SJV funds and develop a process for ranking and distributing funds and tracking progress and accomplishments of funded projects.

Strategies:

1. Develop administrative funding needs for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and accomplishment and need information for partners and Congressional outreach.
2. Develop and maintain a competitive awards program, which contributes to the SJV mission and objectives, is partnership-driven, and encourages matching funds or cost share.
3. Develop a project tracking system and database.

- Measurables:
1. Develop a fair award review, scoring, and approval process.
 2. Develop a request for proposals that reflects SJV goals and priorities.
 3. Post the request for proposals on the website.

Objective 2. Other known funding sources: Develop information about known funding sources.

Strategies:

1. Develop a database of funding sources.

2. Provide advice to partners about funding sources appropriate for specific projects including new potential partners.

Measurables: 1. Post funding database on website for partner use.
2. Projects funded based on use of advice or information.
3. Funding proposals discussed with partners and submitted.

Objective 3. New funding sources: Work cooperatively to seek out and leverage funds for priority projects. Seek out specific new funding opportunities.

Strategies: 1. Identify and develop new funding opportunities.

Measurables: 1. New funding opportunities identified.
2. New funding sources in database.
3. Contact made with potential funders.

Evaluation

The SJV reports accomplishments to many entities including: funding entities, conservation organizations, state and federal agencies, media, and Congress. It is essential that the SJV be able to quickly and accurately measure and report accomplishments. In some cases the metrics to measure success are simple such as reporting that a particular activity was completed. In other cases, success can be far more difficult to measure and requires significant time and effort (e.g., examining our effects on long-term trends in bird populations).

Goal: Sonoran Joint Venture personnel, Management Board, and committees will conduct an annual review to determine progress made in the elements and measures of the current Strategic and One-year Action plans.

Objective 1. Tracking Database: Accomplishments will be tracked annually.

Strategies: 1. Develop and use a database to track accomplishments and measurables.

Measurable: 1. Tracking database developed.

Objective 2. Annual progress reports: Accomplishments will be reported to the Management Board and partners annually.

Strategies: 1. An annual progress report will be prepared by SJV staff with input from the Management Board and Committees for each element of the Strategic Plan, detailing progress made and suggested changes.
2. Management Board will review reports and approve or disapprove suggested changes. The One-Year Action Plan will be redrafted to reflect changes.

3. The SJV Coordinator will evaluate staff.
4. The Management Board and committees will “self-evaluate” their effectiveness.

- Measurables:
1. Annual progress report prepared.
 2. Strategic Plan and One-Year Action Plan updated.
 3. Evaluations completed.

STRUCTURE

The following section outlines the roles and responsibilities of the various units of the SJV structure, the Management Board, committees, and staff. All of these units must work together to accomplish the goals and objectives in the preceding sections of this Plan.

Management Board

The SJV is guided in policy and planning by a Management Board (Board). The primary responsibility of the Board is to maintain leadership, guidance, resources, commitment, and support within the SJV to accomplish the goals and objectives of this Strategic Plan. The Board will do this by:

1. providing guidance on organizational policy, program priorities and long-range planning;
2. reviewing, providing input, and approving the organizational plans;
3. identifying and helping secure potential partnerships and funding sources;
4. approving the list of SJV Awards and proposals submitted to NAWCA, NMBCA, etc.;
5. endorsing significant budget changes;
6. endorsing significant changes in the duties of SJV staff and new SJV staff positions;
7. recruiting new board members and selecting new chairpersons;
8. appointing members from their agency/organization to various committees;
9. determining how the members agency/organization can contribute to the SJV partnership;
10. working with staff and committees to ensure that SJV partnership accomplishments of their agency/organization are reported to the JV;
11. keeping Congressional (U.S.) members informed of accomplishments and needs; and
12. revising and updating this plan every 5 years.

The Board will meet three times a year in March, July, and November and more frequently if determined necessary by the Board and/or the Chairperson. Board meetings will rotate between the United States and Mexico and the Board will strive to meet within each of the states participating in the SJV at least once every two years. The Board will strive to maintain representation from each state participating in the SJV. At any meeting of the Board a quorum shall be more than one-half of the total number of members at that time.

Members of the Board will include volunteer representatives from federal, state, corporate, non-profit conservation organization partners, and private individuals interested in the conservation

of birds and their habitats within the boundaries of the SJV. Individual Board members agree to:

1. serve at least a two year term;
2. attend 3 board meetings a year;
3. designate an alternate to act in their behalf in the event of absence; and
4. agree to step down if they miss an excessive number of meetings.

Chairperson

The Chairperson will be elected by simple majority vote by the Board and serve a two year term with an optional second two year term if desired and approved by the Board. The Board will strive to rotate the Chairperson position between Mexico and the United States. The Chairperson leads Board meetings, and facilitates and participates in the decision-making process of the Board.

Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson will also be elected by a simple majority vote of the Board. He or she will become the Chairperson at the end of the sitting Chairperson's term. The Vice-Chairperson will act as Chairperson in the event of his or her absence and will lead the Executive Committee. If possible the Vice-Chairperson will be from the opposite country as the sitting Chairperson to help facilitate the regular exchange between countries.

Executive Committee

The primary function of the Executive Committee is to facilitate important SJV issues which require a definitive action in the time between Board meetings. The Executive Committee will be comprised of at least the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, Past Chairperson(s), and committee chairs, as well as the Coordinator. Issues resolved by the Executive Committee will be submitted to the Board to as soon as possible by email or at the next Board meeting.

Technical Committee

The primary responsibility of the Technical Committee is to provide the Management Board and JV staff with technical expertise regarding biological planning, recommendations, prioritization, and evaluation. The Technical Committee's responsibilities include:

1. developing, maintaining, and communicating a strong scientific foundation for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating bird conservation;
2. identifying and prioritizing species, habitats, and focus areas;
3. assisting partners in identifying and developing bird conservation projects and programs;
4. providing technical advice to partners developing bird conservation proposals;
5. assisting in the development and implementation of the SJV Conservation Plan and the SJV Inventory and Monitoring Plan;

6. reviewing and ranking proposals submitted to the SJV Awards Program;
7. reviewing documents/issues and providing feedback to the appropriate entity; and
8. monitoring and evaluating the progress of the objectives of the Conservation Plan.

The Technical Committee will have two co-chairs, one from Mexico and one from the United States (the Assistant JV Coordinator). They will set the committee's agendas, report findings to the Management Board, and represent the SJV on the NSST, PIF Technical Committee, NABCI monitoring group, and other national science initiatives.

The Technical Committee will generally be open to program or field level biologists who represent an institution with a vested interest in regional bird conservation and are knowledgeable about specific habitat types, geographic areas, species, or taxonomic groups. The Technical Committee may have subcommittees working on more narrowly defined issues. The size and makeup of the Technical Committee may vary according to the current needs of the SJV. We will strive to have equal representation from the U.S. and Mexico. We will seek representation from each state, from each bird initiative, and from conservation-based agencies and NGOs. The Technical Committee will serve as a forum of exchange of information on bird conservation, research, and monitoring. The committee will translate goals and objective of the bird initiatives to meaningful goals and objectives at the JV, BCR, state, and local scales. One of the committee's prime functions will be to help write and implement the Conservation and Monitoring plans.

Education and Outreach Committee

The primary responsibility of the Education and Outreach committee is to support the goals and objectives of the SJV through its education and outreach projects, programs, and activities. This is accomplished by:

1. developing and maintaining the SJV website and listserve;
2. developing and distributing educational and outreach materials to SJV partners and the general public;
3. implementing and/or facilitating SJV education and outreach activities;
4. working with the JV and Assistant JV coordinators to facilitate communication and sharing of information among SJV partners; and
5. recognizing partners for outstanding contributions toward achieving the goals of the SJV by soliciting nominations and recommending finalist(s) to the Management Board for approval.

JV Coordinator

The primary responsibility of the JV Coordinator is to facilitate the execution of the SJV Strategic Plan. This will be accomplished by:

1. supporting all committees through their respective chairpersons;

2. coordinating the development and implementation of SJV partnerships;
3. providing guidance to partners in the development of projects and programs;
4. generating and leveraging funds for SJV projects and programs;
5. working with the Technical Committee and Assistant JV Coordinator to administer the SJV Awards Program;
6. working closely with the Management Board, organizing Board meetings, providing SJV briefings, tri-annual updates, and annual progress reports; and
7. tracking accomplishments and evaluating progress towards the goal and objectives of the SJV.

Assistant JV Coordinator

The primary responsibility of the Assistant JV Coordinator is to maintain the biological foundation of the SJV and ensure its continuous improvement by:

1. facilitating the execution of the SJV Conservation Plan;
2. cooperatively leading the Technical Committee with the SJV Mexican co-chair;
3. acting as the SJV liaison to all existing and future major bird initiatives and partner organizations involved in conservation within the SJV;
4. representing the SJV on the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Science Support Team (NSST) and the Partners in Flight (PIF) Technical Committee;
5. representing the SJV on the U.S. NABCI Coordinated Bird Monitoring group;
6. providing leadership to a variety of federal, state, and local conservation groups in the development of SJV Conservation Plan;
7. developing and maintaining SJV science databases;
8. reviewing and ranking SJV Awards Proposal projects;
9. monitoring and evaluating the progress of SJV conservation projects; and
10. assisting the JV Coordinator with other duties of the JV and representing the JV as needed.

Education and Outreach Coordinator

The primary responsibility of the Education and Outreach Coordinator is to support the goals and objectives of the SJV through education and outreach projects, programs, and activities. This is accomplished by:

1. working with the Education and Outreach Committee;
2. developing an Education and Outreach Plan if needed;
3. developing and maintaining the SJV website and listserv;
4. developing and distributing SJV educational and outreach materials to SJV partners and the general public;
5. implementing and/or facilitating SJV education and outreach activities;
6. working with JV and Assistant JV coordinators to facilitate communication and sharing of information among SJV partners; and
7. representing the SJV at meetings as needed.