



Evaluation at a Glance

Habitat Conservation Partnerships Program

About the program

Habitat is where wildlife lives. Conserving habitat is a critical element in the conservation and protection of wildlife.

- The protection and conservation of habitats require the efforts of not only Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), but also all of its many partners throughout the federal government and provinces, territories, Indigenous peoples, environmental non-governmental organizations, Canadians and others.

The Habitat Conservation Program (HCP) addresses the need for wildlife habitat conservation in Canada by funding projects and facilitating the donation of ecologically sensitive private lands through tax incentives. It also encourages partnerships and habitat conservation activities that secure, protect, improve and restore important and ecologically sensitive habitat to enhance the survival of wildlife, including migratory birds and species at risk.

- The program consists of seven program components that provide different mechanisms focused on ensuring that wildlife habitats are secured and managed in ways that are compatible with habitat conservation.
- The majority of the HCP Program's funding is paid out to conservation partners to secure, protect and enhance wildlife habitat.
- The evaluation focused on the program components 1 to 5 in Figure 1. Average annual spending for these five components was \$28.2 million over the six-year period from 2010-11 to 2015-16.

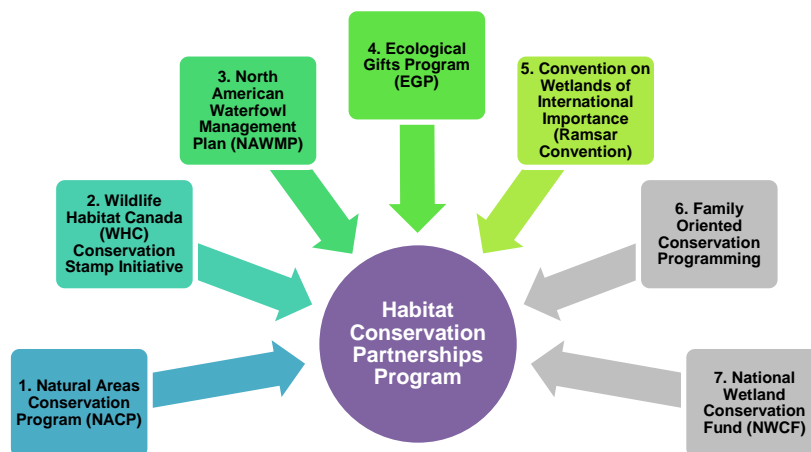


Figure 1: The Habitat Conservation Partnerships Program



What the evaluation found

- Overall, the HCP Program is making progress towards its expected results related to land securement and habitat management. The NACP, NAWMP, EGP and Ramsar components have made significant progress towards their respective land securement or retention goals. Each of the HCP Program components contributes to increased levels of habitat management and land stewardship. As well, each has established guidelines and standard practices in place aimed at maintaining and improving wildlife habitat.
- Several program components have high levels of engagement and participation from their target audiences. However, the evaluation identified some opportunities for improvement related to the involvement of stakeholders such as agricultural, forestry and Indigenous groups.
- The governance structures of the individual program components are clear, appropriate and generally efficient, but the Program lacks an overarching governance structure to facilitate priority setting and enable greater collaboration, communication and efficiencies among Program components.

Recommendations

Two recommendations are addressed to the Assistant Deputy Minister, Canadian Wildlife Service, who has accepted them and has developed management action plans in response.

1. Take appropriate actions to increase participation of targeted stakeholders in program areas where they are under-represented.
2. Introduce a consolidated approach to strategic planning and priority setting among the various HCP Program components.

About the evaluation

The evaluation was conducted between April 2014 and March 2016. Multiple lines of evidence informed the results, including a document review, 37 interviews with internal and external stakeholders, an online survey of stakeholders and six case studies.