



COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in the United States and Canada

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Biodiversity / Ecosystems

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Canada – United States

FORM:

Legally-binding treaty

STATUS:

- Signed by Canada: August 16, 1916
- Ratified by Canada: December 7, 1916
- In force in Canada: December 16, 1916
- In force internationally: December 7, 1916
- Amending Protocol signed: December 14, 1995
- Amending instructions exchanged: October 7, 1999
- Came into force in Canada: October 8, 1999

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Environment and Climate Change Canada

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Web Links:

- Information on the Convention: [Canada Treaty Information](#) website
- [Information on the MBCA program](#)

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

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PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

This Convention is an international agreement signed by the United States and Canada to protect migratory birds. In 1916, when the convention was signed, it only protected migratory birds considered either useful or harmless to humans; many species of migratory birds were excluded due to their “undesirability” to humans. The convention was signed to ensure the protection of migratory birds, their eggs, and their nests as many common species were in large decline or declared extinct, such as the Passenger Pigeon.

The Convention was introduced in Canadian law as the Migratory Birds Convention Act, which has a similar counterpart in the United States. Migratory birds are the full responsibility of the federal government, under Environment and Climate Change Canada.

OBJECTIVE

The Convention extends protection to migratory birds in Canada and the United States and provides for the management of migratory bird species through sustainable hunting, and conservation of migratory bird populations.

KEY ELEMENTS

The requirements of the Convention have legislated components embedded in the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, *Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022* and *Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations*.

Elements of the Convention are also implemented via the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the Declaration of Intent for the Conservation of North American Birds and their Habitat; both of the latter agreements were signed by the Minister of the Environment alongside his/her counterparts in the United States (and later Mexico).

EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected result is sustainable populations of migratory birds based on the conservation principles and tools outlined in the Convention’s Parksville Protocol. The conservation principles include: managing migratory birds internationally, ensuring a variety of sustainable uses, sustaining healthy migratory bird

populations for harvesting needs, providing for and protecting habitat necessary for the conservation of migratory birds, and restoring depleted populations of migratory birds.

The tools indicated in the Protocol include: monitoring, regulation, enforcement and compliance, co-operation and partnership, education and information, incentives for effective stewardship, protection of incubating birds, designation of harvest areas, management of migratory birds on a population basis, use of aboriginal and indigenous knowledge, institutions and practices, and, development, sharing and use of best scientific information.

This agreement and subsequent domestic legislation and regulations enable a number of prohibitions to enter into effect, supporting the conservation of migratory birds.

It also supports international collaboration, recognizing that the conservation of migratory birds requires efforts across their year-round ranges which may span oceans and hemispheres.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

This agreement is the foundation for Canada's domestic and international responsibilities under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act* (MBCA), *Migratory Birds Regulations*, 2022 (MBR 2022) and *Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations* (MBSR). The Convention offers broad parameters for the MBCA, MBR and MBSR including providing the families of birds that are covered and prohibitions that are in place for their conservation and protection.

Coordination of bird conservation is achieved through a variety of regional, national and international fora. This includes, but is not limited to, the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee, Trilateral Committee of Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management (Canada – US – Mexico), the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, Partners in Flight, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and Waterbird Conservation Council.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

Environment and Climate Change Canada's largest investments in support of the MBCA are the numerous monitoring programs undertaken to support regulatory and conservation efforts. The Avian Monitoring Review assessed nearly 200 monitoring activities to ensure their relevance to departmental needs in an efficient and cost effective manner.

The first-ever assessment of the magnitude of the most important human-caused sources of mortality were published in 2013. These assessments are critical for efficiently directing future conservation efforts.

Bird Conservation Region strategies are tools that can be used by Environment and Climate Change Canada, their partners and Canadians to ensure conservation efforts target priority species and address the key threats to these birds.

From 2018-2021, ECCC worked with international partners to conserve over 40,000 hectares and 3,500 km of coastlines of important migratory bird habitat outside of Canada and the US. The conservation of these habitats across the full life cycle of the birds in the Americas also resulted in 120,000 native trees being planted and over 20,000 people engaged in the conservation of migratory birds.

Reports

Biennial reporting on the status of waterfowl populations, consultations on changes to the Migratory Birds Regulations and current regulations are among the most visited sites on Environment and Climate Change Canada's website:

- [Migratory Birds Regulations](#);
- [Modernization of the Migratory Birds Regulations \(2022\)](#);
- [Bird Conservation Region and strategies](#).