



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

Management of the North American Breeding Bird Survey Program

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Biodiversity / Ecosystems

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Canada - USA

FORM:

Memorandum of Understanding

STATUS:

- Signed by Canada: February 2 2012
- In force in Canada and Internationally: February 2, 2012
- Ongoing: the Canada and USA have been cooperating on this survey since 1966

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Environment and Climate Change Canada

Partners: U.S. Geological Survey

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**Web Links:**

- [Canadian Breeding Bird Survey](#) website
- [U.S. Geological Survey Breeding Bird Survey](#) website
- [Strategic Plan for the North American Breeding Bird Survey, 2020-2030](#).

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

July 2022

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

The Breeding Bird Survey helps track changes in North American birds:

- Thousands of keen bird watchers help with the survey
- Over 3000 routes are surveyed each year of which about 600 are in Canada
- The survey was started more than 50 years ago in 1966
- The results tell us which species are doing well and which are becoming rare
- This can help us decide which birds need extra conservation efforts

OBJECTIVE

The North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) is a cooperative survey in Canada, the U.S.A. and Mexico to collect data on population trends of North American landbirds using standardized protocols. The data support conservation and management decisions and scientific research.

KEY ELEMENTS

Shared data management; standardized protocols and program design; cooperative data analysis and reporting.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The BBS continues to collect standardized data on bird population trends throughout the continent with improved geographic coverage over time.

Updated continental data are available for distribution within several months of the end of each field season.

Updated analyses of data are available and reported each year.

Results and data continue to be used for conservation, management and research.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

The Canadian Wildlife Service administers the BBS in Canada, in cooperation with the USGS. All data are

managed within a shared database administered by the USGS.

The BBS supports Canada's efforts to implement the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*. Monitoring the population status of migratory birds is essential for management and protection, including identifying species in population decline for which early action could prevent them from becoming at risk, identifying species that are already at risk and tracking recovery of at risk populations.

The U.S. and Canadian governments have a long history of cooperation on migratory bird data acquisition and management.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

The Canadian BBS office has facilitated completion of over 18,000 BBS surveys from 1966 - 2021; growing from 34 in the first year, to more than 600 / year recently.

Over fifty years of population data have produced trends and relative abundance measures for more than 300 landbird species in Canada.

Data from these surveys are analysed and reported on annually by CWS staff and are incorporated into many different reports, publications, and assessments.

Citizen Scientists participating in these surveys can be important advocates for wildlife conservation.

Reports

The Canadian BBS office publishes [BBS trend estimates](#) on a yearly basis.

Data have been incorporated into the [2019 State of Canada's Birds](#) and [Status of Birds in Canada](#) web reports.

Results have been incorporated into hundreds of scientific publications (see [publications library](#)).

A recent landmark publication, "Decline of the North American Avifauna", was based largely on BBS data and highlighted that North America has about 3 billion fewer birds in 2020 than it did in 1970.

Results

BBS results are used in decision making by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) status assessments for birds and in setting priorities for Bird Conservation Region Strategies.

Data from the BBS are widely used to set priorities for conservation activities on North American birds.

The recent publication on the decline of the North American Avifauna has galvanized enhanced research activities and renewed calls for conservation efforts for North American birds.