



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

## M.L. 2019 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

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**Today's Date:** 8/24/2018

**Date of Next Status Update Report:** May 1, 2020

**Date of Work Plan Approval:**

**Project Completion Date:** July 1, 2021

**Does this submission include an amendment request?** No

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**PROJECT TITLE:** Implementing Conservation Plans for Avian Species of Concern

**Project Manager:** Nathaniel Miller

**Organization:** National Audubon Society

**College/Department/Division:** Audubon Minnesota

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**Location:** Statewide

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**Total Project Budget:** \$124,000

**Amount Spent:** \$0

**Balance:** \$124,000

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**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2019, Chp. xx, Sec. xx, Subd. xx

**Appropriation Language:**

## I. PROJECT STATEMENT:

We propose establishing benchmark survey sites to guide restoration and enhancement activities within Important Bird Areas for three species of conservation concern: The Common Tern, Black Tern and Yellow Rail. Over the past 10 years, Audubon MN has built a solid avian monitoring foundation with the completion of the Breeding Bird Atlas (MNBBA) in 2017 and the implementation of the statewide marshbird monitoring program in 2016. Using the protocol from the marshbird survey and the information gathered from the MNBBA, we propose establishing benchmark survey locations for these species of conservation need in order to better document and guide collaborative conservation efforts.

All three of these birds are focal species within Audubon's Blueprint for Bird Conservation and have individualized, action oriented conservation plans. The Yellow Rail was the least abundant focal species documented in the statewide marshbird monitoring effort. Benchmark sites focused on Yellow Rails are essential to understanding their decline. For Black Terns, the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program reports a statistically significant declining trend (10.5% annual change) in the Great Lakes basin from 1995-2012; this is the largest decline of any marsh bird monitored by the program (Tozer 2013). Finally, Common Terns are a state threatened species with only 5 active colonies in Minnesota. Our intention is to support the coordinated implementation of the Blueprint for Bird Conservation Plans (Pfanmuller 2014) for each of these species.

There are 19 potential IBAs with occupancy records for the three focal species. We plan to designate up to 10 benchmark sites per focal species (some may overlap) within these priority IBAs. Once established, the benchmark sites will be added to the ongoing marshbird survey effort and surveyed by seasonal field technicians. Detailed habitat metrics will be recorded at each benchmark site to determine focal species occupancy as it relates to habitat composition and structure. Benchmark sites will also take into account current and planned management and serve as a resource to determine species response to such actions. Recommendations based on the comprehensive marshbird survey results and the data collected from the benchmark survey sites, will be shared with statewide and regional working groups focused on wetland habitat improvements and species specific management (i.e. the MN Prairie Conservation Plan, the Joint Ventures Great Lakes Waterbird Working group and the Common Tern management working group).

## II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:

**First Update May 1, 2020**

**Second Update November 1, 2020**

**Third Update May 1, 2021**

**Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2021**

## III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:

### **ACTIVITY 1 Title: *Implementation Area Site Selection***

**Description:** *Use the MN BBA and Important Bird Areas to establish focal benchmark marshbird survey locations. Site selection done via remote sensing using GIS and input from partnership collaboration. Then in-person site visits will determine the suitable locations for the focal species.*

**ACTIVITY 1 ENRTF BUDGET: \$15,000**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Conduct cross analysis of Breeding Bird Atlas data and IBA criterion	Fall 2019
2. Create GIS layer of benchmark sites to ground truth	Winter 2019
3. Ground truth and formalize benchmark site selection	Spring 2020

**First Update May 1, 2020**

**Second Update November 1, 2020**

**Third Update May 1, 2021**

**Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2021**

**Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2021**

ACTIVITY 2 Title: *Data Collection*

**Description:** *Conduct two seasons of data collection at benchmark (staff) and marshbird survey (volunteers) sites. Field staff will use point count and secretive marshbird survey protocols. A non-invasive, small, video capable drone will be used to gain visual access to inaccessible marsh habitats. Report on findings and develop management recommendations for ongoing restoration and enhancement work.*

**ACTIVITY 2 ENRTF BUDGET: \$109,000**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Coordinate volunteers in continued marshbird survey effort statewide	2020 -2021
2. Hire field staff to collect two field seasons of benchmark species and habitat data	2020-2021
3. Field staff will use non-invasive, small, video capable drone to gain visual access to inaccessible marsh habitats.	2020-2021
3. Analyze and report on benchmark survey efforts, work to integrate recommendations into existing habitat management for these focal species	2021

**First Update May 1, 2020**

**Second Update November 1, 2020**

**Third Update May 1, 2021**

**Final Report between project end (June 30) and August 15, 2021**

**IV. DISSEMINATION:** Over the course of the project we will work closely with our partners in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, University of Minnesota Duluth and others to keep them updated on project progress. Focal species will benefit from regular communication among working group partners (Joint Venture Great Lakes Waterbird group; Midwest Marsh Bird Working Group, Black Tern Initiative, and Common Tern Working Group). These partners will be instrumental in the development and execution of adaptive-management associated with monitoring. Audubon’s communication team will work to place newsworthy stories on Audubon’s websites, national magazine, and in the media. A dedicated webpage

for the project will be created on [mn.audubon.org](http://mn.audubon.org). This page will depict the project overview and also updates and results.

The Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) will be acknowledged through use of the trust fund logo or attribution language on project print and electronic media, publications, signage, and other communications per the [ENRTF Acknowledgement Guidelines](#).

**V. ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION:**

**A. Personnel and Capital Expenditures**

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:** N/A

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** N/A

**Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 3,182	Divide total personnel hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: 1.53
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**Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Contract Personnel Hours for entire duration of project: 80	Divide total contract hours by 2,080 hours in 1 yr = TOTAL FTE: .04
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**VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

**A. Partners outside of project manager’s organization receiving ENRTF funding**

N/A

**B. Partners outside of project manager’s organization NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
Stephanie Beilke	Conservation Science Manager	Audubon	Great Lakes Black Tern working group coordination
Rachel Pierce	Migratory Bird Biologist	USFWS	Regional Marshbird monitoring coordination
Anna Sidie-Slettedahl	Assistant Coordinator	USFWS Upper MS River & Great Lakes Region JV	Yellow Rail expertise and collaboration
TBD	TBD	Multiple entities	Common Tern Working group

**VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

This project focuses on implementing the management plans (MN Conservation Blueprint for Bird Conservation, 2014) for three benchmark species. We have built a solid foundation of monitoring information to guide this work and look to address specific habitat requirements of these species to advise ongoing restoration work. Audubon’s role is to use the information gathered from these benchmark survey sites to provide

recommendations to area managers working to conserve these focal species. There is potential for long term monitoring of avian use in these survey sites at 5 to 10 year intervals. If needed, we would seek additional funding from available state or federal resources for the follow-up monitoring activities.

**VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

- Project status update reports will be submitted May 1 and November 1 each year of the project
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2022

**IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:**

- A. Budget Spreadsheet**
- B. Visual Component or Map**
- C. Parcel List Spreadsheet**
- D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements**
- E. Research Addendum**

Attachment A:  
 Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
 M.L. 2019 Budget Spreadsheet



Legal Citation:

Project Manager: Nathaniel Miller

Project Title: Implementing Conservation Plans for Avian Species of Concern

Organization: Audubon Minnesota

Project Budget: \$124,000

Project Length and Completion Date: 3 years; July 1, 2022

\$ -

Today's Date: 8/14/2018

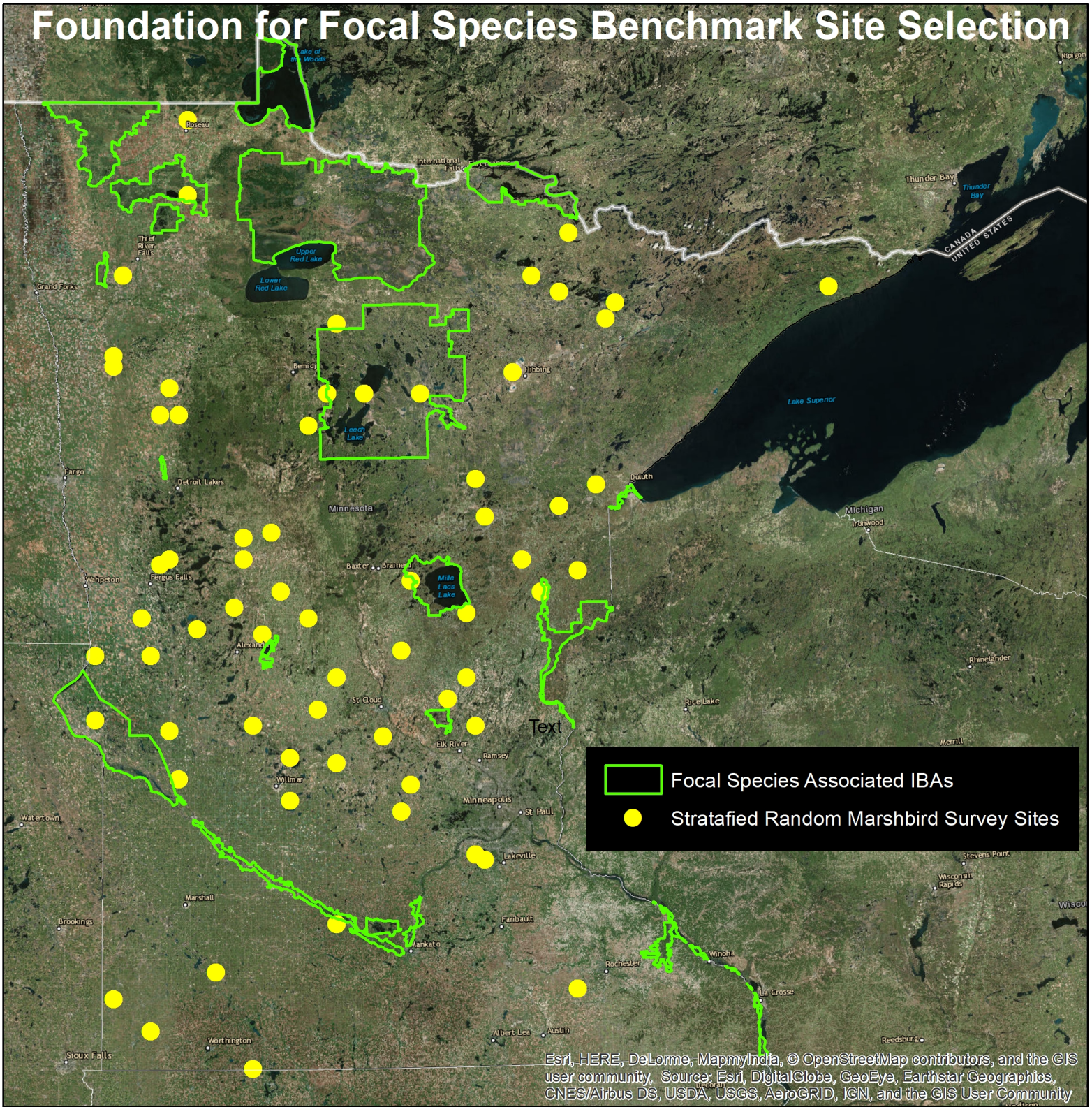
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET	Budget	Amount Spent	Balance
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>			
<b>Personnel (Wages and Benefits)</b>	\$ 95,300	\$ -	\$ 95,300
Project Manager: \$52,000 (75% salary, 25% benefits); 32% FTE each year for 3 years			\$ -
Administrative support: \$7,500, (75% salary, 25% benefits); 6% FTE each year for 3 years			\$ -
2 Temporary Field Surveyors: \$35,800, (93% Salary and 7% benefits); 19%FTE- 10 weeks, each person, for each year, for 2 years			\$ -
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts</b>			\$ -
Statistical Analysis Contract (through competitive bid)	\$ 9,250		\$ 9,250
Boat (2 boat trips per season) and/or air (1 flight per season) service for remote access to benchmark	\$ 1,750	\$ -	\$ 1,750
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies</b>			
Surveyor supplies such as: chest waders (2 pr \$150/pair), safety vests, flagging, batteries, printing data	\$ 700	\$ -	\$ 700
<b>Capital Expenditures Over \$5,000</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Fee Title Acquisition</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Easement Acquisition</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Professional Services for Acquisition</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Printing</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Travel expenses in Minnesota</b>			
Staff and surveyor travel/ lodging for duration of survey (following DNR commissioner plan)	\$ 17,000	\$ -	\$ 17,000
<b>Other</b>			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	\$ 124,000	\$ -	\$ 124,000

OTHER FUNDS CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT	Status (secured or pending)	Budget	Spent	Balance
<b>Non-State: Audubon indirect costs</b>	secured	\$ 17,400	\$ -	\$ 17,400
<b>State:</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>In kind:</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

PAST AND CURRENT ENRTF APPROPRIATIONS	Amount legally obligated but not yet spent	Budget	Spent	Balance
<b>Current appropriation:</b> Maximize Value of Water Impoundments to Wildlife. Legal Citation: M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 06f		\$ 195,000	\$ -	\$ 195,000
<b>Past appropriations:</b> Create a Statewide Waterbird Monitoring Program. Legal Citation: M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 03f		\$ 146,000	\$ 146,000	\$ -



# Foundation for Focal Species Benchmark Site Selection



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