

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2010 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

LCCMR ID: 145-E2

Project Title:

An Integrated, Operational Bird Conservation Plan for Minnesota

LCCMR 2010 Funding Priority:

E. Natural Resource Conservation Planning and Implementation

Total Project Budget: \$ \$151,440

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 2 years, 2010 - 2012

Other Non-State Funds: \$ \$0

Summary:

An integrated bird conservation plan will be developed that builds on existing plans, targets priority species, and provides a framework for implementing coordinated, focused, and effective bird conservation throughout Minnesota.

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Sponsoring Organization: Audubon Minnesota

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Location:

Region: Statewide

County Name: Statewide

City / Township:

_____ Knowledge Base	_____ Broad App.	_____ Innovation
_____ Leverage	_____ Outcomes	
_____ Partnerships	_____ Urgency	_____ TOTAL

MAIN PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE: An Integrated, Operational Bird Conservation Plan for Minnesota

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

There are many national, regional, and state conservation plans that broadly address Minnesota birds, but a consolidated and focused state conservation agenda does not exist. We will produce an integrated conservation plan that targets high priority species and provides a strong framework for coordinated and effective bird conservation in Minnesota. The plan will be useful for both professional and public audiences, and will be implemented through Audubon Minnesota's network of chapters and members, as well as through partnerships with appropriate agencies and conservation groups.

Why: The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's new report, *The State of the Birds*, calls attention to significant bird population declines and the need for stronger conservation efforts. Although many national and regional bird plans outline strategic conservation agendas for different groups of birds (such as colonial waterbirds and shorebirds) or for birds in different landscapes (such as the Aspen Parklands and Tallgrass Prairie), the recommendations are very broad. At the state level, the DNR's plan, *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare*, identifies 292 wildlife "species in greatest conservation need" (including 97 bird species) but also keeps strategic guidance at a general level. For example, the plan does not address priorities among the 97 bird species, gaps in scientific knowledge, priority areas to maximize conservation results, or management actions to stabilize or increase specific bird populations. Minnesota's *Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan* also establishes a very broad, yet helpful framework for conservation priorities.

Goal & Impact: The proposal's goal is to achieve a common bird conservation agenda for Minnesota NGOs, agencies, and citizens by creating one clear *operational plan that provides specific guidance for Minnesota bird conservation*. The operational plan would build upon existing efforts to: identify the highest priorities in each ecological region using select indicator species; synthesize the best proven conservation practices for each species; provide guidance on priority habitat sites where protection, restoration, and monitoring efforts are needed; establish measurable goals for species' population targets; and identify key gaps in scientific understanding. The plan will ensure that bird conservation actions are focused on common objectives and help stabilize population declines of indicator birds and other species associated with their habitats.

How: Audubon will employ an inclusive, consensus-based planning process. It will: 1) synthesize bird priorities from existing conservation plans with the involvement of agency personnel, academics, NGO staff, and citizens; 2) conduct a peer-review of draft findings and present them at workshops statewide to solicit feedback; and 3) use the plan's framework to delineate conservation actions for Audubon to implement at the state and local level by working with Audubon chapters and other resource agency and conservation partners. One implementation target will be Important Bird Areas (IBAs), sites that provide essential habitat for birds.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT RESULTS

Result 1: Prepare a draft Minnesota Bird Conservation Plan

Budget: \$ 68,805

Description: All state, regional and national plans that address bird conservation will be evaluated to identify priority species and management actions at the state level and by ecological subsection.

Deliverables	Completion Date
1. Compile and evaluate existing bird conservation efforts	October 15, 2010
2. Develop a draft bird species priority list (statewide and by subsection)	December 15, 2010
3. Compile and synthesize habitat needs and best management practices	April 30, 2011
4. Prepare a draft operational plan	July 1, 2011

PROJECT TITLE: An Integrated, Operational Bird Conservation Plan for Minnesota

Result 2: Review and finalize operational plan

Budget: \$45,357

Description: Workshops will be held at 6 locations throughout the state to solicit review comments and input on the draft plan in addition to soliciting targeted input from known agency and university professionals, conservation groups and citizen-scientists. A final plan will then be prepared.

Deliverables	Completion Date
1. Conduct 6 workshops statewide for plan review and input	October 15, 2011
2. Prepare final state operational plan	December 30, 2011
3 Disseminate final plan	January 30, 2012

Result 3: Delineate and implement bird conservation actions

Budget: \$37,278

Description: Once the operational plan is finalized implementation actions will be identified for action at the state level and the local level. Conservation work will begin with work on IBAs.

Deliverables	Completion Date
At the Statewide Level:	
1. Identify implementation actions at the statewide level	March 15, 2012
2. Conduct a gap analysis of existing IBAs to assess if they effectively address breeding and migratory habitat for the priority species identified in the plan	May 1, 2012
At the Local Level:	
1. Identify implementation actions for Audubon chapters	March 15, 2012
2. Develop three IBA management plans in different regions of the state that incorporate the plan's conservation actions	June 30, 2012

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

Lee Pfannmuller will be hired as the Project Manager responsible for overall project implementation and plan development. Mark Martell, Audubon's Director of Bird Conservation, will provide assistance by guiding the preparation of the IBA management plans in cooperation with local Audubon Chapters. Technical guidance will be provided by: the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Steve Lewis); the DNR Nongame Wildlife Program (Carrol Henderson), the Minnesota County Biological Survey (Steve Stucker), the University of Minnesota (Gerri Neimi), the Minnesota Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service (Bill Route), Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory (Jan Green), the affiliate members of Bird Conservation Minnesota, and local Audubon Chapters.

B. Timeline Requirements

Two years. The plan will be developed largely over the first 18 months, with the Project Manager working 75% time. Implementation of the plan will begin in the late stages of the plan's development and continue for an additional six months.

C. Long-Term Strategy

Development of the conservation plan will be completed with this funding request. The plan will serve as a catalyst for state and local partners, including Audubon, to implement conservation actions outlined in the plan that may initiate additional funding requests.

An Integrated, Operational Bird Conservation Plan for MN - Project Budget

IV. TOTAL PROJECT REQUEST BUDGET (2 years)

<u>BUDGET ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Personnel:	\$ -
Project Manager - research, write, organize project, 30 hrs/wk @ \$32/hr x 104 weeks + 32% fringe benefits	\$ 131,789
Audubon Director of Bird Conservation - provides technical assistance for project and develops 3 Important Bird Area plans (7% of \$72,057 annual salary and fringes x 2 years - includes 32% fringe benefits)	\$ 10,088
Communications Specialist - publication editing, graphic design (5% of \$50,160 annual salary and fringes x 1 year - includes 32% fringe benefits)	\$ 2,508
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Office Supplies (\$500/year x2)	\$ 1,000
Travel: <i>In-state travel - 6 workshops averaging 300 mi each @\$0.55/mi + other travel of 100 mi/mo x 24 months + 3 IBA planning sessions of 300 mi each @\$0.55/mi</i>	\$ 2,805
Additional Budget Items: Photocopying/Printing + Mailing (\$3000) + publications access fees (\$250)	\$ 3,250
	\$ 151,440

V. OTHER FUNDS

<u>SOURCE OF FUNDS</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>Status</u>
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: Indirect Support (15% of expenditures) to National Audubon	\$ 21,488	<i>Pending</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period:	\$ -	
In-kind Services During Project Period: (400 volunteers hrs x 17.50/hr) + \$13,000/yr x 2 years indirect office-related costs (rent, phone, insurance, cleaning, etc.)	\$ 33,000	Pending
Remaining \$ from Current Trust Fund Appropriation (if applicable):		
Funding History: None.	\$ -	

Project Title: “An Integrated, Operational Bird Conservation Plan for Minnesota”

Project Manager Qualifications and Organization Description Attachment

Project Manager Qualifications:

Lee Pfannmuller was Director of the Department’s Division of Ecological Resources from 1992 through 2007. Prior to this she worked for the DNR’s Nongame Wildlife Program, the Natural Heritage Program and the Scientific and Natural Areas Program. Ms. Pfannmuller has extensive technical expertise in the fields of forest bird management, endangered species policy and biodiversity conservation. She also has extensive administrative experience including personnel management, budget management, policy development and strategic and operational planning. During her career she has managed numerous new and complex conservation initiatives. Her experience relevant to this proposal includes:

- Managing Minnesota’s Forest Bird Diversity Initiative, a 12 year research effort designed to protect Minnesota’s forest songbird populations
- Directing the production of two publications on forest bird management
- Managing the development of Minnesota’s Statewide Wildlife Action Plan, a comprehensive assessment of Minnesota’s species of greatest conservation need
- Establishing Minnesota’s first official list of endangered species
- Developing the animal survey component of the Minnesota County Biological Survey
- Conducting numerous breeding bird surveys including two federal Breeding Bird Survey routes for over 30 years
- Conducting an extensive study of forest bird communities in northeastern Minnesota

Education:

B.A. 1973 Biology, Summa cum laude, Hope College, Holland, Michigan
M.S. 1979 Ecology and Behavioral Biology, University of Minnesota
1988-1989 Completed graduate courses in Management and Organizational Leadership, College of St. Catherine

Audubon Minnesota: Organizational Description

Audubon Minnesota is the state office of the National Audubon Society. Established in 1979, we share Audubon’s 104-year heritage of working to protect our environment. While we are part of the national organization, we establish our own statewide programs and pursue our own funding for Minnesota efforts. The Audubon Minnesota mission is to conserve and restore Minnesota’s natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth’s biological diversity. Today there are nearly 17,000 Audubon members in Minnesota, organized into 14 geographically-based chapters from Agassiz Audubon Chapter in Thief River Falls to the Coulee Region Audubon Chapter in La Crescent.

