

DRAFT

Avian Conservation Implementation Plan Andrew Johnson National Historic Site

National Park Service
Southeast Region



Compiled by J. Keith Watson
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
In cooperation with

ANJO Resource Management Staff, National Park Service
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Introduction

This Avian Conservation Implementation Plan (ACIP) is provided to the staff at Andrew Johnson National Historic Site (ANJO) to serve as guidance to identify, document, and undertake bird conservation activities in the park and with neighboring communities, organizations, and adjacent landowners. This plan may identify goals, strategies, partnerships, and perhaps specific projects allowing the park to participate in existing bird conservation planning and implementation efforts associated with the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). Under the auspice of NABCI, appropriate bird and habitat conservation goals may be recommended as identified in the appropriate existing national or regional bird conservation efforts aligned with this initiative: Partners In Flight (PIF), North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), US Shorebird Conservation Plan (USSCP), and Waterbird Conservation for the Americas (WCA). For example, parks in the Southern Ridge and Valley, including ANJO, will have few if any high priority waterbird conservation issues at a regional landscape or greater scale. As such, little information regarding waterbird conservation will be presented in the ACIP, unless there is an identified park need for this species group, or other mandates, such as federal laws. Similarly, because most of the parks in the Southern Ridge and Valley are located in and are primarily upland forested landscapes, recommendations will be provided in the ACIP for landbird and habitat conservation and will be derived from the appropriate PIF bird conservation plans, PIF being largely a landbird conservation initiative. However, all high priority bird conservation issues for ANJO will be discussed and integrated as appropriate.

Information and data presented in the ACIP have been obtained from several sources: 1) interviews with ANJO staff and 2) the PIF Southern Ridge and Valley Bird Conservation Plan, Version 1.0 (Hill et al., 2000). This plan has been reviewed by ANJO resource management staff and managers, Cumberland/Piedmont Inventory and Monitoring Network (CUPN I&M) staff, and bird conservation partners and approved by ANJO management. Optimally, this plan will be incorporated into the park's Resource Management Plan (RMP) and updated annually to reflect completed projects, newly identified needs, and shifts in bird conservation priorities in the region.

ANJO is not obligated to undertake any of the proposed actions in this plan. The plan is provided to offer guidance to ANJO to voluntarily support important park, regional, and perhaps national and international bird conservation projects for which ANJO is a primary participant in the proposed actions.

Background

During the past thirty years, monitoring programs across North America have documented declines of certain bird species populations and their habitats, often severe (Sauer et al. 2000). The decline has caused great concern among scientists, biologists, biodiversity proponents, ecologists, land managers, etc., and the bird conservation community in general. Birds are recognized as critical components of local and global genetic, species, and population diversity, providing important and often critical ecological, social, and cultural values. Their overall decline has stimulated a worldwide focus on conservation efforts, and North American

interest in bird conservation is rapidly becoming a focus of government, non-government, industry, and private interests and expenditures.

Many state, federal, and non-governmental wildlife agencies and organizations (NGO's) have recognized this alarming bird decline trend and have joined forces in several extensive partnerships to address the conservation needs of various bird groups and their habitats. The primary initiatives are:

- North American Waterfowl Management Plan
- Partners in Flight
- U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan
- Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

While efforts associated with these plans have generated some successes, it has been increasingly recognized that the overlapping conservation interests of these initiatives can be better served through more integrated planning and delivery of bird conservation. The *North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI; <http://www.nabci-us.org/main2.html>)* arose out of this realization. The vision of NABCI is simply to see ***“populations and habitats of North America’s birds protected, restored and enhanced through coordinated efforts at international, national, regional, state and local levels, guided by sound science and effective management.”*** NABCI seeks to accomplish this vision through (1) broadening bird conservation partnerships, (2) working to increase the financial resources available for bird conservation in the U.S., and (3) enhancing the effectiveness of those resources and partnerships by facilitating integrated bird conservation (U.S. NABCI Committee 2000). The four bird conservation initiatives mentioned above, as well as several other local and regional partnerships, work collectively to pursue this vision.

NABCI is guided by a set of principles that establish an operational framework within which the Initiative and its partners may conduct integrated bird conservation in the U.S. These will articulate a common understanding of the relationship among NABCI, the individual bird conservation initiatives, and all partner entities to ensure recognition of existing federal legislative and international treaty obligations, state authorities, and respect for the identity and autonomy of each initiative. The fundamental components of the conservation approach to be used by NABCI are expressed within its goal:

To deliver the full spectrum of bird conservation through regionally-based, biologically-driven, landscape-oriented partnerships.

The Southeastern Bird Conservation Initiative: National Park Service: In 1999, the Southeast Region of the National Park Service (NPS) recognized the importance of coordinating existing bird conservation goals into planning and operations of national park units in the southeast, that is, integration of NABCI. In support of this recognition, the Southeast Regional Office NPS approved and allocated eighty-eight thousand dollars, cost sharing 1:1 with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Region 4 (Southeast) to hire a biologist to conduct this two-year project (Interagency Agreement FS028 01 0368). This project is unique in the

NPS, and perhaps the nation, and represents a potential model for better coordinating regional bird conservation programs and activities within and outside the NPS. It further represents a progressive action toward institutionalizing bird conservation as a programmatic priority in the Southeast Region of NPS and potentially the nation. As envisioned, the integration of NABCI into the Southeastern NPS involves:

- 1) Development and delivery of Avian Conservation Implementation Plans (ACIP),
- 2) Coordination with NPS Inventory and Monitoring Program,
- 3) Development of a web-based project site,
- 4) Establishment or enhancement of bird conservation partnerships,
- 5) Identification and exploration of potential funding opportunities, and
- 6) Technical guidance and assistance as needed or requested

This ACIP fulfills one aspect of the plan outlined above and serves as a basis for future bird conservation actions in ANJO and with adjacent partners or landowners.

Concurrently, the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the FWS and the NPS to implement Presidential Executive Order (EO) 13186, **Responsibilities of Federal Agencies To Protect Migratory Birds**, calls for integration of programs and recommendations of existing bird conservation efforts into park planning and operations. Complementing each other, the MOU and the Southeastern Bird Conservation Initiative will advance bird conservation in the Southeast Region of the NPS beyond current regional NPS efforts.

Role of NPS in Avian Conservation

The interagency agreement that facilitates this partnership supports both FWS and NPS management policies. Specifically for the NPS, the agreement supports and advances the **Strategy for Collaboration** (March 2000), a visionary document developed and signed by the Southeast Natural Resource Leaders Advisory Group (SENRLAG), a consortium of 13 land and resource management agencies in the Southeastern United States whose vision is to encourage and support cooperation in planning and managing the region's natural resources. Furthermore, the agreement is aligned with and implements a variety of NPS Management Policies (2001) including but not limited to External Threats and Opportunities (Chapter 1.5), Environmental Leadership (Chapter 1.6), Cooperative Planning (Chapter 2.3.1.9), Land Protection (Chapter 3), and especially Natural Resource Management (Chapter 4) that details policy and management guidelines which apply to bird conservation. Important policies in this chapter include:

- Planning for Natural Resource Management (4.1.1)
- Partnerships (4.1.4)
- Restoration of Natural Systems (4.1.5)
- Studies and Collection (4.2)
- General Principles for Managing Biological Resources (4.4.1)
- Plant and Animal Population Management Principles (4.4.1.1)

- Management of Native Plants and Animals (4.4.2)
- Management of Endangered Plants and Animals (4.4.2.3)
- Management of Natural Landscapes (4.4.2.4)
- Management of Exotic Species (4.4.4)
- Pest Management (4.4.5)
- Fire Management (4.5) and
- Water Resource Management (4.6)

The NPS is the fourth largest landowner in the United States, consisting of over 380 national park units covering 83 million acres of land and water with associated biotic resources (www.nps.gov). The 64 units in the Southeast Region of the NPS represent 16% of the total number of park units in the national park system and cover approximately 5% of the total land base in the entire system. Park units in the Southeast Region include national seashores (Canaveral National Seashore, Cape Hatteras National Seashore), national parks (Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Everglades National Park), national recreation areas (Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area), national preserves (Big Cypress National Preserve), national battlefields (Cowpens National Battlefield, Fort Donelson National Battlefield), national monuments (Congaree Swamp National Monument, Ocmulgee National Monument), and others such as the Blue Ridge Parkway, Obed Wild and Scenic River, and Timicuan Ecological and Historic Preserve.

Southeast NPS units provide habitat for over 400 species of migrating, breeding, and wintering birds and include a wide range of Federal and State listed threatened and endangered species. Likewise, these units also provide nest, migration, and winter habitat for most of the eastern species identified in the national bird conservation plans in need of conservation attention.

Additionally, the NPS attracts over 280 million visitors to the parks each year, 120 million of these in the Southeast Region, affording excellent recreational bird watching and opportunities to strengthen bird conservation interpretation, outreach, and education programs. These opportunities, the NPS mission, policies, and organization all lead to the conclusion that the NPS is an extremely valuable partner and contributor to bird conservation in the region.

Nationally, the status of birds in national parks is largely unknown, although many parks have adequate knowledge regarding bird occurrence in the parks (<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/othrdata/chekbird/chekbird.htm>). Parks often play a role in ongoing regional bird conservation efforts. Indeed many of these parks are often important to regional, national, or international bird conservation, and many have been designated as Important Bird Areas (IBA's) by the National Audubon Society. To date, there are approximately 64 NPS units that are designated IBA's, 35 of which are considered of global importance (<http://abcbirds.org/iba/aboutiba.htm>). In the Southeast Region, the NPS has 13 IBA's.

The **NPS Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Program** has been developed to provide management driven scientific information to national park managers so that resources can be

adequately protected within national parks. One of the first phases of this program is to inventory vertebrates, including birds, within the 260 national park units in the program. Once completed, data from the inventories will provide an account of the occurrence and abundance of birds in all the national parks in the program. These records will be stored in the NPS I&M NPSpecies database (<http://www.nature.nps.gov/im/apps/npspp/>). Coordination with I&M network staff is important to developing long-term bird monitoring programs that fulfill both park and NABCI objectives.

Park Flight is a NPS international partnership initiative that directs funding toward a variety of NPS programs that involve conservation of neotropical migratory birds whose life history range covers a US national park and a Latin American protected area. A relatively new program, Park Flight offers parks the opportunity to partner with a Latin American national park or protected area to cooperate on developing bird conservation and education projects (NPS 2002).

Recent increases in NPS base funded programs such as inventory and monitoring, exotic species management, habitat restoration, and fire management all indicate that national park managers recognize that park lands are increasingly subject to a variety of threats and conditions that must be improved to provide the quality of national park experience articulated in the NPS Organic Act (1916). Programmatic funding in these areas will increase the ability of national parks to provide quality habitat and conditions for increased wildlife conservation, including birds. Furthermore, private interests and non-profit conservation organizations have initiated programs, including grant programs, to provide much needed funding to national parks to meet backlogs of identified yet unfunded needs.

Park Description

Andrew Johnson National Historic Site honors the life and work of the nation's 17th President and preserves his two homes, tailor shop, and grave site on 7ha in Greeneville, Tennessee. Andrew Johnson's life exemplifies many struggles faced by Americans today. He worked his way from tailor to President. He stood strong for his ideals and beliefs. His presidency, from 1865 - 1869, illustrates the United States Constitution at work following Lincoln's assassination and during attempts to reunify a nation that had been torn by civil war. His work helped shape the future of the United States and his influences continue today. The park is entirely urban and no opportunities exist to implement landscape scale bird conservation projects, but local projects can be undertaken that will enhance the natural value to the park and its visitors.

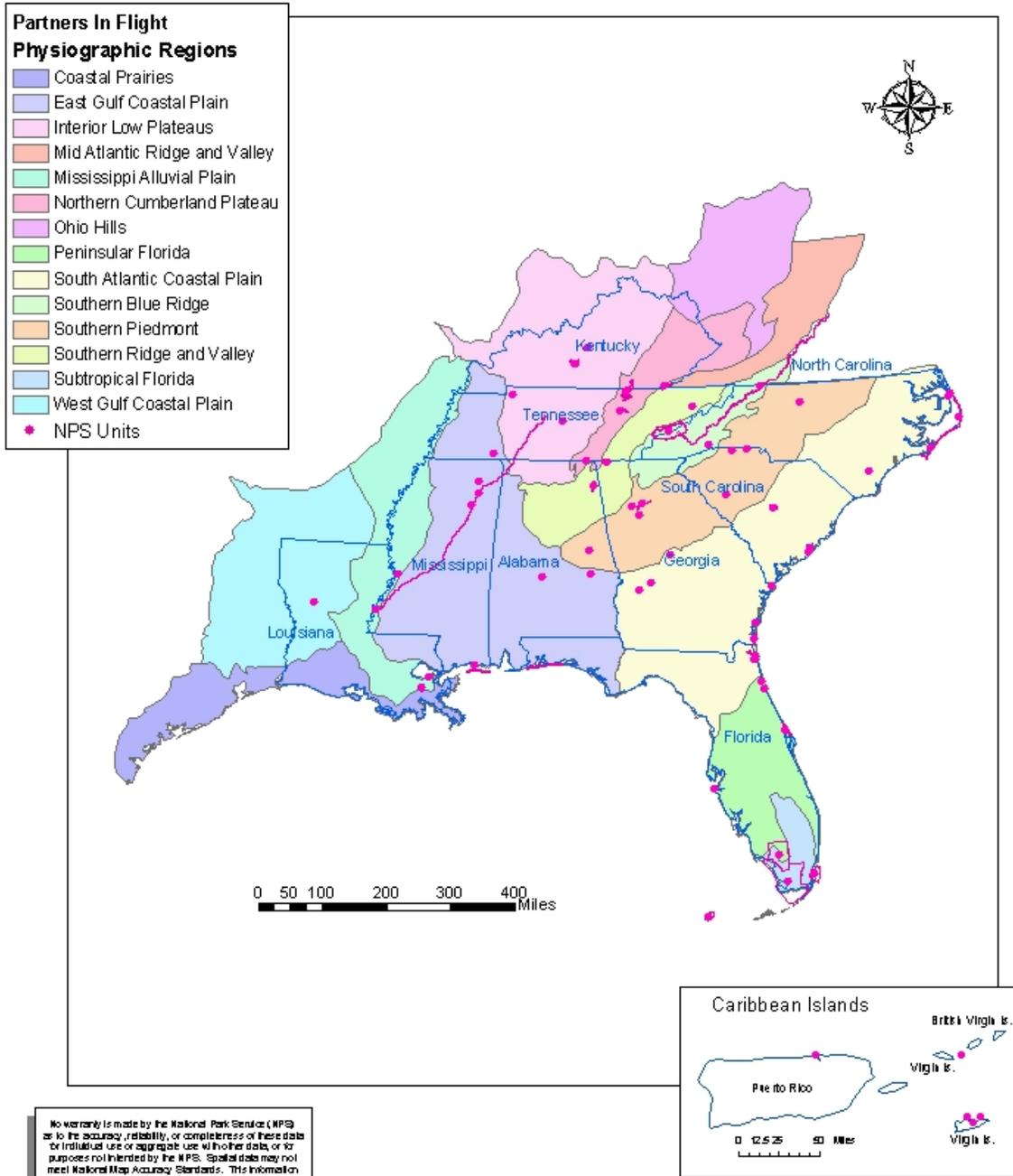
Avian Resources of Southern Ridge and Valley

The Southern Cumberland Plateau/Ridge and Valley area, as defined by Partners in Flight, covers nearly 6,000,000 ha across portions of Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama (see PIF and NPS Location maps below). Important bird habitats include mixed mesophytic forest, upland hardwood forest (Appalachian oak, oak-hickory forests, oak-pine-tulip poplar forests), riparian habitats, southern pine forests, including longleaf pine and loblolly-shortleaf stands, early successional habitats such as barrens and glades, and urban/suburban/agricultural

Partners in Flight (PIF) Regions

Southeast Region (SER)

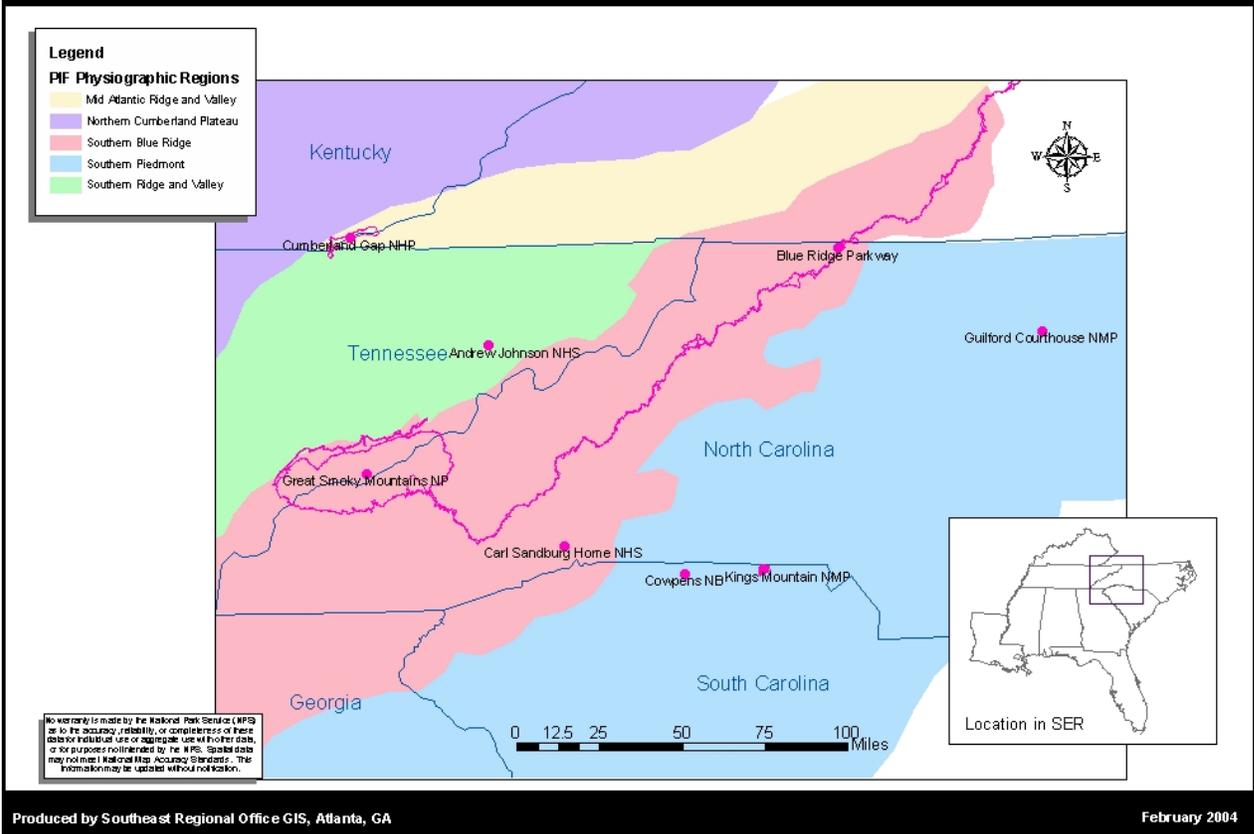
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Partners in Flight (PIF) Regions and NPS Locations

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Southeast Region (SER)



areas. Birds have been systematically scored by the Partners in Flight prioritization process, and grouped by the above broad habitat types for setting habitat objectives. In the Southern Cumberland Plateau/Ridge and Valley physiographic area, the primary bird conservation goals are to stabilize and increase populations of high priority bird species. In order to reach these goals, habitat objectives proposed in this plan include the following items:

1. sustain at least 8 upland hardwood forest patches greater than 40,000 ha each,
2. increase the number of upland hardwood forest patches between 4,000 and 40,000 ha from 91 to over 100 patches,
3. manage greater than 80% of the mixed mesophytic hardwood acreage within these patches for long rotation and/or old growth,
4. actively manage 100% of longleaf pine forests to maintain quality longleaf pine conditions and increase the acreage as possible, and
5. maintain current percentage of short rotation pine across the landscape.

Over 150 bird species nest in the Southern Cumberland Plateau/Ridge and Valley physiographic area. The most widely distributed species include Indigo Bunting, Mourning Dove, and Northern Cardinal. Fairly common birds also experiencing consistent population declines include Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Loggerhead Shrike, Black-and-white Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Wood Thrush, and Acadian Flycatcher. Cerulean Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, and Red-cockaded Woodpecker are among the most rapidly declining and vulnerable species in the physiographic area. Bewick's Wren has been extirpated recently from the area. These species represent a diversity of habitats.

The vast majority of bird conservation recommendations in the Southern Ridge and Valley bird conservation plan can be integrated into existing NPS programs, including habitat restoration, fire management, exotic species management, and interpretation and education programs (see Integration of NABCI Goals and Strategies into Park Planning and Operations later in this ACIP).

Avian Conservation in ANJO

Avian Biodiversity: ANJO does not have any information related to avian resources of the park as it's mission and focus is culturally oriented. Within the 7 ha the park has several green spaces where birds occur, primarily within the Andrew Johnson National Cemetery. These species likely to occur here are those that are representative of the area's urban avifauna, i.e. American Robin, Blue Jay, European Starling, Rock Dove, etc.

Park Priorities: Park staff has not identified any avian conservation priorities for the park. No Federally listed threatened or endangered species occur in ANJO. No educational and outreach programs related to birds are undertaken in the park.

Park Identified Needs for Avian Conservation

ANJO has not identified any projects that would increase avian knowledge of the park.

Coordination with Regional Conservation Initiatives

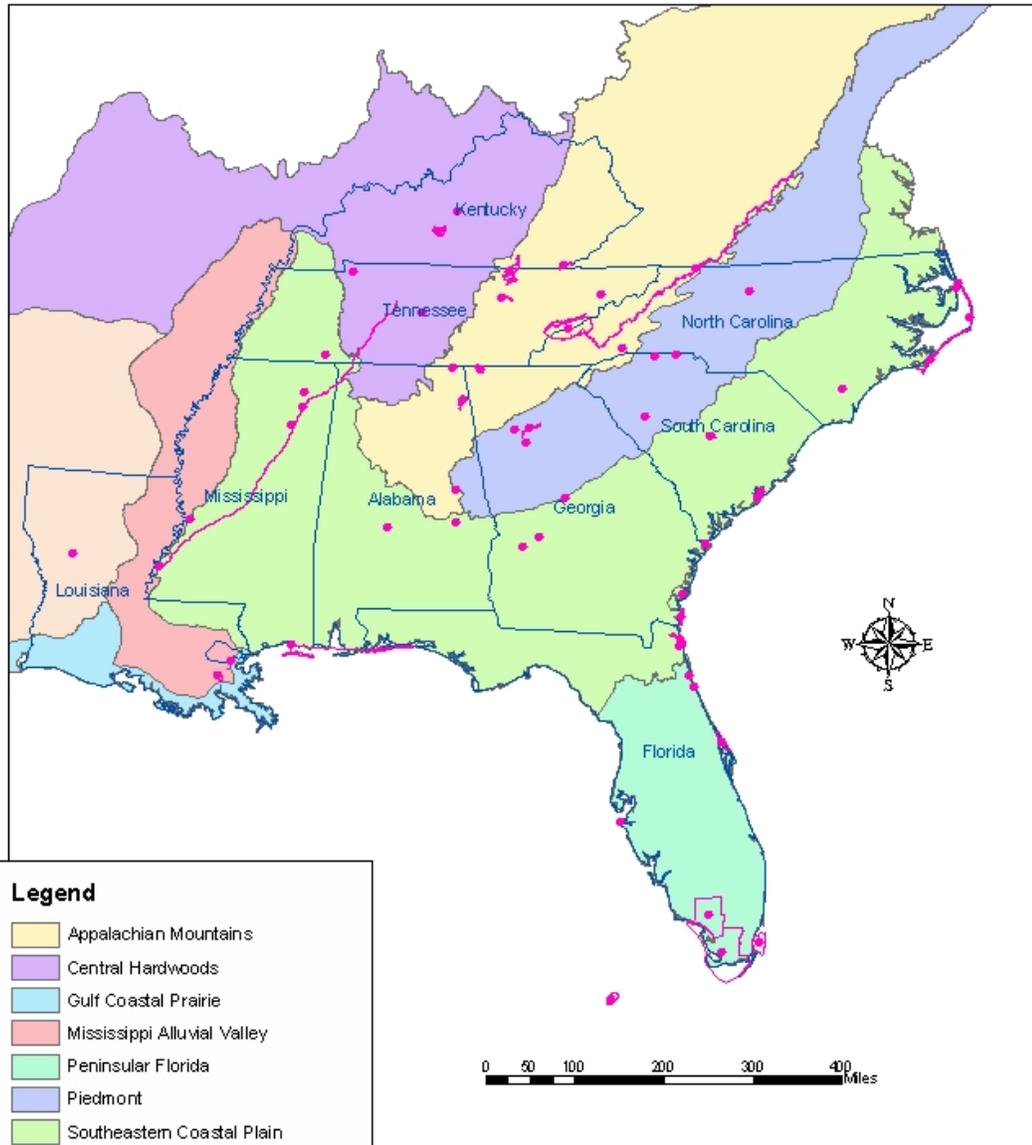
North American Bird Conservation Initiative

NABCI bird conservation planning units, referred to as Bird Conservation Regions (BCR), are often larger than other planning units associated with other plans, such as Partners In Flight. For example, ANJO is within the NABCI Appalachian BCR, which extends from New York to Georgia (see BCR Map below) and encompasses several PIF physiographic areas (the planning unit for PIF)(compare to PIF map).

Bird Conservation Regions

Southeast Region (SER)

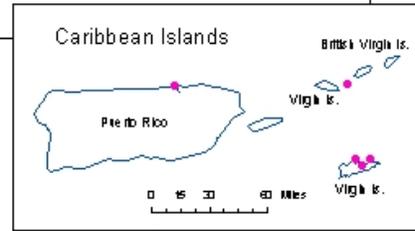
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Legend

- Appalachian Mountains
- Central Hardwoods
- Gulf Coastal Prairie
- Mississippi Alluvial Valley
- Peninsular Florida
- Piedmont
- Southeastern Coastal Plain
- West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas
- NPS Units

No warranty is made by the National Park Service (NPS) as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use without data, or for purposes not intended by the NPS. Spatial data may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information may be updated without notification.



Several NABCI BCR's have coordinators whose primary responsibility is to coordinate all bird conservation planning in the BCR, across all agencies and organizations. Currently, the Appalachian BCR does not have a designated coordinator; however, a bird conservation coordinator for the southern Appalachians that includes several PIF physiographic areas (Southern Blue Ridge, Southern Ridge and Valley, Southern Ridge and Valley) has been established (see contacts below) and can provide valuable assistance to ANJO with implementation of aspects of this ACIP. Active bird conservation planning is underway in the adjacent Central Hardwoods BCR (see contacts below) and communications with this coordinator will be important to fully assess the park's role in regional and landscape scale bird conservation.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP)

The NAWMP (<http://northamerican.fws.gov/NAWMP/nawmphp.htm>) is completed and has been revised several times, incorporating updated goals and strategies based on new information. This plan is one of the most successful bird conservation delivery programs in the United States, being monetarily supported by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA).

Partners In Flight

Goals and strategies for the Southern Ridge and Valley can be found in the draft bird conservation plan, previously submitted to the park. A revised version of this plan should be available in the near future and may be substantially different from the current format; however, bird and habitat conservation priorities are not likely to be significantly changed. The park will receive updates of the plan as they are completed. The current plan identifies priority bird and habitat conservation goals that must be implemented in order to achieve bird conservation success in this region. ANJO being largely a landbird park will utilize this plan more than any other plan to participate in NABCI implementation.

Similar to NABCI BCR's, PIF physiographic areas often do not have designated coordinators. However, state level non-game agencies with investment in PIF will establish key personnel to develop partnerships among cooperators in the physiographic area. The State of Tennessee and the Commonwealth of Kentucky each have a PIF coordinator and can be instrumental in assisting ANJO to implement recommendations identified in this ACIP and projects important to bird conservation relative to Tennessee and Kentucky's role in implementation of the Southern Ridge and Valley PIF plan.

United States Shorebird Conservation Plan (USSCP)

The USSCP has been completed and is available on the world wide web (<http://shorebirdplan.fws.gov/>). A regional step down plan is in preparation by FWS personnel and should be available in 2003. Since ANJO has little habitat of regional importance to shorebird conservation, recommendations for shorebird conservation are not presented.

Waterbird Conservation for the Americas (WCA)

The WCA plan has been completed and is available on the World Wide Web or can be ordered from the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Conservation Training Center (<http://www.waterbirdconservation.org/>). Few waterbird conservation priorities exist on the Southern Ridge and Valley and none are presented here for ANJO.

Integration of NABCI Goals and Objectives into Park Planning and Operations

NABCI Implementation Recommendations

To successfully achieve park established goals and actively participate in NABCI, the park could implement a variety of projects in different NPS programs. Most of these projects would require some level of participation by many existing park programs and could either be achieved through NPS funding, or more likely, through establishing or improving partnerships with agencies and organizations that already have the necessary expertise to provide guidance, funding, and execution of these programs. Programmatic areas where bird conservation actions are likely to be focused are:

- Inventory
- Monitoring
- Habitat Restoration
- Threat Management (includes exotic species, air quality, water quality, etc.)
- Research
- Compliance
- Outreach
- Partnerships

To the extent appropriate, each of these program areas will be discussed separately and within each, specific opportunities identified that, when implemented, will enable to park to meet its mandates (current and expected), as well as integrate NABCI into its planning and operations.

With emphasis added; the park is not expected to implement any of these recommendations or be obligated to pursue any opportunity other than those the park is required to do by law or NPS program or policy. In other words, participation in this effort is currently voluntary. However, participation in these efforts at some level could become mandatory with the completion of an MOU with the FWS regarding EO 13186, **Responsibilities of Federal Agencies To Protect Migratory Birds**. The MOU will establish a formal agreement between the FWS and the NPS to promote bird conservation within the agency by incorporating goals and strategies of existing bird conservation initiatives, plans, and goals into park planning and operations.

Should the park decide to implement any of these projects, further consultation with bird conservation contacts is encouraged to obtain updated information on the relevance of these opportunities in regional bird conservation.

Inventory

Although ANJO has very limited habitat for birds, a local checklist could help visitors appreciate the context which ANJO was originally established (see Outreach below). ANJO is encouraged to:

- **Contact local members of the Tennessee Ornithological Society to begin development of a bird checklist**

Compliance

Park compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Executive Order 13186, **Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds**, is necessary to assure that park activities incorporate bird conservation into park planning and operations. Further, to ensure that migratory birds are considered in all phases of park planning processes, especially during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Director's Order #12 Compliance processes, the park should consider adding specific language in project evaluations that requires consideration and implications of park projects on migratory birds. The MOU being developed between the NPS and the FWS will likely contain specific language requiring a park to consider implications of park projects on migratory birds.

Outreach

ANJO attracts between 40-65 thousand visitors each year. The opportunity exists to reach these visitors and educate them about the National Park Service's participation in bird conservation efforts. ANJO is encouraged to:

- provide a brochure on bird conservation to the public at the visitor center
- support bird conservation by serving shade-grown coffees at meetings, events, and the office buildings in the park (<http://www.americanbirding.org/programs/conssbcof3.htm>)
- explore cultural affiliation of landscape to inhabitants, both historical and contemporary. Cultures are strongly tied to the landscape they inhabit and birds often play a role in a cultural tie to the landscape. When these connections are discovered and preserved, a greater appreciation for the landscape and its value to the culture can be achieved

Partners and Partnerships

Partnerships for land conservation and protection will perhaps have the greatest positive influence on bird conservation above all other landscape scale planning. Specific recommendations are to:

- contact and partner with the local chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society in Knoxville, Tennessee to develop a checklist for the park (<http://www.tnbirds.org/KTOS.html>)

Contacts

Primary contacts within the region can be obtained by viewing the web site for the Southeastern Bird Conservation Initiative, National Park Service at <http://southeast.fws.gov/birds/npsbirds.htm>. This web site will provide contact information of the appropriate bird conservation coordinator in the region for park personnel. Park staff is encouraged to view the web site and obtain contact information. Primary contacts for ANJO are:

Bird Conservation

Mr. Keith Watson
US Fish and Wildlife Service
160 Zillicoa Street, Suite D
Asheville, NC 28801
828-350-8228
Keith.Watson@fws.gov

Mike Roedel
Tennessee State Ornithologist
615-781-6653
michael.roedel@state.tn.us

Mr. Dean Demarest
US Fish and Wildlife Service
1875 Century Blvd.
Atlanta, GA
404-679-7371
dean_demarest@fws.gov

Mr. David Trently
President, Knoxville Chapter
Tennessee Ornithological Society
(865) 531-1473
dtrently@utk.edu

**Cumberland/Piedmont
Inventory & Monitoring Network**
Appalachian Highlands Network
Coordinator
Teresa Leibfreid
National Park Service
270-749-2508
Teresa_Leibfreid@nps.gov

Exotic Plant Management
Mr. Chris Furqueron
National Park Service
Exotic Plant Management Coordinator 404-
562-3113 ext. 540
Chris_Furqueron@nps.gov

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