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Data Sources and Methods for the Habitat Secured for Waterfowl Indicator

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1 Introduction

The Habitat Secured for Waterfowl indicator is a part of the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators (CESI) program (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=En&n=47F48106-1>), which provides data and information to track Canada's performance on key environmental sustainability issues.

2 Description and rationale of the Habitat Secured for Waterfowl indicator

2.1 Description

CESI reports the amount of Canadian wetland and associated upland habitat that has been secured through the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) (http://www.nawmp.ca/eng/pub_e.html) for the benefit of waterfowl.

The indicator is the sum of the waterfowl habitat area (in hectares) secured by the four Canadian habitat joint ventures: Pacific Coast (Canada portion only); Canadian Intermountain; Eastern Habitat; and Prairie Habitat, including the Western Boreal Forest region for the period 1990 to 2011.

The NAWMP is a tri-national (Canada, United States of America and Mexico) partnership composed of federal, state, provincial and municipal governments; non-governmental organizations; industry; and private individuals. NAWMP habitat securement activities are planned and delivered by habitat joint ventures, which involve partners from different organizations. In addition to securement, the partners enhance and restore habitat to increase, manage and maintain its carrying capacity for wetland-associated migratory birds and other wildlife.

2.2 Rationale

The Habitat Secured for Waterfowl indicator provides a view of progress in protecting habitat that supports a particular group of species where development pressures are significant. The indicator is also useful as a measure of Canada's efforts to protect migratory birds. While the NAWMP focuses on the links between loss of wetland habitat and waterfowl declines, it also recognizes the other benefits of maintaining these valuable and productive ecosystems. Wetland preservation helps maintain wildfowling traditions, biodiversity and ecosystem processes.

2.3 Changes since last report

Data for previous years have been adjusted due to a review and update of the NAWMP tracking system.

For the years 2002 to 2011, secured hectares within the Western Boreal Forest (WBF) region administered by the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture have been included. The total area of habitat secured in the WBF is 4 548 251 hectares or about 57% of total secured areas as of 2011. In past years the waterfowl indicator has not included the WBF due to a review of the WBF program. While the review is still ongoing the WBF has been included in this year's indicator to provide a more complete overview of securement by the NAWMP in Canada.

3 Data

3.1 Data source

Environment Canada's Wetlands Office uses the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) National Tracking System to track hectares secured through the NAWMP partnership. The tracking system is updated by partners each quarter and figures are published annually in Canadian Habitat Matters (<http://www.nawmp.ca/>).

3.2 Spatial coverage

The indicator has national coverage. The Pacific Coast Joint Venture is international in scope; however, only the hectares secured in Canada are reported by the indicator.

3.3 Temporal coverage

Data are collected on a quarterly basis and published annually.

3.4 Data completeness

The indicator provides a cumulative total of securement accomplishments for the four Canadian habitat joint ventures: Pacific Coast (Canada portion only); Canadian Intermountain; Eastern Habitat; and Prairie Habitat, including the Western Boreal Forest Region for the period 1990 to 2011.

3.5 Data timeliness

The indicator is current to December 2011.

4 Methods

The indicator is the sum of the waterfowl habitat area (in hectares) secured by the four Canadian habitat joint ventures: Pacific Coast (Canada portion only); Canadian Intermountain; Eastern Habitat; and Prairie Habitat, including the Western Boreal Forest region.

Under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), secured wetland and upland habitat is protected, either through land acquisition or through long-term (at least 10 years) legally binding agreements with landowners. Examples of securement include land purchases, donations, easements and transfers of title from the Crown to management agencies.

For each year, the cumulative habitat secured is calculated by adding newly secured hectares and subtracting expired agreements from continuing securements.

5 Caveats and limitations

- Partners are responsible for reporting the number of hectares secured through their projects to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) National Tracking System. To improve the accuracy of reporting, a review and update of the tracking system by Environment Canada's Wetlands Office has been underway since the last reporting period of this indicator. As a result, annual cumulative habitat secured differs from that previously reported as adjustments have been made to annual securement totals for each joint venture from 1990 to 2011.
- The Pacific Coast Joint Venture is international in scope, but only the hectares secured in Canada are reported here.
- Though habitat securement, enhancement and management are carried out with the goal of waterfowl population recovery and/or sustainability, these indicators do not specifically track waterfowl populations. For further information on waterfowl populations in Canada, see Environment Canada (2011) (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/Publications/default.asp?lang=En&xml=D391EA88-53B4-4C8F-B0E1-DB0DEBB6534D>).
- Though habitat secured through joint venture activities is based on conservation importance or "priority", this indicator is simply a measure of the quantity of habitat secured with no specific reference to its state (e.g. pristine, requiring restoration). Within the habitat secured, some areas may require specific management activities for improvement or enhancement.

6 References and further reading

6.1 References

Environment Canada (2011) Population Status of Migratory Game Birds in Canada. Retrieved on 27 June, 2012. Available from:

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United States Fish and Wildlife Service (2012) North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Retrieved on 26 June, 2012. Available from: <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/index.shtm>.

6.2 Further reading

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