



To: Interior Department Transition Team

Within a few weeks of the Obama Administration, there will be a number of issues regarding migratory bird conservation that will need attention. Attached are one page briefing statements on these issues and below is a quick summary of the actions that should be considered:

Bald and Golden Eagle Management Program/Permit:

The Fish and Wildlife Service is in the final stages of a process that would establish a much-needed management program for the conservation of bald and golden eagles that includes establishing a process by which the “take” of eagles would be managed. Without these regulations the only permitted take of bald eagles would be through previously issued permits under the Endangered Species Act. The new regulations would authorize “take,” as defined by the Act (includes “harass and disturb”), only if it is clear that the take will not undermine the health and stability of eagle populations. The final rule may be published in January, but if it is delayed by the current Administration, **it is critical that the final rule be published as soon as possible**. In the absence of this program, there is a real possibility that elements of an economic stimulus package would be delayed unnecessarily, because of the lack of a permitting process that allows for private and public interests to be authorized consistent with the preservation of eagles.

State of the Birds Report:

On March 11, 2009, the public launch/announcement of the first ever, comprehensive *State of the U.S. Birds Report* will occur through a planned “newsmaker lunch”. The event is planned to include the Secretary of Interior with the chief executive officers of The Nature Conservancy, The National Audubon Society, American Bird Conservancy and others. The Report is the first partnership-based attempt to capture the status of U.S. bird populations in a single, concise document intended for policy makers and the American public. Goals of the report are to demonstrate and provide data-driven support for the ideas that the health of bird populations is linked to human quality of life and that bird populations are bellwethers of landscape-level changes in the nation’s natural resources.

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP):

ACAP is an international, multilateral agreement (i.e. treaty) that seeks to conserve albatrosses and petrels (some of the most imperiled bird species on the globe) by coordination international efforts to mitigate know threats to these populations. U.S. ratification of ACAP and implementing legislation will enable U.S. to proactively work to ensure self-sustaining populations. A treaty transmittal package has been forwarded by the White House to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in September and will be considered in the next Congress. In addition, **a multi-departmental effort is being finalized to draft and submit legislation that would provide the necessary domestic authorities. This legislation will need to be reintroduced in the new Congress.**

