



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



An approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing

3 July 2013

The Economic Impacts of American Conservation A Broad Reach

Earlier this year, a study was released that provides a revealing look at this country's stake in natural resource conservation. The study, "The Conservation Economy in America," was commissioned by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and conducted by Southwick Associates. It took a serious look at the economic impacts of direct investments into U.S. conservation.



For the purpose of the study, "natural resource conservation" was viewed as "the steps intended to support the protection or management of native fish and wildlife species and/or land and water acquisitions to protect their habitats." Both public and private conservation investments were accounted for in the study. The sources of investments were measured, with federal accounting for 60 percent, state 24 percent, local 5 percent, and private 11 percent. This added up to over \$38.8 billion per year.

These monies, once spent, circulated through the economy and produced an impressive \$93.2 billion of total economic activity.

One simple suggestion in the report was that "if conservation investments in the U.S. were no longer made and these dollars were not invested elsewhere, U.S. economic activity would fall by \$93 billion."

Actually, the figures were conservative, as the authors of the report readily admitted. That's because not included in the study were such important activities as outdoor recreation, environmental education, eco- or avi-tourism, historic preservation, pollution control and abatement, municipal parks and recreation programs, timber marketing, and scientific research.

From that point of reference, this study represents at least a *start* in measurement, and you can access the full report [here](#).

The implications are enormous, especially in light of the current tug of war between

competing political forces which are resulting in starving natural resource and conservation funding.

This Year's Migratory Bird Stamp Released

It's not "Just Ducks"



Last week, the 2013-2014 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (often called the Duck Stamp, and increasingly called the Migratory Bird Stamp) was officially released. This year's stamp shows a Common Goldeneye painted by Robert Steiner. The stamp, of course, was originally created in the 1930s as a federal license for hunting migratory waterfowl, but "Ducks Stamps" have a broader purpose.

The stamps are crucial for National Wildlife Refuge System growth, as 98 cents out of every dollar generated by the sale of the stamps goes to help secure wetland and grassland habitat for the Refuge System. To date, more than \$850 million has been used to purchase or lease over 5.5 million acres of Refuge System habitat in the lower-48. (Stamp proceeds go into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund - MBCF - to be spent on fee purchase, easement, or leasing of Refuge System lands.)

But waterfowl are certainly not the only wildlife to benefit from the sale of these stamps. Other birds, mammal, fish, and herps have benefited too! And people have also reaped the rewards.

Of course, there are different ways to appeal to the public - hunting and non-hunting - to appreciate and buy the \$15-stamp. Recently, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology has made an appeal for bird enthusiasts to support the stamp effort. You can find an example of the Lab's creative effort [here](#).

At the same time, more traditional appeals to outdoorsmen are being made. These still stress broad conservation concerns to preserve the resources and connect to other crucial conservation efforts. An example, from Ducks Unlimited, can be seen [here](#).

A more generic conservation-oriented pitch is made by the National Wildlife Refuge Association. It's viewed [here](#).

What's important to consider is that *all* these sorts of approaches can be appropriate, geared to different audiences, whether they are birders, hunters, wildlife photographers, urban environmentalists, or rural farmers.

More on the stamp and its appeal will appear in the next GBP bulletin. The Jr. Duck Stamp will also be discussed in that issue.

In the meantime, you may also wish to view the work of the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp. See [here](#).

PIF in August ***Fifth International Conference***

Partners in Flight (PIF) was launched in 1990 in response to concerns over declines in the populations of many of our migrating landbirds. The initial focus of this multi-partner network was on Neotropical migrants that breed in North America and winter in Central and South America, but the scope has broadened to include most landbirds and other species requiring terrestrial habitats.

This summer's Partners In Flight (PIF) meeting will be its 5th international conference, held from 25 through 28 August in Snowbird, Utah. The conference will target the creation of a unified vision in the bird conservation community for "full lifecycle bird conservation needs." Goals will include building hemisphere-wide cooperation, increased funding, and shared priorities to address the causes of bird population declines. Visit the [PIF website](#) for details.



Words to Consider:

"So, do you feel depressed?" - Dr. Jennifer Melfi

"Since the ducks left." - Tony Soprano

- Episode 1, *The Sopranos*, January 1999

GBP Bulletin Archives

Great Birding Projects is a vehicle to promote a creative approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing. GBP functions as a bridge to an innovative engagement between people and birds. You can access all previous issues of the *GBP* bulletin on the GBP website [here](#).



Happy Fourth of July!



As Americans celebrate independence and the values and experiences that define this country, it would be good to consider the heritage of preserving and appreciating our wildlife and natural places. This includes working landscapes - farms, forests, and ranchlands - maintained in creative and sustainable ways.

This love for our resources is actually ingrained in our American culture, and it enriches us as a people, providing us with incredible opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and participate in health-affirming recreation. The preservation, appreciation, and appropriate funding for these resources is crucial for the future of this great nation. There is no reason why this shouldn't be a 4th of July theme, capable of being embraced by all Americans, a profound vision to pass on to future generations.