

# CONSERVATION BUSINESS PLANS FOR GEOGRAPHIC FOCAL AREAS

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## Introduction

For years, bird conservation groups of every shape and color have been speaking of the need to work together to save birds in every corner of their range. Unfortunately, there has not been a master playbook that identifies priorities and organizes such “full life-cycle conservation” plans.

The 5th Partners in Flight Conference (PIF V) hopes to change that. Representatives of groups from throughout the Western Hemisphere will come together to develop a unified vision of bird conservation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. There will be an emphasis on migratory birds and new, innovative conservation methods. It’s anticipated that this process will produce a breakthrough set of “Conservation Business Plans,” covering no less than nine of the most important geographic areas in Latin America and the West Indies where PIF priority species winter, as well as linkages to their North American Breeding grounds .

At the conference, attendees will develop these Conservation Business Plans in a three-day series of work sessions. They’ll also be asked to develop five-year implementation schedules for the Conservation Plans, identifying specific priorities and projects for target bird species and their habitats.

## What is a Conservation Business Plan?

A “Conservation Business Plan” is a conservation plan that has a strong focus on:

1. Conservation actions and projects that are well-defined and able to be implemented
2. A definition of the project’s measurable impacts, and the costs of implementing the project
3. A discussion of the general risks that could affect the project and its strategic approach

The PIF V meeting will focus on developing Conservation Business Plans during three days of break-out group work focused on specific geographic focal areas and the birds they hold. We anticipate that a Conservation Business Plan should run about 8-15 pages, plus a Project Matrix.

The Plan should be built on the existing work for the target species or target habitats (previous conservation plans, research papers, etc.), and these will be clearly cited and referenced in the CBP appendix.

Full Annual Life Cycle – The Conservation Business Plan will focus on the full annual life cycle needs of a target species – its wintering needs, breeding needs and transit needs, and the threats that affect them. Our approach will be to begin in a geographic focal are in the south and link it to specific focal area(s) in the north, depending on the target species migratory behavior(s).

Measurable, Long-term Goals – The Conservation Business Plan will define measurable, long-term goals for each of its conservation targets. For example: “The goal for the Golden-winged Warbler is to increase its current population by 50% by 2050.” Measurable and time-limited goals are extremely important and will be used to drive the planning process.

Project Driven -- The Plan should focus through broad strategies and threats down into specific projects – defined activities, with measurable goals, budgets and timeframes outlined. These should be listed into the Project Matrix.

While the conservation goals may have a long time horizon (e.g. “by 2050”), the Conservation Business Plan’s projects should generally focus on actions (i.e. projects) that can be implemented within a 5 year time horizon.

Prior to PIF V: Much of the work for the Conservation Business Plan will be drafted prior to the meeting by the Geographic focal teams and distributed to the PIF V attendees in advance of gathering in Utah.

### **Timeline for Work Prior to PIF V:**

- April 25 - Assemble Geographic Focal teams and begin orientation of the Conservation Business Planning process.
- May 20 – For each Geographic Focal area: Drafts completed by each team of 1) the Summary Introduction, 2) Conservation Targets identified and 3) preliminary Conservation Goals stated.
- June 20 - For each Geographic Focal area: Drafts completed by each team for the List of Threats. Team may have identified preliminary set of strategies they will use to organize the discussions around at PIF V. Good list of background materials identified?
- July 1 – Drafts of the preliminary parts of the Conservation Business Plans have been reviewed by all team members and other interested parties.
- July 20 – Drafts of the preliminary parts of the Conservation Business Plans have been put on the web and sent to all participants of each PIF V breakout session.

What happens with the Conservation Business Plans after PIF V? It is our intent that the products of the PIF V geographic focal area breakout sessions, and specifically the Conservation Business Plans, will be advanced beyond the meeting by working groups and other partnerships that form as part of the business-planning process. In some cases, active working groups already exist (e.g. Golden-winged Warbler Working Group, [www.gwwa.org](http://www.gwwa.org)) that can shepherd the resulting priority projects through collaborative fund-raising and implementation; these may serve as models for other developing partnerships. We urge all breakout leadership teams to consider these partnerships explicitly in developing their Conservation Business Plans.

## Table of Contents of a Conservation Business Plan

1. **Summary:** Introduction and definition of the linked geographic areas covered. Followed by identification/list of the conservation targets: Species, habitat types, ecosystem functions. Use PIF scores to establish priority target species. Brief description of the current situation and conservation need (i.e. an over view of why is this geography is in need of conservation attention for the targets identified). Brief citation of major prior conservation plans or other key documents this CBP is built upon (citation listed in appendix). Note on CR/EN endemic species: These should/can be listed as conservation targets. Care should be taken, however, to build a Conservation Business Plan that does not focus too specifically on individual species but rather seeks to address threats that the migratory and endemic species have in common. *(Section length = approximately 2-4 pages; draft to be filled out prior to PIF V meeting.)*

2. **Goal Identification for Conservation Targets:** Conservation targets = those elements of biodiversity that the Conservation Business Plan intends to focus on and protect. They can be a species, a habitat or ecological system, or an ecological process. Start with a list of the most critical birds of concern for the linked geographical areas covered, and add other species, habitats or ecological functions if the team feels it appropriate.

A formal goal must be established for each Conservation Target. Begin with conservation goals that have been established in prior PIF Plans (e.g. the 2004 PIF *North American Landbird Conservation Plan*) or by various working groups. A conservation goal is a formal statement detailing the desired future condition of the target. The goal should *be quantitative, time-limited, impact-oriented, specific and linked to the target*. Generally it describes the long-term status for the target that is desired: "The goal for the Golden-winged Warbler is to increase its current population by 50% by 2050." If possible, the team should identify secondary goals related to the target's primary conservation goal, for example: "Increase the amount of early successional breeding habitat for Golden-winged Warbler from two million acres to three million acres by 2050".

*(Section length = approximately 2 pages. Begin with population goals established by prior PIF and working group plans. Draft to be filled out prior to PIF V meeting.)*

3. **List of specific threats:** List of the key threats that affect the conservation targets. Identify the sources of those threats (e.g. water pollution from unregulated housing development and poor sewage treatment) and how they impact the target or its viability\* (are they negatively affecting reproductive success, survivorship, or simply the number of individuals that the geographic area can support, i.e. carrying capacity?) If possible, select and identify a small number of priority threats (3-6) that the Conservation Business Plan will focus on. Threats should be considered through the full annual life cycle scale of the given target species – wintering, breeding and transit.

This section can address direct threats, indirect threats and even major opportunities to advance conservation. We anticipate using a modified version of the Miradi approach for this section (details to follow).

*(Section length = approximately 3-6 pages; draft to be filled out prior to PIF V meeting.)*

4. **Prescribed Actions by theme:** The Breakout Group Leaders will need to organize their Project Matrix, described below, to allow fruitful discussion during the PIF V meeting.

We suggest that you set up your Project Matrix by listing each of the priority threats that the group will discuss by each appropriate Annual Life Cycle stage (wintering, breeding, transit). For each of the priority threats, begin to develop general strategies and opportunities to address them: What are viable solutions to each priority threat or opportunity?; how can it be implemented, what are the costs? What are the objectives for each strategy? Each threat can have multiple objectives, multiple strategies to achieve them, and multiple projects that can be implemented to alleviate the threat. At the beginning, the Project Matrix may look something like this:

Priority threat 1 X wintering ...  
Priority threat 2 X wintering  
Priority threat 3 X wintering  
Priority threat 1 X breeding  
Priority threat 2 X breeding  
Priority threat 4 X breeding  
Priority threat 2 X transit  
Priority threat 4 X transit

The results from breakout discussions will be fed into the Project Matrix, found below. For each threat, identify strategies that should be pursued, and then begin to develop a list of projects and activities that can be undertaken to alleviate each threat. Fill in the Project Matrix for each project. List the measureable results expected. Describe the time period. Describe the costs for each project/action and, if known, potential funding sources(?) What are the risks? Ensure that the Full Annual Life Cycle is considered for each threat, as appropriate (wintering, breeding, transit).

Questions/projects to be considered could address the following:

- Species-specific projects: how can we meet the overall population goal? The overall habitat goal? The desired habitat conditions and BMPs to get there? Key focal areas identified? Management actions prescribed for what areas? Conservation and protections identified for what areas? Ongoing guard presence needed for what areas?
- Habitat projects: Is it being diminished or degraded in a way that makes it unable to support target species? Is it affecting overall carrying capacity, or a key vital rate, or both?
- Direct land protection projects: What areas are identified for protection? Public decree? Where is critical Increased onsite protection or management needed?
- Working landscape projects: how do we influence local communities? Promote bird-friendly uses of the land? In what specific areas? What industries are impacting habitat and focal species where engagement could lead to more sustainable practices?

- Policy/regulatory projects: To what extent are existing or potential future laws, regulations, policies, or judicial decisions detrimental?
- Socio – Economic/Community engagement projects: To what extent are social factors and considerations detrimental? To what extent are current or anticipated economic factors and conditions detrimental? How do we influence and engage local communities to meet their needs and the needs of the conservation targets? How can environmental education and environmental awareness projects be used to reach our goals?
- Knowledge, Monitoring and Evaluating projects: To what extent is our scientific understanding of the threats and/or necessary conservation actions insufficient? Have the monitoring and evaluation needs for the program been adequately identified and planned for?

NOTE: For each conservation target, ensure that the Full Annual Life Cycle is considered as the team addresses each threat (wintering, breeding, transit). *Some example project can be drafted prior to the PIF V meeting, most will be filled in during the breakout sessions.*

## The Project Matrix

For each project, begin to fill in a row of the Project Matrix. **(This Matrix is open for review, comment and improvement)** Under each list key activities for each relevant theme in a tabular form:

<b>Key Threat (use as the organizing principle)</b>	<b>Stage W, B, T</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Key Theme and Strategy</b>	<b>Cons. targets</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>Which of the main threats is being addressed here?</b>	<b>List if: Wintering Breeding and/or Transit work</b>	<b>What is the overall objective?</b>	<b>What type of work (theme from above) and what is the strategy is being used?</b>	<b>What are the conservation targets</b>	<b>What is the project name?</b>	<b>What are the activities?</b>
Lack of wintering habitat and accelerating habitat degradation	Wintering	Increase wintering habitat for shorebirds in Argentina – by XXX acres overall by 2025.	Community engagement: Engage rice farmers in Argentina to promote conditions that support certification	All target shorebirds in the Grassland group	Creating bird- friendly rice fields in Argentina through farmer certification	Farmers are informed and provided incentives to move their rice field towards certification

Matrix  
continued...

<b>Results of the Activity</b>	<b>Long-term Outcome</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Anticipated Costs</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>What is the measurable result/deliverables ?</b>	<b>What are the measurable long- term impacts/outcomes expected?</b>	<b>What time period? How long will it take/</b>	<b>Cost/year</b>	<b>Total project costs</b>	<b>How will the project be evaluated?</b>	<b>General comments, next steps, list of potential actors, risks</b>
6 workshops; 150 farmers enlisted; 3000 acres put into certified bird- friendly rice management by 2015.	X% acres added toward overall Argentina habitat goal.	Two years	\$75,000	\$150,000	Number of farmers engaged in certification; number of acres	