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# **Evaluation of the Wildlife Habitat Canada Conservation Stamp Program**

**March 4, 2011**

**Canada**

***Audit and Evaluation Branch***  
***Evaluation of the Wildlife Habitat Canada Conservation Stamp Program***

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**Report clearance steps**

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**Acronyms used in the report**

CSDP	Conservation Service Delivery and Permitting
CWS	Canadian Wildlife Service
DG	Director General
Dir	Director
DUC	Ducks Unlimited Canada
EC	Environment Canada
EHJV	Eastern Habitat Joint Venture
Ex/Dir	Executive Director
HEC	Habitat and Ecosystem Conservation
HSP	Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk
NACP	Natural Areas Conservation Program
NAWCA	North American Wetlands Conservation Act
NAWMP	North American Waterfowl Management Plan
NCC	Nature Conservancy of Canada
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PCESC	Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference
RMAF	Results-based Management and Accountability Framework
WHC	Wildlife Habitat Canada

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The Evaluation Project Team was led by Robert Tkaczyk, under the direction of the Environment Canada Evaluation Director, Shelley Borys, and included Lindsay Fitzpatrick and Susan Wharton.

The evaluation and final report were conducted and prepared by PRA Inc.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

Environment Canada's (EC's) Evaluation Division, Audit and Evaluation Branch, conducted an Evaluation of the Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) Conservation Stamp Program (the Stamp Program). The evaluation was part of the Departmental Risk-Based Audit and Evaluation Plan planned in May 2009, and was undertaken to fulfill Treasury Board evaluation requirements, as the Stamp Program's terms and conditions expire at the end of fiscal year 2010–11. The evaluation was initiated in October 2009 and completed in October 2010.

WHC is a national, charitable, not-for-profit organization established in 1984 by EC, provincial wildlife agencies and conservation organizations, with the aim of delivering an effective and efficient habitat conservation program by funding projects that conserve and protect wetlands associated with waterfowl. To support this activity, EC, through a contribution agreement, annually transfers between \$1.0 million and \$2.2 million to WHC for the purposes of the Stamp Program. EC generates the revenue required to fund the Stamp Program through the sale of Habitat Conservation Stamps, which waterfowl hunters must purchase and have affixed to their annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permits.

The evaluation assessed the relevance and performance of the Stamp Program (i.e., those activities funded through the sale of Habitat Conservation Stamps). It did not examine WHC's involvement in activities not related to the Stamp Program. The evaluation was conducted as a follow-up to a formative evaluation approved in 2005–06 and covered the period from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2010. The evaluation drew on four lines of evidence: a document review, a literature review, a file review, and key informant interviews with EC senior management, program managers and staff, members of the WHC Board of Directors, WHC managers and staff, and successful applicants.

### **Findings Summary**

#### **Relevance**

Wetlands are one of the most biologically productive habitats on the planet and support a wide range of flora and fauna. They are particularly important for migratory birds, as they provide food, shelter, and breeding opportunities. According to EC documentation, it is estimated that in settled areas of Canada, up to 70% of wetlands have been lost or degraded.

With respect to wetlands and habitats supporting waterfowl, the Stamp Program aims to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and respond to habitat loss, which is one of the leading causes of species endangerment and declines in biodiversity. Although the extent and current rate of wetland loss in Canada is largely unknown, it is widely

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believed that wetland loss continues and that there is a continued need for conservation efforts.

The Stamp Program aligns well with the Government of Canada's priorities and EC's mandate and responsibilities. The Government of Canada and provincial and territorial governments have shared jurisdiction for wetlands management, and the federal government has direct responsibility for the estimated 29% of Canada's wetlands located on federal land. Additionally, the Stamp Program supports and/or aligns with various international commitments that the Government of Canada has made since the 1980s to protect and conserve wetlands (e.g., the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan [NAWMP] and the Convention on Biological Diversity).

Eight federal statutes contribute to wetland conservation in Canada, including the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*. The Act covers EC's role in wetland conservation. Furthermore, the *Migratory Birds Regulations, 1994* under the Act outline the legitimacy of WHC's role in delivering the Stamp Program, by specifying that stamp revenues are to be used by WHC.

Interviewees felt that there was a continued need for the Stamp Program, as there are relatively few funding sources for conservation projects specifically targeting wetlands associated with waterfowl. An analysis of data collected revealed that the Stamp Program is one of several habitat conservation programs in Canada, many of which also receive Government of Canada funding. Although some habitat conservation programs also target wetlands associated with waterfowl, many of the other federal programs do not solely focus on wetlands, and instead address other aspects of biodiversity, wildlife (including species at risk), and/or habitat conservation. Various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or non-profit organizations focus on wetlands; WHC, through the Stamp Program, either partners with these organizations or targets other wetlands. The activities of these organizations may not necessarily duplicate those of the Stamp Program with respect to its focus on specific wetlands areas, even though all are concerned overall with conservation-related issues in Canada (focusing on species and the habitats that support them). Although the Stamp Program has focused on a specific niche in the conservation area, other programs, both federal and non-governmental, target the same issues and may be better financially situated to address these issues. Furthermore, evidence collected as part of the file review revealed that there is duplication of effort, as some Stamp Program recipients received funding from two or three different sources within EC.

The Stamp Program was designed as a "top-up" program to complement other conservation programs that wholly or in part support wetland conservation. Despite this design, some interviewees questioned the value of contributing relatively small amounts of funding to "top up" projects with large budgets. Indeed, comparing the amounts that WHC provides to conservation projects with amounts provided by other partners, it would seem that WHC is essentially topping up other funding, providing a total of \$2.8 million in 2008–09 and 2009–10 while partners provided approximately \$23 million to those same conservation projects. It was suggested that the Stamp Program needs

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to be more strategic in selecting projects to fund (e.g., revisiting project eligibility and scoring criteria).

#### **Performance**

Habitat Conservation Stamp sales declined between 1985 and 2008 by 54.3%, although they seem to have stabilized between 2002 and 2008 (the decline in that period was only 1.1%). The price for a Habitat Conservation Stamp has remained at \$8.50 since 1991. Stamp Program revenues generated have therefore also been declining over the same period, though they appear to have stabilized between \$1.5 and \$1.6 million per year.

Over the evaluation period, the Stamp Program provided approximately \$4.9 million in funding to 108 projects aimed at improving wetlands, protecting migratory bird populations and biodiversity, and supporting conservation networking. A review of files for projects funded in 2008–09 and 2009–10 revealed that the Stamp Program funding covered 8% of the total value of habitat conservation projects and 12% of the total value of NAWMP and networking projects.

Overall, WHC has significantly increased the proportion of Stamp Program revenues it provides to projects, from 30.8% of Stamp Program revenues in 2005–06 to 70.7% in 2009–10 (the highest percentage came in 2008–09, when it provided 77.1% of Stamp Program revenues received to projects). Furthermore, over the five-year period, expenditures related to the Stamp Program have remained just under 20% annually. Since the last evaluation took place in 2005, WHC has taken important steps to meet its obligations under the present contribution agreement with respect to the allocation of 80% of the Stamp Program revenues received from EC toward conservation projects.

Over the evaluation period, the amounts that EC reported transferring to WHC and the amounts that the organization reported receiving from the Department did not align. Further discussions with EC and WHC staff revealed that these discrepancies may be explained by differing financial accounting and reporting practices with respect to reporting expenditures and revenues for a given year (i.e., timing related to when expenditures are incurred). Furthermore, during follow-up discussions, EC and WHC staff also indicated that Canada Post provides its final report with respect to actual sales of Habitat Conservation Stamps for a given fiscal year not until June of the following fiscal year (i.e., stamp sales for 2009–10 would only be available in June 2010). This has made it more difficult to reconcile the financial figures reported by EC and WHC, as both close their financial books for a given fiscal year in April. However, the fact remains that EC and WHC were unable to provide the actual amounts to fully reconcile the two sets of numbers for the entire evaluation period going back to 2005–06.

EC program representatives discussed the difficulties associated with measuring outcomes for any conservation-related program. Overall, they acknowledged that, as part of the broader suite of conservation-related programs within the Department, the contribution to achieving healthy waterfowl populations made by projects funded through the Stamp Program is unknown.

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Projects funded by the Stamp Program have completed various activities intended to improve wetlands and protect migratory bird populations and biodiversity. EC representatives also were confident that the program was delivering its intended outputs and believed WHC was funding an appropriate range of conservation projects. However, the evaluation found significant shortcomings in the area of performance data collection and reporting. Although data on the amount of partner contributions provided are available, and, beginning in 2008-09, performance data on the total number of acres conserved are available, these are the only aggregate-level performance data collected and reported. The performance measurement strategy presented in the 2008 Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) was never implemented. WHC does not recall receiving it, nor has EC followed up with respect to its implementation.

Therefore, the main sources of performance data that the evaluation could draw upon were project-level final reports prepared by funding recipients, as well as WHC's annual reports. Much of this information is activity-based rather than outcome-based and, as such, it is difficult to determine the extent to which projects were successful in achieving their objectives. Thus, the evaluator's ability to report on the achievement of Stamp Program outcomes is limited.

Key-informant interviewees had mixed reviews with respect to whether the WHC increased the number and type of partners participating in habitat conservation projects. Some believed that the conservation community was static, with no new additional partners or groups; others believed that the program had been able to influence partner involvement in projects. Interviewees also believed that the Stamp Program had made an important contribution to increasing the awareness of the need for stewardship activities through funding projects related to conservation networking.

Furthermore, some stakeholders indicated that WHC is no longer actively pursuing some of its intended outcomes, including the development of innovative habitat conservation tools. Others stated that the Stamp Program has too many expected outcomes and that some of them are unfocused. They suggested the need to revisit expected program outcomes, with an aim to refine and clarify the priorities and focus of the Stamp Program.

Finally, the Stamp Program may not represent the most cost-effective approach to achieving conservation outcomes. Although a thorough cost analysis of alternative approaches was not conducted, as it was beyond the scope of this evaluation, the fact that the Stamp Program is a small contributor (providing top-up funding) to many of the projects makes it difficult to attribute any improvements in waterfowl populations to the activities of the program. Possible alternatives include acquiring wetland habitat to support waterfowl or reallocating stamp revenues to other existing EC conservation-related programs. It should be noted that these alternatives were the subject of two separate public consultations held in 2007 by EC and WHC, which were reported to have found support for the continuation of the Stamp Program, with no changes to its design and delivery (although a few respondents to EC's public consultations did state a

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need to examine alternatives to determine what might be the most cost-effective approach).

#### **Recommendations**

These recommendations are directed to the Assistant Deputy Minister, Environmental Stewardship Branch (ADM, ESB), noting that the terms and conditions of the program expire on March 31, 2011.

#### **Recommendation 1:**

Overall, the evaluation found that there are concerns with respect to duplication of effort and overlap with other federal programs and NGOs (though the Stamp Program does complement these in some instances). The Stamp Program is one of several habitat conservation programs in Canada, many of which also receive Government of Canada funding (some of which also target wetlands associated with waterfowl). Although federal and non-governmental programs may not necessarily duplicate the Stamp Program with respect to its focus on specific wetlands areas, all of these programs are concerned overall with conservation-related issues in Canada (focusing on species and the habitats that support them, including wetlands). Therefore, the activities of other federal programs and NGOs aim to address the same overall issues related to aspects of biodiversity, wildlife and/or habitat conservation (including wetlands). Although not examined, these programs could be better financially situated to address these issues. The Stamp Program is therefore unable to demonstrate a unique need for the Stamp Program in the context of other conservation-related programs in Canada, which calls into question its overall relevance.

Furthermore, some interviewees questioned the strategy of providing relatively small amounts to “top-up” projects with large budgets. Evidence collected revealed that WHC only provides approximately 10% of the total value of conservation projects. Given the relatively small amounts that the program provides to individual projects, it is difficult to attribute any improvements in waterfowl populations and the wetland habitats that support them to program activities. EC acknowledged that, as part of a broader suite of conservation-related programs, it was difficult to determine the contribution of the Stamp Program to wetlands conservation and protection of waterfowl populations. This was further demonstrated by significant shortcomings in the area of performance data collection and reporting, which limited the evaluator’s ability to report on the achievement of the WHC Stamp Program’s outcomes and thus achievement of its overall objectives. The Stamp Program is therefore unable to demonstrate its contribution to the improvement of wetlands in Canada, which also calls into question the overall relevance of the program.

**Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the ADM, ESB, explore all options available with respect to the distribution of funds from the sale of Wildlife Conservation Stamps to conservation-related projects and make the appropriate decision as to which option is the most efficient and effective.**



**Recommendation 2:**

Evidence collected as part of this evaluation illustrated a discrepancy between the program financial figures provided by EC and those reported by WHC. It should be noted that EC figures have been reconciled internally, while WHC financial figures have been audited externally. During follow-up discussions, potential reasons were provided as to why these discrepancies over the amounts of revenue transferred existed, including differing financial accounting and reporting practices (such as timing related to when expenditures are incurred), and the timing of the Canada Post final report with respect to stamp revenues. These factors have made it difficult to reconcile the financial figures reported by EC and WHC (as both close their financial books for a given fiscal year in April). EC was unable to provide the actual amounts to fully reconcile these two sets of figures over the evaluation period.

**Recommendation 2: It is recommended that EC fully reconcile past program financial figures provided by EC with those provided by WHC.**

**Recommendation 3:**

Another weakness of the Stamp Program is its limited ability to demonstrate achievement of expected outcomes. Information on the current status and rate of loss of wetlands (i.e., baseline data) does not exist. Furthermore, the performance indicators identified in the WHC Stamp Program RMAF have not been implemented. Actual performance data collected and reported are either activity-based or output-based, which makes it difficult for the Stamp Program to demonstrate the achievement of results. As a consequence, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the program was successful in achieving its expected outcomes, as identified in the WHC Stamp Program logic model. Furthermore, in the broader suite of conservation-related programs, given the nature of the Stamp Program (i.e., a top-up funding mechanism), it is difficult to assess the contribution that the projects funded through the Stamp Program made to improving waterfowl populations and the habitats that support them.

Additionally, interviewees suggested the need to revisit expected program outcomes with an aim to refine and clarify the priorities and focus of the Stamp Program, as they believed that there were too many expected outcomes and that some of them are unfocused.

**Recommendation 3:**

- a. **It is recommended that EC and WHC work together to establish consistent financial reporting practices, including a clear identification of administrative costs required to deliver the program.**
- b. **It is recommended that EC work with WHC to develop a well-defined and measurable performance management strategy, including a revised logic model and performance indicators, and data collection tools that would allow the program to better demonstrate its results.**

**Management Response**

**Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the ADM, ESB, explore all options available with respect to the distribution of funds from the sale of Wildlife Conservation Stamps to conservation-related projects and make the appropriate decision as to which option is the most efficient and effective.**

<b>Statement of Agreement/Disagreement with the Recommendation</b>		
The ADM, ESB, agrees with this recommendation related to the Conservation Stamp Program.		
<b>Management Action</b>		
EC will undertake an internal strategic review of the Conservation Stamp Program to determine if the program is delivered in a way that leverages both additional funding and stakeholder involvement in direct on-the-ground habitat conservation activities from a variety of partners. In addition, EC will determine if the program could deliver more direct benefits to habitat conservation and EC priorities. Furthermore, EC will again explore various options available to distribute funds from the sale of the Wildlife Conservation Stamp to ensure alignment with the intent of the Conservation Stamp Program (particularly funding of wetland habitat conservation, primarily for waterfowl). EC will work with WHC over the next three fiscal years (2011–12, 2012–13 and 2013–14) to ensure the program is delivered as intended. As such, EC will enter into yearly Contribution Agreements with WHC for the next three years, starting in fiscal year 2011–12, to allow for opportunities to assess efficiency and to make, if required, program improvements. Following this, EC will implement any required changes to the delivery of the program, including making any adjustments to the delivery agent, range of outcomes and utilization of stamp revenue, taking into account the results of consultations on regulatory amendments should such amendments be required.		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Fall 2011	Assessment of current delivery of the Habitat Conservation Stamp Program and identification of changes to current program delivery.	Director General (DG)- Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) Executive Director (Ex/Dir)-Habitat and Ecosystem Conservation (HEC) Director (Dir)-Conservation Service Delivery and Permitting (CSDP)
Spring 2012	Steps taken, in collaboration with WHC, to implement any changes identified in the strategic assessment for delivery of the program.	DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC Dir-CSDP  WHC
Spring 2013	Undertake assessment of program delivery	DG-CWS

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	in meeting desired outcomes and, if deemed appropriate, explore other mechanisms to distribute funds from the sale of the stamps.	Ex/Dir-HEC Dir-CSDP
Spring 2013/ Spring 2014	Changes outlined in an updated Contribution Agreement or other mechanisms, as deemed necessary.	DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC Dir-CSDP

**Recommendation 2: It is recommended that EC fully reconcile past program financial figures provided by EC with those provided by WHC.**

<b>Statement of Agreement/Disagreement with the Recommendation</b>		
The ADM, ESB, agrees with this recommendation. Given the transformation that occurred at EC in 2005–06 and 2006–07, and the changes in management at EC and WHC during this time frame, the ADM, ESB, agrees to work with WHC to reconcile the financial figures for the past three years of the evaluation period (2007–10)		
<b>Management Action</b>		
Recognizing this as an issue, in fiscal year 2010–11 EC took positive steps toward working with WHC to ensure reconciliation with EC financial figures. For example, EC participated more actively in WHC Board Meetings in 2010–11 and worked with WHC to clearly identify which activities were linked to the Stamp Program in their work plan. Due to differences in WHC's accounting and reporting system (e.g., WHC had different names for their various grant programs, and funded different activities based on project eligibility, allowing for funding of indirect habitat conservation work that in 2008–10, based on program improvements, was reported differently) in annual reports and audited financial statements in 2005–06 and 2006–07, it would be difficult to align similar activities (and project costs) to stamp funds 1:1. Furthermore, the evaluation period spanned two separate contribution agreements, further complicating accounting and reporting issues. Thus, the ADM, ESB, in collaboration with WHC, will undertake the steps necessary to reconcile the program financial figures provided by EC with those provided by WHC from 2007–08, 2008–09 and 2009–10.		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Spring 2011	EC will review WHC's audited financial statements and EC's internal financial statements from 2007–10.  EC will meet with WHC as necessary to review the provided financial statements.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP  WHC
Summer 2011	EC will reconcile the financial figures and produce a report outlining the results.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP

**Recommendation 3:**

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- a. It is recommended that EC and WHC work together to establish consistent financial reporting practices, including a clear identification of administrative costs required to deliver the program.

<b>Statement of Agreement/Disagreement with the Recommendation</b>		
The ADM, ESB, agrees with this recommendation.		
<b>Management Action</b>		
The ADM, ESB, commits to implementing initiatives to establish consistent financial reporting between WHC and EC. In addition, EC will work with WHC to determine what issues (e.g., the timing of WHC's audited reports and annual reports, and the timing of reconciliation with Canada Post, etc.) need to be addressed to ensure that reporting is transparent and consistent.		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Spring 2011	Development of an internal (to EC) work plan to ensure proper systems and accounting are in place, including roles and responsibilities of each party, for financial reporting.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP
Spring 2011	Consultation with WHC and collaborative development of an action plan to address issues identified as preventing consistent reporting, including roles and responsibilities of each party.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP  WHC
Summer 2011	Implementation of an internal work plan and WHC action plan.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP  WHC
Fall 2011	Implement new financial reporting.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP  WHC

- b. It is recommended that EC work with WHC to develop a well-defined and measurable performance management strategy, including a revised logic model and performance indicators, as well as data collection tools that would allow the program to better demonstrate its results.

<b>Statement of Agreement/Disagreement with the Recommendation</b>		
The ADM, ESB, agrees with this recommendation.		
<b>Management Action</b>		
The ADM, ESB, will communicate directly with WHC to collaboratively review and refine the program logic model. In consultation with ESB, WHC will be directed to ensure that the		

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outcomes in the logic model are clearly defined and that the program's outputs and performance measures are linked to these outcomes. Furthermore, the ADM, ESB, will ask WHC to review the current grant application process (e.g., NAWMP funding ratios, project criteria, scoring guidelines) to ensure that the funding to grants is more aligned with the intent of the Stamp Program and the revised logic model.

EC will be responsible for ensuring that the outcomes relate to the terms and conditions governing the contribution agreement with WHC.

Once specific outcomes are clearly defined, performance indicators will be developed by EC in consultation and collaboration with WHC, to ensure that the performance indicators meet the needs of the Department. Performance indicators must be relevant, meaningful and reportable. To this end, EC will work with WHC to ensure that appropriate data collection tools are in place to collect necessary information and to demonstrate the achievement of program outcomes.

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Spring 2011	Updated logic model, including relevant performance indicators.	WHC DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC
Summer/Fall 2011	Review grant application process and develop new criteria and scoring guidelines in line with revised logic model.	WHC
Summer/Fall 2011	Implementation of data collection tools and reporting mechanisms based on identified outcomes and performance indicators.	WHC DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC
Fall 2011/Winter 2012	Provide information, in the next call for applications, regarding reporting requirements on performance indicators; and development of guidance documents on collecting and reporting the data for funding recipients in fiscal year 2011–12.	WHC

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Environment Canada's (EC's) Evaluation Division, Audit and Evaluation Branch, conducted an Evaluation of the Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) Conservation Stamp Program (the Stamp Program), beginning in 2009–10 and extending into 2010-11. The evaluation assessed the relevance and performance of the Stamp Program (i.e., those activities funded through the sale of Habitat Conservation Stamps). It did not examine WHC's involvement in activities not related to the Stamp Program.

The evaluation was planned as part of the Departmental Risk-Based Audit and Evaluation Plan approved in May 2009 and was undertaken to fulfill Treasury Board evaluation requirements, as the Stamp Program's terms and conditions expire at the end of 2010–11. The evaluation was conducted as a follow-up to a formative evaluation completed in 2004–05, and considered the period from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2010. The evaluation was initiated in October 2009 and completed in October 2010.

This document presents the findings and recommendations of the evaluation and is organized in the following manner: section 2 provides background information on the WHC Stamp Program; section 3 presents the purpose of the evaluation and the methods used to conduct the evaluation; section 4 presents the evaluation's findings; sections 5 and 6 lay out, respectively, the conclusions and recommendations; and section 7 contains the management response.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

EC, with provincial wildlife agencies and conservation organizations, established WHC in 1984. The organization's objectives are to:

- promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of habitat for the purpose of retaining diversity, distribution and abundance of wildlife;
- provide a funding mechanism for conservation, restoration and enhancement projects; and
- foster coordination and leadership in the fields of conservation, restoration and enhancement.<sup>1</sup>

WHC's key responsibility is to deliver "an effective and efficient habitat conservation program by funding projects that conserve and protect key habitats, particularly for waterfowl."<sup>2</sup> To support this activity, EC, through a contribution agreement, annually transfers between \$1.0 million and \$2.2 million to WHC (since 2002, the average has been approximately \$1.5 million) for the purposes of the Stamp Program. EC generates

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<sup>1</sup> Environment Canada, 2008, *Terms and Conditions for a Transfer of Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamps*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Environment Canada, 2008, *Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) and Risk-based Audit Framework (RBAF) for Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp Program*, p. 4.

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the revenue required to fund the Stamp Program through the sale of Habitat Conservation Stamps, which waterfowl hunters must purchase and have affixed to their annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permits.

## **2.1 Program Profile**

The objectives of the Stamp Program are to:

- support initiatives under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP);
- support grants for regional and local habitat projects of importance to waterfowl and associated wetland species;
- promote engagement of Canadian organizations and institutions in habitat stewardship initiatives including a stewardship recognition awards program;
- facilitate habitat stewardship programs in Canada; and
- promote coordination of habitat conservation initiatives to foster cooperation and leadership in the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of wildlife habitat in Canada and North America.<sup>3</sup>

Through the Stamp Program, WHC provides funding to projects involving multiple partners that:

- “Focus on direct (on the ground) interventions related to habitat conservation, restoration or enhancement in wetlands that are associated with waterfowl species (and allow continued access for migratory game bird hunting, where applicable);
- Deal with (wetland) habitat acquisition/securement for waterfowl species (where applicable, such projects should allow continued access for migratory game bird hunting);
- Are research proposals supported by the scientific or technical committees associated with one of the NAWMP Habitat Joint Ventures in Canada;<sup>4</sup>
- Promote the contribution of hunters to habitat conservation; and
- Support habitat conservation networking activities and events, including national or regional stewardship activities.”<sup>5</sup>

WHC grants cannot be used for projects involving non-waterfowl species, species at risk, or fish habitat conservation, restoration and enhancement.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Environment Canada, 2008, *Contribution Agreement*, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout North America, the NAWMP establishes regional partnerships, called Habitat Joint Ventures, to undertake conservation projects. The partnerships involve individuals, corporations, conservation organizations and government working collaboratively on a variety of conservation-related projects aimed at the survival of waterfowl populations through the preservation and restoration of quality wetland and upland habitats.

<sup>5</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2010, *Project Eligibility*. Available from:  
[www.whc.org/conservation/conservation-grants/project-eligibility](http://www.whc.org/conservation/conservation-grants/project-eligibility)

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WHC offers grants for the following types of projects:

- Habitat Conservation, Restoration or Enhancement, and Habitat Acquisition/Securement;<sup>7</sup> and
- Habitat Conservation Networking and Promotion of Hunters' Contributions to Habitat Conservation.

To select successful projects for funding, a proposal review committee, which includes WHC, assesses each application against a scoring sheet that includes criteria such as focus on wetlands, focus on waterfowl species, focus on direct (on-the-ground) interventions, inclusion of partners, and amount of matching funding. In addition to these criteria, the scoring sheet lists five additional considerations:

- whether projects contribute to an equitable distribution of WHC support across the country over a broad range of time;
- based on projects involving multiple partners, WHC can only contribute up to a maximum of 50% of the total project cost;
- assurance that no single project will exceed 20% of the total available WHC grant funding in a given year;
- assurance that projects will be substantially complete by the end of the fiscal<sup>8</sup> year in which they are approved; and
- whether applicants have previously been awarded a WHC grant.<sup>9</sup>

Funding applications, for projects to be conducted the following fiscal year, must be submitted by November 1.

The proposal review committee recommends projects for funding to the Board of Directors, which makes the final selection of projects to receive funding at its January meeting.

In addition to administering the Stamp Program, WHC undertakes activities related to funding other conservation-related projects, promoting conservation action through its National Stewardship Awards program, and promoting conservation coordination by participating in the NAWMP.

## **2.2 Governance Structure**

The Stamp Program is governed by a contribution agreement between EC and WHC. The most recent contribution agreement was in effect from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2011.

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<sup>6</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2010, *Project Eligibility*. Available from: [www.whc.org/conservation/conservation-grants/project-eligibility](http://www.whc.org/conservation/conservation-grants/project-eligibility)

<sup>7</sup> This application form is used for the NAWMP and Habitat Conservation grants.

<sup>8</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada's fiscal year runs from April 1 to March 31.

<sup>9</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2009, *Scoring Sheet re: Wildlife Habitat Canada's Evaluation of Grant Applications for 2010/2011*, p. 2.



### **2.2.1 Environment Canada Responsibilities**

The contribution agreement and associated terms and conditions outline the following EC responsibilities, which are divided between two EC organizations.

EC's Conservation Partnerships and Programs Section is responsible for the following:

- Working with WHC to select the image for the Habitat Conservation Stamp.
- Transferring the revenue generated from the sale of Habitat Conservation Stamps, to a maximum of \$2.2 million, to WHC for the delivery of wildlife habitat programs. EC is to make advance payments of anticipated revenues to WHC by monthly instalments.
- Monitoring the program. EC has the right to:
  - appoint three members (one of which is selected in consultation with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans) to the WHC Board of Directors and serve as an observer at WHC board meetings;
  - review and, if needed, request changes to WHC's annual work plan; and
  - evaluate the program and audit WHC; this includes developing a Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) for the program as well as an audit plan and framework.
- Participating in the WHC committee that reviews proposals for project funding.
- Providing, upon request, technical support to funded projects.

EC's Conservation Service Delivery and Permitting Section is responsible for:

- working with WHC to have the Habitat Conservation Stamp printed;
- distributing current-year stamps and philatelic products to Canada Post outlets, outfitters and/or provincial permit outlets for sale and reconciling sold and unsold stamps;
- providing WHC with current-year stamp booklets, artist-signed stamps, corner blocks, and panes, for sale to stamp dealers and for the limited-edition stamp program;
- donating, prior to the stamp launch date, 500 stamps in booklets to WHC for publicity purposes;
- providing WHC with previous-year stamp booklets, artist-signed stamps, corner blocks, and panes for continued sale to the public until March 31 of the year following the stamp's issue year; and
- destroying all unused stamps.

### **2.2.2 Wildlife Habitat Canada Responsibilities**

WHC is responsible for administering and delivering the Stamp Program, including:

- making arrangements to design the annual stamp (traditionally, WHC has held an annual competition to solicit the artwork);

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- working with EC to select the image for, and print, the Habitat Conservation Stamp;
- selling limited-edition prints of the stamp;
- returning unsold stamp booklets, corner blocks, and panes to EC by March 31 of each year;
- developing an annual business plan and budget;
- preparing an annual report and audited financial statements;
- applying at least 80% of the stamp revenue received to program expenditures incurred (i.e., payments to final recipients); and
- applying the balance of stamp revenue received to other expenditures relating to salaries, office and equipment, and administrative expenses incurred in maintaining a small office and staff, the selection of the image to be used for the stamp, communications to the public, and fundraising.

### **2.2.3 Wildlife Habitat Canada Organizational Structure**

A Board of Directors, comprising 8–12 members, governs WHC. The Board currently consists of 11 members, including three EC-appointed members (one of which is selected in consultation with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans), two representatives of provincial and territorial wildlife directors, one member representing a non-governmental organization (NGO) national wildlife organization, and five members selected by the Board.<sup>10</sup> The Board currently meets twice per fiscal year, with one meeting held in Ottawa and the second rotating among all provinces and territories.

Since 2005, WHC has downsized its staff complement from twelve to four. As of June 2010, WHC staff includes:

- a President, who manages the organization's business planning, corporate relations, and financial obligations;<sup>11</sup>
- a Director of Finance and Administration, who assists the President in managing the organization's business planning, corporate relations, and financial obligations;
- a Coordinator of Product Management and Communications, who is responsible for interaction with grant recipients, the artwork selection process, and the production of the Habitat Conservation Stamp; and
- an Executive Assistant, who is responsible for corporate business duties and relations with grant recipients.

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<sup>10</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2010, *Board of Directors*. Available from: <http://www.whc.org/about/board-of-directors>

<sup>11</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada has had four different presidents since April 2005: the first served from 2002 to 2006 and the second served from 2006 to 2008. An acting president governed briefly during 2008 and was replaced by the current president in July 2008.

An organizational chart for WHC appears in Figure 1.

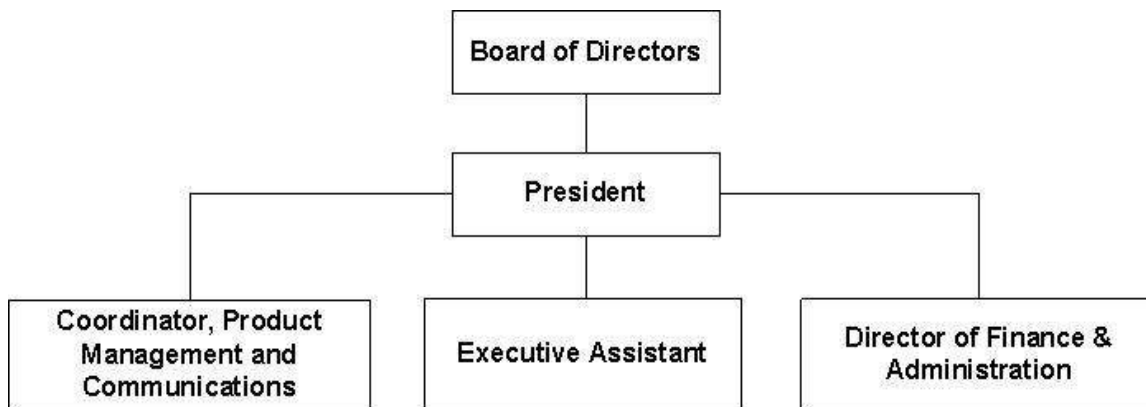


Figure 1: WHC organizational chart

## **2.3 Resource Allocation**

### **2.3.1 Program Revenue**

Revenue to fund the Stamp Program is generated through the sale of Habitat Conservation Stamps and limited-edition prints depicting the image of the stamp. Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permits with affixed Habitat Conservation Stamps are distributed to the Canadian public through vendor arrangements with Canada Post, provincial locations, select vendors in Alberta, and other outfitters. WHC and Canada Post also make limited-edition stamps (for philatelic purposes) and prints available for sale.

WHC's main revenue source is the transfers it receives from EC. EC transfers funds to WHC based on estimated sales of Habitat Conservation Stamps for the year. Table 1 shows the amount of transfers that the organization received from EC. Over the evaluation period, transfers from EC, which are earmarked for the Stamp Program, have been accounting for an increasingly larger proportion of WHC revenues. In 2009–10, transfers from EC accounted for approximately 90% of WHC's revenues.

Two major revenue sources in 2005–06 and 2006–07 were the Ontario Wetlands Habitat Fund and the Canadian International Development Agency, which together provided over \$1.5 million in revenue to WHC. These revenue sources were not used for the purposes of the Stamp Program. The Ontario Wetlands Habitat Fund was phased out by 2008–09 and the International Program, which the Canadian International Development Agency funded, ended in 2006–07. Presently, other revenue sources also include: Newfoundland's Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV), the Stewardship Portal,<sup>12</sup> and the Forest Stewardship Recognition Program. These revenue

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<sup>12</sup> Stewardship Canada developed the online Stewardship Portal to support a stewardship knowledge network (based on the premise that information is essential to good stewardship). The portal provides an easy entry point to access information, resources and contacts related to stewardship.

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sources are external to the Stamp Program and therefore were not examined as part of the evaluation.

**Table 1: Stamp revenue provided to WHC, 2005–06 to 2009–10<sup>13</sup>**

Year	Total WHC reported revenues	Transfers received from EC	Proportion of WHC revenue
2005–06	\$3,573,113	\$1,495,138	41.8%
2006–07	\$3,338,148	\$1,419,291	42.5%
2007–08	\$2,273,257	\$1,551,346	68.2%
2008–09	\$2,003,830	\$1,553,160	77.5%
2009–10	\$1,892,339	\$1,696,940	89.7%

### **2.3.2 Program Expenses**

#### **Environment Canada Stamp Program Expenses**

Overall, EC's yearly expenses with respect to administering the Stamp Program are low. For example, in 2009–10, total costs were \$48,500 (excluding shared expenditures, indicated further on in this section).

EC's Conservation Partnerships and Programs Section has negligible operations and maintenance expenses (e.g., taxis, photocopies, and travel to one WHC Board of Directors meeting per year) associated with the Stamp Program. It also devotes limited human resources to the program: although, as of 2009–10, three staff members are involved in the program, their combined contribution is estimated at only 33 days of work annually. The annual cost for these human resources is approximately \$13,000.

In 2009–10, EC's Conservation Partnerships and Programs Section issued one contract as part of the Stamp Program. This \$8,500 contract was for promotional events associated with the launch of the new stamp.

In 2009–10, EC's Conservation Service Delivery and Permitting Section also had minimal operations and maintenance expenses associated with the Stamp Program, estimated at approximately \$5,000 (which includes shredding and translation). It also devoted limited human resources to the program: approximately 0.25 full-time equivalents were dedicated to the Stamp Program, at a cost of approximately \$22,000.

#### **WHC Stamp Program Expenses**

The total annual expenditures for the Stamp Program, as reported in audited financial statements, are summarized in Table 2.

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<sup>13</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2005–06 to 2009–10, *Audited Financial Statements*.

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		<b>2005–06</b>	<b>2006–07</b>	<b>2007–08</b>	<b>2008–09</b>	<b>2009–10</b>
Stamp Program	Stamp Program cost	\$84,498	\$178,451	\$279,763	\$234,463	\$308,447
	Project funding	\$460,000	\$971,092	\$1,096,682	\$1,196,758	\$1,199,667

**Shared Stamp Program Expenditures**

There are also costs that are shared between EC and WHC with respect to the Stamp Program. These include printing costs for the Habitat Conservation Stamps and a contract with Canada Post to sell the stamps. It is unclear how much is paid by each of the two organizations.<sup>15</sup>

Over the evaluation period, printing costs were \$70,186 in 2005–06; \$73,695 in 2006–07; \$71,235 in 2007–08; \$67,994 in 2008–09; and \$69,230 in 2009–10. Costs associated with the contract with Canada Post were \$41,317 in 2005–06; \$38,449 in 2006–07; \$31,876 in 2007–08; \$38,399 in 2008–09; and \$30,423 in 2009–10.

**2.4 Program Logic Model**

The 2008 RMAF includes a logic model of the Stamp Program (Figure 2), which identifies the linkages between the Stamp Program’s activities, outputs and intended outcomes.

The expected immediate outcomes of the Stamp Program are:

- increase in the number and types of wildlife habitat protected, conserved, enhanced and restored;
- increase in scientific understanding of protection, enhancement and restoration of wildlife habitats;
- increase in the application of innovative habitat conservation tools;
- existence and utilization of voluntary preventative measures to protect, restore and enhance habitats;
- increase in the number of private landowners engaged in habitat stewardship activities;
- increased overall participation in the number and types of partners involved in habitat conservation; and
- enhanced partnerships in support of habitat conservation.

The expected intermediate outcomes of the Stamp Program are:

<sup>14</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada. 2005–06 to 2009–10. *Audited Financial Statements*.

<sup>15</sup> During discussions with EC and WHC, it was noted that WHC is responsible for 100% of philatelic stamp printing costs, as well as 100% of the printing costs associated with Habitat Conservation Stamps that have been sold. EC is responsible for printing costs associated with unsold Habitat Conservation Stamps. Therefore, WHC’s share of the printing costs would be higher than EC’s.

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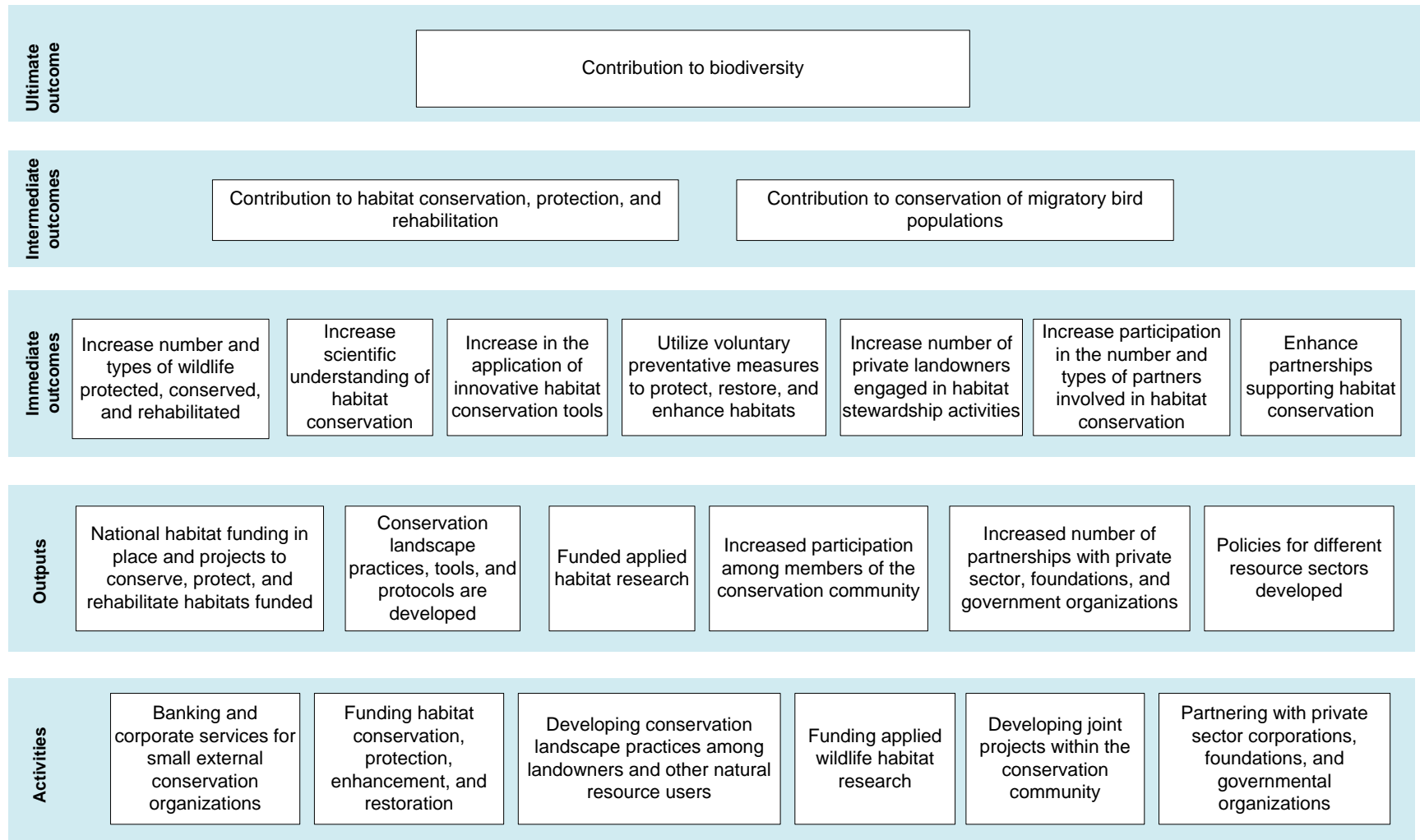
- a contribution to the conservation, protection and rehabilitation of habitats; and
- a contribution to the conservation of migratory bird populations.

The expected ultimate outcome of the Stamp Program is:

- a contribution to the conservation of biological diversity.

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Figure 2: WHC’s Stamp Program logic model



## **3.0 EVALUATION DESIGN**

This section outlines the evaluation purpose and scope, along with the data collection approach and methods used.

### **3.1 Formative Evaluation**

A formative evaluation of the Wildlife Habitat Canada Conservation Stamp Program was conducted in 2004–05 and approved by the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee in the summer of 2005. The evaluation covered work carried out at WHC from April 1, 2000 to December 31, 2004. It arrived at the following conclusions:

- Serious deficiencies exist in WHC and in the Canadian Wildlife Service's (CWS's) management and oversight of the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp Program;
- WHC's activities drifted considerably from those established at the organization's founding in 1984; and
- Alternatives to the current delivery approach existed and needed to be examined prior to the development of any future contribution agreement. The need and rationale for maintaining mandatory contributions from waterfowl hunters also required further assessment.

The evaluation recommended the following:

- Implement a number of identified actions to ensure greater accountability over the transferred resources.
- Attend WHC Board of Directors and Committee meetings.
- Consult EC legal services with respect to the relevance of the *User Fees Act*, and accompanying policies, to the collection of permitting fees and the sale of the Habitat Conservation Stamp to migratory game bird hunters in Canada.
- Consult with paying stakeholders and other stakeholders, including the provinces, and make a determination with respect to the continued need and relevance of the Habitat Conservation Stamp.
- Develop service standards for expenditure of the stamp revenues, in accordance with the requirements of the *User Fees Act*, as appropriate.
- Analyze options and identify desired delivery approach.
- Clarify federal expectations with respect to any future contribution agreement.

### **3.2 Purpose and Scope**

This evaluation covers the period from April 1, 2005, to March 31, 2010, and follows a formative evaluation approved in 2005–06. The evaluation was completed between October 2009 and October 2010.



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As indicated in the Treasury Board Secretariat's directive on the evaluation function (April 2009), this report presents the results of an evaluation that examined the following issues:

- **Relevance** – Does the Stamp Program remain consistent with and contribute to federal government priorities and address actual needs?
- **Performance** – Has the Stamp Program met its intended outcomes? Are the most appropriate, efficient and economic means being used to achieve outcomes?

The following evaluation issues were addressed as part of this evaluation:

#### ***Relevance:***

1. Is there a continued need for the Stamp Program? Why or why not?
2. Is the Stamp Program aligned with federal government priorities?
3. Is there a legitimate, appropriate and necessary role for EC in the Stamp Program?

#### ***Performance:***

4. Are appropriate performance data being collected, captured and safeguarded? If so, is this information being used to inform senior management / decision makers?
5. Have EC and WHC organized their activities related to the contribution agreement with the least cost?
6. Is the contribution agreement resulting in the production of required outputs with the least cost?
7. To what extent are funded projects realizing the outcomes of the Stamp Program?
8. Have there been any unintended (positive or negative) outcomes?
9. Would alternate methods produce the required outputs and outcomes at lower cost?

The matrix of the evaluation issues/questions, indicators, and data sources that guided the evaluation appears in Annex A.

### ***3.3 Evaluation Approach and Methodology***

The evaluation drew on four lines of evidence: document review, literature review, file review and key-informant interviews.

#### ***Document Review***

The purpose of the document review was to produce a program profile of the WHC Conservation Stamp Program, and describe the documented evidence that was available to respond to the evaluation questions.

The review incorporated documents provided by EC as well as publicly available materials pertinent to the evaluation. Examples of documents include:

- Treasury Board submissions and Memoranda to Cabinet;

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- Memoranda to Minister and other internal briefing materials;
- Stamp Program RMAF / results-based audit framework;
- Stamp Program documentation (e.g., progress and annual reports, annual work plans, WHC communications plan, and meeting minutes);
- Stamp Program financial and performance data (for the program as a whole and on an individual-project basis);
- WHC publications and policies (e.g., status of habitat reports; applied research reports; information on conservation landscape practices, tools, and protocols; and articles published in professional and scientific journals);
- *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* and *Migratory Birds Regulations*;
- EC Reports on Plans and Priorities and Departmental Performance Reports;
- 2004–05 Formative Evaluation of the WHC Conservation Stamp Program; and
- 2007 Environment Canada Consultation Paper on Options for the Future of the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp, Use of Conservation Revenues, and the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit, as well as the results of those consultations.

This data collection method addressed evaluation questions 1 to 8.

### ***Literature Review***

The objective of the literature review was to:

- describe the biological and economic importance of wildlife habitats, and review evidence investigating whether Canadians are at risk of losing the benefits that habitats provide;
- discuss, in theory, whether governments should be involved in wetland preservation, and describe common forms of policy intervention; and
- examine policies, programs, initiatives, legislation and institutions aimed at preserving wildlife habitats in Canada, to determine whether they complement or duplicate the Stamp Program's objectives.

The literature review drew on the following information sources:

- government websites (e.g., EC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service);
- websites of NGOs involved in habitat and wildlife conservation (e.g., WHC, Ducks Unlimited Canada [DUC], the Nature Conservancy of Canada [NCC], and the Wildlife Habitat Council);
- a keyword search of the academic literature (articles in refereed journals) and technical literature (reports produced by research institutes); keywords included *wetlands*, *migratory birds*, *conservation* and *biodiversity*; and
- key journals in the fields of wetland biology and environmental management. The review involved examination of entire volumes and issues of these and other journals, to obtain additional relevant materials. Key articles and reports were identified through a review of abstracts. Additional pertinent literature was also found by reviewing the bibliographies of selected articles.

This data collection method addressed evaluation questions 1 and 9.

### ***File Review***

The objective of the file review was to collect data on the financial sources used and outcomes obtained for all of the projects that WHC funded in 2008–09 and 2009–10.<sup>16</sup> The file review involved an examination of the final reports for the funded projects. Although a total of 56 projects were included in the file review, final reports were only available for 49 of the projects.<sup>17</sup>

This data collection method addressed evaluation questions 4 to 8.

### ***Key-Informant Interviews***

Interviews were completed with 21 key informants, representing the following groups:

#### **Environment Canada**

- Senior management (2)
- Program managers and staff (2)

#### **WHC**

- Board of Directors (4)
- Management and staff (4)

#### **Other stakeholders**

- Successful applicants (community representatives) (9)

EC emailed key informants an introductory letter describing the objectives of the evaluation and explaining that the contractor may contact them to schedule an interview.

Interviews were conducted over the phone, in the key informant's preferred official language. Prior to the interview, key informants received a copy of the interview guide so they could provide considered responses. Three interview guides were used—one for senior management, one for EC and WHC program representatives, and one for successful applicants.

Key informants were assured of the anonymity of their responses. To ensure accuracy, the interviews were audio-recorded (with the respondents' permission). The recordings were destroyed once the interview notes were completed.

This data collection method addressed evaluation questions 1 to 9.

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<sup>16</sup> The file review focused on 2008–09 and 2009–10, as the latest contribution agreement between EC and WHC was signed in 2008.

<sup>17</sup> The remaining seven final reports were still outstanding at the time the request for the 56 files was made.

### **3.4 Limitations**

There are two specific limitations associated with this evaluation.

#### **1. Performance Information**

It is difficult to determine the level of success of the Stamp Program in achieving its objectives, because:

- a. Baseline data for the expected outcomes have not been collected.
- b. The Stamp Program does not maintain aggregate-level or outcome-level data aside from the total number of acres conserved/protected and the total amount of cash and in-kind contributions that partners made to projects funded through the Stamp Program. Presently, the information included in the project reports tends to be activity-based and output-based rather than outcome-based.
- c. The Stamp Program does not systematically verify whether funded projects achieved their reported successes. However, some members of the Board of Directors, out of personal interest, will occasionally view some of the on-the-ground projects.

Given the nature of the Stamp Program as a top-up mechanism, it may be unrealistic to expect that the program could implement such a performance measurement strategy. However, the Treasury Board Policy on Transfer Payments is clear in this regard: each Grants & Contributions program is responsible for implementing a set of performance indicators, expected results and outcomes, methods for the reporting on performance, and evaluation criteria to be used in the assessment of the effectiveness of the transfer payments. The very nature of the tool therefore limits its ability to respond to the Policy on Transfer Payments.

Consequently, much of the analysis of the success of the Stamp Program draws upon activity-based and output-based information, as well as subjective evidence derived from key-informant interviews. Thus, the evaluators' ability to report on the achievement of program outcomes was limited.

#### **2. Attribution**

The Stamp Program funds individual projects, which also receive funding from many other sources.<sup>18</sup> On average, program contributions have accounted for approximately 10% of the total value of projects funded. This makes it difficult to assess the extent to which the Stamp Program funding contributed to project results. Consequently, analysis of the contribution of the Stamp Program to the overall improvement of wetlands in Canada is difficult to determine and is primarily based on subjective evidence derived from key-informant interviews.

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<sup>18</sup> The participation of multiple partners is an eligibility condition for WHC funding. Source: Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2009, *Scoring Sheet re: Wildlife Habitat Canada's Evaluation of Grant Applications for 2010/2011*, p. 2.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

This section presents the evaluation findings by evaluation issue (relevance and performance) and by the related evaluation questions. The findings at the overall issue level are presented first, followed by the findings for each evaluation question.

A rating is also provided for each evaluation question, based on a judgement of the evaluation findings. The rating symbols and their significance are outlined below in Table 3. A summary of ratings for the evaluation issues and questions is presented in Annex C.

<b>Table 3: Rating symbols and significance</b>	
<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Significance</b>
<b>Achieved</b>	The intended outcomes or goals have been achieved or met
<b>Progress made; attention needed</b>	Considerable progress has been made to meet the intended outcomes or goals, but attention is still needed
<b>Little progress; priority for attention</b>	Little progress has been made to meet the intended outcomes or goals, and attention is needed on a priority basis
<b>N/A</b>	A rating is not applicable
~	Outcomes achievement ratings are based solely on subjective evidence

### 4.1 Relevance

#### Summary of Findings: Evaluation Issue – Relevance

Wetlands are one of the most biologically productive habitats on the planet and support a wide range of flora and fauna. They are particularly important for migratory birds, as they provide food, shelter, and breeding opportunities. According to EC documentation, it is estimated that in settled areas of Canada, up to 70% of wetlands have been lost or degraded.

With respect to wetlands and habitats supporting waterfowl, the Stamp Program aims to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and respond to habitat loss, which is one of the leading causes of species endangerment and declines in biodiversity. Although the extent and current rate of wetland loss in Canada is largely unknown, it is widely believed that wetland loss continues and that there is a continued need for conservation efforts.

The Stamp Program aligns well with the Government of Canada's priorities and EC's mandate and responsibilities. The Government of Canada and provincial and territorial governments have shared jurisdiction for wetlands management, and the federal government has direct responsibility for the estimated 29% of Canada's wetlands located on federal land. Additionally, the Stamp Program supports and/or aligns with various international commitments that the Government of Canada has made since the 1980s to protect and conserve wetlands (e.g., the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the NAWMP and the Convention on Biological Diversity).

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Eight federal statutes contribute to wetland conservation in Canada, including the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*. The Act covers EC's role in wetland conservation. Furthermore, the *Migratory Birds Regulations, 1994* under the Act outline the legitimacy of WHC's role in delivering the Stamp Program, by specifying that stamp revenues are to be used by WHC.

Interviewees felt that there was a continued need for the Stamp Program, as there are relatively few funding sources for conservation projects specifically targeting wetlands associated with waterfowl. An analysis of data collected revealed that the Stamp Program is one of several habitat conservation programs in Canada, many of which also receive Government of Canada funding. Although some habitat conservation programs also target wetlands associated with waterfowl, many of the other federal programs do not solely focus on wetlands—they also address other aspects of biodiversity, wildlife (including species at risk), and/or habitat conservation. Various NGOs or non-profit organizations focus on wetlands; WHC, through the Stamp Program, either partners with these organizations or targets other wetlands. The activities of these organizations may not necessarily duplicate those of the Stamp Program with respect to its focus on specific wetlands areas, even though all are concerned overall with conservation-related issues in Canada (focusing on species and the habitats that support them). Although the Stamp Program has focused on a specific niche in the conservation area, other programs, both federal and non-governmental, target the same issues and may be better financially situated to address these issues. Furthermore, evidence collected as part of the file review revealed that there is duplication of effort, as some Stamp Program recipients received funding from two or three different sources within EC.

The Stamp Program was designed as a “top-up” program to complement other conservation programs that wholly or in part support wetland conservation. Despite this design, some interviewees questioned the value of contributing relatively small amounts of funding to “top up” projects with large budgets. Indeed, comparing the amounts that WHC provides to conservation projects with those provided by other partners, it would seem that WHC is essentially topping up other funding, providing a total of \$2.8 million in 2008–09 and 2009–10, while partners provided approximately \$23 million to those same conservation projects. It was suggested that the Stamp Program needs to be more strategic in selecting projects to fund (e.g., revisiting project eligibility and scoring criteria).

### 4.1.1 Continued Need for the Program

Evaluation Issue: Relevance	Indicator(s)	Methods	Rating
1. Is there a continued need for the WHC Conservation Stamp Program? Why or why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of continued habitat loss</li> <li>▪ Evidence that habitat loss adversely affects biodiversity in Canada</li> <li>▪ Presence/absence of other programs that complement or duplicate the objectives of the WHC Conservation Stamp Program</li> <li>▪ Views on connection of program objectives with societal/environmental needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Literature review</li> <li>▪ Key-informant interviews</li> </ul>	Progress made; attention needed

### Habitat Loss and Biodiversity

Habitat losses are one of the leading causes of species endangerment and declines in biodiversity. The scientific literature identifies wetlands, which support a wide range of flora and fauna, as one of the most biologically productive habitats on the planet.<sup>19</sup> EC reports that wetlands provide a critical source of habitat for over 155 bird species, 45 waterfowl species, and 50 mammalian species, many of which are endangered or at risk.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, wetlands serve as a source of water filtration, fish spawning and nursery areas, shoreline protection, reservoirs, oxygen and water vapour needed for natural atmospheric and climatic cycles, and recreation.<sup>21</sup> Wetlands can also generate ecological goods and services, which are “the social, cultural and economic benefits arising from the healthy functioning of ecosystems, including stable climates, clean air and water, biodiversity, food, energy, raw materials and aesthetically pleasing landscapes.”<sup>22</sup>

Wetlands are a particularly important source of food, shelter, and breeding grounds for migratory birds. It is believed that as much as half of North American waterfowl originate from the Prairie Pothole Region,<sup>23</sup> which is estimated to account for 20% of the continent’s total duck population.<sup>24</sup> Because many migratory birds need access to

<sup>19</sup> Environment Canada, 2010, “Wetlands of Ontario.” Available from: [www.ec.gc.ca/tho-wlo/default.asp?lang=En&n=06269065-1](http://www.ec.gc.ca/tho-wlo/default.asp?lang=En&n=06269065-1)

John Randolph, 2004, *Environmental Land Use Planning and Management*, p. 511.

<sup>20</sup> Environment Canada, 2009, “Quickfacts.” Available from: [www.ec.gc.ca/eau-water/default.asp?lang=En&n=11A8CA33-1](http://www.ec.gc.ca/eau-water/default.asp?lang=En&n=11A8CA33-1)

<sup>21</sup> Environment Canada, 2010, “About Wetlands.” Available from: [www.ec.gc.ca/tho-wlo/default.asp?lang=En&n=B4669525-1](http://www.ec.gc.ca/tho-wlo/default.asp?lang=En&n=B4669525-1)

<sup>22</sup> Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2008, *Securing Natural Capital and Ecological Goods and Services for Canada*, p. 2. Available from: [www.irpp.org/cpa/briefs/olewiler\\_f.pdf](http://www.irpp.org/cpa/briefs/olewiler_f.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> The Prairie Pothole Region extends from western Canada into the north-central United States, and covers large areas of land in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

<sup>24</sup> G. C. van Kooten and Andrew Schmitz, 1992, “Preserving waterfowl habitat on the Canadian prairies: economic incentives versus moral suasion,” *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 74(1):79–89.

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wetlands during their migration and breeding seasons, Stewart (1999)<sup>25</sup> argues that wetland loss requires wetland-dependent birds (including migratory birds) to use less-suitable habitat, resulting in higher mortality and lower reproductive success. Further, Leslie (2006)<sup>26</sup> reports that of the eight species of North American birds that became extinct since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, five were wetland-dependent, and suggests that habitat loss “likely played at least some part in all of them.” However, Stewart (1999)<sup>27</sup> points out that not all birds are equally dependent on wetlands, nor are all wetlands equally important to birds, in part because each species has a “unique and complex set of needs for wetland habitats,” which in turn “makes it difficult to generalize about how loss or degradation of wetlands affects bird populations.” He concludes that “it seems reasonable to expect ... that as the numbers of wetlands in a region decline, so too will the numbers of wetland-dependent birds.”

The scientific literature confirms that substantial wetland loss has occurred. It is estimated that, since 1900, 50% of the world’s wetlands have been lost.<sup>28</sup> Further, it is estimated that in settled areas of Canada, up to 70% of wetlands have been lost or degraded.<sup>29</sup> Much of the wetland loss in Canada is due to conversion to agricultural uses (85%), and urban growth and industrial expansion (9%).<sup>30</sup> Although it is not known with certainty how many hectares of wetlands exist in Canada, it is estimated that there are approximately 127 million hectares,<sup>31</sup> which represents approximately 14%<sup>32</sup> of Canada’s land area<sup>33</sup> and approximately one quarter of all wetlands in the world.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Robert E. Stewart, 1999, *Technical Aspects of Wetlands: Wetlands as Bird Habitat*, U.S. Geological Survey Water Supply Paper No. 2425. Available from: [water.usgs.gov/nwsum/WSP2425/birdhabitat.html](http://water.usgs.gov/nwsum/WSP2425/birdhabitat.html)

<sup>26</sup> Scott Leslie, 2006, *Wetland Birds of North America: A Guide to Observation, Understanding and Conservation*, Toronto (ON): Key Porter Books, p. 33.

<sup>27</sup> Stewart, *Technical Aspects of Wetlands*.

<sup>28</sup> Environment Canada, “Quickfacts.”

<sup>29</sup> Environment Canada, 2004, *Wetlands: Wet, Wild and Essential...and they need our help!* Available from: [www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/docs/pdf/wetlandsposter04-e.pdf](http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/docs/pdf/wetlandsposter04-e.pdf). Note: This figure appears in numerous publications. The original source is unknown.

<sup>30</sup> Government of Canada, 1991, *The Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation*, p. 4. Available from: [www.wetlandscanada.org/Federal%20Policy%20on%20Wetland%20Conservation.pdf](http://www.wetlandscanada.org/Federal%20Policy%20on%20Wetland%20Conservation.pdf)

Ed Wiken, Jean Cinq-Mars, Moreno Padilla, Harold Moore and Claudia Latsch, 2003, *The State of Canadian Wetlands*, p. 6. Presented at the Conference on Canadian Wetlands Stewardship: Setting a Course Together, Ottawa (ON). Available from: [http://whc.org/files/wetland\\_status\\_canada\\_feb7\\_03.doc](http://whc.org/files/wetland_status_canada_feb7_03.doc)

<sup>31</sup> Natural Resources Canada, *The Atlas of Canada*. Available from:

[http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/learningresources/theme\\_modules/wetlands/index.html](http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/learningresources/theme_modules/wetlands/index.html). This statistic dates back to 1988. Given that wetland loss has not stopped since that time, this figure overestimates the extent of Canada’s wetlands.

<sup>32</sup> Wiken et al. place this figure at closer to 160 million hectares, and estimate that wetlands cover about 18% of Canada’s surface. However, they acknowledge that the extent of wetlands can vary according to the measurement technique used.

<sup>33</sup> North American Wetlands Conservation Council, 1993, *Wetlands: A Celebration of Life—Final Report of the Canadian Wetlands Conservation Task Force*, p.10. Available from: [www.wetlandscanada.org/Wetlands%20a%20Celebration%20of%20Life%201993-1.pdf](http://www.wetlandscanada.org/Wetlands%20a%20Celebration%20of%20Life%201993-1.pdf). Note: the majority of Canada’s wetlands are found in the prairie provinces (37%), Ontario (23%), and the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (23%).

<sup>34</sup> Environment Canada, *Wetlands: Wet, Wild and Essential ... and they need our help!* p. 2.



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It is widely believed that Canada is continuing to lose wetlands, although the rate of loss is unknown. In the early 1990s, Bond et al. estimated that wetlands in Canada were disappearing at a rate of 0.5 hectares (i.e., approximately 1.24 acres) per minute.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, in its recent report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the Government of Canada (2009) reported that although the rate of wetland loss has declined over time, it has not been altogether halted.<sup>36</sup>

The widely shared perception that Canada is still losing wetlands suggests there is a continued need for wetland conservation; however, the extent of the need is unknown. The Government of Canada acknowledges that few detailed studies have assessed recent wetland loss in this country.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, neither a comprehensive inventory nor a status and trends monitoring program currently exists.<sup>38</sup>

All groups of key informants believe there is a continued need for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitats, migratory bird populations, and biodiversity. They indicated that the wetland losses are due to factors such as urban sprawl, increasing farm sizes, forestry practices, water drainage, and intensive agricultural practices. All groups of key informants explained that wetland habitat loss has a direct and negative impact on waterfowl populations and biodiversity.

#### **Other Conservation Programs**

The Stamp Program is one of a multitude of habitat conservation programs and organizations in Canada, many of which the Government of Canada funds. As noted in section 2.1, the Stamp Program's primary focus is on habitat conservation, restoration and enhancement in wetlands that are associated with waterfowl. An examination of project eligibility criteria reveals that funds cannot be used for projects involving non-waterfowl species, species at risk, or fish habitat conservation, restoration and enhancement. The following are examples of other federal and non-governmental conservation-related programs, initiatives and organizations that exist in Canada.

#### **Federal**

- The Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk (HSP) (led by EC) engages Canadians in conservation actions to contribute to the recovery of endangered,

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North American Wetlands Conservation Council, 1993, *Wetlands: A Celebration of Life – Final Report of the Canadian Wetlands Conservation Task Force*, p. 10. Available from:

[www.wetlandscanada.org/Wetlands%20a%20Celebration%20of%20Life%201993-1.pdf](http://www.wetlandscanada.org/Wetlands%20a%20Celebration%20of%20Life%201993-1.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Wayne K. Bond, Kenneth W. Cox, Thomas Heberlein, Edward W. Manning, David R. Witty and Don A. Young, 1992, *Wetland Evaluation Guide*, p. 6 (Issues Paper No. 1992-1), Ottawa (ON): North American Wetlands Conservation Council. Available from:

[www.wetlandscanada.org/Wetland%20Evaluation%201992.pdf](http://www.wetlandscanada.org/Wetland%20Evaluation%201992.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Government of Canada, 2009, *Canada's 4th National Report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity*, p. 11. Available from: [www.cbd.int/doc/world/ca/ca-nr-04-en.pdf](http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ca/ca-nr-04-en.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada's 4th National Report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity*, p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Clayton D. A. Rubec, Alan R. Hanson, 2008, "Wetland mitigation and compensation: Canadian experience," *Wetlands Ecology and Management* 17(1):3–14.

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threatened and other species at risk, and to prevent other species from becoming a conservation concern.

- The Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP) (administered by EC; funds are made available to the NCC) facilitates the acquisition of ecologically sensitive lands to ensure the protection of diverse ecosystems, wildlife and habitat.
- The NAWMP is an international action plan signed by the United States, Canada (led by EC) and Mexico, to conserve migratory birds throughout the continent. The Plan's goal is to return waterfowl populations to their 1970s levels by conserving wetland and upland habitat. On-the-ground work is undertaken by such organizations as DUC, the NCC and the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation, funded through Grants & Contributions.
- The Protected Areas Network (led by EC) identifies nationally important wildlife habitat whose loss would have a direct impact on the Canadian population of one or more wild species. Thus far, 11.8 million hectares of habitat have been protected, including 1.5 million hectares of aquatic habitat, through the creation of National Wildlife Areas (51 sites), Migratory Bird Sanctuaries (92 sites) and Marine Wildlife Areas (1 site proposed).

#### **Non-governmental Organizations**

- DUC, which conserves, restores and manages wetlands and associated habitat for North American waterfowl.
- The NCC, which protects areas of biological diversity for their intrinsic value and for the benefit of future generations.
- The Canadian Wildlife Federation, which aims to increase policy makers' and the public's awareness of wildlife and wildlife issues, through a range of educational materials and programs and through supporting conservation-related programs carried out by other organizations.
- Nature Canada, which aims to protect and conserve wildlife and habitats in Canada by engaging people and advocating on behalf of nature.

Key informants also identified other federal conservation programs, such as EcoAction, the Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk, the National Environmental Farm Planning Initiative (discontinued), the Interdepartmental Recovery Fund, the Biosphere Reserve, the Environmental Damages Fund, and the Ecological Gifts Program. Despite the existence of these other conservation programs, all groups of key informants indicated that these programs alone cannot meet the need for habitat conservation in Canada. They stated that these programs do not duplicate the Stamp Program, because many of the other federal programs do not solely focus on wetlands, but address other aspects of biodiversity, wildlife (including species at risk), and/or habitat conservation (including wetlands). Moreover, conservation organizations indicated that these other programs do not fund habitat networking.

WHC representatives also explained that the Stamp Program does not overlap with other non-governmental conservation organizations in funding the same project

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proponents. Although various non-governmental or non-profit organizations focus on wetlands, the Stamp Program either partners with these organizations (e.g., the NCC and DUC) or targets other wetlands. Additionally, they indicated that WHC facilitates, coordinates and supports the work that other organizations are carrying out, by participating with them on various committees, working with the Habitat Joint Ventures, provincial groups and other agencies, and participating in stewardship and biodiversity conferences.

The Government of Canada provides some of these programs and conservation organizations with much higher amounts of financial support than the Stamp Program (the Stamp Program's revenues are limited by the number of Habitat Conservation Stamps sold each year). While the Stamp Program presently receives between \$1.5 and \$1.6 million per year, the NACP is receiving a total of \$225 million (starting in 2007 until all of the funds have been used) and the HSP received \$30.6 million between 2006–2007 and 2008–2009. Additionally, over the evaluation period, the NAWMP received an average of \$9.3 million per year from EC (including from the CWS, the HSP, the Environmental Damages Fund and EcoAction). Furthermore, the WHC Stamp Program provides about 25% of its funds toward NAWMP projects, including joint ventures. Although these programs may not necessarily duplicate the Stamp Program with respect to its focus on specific wetland areas, they are all concerned overall with conservation-related issues in Canada (focusing on species and the habitats that support them, including wetlands areas). Thus, there is potential for overlap. For instance, waterfowl, which are considered a species at risk (e.g., Harlequin Duck), may be targeted (along with the habitats that support them) by programs such as the HSP, which may be better financially situated to address the issue of conservation of wetlands associated with waterfowl. Therefore, even though the Stamp Program has focused on a specific niche in the conservation area, other federal and non-governmental programs are focused on very similar issues and may be better financially situated to address these issues.

Furthermore, evidence collected as part of the file review reveals that in 2008–09 and 2009–10, WHC recipients received contributions from a variety of partners (WHC provided about 10% of total project funding),<sup>39</sup> including:

- watershed authorities provided approximately \$200,000 in cash contributions and almost \$300,000 in in-kind contributions;
- U.S. sources provided \$1.3 million;
- the NACP provided \$1,000,525;
- conservation organizations (e.g., habitat organizations, bird/waterfowl organizations, wildlife organizations, and fish/hunter organizations) provided almost \$1 million in cash contributions and over \$3 million in in-kind contributions; and
- recipients also received funding from governments (federal, provincial and municipal), which together provided \$1.9 million in cash contributions to projects.

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<sup>39</sup> Section 4.2.2 discusses in detail the contributions that various stakeholders have made to conservation projects funded by the WHC Stamp Program.

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Of this, the Government of Canada provided almost \$1 million. Contributing federal departments included EC (\$831,000), Western Economic Diversification Canada (\$53,000), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (\$41,000) and Parks Canada (\$16,000).

Various EC programs provided funding to projects funded by the WHC Stamp Program. As stated, EC provided \$831,000 to 11 of the 56 projects examined as part of the file review, in addition to approximately \$2.8 million (see Table 6 on page 39) in funding provided as part of the Stamp Program over the same period. This included \$588,000 from the CWS, \$33,665 from the HSP and \$24,000 from the Science Horizons Youth Internship Program (the remaining sources of EC funding were not specified). Some WHC recipients received funding from two or three different sources within EC, which, although allowed under the terms and conditions of the contribution agreement with WHC, is a duplication of effort.

#### **Connection of Program Objectives with Societal/Environmental Needs**

Some WHC representatives and successful applicants explained that the hunting community advocated for the creation of a program such as the WHC Conservation Stamp Program, and continue to support its existence. They reported that a unique aspect of the Stamp Program is that the people who buy the stamps—hunters and the public—know that the money raised from the stamps directly supports conservation activities.<sup>40</sup>

Key informants stated that there is a need for the Stamp Program because there are relatively few funding sources available for conservation projects aimed solely at wetlands associated with waterfowl. They reported that it is difficult for conservation organizations to find funding sources for their projects, especially since the 2008 economic downturn. Furthermore, WHC representatives noted that they receive more applications than they are able to fund. However, an analysis of data collected reveals that there are many organizations that provide funding to conservation projects (as discussed in detail in section 4.2.2).

A few stakeholders suggested that in years past, WHC was not focusing on the priorities it was set up to address. However, they believe that this situation has been resolved and noted that WHC is now focusing on wetlands and waterfowl and has publicly recognized the support from hunters.

A few successful applicants questioned the value of contributing relatively small amounts of funding to projects with large budgets. They suggested that WHC could be more strategic in selecting projects to receive funding (e.g., revisiting project eligibility and scoring criteria). Furthermore, some stakeholders suggested that WHC's priorities could be revisited to assess whether it would be appropriate for the program to focus on

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<sup>40</sup> EC and WHC reported that responses to their separate public consultations conducted in 2007 suggest that there is public, private sector and provincial government support for the Stamp Program. For further information, please see section 4.2.5.

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other priorities (e.g., to invest in landscape monitoring projects and/or the creation of a baseline).

#### **4.1.2 Alignment with Government Priorities**

<b>Evaluation Issue: Relevance</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Rating</b>
2. Is the WHC Conservation Stamp Program aligned with federal government priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Extent to which WHC Conservation Stamp Program aligns with:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Government of Canada's current objectives and priorities</li><li>▪ EC's current objectives and priorities</li></ul></li><li>▪ Views on alignment of WHC Conservation Stamp Program outcomes with recent/current federal government and EC priorities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Document review</li><li>▪ Key-informant interviews</li></ul>	Achieved

In the 2010 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada committed “to further protect and preserve the diversity and health of our natural environment ... bolster its Action Plan on Clean Water ... build on the creation of more than 85,000 square kilometres of national parks and marine conservation areas as part of its national conservation plan.”<sup>41</sup>

The Stamp Program also supports and/or aligns with various commitments and policies that the Government of Canada has made since the 1980s to protect and conserve wetlands. For example:

- On May 15, 1981, Canada joined the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (also known as the Ramsar Convention), which is an international treaty committing member countries to “maintain the ecological character of their Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the ‘wise use’, or sustainable use, of all of the wetlands in their territories.”<sup>42</sup> Canada has 37 Wetlands of International Importance, with a surface area of 13 066 675 hectares.<sup>43</sup>
- In 1986, Canada and the United States signed the NAWMP, which is an international action plan that is striving to return waterfowl populations to their 1970s levels through the conservation of wetlands and upland habitat. Since its

<sup>41</sup> Government of Canada, 2010, *Speech from the Throne*. Available from: [www.speech.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1388](http://www.speech.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1388)

<sup>42</sup> The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, no date, *About the Ramsar Convention*. Available from: [www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-about-ramsar/main/ramsar/1-36%5E7687\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-about-ramsar/main/ramsar/1-36%5E7687_4000_0)

<sup>43</sup> The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, no date, *Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands*. Available from: [www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-parties-contracting-parties-to-23808/main/ramsar/1-36-123%5E23808\\_4000\\_0](http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-parties-contracting-parties-to-23808/main/ramsar/1-36-123%5E23808_4000_0)

creation, NAWMP partners have conserved over 5.2 million hectares of wetlands and associated upland habitat.<sup>44</sup>

- In 1991, the Government of Canada established a Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation. The objective of the policy is to “promote the conservation of Canada’s wetlands to sustain their ecological and socio-economic functions, now and in the future.”<sup>45</sup> The policy comprises the following seven strategies for the use and management of wetlands: developing public awareness; managing wetlands on federal lands and waters in other federal programs; promoting wetland conservation in federal protected areas; enhancing cooperation with provinces, territories and NGOs; conserving wetlands of significance to Canadians; ensuring a sound scientific basis for policy; and promoting international actions.
- In June 1992, Canada was the first industrialized country to ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity, the objectives of which are “the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.”<sup>46</sup> The Convention requires participants to develop national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and to integrate these into broader national plans for environmental development.

Prior to 2010–11, the activities of WHC contributed to the EC Program Activity Architecture outcome “biodiversity is conserved and protected.” As discussed in section 4.1.1, the populations of some species of migratory birds are declining or are at risk due to loss of wetland habitats. The health and status of these habitats is directly related to the health and status of biodiversity.

In 2009–10, EC updated its Program Activity Architecture. Following this update, and effective as of 2010-11, EC’s involvement in the Stamp Program now supports the following strategic outcome: Canada’s natural environment is conserved and restored for present and future generations. The Stamp Program falls under the *biodiversity and wildlife habitat* program activity, which seeks to prevent biodiversity loss while still enabling sustainable use by:

- protecting and recovering species at risk;
- conserving, restoring and rehabilitating significant habitats;
- conserving and managing migratory birds; and

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<sup>44</sup> NAWMP, 2009, *Canadian Habitat Matters 2009 Annual Report*, p. 1. Available from: [www.nawmp.ca/pdf/HabMat2009AnnualReport\\_E.pdf](http://www.nawmp.ca/pdf/HabMat2009AnnualReport_E.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Government of Canada, *The Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation*.

<sup>46</sup> Convention on Biological Diversity, 2010, “About the Convention.” Available from: [www.cbd.int/convention/about.shtml](http://www.cbd.int/convention/about.shtml)

Environment Canada, 2010, “Convention on Biological Diversity.” Available from: [www.cbin.ec.gc.ca/convention/default.cfm?lang=eng](http://www.cbin.ec.gc.ca/convention/default.cfm?lang=eng)

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- ensuring a coordinated and coherent national assessment, planning, and action to protect biodiversity, including viable populations of species, healthy and diverse ecosystems, and genetic resources.<sup>47</sup>

In addition, representatives of EC indicated that issues related to species at risk and migratory birds and the habitats that support them were departmental priorities, which align with the Government of Canada's habitat priorities.

#### **4.1.3 Role for Environment Canada in the Program**

<b>Evaluation Issue: Relevance</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Rating</b>
3. Is there a legitimate, appropriate and necessary role for EC in the WHC Conservation Stamp Program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Existence of legislation, Acts and policies governing EC involvement in wildlife habitat conservation/protection</li><li>▪ Extent to which the federal government has jurisdiction over the conservation/protection of wildlife/waterfowl habitat</li><li>▪ Views on whether EC should be involved in this program to conserve/protect wildlife/waterfowl habitat</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Document review</li><li>▪ Key-informant interviews</li></ul>	Achieved

The Government of Canada and provincial and territorial governments have shared jurisdiction for wetlands management. For its part, the federal government has direct responsibility for the estimated 29% of Canada's wetlands located on federal land; and, eight federal statutes contribute to wetland conservation in Canada: *the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, the *Canada Wildlife Act*, the *National Parks Act*, the *Canada Oceans Act*, the *Fisheries Act*, the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, the *Income Tax Act of Canada*, and the *Species at Risk Act*.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the Government of Canada has a responsibility to demonstrate leadership and has "committed to assisting national efforts in wetland conservation through the provision of models, tools and expertise and improving knowledge on the wetland resource of Canada" and "... act[ing] as a catalyst, stimulating and enabling Canadians to participate in a collective effort."<sup>49</sup> Additionally, key informants said it is appropriate for the federal government to have a role in protecting migratory waterfowl, because these birds move across provincial and national borders.

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<sup>47</sup> Environment Canada. *Report on Plans and Priorities*. (2009-2010).

<sup>48</sup> Government of Canada. *The federal policy on wetland conservation*. 1991. p.4. Available from: <http://dsp-psd.communication.gc.ca/Collection/CW66-116-1991E.pdf> and Lynch-Stewart, P., Kessel-Taylor, I., & Rubec, C. *Wetlands and government: Policy and legislation for wetland conservation in Canada*. 1999. (Issues Paper No. 1999-1). Available from: [www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/publications/AbstractTemplate.cfm?lang=e&id=336](http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/publications/AbstractTemplate.cfm?lang=e&id=336)

<sup>49</sup> Government of Canada. *The federal policy on wetland conservation*. 1991. p.4. Available from: <http://dsp-psd.communication.gc.ca/Collection/CW66-116-1991E.pdf>



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The *Department of the Environment Act, 1985* outlines the powers, duties and functions of the Minister of the Environment. They include the preservation and enhancement of the quality of the natural environment, including water, air and soil quality; renewable resources, including migratory birds and other non-domestic flora and fauna; and water.<sup>50</sup> To this end, EC's mandate is to "preserve and enhance the quality of the natural environment, including water, air, soil, flora and fauna; conserve Canada's renewable resources; conserve and protect Canada's water resources; forecast weather and environmental change; enforce rules relating to boundary waters; and coordinate environmental policies and programs for the federal government."<sup>51</sup> The Stamp Program, which supports activities to conserve migratory bird populations and wetlands, aligns well with EC's mandate and responsibilities.

The legitimacy of WHC's existence and EC's role in wetland conservation is largely covered under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*.<sup>52</sup> The Government of Canada assented to the Act for the purposes of protecting migratory birds in Canada and the United States. The Act gives the Government the authority to charge migratory bird hunters a fee for a hunting permit, and for a Habitat Conservation Stamp that provides the most significant source of revenue for the Stamp Program. Paragraph 12(j) of the Act states that the Government of Canada may<sup>53</sup> "...charg[e] fees for permits, leases, stamps or other authorizing documents required to carry on any activity under this Act or the regulations, and ... [to] determin[e] the amount of the fees and the terms and conditions under which they are to be paid."<sup>54</sup> Further, paragraph 4(d) of the *Migratory Birds Regulations* states that no permit is valid "in the case of a migratory game bird hunting permit, unless it has affixed to it, in the space provided therefore, the habitat conservation stamp."<sup>55</sup>

The legitimacy of WHC's role in delivering the Stamp Program is also outlined in the *Migratory Birds Regulations* under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*. Subsection 2(1) of the Regulations states that "'habitat conservation stamp' means a stamp issued for the purposes of Wildlife Habitat Canada for that period beginning on the day of issue and ending on March 10" and "'Wildlife Habitat Canada' means the corporation without share capital incorporated under Part II of the *Canada Corporations Act* by letters patent dated February 24, 1984."<sup>56</sup>

Representatives of WHC and successful applicants believe the Government of Canada has some responsibility to conserve habitats and migratory bird populations. However,

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<sup>50</sup> Department of Justice, 2010, *The Department of the Environment Act*. Available from: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/E-10/index.html>

<sup>51</sup> Environment Canada, no date, "About Environment Canada." Available from: [www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=BD3CE17D-1](http://www.ec.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=BD3CE17D-1)

<sup>52</sup> Department of Justice, 2010, *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*. Available from: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/M-7.01>

<sup>53</sup> It should be noted that the Act does not require the Government of Canada to charge fees for stamps.

<sup>54</sup> Department of Justice, *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*.

<sup>55</sup> Department of Justice, 2010, *Migratory Birds Regulations*. Available from: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/C.R.C.-c.1035/index.html>

<sup>56</sup> Department of Justice, *Migratory Birds Regulations*.



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they acknowledged that this responsibility should be shared with other orders of government and other programs.

Successful applicants noted that it was more appropriate for WHC to deliver the Stamp Program than EC, because they believed that WHC was more transparent to hunters and that the public did not trust EC to use the available funding for its intended purpose. They also believed that WHC was easier to work with than EC because it was less bureaucratic.

## **4.2 Performance**

### **Summary of Findings: Evaluation Issue – Performance**

Habitat Conservation Stamp sales declined between 1985 and 2008 by 54.3%, although they seem to have stabilized between 2002 and 2008 (the decline in that period was only 1.1%). The price for a Habitat Conservation Stamp has remained at \$8.50 since 1991. Stamp Program revenues generated have therefore also been declining over the same period, though they appear to have stabilized between \$1.5 and \$1.6 million per year.

Over the evaluation period, the Stamp Program provided approximately \$4.9 million in funding to 108 projects aimed at improving wetlands, protecting migratory bird populations and biodiversity, and supporting conservation networking. A review of files for projects funded in 2008–09 and 2009–10 revealed that the Stamp Program funding covered 8% of the total value of habitat conservation projects and 12% of the total value of NAWMP and networking projects.

Overall, WHC has significantly increased the proportion of Stamp Program revenues it provides to projects, from 30.8% of Stamp Program revenues in 2005–06 to 70.7% in 2009–10 (the highest percentage came in 2008–09, when it provided 77.1% of Stamp Program revenues received to projects). Furthermore, over the five-year period, expenditures related to the Stamp Program have remained just under 20% annually. Since the last evaluation took place in 2005, WHC has taken important steps to meet its obligations under the present contribution agreement with respect to the allocation of 80% of the Stamp Program revenues received from EC toward conservation projects.

Over the evaluation period, the amounts that EC reported transferring to WHC and the amounts that the organization reported receiving from the Department did not align. Further discussions with EC and WHC staff revealed that these discrepancies may be explained by differing financial accounting and reporting practices with respect to reporting expenditures and revenues for a given year (i.e., timing related to when expenditures are incurred). Furthermore, during follow-up discussions, EC and WHC staff also noted that Canada Post only provides its final report with respect to actual sales of Habitat Conservation Stamps for a given fiscal year in June of the following fiscal year (i.e., stamp sales for 2009–10 would only be available in June 2010). This has made it more difficult to reconcile the financial figures reported by EC and WHC, as both close their financial books for a given fiscal year in April. However, the fact

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remains that EC and WHC were unable to provide the actual amounts to fully reconcile the two sets of numbers for the entire evaluation period going back to 2005–06.

EC program representatives discussed the difficulties associated with measuring outcomes for any conservation-related program. Overall, they acknowledged that, as part of the broader suite of conservation-related programs within the Department, the contribution to achieving healthy waterfowl populations made by projects funded through the Stamp Program is unknown.

Projects funded by the Stamp Program have completed various activities intended to improve wetlands and protect migratory bird populations and biodiversity. EC representatives also were confident that the program was delivering its intended outputs and believed WHC was funding an appropriate range of conservation projects. However, the evaluation found significant shortcomings in the area of performance data collection and reporting. Although data on the amount of partner contributions provided are available, and, beginning in 2008–09, performance data on the total number of acres conserved are available, these are the only aggregate-level performance data collected and reported. The performance measurement strategy presented in the 2008 RMAF was never implemented. WHC does not recall receiving it, nor has EC followed up with respect to its implementation.

Therefore, the main sources of performance data that the evaluation could draw upon were project-level final reports prepared by funding recipients, as well as WHC's annual reports. Much of this information is activity-based rather than outcome-based and, as such, it is difficult to determine the extent to which projects were successful in achieving their objectives. Thus, the evaluator's ability to report on the achievement of Stamp Program outcomes is limited.

Key-informant interviewees had mixed reviews with respect to whether the WHC increased the number and type of partners participating in habitat conservation projects. Some believed that the conservation community was static, with no new additional partners or groups; others believed that the program had been able to influence partner involvement in projects. Interviewees also believed that the Stamp Program had made an important contribution to increasing the awareness of the need for stewardship activities through funding projects related to conservation networking.

Furthermore, some stakeholders indicated that WHC is no longer actively pursuing some of its intended outcomes, including the development of innovative habitat conservation tools. Others stated that the Stamp Program has too many expected outcomes and that some of them are unfocused. They suggested the need to revisit expected program outcomes, with an aim to refine and clarify the priorities and focus of the Stamp Program.

Finally, the Stamp Program may not represent the most cost-effective approach to achieving conservation outcomes. Although a thorough cost analysis of alternative approaches was not conducted, as it was beyond the scope of this evaluation, the fact that the Stamp Program is a small contributor (providing top-up funding) to many of the

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projects makes it difficult to attribute any improvements in waterfowl populations to the activities of the program. Possible alternatives include acquiring wetland habitat to support waterfowl or reallocating stamp revenues to other existing EC conservation-related programs. These alternatives were the subject of two separate public consultations held in 2007 by EC and WHC, which were reported to have found support for the continuation of the Stamp Program, with no changes to its design and delivery (although a few respondents to EC's public consultations did state a need to examine alternatives to determine what might be the most cost-effective approach).

#### **4.2.1 Collection and Use of Performance Data**

<b>Evaluation Issue: Relevance</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Rating</b>
4. Are appropriate performance data being collected, captured and safeguarded? If so, is this information being used to inform senior management / decision makers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Existence of baseline data for key outcome indicators</li><li>▪ Presence of populated performance-data tracking system</li><li>▪ Extent to which performance data informs/supports EC's decision-making processes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Document review</li><li>▪ File review</li><li>▪ Key-informant interviews</li></ul>	Little progress; priority for attention

The contribution agreement between EC and WHC requires WHC to provide EC with:

- a strategic plan and annual business plan highlighting the program objectives for the coming year, with details of projects, activities and budgets;
- an annual report of projects and programs carried out with the revenues derived from the stamp; and
- audited financial statements for the previous fiscal year.

The primary source of existing performance information is the final report that WHC requires funding recipients to prepare. WHC supplies funding recipients with a template to guide the preparation of the report and requires them to document their results, including specific habitat products/results that have been supported by WHC's contributions; benefits to waterfowl, wetland-associated species, and/or other wildlife; and relevance to habitat planning, decision making, and/or management. WHC then integrates the information included in the final project reports into its annual report of projects and programs. WHC representatives reported that the organization does not track increases in scientific understanding of protection, enhancement and restoration of wildlife habitats or increases in the number and types of wildlife habitats protected, conserved, enhanced and restored, which are two of the Stamp Program's intended

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immediate outcomes. They noted that they are starting to build a database of acres conserved by wetland and habitat type.

Aside from the total number of acres conserved and partners' in-kind and cash contributions to funded projects, the annual report does not provide aggregate-level information on the success of the WHC Conservation Stamp Program; it simply summarizes the final report received for each project. This style of reporting does not accommodate the development of statistics such as the number and types of habitats conserved or the number and types of partners involved in habitat-related stewardship activities. Moreover, the information included in the project reports tends to be activity-based rather than outcome-based. Furthermore, baseline data does not exist for the expected outcomes to be achieved by projects funded under the Stamp Program, meaning it is difficult to determine the level of success of a project in achieving its objectives. Thus, the evaluator's ability to report on the achievement of program outcomes is limited.

EC representatives indicated that more detailed reports from WHC on program-related outputs and outcomes would be useful. For example, EC would like to know what types of applicants WHC has, how many are repeat applicants, what types of organizations are funded, and which types of grants they have received, as well as what outcomes have resulted from long-term study of particular ecosystems.

EC representatives acknowledged the need to improve the Department's reporting on the performance of the Stamp Program. EC does not currently report internally on the program's performance, although it does track Stamp Program contributions and accomplishments under the NAWMP in its National Tracking System. Furthermore, EC representatives noted that performance information for the Stamp Program could also be reported in the Departmental Performance Report, but has not been thus far. They also indicated that the information could be used to demonstrate EC's leadership in conservation. For example, EC could report on the priority areas addressed and whether the wetland habitat conservation work complements work being conducted in the areas of species at risk or invasive alien species.

WHC representatives indicated that the *Status of Wildlife Habitats in Canada* report could provide a source of performance information. However, the last report was released in 2001. They acknowledged that the report needs to be updated, but stated that WHC does not have the financial resources required to update the report. They also stated that they have been asking the federal government to conduct a survey on the status of the wetlands because a national baseline does not exist.

In 2008, EC revised the 2002 RMAF developed for the WHC Conservation Stamp Program. The RMAF includes a performance measurement strategy, which incorporates a set of performance indicators on which WHC was expected to report (listed in Table 4). The RMAF is referred to in the Terms and Conditions appended to the 2008 contribution agreement between EC and WHC. Specifically, the Terms and Conditions state that "accountability in the management of this contribution will be ensured in accordance with the combined Results-based Management and

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Accountability Framework (RMAF).<sup>57</sup> The Terms and Conditions also discuss WHC’s need to report on performance, and state that WHC is to provide EC on a yearly basis with an annual report and audited financial statements “to enable EC to evaluate the relevancy and accomplishments of WHC and the projects undertaken with the federal funding received.”<sup>58</sup> The section on reporting does not address the requirement to report specifically on the performance indicators. WHC does not recall receiving the RMAF, and EC has not followed up with respect to the implementation of the RMAF. As a result, although WHC does provide EC with its annual report and audited financial statements yearly, performance data have not been collected with respect to these performance indicators and therefore there is limited historical performance information for the Stamp Program. Accordingly, it is difficult to determine the extent to which projects were successful in achieving their objectives.

**Table 4: Performance measurement strategy<sup>59</sup>**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Performance indicator</b>
Habitat conservation / project delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and types of wildlife habitat protected, conserved, restored and enhanced</li> <li>• Number of habitat-conservation-related activities using new/appropriate tools, landscape practices, or protocols to protect, conserve or enhance wildlife habitat</li> <li>• Number of voluntary measures being applied to conserve, restore or enhance wildlife habitat</li> <li>• Number of private landowners engaged in WHC stewardship activities</li> <li>• Number of habitat-related research projects being funded by, or receiving some form of support from, WHC</li> </ul>
Partnership development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of partners and types of partners involved in habitat-related stewardship activities, and funds raised</li> </ul>
Conservation, protection and rehabilitation of habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and types of wildlife habitat protected, conserved, restored and enhanced</li> </ul>
Conservation of migratory bird populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and types of wildlife habitat protected, conserved, restored and enhanced that serve as habitat to migratory bird species</li> </ul>
A contribution to the conservation of biological diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition by key players such as EC and others in the conservation community that WHC and other NGOs have an important role to play in the conservation of biological resources in Canada, as demonstrated in presentations, reports, and invitations to national operational and policy meetings</li> </ul>

<sup>57</sup> Environment Canada, 2008, *Terms and Conditions for a Transfer of Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamps and a Contribution to Wildlife Habitat Canada Related to the Implementation of the Wildlife Conservation Stamp Program*.

<sup>58</sup> Environment Canada, *Terms and Conditions for a Transfer of Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamps*.

<sup>59</sup> Environment Canada. *Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) and Risk-based Audit Framework (RBAF) for Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp Program*. 2008.

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The RMAF identifies the primary source of performance data as an internal project database. Although this database has not been created, WHC has started to maintain a “grants project tracking record.” This record collects administrative information related to funded projects, and contains the title of the project, applicant name, approved WHC funding amount, the date the funding agreement was signed, invoice and payment dates, and the dates that budget and cash flow projections, the interim project report, and the final project report were received. It does not, however, contain any project-level information on activities, outputs and outcomes.

The RMAF indicates that WHC is to monitor changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of key policy-makers and successful applicants. There is no documented evidence that this work has been initiated or completed.

WHC representatives noted that the performance information WHC collects is used in making decisions about which projects to fund. They noted that the Board of Directors, which is involved in the project selection process, receives regular updates at its meetings on the status and progress of projects and considers the past performance of repeat applicants in its decision-making process.

WHC representatives also stated that the organization shares Stamp Program performance information with the Habitat Joint Ventures through its participation on their boards and committees.

Successful applicants identified the need for WHC to better communicate what it does and what its accomplishments have been, noting that the organization is not as visible as it once was. It should be noted that EC had requested that the stamp revenues transferred to WHC be directed primarily to conservation-related activities.

**4.2.2 Activities and Outputs**

<b>Evaluation Issue: Performance</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<p>5. Have EC and WHC organized their activities related to the contribution agreement at the least cost?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ EC human resource requirements to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain a signed contribution agreement</li> <li>• Provide WHC with booklets, artist-signed stamps, corner blocks, and panes</li> <li>• Participate in WHC Board of Director and other committee meetings</li> <li>• Review WHC business plans, interim reports and annual reports</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Cost for WHC to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design, produce and distribute stamps</li> <li>• Administer projects</li> <li>• Promote participation in conservation activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Views on whether EC and WHC activities are undertaken at the lowest cost possible</li> <li>▪ Views on how the cost of the program activities could be reduced (without compromising quality)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key-informant interviews</li> </ul>	<p>Progress made; attention needed</p>
<p>6. Is the contribution agreement resulting in the production of required outputs at the least cost?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Amount of project funding issued to various types of projects</li> <li>▪ Percent of funding contributed by WHC (per-project basis)</li> <li>▪ Amount of funding contributed to projects by partners (per-project basis)</li> <li>▪ Views on the extent to which WHC funding encouraged other partners to also fund the project</li> <li>▪ Views on whether the cost of producing outputs is as low as possible</li> <li>▪ Views on how the cost of producing outputs could be reduced (without compromising quality)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ File review</li> <li>▪ Key-informant interviews</li> </ul>	<p>Progress made; attention needed</p>

**Stamp Sale Revenues**

Revenues to fund the WHC Stamp Program are generated through the sale of Habitat Conservation Stamps, which waterfowl hunters must purchase and affix to their annual

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Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permits (starting in 1985). In the first year of the program, the price of the stamp was set at \$4.00. Since then, the price of the stamp has been raised four times—to \$4.50 in 1986, \$6.50 in 1987, \$7.50 in 1989, and \$8.50 in 1991. No information was available on why the price has not increased since 1991.

As the price of the Habitat Conservation Stamp has not changed since 1991, the decline in revenue generated is directly related to the decline in permit sales. In Canada between 1985 and 2008, permit sales declined 54.3%, from 375 743 to 171 762.<sup>60</sup> The largest percentage declines were in the Northwest Territories / Nunavut (73%) and Prince Edward Island (70%), while the smallest decline was in Newfoundland and Labrador (37%). Declines in Ontario and Quebec, the two provinces with the greatest permit sales, were 58% and 52%, respectively. Although determining the cause of the decline is outside the scope of this evaluation, key informants suggested that hunting has declined, as it is not as socially acceptable as it previously was.

Figure 3 shows that the revenue raised from stamp sales peaked in 1991 at \$2.5 million, and then steadily declined until 2002 when it appears to have stabilized between \$1.5 and \$1.6 million.<sup>61</sup>

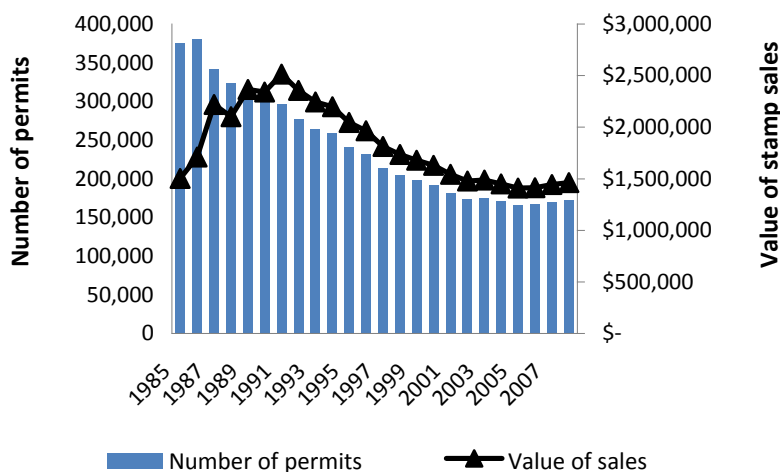


Figure 3: Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit and WHC Conservation Stamp sales, 1985 to 2008<sup>62</sup>

As summarized in Table 5, the amounts that EC reported transferring to WHC and the amounts the organization reported receiving from the Department do not align:

<sup>60</sup> Environment Canada, 2010, "Permit Sales." Available from: <http://ec.gc.ca/reom-mbs/default.asp?lang=En&n=C9046964-1>

<sup>61</sup> Between 2002 and 2008, permit sales declined from 173 555 to 171 762, i.e., 1.1%.

<sup>62</sup> Environment Canada, "Permit Sales."



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- From 2005–06 to 2008–09, EC reported transferring between \$41,556 and \$165,214 more funds to WHC than the organization said it received; and
- In 2009–10, WHC reported receiving \$116,418 more funds than EC said it provided.

Further discussions with EC and WHC staff revealed that these discrepancies may be explained by differing financial accounting and reporting practices with respect to reporting expenditures and revenues for a given year (i.e., timing related to when expenditures are incurred). Specifically, WHC reports “gross revenue” in its audited financial statements in terms of Stamp Program revenues received from EC, whereas EC reports on “net revenue” transferred to WHC. The “gross revenue” is adjusted to include, among other expenditures, the “cost of goods sold” related to sales of the Habitat Conservation Stamp in order to arrive at “net revenue.” The “cost of goods sold” would include, among other expenses, printing costs for the Habitat Conservation Stamp and contracting costs related to Canada Post selling the stamps. However, EC was unable to provide the actual amounts to reconcile the two sets of numbers.

Furthermore, during follow-up discussions, EC and WHC staff also noted that Canada Post only provides its final report with respect to actual sales of Habitat Conservation Stamps for a given fiscal year in June of the following fiscal year (i.e., stamp sales for 2009–10 would only be available in June 2010). This has made it more difficult to reconcile the financial figures reported by EC and WHC, as both close their financial books for a given fiscal year in April. However, the fact remains that EC was unable to provide the actual amounts to fully reconcile<sup>63</sup> the two sets of numbers for the entire evaluation period going back to 2005–06.

**Table 5: Reconciliation of Stamp Program funding, 2005–06 to 2009–10<sup>64</sup>**

<b>Source</b>	<b>2005–06</b>	<b>2006–07</b>	<b>2007–08</b>	<b>2008–09</b>	<b>2009–10</b>
EC reported stamp revenue sent to WHC	\$1,629,042	\$1,584,505	\$1,592,902	\$1,686,849	\$1,580,522
WHC reported stamp revenue received from EC	\$1,495,138	\$1,419,291	\$1,551,346	\$1,553,160	\$1,696,940
Amount not reconciled	\$133,904	\$165,214	\$41,556	\$133,689	-\$116,418

### **Environment Canada Costs**

As described in section 2.3.2, EC has minimal human resources and financial costs associated with the Stamp Program. For the EC staff involved in the program, little of their time is spent on program activities.

<sup>63</sup> EC figures have been reconciled internally.

<sup>64</sup> Environment Canada, 2010, revenue spreadsheets.  
Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2005–06 to 2009–10, Annual Reports.

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Key informants identified some potential opportunities for reducing the cost of the Stamp Program, noting that all suggestions were on a small scale:

- EC representatives stated that it might be possible to reduce the cost of the contract for printing the stamps. Over the evaluation period, printing costs ranged from a high of \$73,700 in 2007–08 to a low of \$68,000 in 2008–09. Printing costs for 2009–10 were \$70,800.
- EC representatives noted that it might be possible to reduce the cost of the contract for sale of the stamp. In 2009–10, EC paid \$31,900 in vendor fees associated with stamp sales.
- Representatives of EC and WHC suggested that making the contribution agreement with WHC effective for a five-year period rather than a three-year period could reduce the administrative costs associated with the program.<sup>65</sup>
- Conflicting views were expressed when speaking with EC representatives regarding potential internal delivery of the Stamp Program by EC. On the one hand, it was suggested that using the Department to deliver the Stamp Program internally rather than through an outside organization may reduce the administrative costs associated with the Stamp Program, and that internal delivery of the program (which funds between 20 and 30 projects annually) would require only marginal increases in administrative overhead. On the other hand, the view was also expressed that if the Department used this approach, it would have to hire at least one additional staff person, thereby increasing salary costs.

Some EC representatives also noted that the division of responsibilities between the two EC groups involved is not 100% clear, and identified the need for improved communication.

#### **WHC Costs**

WHC representatives believe their organization can deliver the Stamp Program more efficiently than the federal government. Since the last evaluation, WHC has taken various steps to reduce its operating costs. For example, WHC representatives reported that the organization has taken the following steps:

- removed the pre-proposal phase from the application process;
- moved to an electronic application process;
- reduced the number of phone lines from six or seven to two;
- reduced web costs by 50%;
- obtained free advertising from sources such as *Delta Waterfowl* magazine and its partnership with the Robert Bateman “Get to Know” program;
- used existing contacts, where possible, to obtain free consulting services;
- reduced the number of staff from twelve to four and hired a summer student; and
- reduced costs associated with the Board of Directors. Although financial statements show that board costs increased by 15% between 2005–06 and

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<sup>65</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada representatives noted that prior to the signing of the current contribution agreement, there was a period of time when the organization was operating without an agreement.

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2008–09, WHC staff noted that steps were taken to reduce these costs in 2009 (e.g., having partners share costs associated with meetings such as rental of venue).

WHC representatives also noted that the organization is trying to secure rent-free office space and is exploring the possibility of using a more advanced process for ordering stamps online.

WHC representatives suggested that costs could be reduced if EC had the stamps sent directly to WHC from the printer rather than having them delivered to EC and then transferred to WHC. However, this is not feasible, as the Habitat Conservation Stamps are legal tender. EC must therefore maintain an inventory of the stamps, be responsible for the whereabouts of the stamp at all times and destroy all unused stamps in a timely manner. WHC also suggested that WHC could possibly manage the contract for stamp sales with Canada Post.

WHC representatives noted that their relationship with EC could also be improved. They indicated that they often have to request information from EC multiple times before receiving it. They also reported that there have been delays of two to three months in the delivery of monthly cheques from EC in the past,<sup>66</sup> although no indication was provided as to how many times this actually occurred.

#### **Contribution Agreement Requirements Related to Allowable Expenditures**

According to the Terms and Conditions of the contribution agreement between EC and WHC, the organization is to pay final recipients at least 80% of the stamp revenue it receives from the Department. EC representatives believed that WHC is allocating 80% of the revenue it receives from the sale of the stamps to on-the-ground projects, although this could not be confirmed, due to issues concerning full reconciliation of costs between WHC and EC (see Table 5 on page 36 and Table 6 on page 39).

Table 6 presents financial information related to the Stamp Program, including Stamp Program revenues received by WHC from EC, Stamp Program funding provided to projects, and expenditures related to the Stamp Program, over the period 2005–06 to 2009–10. Overall, WHC has significantly increased the proportion of Stamp Program revenues received that it provides to projects, from 30.8% of Stamp Program revenues in 2005–06 to 70.7% in 2009–10 (the highest percentage came in 2008–09, when it provided 77.1% of Stamp Program revenues received to projects). Furthermore, over the five-year period, expenditures related to the Stamp Program have remained under 20% annually. Since the last evaluation took place in 2005, WHC has taken important steps to meet its obligations under the present contribution agreement with respect to the allocation of 80% of the Stamp Program revenues received from EC toward conservation projects.

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<sup>66</sup> For instance, a comment provided on June 15, 2010, stated that WHC had not yet received cheques for April, May and June 2010.

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Table 6 also includes the “Stamp revenues remaining” row, which represents the difference between the “WHC stamp revenues received from EC” row and the “Stamp Program funding provided to projects” and “Stamp Program cost” rows. This amount could include the amount WHC returned to EC as part of the reconciliation exercise, as well as shared costs (e.g., printing costs), though the actual items and amounts were not provided. Although a significant amount of stamp revenues remain, follow-up discussions with EC and WHC revealed that this may be due to differing financial accounting and/or reporting practices at WHC (especially in 2005–06). Furthermore, WHC returned two cheques in April 2010, in the amounts of \$125,976 and \$82,892, as part of the reconciliation process (to reimburse EC for costs associated with the Habitat Conservation Stamp, including printing and the Canada Post contract to sell the stamps). However, neither EC nor WHC were able to provide actual amounts to fully reconcile the two sets of numbers.

**Table 6: Stamp Program financial information for WHC, 2005–06 to 2009–10**

	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	Total
Stamp revenues received from EC (WHC reported) <sup>67</sup>	\$1,495,138	\$1,419,291	\$1,551,346	\$1,553,160	\$1,696,940	\$7,715,875
Stamp Program funding provided to projects <sup>68</sup>	\$460,000	\$971,092	\$1,096,682	\$1,196,758	\$1,199,667	\$4,924,199
Percentage of total stamp revenues received	30.8%	68.4%	70.7%	77.1%	70.7%	63.8%
Number of projects <sup>69</sup>	10	22	20	29	27	108
Stamp Program cost (administrative) <sup>70</sup>	\$84,498	\$178,451	\$279,763	\$234,463	\$308,447	\$1,078,622
Percentage of total stamp revenues received	5.7%	12.5%	18%	15.1%	18.2%	14%
Stamp revenues remaining	\$950,640	\$269,748	\$174,901	\$121,939	\$188,826	\$1,713,054
Percentage of total stamp revenues received	63.6%	19.0%	11.3%	7.9%	11.1%	22.2%

### **Types of Projects Funded**

Since 2005–06, the Stamp Program has provided approximately \$4.9 million in funding to conservation projects. Over the evaluation period, over half (57%) of the project

<sup>67</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2005–06 to 2009–10, Audited Financial Statements.

<sup>68</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2005–06 to 2009–10, Annual Reports. EC and WHC believe that these numbers were understated and that the actual funding provided to projects was significantly higher, though actual amounts were unavailable.

<sup>69</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2005–06 to 2009–10, Annual Reports.

<sup>70</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2005–06 to 2009–10, Audited Financial Statements.

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funding went to habitat conservation projects. Another 41% went to NAWMP projects and 2% went to conservation networking projects, which is in line with the WHC yearly work plan.<sup>71</sup>

In addition to providing cash funding through the Stamp Program, WHC provided a total of \$12,000 in in-kind contributions to three NAWMP projects. Details on the nature of the in-kind contributions were not available.

As shown in Figure 4, since 2005–06, recipients of Stamp Program funding have completed 108 projects, including 31 NAWMP projects, 60 habitat conservation projects, and 17 conservation networking projects. In 2005–06, a total of 10 projects were completed; this doubled to 20 and 22 projects in 2006–07 and 2008–09, respectively, and tripled to 29 and 27 projects in 2008–09 and 2009–10, respectively.

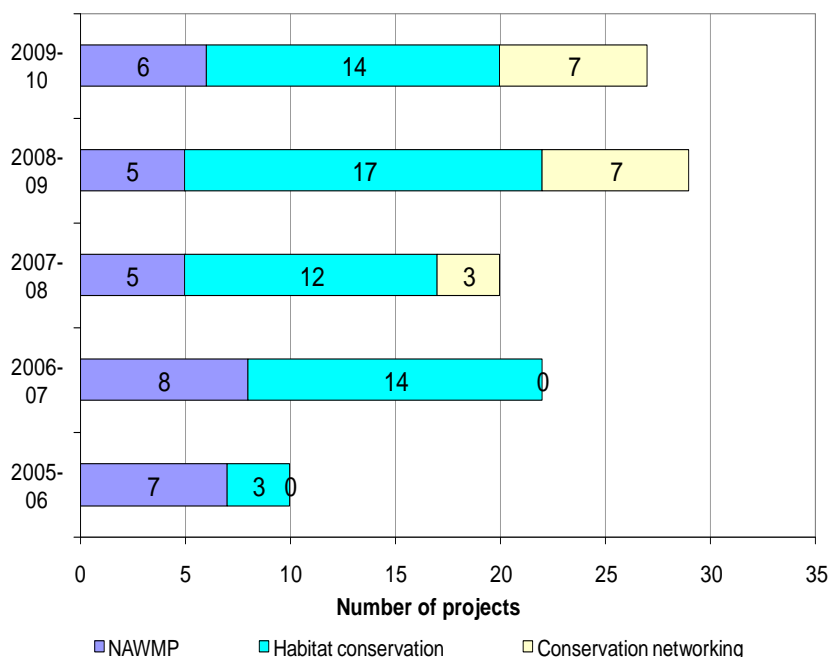


Figure 4: Number of completed projects, 2005–06 to 2009–10<sup>72</sup>

Through the Stamp Program, WHC provides a funding source for the implementation of the NAWMP in Canada. Not only does it serve as part of the Canadian contribution to match the annual US\$25 million investment in Canadian wetland and waterfowl projects from the United States under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), but it allows a variety of recipients across the country to contribute to the NAWMP

<sup>71</sup> WHC does not use predefined targets for the distribution of available funding across project type. However, based on projects involving multiple funding partners, WHC will only provide up to 50% of the project funding. Additionally, no single project can receive more than 20% of the total funding available for projects. Source: Wildlife Habitat Canada, no date, "Project Eligibility." Available from: <http://www.whc.org/conservation/conservation-grants/project-eligibility>

<sup>72</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada, 2005–06 to 2009–10, *Annual Reports*.

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goals. Overall, since 1986 (when Canada and the United States signed the NAWMP), WHC has contributed over \$18 million to NAWMP/NAWCA projects as tracked through the National Tracking System.

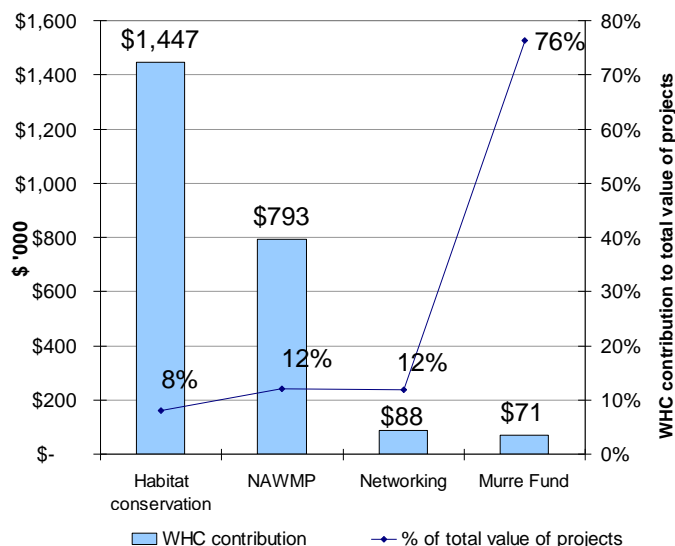
Overall, EC representatives stated that they were confident that the program was delivering its intended outputs and believed WHC was funding an appropriate range of conservation projects.

**Stamp Program Contributions to Funded Projects**

In 2008–09 and 2009–10, the Stamp Program provided funding for 56 projects, completed by 33 different recipients. The total amount of funding provided to each recipient over the two-year period ranged from \$2,000 to \$945,000. DUC received \$945,000 to undertake 11 different projects between 2008–09 and 2009–10. Other examples of funding recipients include the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation, the NCC, Fondation de la faune Québec, and Delta Waterfowl Foundation.

As noted above, the Stamp Program has been funding projects involving multiple partners. The program’s contributions to projects have accounted for less than 10% of the total value of the projects. As shown in Figure 5, between 2008–09 and 2009–10, the Stamp Program’s cash contributions covered:

- 8% of the total value of habitat conservation projects;
- 12% of the total value of NAWMP and networking projects; and
- 76% of the total value of the Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Fund.<sup>73</sup>

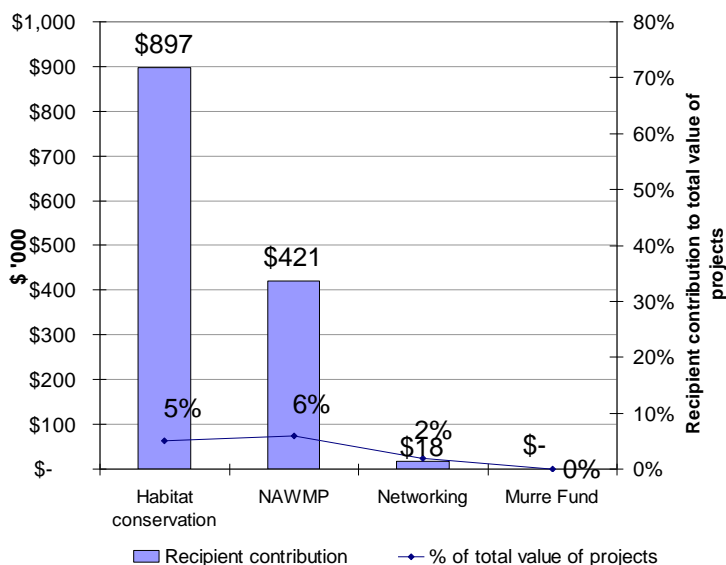


**Figure 5: WHC’s cash contribution to projects, 2008–09 and 2009–10**

<sup>73</sup> See page 43 for further details on the Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Fund.

**Recipient Contributions to Funded Projects**

Stamp Program recipients are minority funders of their projects. As shown in Figure 6, in 2008–09 and 2009–10, recipients provided just over \$1.3 million in cash funding, which accounts for approximately 5% of the total value of the projects. However, recipients also provided an additional \$1.2 million in in-kind contributions to these projects.

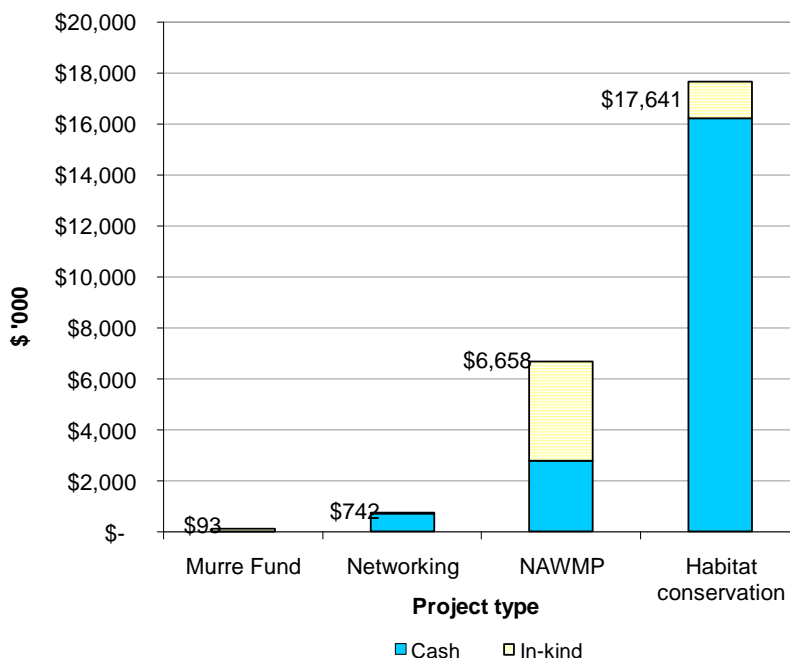


**Figure 6: Recipient cash contributions to projects, 2008–09 and 2009–10**

**Partner Contributions to Funded Projects**

Although the Stamp Program provided approximately \$2.8 million in funding to projects in 2008–09 and 2009–10, the total value of these projects was \$25.1 million. This means that, over a two-year period, partners provided almost \$23 million in cash and in-kind contributions to habitat conservation and conservation networking projects. As shown in Figure 7, the 31 habitat conservation projects funded in 2008–09 and 2009–10 were valued at \$17.6 million, of which 92% was covered by cash contributions; and the 14 conservation networking projects were valued at \$742,000, of which 96% was cash.

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**Figure 7: Total value of projects in 2008–09 and 2009–10**

Partners also provided cash and in-kind contributions to NAWMP projects. As shown in Figure 7, the 11 NAWMP projects funded in 2008–09 and 2009–10 were valued at \$6.6 million, of which 42% was cash and 58% was in-kind. Although the nature of the in-kind contributions was not systematically reported, examples of the contributions are volunteered staff time, outreach support, development of posters and banners, expert advice, research services, and fieldwork.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Fund is a special habitat conservation project. In 2005, WHC, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, EC, and Nature’s Legacy (formerly the Newfoundland and Labrador Legacy Nature Trust) agreed to use the revenues from the sale of Habitat Conservation Stamps to Murre hunters in order to establish a Newfoundland and Labrador Murre Conservation Fund. The Murre Conservation Fund provides funding for programs and projects that will introduce youth and/or the public of Newfoundland and Labrador to the conservation, management and traditional uses of Murres. Murre Fund projects totalled \$93,000, of which 87% was cash.

Stamp Program projects have successfully accessed partner funding. However, the extent to which the Stamp Program funding leverages partner funding is unclear, because, for each funded project, it is not known whether the Stamp Program or partner contributions were committed first. WHC representatives and successful applicants stated that when applying to WHC, some proponents already had partner funding lined up, and in other cases, partner funding depended on a successful application to WHC. It is therefore not known whether the Stamp Program leverages funding for projects or



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whether it contributes relatively small amounts of funding to “top-up” projects with large budgets. Indeed, comparing the amounts that WHC provides to conservation projects with those provided by other partners, it would seem that WHC is essentially topping up other funding, providing \$2.8 million in 2008–09 and 2009–10 (8% of the total value of habitat conservation projects, and 12% of the total value of NAWMP and networking projects), while partners provided approximately \$23 million.

#### **4.2.3 Realization of Outcomes**

<b>Evaluation Issue: Performance</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Rating</b>
7. To what extent are funded projects realizing the outcomes of the WHC Conservation Stamp Program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Increased overall participation in the number and types of partners involved in habitat conservation</li><li>▪ Increased scientific understanding of protection, enhancement and restoration of wildlife habitats</li><li>▪ Increased use of innovative tools and/or voluntary measures to protect, enhance and restore habitats</li><li>▪ Increased number and types of wildlife habitats protected, conserved, enhanced and restored</li><li>▪ Evidence that funded projects have contributed to the conservation of migratory bird populations and/or biodiversity</li><li>▪ Evidence of / views on factors outside of the program that have influenced the achievement of intended outcomes</li><li>▪ Views on the extent to which intended outcomes have been achieved as a result of the program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Document review</li><li>▪ File review</li><li>▪ Key-informant interviews</li></ul>	Little progress; priority for attention

#### **Overall**

The main sources of performance data that the evaluation could draw upon were project-level final reports prepared by funding recipients, as well as WHC’s annual reports. Much of this information is activity-based rather than outcome-based and, as such, it is difficult to determine the extent to which projects were successful in achieving their objectives. Furthermore, as indicated in section 4.2.1, the performance measurement strategy developed and presented in the 2008 RMAF was not implemented, and therefore performance data have not been collected with respect to these performance indicators. There is very limited historical performance information for the Stamp Program. Thus, the findings presented below are based solely on subjective evidence.

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EC representatives discussed the difficulties associated with measuring outcomes for any conservation-related program. They noted that it is relatively easy for programs to measure outputs such as the number of acres conserved, but stated that it is more challenging to measure outcomes such as the impact of wetland conservation on waterfowl populations. Furthermore, EC program representatives acknowledged that, as part of a broader suite of conservation programs, the contribution to achieving healthier waterfowl populations made by projects funded through the Stamp Program is unknown.

The program's logic model also contains many diverse outcomes, and some stakeholders indicated that WHC was no longer actively pursuing some of them. For example, a few stakeholders noted that WHC used to be more involved in the development of innovative habitat conservation tools. They explained that a need for this had existed when tools such as conservation easements, which are now available, were previously unavailable. In contrast, some claimed a need for more innovative conservation tools, because the ones used in the past had little impact on the status of wetlands and waterfowl.

A few successful applicants also indicated that the Stamp Program had too many intended outcomes and stated that some of them were unfocused. They suggested that there is a need to revisit, refine and clarify the priorities and focus of the Stamp Program. EC representatives concurred, suggesting that it may be time to revisit the performance indicators identified in the program's RMAF.

#### **Partner Participation in Habitat Conservation**

Successful applicants had mixed views on whether the Stamp Program is increasing the number and types of partners involved in habitat conservation. Some stated that the conservation community is static, with no new additional partners or groups; however, these stakeholders noted that the program can influence the number and types of partners that participate in a particular project. Some successful applicants also noted that the number of partners involved in a project is affected by the amount of funding available. Although WHC gathers information on partners' contributions to projects, it has yet to analyze how many are repeat contributors and how contributions vary over time. Also, WHC does not determine how many new partners become involved in projects each year.

#### **Awareness of the Need for Stewardship Habitat Activities**

WHC representatives believe that the program has contributed to increased awareness of the need for stewardship habitat activities. For example, WHC hosted a major stewardship conference in Calgary (July 2009) and created a Youth Conservation Stamp. The Youth Conservation Stamp is used to engage youth in conservation activities (proceeds from youth stamp sales support youth-driven wildlife conservation projects). WHC has also developed the mentor pin program, which provides recognition for hunters' contributions to conservation, and has helped small groups with fundraising (through the donation of conservation edition prints).

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EC representatives indicated that WHC has made a significant contribution to habitat conservation networking. Many other NGOs also contribute to habitat conservation networking in Canada, including DUC and the NCC.

#### **Improvements to Wetlands, Bird Populations, and Biodiversity**

Funded projects have completed various activities intended to improve wetlands, migratory bird populations, and biodiversity. For example, projects involved building nests, creating/improving wetlands and waterways, removing bush, planting species, purchasing land, undertaking prescribed burns, and caging trees. WHC's annual reports indicate that between 2008–09 and 2009–10, funded projects contributed to the conservation, protection and rehabilitation of 158 966 acres. Annex B provides some examples of projects funded in 2009–10. It is not possible, however, to determine the extent to which projects were successful in achieving their overall objectives. The information included in the project reports tends to be activity-based rather than outcome-based. Furthermore, baseline data does not exist for the expected outcomes to be achieved by each project, and therefore it is difficult to determine the level of success of a project in achieving its objectives. Thus, the evaluator's ability to report on the achievement of program outcomes is limited.

#### **4.2.4 Unintended Outcomes**

<b>Evaluation Issue: Performance</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Rating</b>
8. Have there been any unintended (positive or negative) outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Presence/absence of unintended outcomes</li><li>▪ Views on whether unintended outcomes occurred</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Document review</li><li>▪ File review</li><li>▪ Key-informant interviews</li></ul>	N/A

No unintended outcomes were identified through this evaluation.

#### **4.2.5 Alternate Methods**

<b>Evaluation Issue: Performance</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Rating</b>
9. Would alternate methods produce the required outputs and outcomes at lower cost?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Existence of alternative program models</li><li>▪ Rationale for selected approach</li><li>▪ Views on whether there are alternative program models that would achieve the same expected outcomes at lower cost</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Literature review</li><li>▪ Key-informant interviews</li></ul>	Progress made; attention needed

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The Stamp Program may not represent the most cost-effective approach to achieving conservation outcomes. Possible alternatives include having EC deliver the Stamp Program internally, or eliminating the program and diverting stamp revenues to existing programs.

One of the broad conclusions of the 2005 evaluation was that “alternatives to the current delivery approach exist and need to be examined prior to the development of any future contribution agreement. The need and rationale for maintaining mandatory contributions from waterfowl hunters also requires further assessment.”<sup>74</sup>

In response to the evaluation, EC developed a consultation paper on options for the future of the stamp, use of conservation revenues, and the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit. The paper<sup>75</sup> was prepared to support consultation on the future of the Habitat Conservation Stamp and on management of the revenues generated by the Stamp Program for habitat conservation, particularly for migratory birds. The first two options examined whether the Habitat Conservation Stamp was the most effective and efficient mechanism to generate conservation revenues:

1. maintain existing Stamp Program arrangements; and
2. eliminate the Stamp Program and continue to collect dedicated Habitat Conservation Stamp revenue, which would be dedicated to habitat conservation projects, particularly for migratory bird initiatives across Canada.

The next set of options examined the most appropriate administrative arrangement for managing and distributing the revenues generated:

1. continue the contribution agreement with WHC;
2. provide the conservation revenues to habitat conservation delivery agents (e.g., non-governmental conservation organizations or organizations with capacity to develop and implement habitat conservation projects on the ground); and
3. direct the conservation revenues to EC’s habitat and migratory bird conservation programs.

The consultation paper was posted on the departmental website and approximately 1685 stakeholders, including provincial/territorial governments, hunters, environmental non-governmental conservation organizations, outfitters, artists, print and stamp dealers and previous recipients of grants from WHC, were invited to provide comments to the Department on the consultation paper. EC reported receiving over 100 responses, which indicated ongoing public, private sector and provincial government support for

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<sup>74</sup> Environment Canada, 2005, *Evaluation of the Wildlife Habitat Canada Conservation Stamp Program*.

<sup>75</sup> Environment Canada, 2007, *Options for the Future of the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp, Use of Conservation Revenues and Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit*.

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continuation of the Stamp Program and for continuing the agreement with WHC. Reasons cited included:

- WHC is a cost-effective organization providing valuable services to the conservation community;
- WHC is well positioned to fund conservation activities; and
- WHC's arm's-length status enables accountability.

A few respondents stated the need to examine alternatives to determine what the most cost-effective approach might be.

Furthermore, WHC solicited feedback on these options and received comments from 36 respondents,<sup>76</sup> including 16 representatives or members of conservation organizations, six artists, four waterfowl hunters, seven individuals possessing the three previous characteristics, and three others.<sup>77</sup> Of those who responded, WHC reported that 97% strongly supported the continuation of the existing Stamp Program (i.e., generating revenues through the sale of the Habitat Conservation Stamp), and 100% supported continuing the financial arrangement between EC and WHC. One respondent supported the elimination of the Stamp Program and continued collection of dedicated habitat conservation revenue. No respondents supported the provision of conservation revenues to EC or habitat conservation delivery agents.

Questions remain as to whether generating conservation revenue through a conservation stamp and transferring funds to WHC for the delivery of a conservation funding program is the most cost-effective delivery approach. The alternative models, which were considered in 2007 as possible options with respect to the future of the Stamp Program, have the potential to reduce program costs and potentially improve program outcomes.

Examples of additional program models that could be considered include:

- **Acquire wetland habitat to support waterfowl.** The U.S. Federal Duck Stamp Program is a government-run program that places revenue from the sale of the stamp in a Migratory Birds Conservation Fund, which the Department of the Interior can use to acquire migratory bird habitat. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 98 cents of every dollar spent on Federal Duck Stamps goes directly to securing wetland habitat for protection in the National Wildlife Refuge System, making it very cost-effective.<sup>78</sup> In 2008–09, this program generated \$22.9 million USD in revenue, which is significantly more than the \$1.6 million the WHC Conservation Stamp Program generates. However, stamp sales in the United States are significantly higher than those in Canada. In 2008, over 1.5 million stamps were sold in the United States compared to approximately

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<sup>76</sup> Wildlife Habitat Canada. *Summary of Consultation Comments Received by Wildlife Habitat Canada on Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp*. No date.

<sup>77</sup> The paper does not indicate how many individuals were invited to provide their feedback.

<sup>78</sup> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). *Federal duck stamps – A conservation tradition*. No date. Retrieved from <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/duckstampsales.htm>

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178 000 in Canada. The current price of the Federal Duck Stamp is US\$15, and has remained fixed since 1991–92. The United States is currently considering increasing the cost of the Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25.<sup>79</sup>

- **Provide funding to conservation organizations through existing programs.** Many organizations (e.g., DUC, the NCC) that receive funding through the Stamp Program also receive funding through EC programs. Given this, an alternative approach to the Stamp Program is to eliminate the program and divert stamp revenues to existing EC programs, thus avoiding the overhead costs associated with WHC.

Key informants expressed little support for changing the approaches used to generate and deliver conservation revenue (i.e., through the sale of the Habitat Conservation Stamp). EC representatives reported that the public consultation held in 2007 found support for the continuation of the program, with WHC serving as the delivery agent. No information was provided on why there was such support for the WHC. Successful applicants also expressed strong support for the continuation of the Stamp Program in its current format (with minor adjustments). They did not believe EC should directly deliver the program funding, for the following reasons:

- the public constituency does not have confidence in the Department's ability to deliver the program funding quickly;
- additional human resources would be required to accommodate the increased workload associated with delivering a program based on a cyclical call for proposals; and
- relationships in the conservation community could be weakened if the Government, and not another conservation organization, directly delivers the program funding.

EC representatives also expressed concern about the other alternative program models. They noted that issuing top-up funding to organizations already receiving funding from other existing departmental mechanisms may not involve a competitive process. Additionally, they cautioned that dedicating funding to land acquisition, as is done under the U.S. Duck Stamp model, would not support the funding of conservation networking projects. As well, an overarching concern was that alternative program models may reduce the amount of funding that partners provide to conservation projects. However, based on an examination of the financial amounts (see section 4.2.2) that WHC provided to conservation projects in comparison to those provided by other partners, WHC only provides approximately 10% of the total value of conservation projects. As was previously stated, however, although in some cases the partner funding depends on a successful application to WHC, in other cases the proponents already have partner funding lined up before they apply for Stamp Program funding.

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<sup>79</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, 2010, *Budget Justifications and Performance Information, Fiscal Year 2011*, pp. MBC-2. Available from: [www.fws.gov/budget/2011/PDF%20files%20FY2011%20Greenbook/25.%20MBCA%20final%202011.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/budget/2011/PDF%20files%20FY2011%20Greenbook/25.%20MBCA%20final%202011.pdf)

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

This section concludes on the findings of the evaluation.

The evaluation of the WHC Stamp Program revealed that the program is aligned both to governmental and departmental priorities. There are, however, significant issues that need to be addressed, with respect to duplication of effort and overlap with other federal and non-governmental organizations, as well as the appropriate use of Stamp Program revenues and the appropriate role for the Stamp Program. Specifically, there remain questions with respect to the effectiveness of the program in achieving its overall objectives.

The evaluation revealed that such a program continues to be aligned with government-wide priorities, as in 2010 the Government committed to further protect and preserve the diversity of Canada's natural environment. Furthermore, the federal government shares jurisdiction with the provinces with respect to wetlands management, and has signed several international commitments related to wetlands conservation, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the NAWMP and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. With respect to departmental priorities, the evaluation found that the WHC Stamp Program remains consistent with EC's mandate, most importantly the protection of migratory birds (through the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*) and the habitats that support them, along with biodiversity.

The evaluation found, however, that the WHC Stamp Program duplicates other federal and non-governmental programs. Evidence collected revealed that EC used two or three different mechanisms to fund some of the same projects (i.e., different groups within EC have funded the same projects in a given year). The Stamp Program is one of several habitat conservation programs in Canada, many of which also receive Government of Canada funding (some of which also target wetlands associated with waterfowl). Many of the other federal programs do not solely focus on wetlands, but address other aspects of biodiversity, wildlife (including species at risk), and/or habitat conservation. Although federal and non-governmental programs may not necessarily duplicate the Stamp Program with respect to its focus on specific wetlands areas, all of these programs are concerned overall with conservation-related issues in Canada (focusing on species and the habitats that support them). Although the Stamp Program has focused on a specific niche in the conservation area, other programs, both federal and non-governmental, target the same issues and may be better financially situated to address these issues. The Stamp Program is unable to demonstrate a unique need for the Stamp Program in the context of other conservation-related programs in Canada, thereby calling into question its overall relevance.

The evaluation also found that the overall effectiveness of the Program has been hindered by how funds are disbursed among projects and by declining revenues. Program revenues declined from \$2.5 million in 1991 to \$1.5–\$1.6 million presently, as stamp sales declined by 54.3% nationally, while the price of the stamp has remained fixed at \$8.50 since 1991. This has led to a decline in resources available to the Stamp Program to fund conservation-related projects. According to the evidence collected,

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there are concerns about the value of contributing relatively small amounts of funding to “top up” projects with large budgets from other sources (WHC only provides approximately 10% of the total value of conservation projects).

Furthermore, given that the WHC Stamp Program is such a small contributor to many of the projects it funds, it is difficult to determine the contribution of the program to wetlands conservation and protection of waterfowl populations, especially as part of a broader suite of conservation-related programs. This was further demonstrated by significant shortcomings in the area of performance data collection and reporting, which limited the evaluator’s ability to report on the achievement of the WHC Stamp Program’s outcomes and thus achievement of its overall objectives. The program is therefore unable to demonstrate its contribution to the improvement of wetlands in Canada, thereby calling into question its overall relevance.

Finally, there is a need for increased EC oversight of the WHC Stamp Program. Over the evaluation period, EC was unable to fully reconcile Stamp Program financial figures provided by the Department with figures provided by WHC. Further discussions with EC and WHC staff revealed that these discrepancies may be explained by differing financial accounting and reporting practices with respect to reporting expenditures and revenues for a given year (i.e., timing related to when expenditures are incurred). Furthermore, the timing of the Canada Post final report with respect to sales of Habitat Conservation Stamps has also made it difficult to fully reconcile the financial figures reported by EC and WHC. However, the fact remains that neither EC nor WHC was able to provide the amounts to fully reconcile the two sets of numbers for the entire evaluation period going back to 2005–06.



## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations are directed to the ADM, ESB, noting that the terms and conditions of the program expired on March 31, 2011.

### **Recommendation 1:**

Overall, the evaluation found that there are concerns with respect to duplication of effort and overlap with other federal programs and NGOs (though the Stamp Program does complement these in some instances). The Stamp Program is one of several habitat conservation programs in Canada, many of which also receive Government of Canada funding (some of which also target wetlands associated with waterfowl). Although federal and non-governmental programs may not necessarily duplicate the Stamp Program with respect to its focus on specific wetlands areas, all of these programs are concerned overall with conservation-related issues in Canada (focusing on species and the habitats that support them, including wetlands). Therefore, the activities of other federal programs and NGOs aim to address the same overall issues related to aspects of biodiversity, wildlife and/or habitat conservation (including wetlands). Although not examined, these programs could be better financially situated to address these issues. The Stamp Program is therefore unable to demonstrate a unique need for the Stamp Program in the context of other conservation-related programs in Canada, which calls into question its overall relevance.

Furthermore, some interviewees questioned the strategy of providing relatively small amounts to “top-up” projects with large budgets. Evidence collected revealed that WHC only provides approximately 10% of the total value of conservation projects. Given the relatively small amounts that the program provides to individual projects, it is difficult to attribute any improvements in waterfowl populations and the wetland habitats that support them to program activities. EC acknowledged that, as part of a broader suite of conservation-related programs, it was difficult to determine the contribution of the Stamp Program to wetlands conservation and protection of waterfowl populations. This was further demonstrated by significant shortcomings in the area of performance data collection and reporting, which limited the evaluator’s ability to report on the achievement of the WHC Stamp Program’s outcomes and thus achievement of its overall objectives. The Stamp Program is therefore unable to demonstrate its contribution to the improvement of wetlands in Canada, which also calls into question the overall relevance of the program.

**Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the ADM, ESB, explore all options available with respect to the distribution of funds from the sale of Wildlife Conservation Stamps to conservation-related projects and make the appropriate decision as to which option is the most efficient and effective.**

### **Recommendation 2:**

Evidence collected as part of this evaluation illustrated a discrepancy between the program financial figures provided by EC and those reported by WHC. It should be

noted that EC figures have been reconciled internally, while WHC financial figures have been audited externally. During follow-up discussions, potential reasons were provided as to why these discrepancies over the amounts of revenue transferred existed, including differing financial accounting and reporting practices (such as timing related to when expenditures are incurred), and the timing of the Canada Post final report with respect to stamp revenues. These factors have made it difficult to reconcile the financial figures reported by EC and WHC (as both close their financial books for a given fiscal year in April). EC was unable to provide the actual amounts to fully reconcile these two sets of figures over the evaluation period.

**Recommendation 2: It is recommended that EC fully reconcile past program financial figures provided by EC with those provided by WHC.**

**Recommendation 3:**

Another weakness of the Stamp Program is its limited ability to demonstrate achievement of expected outcomes. Information on the current status and rate of loss of wetlands (i.e., baseline data) does not exist. Furthermore, the performance indicators identified in the WHC Stamp Program RMAF have not been implemented. Actual performance data collected and reported are either activity-based or output-based, which makes it difficult for the Stamp Program to demonstrate the achievement of results. As a consequence, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the program was successful in achieving its expected outcomes, as identified in the WHC Stamp Program logic model. Furthermore, in the broader suite of conservation-related programs, given the nature of the Stamp Program (i.e., a top-up funding mechanism), it is difficult to assess the contribution that the projects funded through the Stamp Program made to improving waterfowl populations and the habitats that support them.

Additionally, interviewees suggested the need to revisit expected program outcomes with an aim to refine and clarify the priorities and focus of the Stamp Program, as they believed that there were too many expected outcomes and that some of them are unfocused.

**Recommendation 3:**

- a. It is recommended that EC and WHC work together to establish consistent financial reporting practices, including a clear identification of administrative costs required to deliver the program.**
- b. It is recommended that EC work with WHC to develop a well-defined and measurable performance management strategy, including a revised logic model and performance indicators, and data collection tools that would allow the program to better demonstrate its results.**

## 7.0 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

**Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the ADM, ESB, explore all options available with respect to the distribution of funds from the sale of Wildlife Conservation Stamps to conservation-related projects and make the appropriate decision as to which option is the most efficient and effective.**

<b>Statement of Agreement/Disagreement with the Recommendation</b>		
The ADM, ESB, agrees with this recommendation related to the Conservation Stamp Program.		
<b>Management Action</b>		
EC will undertake an internal strategic review of the Conservation Stamp Program to determine if the program is delivered in a way that leverages both additional funding and stakeholder involvement in direct on-the-ground habitat conservation activities from a variety of partners. In addition, EC will determine if the program could deliver more direct benefits to habitat conservation and EC priorities. Furthermore, EC will again explore various options available to distribute funds from the sale of the Wildlife Conservation Stamp to ensure alignment with the intent of the Conservation Stamp Program (particularly funding of wetland habitat conservation, primarily for waterfowl). EC will work with WHC over the next three fiscal years (2011–12, 2012–13 and 2013–14) to ensure the program is delivered as intended. As such, EC will enter into yearly Contribution Agreements with WHC for the next three years, starting in fiscal year 2011–12, to allow for opportunities to assess efficiency and to make, if required, program improvements. Following this, EC will implement any required changes to the delivery of the program, including making any adjustments to the delivery agent, range of outcomes and utilization of stamp revenue, taking into account the results of consultations on regulatory amendments should such amendments be required.		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Fall 2011	Assessment of current delivery of the Habitat Conservation Stamp Program and identification of changes to current program delivery.	DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC Dir-CSDP
Spring 2012	Steps taken, in collaboration with WHC, to implement any changes identified in the strategic assessment for delivery of the program.	DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC Dir-CSDP  WHC
Spring 2013	Undertake assessment of program delivery in meeting desired outcomes and, if deemed appropriate, explore other mechanisms to distribute funds from the sale of the stamps.	DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC Dir-CSDP
Spring 2013/ Spring 2014	Changes outlined in an updated Contribution Agreement or other mechanisms, as deemed necessary.	DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC Dir-CSDP

**Recommendation 2: It is recommended that EC fully reconcile past program financial figures provided by EC with those provided by WHC.**

<b>Statement of Agreement/Disagreement with the Recommendation</b>		
The ADM, ESB, agrees with this recommendation. Given the transformation that occurred at EC in 2005–06 and 2006–07, and the changes in management at EC and WHC during this time frame, the ADM, ESB, agrees to work with WHC to reconcile the financial figures for the past three years of the evaluation period (2007–10)		
<b>Management Action</b>		
Recognizing this as an issue, in fiscal year 2010–11 EC took positive steps toward working with WHC to ensure reconciliation with EC financial figures. For example, EC participated more actively in WHC Board Meetings in 2010–11 and worked with WHC to clearly identify which activities were linked to the Stamp Program in their work plan. Due to differences in WHC’s accounting and reporting system (e.g., WHC had different names for their various grant programs, and funded different activities based on project eligibility, allowing for funding of indirect habitat conservation work that in 2008–10, based on program improvements, was reported differently) in annual reports and audited financial statements in 2005–06 and 2006–07, it would be difficult to align similar activities (and project costs) to stamp funds 1:1. Furthermore, the evaluation period spanned two separate contribution agreements, further complicating accounting and reporting issues. Thus, the ADM, ESB, in collaboration with WHC, will undertake the steps necessary to reconcile the program financial figures provided by EC with those provided by WHC from 2007–08, 2008–09 and 2009–10.		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Spring 2011	EC will review WHC’s audited financial statements and EC’s internal financial statements from 2007–10.  EC will meet with WHC as necessary to review the provided financial statements.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP  WHC
Summer 2011	EC will reconcile the financial figures and produce a report outlining the results.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP

**Recommendation 3:**

- a. **It is recommended that EC and WHC work together to establish consistent financial reporting practices, including a clear identification of administrative costs required to deliver the program.**

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<b>Statement of Agreement/Disagreement with the Recommendation</b>		
The ADM, ESB, agrees with this recommendation.		
<b>Management Action</b>		
The ADM, ESB, commits to implementing initiatives to establish consistent financial reporting between WHC and EC. In addition, EC will work with WHC to determine what issues (e.g., the timing of WHC's audited reports and annual reports, and the timing of reconciliation with Canada Post, etc.) need to be addressed to ensure that reporting is transparent and consistent.		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Spring 2011	Development of an internal (to EC) work plan to ensure proper systems and accounting are in place, including roles and responsibilities of each party, for financial reporting.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP
Spring 2011	Consultation with WHC and collaborative development of an action plan to address issues identified as preventing consistent reporting, including roles and responsibilities of each party.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP  WHC
Summer 2011	Implementation of an internal work plan and WHC action plan.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP  WHC
Fall 2011	Implement new financial reporting.	DG-CWS Dir-CSDP  WHC

- b. It is recommended that EC work with WHC to develop a well-defined and measurable performance management strategy, including a revised logic model and performance indicators, as well as data collection tools that would allow the program to better demonstrate its results.**

<b>Statement of Agreement/Disagreement with the Recommendation</b>		
The ADM, ESB, agrees with this recommendation.		
<b>Management Action</b>		
The ADM, ESB, will communicate directly with WHC to collaboratively review and refine the program logic model. In consultation with ESB, WHC will be directed to ensure that the outcomes in the logic model are clearly defined and that the program's outputs and performance measures are linked to these outcomes. Furthermore, the ADM, ESB, will ask WHC to review the current grant application process (e.g., NAWMP funding ratios, project criteria, scoring guidelines) to ensure that the funding to grants is more aligned with the intent of the Stamp Program and the revised logic model.		

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EC will be responsible for ensuring that the outcomes relate to the terms and conditions governing the contribution agreement with WHC.

Once specific outcomes are clearly defined, performance indicators will be developed by EC in consultation and collaboration with WHC, to ensure that the performance indicators meet the needs of the Department. Performance indicators must be relevant, meaningful and reportable. To this end, EC will work with WHC to ensure that appropriate data collection tools are in place to collect necessary information and to demonstrate the achievement of program outcomes.

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Deliverable(s)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>
Spring 2011	Updated logic model, including relevant performance indicators.	WHC DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC
Summer/Fall 2011	Review grant application process and develop new criteria and scoring guidelines in line with revised logic model.	WHC
Summer/Fall 2011	Implementation of data collection tools and reporting mechanisms based on identified outcomes and performance indicators.	WHC DG-CWS Ex/Dir-HEC
Fall 2011/Winter 2012	Provide information, in the next call for applications, regarding reporting requirements on performance indicators; and development of guidance documents on collecting and reporting the data for funding recipients in fiscal year 2001–12.	WHC

## ANNEX A – MATRIX OF EVALUATION ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Evaluation matrix – Issues, questions, indicators and analysis		
Question	Indicators	Data sources
<b>ISSUE: Relevance</b> – Does the WHC Conservation Stamp Program remain consistent with and contribute to federal government priorities and address actual needs?		
1. Is there a continued need for the WHC Conservation Stamp Program? Why or why not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Evidence of continued habitat loss</li> <li>▶ Evidence that habitat loss adversely affects biodiversity in Canada</li> <li>▶ Presence/absence of other programs that complement or duplicate the objectives of the WHC Conservation Stamp Program</li> <li>▶ Views on connection of program objectives with societal/environmental needs</li> </ul>	Document review Literature review Key-informant interviews
2. Is the WHC Conservation Stamp Program aligned with federal government priorities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Extent to which WHC Conservation Stamp Program objectives align with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Government of Canada's current objectives and priorities</li> <li>– EC's current objectives and priorities</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Views on alignment of WHC Conservation Stamp Program outcomes with recent/current federal government and EC priorities</li> </ul>	Document review Key-informant interviews
3. Is there a legitimate, appropriate and necessary role for EC in the WHC Conservation Stamp Program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Existence of legislation, Acts and policies governing EC involvement in wildlife habitat conservation/protection</li> <li>▶ Extent to which the federal government has jurisdiction over the conservation/protection of wildlife/waterfowl habitat</li> <li>▶ Views on whether EC should be involved in this program to conserve/protect wildlife/waterfowl habitat</li> </ul>	Document review Key-informant interviews
<b>ISSUE: Performance</b> – Has the WHC Conservation Stamp Program met its intended outcomes? Are the most appropriate, efficient and economic means being used to achieve outcomes?		
4. Are appropriate performance data being collected, captured and safeguarded? If so, is this information being used to inform senior management / decision makers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Existence of baseline data for key outcome indicators</li> <li>▶ Presence of populated performance-data tracking system</li> <li>▶ Extent to which performance data informs/supports EC's decision-making processes</li> </ul>	Document review File review Key-informant interviews

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<b>Evaluation matrix – Issues, questions, indicators and analysis</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data sources</b>
5. Have EC and WHC organized their activities related to the contribution agreement at the least cost?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ EC human resource requirements to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Obtain a signed contribution agreement</li> <li>– Provide WHC with booklets, artist-signed stamps, corner blocks, and panes</li> <li>– Participate in WHC Board of Directors and other committee meetings</li> <li>– Review WHC business plans, interim reports and annual reports</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Cost for WHC to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Design, produce and distribute stamps</li> <li>– Administer projects</li> <li>– Promote participation in conservation activities</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Views on whether EC and WHC activities are undertaken at the lowest cost possible</li> <li>▶ Views on how the cost of the program activities could be reduced (without compromising quality)</li> </ul>	Document review Key-informant interviews
<b>ISSUE: Performance – Has the WHC Conservation Stamp Program met its intended outcomes? Are the most appropriate, efficient and economic means being used to achieve outcomes? (continued)</b>		
6. Is the contribution agreement resulting in the production of required outputs at the least cost?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Amount of project funding issued to various types of projects</li> <li>▶ Percent of funding contributed by WHC (per-project basis)</li> <li>▶ Amount of funding contributed to projects by partners (per-project basis)</li> <li>▶ Views on the extent to which WHC funding encouraged other partners to also fund the project</li> <li>▶ Views on whether the cost of producing outputs is as low as possible</li> <li>▶ Views on how the cost of producing outputs could be reduced (without compromising quality)</li> </ul>	Document review File review Key-informant interviews
7. To what extent are funded projects realizing the outcomes of the WHC Conservation Stamp Program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Increased overall participation in the number and types of partners involved in habitat conservation</li> <li>▶ Increased scientific understanding of protection, enhancement and restoration of wildlife habitats</li> <li>▶ Increased use of innovative tools and/or voluntary measures to protect, enhance and restore habitats</li> <li>▶ Increase in the number and types of wildlife habitats protected, conserved, enhanced and restored</li> <li>▶ Evidence that funded projects have contributed to the conservation of migratory bird populations and/or biodiversity</li> <li>▶ Evidence of / views on factors outside of the program that have influenced the achievement of intended outcomes</li> <li>▶ Views on the extent to which intended outcomes have been achieved as a result of the program</li> </ul>	Document review File review Key-informant interviews



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<b>Evaluation matrix – Issues, questions, indicators and analysis</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data sources</b>
8. Have there been any unintended (positive or negative) outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Presence/absence of unintended outcomes</li> <li>▶ Views on whether unintended outcomes occurred</li> </ul>	Document review File review Key-informant interviews
9. Would alternate methods produce the required outputs and outcomes at lower cost?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Existence of alternative program models</li> <li>▶ Rationale for selected approach</li> <li>▶ Views on whether there are alternative program models that would achieve the same expected outcomes at lower cost</li> </ul>	Literature review Key-informant interviews

## ANNEX B – EXAMPLES OF FUNDED PROJECTS

Examples of funded projects <sup>80</sup>			
Project title and organization	Funding	Objectives	Outcomes
<b>NAWMP projects</b>			
Coastal and Inland Freshwater Wetlands Stewardship and Conservation  Newfoundland and Labrador EHJV	The total cost of the project was \$291,360. WHC's contribution of \$28,000 cash and \$2,850 in-kind covered 11% of the project costs.  Other funding partners included deferred revenue (\$14,000), the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Environment and Conservation (\$70,000 cash and \$126,000 in-kind), North American Wetlands Conservation Act funds (\$45,000 cash), and the Canadian Wildlife Service (\$5,000).	This project supported the EHJV in Newfoundland and Labrador's implementation of its component of the NAWMP. The primary objective of Newfoundland and Labrador's component of NAWMP is to conserve and enhance existing wetland habitat for waterfowl.  Stamp Program funds were used to support Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Environment and Conservation's Newfoundland and Labrador Stewardship Program. Proposed activities involved municipal stewardship, coastal stewardship, stewardship extension, and coordination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded the Town of Stephenville Crossing's existing conservation to include an additional 169.6 acres of wetland, associated upland habitat and critical habitat beaches for the Endangered Piping Plover. Also developed a conservation plan with the town, which outlines conservation and enhancement principles for these wetlands, plover beaches and other associated wildlife.</li> <li>• Signed coastal stewardship agreements with the towns of Mary's Harbour, Red Bay, and St. Lewis. These agreements will place some 9406 acres of coastal habitat and associated offshore islands in St. Peter's Bay under conservation. Also developed conservation plans with these towns, which outline "wise use" principles for local residents whose activities impact this area and its sea ducks (namely, Common Eider) and seabirds.</li> <li>• Provided technical and logistical support to existing stewardship-agreement communities and partners, as well as designed and implemented communication and education tools that further the goals of the EHJV in Newfoundland and Labrador.</li> <li>• Attendees at a wetlands workshop agreed that a provincial interdepartmental working group, chaired by the EHJV Program Manager, should be formed to discuss the development of a comprehensive provincial wetland policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Conservation projects</b>			

<sup>80</sup> Information drawn from funding recipients' final project reports for 2009-2010 projects.

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<b>Examples of funded projects<sup>80</sup></b>			
<b>Project title and organization</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Habitat Stewardship in Saskatchewan  Saskatchewan Watershed Authority	The total cost of the project was \$571,000. WHC's contribution of \$100,000 cash covered 18% of the project costs.  Other funding partners included the Canadian Wildlife Service (\$280,000 cash), the Assiniboine Watershed Stewardship Association (\$60,000 cash), DUC (\$80,000 cash and \$30,000 in-kind), and the Province of Saskatchewan (\$15,000 cash and \$6,000 in-kind).	This project addressed habitat needs for waterfowl, shorebirds and water birds, by restoring drained wetlands in the Upper Assiniboine Saskatchewan NAWMP Target Landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stamp Program funds contributed to 28 projects that converted 5536 acres of cropland to native or non-invasive tame perennial forage in Saskatchewan NAWMP Target Landscapes.</li> <li>Stamp Program funds contributed to a multi-agency project that employed a reverse auction approach to restore drained wetlands in the Upper Assiniboine NAWMP Target Landscape. 211 drained wetland basins, totalling 210 acres, were restored.</li> <li>WHC funds, along with other partner funding agencies, contributed to an inventory of drained and intact wetland basins in NAWMP Target Landscapes where wetlands are at high risk of drainage, and wetland restoration is a high priority. A total of 54 505 wetlands and 10 550 drains were digitized for this inventory.</li> </ul>
Alberta Hen House Super Site Project  Delta Waterfowl Foundation	The total cost of the project was \$48,125. WHC's contribution of \$25,000 cash covered 52% of the project costs.  Other funding partners, all of whom provided cash contributions, included the Alberta Conservation Association (\$6,250) and the Delta Waterfowl Foundation	Nest success is one of the main factors influencing mallard populations. Mallard populations have declined on the Canadian prairies in response to a loss of wetland and grassland habitat as well as an increase in medium-size mammalian predators. Hen houses provide an alternate nesting site, away from mammalian predators, and have been found in past studies to increase nesting success up to 80%, and appear to help hen survival during the nesting season, where roughly 30% of ground-nesting hens die. This project involves placing 200 nest structures, mainly on private land with landowner consent and accessibility to hunters, in wetlands that are of optimal size and that contain suitable brood-rearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributions from WHC supported construction, shipping, site selection, and installation.</li> <li>It will take a few years of maintenance and data collection from the Super Site structures to correctly identify how mallard populations will benefit. However, from past research, it is predicted that by year three, the Super Site should see an average of 160 of the 200 structures used by mallards, with 80% of those nest-hatching. Based on work completed in Manitoba, it is also expected that increased survival of female mallards will be seen over the 10-year period.</li> </ul>

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### Evaluation of the Wildlife Habitat Canada Conservation Stamp Program

Examples of funded projects <sup>80</sup>			
Project title and organization	Funding	Objectives	Outcomes
	(\$16,875).	habitat. Each structure will have GPS locations, evaluated and maintained yearly for occupancy rates and hatching success.	
Conservation networking projects			
Give Green Canada, Field Test Phase One: eLearning Course & Phase Two: Individual Mentoring  Give Green Canada	The total cost of the project was \$45,000. WHC's contribution of \$8,000 cash covered 18% of the project costs.  Other funding partners, all of whom provided cash contributions, included Genus Capital Management (\$2,500), the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia (\$5,000), the Vancity Community Foundation (\$10,000), and EC (\$19,500).	Give Green Canada offers wildlife habitat organizations a unique opportunity to learn the practical and pragmatic ways and means of how to build their future financial security by asking for and accepting major gifts and bequests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacted, created linkages for, and updated a database of organizations and regional networks.</li> <li>• Developed a comprehensive list of professional advisor networks and associations.</li> <li>• Developed a means to communicate news flashes both on the website and in the course, and through its distribution system "Campaign Monitor."</li> <li>• Developed a social media presence via Twitter as a means of communicating with course and mentorship participants on helpful tips and topics related to the field.</li> <li>• Launched a training mentorship course field test.</li> </ul>
9th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference (PCESC)  Manitoba Conservation	The total cost of the project was \$97,000. WHC's contribution of \$10,000 cash covered 10% of the project costs.  A total of 26 other partners contributed to the project. Federal government partners provided \$32,500. This includes \$21,000 from	The 9th PCESC Manitoba Steering Committee hosted the 9th PCESC in Winnipeg at the Winnipeg Convention Centre and the Delta Winnipeg from February 25–27, 2010. The conference theme was "Patterns of Change: Learning from our past to manage our present and conserve our future." Numerous delegates and conservation partners worked together at this conference to address the key leading issues and challenges facing the Prairies Ecozone and the various habitats and species it supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 300 people attended the conference.</li> <li>• The conference comprised two plenary sessions and six workshops.</li> <li>• Over 60 posters were presented on a wide range of topics.</li> <li>• The conference will provide future benefits, as delegates return home and develop new initiatives to address issues identified at workshops. Economic benefits (ecological services) were also discussed as part of workshops, to highlight a better accounting of the economic value of services, such as air and water purification, that are provided by natural ecosystems.</li> </ul>

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**Evaluation of the Wildlife Habitat Canada Conservation Stamp Program**

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Examples of funded projects <sup>80</sup>			
Project title and organization	Funding	Objectives	Outcomes
	EC.		

## ANNEX C – SUMMARY OF RATINGS<sup>81</sup>

Evaluation question	Achieved	Progress made; attention needed	Little progress; priority for attention	Not applicable
<b>Relevance</b>				
1. Continued need for the Stamp Program		X		
2. Stamp Program aligned with federal government priorities	X			
3. Legitimate, appropriate and necessary role for EC in the Stamp Program	X			
<b>Performance</b>				
4. Appropriate performance data being collected, captured and safeguarded			X	
5. Activities related to the Stamp Program are organized at the least cost		X		
6. Contribution agreement results in the production of required outputs at the least cost		X		
7. Funded projects are realizing the outcomes of the Stamp Program			~X	
8. Unintended outcomes and resulting actions				X
9. Alternate methods		X		

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<sup>81</sup> The rating symbols and their significance are outlined in Table 3 on Pg. 16.