

ATLANTIC COAST JOINT VENTURE

Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Bird Conservation Initiative

The Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Bird Conservation Region is one of the most highly diverse regions along the Atlantic coast, providing habitat for millions of breeding, migrating, and wintering birds. The diverse habitats include barrier beach, back-barrier lagoon systems, intertidal mud and marsh, coastal freshwater and brackish marshes, forested wetlands, mixed hardwood forests, and intensive agriculture. Conservation of migratory birds presents a distinctive challenge because this area also is one of the most densely populated regions in the U.S. with intense coastal development for summer residences and major cities such as Boston, New York, and Baltimore.

Although a coordinated, all-bird workshop has yet to be convened in the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Bird Conservation Region, planning for integrated conservation of migratory birds is proceeding. In 2002, the Northeast Working Group of Partners in Flight and the North Atlantic Working Group of the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan met to identify priority species, delineate focus areas, and develop integrated conservation projects. The Mid-



Atlantic/New England Maritimes group of the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan met in a series of meetings also identifying priority bird species, delineating focus areas, and developing conservation projects. Priority species of waterfowl and focus areas were identified in 2001 in conjunction with the revised waterfowl Implementation Plan for the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture.

Priority species from the four initiatives include such species as American black ducks, Atlantic brant, and scoters for waterfowl; piping plovers, American woodcock, red knots and American oystercatchers for shorebirds; least terns, common loons, and black rails for waterbirds; and wood thrush, prairie warblers, and saltmarsh sharp-tailed sparrows for landbirds. The habitats of this Bird Conservation Region are a complex transition between the southern New England and the southern Atlantic coastal plains. Habitats, such as beaches that are important for foraging and breeding, are under severe pressure by multitudes of vacationers and use continues to increase. Delineating focus areas within this region was difficult given the importance of all the habitats and the threat these habitats are facing. Many of the focus areas center on coastal habitats such as beaches, saltmarshes, and coastal freshwater marshes underscoring the importance of these types.

An all-bird workshop is being planned for the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic Bird Conservation Region to integrate the results of the individual initiative's meetings and to assist states in developing the bird conservation components of their comprehensive wildlife planning efforts. The objective of the workshop will be to efficiently and effectively integrate the priorities of each migratory bird initiative and coordinate the efforts of the states in this region on addressing common bird conservation issues that they all share. The workshop will identify high priority projects to implement within the region to determine status of priority species, identify strategies to protect priority habitats and locate the most critical areas for conservation, and evaluate the effectiveness of conservation delivery within the region.

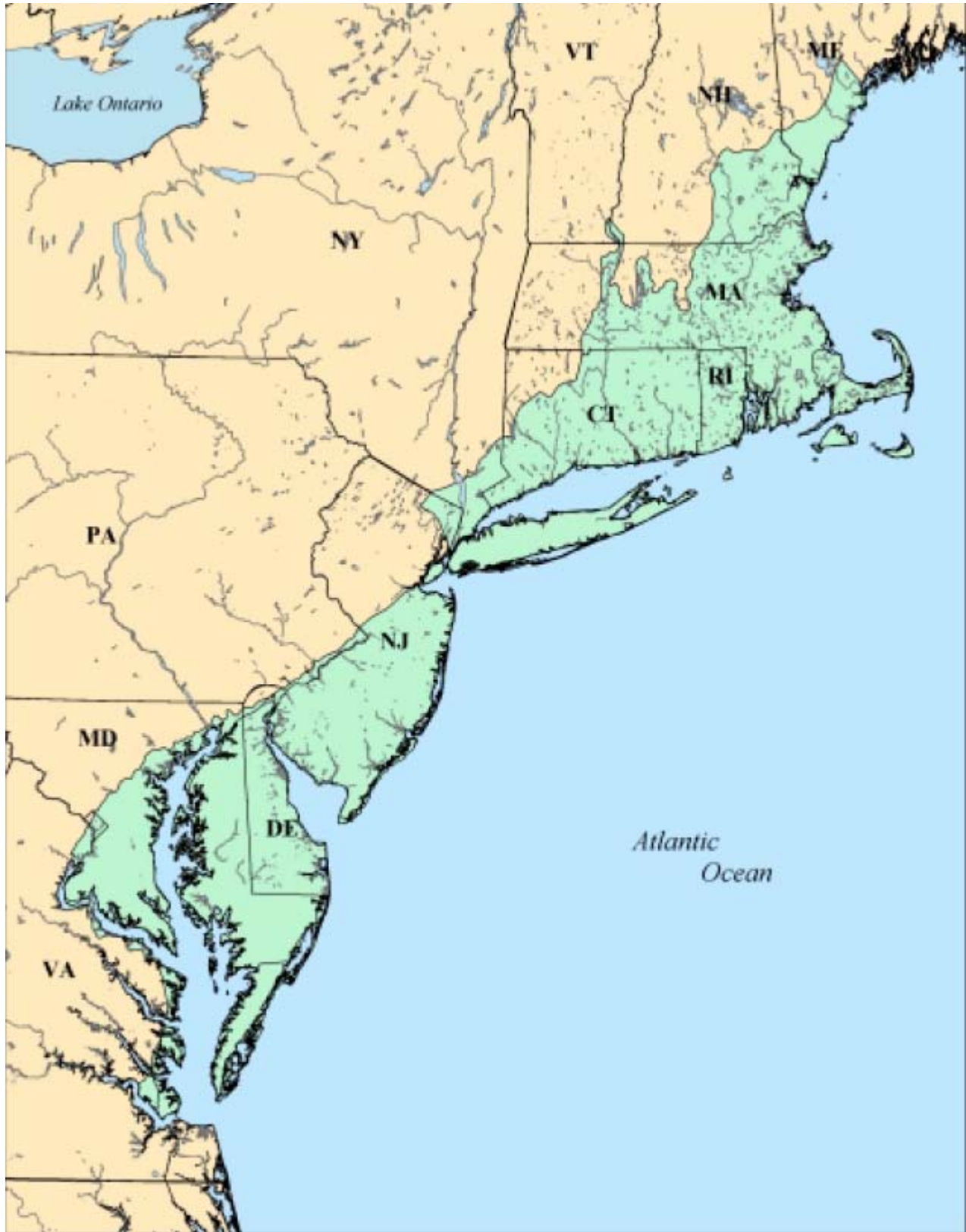


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SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND/MID-ATLANTIC BIRD CONSERVATION REGION



PARTNERS

Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, The Nature Conservancy, Massachusetts Audubon Society, New Jersey Audubon Society, National Audubon Society, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, College of William and Mary, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, Department of Defense