**May 2016 Board Retreat – Post-meeting Interview Results:**

**ACJV Flagship Priorities Initiative**

**Flagship Priorities Elevator Pitch Preferences:**

1) The ACJV has identified saltmarsh habitat conservation (through protection, restoration, etc) as a priority throughout the Flyway. We will work to conserve this habitat by focusing on 3 ‘flagship’ species: Black Duck, Saltmarsh Sparrow, and Black Rail for which we will develop population objectives tied to habitat goals. – **17 board members**

2) The ACJV is prioritizing 3 flagship species in need of conservation attention: Black Duck, Saltmarsh Sparrow, and Black Rail. We will develop population objectives for these species and will work to conserve/enhance habitat to boost their populations, which will benefit a variety of other species that depend on saltmarsh habitat. – **5 board members**

Both/Hybrid statement **– 4 board members**

**Adopted Hybrid Statement** (developed based on board interview responses)

*3) Our goal is to protect, restore, and enhance coastal marshes and the populations of birds that depend on them throughout the Atlantic Flyway. We will pursue this goal by focusing on three flagship species that best represent this habitat: American Black Duck, Black Rail, and Saltmarsh Sparrow. The ACJV will engage partners to develop species-specific population objectives, identify the full array of threats, and craft actions to remove or reduce those threats by protecting and restoring critical habitat that sustains their populations and benefits other marsh species.*

**Board satisfaction with the choice of ACJV Flagship Priorities**

**(average ranks on scale of 1-5 with 5 being high):**

Board members are generally happy with both the habitat and species priorities:

Habitat: 4

American Black Duck: 3.83

Saltmarsh Sparrow: 3.69

Black Rail: 3.51

**Habitat Selection Preference:**

Board members overwhelmingly preferred broadening the habitat selection to Coastal Marshes rather than Saltmarshes:

Coastal Marsh – 18 board members

No preference – 4 board members

Saltmarsh – 2 board members

**Board responses to the question – ‘what is a coastal marsh’?**

Most common words used include: saltwater (10), brackish (9), freshwater (6), coastline (4), tidal (3), coastal plain (3), rivers (3), determine by species needs (3)

***Final definition*** *– Coastal marshes include tidally influenced salt, brackish and freshwater marshes associated with ocean, bay and river systems in the coastal plain.*

Definition would NOT include forested wetlands or inland freshwater marshes not associated with coastal systems.

**Most commonly raised concern – What does this prioritization mean for other non-flagship priorities? Will we be neglecting other species needs?**

As with any strategic effort, some things will necessarily get more attention than others. We feel that in order to be successful in achieving our saltmarsh conservation goals, we must devote the majority of our time (at least 65%) to our flagship priorities. However, ACJV staff will spend the remaining 25% of our time working with partners on key priority species and/or habitats at the state or regional level as appropriate – especially where those priorities overlap with our saltmarsh goals or help maintain connections to important partners. See the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture Species and Habitat Priorities document for a full breakdown of ACJV species and habitat priorities.