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Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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Resolution 2012-04-06

URGING PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTHERN WINGS PROGRAM AND ANNUAL LIFE CYCLE CONSERVATION OF THE OVER 380 MIGRATORY BIRDS THAT WINTER IN MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN

WHEREAS, 47.7 million bird watchers generated over \$82 billion in total industry output, 671,000 jobs, and \$11 billion in local, state, and federal tax revenue in 2006; and

WHEREAS, regional and local economic impacts of bird watching are significant in such places as the Rio Grande Valley of Texas where nature tourism, dominated by birding, brings in over \$300 million a year to the economy; and

WHEREAS, 2012 marks the 25th anniversary of Bird Habitat Joint Ventures, 22 years of North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants, 12 years of State Wildlife Grants, and 11 years of Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act funding, which cumulatively have invested hundreds of millions of dollars into the conservation of priority migratory birds; and

WHEREAS, science shows us that in order to protect our state-based bird conservation investments we also need to conserve migratory birds throughout their annual life cycle; and

WHEREAS, conservation of priority migratory birds of importance in North America hinges on their conservation in Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean; and

WHEREAS, conservation work in Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean is cost effective, and is implemented by professional partners with a track record of conservation success; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Wings Program, a partnership of state fish and wildlife agencies, was created in 2009 to provide a mechanism for state wildlife agencies to partner in conservation projects for shared priority species with partners in Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean; and

WHEREAS, each year the Southern Wings Program has continued to increase the number of participating states and amount of funds contributed; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Wings Program developed a 10-year Vision in March 2012, which set an annual goal of \$2 million a year in voluntary state contributions to projects that support the conservation of state wildlife agency priority species throughout the Hemisphere.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies endorses the 10-Year Vision of the Southern Wings Program and encourages continued development and implementation of the actions and strategies needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the Vision; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies encourages states to strive to maximize their voluntary funding for annual life cycle conservation in support of the 10-year Vision to achieve the \$2 million annual goal for the conservation of shared priority species.

Submitted by the Bird Conservation Committee