

Fall Flights

Directors Listening Sessions Report | March 2024



Executive Summary

Listening Session Objectives

- Build Relationships
- Foster AFWA ownership of Fall Flights
- Inform a communications/marketing plan

Methods

- Conducted 10 listening sessions with 32 directors or their proxies during February 2024.
- These listening sessions focused on what it took for states to secure commitments to Canadian waterfowl habitat, the obstacles they had to overcome, and what they would like to see from the Fall Flights Advisory Committee and Fall Flights partners to maintain or increase their level of support.

Results

Objective 1: Build Relationships

- Directors appreciate the opportunity for face time with Fall Flights team members at AFWA meetings, commission meetings, DU state conventions, and trips to Canada.
- Participants appreciated getting to know the new Manager of Development and State Relations and to visit with each other about Fall Flights during the listening sessions.

Objective 2: Foster AFWA ownership of Fall Flights

- Director recommendations on how to overcome challenges.
 - Budget issues
 - Increases in Fall Flights investments with state Duck Stamp/License Fee increases, reviewing investments with new leadership, using Pittman-Robertson funding over and above what can be matched through NAWCA, and consider alternative ways to allocate funds from existing or new funding sources.
 - Optics of Investing out-of-country
 - Provide states with a brochure/short PowerPoint that communicates the value proposition of Fall Flights, supporting materials that demonstrate the Return on Investment (ROI), and the benefits beyond waterfowl.
 - Agency Inertia
 - Engage staff at multiple levels, share success stories, encourage collaboration, and enlist the support of advocates.
- Director recommendations for the Advisory Committee, Manager of Development and State Relations, and partners.
 - The Fall Flights Team should continue to focus on building relationships, offering trips to Canada, visiting state (e.g., commission meeting and state DU conventions), attending AFWA meetings, and providing information about Fall Flights.
 - With rapid turnover, continual engagement will be necessary to maintain awareness and increase support.

Objective 3: Director recommendations to inform development of a communications/marketing plan.

- Consider directors, agency staff, and constituents as potential audiences.
- Send short monthly e-mail blasts to directors, perhaps provide more in-depth information for staff, and provide materials that can be incorporated into agency social media or print for external audiences.
- Utilize in-person conversations and virtual meetings with directors and agency staff.
- Include messaging focused on brand recognition, the value proposition, return on investments, empowering advocates, strategies to reach goal, and celebrating success.

Proposed Nest Steps

Objective 1: Build Relationships

- Fall Flights team should continue to build relationships with state leadership by hosting trips to Canada, attending state commission meetings, state DU conventions, and regional AFWA directors' meetings.
- The Manager of Development and State Relations should attend AFWA regional meetings in 2024.
- Schedule virtual meetings with agency staff involved with Fall Flights.

Objective 2: Foster AFWA ownership of Fall Flights

- Advisory Committee Chair should send an email blast out to directors sharing results of listening sessions and how the ideas/information will inform next steps.
- Develop the following two products in the near term.
 - a brochure describing the value proposition of Fall Flights and
 - a small number of PowerPoint Slides that waterfowl biologist can include when presenting waterfowl program information to their commissions.

Objective 3: Inform a Communications/Marketing Plan

- The Manager of Development and State Relations should convene a team of communication and marketing specialists to develop and implement a communications/marketing plan.
- Use AFWA's Communication Plan and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Marketing Plans as examples.

Conclusions

- Directors are very supportive of Fall Flights.
- Overall, directors supported the Advisory Committee's emphasis on building relationships, fostering ownership, and enhancing communications.

Table of Contents

<i>Listening Session Objectives</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Methods</i>	<i>2</i>
Format	2
Participants	3
<i>Results</i>	<i>5</i>
Objective 1: Building Relationships	5
Objective 2: Fostering Ownership	5
Identifying Challenges and Opportunities	5
Budget Issues	5
Investing in Canada.....	6
Navigating a Path Forward	7
Defining Expectations for the Advisory Committee, Manager of Development and State Relations, and Partners.....	8
Building Relationships.....	8
Offering Trips to Canada	8
Attending State Commission Meetings and DU State Conventions.....	8
Attending Regional AFWA meetings	9
Objective 3: Inform a Communications/Marketing Plan	9
Potential Audiences and Associated Information Needs	9
Directors.....	9
Agency Staff	9
Constituents.....	9
Communication Platforms	9
Messaging	10
Brand Recognition	10
The Value Proposition	10
Return on Investments	10
Empowering Advocates	10
Roadmaps to Goal.....	10
Celebrating Success	11
<i>Proposed Next Steps</i>	<i>11</i>
Objective 1: Building Relationships	11
Objective 2: Fostering Ownership	11
Objective 3: Informing a Communications/Marketing Plan	12
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>12</i>

Listening Session Objectives

The first objective of the listening sessions was to help **build relationships**. These calls provided an opportunity to introduce Andy to directors and to learn more about them. At the same time, it provided a forum for directors to hear from each other and set the stage for future conversations.

The second objective was to **foster AFWA ownership**. The first step was to learn more about director experiences with Fall Flights and the role the Advisory Committee, partners, and Manager of Development and State Relations could play to help them reach their goals. The second step will be to demonstrate the Fall Flights Team is following their recommendations and to continue to emphasize that this is their program.

The third objective was to **inform a marketing/communication plan** with a focus on identifying customer needs, in this case the prerequisites for states to invest in Fall Flights. This qualitative information along with segmentation analysis and survey conducted for the Fall Flights Task Group will serve as the basis of a situation analysis to be included in the communications/marketing plan.

Methods

Format

We employed a Community Listening Session (CLS) approach to learn about opportunities and constraints for states to invest in Fall Flights and potential approaches to maintain or increase investment levels. This approach provides the opportunity for participants to learn from one another, employ standard focus group techniques, and utilize a participatory research approach (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Schematic depicting inspiration for the CLS approach and distinguishing characteristics.



Source: Nicole M. Ardoin, Rachelle K. Gould, Deborah Wojcik, Noelle Wyman Roth & Matt Biggar (2022) Community listening sessions: an approach for facilitating collective reflection on environmental learning and behavior in everyday life, *Ecosystems and People*, 18:1, 469-477, DOI: [10.1080/26395916.2022.2101531](https://doi.org/10.1080/26395916.2022.2101531)

Andy first met with representatives from DU Canada (David Kustersky and Howie Singer), Manitoba Habitat Conservancy (Roald Stander), and AFWA (Dean Smith) to develop the script for the listening sessions. We included the following questions to guide the conversations:

1. What were your impressions of how the duck season went in your state?
2. What did it take for you to secure your state commitment to Canadian waterfowl habitat and what obstacles did you have to overcome to do so?

3. If you haven't achieved your goal, what are some of the obstacles that stand in your way?
4. How can the Advisory Committee and I help you and other states reach your goals. If you are at or above goal, what can we do to help you sustain that level of participation?
5. What would you like to see from partners to help you and other states reach your goals?
6. How can we best keep you informed about Fall Flights and provide information that will help you sustain or increase your investment in Canadian wetland and associated upland habitats?
7. Highlight one thing that we need to continue doing to sustain your level of engagement and indicate if there is anything we really don't need to be doing to support the program.

We grouped participants based on Regional Associations as much as possible and attempted to include more and less engaged states in each session. Andy facilitated each session. Dean Smith served as the recorder for most sessions to ensure consistency and David Kostersky, Deanne Drouillard, Howie Singer, and Roald Stander served as the recorder in at least one session each so Fall Flights partners would have familiarity with the process. All sessions were recorded and transcribed. Andy then coded the data and grouped these codes into themes.

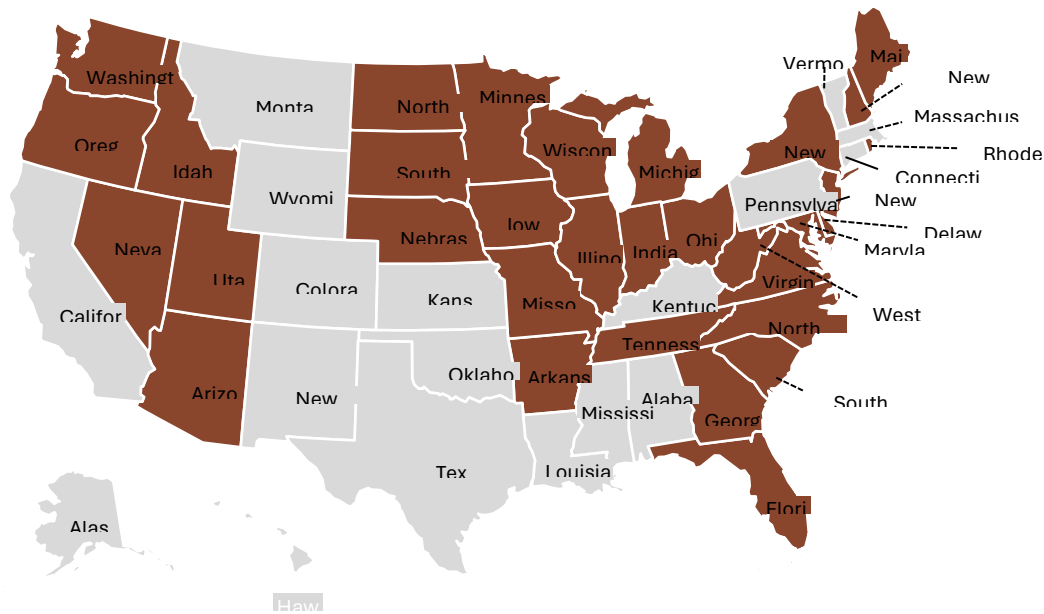
Participants

Thirty-two directors or proxies participated in 10 listening sessions during February 2024 (Table 1 and Figure 2). MAFWA had the highest proportion of their states participating at 85% followed by NEAFWA (69%), SEAFWA (60%), and WAFWA (50%). The Atlantic Flyway had the greatest representation with 76% of Atlantic Flyway states participating followed by the Mississippi Flyway (71%), Pacific Flyway (50%), and Central Flyway (30%).

Table 1. Listening Session Dates and Participants

February 7	AZ, OR
February 9	MD, ME, NH
February 12	IA, ND
February 14	OH,
February 15	NY, RI, VA, NJ, WV
February 16	NE, WI, MN, MI, IN
February 23	SC, NC, GA, DE
February 23	ID, NV
February 26	FL, TN, IL, MO, WA
February 27	SD, UT, AR

Figure 2: Map showing participating states in brown.



Participation was evenly distributed among states based on level of engagement in Fall Flights (Table 2). Sixty-four percent of the states at or above their AFWA goal participated in a listening session. We were concerned that we may not garner strong participation from less active states. This turned out not to be the case. Seventy-three percent of those states that were more than 40% below goal and had not increased investments in the last three years participated in a listening session.

Table 2. Listening Session Participation Based on Level of Engagement

Engagement Level	Listening Session Participants	Total	Percent of Total
At goal	9	14	64%
>40% of goal & increased investment in last three years	4	7	57%
>40% of goal & no change in investment in last three years	5	8	63%
<40% of goal & increased investment in last three years	6	9	67%
<40% of goal and no change in investment in last three years	8	11	73%
Total	32	49	65%

Results

Objective 1: Building Relationships

The listening sessions provided us with the opportunity to meet with 26 directors, six deputy directors, and one senior administrator. The response was favorable with several directors responding in follow-up emails that they look forward to continuing the conversation. During the sessions, participants noted they appreciated the opportunity to learn from one another and appreciated these sessions as an important first step.

Objective 2: Fostering Ownership

Identifying Challenges and Opportunities

Budget Issues

Challenges

Competing Priorities

Agency budget limitations and competing demands were the most frequently cited factors limiting investments. Directors mentioned these issues in seven of the ten sessions. This result was similar to results from the Fall Flights Task Force Survey where 57% of respondents indicated that program or agency budget limitations were one of the top barriers to increasing investments. Directors from nearly every duck production state noted the challenge of balancing in-state waterfowl production needs with those found in Canada.

Limited Flexibility

In addition to competing priorities, several directors noted they have relatively small amounts of discretionary funding available that could be invested in Canada. States generally followed one of three investment approaches.

- Seventeen states indicated their contributions were directly tied to their state duck stamp program and their legislative budgets. Of these, at least five indicated they are mandated to invest 25% to 50% of available funds in Fall Flights.
- Nine states indicated they use a combination of funding sources.
- Funding mechanisms were not identified for the remaining six states.

Directors from states that have a line item in their legislative budget noted that once this is in place, it is protected and relatively secure. The challenge is that once in place, it is difficult to change and subject to risks when exposed to the political process associated with introducing legislation. States that use a combination of funding sources indicated they have more flexibility in determining investment levels, but these investments are much less secure. With turnover within agencies, priorities could quickly change.

Opportunities

Review Fall Flights Investments When Considering Duck Stamp/License Fee Increases

When states consider duck stamp or license fee increases, it is an opportune time to consider Fall Flights investments. Six states noted that they had either included Canadian investments in recent duck stamp or license price increases or were planning to do so in the future. When taking this approach, they stressed the need for advocacy, both in terms of supporting price increases and investing a portion of these funds in Canada.

Review Investments During Times of Leadership Changes

Participants in seven listening sessions noted that changes in funding occurred around the time there were changes in leadership. New directors participating in the call also expressed an interest in learning more and potentially increasing their investments.

Use Pittman-Robertson Funding

Given limited availability of discretionary funds and a desire to make use of Pittman-Robertson funds, several directors encouraged us to provide more information about the potential to use PR funds to reach their goals. North Carolina has been using this approach for the last several years, so there a precedent. Potential PR match could either be provided by states or Canadian partners. There are at least three caveats.

- First, PR funds cannot be matched with NAWCA dollars, so the overall return on the investment will be lower.
- Second, NAWCA funds and PR funds cannot be used for the same project, so if states chose to use PR funds it would need to be an amount sufficient to cover the costs of the project.
- Third, not all work done by Canadian partners would be eligible for PR match.

Consider Alternative Ways to Allocate Funds from Existing or New Sources

Two states noted they will soon be receiving significant wetland funding from partners. In both cases, they thought this funding could potentially free up funding from other sources that could then be invested in Canada through the Fall Flights program.

Investing in Canada

Challenges

Optics

While states expressed support for Fall Flights, participants in five listening sessions noted they face challenges spending state funds out-of-country. Some directors noted that their constituents understood the value of sending money out-of-country and others expressed more uncertainty. One director asked if DU has ever surveyed members on this topic. As another director put it, “*can they pass the “red face” test*” to send money to Canada.

Opportunities

Demonstrate Return on Investment

States need to be able to communicate the Return on Investment (ROI) based on sound science both internally and externally. At the broadest level, directors need a short document and talking points so they can succinctly communicate the overall value proposition of Fall Flights. At a

finer scale, agency staff need materials like PowerPoint slides that they can incorporate into presentations to be shared internally and with partners. The match or leveraged value that state investments generate is a key selling point.

Directors from seven states suggested including nongame species and overall wetland system benefits into the ROI equation. They noted an appeal to a broader audience and better alignment with a greater range of agency priorities would increase the likelihood of garnering support from commissioners and staff. Two states noted that they are also exploring ways to increase investments for nongame bird species through Southern Wings. Second, breeding ground states were looking for guidance on how they could better communicate the value of investing in breeding habitat for ducks in Canada rather than within their own states.

Navigating a Path Forward

Challenge

Staff Resistance or Ambivalence

Two directors noted the challenge of garnering support from large commissions. With frequent turnover amongst commissioners this can be even more challenging. Directors from two states noted reluctance from staff to support funding increases. In one case, this in part, had to do with agency organization. Budgets proposals come up through regions and this can lead to some parochialism. Two directors indicated they had not heard from their staff about Fall Flights and that it would really take advocacy from staff before they would entertain increasing investments. One Deputy Director noted that with all the staff turnover within their agency, it will require vigilance to ensure new staff are aware of Fall Flights and the benefits of investing in it.

Perceived Insurmountable Obstacles

More than half of the participants expressed doubt their agency would ever be able to reach their goal for many of the reasons already described.

Opportunity

Engage Staff at Multiple Levels

Participants from seven sessions emphasized the importance of engaging staff at all levels. In some of the listening sessions, we followed up with a question about developing Fall Flights Teams of Champions in each state. This idea was well received. Ohio noted that this approach would fit with their agencies efforts to broaden staff expertise beyond a single specialty to foster a more versatile and knowledgeable workforce that prevents loss of knowledge with turnover. Utah and Washington suggested including individuals with nongame or ecosystems expertise. Participants suggested directors could help identify team members.

Share Success Stories and Encourage Collaboration

Directors participating in three listening sessions recommended highlighting success stories. They noted that sharing successes can inspire others and build momentum. It is important to have highlights of achievements or projects, along with points that directors can brag about. This could include successes, milestones, or initiatives worth highlighting. Directors also recommended facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing among states to learn from each other's experiences. One director also noted that providing Fall Flights items such as the

backpacks or lapel pins helps generate awareness and provides free marketing. Ohio and Wisconsin indicated they do a check presentation each year at their state Ducks Unlimited Convention to further highlight the strength of their partnership. In the case of Ohio, they then post this on social media.

Encourage Partner Advocacy and Collaboration

Participants from seven listening sessions stressed the importance of constituent advocacy. Several directors noted that it would require a strong push from constituents before they would be able to increase their investments. As one director put it, *“It would be fantastic to have sportsmen coming to commission meetings and call for more investment in Fall Flights.”* Another director noted that partners should support and encourage states by holding each other up and giving accolades for their achievements. Publicly cheering each other on can help demonstrate unity and solidarity in conservation efforts. This director continued by suggesting that all states could do better working with their constituents and then having those strong advocates out there when you have those rocky times. Sometimes legislators are not going to listen to us, the government, but they will listen to the constituents and those strong advocates have to be the ones to stand up and ask for certain things.

Defining Expectations for the Advisory Committee, Manager of Development and State Relations, and Partners

Building Relationships

Directors in six listening sessions emphasized the importance of building relationships. As an example, one director noted that he would be more likely to open and read emails from someone with whom he has a relationship. Multiple directors mentioned the listening sessions provided a good example of building relationships and providing outreach. Another director noted the importance of continual and repeated engagement to keep Fall Flights front and center. Multiple directors highlighted how they valued the opportunities for casual, quick conversations with AFWA staff and partners. They provide an opportunity to ask questions in a low-pressure environment.

Offering Trips to Canada

Directors in six sessions highlighted the critical importance trips to Canada play in garnering support for investments. They noted the importance of commissioners, agency leadership, and key advocates participating on these trips. Commissioners and advocates who have gone on these trips have been able to tell the story much more effectively regarding the value of investing in Canada. As an example, one director described how a key advocate who participated on a trip was then able to make a compelling case to their legislature to invest in Canada. Funding mechanisms to support travel to Canada arose in a few listening sessions. In these sessions, participants requested we explore possibilities to fund travel for key advocates to go on these trips. It can be a challenge when they must pay their own way.

Attending State Commission Meetings and DU State Conventions

Directors in three sessions commented on the value of having someone other than one of their agency staff explaining the program, the reasons why states should participate, and how they would benefit. Having Fall Flights team members attend these meetings also provides an

opportunity to build relationships. As an example, one director noted some of his commissioners now are texting Dave Kustersky directly. During the conversations, three states asked if someone could present to their commission. They also noted the importance of timing. One director noted that having Dave reach out at AFWA is one thing, but to come to their state is a big deal.

Attending Regional AFWA meetings

Directors in four listening sessions brought up the importance of hearing about Fall Flights at regional AFWA directors' meetings. While some mentioned they appreciated hearing the updates during the meeting, others indicated they appreciated the opportunities for more informal conversations.

Objective 3: Inform a Communications/Marketing Plan

Potential Audiences and Associated Information Needs

Directors

In eight listening sessions, we asked if participants would prefer monthly email blasts or quarterly newsletters. In seven of the eight sessions directors indicated they would prefer email blasts with just a few bullet points. They noted quarterly newsletters may not be frequent enough to keep top of mind. Information provided monthly would also provide them with more opportunity to incorporate key messages when they provide staff updates. Given the volume of information directors receive daily, they said they would be less likely read more in-depth information. However, a small number of directors did indicate they would prefer quarterly updates, especially to help learn more about the program. One director mentioned a much more in-depth look at Fall Flights every three or four years would be welcomed.

Agency Staff

We noted that we would be asking staff similar questions about information needs, so we did not spend as much time discussing it. A few directors indicated that staff may desire more detailed information. They also indicated the annual state reports provided to staff are helpful.

Constituents

Several directors requested more outward, public facing communication products that would help them, and their staff, communicate with partners and the public about the benefits of investing in Fall Flights. They encouraged the Fall Flights Team to create a very short document or brochure that clearly articulates the value proposition of Fall Flights.

Communication Platforms

Directors suggested using different communication platforms depending on the audience and desired outcomes. Several directors indicated these listening sessions served as a good form of outreach to connect with them and suggested virtual meetings may also be productive with agency staff. They also stressed the importance of in-person interactions with directors and commissioners. In addition to short emails, two directors suggested short videos. One director noted, "YouTube is the new reading...I'm often listening to things and doing multiple things, and if I'm listening to something or there's a nice visual, it catches my attention a bit longer than the three other things." For outward facing communications, participants suggested materials that could be packaged within agency social media or print publications. One director suggested

developing materials that could be published in outdoor magazines. Directors in two listening sessions recommended developing communication materials for DU events so local members/donors would have a better idea how their money is being spent. They suggested using local hunters to help tell the story.

Messaging

Brand Recognition

In multiple sessions, directors noted rapid turnover will require ongoing efforts to continue to build and maintain program awareness. Directors need to be reminded of their state goals and their investment levels. In follow-up correspondence, it was also apparent that the connections between AFWA, DU, and other partners could be clarified. In one case, a director called to double check to make sure the check his agency sent to DU was part of Fall Flights. In another case, a wildlife chief had the impression that AFWA goals were DU specific and did not include investments with other partners.

The Value Proposition

Several directors requested a very short document that provided a high-level overview of Fall Flights. They would be able to share this document with interested parties and it would provide them with the content they need to give an “elevator speech,” when trying to garner support for state investments.

Return on Investments

Directors asked for information that they could share with commissioners, staff, and constituents that highlights ROI. Messaging on ROI needs to address three questions.

- First, how does sending money out-of-country benefit states and align with agency priorities?
- Second, for states prioritizing systems approach to conservation, how does sending money out-of-country benefit more than just waterfowl?
- Third, for breeding ground states, how does sending money result in a greater ROI than investing in breeding waterfowl within their own states? Directors emphasized the importance of using sound science to quantify the ROI.

Empowering Advocates

Directors noted they depend on strong advocacy from constituents, especially when legislative action is required to increase funding. For this to happen, constituents need to be aware of Fall Flights, recognize how it benefits them, and understand their role in garnering support. This will require messaging with objectives ranging from creating awareness to providing more strategic guidance on how to best support states.

Roadmaps to Goal

Throughout these listening sessions, it became apparent that states have used a variety of strategies to invest in Fall Flights. These strategies range from making an in-house decision to prioritize investing in Fall Flights to introducing legislation to increase investments. Messaging that describes different strategies to increase investments and the pros and cons associated with them may help state agencies as they develop their own roadmaps to goal. As one example, several directors noted that it would be helpful to know more about the potential of using Pittman-Robertson funding for Fall Flights.

Celebrating Success

On the one hand, many directors highlighted the challenges they faced to increase investments and expressed doubt they would ever be able to reach goal. On the other hand, other states have already reached goals. These states can demonstrate what is possible and help inspire other states.

Proposed Next Steps

Objective 1: Building Relationships

It was evident that the Fall Flights Team has done a tremendous job developing relationships with state leadership by hosting trips to Canada, attending state commission meetings, state DU conventions, and regional AFWA director's meetings. These activities should continue. The Manager of Development and State Relations should attend the following AFWA meetings in 2024:

- North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference: March 25-29
- WAFWA Summer Meeting: June 3 -7
- MAFWA Directors Meeting: June 23-26
- AFWA Meeting: September 22-25
- NEAFWA Directors Meeting: October 29-31
- WAFWA Executive Leadership Meeting: December 3-5

The Director of Development and State Relations should schedule virtual meetings with agency staff involved with Fall Flights. Potential participants may include Wildlife Chiefs and/or Flyway Council Representatives, Flyway Technical Section Representatives, Wetland Coordinators, and others recommended by directors.

Directors from Washington, Utah, and Nevada asked if it would be possible to have someone come to their state to meet with their commissions and staff. The Advisory Committee should decide how they would like to handle these requests.

Objective 2: Fostering Ownership

The Advisory Committee Chair should send an email blast out to directors as a follow up to the listening sessions. The objectives of this email would be to remind directors that this is a shared AFWA program, generate awareness of the Advisory Committee, and demonstrate that the Advisory Committee is using suggestions provided by directors during the listening sessions to help states reach their goals.

The Manager of Development and State Relations should invite marketing and communications experts to assist with the development and implementation of a marketing/communications plan. Highlighting the role state communications and marketing experts are playing in developing these materials will provide another way to generate awareness of the Fall Flights program to a broader audience within agencies and reinforce the idea this is their program. As a first step, the

Manager of Development and State Relations should reach out to the Education, Outreach and Diversity Committee and the Outreach and Marketing Working Group.

The Manager of Development and State Relations and the Fall Flights Team should demonstrate responsiveness by developing the following two products in the near-term as requested by directors:

- 1) a brochure describing the value proposition of Fall Flights and
- 2) a small number of PowerPoint Slides that waterfowl biologist can include when presenting waterfowl program information to their commissions.

In the long-term, the Manager of Development and State Relations should work with state communication and marketing experts to develop communication materials that describe strategies to achieve goal, demonstrate return on investments, and celebrate successes.

The Manager of Development and State Relations should explore opportunities to engage agency staff and partners that could assist in identifying and promoting the benefits of investing in Fall Flights for nongame species. There are three potential paths that should be investigated.

- First, the Fall Flights Team should investigate opportunities for states to include Fall Flights Investments in their State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP) as some states are already doing. States must have their State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP) updated by October 2025, so there may be opportunities to do so.
- Second, USGS will update their Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) database after all SWAPs have been completed. The Fall Flights Team should work with partners to conduct an analysis to determine which SWAP species benefit from Fall Flights.
- Third, the Fall Flights Team should reach out to nongame partners to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Fourth, the Manager of Development and State Relations should follow up on initial contacts by the Fall Flights Team with the Cornell Bird Lab to develop communication materials highlighting the ROI for nongame species.

Objective 3: Informing a Communications/Marketing Plan

The Manager of Development and State Relations should convene a team of communication and marketing specialists to develop and implement a communications/marketing plan. Based the examples of AFWAs Communication Plan and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, potential sections may include a strategy overview, a situation analysis, communication objectives, branding strategy, target audiences, communication platforms, messaging, and evaluation. The overall structure and content should be guided by recommendations from the marketing/communications team.

Conclusion

Listening session participants expressed strong support for the Fall Flights program regardless of their own state's participation level. While supportive many participants expressed doubts, they would be able to reach goal. Perhaps the most encouraging finding was the number of directors that expressed a willingness to investigate further how their state may invest more. Arkansas,

New Jersey, North Carolina, Maine, Missouri, Florida, Maryland, New York, Virginia, and Indiana highlighted that they had either just increased investment or were actively in the process of doing so. Minnesota, Michigan, Nebraska, Oregon, and Idaho indicated they would like to invest more and expressed a willingness to explore options. Other states like Arizona, Delaware, and New Hampshire indicated that it would be worth circling back with their staff to better determine the priority level. Finally, states like Washington and Utah were in the process of becoming more familiar with Fall Flights and provided great suggestions on how we could help their agencies become more involved. Overall, directors supported the Advisory Committee's emphasis on building relationships, fostering ownership, and enhancing communications.