

1SUPPORTING STATEMENT A FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION

North American Woodcock Singing Ground Survey OMB Control Number 1018-0019

Terms of Clearance: On February 23, 2024, OMB imposed the following Terms of Clearance on this collection, “In accordance with 5 CFR 1320, the information collection is approved for three years. As terms of clearance, however, the Agency is asked to provide OMB with screenshots of the new application for review and approval prior to the system going live.”

Agency Response to Terms of Clearance: We provided screenshots of the web application in the spring of 2024 and provided updated screenshots in this collection for revisions that were made since then to the web application and now the mobile application.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA; 16 U.S.C. 703–712) requires the Secretary of the Interior, delegated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (we, Service, FWS), to implement a viable and ongoing program for the protection and conservation of various migratory birds. The MBTA designates the Department of the Interior as the primary agency responsible for:

- Management of migratory bird populations frequenting the United States, and
- Setting hunting regulations that allow for the well-being of migratory bird populations.

These responsibilities dictate that we gather accurate data on various characteristics of migratory bird populations. The North American Woodcock Singing Ground Survey is an essential part of the migratory bird management program. State, local, Tribal, U.S. Federal, and Canadian Provincial conservation agencies conduct the survey annually to provide the data necessary to determine the population status of the American woodcock. In addition, the information is vital in assessing the relative changes in the geographic distribution of the species.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection. Be specific. If this collection is a form or a questionnaire, every question needs to be justified.

The Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management (DMBM) uses the information to assess the status of woodcock populations and to develop recommendations for hunting regulations. The Service, State, and Canadian Provincial conservation agencies, university associates, and other interested parties also use the information for various research and management projects. The Canadian Wildlife Service, Provinces, and States rely on the Service to administer and coordinate this survey.

State, local, Tribal, U.S. Federal, and Canadian Provincial conservation agencies, as well as other participants, use FWS Form 3-156 to conduct annual field surveys. Instructions for

completing the survey and reporting data accompany the form and are within the data collection applications. Observers can utilize the data collection applications on a web browser or with a mobile device in the field to collect/report survey data or scan/email the paper version of Form 3-156 to their assigned coordinator who will then enter the data via a data collection application.

We collect observer information (name, email address, and agency they work for) so that we can contact the observer if questions or concerns arise. Observers provide information on:

- Sky condition, temperature, wind, and precipitation.
- Survey date.
- Stop number.
- Stop location.
- Mileage accrued.
- Time at each stop.
- Number of American Woodcock males heard peenting.
- Disturbance level.
- Comments concerning the survey.

We use the information that we collect to analyze the survey data and prepare reports. Assessment of the population's status serves to guide the Service, the States, and the Canadian Government in the annual promulgation of hunting regulations.

The latest results from the survey collection are available to the public over the Internet at <https://fws.gov/library/collections/american-woodcock-population-status-reports> or by contacting the Service to receive in a summarized, tabular format.

NOTE: With our November, 2023 submission, we also included North American Woodcock Singing Ground Survey - CAN and North American Woodcock Singing Ground Survey - US. These two collections were for observers who only submitted their survey form with no data entry; therefore, USFWS staff entered their data for them. This no longer occurs so we removed these two information collections for the current renewal.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden and specifically how this collection meets GPEA requirements.

The reporting procedure requires that observers/respondents fill out FWS Form 3-156 either by pen or pencil on a paper version or by using a data collection application on a mobile device in the field or after they return to the office using the mobile application or web browser. A PDF version of FWS Form 3-156 (pre-printed with unique individual route information) is distributed to every assigned observer before the survey season begins. If respondents choose to complete the paper form in the field, they can voluntarily submit data via the data collection applications using a secure login method that is accessible via a computer or mobile device. Survey forms are collected by designated State and province coordinators if the respondent chooses not to submit data via the data collection application themselves. The State or province coordinator would then report the results on behalf of the respondent/observer using the data collection application's offline feature. If respondents choose to utilize the data collection application while conducting the survey, results are reported as soon as they fill out

the electronic form in its entirety and submit their data. This method will streamline data processing steps and increase data accuracy.

Respondents will need to download the application to their mobile device and register before being able to use it or they may access it through a secure login method via a web browser. Much of the electronic form is pre-filled with specific variables that help reduce data entry time and ensures data accuracy.

The Service is working to verify spatial data for routes that is needed for mobile application data entry. The long-term goal is to have spatial data available for all routes within the survey so that all observers have the option to use the mobile application for data entry.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

We are not aware of any duplication. Within the Federal government, the DMBM is the sole organizational unit charged with monitoring the population status of migratory game birds. Also, the realm of migratory bird management is small. If similar sources of information were available or even possible, DMBM would be aware of them.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

The survey does not impact small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Migratory game bird populations are dynamic and can change in size and status from year to year. For this reason, the promulgation of hunting regulations has traditionally been an annual activity, and, thus, annual assessments of the population status of the more important species, including woodcock, are desirable. Without information on the population's status, we might promulgate hunting regulations that are:

- Not sufficiently restrictive, which could cause harm to the woodcock population, or
- Too restrictive, which would unduly restrict recreational opportunities afforded by woodcock hunting.

Another consequence of not conducting the surveys is that we could be vulnerable to litigation charging mismanagement and failure to fulfill treaty and other obligations.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- * requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;
- * requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;
- * requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;

- * requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;
- * in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
- * requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;
- * that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or
- * requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information, unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

No special circumstances exist that require us to conduct this collection in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and in response to the PRA statement associated with the collection over the past three years, and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every three years — even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

On March 2, 2026, we published in the *Federal Register* ([91 FR 10109](#)) a notice of our intent to request that OMB approve this information collection. In that notice, we solicited comments for 60 days, ending on May 1, 2026. We also published the *Federal Register* notice on Regulations.gov (Docket No. [FWS-HQ-MB-2026-0166](#)). We received two comments in response to that notice; however, neither comment addressed the information collection requirements.

Comment 1: Electronic comment received 03/14/2026 from Teresa Greg Goodman via Regulations.gov (FWS-HQ-MB-2026-0166-0002). The commenter asked how she could help document the woodcock.

Agency Response to Comment 1: The commenter did not address the information collection requirements; therefore, no response is required.

Comment 2: Anonymous electronic comment received 04/27/2026 via Regulations.gov

(FWS-HQ-MB-2026-0166-000e). The commenter requested the Service protect the woodcock.

Agency Response to Comment 2: While we respect the commenter's opinion, it is beyond the scope of this collection and therefore no action was taken. Nevertheless, we feel it is important to note that the Service developed a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in 2013 ([FSEIS 2013](#)) that permits the hunting of migratory birds. It ensures that the proposed management action continues to follow the National Environmental Policy Act. Furthermore, this process ensures that the action does not adversely affect populations of species covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or listed species and their critical habitats under the Endangered Species Act.

The purpose of and need for FSEIS 2013 was to adopt a process for authorizing migratory bird hunting in accordance with the MBTA (16 U.S.C. §703-712) and the four bilateral conventions. The process employs resources and information available to the Service, States, and public that allows for adequate public involvement and timely adoption and publication of annual regulations by the Department of the Interior for the hunting of migratory birds.

In addition to the *Federal Register* notice, we consulted with the nine (9) individuals identified below who familiar with this collection of information in order to validate our time burden estimate and asked for comments on the questions below:

Organization	Title
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	Migratory Bird Program Leader
Pennsylvania Game Commission	Reports & Data Management Coordinator
Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment and Climate Change Canada	Migratory Game Bird Biologist
Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife	Migratory Game Bird Project Leader
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife	Wildlife Biologist
Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management	Upland Gamebird Biologist
Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Wildlife Biologist
Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Wildlife Biologist
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Regional Wildlife Manager

“Whether or not the collection of information is necessary, including whether or not the information will have practical utility; whether there are any questions they felt were unnecessary”

Comments: Responses to this question indicated this collection of information is necessary, pertinent and concise. It helps build a long-term dataset that is used manage woodcock populations and monitoring of this species is required by law in order to allow this species to be harvested. This survey gives a basic understanding and a way for agencies to monitor population trends.

Agency Response/Action Taken: There was no action taken by the Service since all thought there was a practical utility, and it is necessary.

“The accuracy of our estimate of the burden for this collection of information”

Comments: Responses to this question were mostly in line with the accuracy of our estimated burden. A few respondents did indicate it takes them longer to drive to and from the survey site than what the Service estimates and the estimated time to review the instructional materials, map and training presentation took much less time than the Service estimated.

Agency Response/Action Taken: We calculate an average overall for observers to obtain the estimated time it takes to drive to and from the route location and review various survey materials prior to conducting the survey. So, the actual time it takes may vary from one observer to another with some taking considerably more or less time to travel to and from the route's location or more or less time to review survey material instructions.

“Ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected”

Comments: Responses indicated that the Singing-ground Survey is a streamlined survey with clear goals, is straight forward, and has plenty of instructions.

Agency Response/Action Taken: There was no action taken since all agreed the Service provides clear, concise, instruction for the Survey.

And

“Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents”

Comments: Commenters recommended a phone/field app where observers could see stops on a digital map and enter real-time data, which would reduce data entry time and inconsistencies when new observers take over.

Agency Response/Action Taken: The Service has already developed a mobile application that can be used for data entry in the field. As indicated the response to question 3 above, the Service is working to verify spatial data for routes that is needed for mobile application data entry. The long-term goal is to have spatial data available for all routes within the survey so that all observers have the option to use the mobile application for data entry.

Additional comments received during the outreach:

Comments: Respondents indicated that they didn't see any other ways the Service might improve the efficiency of the way the survey is conducted/handled. They are satisfied with data collection methods and feel at this point they have been fine tuned. Respondents are glad to take part in this survey and feel it increases their skillsets/knowledge base as wildlife biologists and enables them to relay pertinent information to the public.

Agency Response/Action Taken: There was no action taken since respondents were satisfied with the Service's level of efficient processes and data collection methods.

Despite attempts to solicit feedback, we did not receive responses from 2 of the 9 individuals contacted as part of the targeted outreach.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

We do not provide payments or gifts to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

We do not provide any assurance of confidentiality. Information is collected and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a) and the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552). We will maintain the information in a secure System of Records (Migratory Bird Population and Harvest Surveys – Interior, FWS-26, modification published [88 FR 16277](#), March 16, 2023).

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

We do not ask sensitive questions.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- * Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.
- * If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.
- * Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here.

We estimate that approximately **794 non-Federal observers** conduct the survey and submit data annually for a total of **1,704 annual burden hours**. For each response, we estimate it will take observers from Canada and the United States an average of 2.17 hours to supply the needed information for a total hourly burden cost of **\$96,633 (rounded)**. This includes time for:

- Reviewing instructions, map and training presentation (20 minutes)
- Gathering data during survey stops (30 minutes)

- Completing and reviewing the survey form (5 minutes)
- Driving time to and from the survey site (1 hour)
- Entering data into an application on a web browser (15 minutes)

Approximately 75 Canadian and United States observers (11% percent) will voluntarily choose to submit data electronically using a mobile application in the field rather than entering data on a web browser, which will decrease the time by 15 minutes to a response time of 1.92 hours per response. This is because an observer is entering data at the time of collection and there is no need to enter it on a web browser later.

Table 12.1 – Annual Response and Burden Hour Calculations

NOTE: We have a web browser application (app submission) and the mobile app (in the field app collection and submission). Respondents would use the web browser application if they collected their results on the paper form in the field and then went back to their computer after the survey to enter the results into the web browser application. We provide a breakdown between submissions in the U.S. and those in Canada.

NOTE: With our November, 2023 submission, we also included North American Woodcock Singing Ground Survey - CAN and North American Woodcock Singing Ground Survey - US. These two collections were for observers who only submitted their survey form with no data entry; therefore, USFWS staff entered their data for them. This no longer occurs so we removed these two information collections for the current renewal.

Table 1 – Burden Estimates:

Requirement	Average No. of Annual Respondents	Average No. of Responses Each	Average No. of Annual Responses	Average Completion Time per Response (Hours)	Estimated Annual Burden Hours *	Hourly Rate	\$ Value of Annual Burden Hours
Survey – US (Web Browser – App Submission)							
Government	530	1	530	2.17	1,150	\$ 58.98	\$ 67,827.00
Survey – CAN (Web Browser – App Submission)							
Foreign Gov.	189	1	189	2.17	410	51.61	21,160.10
Survey – US (Mobile App)							
Government	15	1	15	1.92	29	58.98	1,710.42
Survey – CAN (Mobile App)							
Foreign Gov.	60	1	60	1.92	115	51.61	5,935.15
TOTALS:	794		794		1,704		\$ 96,632.67

*Rounded

We calculated the benefits for both U.S. and Canadian observers in accordance with Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [News Release](#) USDL-26-0827, June 12, 2026, Employer Costs for Employee Compensation—March 2026. We used the [Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2023](#) (19-1023 Zoologists and Wildlife Biologists) from the Bureau of Labor Standards website to determine the dollar value of the U.S. burden hours [\$36.41 (mean hourly wage for zoologist/wildlife biologist) multiplied by 1.62 to account for benefits for State government employees, resulting in an annual cost factor of \$58.98 per hour].

We used the Statistics Canada website, [Table 14-10-0417-01 Employee wages by occupation, annual](#) on May 13, 2026 to determine labor cost information for Canadian observers (average hourly wage rate for natural and applied sciences and related occupations). We obtained 2025 labor cost information (Release date: January 9, 2026) for full time (15 years and over) biologists in each Province (Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Prince Edward

Island, and Manitoba) participating in the survey and then averaged all the provinces together. We estimate the average dollar value of a Canadian burden hour to be \$43.66 CAD (see Table 12.2). Using the exchange rate in effect on May 13, 2026 (1.00 CAD = 0.73 USD), we estimate the dollar value of a Canadian burden hour to be \$31.86 USD, which we multiplied by 1.62 to account for benefits (\$51.61 USD).

Table 12.2 – Calculation of Canadian Burden Hour Average

Location	Average Hourly Wage (\$)	Overall Average
Ontario	\$ 50.77	
Nova Scotia	44.16	
New Brunswick	40.67	
Quebec	46.60	
Prince Edward Island	38.43	
Manitoba	<u>41.35</u>	
Subtotal:	\$ 261.98	\$ 43.66

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual non-hour cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected in item 12.)

- * The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life) and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information (including filing fees paid for form processing). Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.
- * If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.
- * Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government, or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.

There are no nonhour burden costs to respondents.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of

information.

The total estimated annual cost to the Federal Government is **\$115,200** (rounded), which includes \$103,356 (rounded) for salaries and \$25,100 for operating costs.

We used Office of Personnel Management Salary Table [2026-DCB](#) to determine the annual wages and multiplied the hourly wage by 1.62 to account for benefits in accordance with BLS [News Release](#) USDL-26-0827.

Table 14.1 - Salary Costs

Position	Grade/Step	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate (Incl. Benefits)	Total Hours	Total Salary Costs
Wildlife biologist	GS-12/05	\$ 55.62	\$ 90.10	1,000	\$ 90,100

Table 14.2 - Operating Costs

Activity/Survey	Costs
Materials	\$100
Data Entry Application Improvements*	\$25,000
Total	\$25,100

*New cost this year – funds given to Birds Canada for data entry application improvements. The old data entry application was in house (FWS) and maintained by me, thus no actual costs were associated with it.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments in hour or cost burden.

We are reporting a discretionary burden change of -392 responses and -753 hours due to the discontinuation of the two ICs for observers who only submitted their survey form with no data entry (FWS Staff entered data) and a change in agency estimate of 366 responses and 831 hours.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

Analytical techniques are in the annual American Woodcock Population Status Report under METHODS. We distribute this status report both internally and externally.

Form 3-156 sent to observers	Early spring
Survey	April – May
Collection of data	April – June
Data analysis	July
Report writing	July – August
Publication date	September
Service Regulations Committee Meeting (recommendations on hunting season)	October

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

We will display the OMB control number and expiration date.

18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in

"Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.