

**NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION ACT
FY 2016 REVIEW
PROPOSAL SCORING GUIDANCE**

NOTE: We have tried to align the proposal narrative to more closely follow the order of these criteria. However there are still sections that do not fit chronologically with the criteria. Below the table, after each Question in brackets are section numbers describing where you are most likely to find information related to the particular criteria question. If the applicant followed our suggested proposal narrative format, there will be 13 sections plus appendices. So for instance Question 1 reads: Q1. [Section 1v, 3a], which indicates bird information is most likely in part “v” of the coverpage, section 1, and the Project Description (Section 3) part “a”, Statement of Need.

How does the proposal address the requested elements and program priorities?	Maximum Points
Q1. Does the project address Neotropical Migratory Birds (NMBs) identified as a conservation priority by a government agency or bird conservation initiative?	5
Q2. Does the project satisfy other important national or local conservation objectives, in addition to NMB conservation? For research and monitoring, are new and innovative technologies or techniques being tested or deployed? Is the research and monitoring beneficial to other suites of species or will it improve understanding of the ecosystem and its management?	2
Q3. Is the project located in an important breeding or nonbreeding area for Neotropical Migratory Birds or does the project further our knowledge and understanding of these sites?	3
Q4. Are natural resources (i.e. habitat or species) in the project area under immediate and significant threat? For research and monitoring, does the lack of knowledge pose a significant threat to conservation of the species?	6
Q5. Will the project contribute to a direct or indirect benefit to this population of NMB? How important is this benefit? Does this benefit apply locally, regionally, or population-wide?	10
Q6. Does the project contribute to achieving goals and objectives of an international bird conservation plan?	3
Q7. Does the project provide good benefits to Neotropical Migratory Birds for the costs?	4
Q8. How will conservation activities continue after the project is completed? Is the project sustainable?	4
Q9. Does the proposal represent a partnership among public, private and/or other organizations with appropriate local involvement?	5
Q10. Are the implementers capable and qualified to deliver the objectives for which they are responsible? Are there risk factors for the grantee or contributing partners? Have they effectively delivered and demonstrated conservation outcomes in previous work?	5
Q11. Is the proposal well written, and does it have clear objectives and are the desired conservation outcomes measurable?	5
Q12. Is the project designed well? Is the methodology clearly explained and logical for the project goals? Are the measurable outcomes appropriate indicators and measurable within the project period?	5
Q13: Does the project reduce the effects of a predicted or current climate change impact on a highly vulnerable species or habitat? (If the proposal addresses climate change impacts on Neotropical migratory birds, it should provide citations for the research guiding the proposed conservation actions.)	3
TOTAL	60

The following section provides definitions and parameters for each question from above.

Q1. [Sections 1v, 3a] Does the project address Neotropical Migratory Birds (NMBs) identified as a conservation priority by a government agency or bird conservation initiative? (Scale of 0 – 5)

0 = Project addresses one to several relatively unthreatened NMBs (not Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) or Watch List species).

1-2 = Project addresses ten or more relatively unthreatened NMBs and/or NMBs that are experiencing recent population declines but are not BCC or Watch List species.

3-5 = Project addresses one to several BCCs and 10 or more NMBs that are experiencing recent population declines.

Considerations for reviewers in Q1: For projects in North America, where there are identified Bird Conservation Regions, we need to ensure that the BCC identified occurs within the BCR in which the project is taking place. In other words, if Gull-billed Tern is identified as a BCC in BCR 37, and the project is taking place in BCR 36, we will need to make sure that the applicant has identified that species correctly, has associated it with the correct BCR, and then we may also need to double-check accuracy as reviewers.

Q2. [Sections 3a, 3d, 8, 12] Does the project satisfy other important national or local conservation objectives, in addition to NMB conservation? For research and monitoring, are new and innovative technologies or techniques being tested or deployed? Is the research and monitoring beneficial to other suites of species or will it improve understanding of the ecosystem and its management? (Scale of 0 – 2)

0 = Does not address other bird or natural resource conservation objectives or does not mention these other objectives.

1 = Addresses general natural resource objectives for resident bird species or other taxa.

2 = Addresses high-priority, national or local objectives, particularly for threatened resident bird species or taxa on the IUCN Red List.

Q3. [Section 3a] Is the project located in an important breeding or nonbreeding areas for Neotropical Migratory Birds or does the project further our knowledge of these sites? (Scale of 0 – 3) (For research focused projects, will the research further our understanding of important breeding or nonbreeding areas?) Examples include: Important Bird Area, Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site, Ramsar site, or other such designation (or is in the process of being designated as such) that is important for NMBs.

0 = Site is located in an area that is not indicated as a priority for neotropical migratory birds in existing plans or other prioritization efforts.

1 = Site is located in an area that is a low priority for neotropical migratory birds as documented in existing conservation plans or other prioritization efforts.

2 = Site is located in an area that is a moderate priority for neotropical migratory birds as documented in existing conservation plans or other prioritization efforts.

3= Site is located in an area that is a high priority for neotropical migratory birds as documented in existing conservation plans or other prioritization efforts. Example: Project site is important to a significant percentage of one or more NMB populations (i.e. greater than 1, 5 or 10% of the global population uses the site).

Q4. [Sections 3, 3a, 12] Are natural resources (i.e. habitat or species) in the project area under immediate and significant threat? [For research and monitoring, does the lack of knowledge pose a significant threat to conservation of the species?] (Scale of 0 – 6)

0 = Project location is not under immediate threat. [Sufficient knowledge exists or adding additional knowledge as proposed will not improve conservation]

1-3 = Project site is under threat (i.e. deforestation or pollution) and likely to lose significant habitat valuable to NMBs in 5 - 20 years without conservation action. [There is limited understanding and the knowledge will improve conservation of the species within 5-10 years]

4-6 = Project site and NMB habitat will be lost or of little value to NMBs in 5 years without conservation action. [Without the knowledge the species could be lost within 5-10 years]

Additional Consideration for Q4: If the project does not focus on habitat or a particular location, then consider the threat to the non-habitat resource on a 0 – 6 scale.

Q5. [Sections 3, 3b] Will the project contribute to a direct or indirect benefit to this population of NMB? How important is this benefit? Does this benefit apply locally, regionally, or population-wide? (0-10)

Considerations for reviewers for Q5: Does the project address or resolve a major population bottleneck (limiting factor) or other significant conservation problem for the targeted species? Does the proposal reference known population bottlenecks and how they were determined? What is the consequence/ramification if this project were not funded? Will there be a negative effect on the species or the population if the project is not funded? Have the proponents mapped out a conceptual model of change for their project area, identifying and proposing to undertake the highest priority conservation actions to achieve their desired outcomes? How does this measure with other proposals? Will the impact of the project go beyond the local site and have a broader impact?

Q6. [Sections 3a, 3d] Does the project contribute to achieving goals and objectives of an international bird conservation plan? (Scale of 0 – 3)

0 = Project actions do not link to any plan objectives.

1-2 = Project clearly relates to, or meets, the objectives of an international bird plan or a species recovery plan.

3 = Project is coordinated with and delivers high-priority conservation actions identified by a bird conservation plan.

Additional Consideration for Q7: Does the project fit into a Bird Conservation Business plan?

Q7. [Sections 9, 10] Does the project provide good benefits to Neotropical Migratory Birds for the costs? (4 points)

0-4= Project provides good benefits to NMBs at low costs. COST vs. BENEFIT

Q8. [Sections 5, 7] How will conservation activities continue after the project is completed? Is the project sustainable? (Scale of 0 – 4)

0 = No clear sustainability for the project or results.

1-2 = Project organization has specific plans for the future sustainability of the project/conservation site.

3-4 = A clear financial plan set up (i.e. site endowment) for the continued sustainability of the project or organization has long-term history in the project area and local organizations are integrated into project and poised to deliver continuity into the future.

Q9. [Sections 4, 5] Does the proposal represent a partnership among public, private and/or other organizations with appropriate local involvement? (5 total points)

0-3 = Local partners and, if applicable the local community, are adequately involved.

0-1 = Multiple and appropriate partners are involved from a diversity of institutions including in-country non-governmental and/or governmental organizations.

0-1 = All partners have clearly defined rolls and contribute to the project in a meaningful way through financial or organizational resources.

Additional consideration for Q10: What is the conservation value of the partnership? Some partnerships are with groups which do not do a great deal for the conservation of species, but there are other partnerships with strong conservation ties which leverage a disproportionate amount of conservation attention. Sometimes the value of a project is in the strength of the partners in terms of conservation value rather than just in the number of partners involved.

Q10. [Sections 2, 5] Are the implementers capable and qualified to deliver the objectives for which they are responsible? Are there risk factors for the grantee or contributing partners? Have they effectively delivered and demonstrated conservation outcomes in previous work? (0-5)

Additional Considerations for Q11: Do the PIs/partners have the proper experience to carry out the proposed project? If applicable evaluate based on the prior performance of the applicant in previous NMBCA or other projects. For continuing projects, how successful were they in executing prior projects and delivering desired outcomes? If partners have proven successful, then there is a greater chance that NMBs will benefit from the new proposal.

Q11. [Sections 3, 9] Is the proposal well written, and does it have clear objectives and are the desired conservation outcomes measurable? (5 points)

0-1 = Proposal follows format and provides sufficient information for evaluation.

0-1 = Proposal is well written and logical; background information contributes to an understanding of the project.

0-2 = Objectives and outcomes resulting from the project are clear and testable.

0-1 = Budget is clear, detailed and precise; costs cover all proposed activities, are clearly calculated and administrative costs meet guidelines. The costs are reasonable.

Q12. [Sections 3, 3d] Is the project designed well? Is the methodology clearly explained and logical for the project goals? Are the measurable outcomes appropriate indicators and measurable within the project period? (0-5 points)

0-5 = Project is logical and well designed to achieve the desired outcome. Outcomes are achievable during the project period. Did the PI's clearly outline their methodology? For projects with research and monitoring activities, does the research project identify a clear conservation or management question to be answered and collect the appropriate data in the appropriate manner to answer the question. What are the intellectual merits of the research? Is the research novel and a significant contribution to conservation science? Monitoring projects should include appropriate design elements and, where possible, should be connected with other regional- or international-scale monitoring efforts. Monitoring projects should particularly be developed to determine project effectiveness.

Q13. [Section 8] Does the project reduce the effects of a predicted or current climate change impact on a highly vulnerable species or habitat? (If the proposal addresses climate change impacts on Neotropical migratory birds, it should provide citations for the research guiding the proposed conservation actions.) (0-3 points)