



MoBCI

Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative

Five-Year Strategic Plan

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Introduction

As the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MoBCI) approaches its 25th anniversary, its leaders know that much has been accomplished over the partnership's history. At the same time many challenges remain, and new ones have surfaced. Moreover, opportunities present themselves that may not have even existed in the past. Bird conservation approaches mature. Funding challenges and opportunities both develop and disappear. Administrative and political attitudes adjust. Briefly stated, the bird conservation landscape has changed over time. In view of these changes, MoBCI's leaders have called upon the partnership to update and focus its longer-term vision through a new strategic plan. That update is the focus of this report, and it's hoped the strategic plan outlined here will guide the organization for the immediate future.

Purpose

MoBCI has as its primary purpose to work together to conserve, restore, and protect bird populations. MoBCI members realize that our respective organizational interests in birds are varied, but also that these diverse interests, if unified, represent a powerful force of action and voice on behalf of birds and their habitats. Further, member organizations recognize that much more can be accomplished if we jointly engage in what are truly common goals. Moreover, communication and cooperation promote an understanding of our respective individual and organizational interests in birds. Accompanying that understanding is appreciation for the motivations of others. MoBCI is Missouri's "step down" of the hemispheric and international integrated bird conservation partnership—the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). The NABCI vision is one where "Populations and habitats of North America's birds are protected, restored, and enhanced through coordinated efforts at international, national, regional, state, and local levels, guided by sound science and effective management." Like the NABCI, the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative is about conserving birds across geopolitical boundaries, across taxonomic groups, and across landscapes. Also, like NABCI, the MoBCI is a partnership-based affiliation; however, it is designed for delivery of conservation at the state and local levels.

Guiding Principles

- Bird conservation depends upon the coordination of diverse skills and resources of landowners, government agencies, businesses, private and public institutions, and all citizens who care for birds.
- Bird conservation demands that attention be focused on the full array of wild bird species.



- Bird conservation is based on the best available science.
- Voluntary partnerships are essential for the effective delivery of integrated bird conservation.
- Knowledge is shared widely to encourage voluntary stewardship and further bird-based recreation.

Vision

A Missouri where birds are valued and thrive in healthy habitats, supported by collaborative and engaged organizations and communities.

Mission

To leverage the power of cooperative partnerships to restore, manage, and sustain bird populations and their habitats, while fostering a shared commitment towards bird conservation through meaningful outreach.

Goals, Objectives, and Action Plans

Definitions

Strategic Plan – a high-level roadmap that outlines where the organization wants to go over the long term and how it intends to get there.

Goal – broad, long-range outcomes the organization wants to achieve. More specifically, goals are milestones in the process of implementing the strategic plan.

Objective – specific, quantifiable, time-sensitive statement of what is going to be achieved to support each goal.

Action Plan – statements of specific actions and activities that will be used to achieve a goal within the constraints of the objective.

Goal 1: Improve bird populations and habitat through partnerships and collaboration.

Objective 1.1: Administer the MoBCI Grant Program annually, by releasing a request for proposals each fall, reviewing applications with a designated Grants Committee, and recommending funding to the Missouri Department of Conservation for at least three partner-led conservation projects for bird habitat or community conservation projects per year that support bird populations and habitat.

Timeline: *Annually starting in 2027*

Lead: *Grants Committee*

Action Plan 1.1.1: Post annually updated (if needed) grant RFPs. Send RFP revisions to MDC by May 1 and post live on the website by June 1.

Objective 1.2: Solicit proposals and provide direct MoBCI funding to at least two new projects focused on bird habitat restoration or bird population monitoring, in addition to those supported through the regular grant program. Promote the opportunity through partner networks and MoBCI platforms.

Timeline: *By 2026*

Lead: *Grants Committee*

Action Plan 1.2.1: Solicit funds from affiliate organizations to help grow the grant dollars pool for extended funding outside of Priority Geography tiers with a goal of matching MDC dollars 1:1.

Objective 1.3: Develop and implement a standardized tracking system for measuring conservation outcomes, including acres of habitat impacted and number of people reached through MoBCI-supported projects. Report metrics annually and use them to guide future priorities.

Timeline: *By 2028*

Lead: *Grants Committee*

Action Plan 1.3.1: Add the metrics to the reporting for grant recipients to keep track of acres impacted and community outreach efforts through a shared document reporting form.

Objective 1.4: Develop an active database of project ideas or objectives that benefit bird habitat/populations that can highlight priorities and opportunities for collaboration.

Timeline: *By 2029*

Lead: Grants Committee

Action Plan 1.4.1: Mine conservation organization websites for potential projects and create a database to prioritize these projects to send out to affiliates.

Objective 1.5: Develop one project each year to submit for NWTF superfund funding that targets bird conservation. Solicit projects from partner organizations.

Timeline: Annually starting in 2027

Lead: Grants Committee

Action Plan 1.5.1: Explore funding from other partner organizations with special calls for grant applications from affiliates regardless of Priority Geography Tiers to broaden scope of impact.

Goal 2: Provide and promote outreach opportunities that inspire public involvement in bird conservation.

Objective 2.1: Administer the Jerry Wade Youth Habitat and Education Program (YHEP).

Timeline: Annually starting in 2027

Lead: YHEP Committee

Action Plan 2.1.1: Establish a YHEP Committee to examine and change grant requirements as necessary to enhance participation in the program.

Action Plan 2.1.2: Build and maintain a contact information file of environmental educators in MO to enhance communication efforts with affiliate organizations with education and outreach projects.

Action Plan 2.1.3: Distribute information about Jerry Wade Youth Habitat and Education Program (YHEP).

Objective 2.2: Increase annual MoBCI conference attendance by 20%, from 2025 attendance numbers.

Timeline: by 2032

Lead: Conference Committee

Action Plan 2.2.1: Engage new conference attendees through targeted and intentional recruitment by Steering Committee members.

Action Plan 2.2.2: Provide a student-centered social event or forum during the conference for students to socialize, meet, and greet conservation professionals, and learn more about MoBCI and its affiliate members.

Action Plan 2.2.3: Research and identify new conference venues as necessary to accommodate conference needs as they change due to conference growth or restructuring.

Objective 2.3: Maintain and enhance the MoBCI website and social media presence.

Timeline: *Annually starting in 2027*

Lead: *Communications Committee*

Action Plan 2.3.1: Establish a Communications Committee to manage MoBCI website and social media platforms content and messaging.

Action Plan 2.3.2: Evaluate and update the MoBCI website regularly to assess both website design and content ensuring accurate, current content related to news, projects, outreach events, collaborative initiatives, and organizational updates.

Action Plan 2.3.3: Evaluate establishing and maintaining a 2nd social media platform (e.g., Instagram)

Action Plan 2.3.4: Post 2-3 updates a week to the MoBCI Facebook page highlighting MoBCI activities, funding opportunities, and partner/affiliate successes.

Objective 2.4: Prepare and distribute one newsletter per year to all partner organizations, stakeholders, and interested members of the public. Each newsletter should include recent accomplishments, upcoming opportunities, and partner highlights.

Timeline: *Annually starting in 2027*

Lead: *Communications Committee*

Action Plan 2.4.1: Identify members(s) of the Communications Committee who will focus on newsletter content management and publication.

Action Plan 2.4.2: Steering Committee members and MoBCI grant awardees submit articles to the newsletter on a schedule as designated by the Communications Committee members referred to in 2.4.1.

Objective 2.5: Develop and provide outreach materials focusing on the mission and vision of MoBCI to be utilized by cooperators and partners at public events.

Timeline: By 2029

Lead: Communications Committee

Action Plan 2.5.1: Maintain and update a list of outreach materials.

Action Plan 2.5.2: Ensure MoBCI outreach materials are available to MoBCI SC members as needed.

Objective 2.6: Create and staff an engaging display for the Missouri Natural Resources Conference poster session and mixer night. This will involve designing a visually appealing and informative display that highlights key aspects of our work.

Timeline: Annually starting in 2027

Lead: Communications Committee

Action Plan 2.6.1: Borrow table space from an affiliate and offer to help defray the cost of the table rental.

Goal 3: Engage existing and new partners in bird habitat and population conservation.

Objective 3.1: Establish a formal partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), and/or Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) as a MoBCI member organization by initiating contact, holding at least one engagement meeting, and submitting a membership invitation with clear collaboration benefits.

Timeline: By 2030

Lead: MoBCI Chair and/or PFQF Rep

Action Plan 3.1.1: Identify agency contacts to ask to initiate a meeting to discuss how MoBCI can help these agencies achieve their bird habitat goals.

Objective 3.2: Develop and administer a survey for partners to assess MoBCI's current effectiveness in supporting partnerships and identify new ideas/areas to strengthen and encourage partnership activities and involvement in MoBCI.

Timeline: By 2028

Lead: Partnerships Committee

Action Plan 3.2.1: Establish a Partnerships Committee.

Action Plan 3.2.2: Develop survey questions and send them to partners to gather ideas on how MoBCI can further our reach. Include potential projects that partners can collaborate with one another for more effective action.

Objective 3.3: Each year, identify and conduct targeted outreach to at least one existing or potential MoBCI member organization to increase their involvement through collaborative projects, event participation, or co-authored outreach materials. Track outcomes annually in a partner engagement log.

Timeline: *Annually starting in 2027*

Lead: *Partnerships Committee*

Action Plan 3.3.1: Improve marketing by sending out more frequent emails about what other partner organizations are doing to promote bird conservation. Create a Communications Chair in MoBCI Steering Committee to assist with social media posts and emails.

Objective 3.4: Increase participation of early career professionals on the MoBCI Steering Committee by maintaining at least one early career representative per year, through targeted recruitment from universities, conservation corps, and professional societies. Develop onboarding materials by the end of 2026 to support their success.

Timeline: *Annually starting in 2027*

Lead: *Partnerships Committee*

Action Plan 3.4.1: Email students who participate in the MoBCI conference to contribute to the SC by encouraging them to be active participants. Appoint one student to the SC as the representative.

Objective 3.5: Establish connections with local university professors and conservation-minded students, particularly those focused on ornithological research, to collaborate on relevant research questions. Encourage participation of at least one professor/student in our annual conference.

Timeline: *By 2028*

Lead: *Partnerships Committee*

Action Plan 3.5.1: Create a database of professors and other educators and invite them to participate with the Communications Committee for more outreach to students.

Goal 4: Ensure a fiscally sound organization with the capacity to fully accomplish the MoBCI mission.

Objective 4.1: Develop and implement income-generating initiatives (e.g., merchandise, sponsorships, grant opportunities) that raise awareness of MoBCI's mission and contribute to its operational budget. Evaluate revenue and reach in the first year of launch.

Timeline: *Annually starting in 2027*

Lead: *Fundraising Committee*

Action Plan 4.1.1: Establish a Fundraising Committee to address development of new income-generating projects as well as maintaining current efforts (e.g., Como Gives campaign).

Action Plan 4.1.2: Increase participation in the Como Gives campaign by at least 10% annually through targeted appeals, donor recognition, and storytelling campaigns. Track progress with an annual fundraising report.

Action Plan 4.1.3: Develop and implement at least one new income generating initiative. Evaluate and maintain or initiate other fund-raising projects, as necessary.

Objective 4.2: Conduct a feasibility assessment for creating a part-time or full-time paid MoBCI Coordinator position.

Timeline: *By 2028*

Lead: *Fundraising Committee*

Action Plan 4.2.1: Establish a job description and duties with input from Steering Committee members and partner organizations.

Action Plan 4.2.2: Establish funding levels needed to support a part-time or full-time MoBCI Coordinator position.

Action Plan 4.2.3: Explore/investigate opportunities for a joint position shared with affiliate organizations.

Objective 4.3: Establish, approve, and update operation manual(s) as needed to ensure stable governance of the MoBCI organization through leadership and Steering Committee changes.

Timeline: *By 2028*

Lead: Treasurer and Secretary

Action Plan 4.3.1: Create and approve a MoBCI operation manual that outlines/summarizes the by-laws and includes the duties, expectations, and term limits for MoBCI leadership positions. The operation manual will be reviewed and updated, as necessary.

Action Plan 4.3.2: Recruit volunteer(s) to build an operations manual based on the current by-laws.

Action Plan 4.3.3: Build and approve a financial operation manual for the MoBCI Foundation to ensure that best fiscal management practices and protocols are followed across MoBCI leadership and Steering Committee changes. The financial operation manual will be updated and maintained as necessary by the MoBCI Treasurer. David Erickson volunteered to build the first financial operation manual.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all MoBCI's more than 80 affiliate organizations who generously shared input during our 2025 Annual Conference and through the follow-up survey. Your feedback provided the foundation for shaping this strategic plan and ensuring it reflects the shared priorities of our diverse partnership.

Special thanks to the current and past Steering Committee members whose commitment made this planning effort possible. Your willingness to invest substantial time and energy participating in two intensive strategic planning sessions, completing numerous homework assignments, and engaging in countless discussions was instrumental. Your dedication, experience, and collaborative spirit strengthened every stage of this process.