IX. Strategy Monitoring

ADF&G has adopted the performance measurement system established by the state's Office of Management and Budget. These targets and measures provide a common understanding of purpose, direction and expected outcomes for state agency programs. They also provide for accountability through the federal and state budgeting processes. This structure will provide the basic framework for monitoring and evaluating progress under Alaska's CWCS. Interim progress (i.e., between CWCS iterations) will be reported periodically.

The department will evaluate CWCS performance at the overall strategy level and at the species or species group level. This approach will look at the performance of ADF&G and its partners in meeting identified performance indicators or "targets," as well as the effectiveness of conservation actions in attaining long-term outcomes.

The goal for the CWCS is to conserve the diversity of Alaska's fish and wildlife. Goals and objectives are also established for individual species and species groups. Efforts to document and manage habitats will also be monitored as they are implemented. All projects funded by ADF&G have specific project objectives that contribute to broader program objectives.

Red-throated Loon D. Menke, USFWS

Two sample frameworks, one for monitoring Alaska's overall performance under the CWCS (Table 36), and one for determining success in conserving a single species (Red-throated Loon; Table 37) are shown below.

Table 36: Sample Framework for Monitoring Overall Performance under the CWCS

CWCS OUTCOMES		ACTIVITIES/OUTPUTS	INPUTS
Long-term and End Results	Short-term/ Intermediate Results	Conservation Actions	What we invest
CWCS Goal: Conserve the diversity of Alaska's fish and wildlife Target: Decreasing trend in the ratio of species having SRANKs of S1, S2 compared to S3, S4, S5 over 5 years[17] Measure: Trend in the ratio of species having SRANKs indicating imperiled status (S1, S2) to those with less concern or considered secure (S3, S4, S5) Target: No loss of genetic diversity through extirpation or extinction of populations Measure: Number of populations lost in the state, over which the State of Alaska has management authority and for which human activities are believed to be primarily responsible.	Target: Establish new quantified targets for 10 species and 5 habitats[18] by 2015 Measure: The number of biological reference points established for CWCS featured species and key habitats Target: Meet the objectives (defined by targets) of 10 species by 2010 Measure: The number of objectives attained	Prioritize species for initial inventory and monitoring based on range-wide distribution factors such as endemism, limited, widespread, disjunct and peripheral and relative conservation concerns Define, inventory and map habitats at the ecoregional landscape level by patch communities and matrix-forming communities to identify relative vulnerability to destruction and degradation Map known populations and distributions of priority species within defined habitat communities Map expected populations and distributions based on habitat associations and predicted estimates Establish working groups, MOUs, and cooperative initiatives to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders and management agencies Explore market mechanisms that conserve the diversity of wildlife	Staff time Money Partnerships and donations of labor, equipment, and materials

[17] SRANKs are codes systematically applied to a state's species or populations by the National Heritage Network and The Nature Conservancy to indicate relative conservation status: e.g., S1 = critically imperiled, S5 = widespread, abundant, secure. For more information on SRANKs or global ranks (GRANKs), see Appendix 7, pages 4–6.

[18] Numbers here were picked arbitrarily, as examples; we expect that actual numerical targets for the CWCS will be selected within the first several years of CWCS implementation, with input from multiple divisions, agencies and partners.

Table 37: Sample Framework for Monitoring Success in Maintaining a Single Species, Red-throated Loon[19]

CWCS OUTCOMES		ACTIVITIES/OUTPUTS	INPUTS
Long-term and End Results	Short-term/ Intermediate Results	Conservation Actions	What we invest
Species Goal: Ensure Red-throated Loon populations remain sustainable throughout their range within natural population-level variation and historic distribution across Alaska	Species Objective: Maintain viable Red-throated Loon population levels Target: Maintain a population of at least 10,000 to 20,000 adult breeders Measure: Population number as indicated by Arctic Coastal Plain Survey and the Alaska Waterfowl Breeding Survey.	Conduct studies to evaluate phenology of birds' arrival and initiation of breeding relative to survey timing and climatic variations Evaluate detectability of breeders vs. nonbreeders and detection differences among observers Implement survey to evaluate current productivity surveys Institutionalize a contaminants monitoring program of loon tissues and prey Conduct studies to estimate survival and productivity simultaneously	Staff time Money Partnerships and donations of labor, equipment, and materials

[19]Particulars taken from Red-throated Loon Conservation Action Plan, found in Appendix 4

Evaluation and Reporting

The Strategy's success will be evaluated at various levels: first, whether the state and its partners are meeting the intermediate result targets at the species level, and then, whether we are conserving the diversity of wildlife in Alaska as indicated by the measures experts identified.

Tracking the conservation actions of ADF&G, partners supported by State Wildlife Grants, and other state, federal and nongovernmental organizations will be a monumental task. ADF&G hopes to convene a charrette-style meeting in 2005 to engage motivated and innovative resource managers in discussing particulars of plan implementation. Monitoring will be a big part of that challenge. We expect to begin developing the more detailed approach to implementation and monitoring, and securing commitments to follow through, at this meeting.

Until a more effective, comprehensive, and collaborative system of reporting is put in place, the planning team envisions that ADF&G staff in the Wildlife Conservation and Sport Fish Divisions will be responsible for staffing the charrette and other meetings and reporting on progress towards CWCS targets. Reports will be tailored to various interests including ADF&G policymakers, Strategy partners, USFWS Federal Assistance, Alaska Office of Management and Budget, the IAFWA, and the public.

Adaptive Management

Many of the specific conservation actions and strategies within the CWCS will be implemented in a manner consistent with the principles of adaptive management. These principles include closely monitoring the conservation actions to determine if the expected results take place, learning from these results, and making changes to specific conservation actions to maximize the intended conservation intent. Conversely, if a conservation action is shown to be ineffective, the Strategy is intended to be flexible enough to allow needed changes in emphasis or approach, without waiting for scheduled milestone reviews/revisions to occur. Many experts felt that reviews should take place as conditions warrant, and an adaptive management approach is consistent with this guidance.