

2009 Black Duck Joint Venture Request for Proposals

Key Date: Proposal deadline is 11:59 pm Eastern Standard time February 1, 2009

Overview Information

Federal Agency Name: Washington D.C. Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Opportunity Title: BDJV FY09 Competitive Grant Program

Opportunity Number: 122009

CFDA Number: 15.655

Announcement Type: This is a biennial request for proposals from the Black Duck Joint Venture

Full Text of Announcement

Funding Opportunity Description

The Black Duck Joint Venture (BDJV) is a partnership-based conservation program under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan that promotes the conservation of Black Ducks by providing greater knowledge for effective management. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a partner in the BDJV, administers grants and purchase orders on a competitive basis for projects/studies that advance both our and the general scientific community's understanding of Black Duck ecology and is seeking proposals from interested parties. The BDJV will accept proposal addressing any aspect of black duck ecology and management, but proposals that address priority research needs (see below) will have a greater probability of funding. The BDJV is currently supporting several research projects addressing high priority research needs (see below) but will accept new proposals addressing these topics.

The BDJV is receptive to funding annual projects as well as a limited number of multi-year (up to 3 years) projects. Successful multi-year projects will be funded in 1-year increments, subject to annual review, demonstration of suitable progress, and funds availability. After 3 years of consecutive funding, those projects may reapply and compete for BDJV funds in one-year increments only and they will be re-evaluated based on their continued merit.

Note: Multi-year projects have special reporting requirements that must be addressed in both the proposal and in annual summary reports. For example, in the proposal, submitters need to clearly define the results that will be attained annually and at the conclusion of the project (e.g., sample sizes, progress of analyses, reports and publications); in the annual summary report the researcher must address progress toward meeting annual and overall objectives. Because multi-year projects commit BDJV funds for extended periods and thus limit the number of other projects which can be funded in subsequent years, they must ensure a good return on investment. Projects with proven methodology and high likelihood of success will likely score higher than projects with untested methodology and high risk factors (unsecured funding, weather dependent, etc.).

To be competitive for funding, proposals should include both cash match and in-kind support. Currently the only source of general funding is U.S. Congress-appropriated funds directed to USFWS for BDJV use -- we are expected to demonstrate effective leveraging of these funds, preferably with non-U.S.-federal resources.

Examples of Recently Funded Projects:

- Linking natal and harvest areas of American black ducks using stable isotope analysis.
- Modeling the relative effects of Mallards and local habitat change on the occurrence and abundance of breeding black ducks in southern and central Ontario.
- Determining food resource availability and estimating habitat carrying capacity for wintering and spring staging American black ducks in Virginia and southern New Jersey.

III. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants:

Applications are encouraged from nonprofit organizations, public and private educational organizations, federal, state, local, and tribal governments and organizations, foreign governments, and individual companies.

Cost Sharing or Matching:

Proposals citing a match contribution which has its origin from other US Government Federal awards will be ranked less competitively than proposals citing a match funded through non-federal (i.e. not originally US Government in origin) funds.

Description and categorization of priority research needs for the American black duck as identified by the Black Duck Joint Venture in Fiscal Year 2009.

Category	Issue	Priority w/in Category	Overall Priority	Evaluation Score
<i>Population Monitoring</i>	Develop and test methodology to monitor black duck productivity throughout the breeding range. ^a	H	H	10
	Quantify effect of “availability” bias and black duck behavioral responses to aerial surveys	M	L	3
	Develop and test protocols to monitor black duck mid-winter abundance in the Great Lakes and southern Canada (<200 km north of GL and ST. Lawrence). ^a	M	M	6
	Integration of breeding surveys into the Integrated Eastern Survey ^a	M	M	6
	Evaluate genetic methods to monitor changes in black duck population size and structure.	L	L	2
	Develop and test methodology for extending BPOP survey to the Great Lakes region (i.e., MI, WI, and MN).	L	L	2
<i>Population Ecology</i>	Identify and quantify influence of abiotic and biotic features on black duck productivity throughout black duck breeding range.	H	H	10
	Quantify and contrast regional post-hunting season survival and mortality factors.	H	M	7
<i>Habitat Ecology</i>	Quantify black duck nocturnal habitat selection and behavior to estimate energetic carrying capacity during winter, by region. ^a	M	H	9

^a Research needs currently being addressed with on-going research projects.; researchers are encouraged to contact the BDJV Science Coordinator or the Principal Investigator to discuss how new projects could complement or integrate with on-going projects.

Table B1. Continued.

Category	Issue	Priority w/in Category	Overall Priority	Evaluation Score
	Develop synthetic models predicting the effects of climate change of black duck population dynamics and habitat use throughout seasonal and annual range.	H	M	7
	Identify and quantify influence of a-biotic and biotic features on black duck productivity, throughout black duck breeding range.	H	H	10
	Quantify regional winter carrying capacity throughout black duck winter range. ^a	M	H	9
	Quantify movement probabilities between wintering areas and breeding areas.	M	M	6
	Quantify spatial and temporal habitat use patterns during non-breeding seasons.	M	M	6
	Evaluate and quantify influence human disturbance (e.g., patch size, road density, perforation, fragmentation, and recreation) on black duck habitat selection, use and quality.	M	L	3
	Evaluate the quality and availability of healthy coastal marshes and other large (>10 ha) marsh/open water complexes during winter and spring.	L	L	2
	Development of decision support tools to identify high priority areas for conservation action (protection and enhancement) by season.	L	L	2

^a Research needs currently being addressed with on-going research projects.; researchers are encouraged to contact the BDJV Science Coordinator or the Principal Investigator to discuss how new projects could complement or integrate with on-going projects.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Proposal submission must be completed electronically via email to the contact listed below. All proposals should be submitted as a single MS Word Document (do not submit the budget as a separate file). Applicants must also complete and submit Standard Form 424 with their proposal. This form can be obtained (as word documents) on the grants.gov website. For more information contact the BDJV Science Coordinator:

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Content and Form of Application:

A complete application package will include the following components:

1. A project proposal (described below)
2. Standard Form (SF) 424 (obtained at www.grants.gov)

Submission Dates and Times:

Proposals must be submitted electronically via email to the individual identified in Section IV by midnight Eastern Standard Time February 1, 2009 to ensure expeditious and efficient review of proposals received by the Government.

The Government does recognize that some applicants may not have access to email and in those cases we will accept proposals by fax or mail providing they are postmarked by midnight Eastern Standard Time February 1, 2009. Should you wish to submit a proposal via fax or mail service, you MUST call the personnel listed under item IV above to inform them that you have submitted a proposal in this format prior to close of business February 1, 2009 (5:00pm Eastern Standard Time). Please keep in mind that the recommended proposal submission process is via email to prevent unwanted delays to other vendors' proposals being considered for evaluation.

Proposals submitted later than midnight Eastern Standard Time February 1, 2009 will not be considered for evaluation. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure Service receipt of their proposal by the deadline. The Service bears no responsibility for misplaced or mishandled proposals when the applicant did not alert the Service to the incoming proposal and method of transmission prior to the submission deadline.

Proposal Format:

Project proposals should follow the format described below and be no more than 20 pages long at font size 12 and 1 inch margins.

1. **Cover Page:** Project title, Principal Investigator name(s), email address, phone number, and affiliation, If this study was previously funded by BDJV as a multi-year study, indicate it is "YEAR X of a Y YEAR STUDY".

Indicate the amount of funding requested for FY 09 and future years if it is a multi-year request. Include proposal date.

2. **Problem/Issue Statement:** What is the problem or issue addressed by the proposed work, in relation to the BDJV priorities? ≤75 words.

3. **Justification:** Complete and concise review of the issue and why it is important to management (supported by relevant literature). Applicants are encouraged to use the BDJV Bibliography of Black Duck Ecology and Management to ensure pertinent work is used in proposal development. What new information will be generated by the study that you are proposing and how far will it go toward solving the problem (i.e., considering the assumptions and limitations of your study, provide some perspective about how your work fits into the big picture)? If a multi-year funding request, please clearly explain why more than one year of funding is needed to achieve the primary objectives.

4. **Objectives or Hypotheses:** The proposal should have specific, clear and concise objectives, hypotheses and/or predictions or a priori model sets to be tested. For multi-year requests, identify the objectives for each year. For continuing multi-year projects: if objectives have changed since the original proposal, highlight and explain these changes.

5. **Scope and Location:** Provide a description and general map of the proposed study area and other important features as necessary. Provide a verbal description of the temporal and spatial bounds of the study. Does the project encompass an appropriate portion of the population range and involve relevant jurisdictions to address the stated problems/issues?

Ideally field studies will be spatially replicated and employ standardized protocols. However, spatially replicated studies are not always feasible. The BDJV strives to support standardized and spatially replicated studies when appropriate. Alternatively, to ensure the BDJV is addressing information needs throughout black duck range and capturing spatial variation in black duck ecology, the BDJV targets research efforts across seasonal reference areas (see tables below). The research goal for each seasonal reference area is expressed as a percent of most recent 5-year research funds appropriated for season-specific research (e.g., % of funds contributed to studies of breeding ecology over a 5-year period). The BDJV tracks annual research expenditures for each reference area and uses the information to indentified under-

represented areas. As of Fiscal Year 2009, the BDJV has contributed 64% of its funds addressing breeding ecology in the core area and 36% in the edge of black duck range. This distribution is approximately within the goals defined by the BDJV. In contrast, 89% of BDJV research funds addressing non-breeding season issues have been spent in the core range and only 11% has been spent in the edge of black duck non-breeding range. In Fiscal Year 2009 studies addressing non-breeding priorities on the edge of black duck range are of particular interest.

Description of regional breeding reference areas and target research goals (% of BDJV research funds).

Regional Breeding Reference Areas		
Area	sub-area	%
Core	Central (C. Quebec, VT, NH, MA, ME)	35
Core	Maritimes (E. Quebec, Atlantic Provinces)	35
Edge	Mid-Atlantic States (NY, PA, NJ, DE, MD, VA, WV)	15
Edge	Western (Ontario, w. Quebec, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio)	15
Total		100

Description of regional breeding reference areas and target research goals (% of BDJV research funds).

Regional Non-Breeding Reference Areas		
Area	sub-area	%
Core	Atlantic Flyway	20
Core	S. Quebec	20
Core	Maritimes	20
Edge	Mississippi Flyway	20
Edge	S. Ontario	20
Total		100

6. Study Design: This section is critical to determining the scientific merit of the proposal and probability of funding. Describe the principle field and laboratory methods (supported by literature). Describe the sampling design and explicitly identify the experimental or observational unit for each objective. Explicitly identify the sample size based on literature or preferably an a priori power analysis. Describe the anticipated statistical analysis based on the study design. The BDJV recognized the specific statistical analysis employed may differ based on the data. Describe explanatory variables to be measured (supported by literature), or provide an a-priori model set for contrasting hypothesis.

7. **Anticipated Output:** The BDJV has an interest in getting information out to the public in a timely and effective manner, such as through web sites. List products or data sets expected in the time frame for which you request funding. Submitters of multi-year proposals need to in concise, clear, and measurable terms, define the results that will be attained annually and at the conclusion of the project (e.g., sample sizes, progress of analyses, reports and publications). For example, by September 2009, we will 1) ... 2)...; by September 2010, we will 1) ... 2)..., etc.). If annual goals for multi-year proposals have changed from previous proposals, explain why they've changed (this may include changes to methodology, analyses, laboratory procedures, sample sizes, field protocols, power analyses, etc).

The breadth of the project should reflect the BDJV request. If your study will take longer than the funding request period to accomplish the stated objectives, please identify sources of funding that are needed to accomplish the stated objectives and whether those sources are secured or unsecured. In other words, if you request one year of funding but it will take two or more years to meet your objectives, how will you fund the study in Year 2 and beyond? If you cannot meet your stated objectives with the BDJV funding you've requested, then you must indicate whether you intend to apply to BDJV in future years to complete this particular study.

Principal Investigator's supported by the BDJV are required to submit annual progress reports, a final report (including meta-data information) and copies of peer-reviewed articles. Additional products may be specified in the grant agreement.

8. **Management Implications:** What is the significance of the work to management of the black duck population? Be as specific as possible. For example, rather than stating that "this information is critical to management...", explain HOW the information could be used to improve management (e.g., what are the practical applications to harvest management, habitat conservation, monitoring capabilities, etc.).

9. **Relationship to Other Projects:** Describe the relationship of the proposed work to other projects, in terms of complementary scientific objectives, direct collaboration and/or shared resources. Principal Investigators are encouraged to contact the BDJV Science Coordinator or any member of the Technical Committee to identify potential relationships to on-going projects.

10. **Literature Cited:** as relevant; Principal Investigators are encouraged to refer to the BDJV "Bibliography of American black duck ecology and management" accessible through the [BDJV web page](#).

11. **Personnel:** One paragraph description of key personnel including background, experience, and responsibilities on the project.

12. **Schedule:** Beginning date, milestones, completion date.

13. **Budget:** Use the budget format provided below so it is clear what BDJV funding is requested and its intended use. If a multi-year request, provide detailed annual budgets for each year. Penalty for non-compliance may be rejection of the proposal. Budget items should be detailed to allow objective evaluation of costs and comparisons among proposals. Lack of detail will result in lower overall proposal ranking.

Include matching contributions ONLY if there is a high likelihood you will indeed receive them, and include ONLY the costs directly relevant to the study element.

Acceptable matching contributions include real purchases as well as in-kind costs (e.g., full time agency staff or tenured professor's salaries, student or technician salaries covered by other sources) provided they are reasonable and commensurate with the particular study element. For example, if the proposal is to add or augment an element to an existing study, you may pro-rate a portion of the total costs for, say, maintaining a field camp. Similarly, if a vehicle will be provided as an in-kind contribution, it is acceptable to include an amount equivalent to rental or lease costs, but not the total cost of the vehicle. Not allowable are capital costs for existing facilities or equipment.

Requests for salaries for principal investigators, students or technicians are acceptable provided they are reasonable and commensurate with the person's involvement in the particular study element. Please indicate the actual time the person will spend on project (e.g., 4 weeks @ \$600/wk). However, BDJV funds can not be used for cost recovery of full time agency or tenured professors' salaries. Other unacceptable requests include costs like travel to conferences, publication expenses, tuition, and training.

Overhead costs may be requested only if they are beyond the control of the applicant; for example, mandatory agency overhead charges levied on inter-agency transfers. For example, the BDJV will coordinate and directly purchase satellite transmitters (PTTs), therefore we will not pay overhead on PTT purchases. In addition, the BDJV will not pay overhead on USFWS salaries, since all BDJV funds are currently administered with USFWS funds anyway.

Capital costs - any request for capital items over \$2000 must be accompanied with a detailed justification.

Note: The entire proposal should be submitted as ONE file in MS Word Format, not multiple files. The budget table should be incorporated into the proposal document, NOT submitted as a separate attachment.

Budget Justification (optional): Use this space to explain particular costs (e.g., contract services, equipment purchases, facility charges, conditional matching

contributions) or to indicate the amount of time a person will be involved in the project.

For multi-year proposals requesting continued funding, identify and explain any changes you have made to the budget from previous proposals.

Other Submission Requirements:

If the study was funded previously by the BDJV, submit an annual progress report. Please note that annual project summaries are due September 30 -- you will not be eligible for future funding unless you have submitted that report. In the annual summary report, multi-year projects must report on significant deviations from original objectives, methodology, and partnerships, and must outline corrective actions and report on status of partnerships and funding to qualify for next year's funding. An annual proposal that incorporates any changes to the original proposal must be submitted for each year of a multi-year study.

Applicants must complete and submit Standard Form 424 with their proposal.

V. Application Review Information:

Criteria:

It is important for applicants to review the evaluation criteria that will be used to score proposals received. Criteria have been organized into 4 categories. A score of 0-10 (0 being lowest and 10 highest) is assigned to each criteria multiplied by its weight. Next the weighted scores are summed to calculate an overall score.

Evaluation Criteria and Weights:

1. Management/Conservation Considerations:
 - a. Does the proposed project address a priority BDJV information need? (weight 0.100)
 - b. Are there clear management implications that will result from the project? (weight 0.100)
 - c. Will the study provide information useful for improving monitoring or management? (weight 0.100)
 - d. Is the study being conducted in an under-represented geographic area (in whole or in part)? (weight 0.05)

2. Scientific Merit:
 - a. Are the goals clearly stated? (weight 0.100)
 - b. Are the objectives clearly stated and associated with appropriate goal? (weight 0.100)
 - c. Is the sample design clearly described, sound, and justified? (weight 0.050)

- d. Are the experimental or observational units identified and appropriate? (weight 0.050)
- e. Are the required sample sizes identified, justified, and adequate? (weight 0.050)
- f. Are the null and alternative hypotheses explicitly stated and supported by literature? (weight 0.040)
- g. Are the hypothesized explanatory variables or a priori model sets identified and justified with supporting literature? (weight 0.040)
- h. Is the timing and data collection schedule realistic? (weight 0.040)
- i. Is the proposal adequately documented with relevant literature? (weight 0.030).

3. Budget Considerations:

- a. Is the total BDJV request reasonable and realistic within our budget? (weight 0.030).
- b. Are the cost estimate detailed, justified, and reasonable? (weight 0.040)
- c. What percent of the CASH match is non-U.S. federal funds? (weight 0.010)
- d. What percent of the IN-KIND match is non-U.S. federal funds? (weight 0.010).
- e. Is the study cost efficient; is the logistical infrastructure in place to make efficient use of BDJV funds? (weight 0.010)
- f. If requesting multi-year funding are the final products/results worth the risks of failure, potential for inadequate funding, and lost opportunity to fund other studies? (weight 0.010)

4. Other Considerations

- a. Does the proposed project significantly complement other on-going projects? (weight 0.0075)
- b. Does the proposed project integrate multiple research categories? (weight 0.0075)
- c. Does the proposed project involve multiple partners? (weight 0.0075)
- d. Will the project bring new partners to the BDJV? (weight 0.0050)
- e. Is this a one-time opportunity? (weight 0.0050).
- f. Is the proposal complete and does it conform to the required format? (weight 0.0075).

Budget (US \$)	BDJV	Funding Sources – Indicate in-kind contributions in <i>italics</i>	Total
Category (examples; add or delete items as appropriate)			
Personnel			
PI			
Technician			
Travel			
Commercial Travel			
Chartered aircraft			
Lodging			
Freight			
Registration			
Materials/Equipment			
Telemetry equipment			
Surgical supplies			
Field gear			
Transportation			
Administrative Overhead			
Total by Funding Sources			
Ratio of Cash-Matching Contributions to BDJV Request			
Ratio of In-Kind Matching Contributions to BDJV Request			

FOR MULTI-YEAR REQUESTS: (this should include in-kind costs noted in table above)

Funding Source	FY08	FY09	FY10	Total
BDJV				
Other				
Other				
Other				
Total				

Review and Selection Process:

Applications will be evaluated and scored by the BDJV Research Working Group and Technical Committee during their February 2009 meeting. A suite of proposals receiving the highest scores will be recommended to the BDJV Management Board for funding approval. The BDJV Management Board will make their decisions in March 2009.

Common Reasons for Low Proposal Review Scores:

- a) Proposal is missing required parts (read the proposal instructions for FY2009 and do not revise an older proposal you may have on hand and/or submitted previously.)
- b) Stated management implications are weak, poorly explained, too general, or impractical.
- c) Information on methods is insufficient to allow full evaluation: lacking citation of procedures, sample sizes not specified, planned statistical analyses not stated. Reviewers will not assume that standard procedures will be followed—all principal methods must be stated in the proposal.
- d) Study is of a local nature with no broad application to larger geographic area, population, or conservation issue.
- e) Budget line items are not clear, budget items are not appropriate or adequately justified, pro rate estimates of salaries and benefits are excessive, indirect costs (if mandatory) are excessive, cash-match and/or in-kind match is inflated relative to BDJV-funded work, insufficient information on the likelihood of securing matching contributions or other funds essential to project success.
- f) Annual objectives are not clearly identified (for multi-year proposals, the annual objectives must be identified)
- g) Proposal is portrayed as being more comprehensive than it really is—the proposal should focus on the objectives for which BDJV funds are requested. If BDJV funding is for a specific component of a larger study or program, describe how the BDJV-funded work specifically relates to the larger effort, but do not write a proposal that encompasses the objectives and budget of a much larger program.
- e) Matching funds ratio is small; a proposal should strive for a 0.5:1 cash-match and 1:1 in-kind match.

Anticipated Award Date:

Grant awards will be announced no later than April 7, 2009.

VI. Award Administration Information:

Award Notices: Award notices will be provided to all applicants by email, mail, or phone during April 2009. Notice of a successful proposal is not an authorization to begin performance (pre-award costs are incurred at the recipient's risk). A purchase order or grant contract signed by a USFWS warranted contracting officer and a formal Notice to Proceed will constitute authorization to begin performance.

VII. Agency Contacts

Submit direct technical questions to:

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