

2008 Black Duck Joint Venture Request for Proposals

Key Date: Proposal deadline is 11:59pm Eastern Standard time February 1, 2008

Overview Information

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

Opportunity Title: BDJV FY08 Competitive Grant Program

Opportunity Number: 122008

Announcement Type: This is an annual 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 biology and 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. In addition to the high priority research needs identified below, in Fiscal Year 2008 the BDJV is particularly interested in proposal addressing questions about the apparent decline in black duck productivity and projects linking black duck vital rates to habitat features. 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 their 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 provide at least a 1:1 match for BDJV funds. 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:

To be competitive for funding, proposals should provide at least a 1:1 match for BDJV funds. The match contribution may include cash or in-kind costs directly associated with the proposed work (also see #13 under Proposal Format, below). Proposals with less than a 1:1 match will be considered, but will be ranked lower than comparable projects with a full match. Additionally, 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 during the 5-year planning horizon, 2008-2013.

Category	Issue
Population Monitoring	Identify sources of and quantify heterogeneity in band reporting rates. ^a Evaluate genetic methods to monitor changes in black duck population size and structure. Quantify and identify sources of variation and bias in estimates of fall age ratios. Quantify effect of “availability” bias in aerial surveys Evaluate and quantify influence of behavioral responses of black ducks to survey related disturbances. Integration of ground breeding population surveys with aerial surveys. Development of post-season banding and aging techniques.
Population Ecology	Development of Adaptive Harvest Management models. ^a Quantify the rate and identify causes of apparent decline in black duck productivity. Quantify regional differences in and factors influencing black duck productivity. Evaluate and quantify population structure and sub-units. Test hypotheses of range contraction versus population decline. Quantify seasonal and annual survival rates and identify environmental and habitat factors that influence survival.
Habitat Ecology	Quantify regional nutritional carrying capacity on seasonal ranges. ^a

^a Research needs currently being addressed with on-going research projects.

Category	Issue
Integration of population dynamics and habitat ecology.	Evaluate and quantify influence of habitat patch size and human disturbance (e.g., road density, perforation, fragmentation, and recreation) on black duck habitat selection, use and quality.
	Evaluate the quality and availability of healthy coastal marshes and other large (>10 ha) marsh/open water complexes during winter and spring.
	Develop synthetic models predicting the effects of climate change of black duck population dynamics and habitat use.
	Identify migration routes and factors influencing time budgets and distribution during migration.

^a Research needs currently being addressed with on-going research 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) including Standard Form 424. This form can be obtained (as word documents) on the grants.gov website. For more information contact the BDJV Science Coordinator:

Patrick Devers
Black Duck Joint Venture Science Coordinator
US Fish and Wildlife Service
11410 American Holly Drive
Laurel, MD 20708
Phone: (301) 497-5549
Fax: (301) 497-5706
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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 to individual identified in Section IV midnight Eastern Standard Time February 1, 2008 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, 2008. 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, 2008 (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, 2008 will not be considered for evaluation. It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure Service receipt of their proposal by the deadline. The Service bears no responsibility for misplaced or mishandled proposals when the recipient 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 12 pages long at font size 12.

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 08 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? ≤50 words.

3. **Justification:** Complete and concise review of the issue and why it is important to management. 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. Maximum 1 page.

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 those 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?

6. **Study Design:** Describe the all principle field and laboratory methods, statistical treatments, a priori model sets and associated variables to be used in model development, experimental or observational units, replicates, sample size(s), anticipated analyses, and citations of references. Provide power analyses as appropriate.

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 2008, we will 1) ... 2)...; by September 2009, 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.

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.

10. **Literature Cited:** as relevant.

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.

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 (see checkbox in budget table). 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.

V. Application Review Information:

Criteria:

It is important for applicants to review the evaluation criteria that will be used to score proposals received. The following criteria will be used. A score of 1-5 (1 being lowest and 5 highest) will be given for each evaluation category then multiplied by the category weight; the total of all weighted scores will be used as primary basis for ranking proposals.

Evaluation Criteria and Relative Category Weights:

1. Management/Conservation Considerations: (Weight 5)
 - a. What information need(s) will this study address?
 - b. Does the proposal address a part of the population with a conservation concern (i.e., declining segment in the western areas of black duck range)?
 - c. Are there clear management implications?
 - d. Will the study provide information necessary or useful for improving monitoring or management of the black duck population?

2. Methodology and Approach: (Weight 4)
 - a. Is the approach appropriate and as presented justified and logical?
 - b. Are the methods appropriate?
 - c. Are the sample sizes adequate?
 - d. Is the timing and data collection schedule realistic?
 - e. Are the objectives clear and realistically achievable?
 - f. Is the study being conducted in an appropriate location?
 - g. Is the proposal adequately documented and relevant literature cited?

3. Funding and Partnership Considerations: (Weight 3)
 - a. Is the study cost efficient/logistically efficient (e.g., is logistical infrastructure in place that will make efficient use of BDJV contributions)?
 - b. Is there a substantial match of contributions particularly from non-US federal sources?
 - c. Are the requested budget items appropriate for BDJV and are cost estimates reasonable?
 - d. If requesting multi-year funding, are final products/results worth the risks of failure, the potential for inadequate funding in future years to achieve objectives, and the lost opportunity to fund other studies (consider total costs over all years to the value of expected end products)?
 - e. Does the study involve multiple partners?
 - f. Will this study bring on new partners to the BDJV?

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 Matching Contributions to BDJV Request			
 Ratio of non-US Federal 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				

4. Other Considerations: (Weight 2)
 - a. Does the study significantly complement other ongoing studies (i.e., is there value added to the study)?
 - b. Do the PIs have a proven track record of successful investigations?
 - c. Will results be communicated effectively and in a timely manner?
 - d. Is this a one-time opportunity that the BDJV should not pass up?
 - e. Does the study integrate multiple research categories (see above)?

Review and Selection Process:

Applications will be evaluated and scored by the BDJV Research Working Group and Technical Committee during their March 2008 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 2008.

Common Reasons for Low Proposal Review Scores:

- a) Proposal is missing required parts (read the proposal instructions for FY2008 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 rata estimates of salaries and benefits are excessive, indirect costs (if mandatory) are excessive, 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 at least a 1:1 match of funding.

Anticipated Award Date:

Contract awards will be announced no later than April 7, 2008.

VI. Award Administration Information:

Award Notices: Award notices will be provided to all applicants by email, mail, or phone during April 2008. 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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