



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
87TH AIR BASE WING (AMC)**



MEMORANDUM TO: Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU), North Atlantic Coast

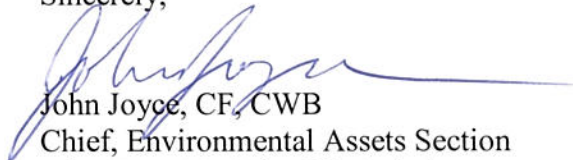
FROM: John Joyce, Chief, Environmental Assets Section for Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL)

SUBJECT: New Jersey Audubon Application

1. I am writing this memo in support of the New Jersey Audubon (NJA) application to join the North Atlantic Coast region of the CESU national network.
2. NJA has had a long and productive relationship with JB MDL, and before that the Naval Air Engineering Station Lakehurst (NAES). NAES was merged into a tri-service joint base in 2009 when McGuire Air Force Base, Ft. Dix Army Base and NAES were consolidated into one base under Air Force ownership.
3. NAES first worked with NJA in 2003 when NJA trained volunteers took over the annual grassland bird survey that had previously been done by other volunteers. For a small administrative fee, NJA has provided consistent, professional level survey results for these grasslands for the past 15 years. It documents the population fluctuations on over 1300 acres of managed grasslands which host at least four state listed Threatened and Endangered species.
4. NJA has provided trained volunteers to accomplish nightjar surveys on the Lakehurst section of JB MDL on a yearly basis since 2012. The declining populations of Chuck-will's-widow, Whip-poor-will and Common Nighthawks have caused concern in the northeastern US and NJA is helping JB MDL to document the locations on base which are used by these species.
5. NJA completed a forest bird survey under contract to NAES during 2005-06. This report was the first comprehensive full year survey to ever document presence/absence of all bird species on NAES.
6. In 2007, NJA published a study done under contract with NAES titled "Distribution and Habitat Relationships of Breeding Birds on NAES 1999-2006". This report analyzed how documented sightings of grassland birds during annual surveys related to the various different native grass stands in the NAES grasslands over an eight year period. One major goal was to determine whether the stands of "invasive" African Love grass which were planted decades ago had lower densities of nesting birds than stands of native grasses.

7. The Department of Defense (DoD) Legacy program is a national effort in which interested groups submit competitive proposals annually for various natural resources research projects throughout the world on DoD installations. NJA has completed two multi-year projects under the Legacy program. The first, "Avian Productivity on NAES", was published in 2009. The second Legacy project was a multi-state study over three years that included NAES Lakehurst, Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland and the Westover Reserve Air Base in Massachusetts. "Avian Response to Grassland Management Around Military Airfields in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast" was published in May, 2012. Both studies were well received in the wildlife management community and provided valuable information to better guide grassland bird management in the northeastern US.
8. NJA continues to be a valuable asset to the JB MDL natural resources program. In addition to the ongoing annual nightjar and grassland bird surveys, NJA stepped in on very short notice to provide a grassland bird survey on the McGuire airfield during the 2016 breeding season. It was the first formal survey on this airfield using standardized protocols in decades.
9. With such a proven track record of outstanding assistance and cooperation with the natural resources program on JB MDL, there is no other more deserving organization than New Jersey Audubon to join the North Atlantic Coast CESU. They understand the intricacies and complications of executing natural resources projects on military bases, and their history of combining professional expertise with reasonable pricing and on-time contract deliverables makes NJA an ideal candidate to join CESU.
10. Please extend to them every effort and courtesy when reviewing their application so they can join CESU and allow DoD to access their considerable experience and talents.

Sincerely,



John Joyce, CF, CWB
Chief, Environmental Assets Section
Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst