

International Canvasback Award presented to DJ Case and Associates by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service

Presented to Dave Case on March 29, 2018 at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, Norfolk, Virginia

DJ Case and Associates and its founder David J. Case, have been a key partner and significant force in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan for more than three decades. They championed the incorporation of human dimensions, public engagement, and communications into management of waterfowl habitat and populations long before the three goals were integrated in the 2012 North American Waterfowl Management Plan Revision.

This involvement began in the formative years of Plan implementation. By 1988, a communications strategy was developed and then updated in 1990 to help implement the brand new North American Waterfowl Management Plan. And DJ Case and Associates have been front and center ever since, grappling with the complex communications challenges surrounding waterfowl management.

Addressing abundance and threats to population resilience, DJ Case and Associates has facilitated workshops and communications strategies involving numerous waterfowl species and populations. In the mid-1990s, they were instrumental in navigating the policy and management challenges presented by overabundant light goose populations by successfully involving the media and federal, provincial, and state governments in both the U.S. and Canada. More recently, they guided development of an updated communications strategy and a position statement for light goose management in North America.

DJ Case has been involved for more than 20 years in Adaptive Harvest Management, the accepted standard for employing Structured Decision Making in waterfowl management. Although AHM is primarily focused on waterfowl harvest management, DJ Case and Associates has played an essential role in efforts to help make Adaptive Harvest Management work for both ducks and hunters by facilitating discussions among federal and state decision makers, by engaging stakeholders, and by developing effective communication strategies and products. They fostered effective engagement with state and federal partners in 1995 on a task force to ensure a smooth transition to AHM-based hunting regulations and in 2003 on a second Task Force to review progress with the Adaptive Harvest Management program.

DJ Case and Associates have supported longitudinal collaboration to ensure the evolution of communications and incorporation of human dimensions science into habitat conservation. On the Canadian breeding grounds, they developed the framework and facilitated a workshop in 2012 to help the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture address the top three challenges of its wetland restoration implementation

plan. In the U.S., their collaboration with the Playa Lakes Joint Venture progressed from an initial survey of landowners in 2006 to determine willingness to engage in playa conservation, was followed in 2013 by focus groups to delve more deeply into landowners' perspectives, and two years later, they engaged scientists to answer landowners' questions about playas and recharge.

DJ Case was emphasizing human dimensions data collection and application before it became the popular thing to do! They coordinated and facilitated a "Strategy Team" to guide communications strategies under the banner of "A Systematic and Sustained Conversation with Waterfowl Hunters." This overall effort involved a National Duck Hunter Survey in 2005, "panels of experts," surveys of avid-influential waterfowl hunters, focus groups, point-of-sale data mining, and a waterfowl hunter recruitment and retention strategy. They facilitated a "think tank" of experts in the fields of human dimensions who emphasized a better understanding of how to systematically account for the perspectives of waterfowl hunters in developing conservation programs. Their deliberations and conclusions greatly influenced the 2012 Update of the NAWMP, with its explicit focus on waterfowl conservation to benefit people.

Prior to completion of the 2012 Revision, DJ Case and Associates designed and facilitated numerous stakeholder input workshops in the U.S. and Canada which were central to the themes found in the Revision and the waterfowl community's acceptance of this new direction. They played a lead role in organizing and facilitating two international workshops held in 2008 and in 2017. These "Future of Waterfowl" workshops laid the groundwork in 2018 for the 2012 NAWMP Revision and in 2017 assessed progress and charted the course for continued implementation.

DJ Case and Associates has played a key role through support of the Interim Integration Committee, Human Dimensions Working Group, Public Engagement Team, Update Steering Committee, Institutions Subcommittee and other task groups responsible for integration across Plan goals for waterfowl populations, habitat, and supporters.

DJ Case and Associates has continually educated the NAWMP community about the power of communicating in a way that would resonate with stakeholders. They have advocated for using social science to test our assumptions of human behavior and constantly remind all of us to ask what we want our audiences to "know, feel, and do," and then to craft our messages around that.

This visionary group of conservation professionals - biologists, social scientists, communication experts, video producers, and web application developers - integrate biological and social sciences to engage people in conservation. To a person they are affable, professional, solid teammates, and an overall pleasure with

whom to work. Their steady hand on the tiller of local, regional and national efforts has exemplified the collaborative and innovative spirit of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

In recognizing the efforts of DJ Case and Associates, we present the 2017 International Canvasback Award, acknowledging their focus on partnerships, a reliance on new information applied to conservation delivery, and perhaps most notably, an emphasis on communication and stakeholder engagement which is critical to the success of the waterfowl management enterprise.