

## **Highlights and Action Items**

### **NABCI Federal Subcommittee meeting**

### **December 13, 2000**

The Federal Subcommittee met December 13, 2000 in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director's Conference at the Main Interior Building, Washington, DC. Paul Schmidt (FWS) and Jack Capp (USFS) chaired the meeting on behalf of Jamie Clark and Val Mezainis respectively. Meeting topics included 1) coordination of federal budgets for bird conservation, 2) integrated bird business plan, 3) appropriations updates, 4) NABCI communications strategy, and 5) NABCI trilateral meeting. In the text below, motions and action items are in bold print. Those attending the meeting were:

Paul Schmidt (FWS), Jack Capp (FS), David Smith (FWS), Jon Andrew (FWS), Kim McClurg (FWS), Dave Davis (EPA), John Meagher (EPA), Lynne Trulio (EPA), Kathleen Kutschenreuter (EPA), Eric Lawton (BLM), Chris Jauhola (BLM), Roberta Chew (State Dept.), Gary Rankel (BIA), Ellie Brown (USGS), Ken Williams (USGS), Chris Eberly (DoD), Tim Toplesik (USACOE), Skip Kolowski (USFS), David Pashley (American Bird Conservancy), Bob Ford (FWS).

After brief introductions, Paul Schmidt distributed copies of the recently published NABCI outreach document, "Bringing it all together", and the associated Bird Conservation Region (BCR) map and booklet of BCR descriptions. The subcommittee voted unanimously to thank Dee Butler (FWS), Rex Johnson (FWS), and David Pashley (ABC) for their efforts in producing this excellent document.

#### Coordination of federal budgets for bird conservation

Paul Schmidt provided background on the subject. At least four agencies (USGS, USFWS, USFS, BLM) have expressed a commitment to articulating NABCI objectives into FY2002 budget language. These agencies have expressed an intent to coordinate among budget program areas as well. Several other agencies on the NABCI Federal Subcommittee have expressed an interest in incorporating suggested introductory language where appropriate (e.g. the Circle of Flight program, BIA; Partners in Flight, Department of Defense). Ken Williams reminded the subcommittee that this was a primary task requested to us from the U.S. NABCI Committee (see U.S. NABCI minutes from September 2000), and as a result, suggested that a smaller group meet regularly to respond appropriately with rapidly moving budget requests.

**The NABCI Federal Subcommittee unanimously passed the following resolution:**

**" In response to the request of the U.S. NABCI Committee, the Federal subcommittee commits to 1) seek to include language at appropriate locations in member agency FY 2002 budget documents to reference cross agency coordination and cooperation**

**for bird conservation, 2) use the Federal Agency Subcommittee as a forum for coordination of budget development as it pertains to member agency bird conservation during the budget formulation process for FY 2002 transition and beyond, and 3) make Federal Agency Subcommittee staff available to assist colleague agencies during bird conservation budget briefings.”**

**To accomplish the concepts of this motion, immediate action items include a smaller group meeting to further coordinate budgets and plan interagency efforts, re-circulate and review of the suggested “NABCI standard paragraph” for budget writers, and re-circulate the names and contact information of Federal Agency Subcommittee staff. Bob Ford is to take the lead on these tasks.**

Schmidt briefly mentioned an idea of coordinating grant programs within Federal Government agencies and noted that he would like to eventually see progress in this area for bird conservation.

#### Integrated bird business plan

David Pashley provided background on an integrated bird conservation business plan. The U.S. NABCI Committee’s second charge was to develop a “business plan” that reduces duplication of effort across staff for all bird conservation initiatives. Each initiative has been asked to develop core staff needs, and to work through NABCI staff to identify overlapping needs, as well as needs unique to that initiative. Parallel to the process, staff are being hired in Bird Conservation Regions (BCR) and their relationships to states, Joint Ventures, federal agencies and others are defined locally or regionally. The U.S. Forest Service, for example, has provided \$300,000 to support BCR staff in FS regional priority bird conservation areas nationwide. Each bird conservation initiative will retain its own business plan; the function of NABCI will be to look for common needs.

**The NABCI Federal Subcommittee unanimously passed the following resolution:**

**“The Federal Agency Subcommittee commends the U.S. Forest Service and the American Bird Conservancy for taking actions to hire staff in Bird Conservation Regions, and as a subcommittee, we accept the challenge to help assure complete funding for BCR staff where needed. While this subcommittee continues to endorse a locally derived, comprehensive plan to determine bird conservation staff priorities nationally, this subcommittee also recognizes that BCR staffing based on the U.S. Forest Service and American Bird Conservancy initiative can proceed parallel with development of national plans, as long as opportunistic decisions are dependent on local partnerships.”**

#### Appropriations update:

David Smith provided a brief overview of appropriations increases to the Joint Ventures and to the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. The Wetlands Council (the body who administers the Act) has expressed an interest in delivering bird conservation programs for a wide range of species and habitats, including uplands. Council staff and staff for the Division of Bird Habitat Conservation (USFWS) are currently reviewing Technical Assessment Questions in

the grant proposal process, and have been charged with developing questions that encourage a broad range of proposals.

The Federal Agency Subcommittee requested that the current status table of funding for BCR staff be distributed to Joint Venture Coordinators for possible assistance with funding these positions (see Attachment 1).

NABCI Communications strategy:

Ken Williams and Jack Capp provided background on the NABCI Communications Strategy. An attachment (see Attachment 2) provides the progress to date regarding the development of a communications strategy, as requested from us by the U.S. NABCI Committee. In a meeting December 7, the NABCI NGO Subcommittee committed to providing \$15,000 for this strategy.

**The Federal Agency Subcommittee agreed to, at least, match the NGO commitment, and requested \$5,000 from each agency on the Federal Subcommittee (which could be approximately \$30,000 in addition to the NGO commitment), consider the Wildlife Management Institute as the banker for this strategy, and to hire an outside consultant to assist the process.** Progress will be next reported at the U.S. NABCI Committee meeting January 30, 2001 in Arlington, VA.

Jon Andrew suggested that the NABCI Communications Strategy link with the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) regional workshops that are under development from a Federal Aid grant.

NABCI trilateral meeting

David Pashley provided background on the NABCI trilateral meeting. The next NABCI trilateral meeting will be held in Querterro, Mexico on February 14 through 17, 2001. Meeting attendees and agenda are close to complete, although NABCI staff will meet in Mexico City in January 2001 to finalize.

**Paul Schmidt, a member of the NABCI trilateral Committee (known as the "G-9"), asked the Federal Agency to consider the G-9 role in international bird conservation and to provide him guidance as to where the international committee should go.** We will place that topic on the agenda for the next federal agency subcommittee meeting. Before the next meeting, Ford will solicit a response from the subcommittee via e-mail.

Next meeting date:

There was a brief discussion regarding the subcommittee structure and protocol; those present agreed that late spring should be the next meeting designed for the Subcommittee principles (late April). The working group, however, should continue to meet on a monthly basis. The next working group meeting will be scheduled the week of January 15-17, 2001; Ford and Capp will provide the date and meeting location in the near future.

A final note . . .

Paul Schmidt and Jack Capp, on behalf of the Federal Agency Subcommittee, thanked Dave Davis for his outstanding efforts to move bird conservation forward through the last several years. His service has provided invaluable input to a wide range of issues, including species prioritization, management, government capabilities, and communications. The Federal Agency Subcommittee wishes Dave well in his retirement; a letter thanking Dave for his service has been signed and mailed from Director Jamie Clark, US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Notes submitted by:

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## **ATTACHMENT 1:**

STATUS OF BIRD CONSERVATION REGIONS -  
RELATIONS WITH JOINT VENTURES, COORDINATORS, ETC.  
15 December 2000

BCRs in Alaska and shared between Alaska and Canada

- 1 ALEUTIAN/BERING SEA ISLANDS
- 2 WESTERN ALASKA
- 3 ARCTIC PLAINS AND MOUNTAINS
- 4 NORTHWESTERN INTERIOR FOREST

There is no current JV coverage nor are there current plans to hire Coordinators for these four Alaskan BCRs.

- 5 NORTHERN PACIFIC RAINFOREST

The boundaries of the Northern Pacific Rainforest are now coincident with proposed boundaries of the Pacific Coast JV. The PCJV has explicitly decided to work with all birds, but lacks some of the expertise and resources to effectively do so, at least on the US side of the border. ABC currently employs a WA-OR PIF Coordinator, and is attempting to raise funds to continue that position with a focus on delivery of landbird conservation within this BCR. The US Forest Service has committed \$35K for each of three years to this position, and additional funds have been promised by USGS, USFWS, and BLM. If funded, this position would be carried out in strict cooperation with the Joint Venture in the US and Canada.

BCRs entirely within Canada

- 6 BOREAL TAIGA PLAINS
- 7 TAIGA SHIELD AND HUDSON PLAINS
- 8 BOREAL SOFTWOOD SHIELD

NABCI-Canada is developing plans to staff all of their BCRs, or aggregates thereof. This planning is currently in early stages, and funding sources have not been secured.

BCRs shared between Canada and the lower 48 states

- 9 GREAT BASIN

USFS has committed \$30K/year to a BCR Coordinator here in cooperation with the Intermountain West JV. BLM, USFWS, and BOR have all dedicated moderate amounts of funds for the first year of this position. ABC has submitted proposals to private foundations in hopes of rounding out funding.

- 10 NORTHERN ROCKIES

Through a grant from the LaSalle Adams Fund, ABC hired Dan Casey as Northern Rockies BCR Coordinator beginning in January of 2000. There are sufficient funds from the initial grant to cover this position through the end of 2001, and USFS has committed an additional \$25K/year. Also, there are favorable signs that LaSalle Adams will renew its support for the Northern Rockies (and Shortgrass) BCR for a second cycle. The bulk of the Northern Rockies is within the Intermountain West JV and the remainder is in the Prairie Pothole JV, and relations between the BCR Coordinator and the Coordinators and Management Boards of both Joint Ventures are excellent.

- 11 PRAIRIE POTHOLE

The Prairie Potholes BCR is entirely covered by the Prairie Potholes JV, and there are no plans or needs to provide infrastructure beyond that currently supplied by the JV. Infusion of new NABCI resources into the Prairie Potholes, however, is highly desirable. There have been active discussions between the PPJV and the Prairie Habitat JV in Canada regarding shared conservation potential within the BCR.

#### 12 BOREAL HARDWOOD TRANSITION

The US portions of this BCR are entirely within the Upper Miss/Great Lakes JV. USFS has committed \$25K/year and Wisconsin DNR is donating office space. A good deal of additional fundraising is going to be necessary to support a position here.

#### 13 LOWER GREAT LAKES/ ST. LAWRENCE PLAIN

The Ohio portion of this JV is in the Upper Miss/Great Lakes JV and the remainder on the US side is in the Atlantic Coast JV. The Canadian portions are in the Eastern Habitat JV. An international meeting is being held this month to advance issues in this BCR.

#### 14 ATLANTIC NORTHERN FOREST

This BCR is in the ACJV in the US and the EHJV in Canada. After a series of meetings including federal, state, and NGO representatives from both sides of the border, and consideration and approval from both JV Management Boards, ABC has begun development of a proposal to private foundations to fund a Coordinator position for this BCR. USFS is putting \$25K/year into this region.

BCRs entirely within the United States

#### 15 SIERRA NEVADA

The eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada is within the Intermountain West JV. There are ongoing discussions within the California Riparian Habitat JV that may lead to its expansion to all habitats in BCRs 15 and 32 not within the boundaries of the Central Valley JV or the San Francisco Bay JV. The RHJV Coordinator position is currently empty, but funds from partners have been gathered, including \$20K/year from USFS, and the position will be refilled in the near future.

#### 16 SOUTHERN ROCKIES/COLORADO PLATEAU

This BCR is entirely within the Intermountain West JV. There are no current plans for developing infrastructure here, although the JV is committed to eventually staffing all of the BCRs within it.

#### 17 BADLANDS AND PRAIRIES

A Concept Plan proposes establishment of a new Joint Venture in this BCR. The lead in developing this Plan was taken by the Bureau of Reclamation with support from USFWS and the Forest Service. These partners, including \$25K/year from USFS, are assisting The Nature Conservancy's Wings program, which is contributing the bulk of the needed funding, in hiring a JV Coordinator.

#### 18 SHORTGRASS PRAIRIE

A grant from the LaSalle Adams Fund to Colorado Bird Observatory allowed Mike Carter to begin as Shortgrass BCR Coordinator in January of 2000. See notes above under BCR 10 (Northern Rockies). This BCR is partially within the IWJV with the majority of area in the Playa Lakes JV (pending proposed minor boundary changes by both JVs), and relationships between the BCR Coordinator and both Joint Ventures are excellent. Indeed, much of the discussion regarding the conceptual relationships between BCRs and Joint Ventures is largely academic in that the reality of the situation is being worked out in places like the Shortgrass

BCR.

19 CENTRAL MIXED GRASS PRAIRIE

The southern portion of the Central Mixed Grass is in the Playa Lakes JV, and that Management Board is proposing a boundary expansion to include all of the BCR south of the Nebraska-Kansas border. The Rainwater Basin JV is entirely included within the Nebraska portion of this BCR, along with several other geographically based conservation partnerships. Several of the partners in the PLJV (including Ducks Unlimited) are considering dedicating funds toward a BCR Coordinator, but this remains a complex situation. USFS is assisting by committing \$20K/year to a combination of this BCR and the Shortgrass. A meeting among principals from both Joint Ventures, all four states, and the USFWS is needed to resolve some of the outstanding issues.

20 EDWARDS PLATEAU

21 OAKS AND PRAIRIES

Neither of these BCRs is within an existing JV and there are no current plans to create infrastructure there.

22 EASTERN TALLGRASS PRAIRIE

23 PRAIRIE HARDWOOD TRANSITION

The majority of these two BCRs are within the Upper Miss/Great Lakes JV, and that JV has suggested that it might consider expanding its boundary to encompass the entire area of both the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie and Prairie Hardwood Transition.

24 CENTRAL HARDWOODS

Under leadership of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, sufficient funds have been accumulated to hire a Central Hardwoods BCR Coordinator. Contributors to this position include five of the states within the BCR, the Forest Service (\$30K/year), USFWS, NFWF (through a grant to ABC), and other private foundation funds raised by ABC. Jane Fitzgerald will begin as BCR Coordinator in January 2001. The geography of this BCR is complex, overlapping parts of both the Upper Miss/Great Lakes and Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Ventures. Partners agree that the Coordinator will create a technical advisory committee and will work with both Joint Ventures for the foreseeable future, with ultimate relationships to be established over time.

25 WEST GULF COASTAL PLAIN/OUACHITAS

The West Gulf portion of this BCR is within the Lower Mississippi Valley JV. That JV and its partners in the four states are working to secure sufficient funding to hire an Assistant JV Coordinator to work exclusively within this BCR. Funds from the USFWS, DU, states, and USFS (\$15K/year) are secured, and a grant from NFWF has been awarded. There is still a need, however, to raise additional non-federal match (at least \$20K/year) for NFWF to secure those funds.

26 MISSISSIPPI ALLUVIAL VALLEY

This BCR corresponds directly to the portion of the Lower Mississippi Valley JV that has been the focus of years of integrated bird conservation. While additional support is always welcome, there is no need to consider any separate infrastructure for this BCR.

27 SOUTHEASTERN COASTAL PLAIN

This is a complex geography. The western portion is not within an existing JV and the portions in Florida and Georgia and east are within the Atlantic Coast JV. That latter portion is the focus of the Joint Venture-led South Atlantic Migratory Bird Initiative, headed by Assistant JV Coordinator Craig Watson. A NAWCA grant was recently awarded to the SAMBI partners

for a package of proposals bringing benefits to a broad cross-section of the region's avifauna. \$40K/year from USFS will greatly secure Craig's position.

28 APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS

This is another tremendously complex area, both in terms of geography and conservation politics. The eastern half of the BCR is in the Atlantic Coast JV, with parts of Ohio in the Upper Miss/Great Lakes and the remainder of the west outside of current JV boundaries.

29 PIEDMONT

The Piedmont is entirely within the ACJV. That JV has proposed an infrastructure of seven separate BCR Coordinators working under (but not necessarily for the same agency as) the JV Coordinator. This proposed structure has been approved by some partners, notably USFWS, and is under review by the JV Management Board. Other than the Atlantic Northern Forest (see BCR 14 above) and the ACJV portions of the Southeastern Coastal Plain (BCR 27), there are no specific plans for how to fund these positions.

30 NEW ENGLAND/MID-ATLANTIC COAST

There is a proposal being developed to adjust the southern boundary of this BCR closer to the Virginia-North Carolina border. Bryan Watts of the Center for Conservation Biology of William and Mary University has developed a proposal to complete a thorough integrated bird conservation plan for the southern portion of this BCR, including a request for funds for staffing, outreach, and implementation. Larry Niles of New Jersey Fish, Game and Wildlife is also proposing development of a delivery structure within this BCR. These two efforts must be coordinated with each other and with the ACJV.

31 PENINSULAR FLORIDA

Other than its status as a subregion of the ACJV, there are no current plans for this BCR.

BCRs shared between the United States and Mexico

32 COASTAL CALIFORNIA

See comments above under the Sierra Nevada (BCR 15). Both the Central Valley and San Francisco Bay Joint Ventures are dedicated to the conservation of all birds within their borders.

33 SONORAN AND MOJAVE DESERTS

The Sonoran Joint Venture was created out of the IWJV and staffed by JV Coordinator Robert Mesta of the USFWS. The JV is international, extending into Sonora and Baja California in Mexico. It does not, however, currently include the Mojave portion of the BCR.

34 SIERRA MADRE OCCIDENTAL

Portions of this BCR are currently included in the Sonoran JV, but that situation is liable to change if infrastructure for this international BCR is developed. USFS is putting \$10K/year into this region.

35 CHIHUAHUAN DESERT

There are no current plans in progress to create a delivery structure in this BCR. Small portions are in the IWJV and the PLJV.

36 TAMAULIPAN BRUSHLANDS

The World Birding Center, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and ABC have been in consultation recently in efforts to raise private dollars to fund a conservation specialist within this BCR.

37 GULF COASTAL PRAIRIE

This corresponds to the boundaries of the Gulf Coast Joint Venture within the US. That JV is committed to delivering conservation for all birds, but currently lacks the staffing and

resources necessary to do so. Recent discussions with the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory may lead to improvements in this situation.

NOTE - The above deals strictly with the issues referred to in the title of this document. There is no inference intended that, just because there is no JV or contemplated BCR development, there is not important bird conservation work ongoing in any of the above areas.

## **ATTACHMENT 2:**

### **NABCI COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

#### **Justification and statement of need**

It is increasingly clear that NABCI is being hampered by inadequate and misleading information about the initiative. Recent meetings at the IAFWA and elsewhere have highlighted the fact that many in the avian conservation community know little about NABCI. Those who have heard of it often misconstrue what NABCI is, and perhaps more importantly, what it is not. In many cases there appears to be little understanding of its potential for agencies and organizations, and knowledge about that potential frequently is limited to only a relatively few individuals within an organization. Those who are aware of NABCI often lack information about its focus, intent, composition, and strategic direction, and thus are unable to be effective spokespersons for it.

If NABCI is to succeed over the long term, a much more pro-active approach to communication is needed, one that identifies audiences, key messages, and appropriate actions for the NABCI partners. In particular, there is a need for both inreach aiming at NABCI partners, and outreach targeting potential partners who currently are not part of the initiative. An inreach effort should be an initial priority, because of the importance of a shared vision and understanding of NABCI as it is implemented within an organization and communicated among partners.

#### **Objectives**

The proposed communication strategy should be based on objectives that help to define what actions are appropriate, to whom they should be directed, and how they should be evaluated as to their success. Proposed objectives for the strategy include:

- exposure of individuals at all levels within partner organizations to the purpose and role of NABCI
- improved understanding by partners and potential partners of the focus, direction, and strategic goals of NABCI
- recognition of actions that can be taken to enhance cooperation among partners, and the potential benefits to avian conservation that can result

#### **Target audiences, key messages, communication vehicles**

The communications effort is to be targeted initially to partners with land conservation missions, in particular those in state and federal conservation agencies. It's focus initially should be on mid-level decision-makers within agencies and organizations who can influence the allocation of resources for conservation.

Key messages should emphasize:

- the purpose and intent of NABCI as a facilitation effort, as opposed to a new bureaucracy that threatens the integrity and independence of ongoing conservation programs
- mechanisms and potential benefits of coordinated conservation actions among

conservation groups

Communications vehicles can include:

- handouts, tri-folds, fact sheets, other documents for both broad and targeted distribution
- web page development along with information products to reside on the website
- displays for conferences and other professional meetings
- facilitated discussions with partners and potential partners
- video productions, etc

### **Roles and responsibilities of NABCI partners**

- identification of organization contacts
- continuing involvement of working group members
- commitment to inreach communication efforts by NABCI partners, utilizing both internal and external (working group) resources
- commitment of partner resources as needed for the effort

### **Resource requirements**

- dedication of in-house capabilities for communication/outreach
- contributions for contracted professional support, estimated to be @\$30,000

### **Proposed actions**

- initial implementation steps:
  - secure endorsement of Steering Committee
  - form a small working group of federal, state, and NGO representatives
  - secure resource commitments from NABCI partners
  - contract with a professional in wildlife communications and outreach
- planning and strategy development
  - work with partners to identify and prioritize target audiences
  - develop communications strategies for target audiences
  - work with partners to identify resources, venues and opportunities for communications efforts
  - coordinate communications activities among partners
- scheduling of ongoing activities on an as-needed basis:
  - develop and distribute communications products
  - schedule presentations and discussions at appropriate forums
  - coordinate resource utilization and in-kind support among partners
- continuous tracking of communications activities and their success, with adjustments as needed to enhance delivery