



# The All-Bird Bulletin

## Bird Conservation News and Information

June 2004

From the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI)



*NABCI is dedicated to promoting and advancing integrated bird conservation in North America.*

*NABCI's goal is to deliver the full spectrum of bird conservation through regionally based, biologically driven, landscape-oriented partnerships.*

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*For a list of grant programs to obtain project funding, visit the NABCI Web site at <http://www.nabci-us.org/funding.html>*

*The All-Bird Bulletin is a news and information-sharing publication of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. If you would like to subscribe to this e-newsletter or submit an article (250 words or less) please contact, [Roxanne\\_Bogart@fws.gov](mailto:Roxanne_Bogart@fws.gov)*

## Secretary Norton Announces 40 "Neotrop" Projects for 2004

On June 9, 2004, Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton announced that 40 projects in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean had been approved by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams for more than \$3.8 million in funding under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. This Act exists to benefit Nearctic-Neotropical migrants which includes 341 species of birds, such as plovers, terns, hawks, cranes, warblers and sparrows, all or part of whose populations breed north of the Tropic of Cancer and winter south of that line. Many of these species are in decline and require immediate conservation action and/or long-term stewardship.



The U.S Shorebird Conservation Plan ranks the Red Knot as a Species of High Concern based on declining population trends and threats on South American nonbreeding grounds. Photo by Jerry Liguori

The grants for 2004 will support projects occurring in the United States and 20 other countries throughout the western hemisphere. These projects will conserve migratory bird habitat, further research and monitoring efforts, support law enforcement, and develop community outreach and education initiatives. Partners are adding nearly \$16 million to the grant funds to reach the goals of their projects. In the United States, diverse partnerships in 16 states and Puerto Rico will carry out 14 projects for the benefit of these birds.

One project with the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences will support conservation along the flight path of the Red Knot, a small shorebird that nests in the arctic and migrates to the southern tip of South America to spend the winter. Partners will conduct critical research in Delaware Bay and carry out education and outreach activities in coastal communities in Argentina and Chile with the goal of reversing the recent decline of this bird.

A project with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources will protect and restore thousands of acres of pine/oak barrens, a globally rare habitat that provides breeding grounds for migrants like the Golden-winged Warbler which winters in Central America and northern South America.

The "Neotrop" program is an excellent example of how cooperative partnerships can benefit wildlife throughout the Americas. Since 2002, nearly \$10 million has funded 107 projects in 29 countries and 22 U.S. states leveraging \$42 million in matching non-federal funds. These grants complement other partnership programs and initiatives such as wetland conservation projects approved by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission and funded by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

For more information on this program, visit [http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NMBCA/eng\\_neo.htm](http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NMBCA/eng_neo.htm)

# Notes from the Field



## State All-Bird Conservation Initiatives Spreading

State all-bird conservation initiatives are emerging as the lasting results of state all-bird workshops funded by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies since 2001. These initiatives have in common the desire of diverse public and private partners to work in an organized and collective fashion to conserve all priority native bird species that occur within their state boundaries.

The following states have organized initiatives and web sites:

Michigan:

<http://www.nabci-us.org/michigan/index.htm>

Missouri:

<http://www.mostateparks.com/mobci/index.html>,

Montana:

<http://biology.dbs.umt.edu/landbird/mbc/mbc.htm>,

Nebraska: <http://www.nebraskabirds.org> and

Wisconsin: <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/>



Visit these sites to find out more about these initiatives and their partners and activities, including biological planning, monitoring and evaluation, on-the-ground implementation, and education and outreach. Another state with a fledgling all-bird initiative is Minnesota — the topic of the article below.

Clark's Nutcracker, pictured in National Bison Range, Montana, is a Partners In Flight Species of Continental Importance. Photo by Karen Hollingsworth

## Minnesota Hatches All-Bird Conservation Initiative

With the help of workshop funding from the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, a new collaboration has formed in Minnesota to keep

common birds common and recover those in decline: The Minnesota Bird Conservation Initiative (MNBCI). The MNBCI is using three strategies to achieve its mission: develop regional conservation plans, enhance partnerships, and build public support. A MNBCI Committee is currently in place, has begun meeting, and plans to hire a MNBCI Coordinator to keep the initiative moving forward.

The second successful workshop of the Minnesota Bird Conservation Initiative (MNBCI) was held in St. Cloud, Minnesota on April 12-13, 2004. It was a continuation of the initiative which began in October 2003 and laid the groundwork for the MNBCI. Over 60 bird conservationists and enthusiasts participated in breakout sessions covering topics from identifying priority species to discussing long-range needs for bird monitoring and landscape planning. On day one, the sessions focused on the specific priorities and needs for waterfowl, shorebirds, landbirds and waterbirds within the state. On the second day the participants were re-aligned into the three major Bird Conservation Regions (BCR's) in Minnesota (Prairie Pothole, BCR 11; Prairie Hardwood Transition, BCR 23; and Boreal Hardwood Transition, BCR 12), bringing together all bird groups within the same ecological landscape. This second workshop secured a life for MNBCI by engaging participants in decision tasks and forming a committee structure to carry into the future. For more information, contact [Barbara\\_Pardo@fws.gov](mailto:Barbara_Pardo@fws.gov)

## Quebec Leads Canada's NABCI Implementation

In Quebec, avian wildlife is represented by more than 300 species, of which 22 are considered at risk and several dozen more are experiencing dramatic declines. The Canadian Wildlife Service, Quebec region (Quebec) is the first Canadian province to develop a five-year action plan for its provincial NABCI implementation. The following five strategic orientations define the plan:

*Obtain a solid biological basis:* Quebec is committed to providing an adequate biological base by developing conservation plans for each bird group (landbirds, waterbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl) during the next five years.

*Work at the Bird Conservation Region level:* Quebec is an immense territory covering over 1,667,000 square kilometers. Six Bird Conservation Regions (BCR) highlight the Province's many ecological facets: Lower Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Plain, BCR 13; Atlantic

Northern Forest, BCR 14; Boreal Hardwood Transition, BCR 12; Boreal Softwood Shield, BCR 8; Taiga Shield and Hudson Plains, BCR 7; and Arctic Plains and Mountains, BCR 3. The Province promotes participation by all people and jurisdictions whose activities impact bird conservation and will sponsor workshops to help researchers revise the prioritization of species and sites to be protected and to develop strategic BCR conservation plans.

*Use the synergy of other conservation initiatives:* In most cases, conservation partnerships are linked to one or more North American Waterfowl Management Plan (Plan) joint ventures and, therefore, Quebec will use Plan updates and other bird conservation plans for waterbirds, shorebirds, and landbirds to ensure consistent, coordinated implementation supporting the NABCI vision.

*Inform and increase awareness as implementation tools:* Quebec will promote voluntary best management practices related to bird conservation through outreach tools aimed at increasing awareness. For example, Quebec has developed a provincial NABCI Web site: [www.qc.ec.gc.ca/faune/ICOAN-NABCI/ICOAN-NABCI.html](http://www.qc.ec.gc.ca/faune/ICOAN-NABCI/ICOAN-NABCI.html).

*Create a network of partners with common interests:* Quebec has created “The Flight,” a cooperative network for the conservation of the Province’s birds and their habitats to serve as an information exchange forum offering various participation options for citizens, municipalities, government, and non-governmental organizations.

The success of NABCI, and of biodiversity conservation in general, depends entirely on the active participation, enthusiasm, and dedication of all participants. Quebec is leading the way in Canada for NABCI implementation. Join The Flight! Contact Luc Bélanger, Manager, Migratory Birds Division, Canadian Wildlife Service, (418) 649-6300, [luc.belanger@ec.gc.ca](mailto:luc.belanger@ec.gc.ca).

## **PLJV Wraps up All-Bird Planning “World Tour”**

This spring, the Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) hosted two-day meetings in each of its six member states — Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas — from April 19 through May 26. The meetings brought together key state partners to discuss progress and concepts of all-bird planning and project implementation. More than 20 organizations

participated in the meetings including: state wildlife agencies, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams, Oklahoma Wildlife and Prairie Heritage Alliance, and Texas Prairie Rivers, among others.

During the meetings, the PLJV demonstrated a suite of new tools, including a Geographical Information System (GIS) and hierarchical database, to step-down national bird plan objectives to the state and local levels and “step-up” state and local habitat and species information. The PLJV also gave a status report on the work of its planning teams for waterfowl, shorebirds, waterbirds and landbirds, and reported on project tracking efforts. States and the PLJV also discussed ways to coordinate efforts between comprehensive wildlife conservation strategies and the Joint Venture’s all-bird planning, and how to increase capacity to deliver habitat projects. A more detailed update from the meetings will be available in the PLJV’s next Science Circular newsletter which will publish in mid-June. To get on the mailing list, email PLJV Communications Team Leader Debbie Slobe ([Debbie.slobe@pljv.org](mailto:Debbie.slobe@pljv.org)).



American Black Duck is a North American Waterfowl Management Plan High Priority Species as a result of population declines due to habitat loss and hybridization with the Mallard. Photo by Glen Smart

## **Central Valley Joint Venture Implementation Plan Updated**

California’s Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV) developed its first Implementation Plan (Plan) in 1990. The 1990 Plan focused heavily on meeting the needs of migratory and wintering waterfowl, with waterfowl objectives partially linked to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). The NAWMP was updated in 2003 with an emphasis on

“Strengthening of the Biological Foundations” of waterfowl conservation in North America. The NAWMP also recognizes the need for joint ventures to expand their conservation interests and partnerships to include multiple bird groups. Joint ventures serve as a model for partner-based conservation, so it was natural that integrated bird conservation should be incorporated into existing joint venture frameworks.

The 2004 CVJV Implementation Plan seeks to improve the biological foundation of waterfowl conservation in the Central Valley, and to develop conservation objectives for other important bird groups that rely upon Central Valley habitats. The CVJV has strengthened the biological foundation for migrating and wintering waterfowl by clearly linking waterfowl objectives for the CVJV to the NAWMP, and by identifying the landscape conditions needed to sustain waterfowl populations at NAWMP goals. This planning effort has resulted in objectives that incorporate both biological and socio-economic factors, and has benefited from efforts of joint venture partners to test key program assumptions over the past decade.

In addition to migrating and wintering waterfowl, conservation objectives were developed for five additional bird groups; 1) breeding waterfowl, 2) migrating and wintering shorebirds, 3) breeding shorebirds, 4) riparian dependant songbirds, and 5) waterbirds. Although additional information is still needed for these bird groups, the 2004 CVJV Update is a first step in developing sound conservation programs for these important bird groups in the Central Valley of California.

For more information, visit the CVJV’s web site <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvhjv/>

## **New Upper Miss/Great Lakes Joint Venture Science Coordinator**

The Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture announces the selection of Mr. Greg Soulliere for the position of Joint Venture Science Coordinator. This position will be located at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s East Lansing Field Office in East Lansing, Michigan.

Greg has 20-plus years experience in biology and research positions, most recently as the Wetland and Waterfowl Specialist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Greg has been Michigan's representative on the Joint Venture’s Management Board

for several years, and his expertise on waterfowl, wetland ecology, and wildlife management issues will serve the Joint Venture partners well as they begin building the scientific foundation for landscape bird conservation in this Joint Venture.

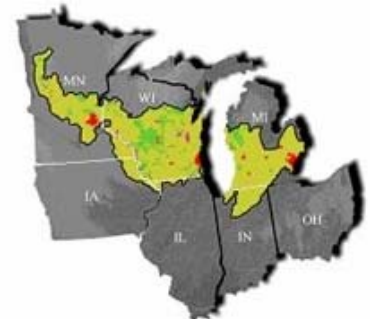
The Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture encompasses all or portions of ten states (including Kansas and Nebraska). This area includes the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie, BCR 22; Prairie Hardwood Transition, BCR 23; and Boreal Hardwood Transition, BCR 12. The mission of the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture is to deliver the full spectrum of bird conservation through regionally based, biologically driven, landscape-oriented partnerships. For more information, contact Barbara Pardo, Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture Coordinator [Barbara\\_Pardo@fws.gov](mailto:Barbara_Pardo@fws.gov). To find out more about joint ventures, visit <http://www.nabci-us.org/jvmap/dwt>

## **Tools of the Trade**

### **USGS Develops Models, Maps, and GIS Tools for Bird Conservation Planning**

Researchers of the U.S. Geological Survey are currently developing decision support tools to help resource managers engaged in bird conservation planning. As part of this project, they are identifying habitat associations for selected bird species over large areas such as states and ecoregions. The habitat models are based on North American Breeding Bird Survey data and describe the complex set of environmental conditions that support populations of a particular species.

Researchers created maps that depict where a species is likely to be found within a state or region and how many individuals are likely to be there.



Resource managers can use the models and maps to identify and prioritize habitats for future monitoring and conservation actions. For more information, see the project web site: [http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/terrestrial/migratory\\_birds/bird\\_conservation.html](http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/terrestrial/migratory_birds/bird_conservation.html)

As part of the same project, USGS researchers developed a set of desktop and internet geographic information system tools that can be applied at a variety of spatial scales. For example, an interactive internet mapping tool is available for the continental United States that allows you to visualize and download land use information and summarize North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data for Federal lands, counties, states, and other geographic divisions. This tool will be especially useful for state and regional bird conservation planners because you can view and summarize land cover and bird information for large or small geographic areas. For example, you can select a specific location and obtain a list of bird species observed on BBS routes adjacent to that location. A Help section provides step-by-step examples for novice geographic information system users: [http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/terrestrial/migratory\\_birds/bird\\_conservation\\_web\\_tools.html](http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/terrestrial/migratory_birds/bird_conservation_web_tools.html) For more information, contact Melinda Knutson, La Crosse, WI, 608-781-6339 [mknutson@usgs.gov](mailto:mknutson@usgs.gov)

## Adaptive Conservation Strategies Guide Now Available

In a world of diminishing natural resources, it is essential that efforts to conserve biodiversity and manage wildlife habitats be guided by the best available scientific knowledge. Science at its best uses experimental methods to constantly modify and improve the knowledge base; an adaptive conservation strategy is designed to respond to evolving information.

Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) Conservation Science (<http://www.prbo.org>) has been actively involved in developing adaptive conservation strategies through participation in the continental bird conservation plans of North America. PRBO research results over the years demonstrate the value of birds as ecosystem indicators. From restoring wetlands to managing fisheries, bird science provides insights to help assess and promote effective wildlife and habitat management—management that results in and supports fully functioning ecosystems to sustain the greatest diversity and abundance of birds and other wildlife.



The US Shorebird Conservation Plan ranks the Black Oystercatcher as a Species of High Conservation Concern. Photo by Barry Reswig

Thanks to a generous grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation as well as support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, PRBO now has available online the recently completed *Developing and Implementing an Adaptive Conservation Strategy: A guide for improving adaptive management and sharing the learning among conservation practitioners*. Visit our website under "Conservation Planning" to download a copy <http://www.prbo.org/cms/index.php?mid=284&module=browse>. The guide includes case studies of applied adaptive conservation planning in terrestrial, wetland, and ocean realms and pointers for practitioners with over 30 specific recommendations.



Conservation and restoration of riparian areas is critical to the success of the Bell's Vireo which Partners In Flight ranks as a Watchlist species in need of immediate action. Photo by Steve Maslowski