



# The All-Bird Bulletin

*Bird Habitat Conservation News and Information*

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*Advancing integrated bird conservation in North America*

## Colorado State Director Chairs U.S. NABCI Committee

After more than five years of leadership by Steve Williams, former Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), the U.S. NABCI Committee (Committee) welcomed Bruce McCloskey, Director of the Colorado Division of Wildlife, as Committee Chair at its August 2005 meeting. The Committee is excited to introduce McCloskey's leadership to its partners as it addresses critical national and international needs in bird habitat conservation. McCloskey is one of the Committee's newest members.

"As a director of a state fish and wildlife agency, I see a great need to coordinate many aspects of bird habitat conservation between neighboring states, at a regional level, and nationally," says McCloskey. "Many groups of birds share the same habitats and many other species of wildlife share those habitats with birds. As I accept the chairmanship, I look forward to working with my partners to further the Committee's bird conservation vision and goal and to bringing more partners to the table to support integrated bird conservation."

Since 1999, the U.S. NABCI Committee has been dedicated to helping partners across the continent meet their bird conservation objectives by working for increased resources to deliver programs and on-the-ground projects and by fostering greater coordination through partnerships that span geographic, taxonomic, and sociocultural divides. Furthermore, the Committee is striving to improve resources

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## NABCI Declaration Fully Signed as Mexican Joint Ventures Take Shape

This spring the highest level environmental secretaries and minister of the United States, Mexico, and Canada signed the *NABCI Declaration of Intent for the Conservation of North America's Birds and Their Habitats*, endorsing its 12 broad objectives for trilateral cooperation on bird conservation. For more information and to download a copy of the Declaration visit <http://www.nabci-us.org/newsdoi.html>.

To implement the Declaration's 12 objectives, the three NABCI national coordinators, Debbie Hahn of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in the U.S., Silke Neve of the Canadian Wildlife Service, and Humberto Berlanga of CONABIO in Mexico, continue their work on a long-term action plan based upon six goals to: build and sustain regional alliances in Mexico, secure sustainable funding for critical habitat projects, develop needed decision support tools, strategically engage other countries, secure the commitment of other partners, and prioritize marine

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and partnerships by fostering an integrated approach to bird conservation based on sound science, effective management, and resource efficiency.

Over the last year, the Committee has taken a more active role in bird habitat conservation with an increased focus on a few key issues. At its January 2005 meeting, the Committee laid out three-to-five year visions for important components of bird conservation. Based on those, the Committee chose four priorities to focus its Action Plan for 2005. They include to:

*“...an integrated approach to bird conservation...is based on sound science, effective management, and resource efficiency.”*

- Improve bird monitoring and increase the coordination and integration of monitoring programs;
- Advance the application of the science of conservation design to benefit bird conservation at a landscape scale;
- Institutionalize bird conservation in state and federal agencies’ natural resource management; and
- Promote international bird conservation.

For more information, visit <http://www.nabci-us.org/actionpln.html>.

To help meet its new objectives, the Committee appointed Debbie Hahn, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ (IAFWA) Migratory Bird Coordinator, to serve as the new U.S. NABCI Coordinator. Though taking on added responsibilities, Hahn is no stranger to the Committee where she has been providing IAFWA staff support for two years. Hahn follows in the footsteps of Bob Ford of the Service and David Pashley of the American Bird Conservancy, exemplifying the truly cooperative nature of this federal-state-private partnership initiative. The Committee thanks Steve Williams and Bob Ford who provided skilled guidance during their tenures.



The Rufous Hummingbird, a Partners In Flight Watchlist species, breeds in forest edges and clearings and brushy second growth in the Pacific northwest and winters mostly in pine-oak woods in Mexico. /D.E. Biggins, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Committee looks forward to working with you, our partners, to advance the vision of integrated bird conservation in North America. For more information on the U.S. NABCI Committee, visit <http://www.nabci-us.org/nabci.html>.

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ecosystem issues. The coordinators consider capacity building and project development two of the most important activities and thus have focused on helping Mexican regional alliances take shape.

The coordinators are working closely with Mexican partners who have made significant progress in developing a joint venture for Marismas Nacionales (Nayarit and Sinaloa) with the help of a grant from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and other funding. Partners have held local and regional meetings, designated the first members of a management board, agreed to short and long-term objectives for the partnership, and are close to hiring a coordinator who will be responsible for facilitating project and partner development. Partners in Yucatan, Janos, and Chiapas are also making strides at developing joint ventures in their regions.

On a related note, President Bush, Mexican President Fox, and Canadian Prime Minister Martin met in late August to discuss the highest priority issues for continental cooperation under the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). Topics of discussion ranged from energy to immigration to the environment. The June 2005 SPP report included the NABCI Declaration of Intent as the only accomplished item in the report’s environmental section.

## 'Neotrop' Program Opens 2006 Season

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to announce its 2006 request for proposals under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. The Act establishes a matching grants program to fund projects that promote the conservation of these birds in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Projects may include activities to benefit bird populations and their habitats, research and monitoring, law enforcement, and outreach and education. All grant requests must be matched by partner funds at least 3:1. Partner funds from a U.S. federal source may be involved in the project, but are not eligible as match. Congress appropriated \$4 million for the grants program in Fiscal Year 2006.

Please visit <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov> and click on *Neotropical Birds Grants Program* for additional information and application materials. The Service must receive your proposal electronically by **December 1, 2005**. Please pass this message on to colleagues, especially those in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## California Current Joint Venture in the Works

The value the joint venture or 'JV' has been widely discussed among bird conservation circles and some forward-thinking sectors of the community have posited the vision of a sea-based JV. The Point Reyes Bird Observatory recently took on this challenge and is currently facilitating the launch of a California Current Joint Venture (CCJV).

The CCJV will be a voluntary, non-regulatory, science-based partnership to support sustainable management and conservation of the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem, modeled after the successful bird habitat joint ventures. PRBO is seeking a senior level marine policy specialist to coordinate the CCJV. For more information on PRBO and this position, visit <http://www.prbo.org/>. To apply, e-mail (1) cover letter, (2) CV/resume, and (3) 5 references to Brenna Langabeer Schlagenhauf ([blangabeer@prbo.org](mailto:blangabeer@prbo.org)) with "Search Committee-CCJV" in the subject line by October 21, 2005.

PRBO Conservation Science has paved the way for the JV by announcing the publication of the California Current Marine Bird Conservation Plan available at <http://www.prbo.org/>. The CCJV's overarching goal will be to implement this ecosystem-level plan that defines a conservation agenda for the California Current System (CCS), focusing on top predators, including but not limited to seabirds, and their prey. PRBO's vision is to create a consortium that will collaboratively identify, prioritize, and implement priority marine conservation and management goals. One of those goals is to identify and protect productive food web hotspots that support top predator populations, such as seabirds, marine mammals, marine turtles, and large fish.

The CCS is a vast oceanic domain, spanning from British Columbia to the northern portion of Baja California, characterized by intense upwelling and associated high ocean productivity. The CCS supports habitat, breeding areas, nurseries, and key feeding grounds for a great diversity of invertebrates, fish, marine birds, and marine mammals. Yet, these resources are under siege, as evidenced by the effects of overfishing, non-target bycatch, habitat destruction caused by irresponsible fishing methods and gear, and marine pollution. Many scientists believe that degradation of CCS marine habitats and disruption of the CCS food web will have impacts far beyond the boundaries of the ecosystem itself.

*"The California Current System supports habitat, breeding areas, nurseries, and key feeding grounds for a great diversity of invertebrates, fish, marine birds, and marine mammals."*



The Arctic Tern is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Bird of Conservation Concern that breeds on coasts and tundra from New England, Washington, and Britain north to the northernmost limits of land and spends the rest of the year at sea. / T. Bowman

## Texas Hires Rio Grande Joint Venture Coordinator

*“The Rio Grande Joint Venture is the newest of 18 bird habitat joint ventures in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.”*

In September 2005, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) hired Mary Gustafson as the new Rio Grande Joint Venture (RGJV) Coordinator. The RGJV is the newest of 18 bird habitat joint ventures that use partnerships and the science of biological planning and conservation design to protect and conserve habitat for birds in specific regional landscapes in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. Gustafson ([mary.gustafson@tpwd.state.tx.us](mailto:mary.gustafson@tpwd.state.tx.us)) came to the TPWD and RGJV after 12 years as a Wildlife Biologist in the Bird Banding Laboratory of the U.S. Geological Survey in Laurel, Maryland. Mary has participated for many years in monitoring surveys including the Mapping Avian Productivity and Survivorship Program and the Breeding Bird Survey.

The Rio Grande Joint Venture area will initially incorporate the Texas portions of Bird Conservation Region (BCR) 35, the Chihuahuan Desert, and BCR 36, the Tamaulipan Brushlands, with the exception of Texas' coastal areas which fall under the Gulf Coast Joint Venture (visit <http://www.nabci-us.org/map.html>). Gustafson will be working in the U.S. to identify and engage partners and prepare an implementation plan. Eventually she will work with partners in Mexico to collaboratively develop a truly binational joint venture. Other binational bird habitat joint ventures include the Sonoran and Pacific Coast Joint Ventures.



The Black-bellied Whistling Duck is found mostly near the Mexican border and breeds in shallow freshwater lakes surrounded by trees or in open country./B. Stratton, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Tamaulipan Brushlands is a wide plain that extends from southern Texas into northeastern Mexico. Grazing has converted much of the grassland, savanna, and thorn-scrub habitats to a less suitable shrubby condition. Botteri's Sparrow, White-tailed Hawk, wintering Whooping Crane, and LeConte's Sparrow are all high priority species of the grassland habitats. Wetlands provide habitat for Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and a great variety of wading and shorebirds, as well as several wintering waterfowl species.

The Chihuahuan Desert's arid grasslands and shrublands cover broad basins, while higher elevation oak-juniper woodlands and conifers occur in numerous isolated mesas and mountains. The area supports a host of important bird species including Burrowing Owl, Golden and Bald Eagles, Peregrine and Prairie Falcons, Scaled Quail, Lucy's Warbler, Mountain Plover, and Lucifer's Hummingbird, as well as Bell's Vireo along some riparian zones and Black-capped Vireo in the montane scrub community.

## Northern Great Plains Joint Venture Hires Science Coordinator

This past summer, the Northern Great Plains Joint Venture (NGPJV) hired Duane Pool as Science Coordinator. Greg Link, President of the NGPJV's management board and Steve Dyke, Non-game Leader with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, introduced Pool at the agency's state-wide staff meeting in August 2005. Duane's first task will be to complete a final draft of the NGPJV's implementation plan. He currently serves as Affiliate Faculty at Colorado State University, where he received his Ph.D. in the Department of Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Stewardship. For eight years, he served in various positions in Ducks Unlimited, Inc. including Manager of GIS/RS and Landscape Ecologist.

As Science Coordinator, Pool will support state agency and joint venture staff in planning, monitoring, and evaluating bird conservation projects and programs associated with the State's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, and the bird initiatives' conservation

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*The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) is a coalition of organizations and initiatives dedicated to advancing integrated bird conservation in North America.*

*The vision of NABCI is to see populations and habitats of North America's birds protected, restored, and enhanced through coordinated efforts at international, national, regional, state, and local levels, guided by sound science and effective management.*

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

*The All-Bird Bulletin is a news and information-sharing publication for participants of NABCI.*

*For subscription or submission inquiries, contact the Editor, Roxanne Bogart, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 802-872-0629 ext. 25 or [Roxanne\\_Bogart@fws.gov](mailto:Roxanne_Bogart@fws.gov). To download back issues, visit [nabci-us.org/news.html](http://nabci-us.org/news.html).*

*The All-Bird Bulletin publishes news updates and information on infrastructure, planning, science, funding, and other advancements in the field of integrated bird conservation and management. Include author's name, organization, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Pictures are welcome but not necessary.*

### Science Coordinator, *from page 4*

plans for waterfowl, landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds. His responsibilities include collaborating with public and private conservation organizations to develop geographic information system (GIS) databases and biological analyses ([dpool@state.nd.us](mailto:dpool@state.nd.us)).

The area under Pool's purview is the North Dakota portion of the joint venture and Badlands and Prairies Bird Conservation Region (BCR 17, see <http://www.nabci-us.org/map.html>). This semi-arid rolling plain is dominated by a mixed-grass prairie that lies west and south of the glaciated Prairie Pothole region, east of the Rocky Mountains, and north of the true shortgrass prairie. Due largely due to the continued dominance of ranching, many contiguous grassland tracts of significant size provide habitat for some of the healthiest populations of high priority dry-grassland birds on the continent, such as Mountain Plover, McCown's Longspur, and Long-billed Curlew.

## WANTED: Playa Buffer Research Cooperators

Sedimentation is a major threat to playas situated in croplands. The Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) has a long history of promoting and funding projects to protect these playas by establishing grass buffers. Many playas also have been buffered through Farm Bill programs such as CRP. Buffers are assumed to adequately protect playas from sedimentation but have not been formally studied. Some observers report that buffers may greatly reduce the volume of runoff water reaching playas, reducing their value to wetland birds. Given this incomplete understanding of the ecological values of playa buffers, the PLJV seeks to develop a research partnership to address this issue as well as potential funders.

Researchers seeking funding for a playa buffer study are encouraged to apply for a PLJV ConocoPhillips grant (visit [http://www.pljv.org/CP\\_RFP.html](http://www.pljv.org/CP_RFP.html)). These funds are available through a competitive granting process and extra incentive funding is available for playa buffers (visit <http://www.pljv.org/projects/PlayaBuffers050915.rtf>). To provide partners with background information on this topic, the PLJV cooperated with U.S. Geological Survey scientists Cynthia Melcher and Susan Skagen to produce a literature synthesis and annotated bibliography on playa buffers. These publications can be downloaded from the USGS website or requested from PLJV staff (visit <http://www.fort.usgs.gov/staff/staffprofile.asp?StaffID=129>).

## Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Posts New Website

The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture was established in 1987 as one of the original six priority habitat joint ventures under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. This ambitious joint venture was one of the first to expand its wetland and grassland habitat conservation efforts for waterfowl to help sustain populations of priority shorebirds, waterbirds, and landbirds as well.

The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture has served as a model for successful bird conservation partnerships. Last month, the PPJV unveiled its new website. It's worth a look: <http://www.ppjv.org/>.