



The All-Bird Bulletin

Bird Conservation News and Information

November 2002

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.

To receive a copy of The All-Bird Bulletin, contact the editor Roxanne_Bogart@fws.gov.
To download back issues, visit <http://www.nabci-us.org/news.html>

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

What is “All-Bird” Conservation?

It is increasingly common to hear the phrase “all-bird conservation,” but what exactly does it mean? Most often, “all-bird conservation” is used to sum up the North American Bird Conservation Initiative’s (NABCI) vision of having *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*. It also is another way of stating the NABCI goal of *delivering the full-spectrum of bird conservation through regionally based, biologically driven, landscape-oriented partnerships*. No wonder people use the short version!

But references to “all-bird conservation” or “all-bird projects” may lead one to lose sight of the true meaning of integrated bird conservation. A founding principle of NABCI is to use the best available scientific information to define conservation needs and strategies. Often referred to as “biological foundation,” this information reflects our understanding of the biological needs of each species and how birds interact with other species and habitats to meet those needs. This information is species-specific and should be the basis for population and habitat objectives of bird conservation plans and the conservation actions that result.

Only by conducting a biological planning process for each species can we determine their individual needs, and then integrate those needs into comprehensive habitat objectives for all species of concern. The planning process should result in a landscape design for each Bird Conservation Region— one that describes, at chosen geospatial levels, the desired future conditions and actions necessary to perpetuate all bird populations of interest. The landscape design, and actions to achieve it, should be developed in consultation with agencies, organizations, and other interests that will be involved with its implementation. Products of this process should include discrete habitat objectives stepped down through multiple scales to include recommendations appropriate for individual management areas, refuges, forest units, private lands programs, and other specific domains and programs. While there is often overlap of habitat needs and benefits among bird species and groups, only by identifying and quantifying the needs for each species can we identify a suite of conservation actions that will protect and restore all bird populations of concern.

So don’t just think of NABCI as being about “all-bird” conservation, but about *conserving all birds*.
– Seth Mott and Bob Ford, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Arlington, Virginia

State All-Bird Conservation Workshops

State fish and wildlife agencies continue to sponsor state-wide and region-wide all-bird conservation workshops to foster better communication and coordination among local conservation groups. In nine workshops held over the past year, biologists, planners, and managers from state, federal, and private organizations have compared notes, huddled over maps, and created new partnerships to deliver more effective conservation projects on the ground.

In early December, more than 60 people representing bird conservation interests in five northeastern states and four Canadian provinces will meet in Rockland, Maine to address issues related to the Atlantic Northern Forest Bird Conservation Region (BCR 14). Co-hosted by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, this three-day workshop will include discussions of regional conservation priorities from each major bird conservation initiative and the development of strategies to meet priority conservation needs.

For more information on state all-bird conservation workshops, contact Rick Kearney, IAFWA Migratory Bird Coordinator, 202- 624-8917, rkearney@sso.org.

Trinational NABCI Projects

At the second trinational NABCI meeting in Querétaro, Mexico, in February 2001, participants agreed to assist local partners in developing trinational projects to catalyze more coordinated actions within the North American bird conservation community. One important goal of these projects is to assist with the development of capacity to deliver integrated bird conservation in Mexico.

Mexico has identified six “hub” sites to serve as linkage points to Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) or joint ventures in the United States and Canada: Chamela, Marismas Nacionales, El Cielo, El Triunfo, Chihuahuan grasslands, and northeast Yucatan. Workshops, being scheduled for each of these sites, will provide opportunities for Mexican partners to meet with representatives of linked BCRs in the two northern countries.

The first of these workshops was scheduled for the complex of Yucatan sites, including Si'an Kaan, Cozumel, and Ria Lagartos, on November 18-20, 2002. Upcoming 2003 workshops are tentatively planned for El Triunfo in January, the Chihuahuan grasslands, centered around Janos, in February, and Marismas Nacionales in March. For more information, contact David Pashley, US NABCI Coordinator, 540-253-5780, dpashley@abcbirds.org or contact Humberto Berlanga, Mexican NABCI Coordinator, hberlang@xolo.conabio.gob.mx.

Director's Order on Joint Venture Administration

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Director's Order (DO) Number 146 was signed and published in September 2002. The DO sets policy and guidance for the establishment and organization of joint ventures receiving administrative funding from the FWS. The Order was necessary because existing policy in the FWS Manual had become outdated over the last several years with the development of multiple national and international bird conservation initiatives and the expanding number and scope of joint ventures to include species other than waterfowl.

The DO defines joint ventures, describes the process and criteria for joint venture establishment, and outlines how the Service will financially support joint venture coordination. A signed copy of the DO can be obtained at <http://policy.fws.gov/do146.pdf>. For more information, contact Seth Mott, FWS Joint Venture Liaison, seth_mott@fws.gov, or Bob Ford, FWS NABCI Coordinator, Robert_P_Ford@fws.gov, 703-358-1784.

Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative

The Southeast Quail Study Group (SEQSG), a partnership of over 100 wildlife professionals from state and federal agencies, universities, and private organizations, was formed in 1995 to address the conservation and management needs of the Northern Bobwhite. This species has endured a decline of more than 65 percent over the last 20 years throughout its range.

In March 2002, the SEQSG prepared the first-ever landscape-scale habitat restoration and population recovery plan for the Northern Bobwhite in the United States. The plan, entitled the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI), is based on the Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) described by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative and, thus, is designed to facilitate integration and collaboration with other species conservation plans, such as Partners In Flight and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The plan defines, both by BCR and state, the habitat acres needed to return bobwhite populations to 1980 levels.

Conditions that benefit quail also benefit a suite of other birds that have experienced population declines. Some quail habitat management practices can benefit Bell's Vireo, Orchard Oriole, Painted Bunting, Loggerhead Shrike, Sedge Wren, Grasshopper Sparrow, Dickcissel, and Henslow's Sparrow. For more information, contact your state wildlife agencies' NBCI Coordinator or Reggie Thackston, SEQSG Chair, Georgia DNR, 478-994-7583, reggie@mylink.net, or visit <http://www.qu.org/seqsg/nbci/nbci.cfm>.

2003 Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Program

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) establishes a matching grants program to fund projects that promote the conservation of these birds in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Application materials for the 2003 grants program are now available from the US Fish and Wildlife Service at <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov>. Grant proposals for 2003 must be sent by January 31, 2003.

Project proposals need to demonstrate how a conservation partnership's activities will foster sustainable, effective, long-term programs to conserve neotropical migratory birds. The Act defines conservation as:

- protection and management of neotropical migratory bird populations;
- maintenance, management, protection, and restoration of habitats of these birds;
- research and monitoring;
- law enforcement; and
- community outreach and education.

For 2002, the Service selected 32 projects to receive grants under the Act. More than \$2.9M has been awarded to organizations working in 26 countries and 17 US states. Nine of the projects are multi-national in scope. All grant requests are matched by non-Federal funds at least 3:1. For more information, contact Doug Ryan or Bob Ford, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 703-358-1784 or e-mail neotropical@fws.gov.

US Congress Reauthorizes NAWCA

On November 15, 2002, as its last piece of legislative business in the 107th Congress, the US House of Representatives passed H.R. 3908, reauthorizing the North American Wetland Conservation Act. In addition to several program changes, the legislation includes \$5 million annual increases in the authorization level, from \$55 million in fiscal year 2003 to \$75 million in fiscal year 2007. For more information, contact the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, 703-358-1784, or link to <http://thomas.loc.gov> to see a copy of the legislation.

Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Waterbird Conservation for the Americas, official name for the waterbird initiative, a partnership of public agencies and private organizations and individuals, has published its continental plan to advance the conservation of waterbirds and their habitats in North America.

Version 1 of the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan emphasizes seabirds and other colonial-nesting waterbirds, and concentrates on the northern portions of its geographic scope. Version 2, due out 2004, will include more guidance on conservation of non-colonial waterbirds and more details on the needs and priorities of various regions within the overall Plan area, especially the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America.

The plan provides an overarching continental framework and guide for conserving waterbirds and sets forth goals and priorities for waterbirds in all habitats from the Canadian Arctic to Panama, from Bermuda through the US Pacific Islands, at nesting sites, during annual migrations, and during nonbreeding periods. It advocates continent-wide monitoring; provides an impetus for regional conservation planning; proposes national, state, provincial and other local conservation planning and action; and gives a larger context for local habitat protection. Taken together, it is hoped that these activities will assure healthy populations and habitats for the waterbirds of the Americas.

To request a copy, contact the US Fish and Wildlife Service National Publications Unit, 304-876-7203. In the US, call toll-free 1-800-344-WILD, e-mail Waterbirds@fws.gov or visit <http://www.waterbirdconservation.org>

New Shorebird Conservation Plan Link

The United States Shorebird Conservation Plan web site can now be found at <http://shorebirdplan.fws.gov>. Visit the site to learn more about the plan, the plan's council, regional shorebird plans, and related shorebird programs. For more information, contact Brad Andres, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Shorebird Plan Coordinator, 703-358-1714 or brad_andres@fws.gov.

Visit the US NABCI Web Site

The US NABCI web site went live in April 2002 and is dedicated to advancing and promoting integrated bird conservation in the United States. Visit the site at <http://www.nabci-us.org> to find out more about NABCI and integrated bird conservation and to access tools and resources, such as a Bird Conservation Regions map hot-linked to regional descriptions, a downloadable NABCI fact sheet and PowerPoint presentation, as well as the current and future issues of *The All-Bird Bulletin*.