



The All-Bird Bulletin

Bird Conservation News and Information

December 2003

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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The All-Bird Bulletin is a news and information-sharing publication of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. To receive The All-Bird Bulletin, contact Roxanne_Bogart@fws.gov.

Contributions of 200 words or less are welcome. Contact the editor, Roxanne_Bogart@fws.gov. The deadline for the next issue is January 31, 2004.

A Bird's Eye View from the Editor

All across the continent integrated bird conservation is gathering momentum. Evidence is everywhere and at every scale — whether it's a national workshop for conservation objective-setting in Texas, a state all-bird symposium in Nebraska, or a regional conservation status assessment workshop in northwestern Mexico. But it doesn't stop there. A group of scientists have begun to develop a coordinated bird monitoring program for the United States and Canada. And it is no surprise that many reviewers of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Strategic Plan wanted to see even greater recognition and commitment to integrated bird conservation.

As we all know, integrated bird conservation is about finding common ground amid the vast and varied interests and agendas within the bird conservation community. When we discover shared approaches or mutual goals, we can use our collective force to work effectively and efficiently toward the ultimate common good: habitats for birds.

Most importantly, integrated bird conservation is about taking a "bird's eye view." It's about looking beyond programmatic and organizational perspectives to take a comprehensive biological view of bird conservation needs on the landscape. It's about using information on the ecological needs of all species of interest to plan, design, and set comprehensive goals and objectives for landscapes that straddle state, provincial, even national borders. Organizations can then jointly define their respective roles in meeting these objectives at regional, state, and local scales. The universal language of science provides the necessary knowledge to underpin and guide these conservation actions, as well as foster healthy debates.

The road to integrated bird conservation is not without its share of hurdles. People engaged in this effort face a host of scientific, managerial, and logistical challenges and complexities. The broad scope of integrated bird conservation requires working across taxonomic interests, geopolitical boundaries, organizational divides, and socio-political domains. Indeed, this is no small or simple task.

As expected, integrated bird conservation is happening in different ways in different places. The All-Bird Bulletin now includes a section called *Notes from the Field* that highlights progress in these various regional, state, and local places. It includes events and progress involving infrastructure, science, planning, and funding.

What other kinds of information would *you* like to see included in The All-Bird Bulletin? Please let us know. We want to hear from you!

NABCI Nurtures Science Support for Bird Conservation

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative's Monitoring Subcommittee and its Federal Agency Subcommittee are working together to develop estimates for the technical and financial resources needed to adequately monitor all bird populations. This information will be provided to the NABCI Committee to gain support for increased and improved monitoring for all birds. This work is part of an effort to develop and carry out a coordinated bird monitoring plan for Canada and the United States to improve coordination among bird monitoring programs and insure that results can be combined across regions. For more information, contact Bob Ford, US NABCI Coordinator, Robert_P_Ford@fws.gov

At its August 2003 meeting in Arlington, Virginia, the Committee endorsed the formation of a Research Working Group to strengthen its ties to the academic community and to promote management-driven research that will benefit bird conservation. For more information, contact Ellen Paul, Executive Director, Ornithological Council, epaul@concentric.net

Migratory Bird Strategic Plan Receives More than 200 Comments

In August the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began a two-month, web-based partner consultation to solicit comments on its draft Migratory Bird Strategic Plan. The comment period, which closed on October 10, 2003, drew responses from more than 200 people and organizations from across the bird conservation spectrum. Twenty-nine percent of the comments were from non-governmental organizations, 25 percent from private citizens, 15 percent from state agencies, 12 percent from other federal agencies, 11 percent from Fish and Wildlife Service employees, and 3 percent from academia.

The overwhelming majority of the responses were appreciative and supportive of the Plan's vision and strategy although many found the broad ten-year Plan lacking in specifics. Commenters stressed the importance of partnerships, sound science as an operating principle, integrated bird management, and the need for more and improved research and monitoring.

The Service will take these comments into consideration as it drafts the final version of the Plan, due in Spring 2004. The Service will hold a Migratory Bird Forum in January 2004, to work with partners to resolve outstanding issues and develop priorities for plan implementation. For more information, call the Service at 703-358-1784 or visit <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/mbstratplan/mbstratplan.htm> to download a copy of the draft plan.

\$4 Million for 'Neotrop' Program in 2004

In October 2003, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced its Request for Proposals for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act's 2004 program. The "Neotrop" matching grants program funds projects that promote the conservation of neotropical migratory birds in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Congress appropriated \$4 million for the 2004 program — a \$1 million increase over last year's level — 75 percent of which will support work outside the United States. Applicants must be able to match with \$3 every dollar being requested. The deadline for project proposals is January 16, 2004.

Need Project Funding?

For information on additional grant programs, visit the NABCI web site: <http://www.nabci-us.org/funding.html>

For more information and to download an application visit http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NMBCA/eng_neo.htm. If you have specific questions, contact the Service's Division of Bird Habitat Conservation at 703-358-1784 or neotropical@fws.gov.

Partners In Flight to Complete Continental Plan

The first version of the North American Landbird Conservation Plan, due for completion at the end of 2003, presents population levels and a continental threat assessment of 448 native landbirds that breed in the United States and Canada. It sets forth 195 birds of continental importance within two categories: Watchlist species — those with a high continental threat assessment, and Stewardship species — those species which, if appropriately planned for within the core of their ranges along with Watchlist species, should provide appropriate conservation for all landbirds on the continent. For each species of continental importance the plan presents required conservation actions, monitoring needs, population objectives, and habitat recommendations for seven avifaunal biomes representing clusters of bird conservation regions that share similar avifauna.

While not included in the written plan, the committee has developed estimates of bird populations by bird conservation region within each state and territory across the U.S. and Canada. This information, along with examples of step-down processes, will be provided at a bird population objectives workshop in January 2004 (see below). IAFWA is currently pursuing a contract to provide states with landbird population estimates and objectives by state. Those interested in receiving the final draft plan can contact National Partners In Flight Coordinator, Terry_Rich@fws.gov.

Landbird Objectives Workshop Expanded to All-Bird

Partners In Flight announced that its Population Objectives Step-down Workshop scheduled February 4-6, 2004 in Port Aransas, Texas, will now provide an exciting opportunity for conservation planners to discuss challenges and advances associated with setting measurable population objectives for the full range of bird species of conservation or management interest. The Workshop will be co-chaired by representatives of the other bird conservation initiatives, all of which recognize the value of quantifiable biological objectives to management and communication.

Workshop organizers are re-working the agenda to allow participants to discuss objective-setting in a broad context (i.e., fundamental principles, common questions), as well as to share and compare operational and practical approaches being tried in different parts of the country for various species of interest. The workshop is designed for people who need measurable objectives to inform conservation decisions, such as representatives of state and provincial wildlife agencies, joint ventures, bird conservation regions, federal agencies, Important Bird Area programs, and other non-governmental organizations.

A detailed agenda will be distributed before Christmas. Contact Terry Rich, National PIF Coordinator, terry_rich@fws.gov for further information or to make suggestions. Registration forms should be returned to Laurel Moore (lamoore@fs.fed.us) by January 6, 2004.

Important Bird Areas Guide Now Available

Between now and December 24, 2003, *The American Bird Conservancy Guide to the 500 Most Important Bird Areas in the United States* will be available at a discounted price from ABC's new online store at <http://shop.abcbirds.org/> where a portion of all sales proceeds goes to support their conservation mission.

This new book describes the top sites for birds and bird conservation in all 50 states, and provides key information to birdwatchers who want to visit them. The book is the culmination of six years of research by ABC scientists working in collaboration with hundreds of biologists across the country. Complete with color illustrations, maps, and a comprehensive index, it is the perfect companion to all bird field guides and a must have for any bird enthusiast's collection.



Notes from the Field

News from the Sonoran Joint Venture

The Sonoran Joint Venture (SJV) in association with CONABIO, NABCI, Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, UNAM, Pronatura Sinaloa, and others, is sponsoring a workshop in Culiacan, Sinaloa, to evaluate the conservation status of bird species in northwestern Mexico using the Partners In Flight species assessment model. This is the third in a series of four workshops, each held in a different part of Mexico. This assessment model will strengthen Mexico's long-term capacity to achieve conservation of neotropical migrant and resident birds and their habitats. Information generated in these workshops will form the basis of Mexico's bird monitoring strategy. The Culiacan meeting will be held in March 2004. For more details contact Carol Beardmore, SJV Science Coordinator at Carol_Beardmore@fws.gov or 602-242-0524, ext. 248.

The Sonoran Joint Venture welcomes Jennie Duberstein as its new Education and Outreach Coordinator. Jennie comes to the SJV with diverse skills and experiences in bird conservation and environmental education. For the past several years she has worked to develop and implement community-based conservation projects in the U.S.-Mexico border region and in northern Sonora. Most recently, she is co-founder of Proyecto Corredor Colibrí, a binational, collaborative project that works with communities in northern Mexico in natural and cultural resource conservation. You can contact Jennie at jennie_duberstein@fws.gov or 520-882-0837.

State All-Bird Workshops Continue

Since 2001, all-bird workshops have been held throughout the country. These workshops, aimed at state wildlife biologists, land managers, and their bird conservation partners throughout the United States, provide an orientation to each of the bird conservation plans and encourage the formation of regionally based all-bird conservation teams. The workshops have become integrated with the state comprehensive wildlife planning process.

Past State All-Bird Workshops

State	Dates	Workshop Focus / Highlights
Alaska	March 5, 2002	State-level
Arkansas	Feb 27-Mar 1, 2002	Central Hardwoods BCR
Colorado	Feb 25-26, 2002	State-level
Iowa	Oct 9-11, 2001	Eastern Tallgrass Prairie BCR
Tennessee	Feb 5-7, 2002	TN / AL portion of Central Hardwoods BCR
Kentucky	May 29-30, 2002	KY / IN / IL portion of Central Hardwoods BCR
Texas	July 9-11, 2002	State-level
Arizona	September 4-5, 2002	State-level
Indiana	September 4-6, 2002	Eastern Tallgrass Prairie BCR-level
Maine	December 3-5, 2002	Atlantic Northern Forest BCR-level
Wisconsin	February 4-6, 2003	State-level
Kansas	March 4-5 2003	State-level
Nebraska	March 12-13, 2003	State-level
Virginia	March 12-14, 2003	BCR 28- Appalachian Mtn (with NE & SE PIF, ACJV)
Idaho	March 18-20, 2003	BCR 9- Great Basin
Montana	August 20-21, 2003	Multi-state; MT and WY
Minnesota	October 1-2, 2003	State-level
Michigan	October 22-24, 2003	State-level
Nebraska	October 28, 2003	State-level; follow-up to previous workshop

A state fish and wildlife agency has hosted each workshop and has employed either a statewide or a regional (bird conservation region) approach. In the statewide approach, participants receive presentations from representatives of the various bird conservation initiatives and then break out into smaller groups to focus on resolving issues specific to the host state. In the Bird Conservation Region (BCR) approach, participants from several states meet at a central location to receive presentations on the bird conservation initiatives and their plans and then work on regional issues, often involving multiple states. To date, 19 all-bird conservation workshops have taken place, involving more than 1,200 participants. More workshops are planned for 2004 including Virginia, California, Maryland, Mississippi, Ohio, and BCR 30-New England/Mid-Atlantic Coast. For more information, contact Debbie Hahn, Migratory Bird Coordinator, IAFWA, at dhahn@ssso.org.

Nebraska All-Bird Partnership Holds Symposium

The Nebraska Partnership for All-Bird Conservation (NPABC) sponsored a Fall Symposium on October 28, 2003, entitled *Grassland Birds: Their Biology and Conservation in a Modern Landscape*. The symposium was attended by nearly 100 people from a wide assortment of organizations including federal and state governments, natural resources districts, non-governmental organizations, university students and professors, and citizens.

Presenters from Nebraska and the Central Plain states provided information on grassland bird habitats, habitat management, predation, grassland ecology, and habitat fragmentation. The NPABC Steering Committee also met to hear reports from workgroups on developing the biological foundation for integrated bird conservation and setting the stage for locally-led habitat conservation initiatives working throughout the State. The Science Advisory Workgroup has made substantial progress in developing a species priority list for Nebraska birds. The Conservation Workgroup has begun cataloging the various bird habitats and will develop a matrix that associates birds with habitat. The Steering Committee has endorsed a strategic plan outline to guide local initiatives through action plan development. A half-dozen habitat initiatives are developing in focus areas within the state to address bird habitat needs.

A March NPABC Symposium is being planned which will focus on the social science aspects of forming local partnerships. Consultants who specialize in guiding large diverse groups through strategic planning processes will be invited to discuss and compare their planning techniques and tools. Visit <http://www.nebraskabirds.org> for more information or contact Steve Moran, Coordinator, Rainwater Basin Joint Venture, at (308)382-8112.

Playa Lakes Joint Venture Expands Its Toolbox

The Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) is committed to conserving habitat for all birds within its six-state boundary, and is creating unique tools to get the job done. Among these tools are the Species for Management Action (SMA) Database and PLJV Geographic Information System (GIS). The SMA Database is an integrated clearing house of information on birds that occur in the PLJV region. It includes data from national and continental bird plans and regional literature and experts, and identifies specific management actions appropriate for each species. The PLJV has also completed the first phase of a new GIS that identifies wetlands and other habitats in the region. The GIS will be made available to partners who will be able to use it to identify, categorize and prioritize areas of special significance to the Joint Venture's conservation mission and track projects on a spatially-explicit level.

The SMA Database and GIS are only two of many unique tools and processes the PLJV is developing for all-bird conservation planning. Find out more on the PLJV's new online science section at <http://www.pljv.org/conservation01.html>. The PLJV is also launching a new electronic publication, the Science Circular, intended for resource managers, technicians and biologists involved or interested in PLJV biological planning. To subscribe, send an email to ScienceCircular@pljv.org.

