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U.S. NABCI Committee
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*Advancing
integrated bird conservation
in North America*

THE NORTH AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

U.S. NABCI Committee Action Plan Update – September 2005

The U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) Committee (Committee) has some exciting news to share. To complement the great strides partners are making in furthering all-bird conservation, the Committee itself is strengthening its commitment and focus and taking on an active leadership role.

NABCI is dedicated to helping partners across the continent meet their common bird conservation objectives by ensuring that organizations have the capacity to support and deliver integrated bird conservation on-the-ground, while at the same time fostering increased cooperation and collaboration through partnerships that span geographic, taxonomic, and sociocultural divides. To realize NABCI's ambitious goal, the Committee defined three-to-five year visions for critical components of bird conservation. Based on those, the Committee chose four priorities to focus its Action Plan for 2005. They include:

- Advancing bird monitoring,
- Advancing the science of conservation design,
- Increasing institutional support for bird conservation within state and federal agencies, and
- Promoting international conservation.

Bird Monitoring

The objectives of the U.S. NABCI Monitoring Subcommittee are to help establish priorities for allocation of resources, provide useful information and tools for management decisions, evaluate the effects of management actions, and help increase our ecological knowledge for the conservation of birds.

The Subcommittee meets September 28-30, 2005 to continue the development of a monitoring report to strengthen federal, state, private, and international collaboration for effective monitoring of bird populations and pertinent environmental conditions. The report will synthesize objectives, responsibilities, needs, and capabilities of state and federal agencies and the bird initiatives. It will include information on the extent and capabilities of current monitoring projects and data, with recommendations for enhanced efficiency. The Subcommittee is considering constructing a pilot monitoring program to showcase the increased capabilities that come with increased cooperation.

Conservation Design

Conservation design is a collaborative effort by partners to develop detailed blueprints for conserving and managing bird habitats on specific landscapes based upon science and decision support technologies that drive conservation delivery. Partners across the country can then use these blueprints to help guide their conservation activities, not only for birds but for other wildlife species as well. For example, conservation design information can provide valuable coarse-scale guidance for conservation actions required to successfully implement State Wildlife Strategies.

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Conservation Design (*continued*)

The Committee is dedicated to helping joint ventures develop their conservation design capabilities. In a workshop-style format at its August 2005 meeting, the Committee discussed some common understandings and definitions of conservation design and is exploring the possibility of hosting a technical meeting early in 2006 to develop a broad unifying conservation design framework.

Institutional Support

Bird-related recreation is fastest growing outdoor activity in the United States. To ensure the continued survival of these species, state and federal agencies must be fully engaged in their responsibilities for managing and conserving birds and many other wildlife species. The Committee is currently developing strategies to work with state and federal agencies to help augment their capabilities to contribute to and carry out integrated bird conservation.

Integrated bird conservation is about cost-effective collaboration and ensuring that conservation actions maximize their bird benefits. Regional public-private partnerships carry out integrated bird conservation using spatially explicit landscape designs that incorporate the needs of all species of concern. These designs provide excellent frameworks for broader wildlife conservation by placing emphasis on important landscapes and habitats that support numerous other species of wildlife. For example, sage grouse are serving as the umbrella species for the sagebrush biome, including species such as pygmy rabbits.

International Bird Conservation

This spring the continent's highest level environmental secretaries and minister signed the "NABCI Declaration of Intent for the Conservation of North America's Birds and Their Habitats" (Declaration), and with it, 12 broad objectives for trilateral cooperation to accomplish bird conservation across the continent. For more information and to download a copy of the Declaration visit <http://www.nabci-us.org>.

The U.S., Canadian, and Mexican members of the Trilateral NABCI Committee are working in partnership to advance several Declaration goals involving trilateral projects and Mexican regional alliances. The three NABCI national coordinators are developing trilateral project proposals which originate from site priorities in Mexico. Together, the coordinators and Mexican partners have made significant progress in developing a joint venture in Marismas (Nayarit and Sinaloa) with the help of a grant from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and other funding.

New NABCI Leadership and Members

After more than five years of dedicated federal leadership by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Bruce McCloskey, Director of the Colorado Division of Wildlife accepted the position of Committee Chair in August 2005. To help it meet its new objectives, the Committee appointed Debbie Hahn, IAFWA's Migratory Bird Coordinator, as the new U.S. NABCI Coordinator. 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 also welcomes the U.S. Geological Survey as its newest member and Sue Haseltine as the agency's representative.

U.S. NABCI Committee Members

Bruce McCloskey, Chair, representing the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Richard Bishop, retired, for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Breck Carmichael, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, for the Resident Game Birds Working Group

Don Childress, the National Flyway Council

Ellie Cohen, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, for the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

Sue Haseltine, U.S. Geological Survey

Matt Hogan, representing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Jim Kushlan, for the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

Val Mezanis, USDA Forest Service, representing federal agencies

Gary Myers, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, for Partners in Flight

David Pashley, American Bird Conservancy, representing nongovernmental organizations

Duane Shroufe, the Migratory Shore/Uplands Game Birds Working Group

Steve Williams, representing Wildlife Management Institute

Scott Yaich, representing Ducks Unlimited, Inc.