

SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS
NABCI FEDERAL AGENCY SUBCOMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 4, 2003

US FOREST SERVICE
WASHINGTON DC

The Federal Agency Subcommittee for the US NABCI Committee met November 4, 2003 at the U.S. Forest Service Building, Franklin Court, Washington DC. Primary agenda items were an update regarding US NABCI Committee meetings; Coordinated Bird Monitoring efforts; Federal outyear needs and budget for bird conservation and management; and the recent hemispheric meeting in Chile.

In attendance were 9 people representing 6 agencies, as follows: Charlie Rewa (NRCS), Bob Sorenson (State), Raye Nilius (USFWS), Jack Capp (USFS), Debbie Pressman (USFS), Jina Marianna (USFS), Eric Lawton (BLM), Kathleen Kutschenreuter (EPA), Bob Ford (USFWS).

Update regarding US NABCI Committee meetings

The US NABCI Committee held a meeting in August 2003 in Washington DC. Bob Ford provided a brief update on specific action items as pertain to the Federal agency subcommittee. The US NABCI Committee discussed federal capacity to deliver bird conservation and encouraged federal agencies to continue working together and discussing outyear needs of each agency.

The US NABCI Committee also discussed the further development of “regional alliances” in parts of Mexico - the Yucatan, Janos, northwest coast (Sinaloa), and Chiapas. Regional alliances are similar in function to Joint Ventures in the United States and Canada. Next phase, trinational projects will also include the partnerships formed during the last year and the NABCI workshops held in Mexico. CONABIO has drafted a proposal to support regional alliances in Mexico - each alliance needs about \$50,000 USD to hire a coordinator and develop the science based tools and projects to move forward.

Federal agencies interested in participating more fully in development of Mexican regional alliances and trinational projects should contact Bob Ford (Robert_P_Ford@fws.gov) for more details.

The US NABCI Committee also provided guidance to develop a research working group to explore the interest there is in coordinated research topics. **Ellen Paul with the Ornithological Council is leading the effort, the first research working group meeting is planned for December 12, 2003.**

Coordinated Bird Monitoring efforts

Jon Bart, scientist with USGS, has been developing “Coordinated Bird Monitoring”. At the August 2003 US NABCI Committee meeting, **the Committee requested that the Federal Agency Subcommittee work closely with the NABCI Monitoring Working Group to further develop monitoring budget estimates and priorities.**

A “Coordinated Bird Monitoring” (CBM) Plan is being prepared for Canada and the United States. Mexico, and perhaps other countries, will probably be included in the second version of the CBM Plan. The Plan is intended to improve coordination among bird monitoring programs and insure that results can be combined across regions. Preparation of the Plan has been endorsed by the US NABCI Committee, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the US Partners in Flight Council, and the Shorebird Council. Review of the proposal is currently being sought from the Canada NABCI Committee and the waterbirds council.

The Plan will contain major recommendations in three areas: (1) infrastructure for bird monitoring including identification of goals, survey protocols, data management, needed technical support, and organizational support; (2) recommendations for new and improved continental monitoring programs including migration monitoring, ground-based surveys of aquatic areas, demographic monitoring, and colony surveys; and (3) preparation of regional CBM Plans that will achieve coordination at the province, State, and regional scale. The CBM Plan is expected to help States prepare their comprehensive wildlife conservation plans and to be useful in other major projects, such as Canada’s Western Boreal Initiative, by providing a comprehensive framework for bird monitoring including design, analysis, and reporting of results.

Federal agencies are encouraged to review and comment on the process and to work on improving the bird monitoring ideas embedded in this approach. At least 2 agencies (USFWS - Brad Andres/Brian Millsap, USFS - Skip Kalowski) have working groups developing ideas to incorporate into Coordinated Bird Monitoring. Others, such as USGS, have discussed it internally as well. It was suggested that NRCS become involved as well to better evaluate the impacts of farm programs. **(Late note: Jon Bart will present this concept to federal agencies December 8 at a special meeting of the Federal Agency Subcommittee).**

Federal outyear needs and budget for bird conservation and management

Each federal agency provided the subcommittee with a broad update on current budget opportunities and outyear needs to accomplish bird conservation. Generally, federal agencies continue to have flat or downward trends in their budgets. However, agencies continue to discuss and find opportunities for coordination and shared priorities.

For the USFWS, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act was funded at \$4million up from \$3million in 03. Joint Ventures were appropriated \$10.4 million, their request level. JV coordinators meet in December to clarify what budgets are needed to do all bird conservation.

Eric Lawton (BLM) provided an overview of an idea that was discussed during recent Partners in Flight meetings. Generally, a web page can be developed for information sharing - what works, what doesn’t work on a variety of topics. Information would probably cut across all the initiatives, and thus be of interest to NABCI. For more information, contact Eric Lawton.

Recent hemispheric meeting in Chile

The International Neotropical Ornithological Congress was held in Chile in October. The Congress was attended by over 30 nations. Technical sessions were held with scientific and management presentations. Other forums and workshops were held in conjunction with the Congress, including the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. Ellen Paul of the Ornithological Council was the lead organizer for the Congress. Contact Ellen Paul for information. A Summit of the Americas was held at the same time and location. It was cosponsored by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the US Department of State. It responded to a action plan agreed to at the 2001 Summit of the Americas held in Canada. Delegates from over 30 nations participated, led by John Turner, Dept. of State. It was agreed that the nations would begin a new partnership initiative to first focus on conservation of migratory birds and then move within two years to conservation of other migratory species. The Fish and Wildlife Service, Herb Raffaele, will lead a small team to develop a Hemispheric strategy within two years. Contact Jeff Flocken, Fish and Wildlife Service, for more information.

Other news

Kathleen K. of EPA asked if Federal agencies could exchange or donate computers like Birders Exchange does for other conservation equipment. National Audubon Society is interested in doing this. Kathleen will further explore this.

Next meeting

The next meeting was planned for early January 2004 to provide input into the USFWS Conservation Forum and the next US NABCI Committee meeting. Specific time and location to be announced.

Summary submitted by:

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