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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 Monitoring Questions & Answers

1. *Why is monitoring important?*

Monitoring programs provide scientists, wildlife officials, private organization and industry leaders, and the public with essential information to make scientifically based decisions to improve bird conservation and management. People rely on monitoring information to determine which species are in the greatest need of conservation and management intervention and to establish priorities for allocation of limited resources.

People also rely on monitoring information to evaluate bird response to habitat manipulation and regulate game bird harvest. By using the information to evaluate the effectiveness of specific management or conservation actions, scientists, managers, and administrators can determine if desired results were achieved, learn from experience, and adapt future actions accordingly. In fact, monitoring and evaluation should be critical and integral components of all on-the-ground projects and population management decisions. Such adaptive resource management is just good business.

2. *Why is NABCI taking a lead on advancing monitoring?*

In the past, many monitoring programs were developed with little consideration to management needs and regional and national coordination, and were based on a presumption that general site-based survey data would be useful for future conservation efforts. The U.S. NABCI Committee would like to advance science- and management-based monitoring efforts that are coordinated across geographic, organizational, and political boundaries. By working together, state and federal agencies and initiatives will be able to increase survey efficiencies, ensure more reliable inferences at biologically meaningful spatial scales, pool resources, and help to meet continuing legal and regulatory challenges in bird conservation. The Committee is thus providing an appropriate venue to allow partnerships of biologists, statisticians, managers, and decision-makers to identify common management issues and design effective, cooperative monitoring programs.

3. *What is the U.S. NABCI Committee specifically doing to advance the monitoring of bird populations and habitats?*

The U.S. NABCI Committee established a Monitoring Subcommittee to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring strategies through increased cooperation among public and private wildlife organizations in monitoring bird populations and their habitats in North America. By fostering this cooperation, the Subcommittee seeks to assure that monitoring programs are cost-effective and provide relevant information that can be integrated into decision-making.

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The Subcommittee is preparing a series of reports that will guide this national and international cooperation. The reports will synthesize objectives, responsibilities, needs, and capabilities for bird monitoring for both state and federal agencies and the bird conservation initiatives. They will include information on the extent and capabilities of existing monitoring projects and data, with recommendations for enhancing the efficiency of current and future efforts, such as eliminating duplication, enhancing coordination of new and existing monitoring efforts, and assuring that data are accessible and maintained. An interim report is due out in Spring 2006. The Subcommittee will also construct a pilot monitoring program to showcase the increased capabilities that will come with enhanced cooperation among agencies and the bird initiatives.

4. To whom is the monitoring report directed?

The U.S. NABCI Monitoring Subcommittee's reports are directed to scientists, managers, decision-makers, and statisticians with an interest in bird conservation and monitoring. The reports seek to stimulate and guide audiences in the coordination of monitoring objectives and activities across geographic and organizational boundaries. They will serve as springboards for the bird conservation community to develop a shared technical and administrative framework for coordinating bird monitoring.

5. Will organizations not involved in the Monitoring Subcommittee have a chance to review and comment on its recommendations before the report is finalized?

Yes. The Subcommittee intends to solicit comments from the bird conservation community on drafts of its reports and products, with an initial interim report due out in Spring 2006.

6. Who is participating on the Subcommittee?

The Subcommittee includes representatives from the bird conservation initiatives, Partners in Flight, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Waterbird Conservation for the Americas, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) Resident Game Bird Working Group, and the IAFWA Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Group, as well as the four government agencies: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Service, U.S. Forest Service, and IAFWA. Liaisons with Canada and Mexico have been identified and will be engaged in the coming weeks.

7. Whom should I contact for more information?

Contact Beatrice Van Horne, Forest Service, bvanhorne@fs.fed.us, 703-605-5285 or Paul Schmidt, Fish and Wildlife Service, Paul_Schmidt@fws.gov, 202-208-1050 or visit <http://www.nabci-us.org>.

U.S. NABCI Committee Members

Bruce McCloskey, Chair, Colorado Div. of Wildlife
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Sally Benjamin, Farm Services Agency

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

Greg Butcher, National Audubon Society

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

Don Childress, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife, and
Parks, for the National Flyway Council

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

Randy Gray, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Sue Haseltine, U.S. Geological Survey

Matt Hogan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Gary Kania, The Nature Conservancy

Jim Kushlan, for the North American
Waterbird Conservation Plan

Val Mezanis, USDA Forest Service

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

Kirk Nelson, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission,
for the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards

David Pashley, American Bird Conservancy

Duane Shroufe, Arizona Game and Fish Dept., for the
Migratory Shore/Uplands Game Birds Working Group

Steve Williams, Wildlife Management Institute

Scott Yaich, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.