

**US NABCI COMMITTEE – 1 FEBRUARY 2000 MEETING**  
**Washington, DC – Hall of the States**

Jamie Clark opened the meeting, welcoming attendees

Meeting objectives – define role & purpose of the committee, relative to subcommittees and the initiatives. Clarify relationships among the structural elements of NABCI in the US. Clarify relationships between NABCI and the bird initiatives, Joint Ventures, Flyway Councils, and North American Wetlands Conservation Council. Identify a process for finalizing the second draft Vision document. Discuss a legislative approach for bird conservation, and consider federal budget.

**LOGISTICAL ISSUES AND UPDATES:**

Charter – This is under review relative to FACA – solicitors are looking at this, and will comment within the next few weeks. The Committee should not risk being impaired by challenges based upon this issue. Dan Ashe will help deal with this. It was agreed to change decision-making away from written or proxy by striking the second sentence and adding the word “or their designated alternate present” after 2/3 of the members. Jim Kushlan suggested that the Committee approve the Charter absent the FACA issue. Issue passed. George Fenwick later brought up the fact that our Charter should stress our interest in conservation of birds internationally, as an acknowledgement of the international context in which we work. This should be a 4<sup>th</sup> section in the Purpose. These changes will be incorporated and a new draft distributed.

Letter of Agreement – between co-chairs and ABC. Committee voted to approve moving forward on this.

**INITIATIVE REPORTS:** Each initiative reported its perspective on the role of NABCI in serving bird conservation and their initiative, specifically.

NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT PLAN COMMITTEE – (handout) David Smith reported for Scott Yaich. The US Section of Plan Committee strongly supports the NABCI concept, particularly regarding increasing resources; it also supports the designated functions of the US NABCI Committee. NAWMP stresses maintenance of autonomy of the initiatives, particularly in terms of maintaining the biological foundations. The Plan Committee urges NABCI not to reinvent delivery structure, but rather utilizing the Joint Venture concept. A single unified “family” of JVs delivering the NABCI vision was encouraged. The Committee also supports the autonomy of JV Management Boards, and maintenance of local, self-directed delivery units. The Plan Committee will work with NABCI in all three countries and beyond. Territorial issues among bird initiatives have been overcome.

PARTNERS IN FLIGHT – (handout) Gary Myers reported on what PIF needs from NABCI to accomplish its objectives. PIF encourages delivery in all BCRs, expansion of NABCI south to take in the ranges of birds. Help is needed in printing and distribution of plans, etc. Suggests new incentives to private landowners to conserve birds. New funds are needed, particularly for on-the-ground conservation projects. Marketing documents are needed.

Will there be a single set of delivery mechanisms or will there be overlap and redundancy? All of the initiatives want a single comprehensive set of delivery mechanisms. The intent is to have no duplication of effort, but a single layer of coverage – a single carpet of JVs that span the U.S. Species prioritization using the PIF methodology is being applied to BCRs, in part to generate a new geographically-explicit set of Species of Management Concern lists.

US SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION PLAN – (handout) Stephen Brown reported for Stan Senner. Integrated implementation is their view as well. The shorebird group strongly supports NABCI and views the role of NABCI as helping to generate funding, both in terms specific to the shorebird plan and those general issues of NAWCA and JV project money, and leadership in the development of integrated implementation. (Alaska, S. Calif. and Atlantic Northern Forest are priority shorebird areas not currently covered by a JV). Broad national bird habitat assessment and monitoring are priorities.

NORTH AMERICAN COLONIAL WATERBIRD CONSERVATION PLAN – Jim Kushlan reported from CW Steering Committee on three ideas. 1. Provide means for delivery of on-the-ground bird conservation,

via BCRs and JVs. Some continental scale programs are also needed, including a continental monitoring program. 2. Infrastructure for communication via the NABCI Committee and the Subcommittees is critical to advancement of CW plan; CW needs a continuing Coordinator position. 3. Additional resources are needed – both people and money; it is assumed that these will come about through the BCR/JV structures; it would be useful if NABCI could accumulate pools of funds to be made available for implementation activities.

NATIONAL FLYWAY COUNCIL – George Vandell sent note that the Vision document is being reviewed and will be voted on at the next meeting in Chicago in March.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES – Gary Myers said that passage of the Conservation And Reinvestment Act will really help state commitment to NABCI. Integration of plans at BCR level is needed to clearly articulate our overall objectives. We are still not at the “blueprint” phase, and states can help at the local level to make this happen. States like AZ and TN can facilitate this type of interaction. IAFWA can also influence the federal budget – NABCI budget needs must be clearly described by agencies. IAFWA also needs to think about legislation along with NABCI and the federal government. Len Ugarenko is IAFWA staff to NABCI. Naomi Edelson noted that there are problems getting CARA passed that are significant and that we cannot ignore this opportunity. Jim Kushlan asked about bird conservation relative to CARA delivery – Naomi stressed that the bird plans being ready really increases the chances that CARA money would be spent in part on bird issues. Gary Myers agreed that there will be lots of competition for that money. There is a new CARA Implementation Committee of the IAFWA (chaired by Duane Shroufe) that is going to deal with this. NABCI needs to publicize itself at the state level. Model plans for use of CARA money have been developed, but these have not consistently been followed. Strategic opportunities to highlight the link between bird conservation, CARA and NABCI ought to be taken advantage of.

#### **VISION DOCUMENT:**

Scott Yaich submitted a second draft. Content is not really an issue, but process is important – how does this document get approved? We must await comment from the Flyway Councils, which meet in March. We should go to the North American Conference in Chicago in March hoping that the draft we take there gets approved by the initiatives, the Flyway Council, and the IAFWA. All initiatives should be prepared to endorse this draft by March, but not on the basis of another wide review. Members of the NABCI Committee must deliver approval from their constituencies. We need endorsement from the four initiatives, the National Flyway Council, and the NGO and Federal Agency Subcommittees at the next meeting of the US NABCI Committee on Friday, March 24. Mig. Wildlife Committee meets on Sunday. If NABCI approves on Friday night, and then the MWC approves on Sunday, it is final. Comments to Scott should go through the NABCI Committee, not from the world at large. Comments from this Committee are due to Scott no later than March 10.

Comment on content – Herb Raffaele brought up the insufficiency of an international focus in the US NABCI Strategy. Should the Vision address birds internationally, throughout the ranges of the birds North American birds? There is an issue of respect for the developing plans of Mexico and Canada. It was agreed that the international context for actions by US NABCI should be highlighted more strongly. The document is not a “Plan” but rather a “Vision” and must be broadened. Herb and David Pashley will provide Scott language to strengthen this perspective.

#### **JOINT VENTURE ISSUES:**

Jim Cole, Coordinator of the Intermountain West JV, noted commonalities among JVs – they all have a Coordinator, a Management Board, and are successful at working within partnerships. After that, there is a tremendous amount of diversity. Local ownership, flexibility, autonomy all must be fostered. Every JV is unique. IWJV’s Mgt. Board provides political & financial support for work on the ground. NAWCA is important in providing seed money to get partners involved. IWJV has a new Mission Statement, referring to ecosystems, taking on the mandate of delivering conservation for all birds, and has developed good relationships with the other initiatives. Internal boundaries are being reconfigured to accommodate these changes, expanding the wetland focus area concept to an all-bird structure. IWJV and Playa Lakes JVs are proposing boundary changes to take in all of the Shortgrass BCR. The Shortgrass is being staffed by Mike

Carter of Colorado Bird Observatory, and the Northern Rockies BCR is being staffed by Dan Casey, both essentially becoming Assistant JV Coordinators. These people will develop proposals for projects within those BCRs – the JV and the Mgt. Board will support this (politically and structurally). JV must also be involved in thinking about how to support these two individuals after their current funding expires after two years. BCR staff provides stronger local focus; inclusion in the existing JV gives great start-up assets to the BCRs.

David Pashley summarized developments in BCRs across the country. The new Coordinators in the Shortgrass Prairie and Northern Rockies were hired using NGO non-game bird money, which is a first. The new Sonoran Desert JV is funded by USFWS. The Prairie Potholes and Prairie Habitat JVs are working together across the US-Canada border to develop a shared vision for the Missouri Coteau. Proposals are in the works to fund Coordinators in the Atlantic Northern Forest, Central Hardwoods, and West Gulf Coastal Plain, and more preliminary discussions are ongoing many other places. Progress is rapid and very exciting. The North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office and the Migratory Bird Management Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service will do their best to support the Joint Venture network that exists and is developing. This support is irrespective of whether or not the BCRs are recognized by the Plan Committee.

The US NABCI Committee should encourage and facilitate BCR development, but should not be in the business of approval. The Committee has no authority to approve this sort of thing, nor would that approval mean very much. There may be a different picture if the legislative picture changes. In the meantime, things are happening quickly and the NABCI Committee should be supportive and provide a forum for coordination and communication between the initiatives, technical assistance, and seek to increase resources for bird conservation. This issue should be tabled for now and perhaps addressed again when things evolve to a point where it is necessary.

The message from NABCI Committee to JVs, old and new is to go forth and prosper; autonomy and diversity are welcomed. This Committee offers itself as a resource to the JVs. The Committee could be more proactive than this, particularly regarding some issues that transcend BCR boundaries, such as monitoring and evaluation.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

##### **FEDERAL AGENCY SUBCOMMITTEE – Jamie Clark**

Meeting was held in December – level of participation was very exciting, both in terms of number of agencies and level represented within each agency. The few notable absentees will be pursued for the next meeting. Objectives included determining the appropriate level of involvement in NABCI. The second Co-chair position is occupied by Val Mezainis, Director of International Programs for the USDA Forest Service. The December meeting was the first time a forum existed for broad federal discussion and interagency coordination of bird conservation issues. In some ways, this goes beyond NABCI. Institutionalizing this Subcommittee for the dual roles of working within NABCI and serving as such a forum was supported. The Subcommittee should serve as a forum for coordination on budget issues, although this will be challenging. A budget that presents multi-agency dedication to bird conservation would be very attractive. A unified mechanism for dealing with bird issues within the federal government is evolving.

The Federal Agency Subcommittee will meet again on March 1, at which time each agency will identify its highest bird conservation priorities. The group will then coalesce these priorities to identify important shared issues. The Federal Agency Subcommittee will host a Spring Forum on May 23-25 for all federal agencies at NCTC in Shepardstown, WV. The common issues that emerge from the March 1 meeting will shape the agenda for the Spring Forum.

##### **NGO SUBCOMMITTEE – George Fenwick**

George is co-chairing with Alan Wentz and Rollie Sparrowe. The unique goals of the NGO Subcommittee are in areas of fundraising and advocacy. The NGO community must support CARA. Infrastructural development is critically important – finding money to get people on the ground is a very high priority. American Bird Conservancy intends to work hard to find money to get these catalytic people on the ground. There must be a strong linkage between the NGO and Federal Subcommittees that goes both ways, NGOs

helping and also communicating to the agencies. Communication beyond the established NABCI community is also important – an abbreviated Vision statement is a tool we need to compel people into action. Getting scientific backing to NABCI is a key role of some of the NGOs. The forest products industry is participating in the Subcommittee, and involvement of other industries is desired. Game species NGOs must be attracted as well.

#### MONITORING – Marshall Howe

The monitoring strategy that grew out of the Puebla meeting was distributed, as well as a history and terms of reference that has been newly developed. Roles and responsibilities of the Subcommittee include:

1. Facilitate comprehensive and integrated population monitoring across all bird initiatives. Achieve economies of scale by merging efforts among these initiatives.
2. Promote development of technical capacity to monitor habitat and landscape attributes relevant to bird population change.
3. Advise on establishment and operation of centralized, accessible databases.
4. Encourage active partnerships between technical monitoring interests and wildlife managers at all levels.
5. Serve as a forum for coordinating monitoring across international boundaries.

The Subcommittee will report on budget needs. It ought to influence development of monitoring within JVs as they get up and running – baseline data are needed. Membership in the Subcommittee includes one representative each from USGS, USFWS, each bird initiative, and others as needed, with a chair selected by the US NABCI Committee.

There is an inclination to expand this Subcommittee from monitoring to include research and to serve as a scientific, technical support subcommittee for NABCI. The NABCI Committee is generally in favor of combining research and monitoring into a single subcommittee, but stresses that monitoring should be a top priority. However, the Subcommittee should decide first on its own rules; Marshall will confer with his group on the advisability of incorporating research into monitoring, and will report back prior to the March 24 NABCI meeting.

#### BIRD CONSERVATION FUNDING COMMITTEE – Rollie Sparrowe

This Committee has not formally been constituted. As described in the first US NABCI Committee meeting, it needs inauguration by IAFWA, and up to now has needed the Vision document. There are needs for a Funding Committee both in terms of appropriations and legislation. Rollie and Paul Baicich have written a document suggesting that those interested in NABCI must be committed to the success of CARA. Committee must find out how to rise above the current political situations and tell the story of NABCI effectively to the Hill, Administration, OMB, etc. It needs to be systematic in the future, not just responsive to fast-moving events. A sales package and careful strategy will be better than just working on one or another small facet of a budget (proactive rather than reactive) by identifying what is in NABCI for agencies, the President, etc. Wildlife priorities in the next piece of Farm Bill legislation must be stressed. Bird conservation must be injected into watershed project dollars. New ideas are needed. We have to find a way to repackage monitoring in a way that is attractive to Congress and decision-makers. There are also international roles for the Funding Committee. Its structure will probably revolve around 5 or 6 people in DC. The Committee needs to know what is called for in the various bird conservation plans. A Neotropical Migratory Bird Bill may be a good starting point that could grow into a more powerful funding tool. Gary Myers reminded that the recommendations from the Vision document are great as starting points for these discussions. What should we push for now, and who will do what? We have to get the word straight on NABCI in order to sell it. We certainly should not set bird funding needs against other budget items in agency budgets. A focused strategy must be devised. We have to examine those things that are already happening (existing programs such as NAWCA, NAWMP, the Refuge System) and we have to think about a longer-range strategy as well. Rollie will get a group together within the next few weeks to work on these multiple and huge issues – immediate budgets, Neotropical bill, Farm Bill. Max Peterson and the IAFWA will work with Rollie on this.

A relatively simple marketing document for NABCI, began as a shortened version of the Vision document, is badly needed. The NGO Subcommittee will work on the text, and then the Federal Agency

Subcommittee will work on design and printing and distribution. The marketing document should show how what we are asking for now fits in the larger context of our long-term vision. Make the case that NABCI is fundamentally tied to and supported by traditional wildlife interests. The breadth of support and clarity of the NABCI vision have to be emphasized. Preempt arguments that this is taking away from other priorities for conservation. NABCI is an efficiency issue – it shouldn't be treated as something new. Address the relationship between NABCI and the NAWMP as this is a very sensitive issue. It may be best to lay out some options rather than defining a single course of action.

Should the Bird Conservation Funding Committee be an entity within the IAFWA? Because of issues of structure and timing, the US NABCI Committee decided against this; Max Peterson suggested funneling through the IAFWA Budget Committee inasmuch as that would be useful. The Bird Conservation Funding Committee will be a stand-alone entity, reporting to the NABCI Committee as well as to the IAFWA Budget Committee.

#### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE NGO AND FEDERAL AGENCY SUBCOMMITTEES –

Having federal attendance at the NGO meetings is welcomed, but NGO participation at the Fed. Agency meeting creates some discomfort. All communication linkages are valuable, but non-federal participation in federal meetings could limit the range issues that could be treated. It was pointed out, however, that sensitive issues such as litigation are unlikely to be discussed in the first place in a large meeting. NABCI may benefit more by federal agencies being able to discuss issues in an environment in which they felt comfortable. The Federal Agency will decide on this, but for now will not invite NGOs to its meetings. It was suggested that the two Subcommittees could perhaps have joint meetings to allow for information exchange.

#### **NABCI AND THE NORTH AMERICAN WETLANDS CONSERVATION COUNCIL:**

Alan Wentz noted that the biggest concern of the Council is that it and NABCI be coordinated – they should be good partners and cognizant of each others' activities. Council would like to see a Neotropical Bird Conservation Act passed, and has suggested to the Secretary of the Interior that the Council be a core, perhaps with a broadened group with additional expertise, to administer the money from that Act (and perhaps any other legislation that could support bird conservation). The Council wants to keep NAWCA intact, unamended, for fear of the message that attempts to change it would send to its supporters, and emphasizes the need to maintain a fire wall between pools of funding to avoid competition for and dilution of funds. Council also discussed whether or not it has the mandate under existing authority to deal with uplands and countries beyond Mexico (this may require tinkering with the language of the Act). Gary Myers favors expanding the Council to deal with all birds in order to eliminate the threat of competition for dollars as well as redundancy and the resultant inefficiencies. If the Neotropical bill were to pass, the Secretary could expand the role of the Council to accommodate the broadened responsibilities (inc. work in Latin America). Gary asks whether the NABCI Committee is comfortable with this possibility? There is some diversity of opinion in the NGO community, but there is more support than opposition, in general. Jim Range said that it is necessary to unite at any level possible. Rollie suggested that we build toward the reauthorization of NAWCA, which is coming up in 2003 or so. Does the Committee support the concept of addressing all birds and all habitats through one delivery system? Yes. Gary Myers will write out the specifics of this resolution.

Does the Committee favor expansion of the role of the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office to include all birds? Yes.

#### **NEXT MEETING:**

The US NABCI Committee will next meet in Chicago in conjunction with the North American meetings on Friday evening, March 24, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Specifics as to location and agenda will be distributed later.

#### **ATTENDEES:**

Committee Members:

Jamie Rappaport Clark, (co-chair), US Fish and Wildlife Service  
George Fenwick, co-chair of NGO Subcommittee, American Bird Conservancy  
Jim Kushlan, North American Colonial Waterbird Conservation Plan, US Geological Survey  
Val Mezainis, co-chair of Federal Agency Subcommittee, USDA Forest Service  
Gary Myers, Partners in Flight, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency  
Stan Senner, US Shorebird Conservation Plan, National Audubon Society  
Rollie Sparrowe, Wildlife Management Institute  
Alan Wentz, Ducks Unlimited  
(members absent: George Vandell, David Waller [co-chair], Scott Yaich)

US NABCI Coordinator:  
David Pashley

Staff, Subcommittee representatives, and other attendees:  
Jon Andrew, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Scott Armentrout, USDA Forest Service  
Dan Ashe, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Stephen Brown, US Shorebird Conservation Plan  
Roxanne Bogart, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Jack Capp, USDA Forest Service  
Naomi Edelson, IAFWA  
Marshall Howe, US Geological Survey, Monitoring Subcommittee chair  
Rex Johnson, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Tom Melius, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Max Peterson, IAFWA  
Herb Raffaele, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Jim Range, attorney  
Paul Schmidt, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
David Smith, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Melanie Steinkamp, North American Colonial Waterbird Conservation Plan  
Ken Williams, USGS  
Jim Woehr, Wildlife Management Institute