



US NABCI Committee Meeting Summary and Tasks February 4-5, 2008 Arlington, Virginia

Committee members in attendance: Dale Hall (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), David Pashley (American Bird Conservancy), David Goad (North American Waterfowl Management Plan), Catherine Hickey (U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan), Gary Myers (Partners in Flight), Geoffrey Walsh (for Dwight Fielder Bureau of Land Management), Greg Butcher (National Audubon Society), Terrell Erickson (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Jim Kushlan (Waterbird Conservation for the Americas), John Hoskins (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies), Breck Carmichael (Resident Game Bird Working Group), Bob Ellis (National Flyway Council), Scott Yaich (Ducks Unlimited), Carol Lively (U.S. Forest Service), Peter Boice (Department of Defense), Dave Mehlman (The Nature Conservancy), Steve Williams (Wildlife Management Institute), Sue Haseltine (U.S Geological Survey).

Others: Deb Hahn (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies), Paul Schmidt (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Marie Straussburger (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Guy Foulks (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Mike Johnson (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Mike Kreger (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Seth Mott (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Charlie Rewa (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Carol Beidleman (National Park Service), Jonathan Putnam (National Park Service), Jennifer Wheeler (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Steve Hilburger (U.S Geological Survey).

The Committee agreed the purpose of meeting was to:

- **discuss progress on 2007 objectives,**
- **determine resources needed to complete 2008 objectives,**
- **assess whether there are new topics that need addressed in the work plan, and**
- **plan dates and agenda for Summer 2008 meeting.**

Next U.S. NABCI Committee Meeting

August 12-13, 2008 (pending discussions with the AJVMB)

Short-term Tasks from the meeting (Please see the 2008 Work Plan and the summaries below for a for a complete list of tasks for 2008)

- USFWS – Draft a letter under Dale’s signature to Richard Bishop thanking him for his service to the Committee.
- Deb - Send out electronic copies of the AFWA Resolution and NABCI Monitoring MOU

- Deb – Send out a summary of the meeting, task list, updated charter, updated Committee member contact list, and 2008 work plan
- Deb – Work with NABCI Committee to determine if they want to submit a proposal on climate change if the climate change NCN is accepted in March.
- Steve Williams – Send Deb information on the Kansas State University grant on the concept of a farmers guide to the farm bill.
- David Goad – Send Deb information on Arkansas Game and Fish Commission’s website for farmers.
- TNC, Audubon, ABC, UFWS, USFS International Programs – Send information to Deb on how much money and what activities they have done in the 5 site in Mexico.
- Federal Agency members – Nominate a person to work on messages for transition teams
- John Hoskins – Nominate a person from Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to work on messages for transition teams
- Paul Schmidt – Discuss potential 2008 workshop options with the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) in March 2007
- Committee chairs – send comments to Deb on the Work Plan by February 29.

Summary of Discussions

Membership Updates

1. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – Terrell Erickson is the new National Biologist and now represents NRCS on the Committee.
2. National Flyway Council (NFC) – Bob Ellis is the new Chair of the NFC and will represent the NFC on the Committee.
3. North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) –David Goad from Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will represent the NAWMP. Richard Bishop has been the NAWMP representative for some time but is now retired.
4. Farm Service Agency (FSA) – Sally Benjamin has left FSA. FSA is in the process of determining who will represent them on the Committee.
5. The National Park Service (NPS) has asked to be considered for membership on the Committee. The Committee was excited and supportive of NPS joining the Committee. Carol Beidleman and Jonathan Putnam attended the Committee meeting on behalf of the NPS. They will take the message and invitation for membership back to the NPS.

Communications

NABCI/AJVMB Awards - The US NABCI Committee and the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards (AJVMB) will be giving out 3 bird conservation awards this year—an award to an individual working at the national and international scale; an award for an individual working at

the regional and local scale; and an award for a group working at the local and regional scale. The award recipients were announced and will be contacted in the near future.

All-Bird Bulletin - Two of the 2007 All-Bird Bulletins (ABB) in particular epitomize the need for the ABB and its ability to reach conservationists on the ground. They are the Private Lands and the Monitoring ABBs. The ABB will be continued in 2008.

New Federal Administration - The Committee acknowledged the need to develop messages and briefing packets for the transition teams that will be with federal agencies in early 2009. These teams arrive at federal agencies to get briefed on their work and priorities before appointees of the new administration arrive. The Committee recommends the following in respect to transition team briefings on NABCI and bird conservation.

1. A summary and overview of NABCI and a clear message of who NABCI is.
2. Summarize the priority needs for birds and how they relate to major issues such as climate change and energy development that the agencies will be addressing. In regards to climate change, monitoring and the long term support of databases will be critical.
3. Send the same messages to all federal agencies. Make sure the agency is aware that the same messages are being sent from NABCI who is a group of 21 different agencies and organizations.
4. We want overarching messages and not too much detail because the transition teams will be receiving a lot of information. They will not have time to read long documents.
5. A person from each Subcommittee should have input on the messages.
6. Two possible ways to lay out the briefing packets include the following. First, base them loosely on the funding categories of the Bird Conservation Funding Coalition (BCFC). They might include wetlands, uplands, State Wildlife Grants, Joint Ventures, a strong science foundation, and international conservation. Second, develop them around the themes and structure of the state of the bird report (see Pages 12-13) although that report may not be far enough along in time to influence the packets.

These messages should also be used by Committee members while they are on the Hill or discussing bird conservation with constituencies. Getting the political parties to discuss bird conservation messages on their campaign trail was another recommendation. David Pashley, Peter Boice, Greg Butcher, a Missouri Department of Conservation employee, a member from each NABCI Subcommittee and a member from each federal agency will be tapped to pull together the draft packages by the August NABCI meeting.

2009 North American Meeting – Related to the transition teams the 2009 North American will be held in Crystal City, VA and is an opportunity to advance some of these messages. The North American now has workshops, special sessions, and a plenary session. It was felt that the plenary

was not the appropriate venue although one presentation on bird conservation might be appropriate depending on the overarching topic. The special sessions and the workshops (held on Monday and Wednesday) are the best options. Tuesday will not work because of the Flyway Council and Bird Conservation Committee meetings on that day. This year the plenary is climate change so that would not be the theme for next year. Ideas for the North American included rolling out the State of the Bird report; having a joint meeting of the bird conservation initiatives before the North American; and develop a workshop or special session that works around the State of the Birds themes. WMI has a meeting in March 2007 to discuss the March 2008 meeting. Paul will take the idea of a workshop to that meeting. The Committee will need to approach WMI with a proposal by April 2008.

NABCI Accomplishments Document – Since the Committee is built of partners is it sometime difficult to identify NABCI accomplishments. The Committee, however, would like to see a document that captures what NABCI has done over the years. It should highlight where NABCI has added value and how states, NGOs, JVs, federal agencies, and bird initiative are NABCI. The intent is to get a draft circulated within a couple of months. The Committee would also like a power point presentation that incorporates the accomplishments.

Climate Change – Climate change is an issue that has come to the forefront of discussions in the conservation community. Each USFWS region is developing a climate change workshop. The federal agencies are discussing how climate change impacts are going to affect their agency's work. State's discussed the topic at the September Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association) meeting. The Committee would like to see how they can provide information on how to adapt to climate change as it relates to birds. The Committee believes that the bird conservation community needs to provide information on how they are going to address climate change especially in light of the climate change legislation that is on the Hill (See below). The Committee thinks the discussions should be held at the regional level. The USGS received some transition money to establish a climate change and wildlife center.. They want to look at how to use the global models to predict regional impacts. The bird community has monitoring data and this will be important to addressing climate change at the regional level. The SE Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is submitting a climate change National Conservation Need (NCN). The Committee could submit a proposal for climate change work if this NCN is accepted. When NABCI is talking about climate change it will be key to involve all the Subcommittees – since they all have information to contribute to this topic. Deb Hahn and Sue Haseltine have put together a climate change session at the PIF international conference. They will use the session to begin discussing information gaps, how to show that we need for money to address climate change, and how the bird community will use the money to address climate change and its impact on wildlife.

Climate change legislation – There are a number of bills on the Hill that propose national strategies to address climate change. A coalition of wildlife conservation groups have worked on the wildlife language in the Leiberman-Warner Security Act (S. 2191). The bill has the potential to produce clear US policy direction and a funding source to support it. The Resources Subcommittee (see Page 10)

was involved in some of these discussions and will keep informed of what is happening to the language as the bills advance. It will help ensure the critical bird conservation programs remain in the language to receive funding. What we need to focus on is showing that we need the money and will be able to spend the money should it come to our programs. This only further emphasizes the need to have well-designed, effective, accessible monitoring programs in place. We will be able to detect changes to bird populations before habitat changes are necessarily detected. In fact, we are already observing changes to nesting and migration patterns based on changes in the climate.

Action Items

1. Draft the messages and briefing packets for the 2009 federal transition teams for review at the August meeting. - Greg Butcher, David Pashely, a MDC representative, Peter Boice, representatives from each federal agency, and representative from each Subcommittee.
2. Develop a draft NABCI Accomplishments document over the next two months.
3. Pursue options for the North American meeting in 2009.
4. Keep tabs on the climate change legislation language to ensure that the bird conservation programs that we all support are maintained in the funding language.
5. Determine if we need to submit a climate change proposal if the climate change NCN is accepted in March.

Monitoring

The Subcommittee had three conference calls and one meeting since August to advance its 2007 tasks. It was acknowledged that having a full-time coordinator in the NE has been very important to advancing the goals of the report at a regional level. Unfortunately, the monitoring proposal submitted to the multi-state grant program was not accepted. The proposal would have facilitated the NE Partnership concept throughout the U.S.

Currently, the Subcommittee has a few members that are looking at technical aspects of data store and statistical design, communications, and the development of a monitoring session at the Partners in Flight conference in February 2008. A monitoring session was held at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in December 2007. Membership on the Subcommittee has changed. Jon Bart was replaced by John Alexander (representing Partners in Flight), Dale Humburg is still on the Subcommittee but now represents Ducks Unlimited, and Mike Hubbard (MDC) is the new Association member.

Monitoring Report - A final draft of the *Opportunities for Improving Avian Monitoring* report was distributed and presented at the North American Conference in March. The Committee reiterated it's thanks to the members of the Subcommittee for their hard work and for producing an excellent report.

Monitoring MOU - The Monitoring MOU has been signed by 18 Committee members. To date the only member that will not be able to sign is the AJVMB. Although they support the goals of the

report, they felt that one signature could not represent the Joint Ventures. They sent a letter in support of the report that will be added as an addendum to the MOU.

Association Resolution – A Resolution in support of the monitoring report was developed and submitted to the Bird Conservation Committee of the Association. The Association accepted the Resolution at the September 2007 meeting.

Northeast Coordinated Bird Monitoring Partnership (Partnership) Update - The Partnership has been successful and has based its goals and objectives on the NABCI monitoring report. Dan Lambert, the coordinator for that Partnership puts their success in his own words “The 2007 NABCI report, *Opportunities for Improving Avian Monitoring*, called for a shift in the way bird monitoring professionals approach their work. The landmark publication urges transformation from a set of isolated and marginally informative programs to a system of regionally coordinated and robust initiatives that integrate results into conservation practice. Our coordination and communication efforts in the Northeast have accelerated this transformation. The content and tone of discussions held at the 2007 workshop closely reflected the Partnership's unifying goals. This marked a significant improvement over fractured and contentious dialogue that occurred a year earlier, when partners first considered the challenge of regional coordination at the 2006 workshop.”

Monitoring Workshops – The workshops that occurred in 2007 and early 2008 on structured decision making and statistical design were successful and it is believed that more workshops would be beneficial. In 2008, the Subcommittee wants to develop a series of workshops that advance the goals and the objectives of the report.

Monitoring Program Review - The USGS, USFS, and USFWS discussed hiring staff to review monitoring programs in the U.S. Although this is a daunting task the Subcommittee feels it is one of the most important next steps and has developed a proposal for it. The intent is not to grade or give a thumbs up or thumbs down to programs but recommend improvements and discuss gaps similar to the NAWMP Assessment. There were differing opinions on the Committee as to whether the stick or carrot approach is best. With that said, at least the USFWS is going to continue to consider the review. Canada has developed a working group to do a similar review for Canada that is based on the principles in the monitoring report.

Natural Resources Monitoring Partnership (NRMP) and the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN) - The Subcommittee supports advancement of these databases and participation in these efforts by NABCI members. The NRMP and AKN are only as good as the information they house.

Making the Monitoring Report more useful to managers – In 2008, the Subcommittee will develop a list of questions that will help managers assess their own conservation programs based on the recommendations of the monitoring report.

Waterbirds and Monitoring – The Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative (Waterbird Initiative) wants to find ways to enable continent-wide monitoring programs to succeed. The Waterbird Initiative has recommendations for monitoring with respect to waterbirds and is worried about the longevity and care of databases into the future. For example, the Pacific seabird

monitoring network has no permanent funding and no staff; and the colonial waterbird monitoring database is at Patuxent but no plan for additional support or expansion exists. It will be critical to find ways to secure the long term viability of these databases. This issue is not unique to the waterbird initiative. Each year PIF looks for money to support its species assessment database and other initiatives continually struggle with this. One idea was to develop a 5 year agreement between the federal agencies to support the databases. Also, this could be one component of how we spend the climate change money. The Waterbird Initiative can also help the Monitoring Subcommittee provide messages on monitoring to developing programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Funding a full-time Monitoring Subcommittee Coordinator - What is the likelihood of having funding to support the monitoring subcommittee on a fulltime basic? What about using SWG money to support this? We could lay out how much it would take to institutionalize monitoring and develop a plan to fund it. The hard part is that there is nothing new and nothing sexy about monitoring. The Committee recommends selling it by saying that we can put together information on climate change better and more quickly than any other taxa. Therefore, the databases and a coordinator are important.

Action Items.

1. Develop a series of workshops that advance the goals and the objectives of the report.
2. Continue to pursue the review of monitoring programs
3. Develop a list of questions that will help managers assess their own conservation programs based on the recommendations of the monitoring report.
4. Committee members will take steps to advance the goals and objectives of the report through their organizations and agencies.
5. Connect monitoring with the climate change discussion and the transition team messages.

Waterbirds Conservation for the Americas Update

The last meeting of the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas Council was held jointly with the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network's (WHSRN) Hemispheric Council January 14-18, 2008. They met with WHSRN to enhance the joint relationship and consider working together on a hemispheric-wide waterbird/shorebird effort. The Waterbird Initiative is focused on facilitating waterbird conservation in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Representatives from numerous LAC countries were present at the meeting. The waterbird plan has been translated into Spanish. The next update will be done online through their website. The Waterbird Initiative has recently published an outreach piece that highlights their successes. It is available on their website (www.waterbirdconservation.org). A Rice and Waterbirds Working Group has been advancing dialogue with the rice industry, developing management and policy recommendations, and increasing our understanding of the relationship between waterbirds and rice cultivation.

Private Lands

2007 Update - The Subcommittee was formed in the middle of 2006. The Subcommittee is co-chaired by NRCS and FSA. NRCS recently hired a new national biologist, Terrell Erickson. Sally Benjamin has left FSA so the FSA co-chair position is currently vacant. The Subcommittee helped get time on the NRCS executive leadership agenda and prepare the presentation. They helped develop the June issue of the All-Bird Bulletin on private lands conservation. They also began working on a Farm Bill User's Guide and promoting strategic habitat initiatives.

Farm Bill User's Guide – With the reauthorization of the Farm Bill in high gear, the Subcommittee has started discussing a Farm Bill user's guide. A Guide to the Farm Bill was developed by Don McKenzie of WMI in the late 90s. The Subcommittee feels that an updated guide for the 2007 Farm Bill is critical. They contacted WMI and WMI has no plans to update the guide. The Subcommittee would like to see an updated guide available as soon as possible after reauthorization of the Farm Bill. Dave Walker, USFWS, developed a draft outline/table of contents that was circulated. The Subcommittee would like to hire Randy Gray, retired NRCS national biologist, to write the guide. Randy has connections throughout the conservation community not just the bird conservation community. The Intermountain West JV and the Association have offered financial support. They are looking for an additional \$2,000 to support the project. The guide will be a generic guide to the farm bill that any wildlife conservationists would find useful. Some members of the Committee wanted to make sure that the Association's Agriculture Conservation Committee was aware and on board. Jen Mock has been involved in the discussions from the beginning. The concept will be presented to the Association's Agriculture Conservation Committee in March and their input will be gathered. NRCS, co-chair of the Subcommittee, will be the focal point of the communications on the guide.

A Farm Bill Guide for the farmer – The Committee felt there was a need for another guide that would speak to the farmer as opposed to the wildlife conservationist. The guide would focus on how the Farm Bill can help farmers with their problems not push a program necessarily. Currently, CRP sign up is open during a specified time and farmers come in to sign up. This is not the ideal process. The Committee recommends that the guide be linked to websites such as the National Association of Wheat Growers and other sites that farmers visit regularly. We would need to talk to the Association and the American Farm Bureau. Steve Williams mentioned a grant to Kansas State University. He will find out the status of this grant. There is some work being done on this front at the regional and state level. For example, Joint Ventures are working with landowners to address their problems. Some NRCS staff are gathering data on the economics of the conservation programs that would be helpful. Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) has developed an online database that is built for landowners. It helps direct landowners to solutions for their problems. David Goad will provide information about the website. For such a guide to be successful, FSA offices need to be on board so that they can pitch our messages to farmers. Bringing this idea to NRCS and FSA is one option. The Private Lands Subcommittee will consider this idea.

Strategic Habitat Initiatives - The intent of this task is to collaboratively devise strategic bird conservation habitat initiatives with NRCS and FSA staff. The idea is to choose an area where we have good capacity in the bird community, where private lands are critical to the conservation of birds, and where we have good information and objectives developed for birds. We would help translate the regional bird initiative information into a format that would allow NRCS staff to develop strategic habitat initiatives similar to the Montana EQUIP riparian work and northern Bobwhite Quail examples. Terrell Erickson and Charlie Rewa are setting up a meeting between the Regional Assistant Chiefs and Deb Hahn and Dave Smith to talk about the concept. We need to sell it to NRCS. We would like to work through the NRCS leadership to promote the concept and talk about the tools can we provide NRCS to do this work. We need to show how examples such as the Northern Bobwhite Quail, Woodcock, etc. are having success. We are also going to do a web cast of the concept to NRCS biologists in late February or March.

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) - The CEAP is using bird data that is available to help show the benefits of the Farm Bill Conservation Programs to wildlife. For example, they are working with the Playa Lakes JV to use their Hierarchical All-Bird System (HABS) database.

Action Items:

1. David Goad will be added to the Private Lands Subcommittee
2. Steve Williams will send Deb information on the Kansas State University grant on the concept of a farmers guide to the farm bill.
3. David Goad will send Deb information on AGFC's website for farmers.
4. The Subcommittee will present the farm bill user's guide to the Association's Agriculture Conservation Committee.
5. The Subcommittee will advance the concept of strategic habitat initiatives with NRCS.
6. The Subcommittee will consider how a farm bill guide for farmers might be accomplished.
7. The Subcommittee will retain connections with the CEAP and State Wildlife Action Plan implementation.

Institutionalize bird conservation

The Monitoring Subcommittee is focusing on reaching out to federal agencies. They started with NRCS. They would like to take the NABCI vision to other federal agencies including NPS, BLM, DOD, and USGS and if possible to the Federal Bureau Directors meetings. The Committee continues to support this idea. The Committee feels that this is an ongoing task since bureau heads change. They also recommended including OMB, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Corps of Engineers on the list. The State Director Action Plan has not been expanded to include the Wildlife Diversity Program Managers but is still on the task list for 2008.

Conservation Design

The Conservation Design Subcommittee has held off developing tasks for 2008 until after the PIF international conference. There are numerous sessions that the Subcommittee is assisting with at the

PIF international conference. They include a session being led by Bob Altman and Tom Will that deals with population objectives; a session led by Jane Fitzgerald, Wayne Thogmartin, and Tim Jones on the current status of evaluation of bird-habitat relationships; and a session led by David Pashley, Ed Laurent, and Brian Smith that will address the greatest existing challenges in the science of bird conservation including issues of detectability, vital rates, continental connectivity, measuring environmental variables, determining population limiting factors, data management, and applications. Based on the outcome of these sessions the Subcommittee will determine its 2008 work plan.

Action Items

1. The Subcommittee will help develop sessions at the PIF international conference and use the outcome of the sessions to recommend next steps and potential workshop topics.

Resources Subcommittee

In August 2007, the Committee agreed that they needed a well laid out plan for getting more money for bird conservation. To date, we have not made the pie bigger. The Resources Subcommittee was developed to look at possible funding sources including the carbon sequestration legislation (David Pashley, Gary Myers, Greg Butcher, Geoffrey Walsh, Paul Schmidt, and Herb Raffaele). They were asked to work with the Bird Conservation Funding Coalition (BCFC) on getting more money in existing legislation, find out what the status of the carbon sequestration funding bills are (work with Gary Taylor, Association), and remain cognizant of other initiatives such as the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative.

The Resources Subcommittee focused on providing input on the climate change legislation language and how to fund the Continentally Important Proposals. The Committee would like them to continue with these efforts but also consider how to develop the larger funding strategy. There was also an interest in pulling together the amount of money spent in the US and Canada on conservation at the Continentally Important Proposal sites. This information would be used to make the argument that we need to protect our investment by supporting conservation in Mexico. Other ideas that came up in the discussion included the following. 1. Using carbon credits to encourage countries in Latin America to avoid cutting native vegetation and deforestation. 2. Developing a farm bill program for upland habitats. The forestry crowd has started this. 3. Getting the Continentally Important Proposals on the radar screen of federal agencies to make a link between the proposals and their programs.

Action Items

1. The Resources Subcommittee will prepare a strategy to increase support for bird conservation by the next NABCI meeting (August 2008).
2. The Subcommittee will keep involved with the Climate Change Legislation discussion to make sure that the key bird conservation programs continue to be included.
3. The Resources Subcommittee will work with the Association and the BCFC to coordinate budget recommendations in February 2008.

International

August 2007 Joint US/Mexico NABCI meeting - The U.S. NABCI Committee held a joint meeting with the Mexican NABCI Committee in August 2007 in Mexico City. Attending were 11 representatives each from the United States and Mexico and two representatives from Canada. The Committees compared and contrasted bird conservation in the three countries, strengthened their partnerships, and developed a list of priorities for collaboration over the next three to five years. The top priorities included research and monitoring, further development of regional alliances, completion of continentally important proposals, and improving communication between the countries and between NABCI Committees. See the US/Mexico NABCI Summary for more details.

Discussions were held with the Wetlands Council regarding supporting the development of additional regional alliances as they did with Marismas Nacionales. They are not interested in supporting the development of anymore regional alliances at this time but would consider it again in the future. It would be helpful to get them information on the benefits and outcomes as a result of the money they put into the Marismas Nacionales site. The Committee noted that there is infrastructure in Mexico that can and is supporting the regional alliances but that a little infusion of money can help advance the process more quickly. Deb has not heard from the Mexico NABCI about the status of their action items in regards to regional alliances.

The meeting also stressed monitoring and research and a need to better coordinate our programs. Currently, banding efforts and the Breeding Bird Survey are being expanded into Mexico. Mexico was invited to participate on the Monitoring Subcommittee but has not been active to date. The USGS is starting to develop Cooperative Research and Development Agreements with other countries. The Agreements allow USGS to approach the World Bank and talk about providing training and monitoring help in order to develop capacity in that country. This could be used in Mexico.

The Continentally Important Proposals have been pulled together into a succinct package in order to promote the proposals. The documents include an Introduction/Overview and a two-page document for each of the five proposals. All of the proposals connect to the U.S. but only 3 out of the 5 have a connection to Canadian partners. The proposals are the result of much hard work and provide an exciting yet daunting view of large scale conservation of birds. There was some interest in focusing on one or two sites (Yucatan and Grasslands potentially) because we do not have the capacity to engage in all 5 of the proposal at once. In addition, it is unclear of the capacity at the moment in Canada and Mexico to advance the proposals. Yucatan seems to have the most imminent threats from development and roads. There are expectations of NABCI (all three countries) and we will need to deliver something and address those expectations. The Committee recommended development of a second set of documents that highlight the top 3 or 4 priorities at each site. This will provide smaller more manageable funding opportunities that we can shop around as opposed to funding a 25 Million proposal for example. In addition, they would like to see a section added to the proposals that talks about what has been done at the sites to date. There is a lot

great work that should be acknowledged. The idea of working with the Mexican government to discuss if we could provide policy support was brought up. These might include talking about what we can do if anything in the Yucatan with the threat of a new highway on the peninsula. This issue could be raised at the upcoming Tri-lateral meeting in May which will be in Merida on the Yucatan Peninsula.

1. Gather information on what has been done at the 5 Mexico sites to date and add that information to the Continentally Important Proposal introductory document.
2. Work with Humberto Berlanga to compile a list of the 3-4 top priority actions at each site and develop a second set of documents with that information.
3. Work with Humberto Berlanga to have the documents translated into Spanish.
4. Determine if the NABCI Tri-national Committee can meet in May at the Tri-lateral.

Additional Topics

Enhancing communications with the Joint Ventures – Joint Ventures (JVs) are the main delivery mechanism for bird conservation and the Committee wants to ensure that there are good lines of communication between the Committee and the JVs. The Committee acknowledged the great work JVs do at the regional level. However, they want to ensure that there is someone on the Committee that has the JVs interests in mind during all of the discussions. Although there are a number of JV management board members on the Committee, they are focused on being the voice for other agencies, organizations, or initiatives. Committee members recommended a few potential actions. 1. Follow up with the Association of Joint Venture Management Board (AJVMB) after their February meeting. 2. Attend AJVMB meetings. 3. Ask the Chairs of the Joint Venture Management Boards if they would like to have a joint meeting with the NABCI Committee in August. August 12-13 were discussed as the dates for the next Committee meeting. The objective of the meeting would be to enhance the connection between the JVs and the Committee. 4. Invite Joint Ventures to the NABCI meetings each year so that they know they are welcome and valued. 5. Ask NABCI Committee members that are members of management board to present on NABCI activities at their board meetings. We would like to send the message that we want to better engage with the JVs to ensure good communication and see how the JVs respond.

Agreement on the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (ACAP) – The USFWS is anticipating participation in ACAP; however, it is seen as a treaty and must go through Congress for approval.

State of the Birds Report – The USFWS has been asked to develop a State of the Birds report for 2009. The intent is to engage the public and increase our connection to the public. It is a blank slate at the moment. They will begin developing the report this March. The Committee would like to be involved in the report to some degree and some of the members will be highly engaged. The USFWS is looking for recommendations and ideas. Ideas, recommendations, and comments from the Committee included the following.

- Consider doing a North American state of the birds.
- Review other state of the birds report. - Birdlife (global report), Royal society for the Protection of Birds, Australia has done a country-wide report.
- What about hiring a marketing firm if we want to speak to the public?
- In California, a coalition of groups are starting to write one for the state. They are considering promoting the importance of citizen scientists.
- Consider the state of the landscape. Tell the public what the state of the landscape and birds means to them?
- What do we think the public would do with such a report? - To stimulate public interest and involvement in conservation. They can have an impact on decision makers and policy makers on the state and federal level. The report could give the public actions they can engage on.
- Why not consider something more creative? The public can receive messages through text messages, websites, etc.
- What about using the report to influence congress? Consider including public policy solutions in the report.

New Potential Issues

Climate change, Energy, and Agricultural policy - In January 2007, the Committee acknowledged that climate change was a critical issue that they wanted to begin discussing. Sue Haseltine brought together a small group to discuss next steps. The group developed a session on climate change for the 2008 PIF conference. The session will look at how climate change is affecting birds throughout the U.S., Canada, and Mexico and will have a discussion on the next steps. Energy and agricultural policy are two other issues that are becoming more and more important at the national level that the Committee should begin to consider.

National Bird Conservation Datasets - Over next year, the Monitoring Subcommittee will consider potential strategies to secure large, long term databases that are critical to the initiatives. Geoff Walsh will investigate the development of multi-agency agreements for funding the databases also.