

**US NABCI COMMITTEE
16 MARCH 2001 - WASHINGTON, DC
MINUTES**

Members present - Marshall Jones and Bob McDowell, co-chairs
Jim Kushlan, Val Mezainis, Steve Miller, Gary Myers, Rollie Sparrowe, George Vandel,
Alan Wentz, Scott Yaich
Members absent - George Fenwick

**RESULTS FROM THE QUERETARO, MEXICO, MEETING AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP -**

I. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT - Attendees at the Queretaro meeting recommended development of a trinational bird conservation agreement to be signed at the highest level of accountability in each country. This document should emphasize broad partnerships and landscape ecology principles and, by building upon previous international agreements, provide authority and guidance to appropriate national committees and agencies. Although the initial signatories would be federal, this or an associated document could be signed by a broad set of partners. The US International Working Group recommended that the US NABCI Committee designate a small team to work on this drafting effort in conjunction with similar teams from Canada and Mexico.

The US NABCI Committee agreed to form a small team to work on this agreement, consisting of Herb Raffaele (USFWS), Len Ugarenko (IAFWA and US NABCI staff), and Jim Kushlan (Committee member). This team feels that a draft can be prepared within 6 months. Art Martell suggested that a similar process and timeline ought to be acceptable in Canada. Herb Raffaele will inquire regarding a schedule in Mexico.

II. TRINATIONAL COMMITTEE - A second recommendation emerging from Queretaro is for a revitalized Trinational Committee with clear accountability to the three National Committees. The US International Working Group suggests that this Trinational Committee should exist to serve the National Committees regarding issues with continental implications and in a general sense to increase understanding among the bird conservation communities of the three nations. The group further suggests that specific roles of a Trinational Committee should include interaction among initiatives, cross-border partnerships, demonstration projects, resource development, interaction with other international efforts, and communications.

The US NABCI Committee assessed its charter regarding membership in a Trinational Committee and decided to leave unchanged that description as well as current representation (Paul Schmidt as a federal representative, Gary Myers representing states, and George Fenwick representing NGOs). **The Committee also agreed to leave the specific roles suggested by the International Working Group unchanged.** It was pointed out that, although work with Canada and Mexico is extremely healthy, we should bear in mind the hemispheric nature of bird conservation. The Trinational Committee can represent NABCI beyond the three current member countries.

Once similar discussions have been completed in Canada and Mexico, the three National

Coordinators will suggest next steps, including scheduling of a Trinational Committee meeting, to the three National Committees/Councils and their Trinational representatives.

III. DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS - A third recommendation from Queretaro was development and implementation of international demonstration projects. The Partners in Flight Joint Steering Committees recommend that the US NABCI Committee develop funding sources for these demonstration projects, each originating in Mexico to benefit resident birds as well as wintering birds that are priority breeding species in the US and Canada. PIF further recommends that a small group be appointed to facilitate this process. Gary Myers introduced this proposal and a discussion over several points ensued:

- * A new funding source is not contemplated. The function is to facilitate project success using existing funding vehicles such as NAWCA. Indeed, Alan Wentz indicated that the Wetlands Council would welcome proposals that tie the three countries together.

- * Criteria for identification as a trinational NABCI project must be developed. The intent is not to build explicitly “NABCI” projects, but rather to highlight and improve the chances of success of projects that meet NABCI criteria. This cannot result in formation of a NABCI review bureaucracy, however.

- * Although this process will hopefully result in the creation of new projects, it should begin with identification of ongoing projects that meet the criteria, once they are established.

- * One of the points of this exercise is to demonstrate that interaction among initiatives and across international borders makes sense. The US NABCI Committee wants to show its support for such projects.

- * The suggestion coming out of Queretaro was for trinational projects to be rooted in Mexico and then tied to the US and Canada; within Mexico demonstration projects should start within identified Important Bird Areas (AICAs in Spanish).

- * **The Committee supports highlighting and developing demonstration projects given the above comments, and suggests that Doug Ryan, Herb Raffaele, and perhaps a few others be members of a team with the responsibility of working with similar teams from Canada and Mexico on criteria for demonstration projects. It was also suggested that the three National Coordinators be involved in this process.**

Decisions by the US NABCI Committee regarding all of these Trinational issues will be communicated to the chairs of the Canadian NABCI Council and Mexican NABCI Committee. This will be done through a letter from the US co-chairs (D. Pashley will produce a draft of this for co-chair review).

RESULTS OF THE MARCH 15 NABCI WORKSHOP -

Paul Schmidt presented the following results from the previous day’s workshop (full minutes from that workshop are available from Bob Ford at Robert_P_Ford@fws.gov):

- * The Bird Conservation Region is the appropriate unit in which to develop population and habitat objectives.

- * Birds must be conserved throughout their ranges and the US NABCI Committee should commit to securing resources for work in Mexico and the remainder of Latin America and the Caribbean. Funding of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Act could help in this regard.

- * States are encouraged to initiate all-bird working groups to the extent that they can add value to conservation efforts. It was suggested that states use Wildlife Conservation and

Restoration funds this year to help institute such groups and to implement all-bird conservation projects.

- * Coordination at the Bird Conservation Region level is an important function.
- * All-bird conservation should be delivered through Joint Ventures or other partnerships.
- * The US NABCI Committee should support increased funding to build capacity of all partners where needed to deliver bird conservation.
- * It is important to coordinate/facilitate/cooperate on effective development of new funds for conservation action.
- * NABCI will be supportive of local partnerships that form to deliver all-bird conservation at the BCR level.
- * At some future point a symposium should be held to foster all-bird conservation.

In the ensuing discussion, the strong interest expressed in the conservation of all birds was noted, along with comments that increased involvement by state wildlife agencies should be encouraged. In hopes of accomplishing this, **it was decided that a NABCI State Subcommittee be formed in parallel with the existing NGO and Federal Agency Subcommittees.** Bob McDowell will instigate this.

STAFF ASSIGNMENTS, ACTION PLAN, AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN -

At least two conceptual documents are needed in the near future. The first is a one to three year Action Plan outlining the direction of the US NABCI Committee. The second is completion of the Infrastructure Plan that has been in development over recent months stating and integrating the staffing and other resource needs of the bird initiatives over the next several years. These documents should reflect the breadth of views on the US NABCI Committee, but that Committee is unlikely to be able to complete them given its meeting schedule and other commitments of its members.

It was agreed that staff be assigned to the US NABCI Committee to work on these documents and also to further US NABCI business in general between formal Committee meetings. The staff group should reflect the diversity of US NABCI Committee members, and should consist of representatives of the four initiatives (Shorebirds - Brad Andres; Waterbirds - Jim Kushlan and/or Melanie Steinkamp; PIF - Terry Rich; NAWMP - Seth Mott), the co-chairs of the US NABCI Committee (USFWS - Bob Ford; IAFWA - Len Ugarenko), the Joint Ventures (Coordinator to be named), Flyway Council (?), Forest Service (?), WMI (Jim Woehr), the NABCI National Coordinator (David Pashley), and perhaps representatives of other Committee members as well.

Staff to the NABCI Committee will have drafts of an Action Plan and an Infrastructure Plan prepared prior to the next US NABCI Committee meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS -

A Communications Working Group has been formed, chaired by Ken Williams and including Scott Yaich, Len Ugarenko, Jim Woehr, and Chris Tollefson, with staffing support from David Pashley. With assistance from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, American Bird Conservancy, the Wildlife Management Institute, and the Federal Agency Subcommittee, **the Working Group is poised to enter into a contract for development of a NABCI Communications Strategy with DJ Case and Associates.** This contract will be signed

prior to the end of March, and a draft strategy developed for review by the US NABCI Committee thereafter. The US Communications Working Group is also integrating its activities with an Trinational Communications Group that was created to assist in development of the Queretaro meeting and will continue on other endeavors into the future.

INTERNATIONAL -

The International Working Group made recommendations regarding trinational or continental issues as noted above, but sees its long-term role as being truly international, extending beyond the three current NABCI nations into the entire year-round ranges of the birds that are the conservation focus of NABCI. It is currently developing a vision of expansion of conservation potential through Latin America and the Caribbean as well as investigating some international funding possibilities.

NEXT MEETING -

Jim Kushlan made the following comments regarding the next meeting of the US NABCI Committee:

It is believed that much rides on the success of the US NABCI Committee in fulfilling its role and function in making NABCI successful, but there is uncertainty as to what this role and function should be. It would therefore be extremely helpful to have a long meeting or retreat of a full day or longer in which that function could be made explicit. Possible issues to discuss include:

- * What is the Committee's role - facilitation, coordination, communication, other?
- * How will the Committee or its chairs undertake supervisory responsibilities - for the National Coordinator, Staff Committee, BCR Coordinators?
- * What are the roles of the various Subcommittees, and how should they report to the full Committee?
- * What types of resolutions should the Committee pass - instructions, endorsements, approvals?
- * How should the Committee deal with requests to secure funding or other resources?
- * Can the Committee's business practices, meeting rules, and other operational matters be more precisely defined?
- * What are the responsibilities of the IAFWA and USFWS staff to the Committee and its co-chairs?
- * Should the Committee be proactive, taking leadership and guiding initiatives, or should it be reactive to prompts from initiatives?

In addition, the retreat should include review of the status of the Action Plan and Infrastructure Plan noted above.

Other agenda items suggested were a report from the Demonstration project team and suggestions from the Shorebird Plan on monitoring and research.

If possible, the retreat should take place in June at the National Conservation and Training Center in West Virginia. Dates will be suggested in the very near future.