

**Joint JV/NABCI and U.S. NABCI Committee Meeting
Tasks and Summary
August 4-5, 2009
Arlington, Virginia**

Committee members in attendance: Catherine Hickey (U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan), Geoffrey Walsh (for Dwight Fielder Bureau of Land Management), Greg Butcher (National Audubon Society), Greg Kidd (Acting National Biologist Natural Resources Conservation Service), Jim Kushlan (Waterbird Conservation for the Americas), John Hoskins (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies), Dave Mehlman (The Nature Conservancy), Ken Williams (for Sue Haseltine, U.S. Geological Survey), Skip Hyberg (for Matt Ponish, Farm Service Agency), Jennifer Lee and Carol Beidleman (for Bert Frost, National Park Service), Marcia Maslonek (for the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Laurie Osterndorf (for Matt Frank, Partners in Flight), Carol Lively (U.S. Forest Service), Steve Williams (Wildlife Management Institute), David Goad (National Waterfowl Management Plan), Bob Ellis (National Flyway Council)

Joint Venture Coordinators and Management Board Members: Bob Shaffer (Central Valley JV), Andy Bishop (Rainwater Basin JV), Mike Carter and Barth Crouch (Playa Lakes JV), Barb Pardo (Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes JV), Casey Stemler (Prairie Pothole JV), Bill Uilhein (Lower Mississippi Valley JV), Andrew Milliken (Atlantic Coast JV), Robert Mesta (Sonoran JV), Mary Gustafson (Rio Grande JV), Carey Smith (Pacific Coast JV), Brian Smith (Appalachian JV), Catherine Rideout (East Gulf Coastal Plain JV), Jane Fitzgerald (Central Hardwoods JV), Ken Sambor (Northern Great Plains JV), Tim Connolly (Oaks and Prairies JV), Ellie Cohen (San Francisco Bay and Central Valley JV), DeeCee Darrow (Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes JV), Rick Warhurst (Northern Great Plains JV), Steve Brock (Lower Mississippi Valley JV), Jim Giocomo (Oaks and Prairie JV), Beth Huning (San Francisco Bay JV), Erik Vink (Central Valley JV)

Other participants: Deb Hahn (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies), Brad Andres (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Guy Foulks (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Seth Mott (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Alicia King (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Terry Rich (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Jennifer Wheeler (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Mike Johnson (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Mike Kreger (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Glen Olsen (National Audubon Society), Gene DeGayner (U.S. Forest Service), Darin Shroeder (American Bird Conservancy)

Purpose of August 2009 meeting:

- **determine tasks and priorities to support the Joint Ventures,**
- **discuss progress on 2009 objectives,**
- **decide on recommendations to advance 2009-2010 tasks,**
- **determine resources needed to complete 2009-2010 objectives, and**
- **plan dates for winter 2010 meeting.**

Next U.S. NABCI Committee Meeting

TBD – Deb will send out a Doodle survey to assess the best dates. Early January is the preferred time for the Chair.

Short-term Tasks from the meeting

- Deb Hahn – Finalize summary from JV/NABCI and NABCI Committee meeting
- Deb Hahn – Determine dates for Conference call in October and NABCI meeting in early 2010.
- Deb Hahn – Work with the JV Communications, Education and Outreach Committee to develop outreach material for the JV Legislation ASAP. Distribute to NGO and state agency partners.
- Committee – Review JV task list and determine next steps on October conference call.
- Policy Legislative Subcommittee – Edit Charter based on comments. Move forward by finalizing Subcommittee process and actions with consideration of federal agency membership on NABCI. Add Dave Mehlman, TNC, to the Subcommittee. Prepare for the October Committee conference call.
- Dave Mehlman – Finalize BCR update process based on comments. Announce request for proposed BCR map updates.
- Communications Subcommittee – Work with Committee to increase membership. Finalize framework.
- Committee – Develop a strawdog for future funding of NABCI Coordination.
- Committee – Develop criteria for membership
- State of the Birds – Provide the NABCI Committee an opportunity to comment on the draft report.
- State of the Birds – Discuss the theme for the 2011 report at the Committee’s Winter 2010 meeting.
- Monitoring Subcommittee – Send information from July workshop on databases to Committee.

August 4 - Joint Venture/NABCI Meeting

BACKGROUND: In August 2008, the U.S. NABCI Committee (Committee) began looking strategically at where the Committee needs to focus its activities over the next 3 to 5 years. Supporting and collaborating with the Joint Ventures was identified as a priority. A face to face meeting between JV coordinators and management board members and the U.S. Committee is necessary to define JV priorities and U.S. Committee tasks to help meet those priorities.

PURPOSE: to determine U.S. Committee priorities/tasks for the next 3 to 5 years to support and partner with Joint Ventures in the delivery of integrated bird conservation.

OBJECTIVE: This meeting represents an opportunity

- to exchange information on current activities of both the Committee and the JVs; and

- to determine what assistance the Committee and their respective organizations can provide to JVs and prioritize that assistance based on what the Committee can accomplish and where the Committee can add the most value.

An overview of NABCI and the JVs was presented by Deb Hahn and Seth Mott, respectively. Bob Shaffer and Brian Smith provided information on their JVs. The JV presentations demonstrated the similarities and differences between JVs of different ages and geographic extents. Terry Rich, Jennifer Wheeler, and Brad Andres, Bird Conservation Initiative Coordinators, discussed how they are using the JV matrix of desired characteristics (Matrix) to do a self-assessment of their initiatives and provided other relevant information including a presentation on PIF's Tri-national Vision (presentation on the web at). Even though the initiatives have been around from 10-20 years, they are still a staff of one, and an increase in capacity could help deliver critical biological information for the biological foundation and conservation design. As the bird conservation initiatives or nongame partnerships enter a new phase of maturity, they are using the Matrix to determine minimal and comprehensive content for their initiatives as well as to conduct a self-assessment. The morning session was an opportunity to meet each other and exchange information. The next part of the meeting was focused on the second objective.

First, the group developed an initial (broad) list of JV priorities that NABCI could potentially help JVs address. The list was laid out based on the categories of the JV matrix with the exception of a few categories added at the meeting including international and emerging issues. The Matrix was started as an exercise to examine minimum standards, performance accountability, and self-assessment. It also includes comprehensive content that identifies the ideal expectations of the JVs. The table below summarizes the ideas from the brainstorming session.

JV Matrix Elements	Potential areas where NABCI could add value/support the JVs
Organizational performance	Increased funding
	Improve NABCI member organizations/agencies representation on JV Boards
	Help track accomplishments (evaluation)
Biological Planning	Increased coordination of bird initiatives on particular issues/topics
	Garner expertise from other organizations and agencies to support JV needs
Conservation Design	
	Garner expertise from other organizations and agencies specifically to support modeling needs (e.g., where is additional expertise on modeling found to support JV modeling needs?)

	Help get or promote the importance of mapping/satellite imagery to determine changes at the landscape level
Habitat Delivery	Influence policy that impacts on the ground implementation (e.g., Farm Bill, BLM renewable energy offices, etc.)
	Coordinate with AWWI on mapping for wind energy development
Monitoring	Help coordinate monitoring between JVs and through development of regional partnerships (need to develop something specific here)
Research	Inform key partners/universities/foundations of JV research needs (how, what specific action?)
Communication Education and Outreach (CEO)	Help improve communication among and outside of the bird community in conjunction with the CEO team
	Use the State of the Birds report to advance JVs and speak with one voice at a national scale.
	Increased knowledge about the JVs and the matrix of desired characteristics
	Work with the CEO team to promote important legislation such as the JV bill in the Senate
International (not in matrix)	Assist with international coordination and cooperation and promote the importance of international cooperation and connections.
Emerging Issues	Help the JVs address critical challenges and common threats. Some of these may come from the State of the Birds report (E.g. energy development, wind siting, biofuels, climate change, etc.)
Other	Help the JVs adapt to change

In the afternoon, participants attempted to prioritize the list in the Table above and develop specific tasks to recommend to the Committee. The Committee will discuss these tasks over

the coming months and respond the JVs on what tasks the Committee feels it can accomplish over the next 3 years, in the context of the other tasks they are addressing.

The main topics included—policy/funding, communications, and cross agency coordination (including science support). International was brought up by some of the JVs but there was not consensus on this being a priority. These broad topics are listed below and each has a list of specific tasks and/or actions that are high priority.

Policy/Funding

1. Climate change and wildlife adaptation – We need to defend why we need money for wildlife in climate change legislation.
 - a. Develop JV examples on the ground of how JVs will help habitats adapt to climate change. What will the impacts be and how will you deal with them? What will you do differently in light of climate change? JVs are the tools to address climate change. We should sell the JVs based on this idea. We need to show the impacts to show that we need more money. We have the infrastructure and capacity to adapt to climate change and here is what we would do. (note: We need modeling products and research from USFS, USGS, and others.)
2. Underfunding for science agencies (USGS etc.)
 - a. Help break down barriers to scientific cooperation with science agencies including a lack of funding.
3. Renewable energy siting (wave energy, solar and wind including associated transmission) – Renewable portfolio standards and other incentives are increasing the pace of renewable energy development.
 - a. Demonstrate and advocate that conservation needs to be a priority with other considerations when siting energy.
 - b. Help JVs get the capacity and tools to address siting issues
 - c. Encourage policy makers to take the science that we have and use it to inform siting
 - d. Engage with new and non traditional partners (E.g., American Wind Wildlife Institute (AWWI))
 - e. Develop a list of species affected by development and communicate that to wind industry.
4. State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP)
 - a. Help connect to the SWAPs.

Communications

1. Increase information about JVs across conservation organizations and agencies- demonstrate importance of JVs and the importance of their participation as partners in the JVs
2. Coordinate messages on climate change and renewable energy and other emerging issues – Use messages that resonate with policy makers such as human health issues.
3. Be a single voice for bird conservation in support for the JV legislation
 - a. Work with the JV Communication, Education and Outreach Team to develop a summary of HR 2188 and messages to support the legislation for distribution to non-federal partners.

4. Craft messages about international work and its importance.

Cross Agency Coordination (includes science support)

1. Advocate for the need to regularly (maybe every 3 years) see the state of the system through satellite imagery. The discussion should be with USGS (best they can do is every 5 years), NOAA, USDA (LANDFIRE), and EPA (Note: USGS has 10 million under the climate change center to apply to conservation. This might help. How do we influence the current funding that is available?).
2. Present to and engage the DOI Roundtable, BLM state directors, and other federal agency leadership to increase cross agency coordination on specific issues.
3. Identify and address barriers (including changing or developing policy) to interagency partnerships
4. Improve science and data coordination between agencies.

International

1. Help set the stage for non-border JVs to realize the importance of the priority species. Many JVs do not have the capacity at the moment or have higher priority issues but need help to understand how they can meaningfully interact internationally.
2. Continue to promote and increase the promotion of border JV work (e.g., grasslands proposal).
3. Keep up to date on the tools available for cross-border conservation to both the south and north.
4. Help bring more capacity to work internationally. For example, more money for the Continentally Important Proposals.

Bottom Line

The JVs and NABCI need to continue communicating and engaging together. The JVs need help at a national level from NABCI on coordination and communication (speaking with one voice, developing a set of simple messages)

U.S. NABCI Committee meeting - August 5, 2009

(This section follows the Annotated Agenda. See Annotated Agenda for background information)

Policy Legislative Subcommittee

The Subcommittee has started to form and met on July 6 and 27. The draft Charter was distributed for Committee member review. The charter outlines how the Subcommittee proposes to operate and what it should do. The current NABCI members participating in developing the Subcommittee includes Scott Yaich (DU), Darin Schroeder (ABC), Steve Williams (WMI), Ellie Cohen (PRBO), Deb Hahn (for AFWA), Greg Butcher (National Audubon Society), Paul Schmidt (USFWS), Dan James (USGS), Edith Thompson (USFWS), Jennifer Lee (NPS), and Kirk Nelson (NE).

The Committee spent most of the time discussing the ability for NABCI to have this Subcommittee while having federal membership and commenting on the draft Charter. The Committee agreed that we need to be clear that non-federal partners would be leading the charge and that federal agencies would not be members of the Subcommittee. Although proposals or recommendations would be brought to the NABCI board, federal members would just be advisors. In general, the federal agency members in attendance were comfortable with a non-federal lead effort through the Subcommittee. They recommended that the Subcommittee should complement other efforts and know where it needs to fit in with the many other efforts going on in the policy arena (E.g., Bird Conservation Funding Coalition, American Wildlife Conservation Partners, and individual NGOs etc.). The Committee felt that it is powerful if a policy, bill or other issue has the support of a group such as NABCI as opposed to individual non-federal members.

The Subcommittee needs to develop a list of criteria that it will use to determine what it will address in this area. They may include 1) it is a NABCI priority, 2) it adds value to the current work being done in the conservation community, and 3) it will have a significant impact to bird conservation. The Subcommittee may want to look at the threats in the State of the Birds Report and use those as guidance. For example, the Subcommittee could focus on climate change and identify 3 or 4 things to do relative to climate change. This would also connect to the 2010 State of the Birds report.

Comments on Charter –

1. more clearly define how the Subcommittee will interact and work with the Committee
2. Clearly demonstrate a link to the BCFC
3. Ensure the Charter is clear that only non-federal members will participate.
4. Reexamine bullet 4 under “Procedures” – the Committee is not sure about consensus.
5. Be clear we are in an advocacy role – If we spend too much time lobbying we will need to become a federal lobbyist and that is not what the Committee would want. The Committee was clear that lobbying is not the intent of the Subcommittee.

Next Steps

1. Subcommittee will update charter based on comments
2. Subcommittee will develop a list of recommended items that it works on based on criteria.
3. Federal agencies will have internal discussion about this Subcommittee.
4. The Committee will discuss the Subcommittee on an October conference call

Bird Conservation Funding Coalition (BCFC)

The BCFC would also like to reconnect with NABCI and consider ways it can support NABCI priorities many of which are already included on their list. They would like to revisit their priorities and membership and consider linking more closely to the Bird Conservation Alliance (BCA) to do grassroots Hill work.

The current atmosphere on the Hill right now is tough. Many members do not want to increase appropriations making it hard to push through reauthorization of the Neotrop Act. Some in Congress are saying NAWCA is a land grab and a tax on sportsman. This is unnerving when programs like NAWCA have traditionally received strong bipartisan support. It highlights the need for a coordinated effort to support bird conservation priorities. It will be important to work with and collaborate with the Policy and Legislative Subcommittee.

Communications

Greg Butcher reviewed the draft Communications Framework and the long list of communication issues and tasks for the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee has benefited from professional communications staff associated with the State of the Birds Report and also has had some new members from Committee member organizations (E.g., PRBO) and JVs.

The Committee was supportive of its direction and was impressed with the framework. The Committee reconfirmed the priority that communications has but acknowledged that we are still not going as far into the community as possible. Everyone (E.g., TU, QU, WMI, state agencies, etc.) should have links to the State of the Birds report on their websites. We should also better connect with NAWMP and the resident game bird community. Attending regional state agency association meetings should be a priority. More emphasis should be made to get the state of the Birds report out to more audiences and use it as the unifying factor.

The Subcommittee agreed but noted that in order to accomplish what the Committee wants to accomplish it needs more support from Committee members and their organizations/agencies staff. At the very least, the Subcommittee could use a point of contact in each Committee member organization or agency.

State of the Birds

A video for the State of the Birds report is available on the website (www.stateofthebirds.org). Brad Bortner (brad_bortner@fws.gov) and Alicia King (Alicia_F_King@fws.gov), USFWS, are facilitating report development and the communications effort. The Committee agreed that we need to get the link to the website on as many of our websites as possible. The Committee supported the general direction of the 2010 State of the Birds report but asked to have input into future report topics. This will occur at the Committee's winter meetings each year. They also asked to review the draft document. Climate change is a daunting challenge and the Subcommittee needs to be clear on the science being used in the report. The Committee's final recommendation was that this Subcommittee collaborate with the Policy and Legislative Subcommittee when writing the report.

BCR Map Update Process

At the Committee's request, Dave Mehlman developed a draft process to update the BCR map. Dave has agreed to take the lead on collating the requests after they are submitted and forwarding them to the Working Group. The Committee emphasized that the onus is on the

person proposing the change to demonstrate that the need outweighs the consequences of changing the map. Although Committee members had some concerns about opening up the discussion they approved the process with a few recommendations.

1. Increase connection with the JVs.
2. Add the original intent or objective of the map to the document. This should be found in the original BCR map document. The purpose was to do large scale planning therefore every small change at the local level may not be needed on the larger map.

Waterbird Conservation for the Americas asked about adding marine BCRs. The current marine BCRs are informal and have not been agreed to across the community but might be in the future. There was agreement that this would be the venue to consider the changes. However, with additions that significant, the financial costs of redoing the map would need to be considered also.

Monitoring

In 2005, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) spearheaded a coordinated monitoring report with federal and state agencies. The report focused on connecting monitoring to the conservation or management question. AFWA asked NABCI to take over ownership of the report and broaden the stakeholders involved in the discussion. NABCI created the Monitoring Subcommittee and produced a report in 2007. Key improvements that the report identified included 1) effectiveness – conservation objectives, 2) scope, 3) utility (better statistical design and data management), and 4) increased coordination. It also outlined four main goals one of which focused on data management—Maintain information in modern data management systems.

At the request of the Committee, the Subcommittee began work on data management and securing priority data management systems. The Subcommittee has accomplished the following.

1. modified the Bromely principles for use in the bird conservation community
2. identified the priority databases of the initiatives
3. conducted a workshop on July 7-8, 2009 to develop a matrix of criteria to review priority databases and discuss national standards for database management.

Next steps:

1. Populate the matrix of criteria developed at the workshop to identify the resource needs of each priority database.
2. Develop a best management practices document that should be completed in October 2009.
3. Develop a funding needs document based on step #1 above for the Committee and other decision makers.
4. The Subcommittee is also considering how best to disseminate the best management practices document – The Committee recommended going to the practitioner with the more technical information and the manager with the higher level discussion.

The Committee is comfortable with the direction the Subcommittee is taking and asked to see the documents produced at the July workshop.

Criteria for Considering Additional Members

To date, the Committee has not developed or needed criteria for membership. A number of members were added in 2005 in response to change in priorities and a change in structure (E.g., Conservation on private lands was a new priority and NRCS and FSA were invited to the table.). The Committee has grown and changed organically. Some members are concerned about keeping the Committee to a manageable size and want to be conservative about additional growth.

The Subcommittees are the place for many organizations to impact and work on national priorities without everyone sitting on the Committee. The Committee feels that without criteria we open the door to too many requests. There is no question that Cornell Lab is a critical partner in NABCI through both the State of the Birds report and the monitoring efforts. They also have a critical role in citizen science. However, the real issue is not the merit of Cornell Lab but how the Committee addresses membership requests and the size and composition of the Committee to meet NABCI goals.

Potential criteria include size of the Committee, role of an organization or agency, consideration of industry membership, and financial contributions (E.g., funding for coordination).

Long term funding for Coordination

The funding for coordination ends in December 31, 2009. The USGS and USFWS have been a consistent supporter of Coordination to date and do not see that changing. They would, however, like to see a broader base of support for the cost of coordination. Some members think that members should have to “pay to play.” In these economic times that might be difficult. A strawman of a dues structure will be developed based on a budget for coordination. Greg Butcher will take the lead on discussions with NGO members about potential contributions. Federal agency members are asked to consider what resources they could bring to the table also. Members did not feel the initiatives should have to contribute. The Committee will discuss this on their October conference call.

Updates (due to the short length of the meeting we were unable to discuss the following updates but they are included for informational purposes.)

Private lands

Vision: To better serve and interact with private landowners, all State and Federal land management agencies have incorporated specific bird conservation objectives from the regional, national, and continental bird conservation plans into their land use plans and land management practices.

2009 Status:

1. **Comments on the Farm Bill** – The Committee submitted comments on the proposed rules for the Farm Bill Conservation Programs in March. The letters emphasized key parts of the programs that impact and are important to bird conservation and the Committee’s desire to work with NRCS and FSA to develop the final rules. The Comments were developed

with the support of the Subcommittee and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Agricultural Conservation Committee.

2. **Develop a Farm Bill user's guide** – The Subcommittee in partnership with the Intermountain West Joint Venture developed and published the *Wildlife Conservationist's Guide to the Farm Bill*. The document is posted to the NABCI website in pdf format for downloading (<http://www.nabci-us.org/aboutnabci/FBGuide1.pdf>). It is also available on a standalone website so that it is easy to update as Farm Bill programs are implemented (<http://www.nabci-us.org/fbguidehome.htm>). The Guide has been a great success. Over 3,000 copies have been requested for hard copy and other organizations are already tailoring the document to their own local needs.

3. **Strategic habitat initiative** – As a follow up to the numerous discussions with NRCS and FSA about strategically implementing Farm Bill Conservation Programs with wildlife goals in mind, we are striving to increase biologist capacity in order to implement the conservation programs. We surveyed NRCS and state fish and wildlife agency staff to prepare a white paper outlining needs, opportunities, and objectives for continuing to build the capacity necessary to harness the wildlife potential of the Farm Bill. The White Paper and a glossy one pager was presented to and discussed with the Chief of NRCS on August 5. John Hoskins, David Goad, and Laurie Osterndorf represented NABCI at the meeting.

PIF Tri-national Vision

The primary work of the PIF Science Committee over the last year has been to produce an extension to the PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan which will include all the landbirds of the U.S., Canada and Mexico. This conservation assessment will include 900 species, or nearly 10% of the world's avifauna – a clearly unprecedented project. PIF will not produce a new Watch List, but rather will focus on different groups of priority species with different sorts of needs. These include long-distance migrants, endemics, species shared by all three nations, common species with steep declines, and a few other groups. The overriding message will be “shared species, shared problems, and shared opportunities.” We expect to produce a document more like the State of the Birds report than the original PIF Plan so that the content is more accessible to a broader audience. Nonetheless, its foundation remains in the PIF Species Assessment Process which now includes the entire Mexican avifauna and a substantially updated threats assessment. The Tri-national Vision will be produced in English, Spanish and French. The document will be produced for release at the North American in Milwaukee in 2010 to help celebrate the 20th anniversary of Partners in Flight.

International

Draft vision: Within the U.S., there is much more prioritization of international bird conservation work, including increased funding for international work for priority bird species and habitats, better understanding of limiting factors, and increased communication and collaboration among conservation partners internationally.

2009 Status:

Continentially Important Proposals - The Continentially 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. There are expectations of NABCI (all three countries) and we will need to deliver something and address those expectations. Both the Mexican and Canadian NABCI representatives of the Tri-national Committee agreed to look for funding within their countries for the proposals. There was a Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative meeting in Hohhot China on June 28-29, 2008. The discussion was lead by NGO and academics in Mexico and focused on the North American grasslands. This could potentially help implement the grasslands continentally important proposal and help develop the regional alliance and bi-national Joint Venture in this area. A proposal was submitted to the CEC to fund grassland conservation in Mexico that would be complimented by funds from the Canadian Wildlife Service. The proposal (\$150,000) was accepted. A Coordinator will be hired in Mexico through the Mexican government agency of CONABIO. The Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) will be leading the monitoring and mapping aspects of the project. We hope for continued CEC funding over the next 3 to 5 years.