



US NABCI Committee Meeting Tasks and Summary February 27-28, 2007 Arlington, Virginia

Committee members in attendance: Bruce McCloskey (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies), Paul Schmidt (for Dale Hall, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on February 27), Dale Hall (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on February 28), Breck Carmichael (Resident Game Bird Working Group), David Pashley (American Bird Conservancy), Bea VanHorne (for Val Mezainis, U.S. Forest Service), Richard Bishop (North American Waterfowl Management Plan), Catherine Hickey (U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan), Sue Haseltine (USGS), Gary Myers (Partners in Flight), Dwight Fielder (Bureau of Land Management), Dave Mehlman (The Nature Conservancy), Greg Butcher (National Audubon Society), Charlie Rewa (Natural Resource Conservation Service), Sally Benjamin (Farm Service Agency), Kirk Nelson (Association of Joint Venture Management Boards), Scott Yaich (Ducks Unlimited), Chris Eberly (for Peter Boice Department of Defense), Vernon Beville (National Flyway Council), Jim Kushlan (Waterbird Conservation for the Americas).

Others: Debbie Hahn, Seth Mott, Roxanne Bogart, Marie Strassburger, Amy Krause

The Committee agreed the purpose of meeting was to:

- **discuss progress on 2006 objectives,**
- **review products of the Subcommittees,**
- **determine 2007 objectives/tasks,**
- **determine resources needed to complete 2007 objectives, and**
- **plan the summer 2007 meeting.**

Next US NABCI Committee Meeting

Date To Be Determined – The Committee is pursuing a joint meeting with the Mexican NABCI Council in the summer of 2007

Key Tasks (Please see the 2007 Work Plan for a complete task list)

- **Deb/Bruce** Send a letter to each member of the Monitoring Subcommittee from the US NABCI Committee thanking them for their hard work
- **US NABCI Committee** - Send comments to Paul Schmidt (paul_r_schmidt@fws.gov) and Bea VanHorne (bvanhorne@fs.fed.us) on the Monitoring Subcommittee work plan by March 13, 2007.
- **US NABCI Committee** - Send comments to Paul Schmidt (paul_r_schmidt@fws.gov) and Bea VanHorne (bvanhorne@fs.fed.us) on the Draft MOU for monitoring by April 15, 2007.
- **Sue Haseltine** – Conduct a conference call to discuss climate change and the federal budget. Committee members should email Sue (susan_haseltine@usgs.gov) if they are interested in participating.

- **Monitoring/Communications Subcommittee** - Develop a presentation and talking points about the monitoring report for Committee members to use at the North American Conference
- **Deb** – Develop a meeting summary and task list.
- **Deb** – Set up a conference call for the US NABCI Committee on May 1, 2007 10:00AM – 12:00 PM Eastern Time. Agenda items include the draft MOU on monitoring, a summer meeting in Mexico, the status of proposals under a National Conservation Need, and an update on Conservation Design tasks.

Summary of Discussions

Monitoring

Meetings of the Monitoring Subcommittee occurred in March and May 2006 and a draft report was sent to the US NABCI Committee (Committee) on August 11, 2006. Comments were requested from the bird conservation community and received by November 16, 2006. Comments were consolidated and addressed at a January 3-4, 2007 meeting. A final draft of the report was submitted to the Committee on February 16, 2007.

The Committee reiterated it's thanks to the members of the Subcommittee for their hard work and for producing an excellent report. The report was endorsed by the Committee and will be distributed at the North American Conference in March. A bulk of the discussion focused on the proposed 2007 work plan for the Subcommittee and in particular on the draft MOU. The intent of the MOU was to provide formal endorsement, a restatement of the goals of report, and clear identification of Committee member's responsibility for helping implement the report. A majority of the Committee members were in support of signing the MOU. Two concerns raised were that it would take significant time and effort for some members to get the MOU signed and that the MOU was not concrete enough and therefore would not have the desired affect. The primary reason stated in support of signing the MOU was the benefit behind the process and discussions that would need to be held in order to have the document signed.

The Committee is interested in more on the ground examples of how coordinated monitoring works and will be looking to the Bird Conservation Committee NCN as a potential funding source for more on the ground coordinated monitoring projects. The Committee felt that supporting on the ground efforts and working the MOU through the Committee member's leadership would be a good two pronged approach. The Committee supported the idea of a nationwide monitoring proposal if the Bird Conservation Committee NCN is accepted.

Action Items

1. Send comments to Paul Schmidt (paul_r_schmidt@fws.gov) and Bea VanHorne (bvanhorne@fs.fed.us) on the NABCI work plan by March 13, 2007.
2. Comments on the Draft MOU for monitoring to Paul Schmidt (paul_r_schmidt@fws.gov) and Bea VanHorne (bvanhorne@fs.fed.us) by April 15, 2007.
3. Develop a presentation and talking points on the report.

4. Present the report to the Bird Conservation Committee and the National Flyway Council at the North American Conference.
5. Take an action item on the report from the Bird Conservation Committee to the Association Business meeting.

Private Lands

The Subcommittee was formed in the middle of 2006 and brought a task list to the Committee in August 2006. The main task for the end of 2006 was the development of a workshop at the NRCS National Biologist meeting in March 2007. The task was advanced but the meeting was cancelled. Two new tasks were developed to replace the workshop and they include a set of WebEx presentations to NRCS State Conservationists and biologists and a presentation at the National Leadership meeting on July 10-11, 2007.

Action Items:

1. The Committee supported the tasks for 2007.
2. Bruce McCloskey and Dale Hall will sign a letter to NRCS leadership asking for time on the July meeting agenda to talk about integrated bird conservation, NABCI, State Wildlife Action Plans, and Joint Ventures.
3. The Communications Subcommittee will dedicate an All-Bird Bulletin to case studies/examples about bird conservation actions on private lands. Case studies/examples may come from NRCS, FSA, FWS Private Lands, USFS State and Private Forestry, and Audubon's waterbird and private lands work.

Conservation Design

The Conservation Design Subcommittee developed a 2 hour Plenary Session for the 2006 Association meeting on integrated bird conservation and conservation design. The Plenary session was a success and the information/presentations/handouts from the presentation are available on the NABCI website. Partners in Flight conducted a technical workshop in St. Louis to advance conservation design. It was well attended by States and Joint Ventures.

The Subcommittee is not sure if the community is ready to proceed with more technical workshops on conservation design. The Committee had a brainstorming session on the 2007 tasks. The Committee discussed whether follow up from the plenary session with State Directors was necessary. The follow up could include an invitation to send 1 or 2 staff to a 2-3 day workshop on conservation design. At the very least, it could remind State Directors about conservation design and provide the link to the presentations. The potential of a workshop on conservation design at the 2008 North American Conference was also discussed. Implementation of the State Wildlife Action Plans could be the carrot to get folks to the table on conservation design. The conservation design concept should be tied in with the presentations to federal agencies.

Action Items

1. The Subcommittee will recommend a list of tasks for 2007 by the May 1 conference call.

Communications

The Committee thanked Scott Yaich for his leadership on the Communications Subcommittee. The Committee also thanked Greg Butcher for agreeing to be the lead on the Subcommittee.

A key recommendation was focused on expanding membership of the Subcommittee to include more state and federal partners and a member of each of the other Subcommittees. The Committee is still interested in developing a piece on NABCI accomplishments. For example, the Bird Conservation Funding Coalition (BCFC) was born out of the NABCI NGO Subcommittee. Although budgets have not increased the BCFC has played a role in keeping budgets stable. Appropriations staff specifically said that coming together with one voice was extremely effective.

The Committee had a discussion on conservation funding levels in the federal budget. The Committee would like to help promote a discussion within the conservation community about increasing the size of the environmental cap. Some members felt we might need a second meeting similar to what WMI put on in 2003. The Committee also discussed the need to reengage and reconnect with the Joint Ventures.

Action Items

1. Develop All-Bird Bulletins (ABB) focused on the monitoring report, private lands management and bird conservation, and international conservation.
2. Send private lands case studies to Greg Butcher and Roxanne Bogart for the ABB on private lands.
3. Assist the Monitoring Subcommittee in developing a presentation and talking point on the monitoring report for the North American.
4. Recommend a process by which the bird conservation awards will be decided in the future, consider whether we need to change the award criteria or not, and consider what the potential venues are where the award could be presented over the years.

International

At the August 2006 Committee meeting, it was decided to pursue a summer 2007 meeting in conjunction with the Mexico NABCI Committee. The Committee asked that the International Subcommittee take the lead on moving this forward. The International Subcommittee met on January 9 to discuss objectives, timing, location, etc. Herb Raffaele, Chair of the International Subcommittee spoke to officials in SEMARNAT, the Mexico NABCI Coordinator and others during a recent visit to Mexico. In general the response to pursuing a meeting between the two Committees was positive. Humberto Berlanga, Mexico NABCI Coordinator is going to take the issue to the Mexico NABCI Council at their March meeting. The U.S. Embassy is informed and willing to help. August 2007 is the recommended month.

Potential topics –

1. What is the bird conservation landscape in Mexico and US?
2. Challenges to bird conservation
3. What are Mexico's conservation priorities for birds?
4. How can the US and Mexico NABCI Committee's work toward developing a common vision for bird conservation and advancing common priorities?

The Committee wants the meeting to be more than an opportunity to meet one another but also an opportunity to develop a vision or at least the overarching principles of a vision for bird conservation. No specific location has been identified. Vernon offered the World Birding Center in Mission Texas. The Committee asked that a recommendation be made to Mexico NABCI that the meeting be held within one of the five sites identified by Mexico under the tri-national projects (Marismas Nacionales, Janos, Yucatan, Chiapas, and Laguna Madre) if possible. There was some interest in the Coordinators of the bi-national Joint Ventures (Sonoran and Rio Grande) attending the meeting.

The Tri-national Committee has been working on developing Tri-national or continentally important projects. The original focus was on five sites in Mexico and their connections, based on species, to areas in the US and Canada. It has been difficult to move forward 5 tri-national, multi-million dollar proposals at the same time. The Tri-national Committee is recommending that they focus, at the moment, on 1-3 proposals that are at a point that they can be facilitated to completion (Central Hardwoods/Yucatan; the Linking Communities, Wetlands and Migratory Birds between Marismas Nacionales and Utah; and a grasslands partnership with TNC, the USFS International Programs, and other partners). The Committee was supportive of the idea.

Funding the projects was also discussed. The two sides of the coin were 1. We are in a tough funding climate and getting new, large sources of funding will be difficult and 2. We have to build the projects and try to get the funding no matter what the climate. It was acknowledged that we are working on the biological aspect in regards to the proposals but the other angle to developing new funding sources is political. We need a well crafted plan for the conservation of birds at the flyway scale that looks at how we take care of birds throughout the flyway. The Committee thought that one way to show the immense need was to make the link between the millions of dollars of projects that are not funded through the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act and the conservation of migratory birds at a flyway level.

Action Items

1. The International Subcommittee will meet after hearing a response from the Mexico NABCI Council that is meeting in March.
2. The International Subcommittee will present a draft agenda, location, time line, and other information to the Committee on the May 1 conference call.
3. The Committee would like to have 1 or 2 tri-national projects in a form that they can be discussed and/or advanced at the summer meeting.

Institutionalize Bird Conservation

The Committee asked the Federal Agency Subcommittee to bring a recommendation to the winter 2007 Committee meeting about where the Subcommittee should go. The last meeting of the Federal Agency Subcommittee was on January 9, 2006. The members in attendance expressed frustration about what the Subcommittee's mission is and what role it should play for the Committee. There were also discussions about who will lead the Subcommittee since the employees of the USFS and the USFWS that have played that role in the past are no longer there. In addition, the Committee now has many more Federal members than it did at the time the Federal Agency Subcommittee was created.

The recommendation was to make the Subcommittee inactive but keep it on the books. The Committee accepted this decision.

Of the 2006 Work Plan tasks assigned to the Federal Agency Subcommittee, the Subcommittee recommended that Tasks 5 and 6 be moved under the Communications Subcommittee. With the addition of members from the Federal Agency Subcommittee to the Communications Subcommittee they will begin setting up opportunities to meet and/or present to leadership of NRCS, FSA, BLM, DOD, USFS, etc. Dale Hall offered to take a presentation to the Federal Leadership Roundtable. A draft outline for such presentations was circulated. Two recommendations were made on the draft outline. First, the presentations should be tailored to the Agency. Second, the group should consider how to reach federal agencies such as EPA and DOT who are not closely tied to NABCI but have programs that affect bird conservation.

Action Items


1. Brad Andres/Terry Rich/Jennifer Wheeler/Communications Subcommittee – Write a letter to the Chief of the NRCS and DOD from Bruce as Chair and Dale Hall offering to present to NRCS and DOD leadership at their upcoming meetings about integrated bird conservation, NABCI, State Wildlife Action Plans, Joint Ventures, etc.

Waterbird Conservation for the Americas Update

The Waterbird Conservation for the Americas and WHSRN councils met together in January 2007. They created a task force that will articulate a vision for waterbird conservation in the western hemisphere. Committee members are welcome to participate in the task force. Carol Lively is involved in the task force.

An important development of the meeting was the decision to increase the Waterbird Council's focus and engagement in issues affecting seabirds. Over the next year the Council will choose its specific foci.

From 2004 to 2006, BirdLife International implemented the project "Advancing a Range-wide Approach to Waterbird Conservation at Priority Sites throughout the Neotropics" on behalf of the Waterbird Conservation Council, with funding by the US Fish and Wildlife Service Neotropical



Migratory Bird Conservation Act. This project's aim was to strategically advance conservation for threatened waterbird species and sites throughout the Neotropics, and included essentially all aquatic birds (waterfowl and shorebirds, in addition to species termed waterbirds in North America). Over 1000 sites were identified as being important for waterbirds; these were prioritized on the basis of their relative importance for threatened species and congregations. Based on the findings of the project, recommendations relating to species, site and habitat conservation as well as advocacy, awareness and capacity-building were forwarded including a recommendation to evaluate the development of a "flyway" or "range-wide" initiative to carry on waterbird conservation work in the Neotropics. In response, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to a hemispheric scope, charging itself and its committees to draw from the project to guide its future work, as well as to encourage partners to do the same.

Other Topics

The Committee acknowledged that climate change was a critical issue that the Committee wants to begin discussing the issue. The question is— How could bird conservation programs benefit from the climate change discussions going on in Congress and other places? Sue Haseltine agreed to set up a conference call for those that were interested to kick off the discussion.

A national meeting of educators was held in Austin, TX in early 2007. Some of the goals of the conference were to initiate development of a national bird education network, highlight the key messages for bird conservation, examine outreach methods, and share success stories.

Bruce's service as Chair will end after the summer meeting. At this time the Committee was interested in the Chair reverting back to the FWS for two years. Dale Hall agreed to be the chair.