



The North American Bird Conservation Initiative

US Mexico NABCI Committee Meeting Tasks and Summary August 21-22, 2007 Mexico City, Mexico

Attendees

U.S. Attendees: Dale Hall (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), David Pashley (American Bird Conservancy), Richard Bishop (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), Sally Benjamin (Farm Service Agency), Debbie Hahn (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies), Paul Schmidt (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Herb Raffaele (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service),

Mexican Attendees : M. Ana Luisa Guzmán (CONABIO), Dr. Ernesto C. Enkerlin Hoeflich (CONANP), Rocío Esquivel (CONANP), Lizardo Cruz (Director General of Wildlife), Dra. María del Coro Arizmendi (National University of Mexico), Rosa María Vidal (Chiapas Pronatura, National Bird Program Director), Dr. Eduardo Santana (University of Guadalajara's Manantlán Institute of Ecology and Conservation of Biodiversity), Dr. Raul Ortiz Pulido (CIPAMEX), Humberto Berlanga (CONABIO), Vicente Rodriguez (CONABIO)

Canadian Attendees: Doug Bliss (Canadian Wildlife Service), Garry Donaldson (Canadian Wildlife Service)

Meeting Objectives

The US and Mexico NABCI Committee's agreed the objectives of meeting were to:

- **learn more about bird conservation in the U.S. and Mexico,**
- **share ideas**
- **develop and enhance relationships and partnerships, and**
- **Identify a few priorities to collaborate on over the next 1-5 years.**

August 21, 2007 - 4:00-6:00PM

Ana Luisa Guzman welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed her appreciation for their attendance. Dale Hall and Doug Bliss thanked CONABIO and the Mexican NABCI Committee for the opportunity to meet and get to know each other better. Each country then presented the history and evolution of bird conservation in their country.

Presentations of the Bird Conservation Landscape in the U.S., Canada and Mexico (Paul Schmidt, Doug Bliss, Dr. Eduardo Santana)

The history of bird conservation in the U.S. began with the Lacey Act and the first National Wildlife Refuge and evolved through the development of the bird conservation initiatives, NABCI, and the Joint Ventures. Major players in the bird conservation community include numerous federal agencies and NGOs, state agencies, and Flyway Councils to name a few. Critical delivery mechanisms include but are not limited to the Joint Ventures, USFWS Partners Programs, NRCS Farm Bill Programs, State Wildlife Action Plans, etc. NAWCA, Neotrop Act, State Wildlife Grants, and other programs are key funding mechanisms. The U.S. NABCI Committee has 21 members. Currently the USFWS is the chair. To date, the Chair rotates between the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the USFWS. The Committee works through its Subcommittees which include monitoring, conservation design, private lands, communications, and international.

Canada's NABCI Committee is made up of representatives from the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), Provinces, CWS regional directors, NGOs, and industry. They meet about once a year. Their Action Plan is focused on broad topics that include biological foundation, completing their bird conservation plans, monitoring, partnership development, and policy initiatives.

Mexico has an immense amount of biodiversity and a vast array of habitat types. Mexico also has much cultural diversity. There are about 60 different languages and 12% of the land is owned by indigenous communities. All of this makes conservation in Mexico complicated. The Mexican approach to conservation is to conserve biodiversity. They do not take a species by species approach. They also do not have a strong biological foundation. They need more research and monitoring and it is critical for them to involve the local communities when doing conservation. Currently, management of Mexico's national resources is done through the Federal Government (CONABIO, CONANP, SEMARNAT, PROFEPA, INE, etc.). However, through the development of a national biodiversity conservation strategy, the Mexican States are beginning to take part in the management of biodiversity. In addition, there are numerous NGOs (E.g., Pronatura, Amigos de Sian Ka'an, etc.) that are key partners in conservation. The Mexico NABCI Committee is made up of 11 people, representing the federal government, NGOs, and Universities.

Reception – 7:00-9:00 PM

August 22, 2007 – 9:30 AM – 6:30 PM

Challenges - Each Committee identified some of the challenges they face in their countries.

U.S. Committee

- Funding
- Capacity
 - Committee members have other jobs
 - Recruiting members for Subcommittee work
- Keeping the work plan strategic and action oriented
- Communication
 - Communicating NABCI successes

- The conservation landscape is so complex it is sometimes hard to see where U.S. NABCI fits in to the picture
- Historically hunting and fishing monies have paid for conservation. The U.S. doesn't have a companion funding source for non-hunted species. Our public needs to understand the need to conserve all birds.

México NABCI Committee

- NABCI has evolved over the years and the conservation community has changed so the Mexico Committee needs to redefine its function and role
- NABCI is not well known within federal agencies and other sectors as well the general public (need to focus on outreach, communication etc.)
- Funding – the Committee needs more resources for operations and projects
- Lack of defined procedures (E.g., how do they best communicate, how do they ensure meetings occur regularly, etc.)
- Influencing the agendas of agencies programs
- Although Mexico has a national biodiversity strategy they need something specifically for birds or a national plan.

Canadian NABCI Council

Canada's primary focus is keeping NABCI united and active throughout the country. A national action plan was formulated last year and components of the action plan are proceeding within current constraints. For example on monitoring – building on the NABCI-US report, the Canadian Wildlife Service is undertaking a national review of monitoring on behalf of the NABCI-Canada council. In addition a renewed effort on bird region conservation planning will take place to support proposed regulatory changes for incidental take.

Past and Current Collaboration – The Committee's briefly discussed areas of past and current collaboration through NABCI

- Tri-national Committee
- Development of Tri-national Projects
- Support for regional alliances
 - Yucatan
 - Marismas Nacionales
- NABCI I and II meetings
- Declaration of Intent (DOI)
 - Signed by U.S., Mexican, and Canadian Governments
- Development of the Bird Conservation Regions

Priorities – The final objective of the meeting was to develop a few priorities for collaboration. The discussion of priorities started with the development of a list of numerous priorities. It was then pared down to the 4 top priorities. Two breakout groups were formed and each one discussed two of the four priorities. The breakout groups attempted to clarify and define the priority more

specifically, provide a timeframe for completion, and list action items and a cost if applicable. All the meeting attendees then discussed and reviewed what the breakout sessions developed.

Comprehensive List:

1. Research and Monitoring – Mexico needs more information on biological foundation and to increase the amount of monitoring they conduct. The U.S. has many monitoring programs but there is a need to improve some of the monitoring programs. The U.S. NABCI Committee recently published a report to help improve avian monitoring in the U.S. In addition, programs such as BBS will need to be tailored to the needs of Mexico if they are to be successful. There also needs to be a consideration of habitat monitoring while developing species specific monitoring.

2. Regional Alliances – Development and further implementation of regional alliances in Mexico.

3. Complete the tri-national proposals – The current Tri-national Proposals need refinement within Mexico, U.S., and Canada. There is also a need for the three national committees to look for money to help finish development (short-term) and implement in the long-term (through additional money for birds conservation in the three countries). The Mexico NABCI Committee agreed that these 5 sites in Mexico were important to conservation in Mexico although the sites may not be the top 5 biodiversity sites in Mexico. We have not found the linkages in all three countries for some sites. We may need to look for linkages beyond species such as similar conservation challenges. We could also more specifically define which specific birds go to which specific places using stable isotope research.

There are expectations within Mexico from NABCI in regards to the proposals. The group agreed they need to really discuss if we can accomplish the intent of the projects and if so how especially regarding funding.

4. Communication – to agencies, partners and the public

5. Improve information exchange and communication between the national NABCI Committees

6. Work together to generate new funding within each country and joint funding from international groups.

7. Capacity building in Mexico - training, education, etc.

9. Addressing major common threats – For example, issues such as forestry and birds could be used to share common experiences, successes, and lessons learned. Other common themes could include watershed management, forest fires, riparian management, etc.

10. Getting groups in one country to help with conservation issues in one of the other countries. – For example, some of the resort development companies in the Yucatan are Canadian companies. Also, how can we promote shade-grown coffee in the U.S. and Canada to support the implementation of this practice elsewhere?

11. Complete tri-national species assessment - Mexico is very close to completing assessments of every bird species occurring within the country. The United States and Canada have already completed this assessment. In the very near future, there is a need to come to consensus over scores for shared species.

Breakout Groups Results – The top four priorities were regional alliances, tri-national projects, monitoring and research, and communications. There is a need to further refine the priorities and have them reviewed by other members of the NABCI Committees that were not in attendance so that their input is considered.

1. Regional Alliances – Regional Alliances are important to all three countries and are critical for moving continental conservation priorities forward. We need to ensure a coordinator is established in each regional alliance. Ensure that the original five and at least three new regional alliances are in place or under development.


Actions:

1. Identify specific actions that need be done to ensure the sustainability of each regional alliances
2. Establish three new regional alliances, roughly one per year
3. Regional Alliances should determine membership needs for operation from the local constituency (international participation will follow once local priorities and actions are identified) and establish stable ties to local governments.
4. Submit grant applications to the NAWCA Small Grants Program in support of regional alliances establishment. About \$50,000 is needed to initiate each regional alliance. The USFWS is determining the feasibility of this.
5. The Mexico NABCI Committee should re-establish ties with regional alliance partners.

Timeframe - In 2-3 years, three of the original five will have been fully established/stabilized. In 5 years, at least three new regional alliances will be in development. Three new regional alliances will develop master (implementation) plans after 5 years that include a list of priorities for funding as well as potential international bird links and partnerships.

Potential Partners - TBD at each of the regional alliance sites

Funding - \$50,000 to initiate a regional alliance and \$50,000 per regional alliances per year for 2-3 years until stabilized. The actual costs at each site will vary. The NAWCA Small Grant Program will be considered as a funding source for a grant to support the initiation of regional alliances. There maybe a need for travel funds beyond the \$50,000. The Mexican government should also be approached to provide funding. Perhaps there are existing pots of cash that could be tapped into once leaders learn of the regional alliances.



2. Tri-national Projects – Complete the development of the tri-national projects. (This also included the priority to increase funding for bird conservation in the three countries.)

Actions

1. Review existing documents by each of the projects areas to review and improve. High priority actions should be identified so that funding can be focused on these areas if necessary.
2. Complete project overview documents that outline actions and tasks as a marketing tool to attract funding for each of the five proposals.
3. Develop an overall summary document that is a component of a marketing document
4. Fully engage partners in Canada and the U.S. in order to complete plan documents at each site and facilitate funding and implementation in/from each country. To do this, a three-country sub-committee should be formed which will also act as a contact point for communications with the NABCI committees—one for each project.
5. The Mexico NABCI Committee will identify a committee member to look for internal funding and commitments to facilitate actions at the project sites.
6. The Mexico NABCI Committee will use the Declaration of Intent to talk with key federal government agencies to start generating funding.

Timeframe

Summaries of proposals at each of the five sites to be reviewed and improved by mid September 2007.


Establish a three-country Committee for each proposal by October 2007.

For all proposals, actions and funding identified in three years.

3. Monitoring and Research – In order for the three countries to manage a common wildlife resource they need to generate information about the species and use similar and comparable standards and methodologies between and within countries where applicable. It is priority to institutionalize monitoring programs in each country (on selected species and habitats and threats and management issues), to improve the quality of monitoring in each country, and to have funding explicitly allotted to monitoring work.

Actions

1. Specific new and ongoing monitoring related activities should be strengthened by way of international collaboration.
 - a. Training/education for monitoring programs
 - b. Standardizing monitoring in natural protected areas

- 
- c. Encourage the development of the breeding bird survey and banding programs in Mexico
 2. Develop a tri-national document committing each country to improve bird monitoring within its borders and with each other. It would include a brief description of status and shortcomings, and then a series of proposed activities.
 3. Tri-national projects should have a monitoring component in order to assess their success.
 4. Key research priorities for birds include the following
 - a. Conduct threats analysis for species and sites
 - b. Improve our knowledge of species habitat relationships in relation to threats, land use-changes and management activities and consider these within the context of climate change/global warming.
 4. Communications – There was insufficient time at the meeting to flesh out this priority. However, the Committees agreed to the following.
 1. There needed to be follow-up on the results of this meeting from Committee members and Coordinators in all three countries.
 2. The Committees would like to have meetings like this every 2-3 years.