



NABCI

U P D A T E

U.S. NABCI Committee
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*Advancing
integrated bird conservation
in North America*

THE NORTH AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

U.S. NABCI Committee Work Plan Update – March 2010

The U.S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) Committee (Committee) is dedicated to helping partners across the continent meet their common bird conservation objectives by ensuring that organizations have the capacity to support and deliver integrated bird conservation on-the-ground. At the same time, the Committee is fostering increased cooperation and collaboration through partnerships that span geographic, taxonomic, organizational, and socio-cultural divides.

Through its Subcommittees and work plan, the Committee is focused on the following priorities:

- Advance and support the Bird Habitat Joint Ventures.
- Develop and promote the *State of the Birds* reports.
- Increase institutional support for bird conservation.
- Advance effective and efficient bird monitoring.
- Increase the bird conservation benefits of private lands management.
- Promote international conservation.
- Advocate for critically needed policy changes.

For more information on the Committee and to access the summary and outcomes of the last Committee meeting on January 12-13, 2010 in Arlington, Virginia, please visit <http://www.nabci-us.org>.

Bird Monitoring

The Committee established a Monitoring Subcommittee to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring strategies through increased cooperation among public and private wildlife organizations in monitoring bird populations and their habitats in North America. The Subcommittee's Database Management Team spent last year acting on specific tasks, including technical aspects of data storage and management. It conducted a workshop in July 2009, with representatives of the bird initiatives, database managers, and IT staff to develop criteria to assess the resources needed to improve the bird conservation initiatives' priority databases. The criteria, best management practices, and other information from the workshop can be found at http://www.nabci-us.org/monitoring_database.html.

State of the Birds

The landmark *State of the Birds* report (www.stateofthebirds.org) was completed in March 2009. It revealed troubling declines in bird populations in the United States over the last 40 years—a warning signal of the failing health of our ecosystems. It also highlighted heartening evidence that concerted conservation efforts can help restore habitats and reverse these declines. Its success has been demonstrated in many ways, including being cited in testimony on Capitol Hill and by Congress as the driving force behind its allocation of money for Hawaiian bird conservation.

The NABCI State of the Birds Subcommittee's 2010 *State of the Birds* report was released on March 11, 2010 by Secretary Salazar and other NABCI partners. The first

themed report, it explores the vulnerability of birds and their habitats to climate change in major biomes across the United States. Accelerated by human activities, climate change is altering the natural world as we know it and is diminishing the quality of our environment thus threatening birds and other wildlife and human and societal well-being. Oceanic birds are among the most vulnerable species because they don't raise many young each year; they rely on a rapidly changing marine ecosystem; and they nest on islands that may be flooded as sea levels rise. The report identified common bird species, including American Oystercatcher, Common Nighthawk, and Northern Pintail, as likely to become species of conservation concern as a result of climate change. www.stateofthebirds.org

Private Lands

The Committee established a Private Lands Subcommittee to increase the bird conservation value of private land management. The Private Lands Subcommittee and other partners developed a white paper on the importance of increasing biological capacity to effectively deliver conservation programs of the Farm Bill. The white paper (http://www.nabci-us.org/pvtlands_biocapacity.html) highlights the need for an increase in Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) biologists and partner biologists. More resources are needed to help state agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and NRCS enter into creative agreements to put "boots on the ground" throughout the country to implement conservation programs. The Subcommittee continues to advance this concept and expand participation by partners such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

International Bird Conservation

The U.S., Canadian, and Mexican members of the Tri-national NABCI Committee are working jointly to help partners implement the Continentally Important Proposals and advance regional alliances (Joint Venture-like partnerships) in Mexico — goals cited in the NABCI Declaration of Intent signed by all three countries. Working with other partners such as the Sonoran and Rio Grande Joint Ventures, the Tri-national Committee and the national NABCI coordinators developed a proposal that was funded by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) for \$150,000. The money will support conservation activities in the Northern Grasslands of Mexico, including the creation of a regional alliance, enhanced monitoring, and development of a map of priority grassland areas. The first meeting of partners was held in December 2009 and a coordinator was hired by CONABIO in Mexico. The CEC will also support these efforts in 2010.

Legislative and Policy Subcommittee

This newly created Subcommittee, which consists of non-federal members, commented on implementation of the Wetland Reserve Program on behalf of the Committee. The Subcommittee is also keeping tabs on the progress of the Clean Water Restoration Act, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and ocean policy to determine where and when they can weigh in for the benefit of bird conservation. The Subcommittee also supported the Joint Venture legislation and helped disseminate a fact sheet and letters on the importance of the legislation to bird conservation.

U.S. NABCI Committee Members

Peter Boice, Department of Defense
Greg Butcher, National Audubon Society
Cal DuBrock, Pennsylvania Game Commission for the Resident Game Bird Working Group
Bob Ellis, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for the National Flyway Council
Terrell Erickson, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Dwight Fielder, Bureau of Land Management
Matt Frank, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for Partners in Flight
Bert Frost, National Park Service
David Goad, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan
David Graham, Ohio Division of Natural Resources for the Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group

Rowan Gould, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sue Haseltine, U.S. Geological Survey
Catherine Hickey, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, for the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan
John Hoskins, Chair, Missouri Department of Conservation for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Jim Kushlan, for Waterbird Conservation for the Americas
Dave Mehlman, The Nature Conservancy
Val Mezainis, USDA Forest Service
Kirk Nelson, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards
David Pashley, American Bird Conservancy
Matt Ponish, Farm Services Agency
Steve Williams, Wildlife Management Institute
Scott Yaich, Ducks Unlimited, Inc.