

**US North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) Committee meeting  
January 19-20, 2011  
Meeting Notes and Summary**

**Committee members in attendance:** Geoffrey Walsh (for Dwight Fielder, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)); Greg Butcher (National Audubon Society (Audubon)); David Dewald (Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)); Jennifer Wheeler (Waterbird Conservation for the Americas); John Hoskins (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)); Skip Hyberg (for Matt Ponish, Farm Service Agency (FSA)); Glenn Plumb (for Bert Frost, National Park Service (NPS)); Rowan Gould and Paul Schmidt (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)); Carol Lively (U.S. Forest Service (USFS)); Ken Williams/Steve Hilburger (U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)); David Pashley (American Bird Conservancy (ABC)); Scott Yaich (Ducks Unlimited (DU)); Chris Eberly (Department of Defense (DOD)); Cal DuBrock (Resident Game Bird Working Group)

**Other participants:** Deb Hahn, Allison Vogt (AFWA); Guy Foulks, Alicia King, Mike Krieger, Ken Kriese, Nanette Seto, Drue DeBerry (USFWS); Antoinette Condo (State Department); Anne Law (ABC); Mark Humpert, Jen Mock Schaeffer, and Dean Smith (AFWA); Caroline Garrett (Ducks Unlimited), Charlie Rewa (NRCS); Mary Rolland (USFS)

## **Contents**

- 2011 Priorities for US NABCI Committee & Coordinator: Page 2
- Funding for US NABCI Coordination: Page 3
- Monitoring Subcommittee (including coordination with LCCs): Pages 3-4
- International Bird Conservation (including PIF update): Pages 4-5
- Federal Budgets and the Appropriations Process (update on 2011 and plans for influencing 2012): Pages 5-6
- Policy and Legislative Initiatives: Pages 6-8
  - Farm Bill Reauthorization: Page 6
  - North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) Reauthorization: Page 7
  - JV Authorizing Legislation: Page 7
  - Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (Neotrop) Reauthorization: Page 7
  - State Wildlife Grants: Page 8
  - Duck Stamp Increase: Page 8
  - Federal guidance on isolated wetland protections: Page 8
- Private Lands: Pages 8-9
- State of the Birds Report: Pages 10
- Communications: Page 10
- Marine BCRs and other BCR Map Updates: Pages 11-12
- NABCI/ AJVMB Award: Page 12
- Tri-Initiative Science Team: Page 12

## 2011 Priorities for US NABCI Committee & Coordinator

**Summary:** There was broad agreement from the NABCI Committee Members that key themes for Allison and the NABCI partners to pursue in 2011 include:

Generally,

- Serving as conduit and clearinghouse for all NABCI partners to create synergies among ongoing programs that impact bird conservation
- Coordinating among the various bird conservation jurisdictions including: States (AFWA's Bird Conservation Committee); Eco-Regions (Joint Venture (JV); Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC)); Federal (Migratory Bird Council, Bird Initiatives); International (Canadian and Mexico NABCI Committees; Tri-Lateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management)
- Leading the US bird conservation movement by identifying clearly articulated shared goals and needs among all bird conservation partners and creating linkages to increase efficacy and efficiency

Specifically in 2011,

- Engaging state wildlife agencies as full NABCI partners
- Facilitating the connections between LCCs and JVs to ensure that regional strategies are in line with national priorities particularly through the lens of species monitoring (more details on pages 3-4)
- Engaging NABCI partners in Mexico and Canada in tri-national bird conservation discussions (see details on pages 4-5)
- Leading efforts to achieve desired levels of funding for bird conservation programs both federally and at the state level (more details on pages 5-6)
- Developing and promoting policies and legislation that support and promote bird conservation (more details on pages 6-8)
- Assisting in the inclusion of bird conservation criteria in the implementation of farm bill conservation programs (more details on pages 8-9)
- Producing and leveraging existing and future State of the Birds reports to their full potential to improve communications, inform policy development, and foster state and regional collaborations on priority topics. (more details on pages 9-10)

*Committee Leadership:* Dan Ashe (USFWS) began his two-year term as NABCI Chair at the January meeting. Given the limitations of federal employees to engage in advocacy relating to funding levels and specific policy initiatives, it will be important that the NABCI committee maintain a robust Policy and Legislative Committee that includes participation by NGOs and state agencies. Gordon Myers, chair of the AFWA Bird Conservation Committee, has agreed to serve on the NABCI Committee and represent state wildlife agencies following John Hoskins' departure. John Hoskins will continue his involvement through April 2011 and participate in the State of the Birds release as well as additional meetings with appropriators, OMB, and key agency partners.

**Action Item:** (Allison) In March, Develop a set of specific goals and tasks for the full NABCI Committee and each Subcommittee. Share with NABCI Committee members for comment and feedback.

## **Funding for NABCI Coordination**

**Summary:** The State and NGO portion of the coordination budget is lagging behind the desired 70/30 (federal/state + NGO) split. State budgets are tight but the consensus is that more states would be willing to provide partial funding if there was a better understanding of the benefits and relationship between NABCI's work and state wildlife agencies on the part of state directors. NABCI has helped spur a culture change with regard to nongame conservation in the USFWS since the 1990s. There is more work to do at the state level in that regard.

**Action Item:** (Allison with Ken, Carol, David & Scott) Develop a case statement that clearly articulates the benefits of NABCI's existence to state wildlife agency directors. It will outline NABCI successes; current goals; and additional direct and derivative benefits that would come with more diverse and robust funding for NABCI coordination activities. Paul will provide the value proposition utilized for a similar purpose by NAWMP.

**Action Item:** (Allison) Pursue feasibility of utilizing the flyways as the administrative mechanism to direct state monies to NABCI coordination budget. Also clarify the details of state's using State Wildlife Grant funds as their funding source.

## **Monitoring Subcommittee**

**Summary:** In January 2010, the Monitoring Subcommittee produced a document entitled *Birds as Indicators of Long-term Environmental Change: National Bird Monitoring Recommendations (2010-2020)*. The recommended actions articulated in this report are still valid and should be used to create a work plan for the committee in 2011. The actions defined in the report pertain largely to coordination with LCCs and securing support for regional and national bird monitoring partnerships.

The LCCs are the most fertile ground for the committee's work and the membership of the committee should be expanded to reflect this new priority. Target partners to include on the committee are the National Wildlife Refuge's Inventory and Monitoring, National Park Service, and an Integrated Waterbird Monitoring representative.

In April, LCC staff is meeting and the NABCI Monitoring Subcommittee will have time on their agenda to discuss an extended workshop in the fall. An important message for that meeting is that the challenges associated with monitoring are ubiquitous among all species but bird monitoring has a longer history during which important lessons have been learned that will be valuable as the LCCs develop their strategy. Rowan reported that there are significant remaining funds within LCC budgets to address issues related to monitoring. The USGS Climate

Research Centers are interested in connecting with local and regional monitoring efforts to ensure that they are capable of being scaled up to inform larger-scale research.

**Action Item** (Monitoring Committee with Allison): Recruit additional committee members to assist in collaboration with LCCs and other 2011 goals. New Subcommittee leadership is also needed in light of the interim nature of the current leadership and Paul's April departure.

**Action Item** (Monitoring Committee with Allison): Present to LCC staff in April. In August, the Monitoring Committee will report back on their new goals (based on the meeting with the LCCs) and new membership roster.

**Action Item** (Ken, David, and Steve): Meet with Doug Beard, head of the USGS Climate Change Centers

## **International Bird Conservation**

**Summary:** Initially, the NABCI Committee set out to raise funds for specific international projects. In August 2010, NABCI partners determined that it would be more effective to use their influence to direct funds towards programs that are international in scope within the NABCI partner organizations. They also envision NABCI taking a lead role in encouraging and facilitating JV involvement in international projects. NABCI members will support coordination of programs that span North American borders but not engage in direct fundraising for specific projects. The Southern Wings program has expanded in recent years with money from several states (MO, WI, and more) as well as regional associations (e.g., Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has funded work in the Dominican Republic and Columbia). Improved mapping technologies and isotope research has been useful in articulating the tri-national connections for bird conservation. In 2011, the NABCI Committee would like to continue to assist in similar partnerships.

Another important role for US NABCI in 2011 is to support continued collaboration among NABCI partners in Canada and Mexico. At present, in both countries there is positive momentum and good projects underway for bird conservation. However, that work is coordinated according to a model that is different than the US NABCI model. In Canada, the North American Wetland Conservation Council (NAWCC) shares many of the same members as the Canadian NABCI Committee and has been primarily focused on NAWCA. In addition, there has been decreased federal funding to Environment Canada as well as personnel transition and turnover of NABCI coordination staff. Similarly, in Mexico many on-the-ground projects are underway but the coordination of NABCI activities does not happen in the same way as it does in the U.S.

**Partners in Flight (PIF) Summary:** In May, Partners in Flight published the *Saving our Shared Birds: Partners in Flight Tri-National Vision for Landbird Conservation*. The report (available online [here](#)) is a succinct argument for tri-national conservation and emphasizes the

importance of working tri-nationally for effective bird conservation. A comparison of the proposal sites listed in the NABCI report, *Continental Important Proposals An Introduction* (available [here](#)), with the priority areas highlighted in *Saving our Shared Birds* reveals that the El Triunfo site in Chiapas has the most synergy from the perspective of landbirds. Furthermore, considering all Mexican bird species of interest in all sites, not just landbirds, El Triunfo would still be the highest priority site. A key next step is to build on existing links with Mexican partners, especially Pronatura, CONABIO, and the Sierra de Manantlan, and to perhaps uncover a few new ones.

**Action Item:** (Carol Lively, David Mehlman, Allison) Attend the Tri-Lateral meeting this May in Oaxaca to meet with Humberto Berlanga (Mexican NABCI Coordinator), Sarah Wren and Garry Donaldson (Canadian NABCI staff) as well as other Canadian and Mexican NABCI partners. Bird conservation is evolving and progressing in all 3 countries and there are conversations and opportunities to be initiated to improve coordination and better leverage resources. For the August US NABCI meeting, the Tri-lateral Committee will follow up on any next steps from the tri-national discussions.

## **Federal Budgets and the Appropriations Process**

**Summary:** The federal government is currently operating under a continuing resolution that expires March 4, 2011. The President will release his FY 2012 budget during the second week of February. Meanwhile, the funding bill for 2011 should move through Congress but there is no guarantee. The House is discussing a move back to 2008 levels; thus increases for 2012 are not likely. It is not clear if cuts will be made across the board or target specific programs. If we do return to 2008 levels, this means actual funding will be below that given increases in fixed costs and the advent of new programs since 2008 that must share in that funding. Depending on how earmarks are ultimately defined, their exclusion or inclusion will impact allocation of funds as well.

With Dan Ashe as NABCI Chair, his ability to be out in front on policy and funding issues is limited. John Hoskins, the outgoing AFWA representative and past chair has taken a lead role in budget-related meetings. It is hoped that Gordon Myers, the incoming AFWA representative with support from other state agencies on NABCI, will take a similar role. The NABCI Message to legislators and other policy influencers should stress the efficiency and integration of NABCI and emphasize the importance of partnerships, particularly among diverse partners. The connections of habitat conservation to human health and welfare, through the lens of clean water and natural resource job creation will be important in this fiscal climate where cutting and efficiency reign supreme.

Although the direct impact of the 2010 meetings with these same partners is difficult to quantify, there is certainly no negative impact and the funding levels for key NABCI programs included in the FY 2011 omnibus bill that was put forward (although ultimately did not pass) was corroborating evidence that the meetings were worth the effort. Both the idea of birds as

indicators of overall environmental health and the State of the Birds report resonated with many of the partners.

**Action Item** (Allison): Engage with the Bird Conservation Funding Coalition and the AJVMB on 2012-2013 funding levels and potential meetings with appropriators and OMB. Reach out to JV partners to articulate specific successes that can be shared with legislators to connect the work of JVs to a particular district.

**Action Item** (Gordon Myers, Allison, other non-fed partners): Meet with new staff at OMB, Tomer Hasson, to discuss bird conservation programs.

**Action Item** (All NABCI partners): Reach out to new Members of Congress to educate about key programs without suggesting specific funding levels. It's important to articulate the consequences of both decreased and increased funding scenarios.

**Action Item** (Allison): Compile list of key partners for Gordon Myers and other NABCI partners to meet with this spring and early summer.

## **Policy and Legislative Initiatives**

As the NABCI Committee increases our focus on policy initiatives, a web tool that can be accessed by NABCI partners would be an asset in sharing resources and information about the various policy priorities. The newly revamped AFWA site may be a possibility for this.

Additional non-federal partners are necessary if NABCI is to be an effective advocate for our priority policies and pieces of legislation.

**Action Item** (Allison with Scott and Cal): Recruit additional NGO and State partners to the Policy & Legislative Subcommittee.

**Action Item:** (Deb and Allison) Consult with AFWA communications staff about the possibility of using the AFWA site for NABCI policy work. Allison will work with Scott and AFWA staff to develop a site as appropriate.

### **Farm Bill Reauthorization** (presentation by Jen Mock Schaeffer of AFWA)

The Agriculture committees in both the House and Senate have experienced lots of turnover since the last Congress and there are many new members to the Committee, including freshman Members of Congress. Committee leadership has also changed hands. In the House, Frank Lucas (OK) is the Chair and Colin Peterson (MN) is the ranking member. Senate Ag Committee Chair is suspected to be Debbie Stabenow (MI) with Pat Roberts (KS) serving as the ranking member.

The goal for 2011 is to educate the Committee members about key conservation programs. Committee leadership does not intend to pass a bill until 2012, which in practicality is likely to be 2013. One major philosophical decision is whether compliance enforcement or incentives

are the best approach. As Congress is still operating under PAYGO rules, it will be important to find new money to fund the programs that have a zero budget line going in to the next farm bill. These include GRP, WRP, and Voluntary Public Access.

In general, the fish and wildlife conservation community is being cautious and holding off on putting forward hard numbers until more intelligence is gathered on the interests of the new committee members. AFWA intends to pass its Farm Bill platform (without hard numbers) at the North American meeting in March. Jen is chairing the agriculture subcommittee of the Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP). They will release their platform in mid-2011.

All Titles of the bill are under scrutiny for cuts, not just conservation programs. One of the potential challenges is a push for consolidation of several of the conservation programs, notably WHIP and EQIP. Combining programs that are currently standalone dilutes the ability to directly benefit wildlife through specific selection criteria.

There is a tendency among some Members of Congress to prefer a shotgun approach, versus a targeted approach, to conservation. The ecological and conservation importance of targeting is in an important message for NABCI partners to communicate to Members.

**Action Item:** (NABCI Partners) Identify and articulate success stories and economic data from the programs in the conservation title of the farm bill. Allison will work with the JVs to do the same.

**North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) Reauthorization** (presentation by Caroline Garrett, DU)

Ducks Unlimited is taking a lead role in pursuing reauthorization of NAWCA in early 2012. The current authorization expires in September of 2012 and the goal is for a new bill to be passed by spring 2012 so as to avoid any complications during the 2013 appropriations process. They are reaching out to a broader group of conservation partners (QF, TNC, AFWA, NFWF, ABC, PF, Audubon) than in the last Congress where they had challenges acting as a single organization. Caroline at DU is actively pursuing bipartisan original cosponsors. Allison will report back to the policy and legislative subcommittee as sponsors come on board and if assistance is needed in winning support from particular legislators.

At this point, it is anticipated that the bill will easily make it out of committee at the \$75M level. However, bringing the bill to a vote on the floor of both the Senate and the House will be a challenge.

**Action Item:** (Allison) Contact Caroline and keep NABCI Committee up to date on status of sponsorship and assistance needed in education Members of Congress on the issue

**Joint Venture Authorizing Legislation** (presentation by Anne Law, ABC)

In December, the Neotrop and JV authorization bills were included in an omnibus bill that ultimately did not pass. For this Congress, the original sponsor of the JV bill in the House was not re-elected. The bill did not pass under unanimous consent in the Senate during the last Congress and as such, getting the bill to the floor of the Senate during this Congress will be a

challenge. Unlike the Neotrop reauthorization, a lack of authorization for the JVs does not put the program at risk for zeroed funding because JVs are funded as a line item within the USFWS internal budget. If this organic act were ultimately passed, the JVs would become their own line item in the federal budget. For this coming Congress, the AJVMB is still considering its options.

**Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Reauthorization** (presentation by Anne Law, ABC)  
Some Members of Congress are growing wary of grant programs such as Neotrop and NAWCA because of the associated staff costs with the programs. It will be important for NABCI partners to share the low overhead rate of both programs as a selling point.

Pursuing reauthorization of the Neotrop act is emerging as a top priority given the risk of funding cuts to programs that are not currently authorized. ABC is taking the lead on developing a strategy that will be based on input from sponsors. In the last Congress, the conservation community's original ask was \$20M and Congressman Kind (House D sponsor) decreased it to \$15M. There is likelihood that a proposal to level the authorization to \$6.5M will come up in committee. Bipartisan support is critical to avoid level or cut funding.

**Action Item:** (Allison) Work with Anne at ABC to identify how NABCI partners can get involved in the moving this process forward; coordinate with NABCI Committee members.

**State Wildlife Grants** (presentation by Mark Humpert, AFWA)

Even support for the Dear Colleague letter in support of State Wildlife Grants is tough in this Congress. With so many new members and a tight fiscal environment, the messaging is returning to the themes of preventing endangered species and retaining jobs similar to those used when State Wildlife Grants were just being introduced.

**Duck Stamp Increase** (presentation by Caroline Garrett, DU)

During the last Congress, this bill faced opposition in Committee in the House. The opposition's argument was two pronged: first, the fact that it is a tax on waterfowl hunters and second that it would result in an increase in public land. DU has not developed a strategy for pursuing this legislation again this Congress and Caroline is not optimistic about passage.

**Federal Guidance on Isolated Wetland Protections** (presentation by Scott Yaich, DU)

A legislative approach to restore the pre-SWANCC (Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County) Supreme Court decision protections through the Clean Water Restoration Act has not been successful despite attempts at passage in each of the last three Congresses. Trends show we're losing 80,000 acres a year, but the losses have not been dramatic enough to compel Congress to action.

As an alternative to a legislative approach, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency have drafted regulatory guidance pursuant to this topic. A draft has been sent to OMB and after the 60-day OMB review period, comments will be open to the public, likely in March. The guidance only goes so far and this process is a litmus test for forthcoming

rulemaking. The conservation community will need a coordinated effort, particularly from state agencies. Ducks Unlimited will send out an action alert for comments to their members.

**Action Item:** (Allison) Alert NABCI partners when draft guidance is available for comment coordinate comments from NABCI Committee partners. Possibly draft and submit comments on behalf the NABCI Committee.

**Private Lands** (Presentations by Skip Hyberg, FSA and David Dewald, and Charlie Rewa, NRCS available on NABCI website)

**Summary of FSA presentation:** Secretary Vilsack has committed to enrolling 32M acres in CRP (equal to the statutory cap). Continuous CRP (practices such as riparian buffers or grass filters on acres that can be enrolled outside of a general signup) is growing as well with a current total of 4.9M acres. In Sept, 2011 4.4M acres expire. It is anticipated that 4M acres that will be enrolled in 2011. A challenge is the record high prices of commodities and there is a threat of losing acres during this period. CRP is 25 years old in 2011 and there will be a conference to review the program in DC in June.

The Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Improvement Program is a competitive grants program that intends to open up private land to hunting and fishing. Up to \$50 million is available through FY 2012.

**Action Item:** (Allison and Private Lands Subcommittee) Work to influence where new acres are going by engaging with FSA in their setting their ranking criteria for awarded acres. Allison will follow up with Skip and others on ways to engage NABCI partners in that process.

**Summary of NRCS presentation:** In FY 2010, the Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program received \$144M and enrolled 170K acres; the Grasslands Reserve Program received \$85M and enrolled 396K acres; and the Wetland Reserve Program received \$592M and enrolled 273K acres while restoring 129K acres. The Conservation Stewardship Program received \$321M and treated 25.2M acres; the Agricultural Management Assistance Program received \$5.7M and treated 11K acres; the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program received \$61M and treated 271K acres; the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) received \$839M and treated 13M acres; and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) received \$63M and treated 1.1M acres.

New initiatives for 2011 and beyond for the NRCS landowner assistance programs include the identification of priority landscape initiatives. NRCS' goal is to move away from 'random acts of conservation'. They include migratory bird habitat in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley, Sage Grouse habitat in 11 western states, California Bay-Delta, Great Lakes Restoration, Lesser Prairie Chicken, Longleaf Pine and New England-New York Forestry

The Conservation Effects Assessments Project (CEAP) is partnering with JVs, universities, and NGOs to assess the conservation impact of farm bill programs. The results will assist in verifying the need and impact of the program during reauthorization. See the CEAP website for full list of CEAP-sponsored projects and other program information (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/ceap/>).

**Action Item:** (Allison) Provide link between NRCS and NABCI partners and LCCs/JVs for further future collaboration

## State of the Birds

**Summary:** The upcoming release of the *2011 State of the Birds on Public Lands and Waters* is set for March. The report is organized around biomes as has been the case in the previous 2 reports. The public lands considered in the report include both state and federal. Key themes and messages of the report include:

- Bird species are heavily dependent on public lands
- Management practices are key to the success of birds on public lands
- Some species are reliant on a single agency
- Public lands are an important resources and should be celebrated

The target audiences of the report include policy makers, Members of Congress and their staffs. The intent is that the report will be used as supporting evidence for the policy interests of NABCI and its partner organizations. The report nicely complements the work being done on the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

Arrangements are being made for both Secretaries Salazar and Vilsack to be present at the official release in addition to John Hoskins (representing NABCI) and others. Mike Krieger (USFWS) is the leading the multi-agency team to develop the report. Alicia King (USFWS) is leading the communications effort surrounding the report. A complete suite of communications tools will be available to NABCI partners to accompany the State of the Birds release in March.

The 2012 report will feature Private Lands. The pace of one report/year is unlikely to be sustainable and should be reconsidered beyond 2012.

**Action Item (NABCI Partners):** Review the draft report when circulated by Deb during the first week of February and turn around comments within a week.

**Action Item (NABCI Partners):** Utilize the communications tools within your own agency or organization's coverage of the report's release in order to maximize press coverage and exposure. Allison and Alicia will assist as needed.

**Action Item (NABCI Partners):** In 2011, determine if the pace of one report per year is sustainable or if a different strategy is necessary beyond 2012.

## Communications

**Summary:** The All-Bird Bulletin will continue under the leadership of Roxanne Bogart. The most recent issues have each centered on a specific theme. An issue highlighting marine issues that Jennifer Wheeler has been assisting in the production of will be released in early February. The cover story of that issue will feature the delineation and adoption of Marine Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs)(more info on marine BCRs on Page 11).

Roxanne would like assistance in supporting the NABCI website.

**Action Item** (Chris Eberly): Contact Roxanne to learn more about the needs and potentially assist with the NABCI website support and maintenance.

## **Marine BCRs and other BCR Map Updates**

**Summary:** The NABCI Committee has agreed upon some recent adjustments to BCR lines in response to requests from JVs. Only the adjustments that were based on ecological differences were adopted. In large part these changes were improvements upon the original 1998 delineation. Deb conferred with the Canadian and Mexican NABCI coordinators and they approved the US moving forward on those revisions. Those changes are being incorporated into the official BCR map by Andrew Courtier of Bird Studies Canada.

Rowan underscored the importance of BCRs to USFWS because of their role as the basis for LCC boundaries and their role as a communications tool for the scale of conservation needed to address the issues associated with future global change.

The Waterbird conservation community put forth a request to the NABCI Committee to delineate marine BCRs in the waters surrounding the US. The lines correspond to the areas designated in the 2002 waterbird plan. They are based on the system of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) that are widely used by the marine conservation community as well as the regions defined in the recent national oceans policy.

At this point in time, Canada has also delineated boundary extensions for their terrestrial BCRs that extend into Canadian waters. Mexico is considering the adoption of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation's (CEC) Marine Ecoregions but Mexican NABCI partners are at this point hesitant to adopt them without further examination of their utility for bird conservation.

As a result, there are additional discussions needed at the tri-national level to determine how to include marine BCR boundaries. The U.S. is willing to include their marine boundaries at this time. Jennifer Wheeler stated that in her estimation, even without a continental map, the US can reap the intended benefit of greater attention to the marine environment for bird conservation.

Rowan will broach the issue at the executive committee of the Tri-Lateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management to discuss whether further progression on a unified continental map is of interest to the Canadian and Mexican leaders. At this point the decision-making required is political rather than scientific. The risk is that the effort required to pursue a truly continental process may outweigh the conservation benefits.

### **BCR Planning in Canada** (presentation by Dean Smith, AFWA)

In late January, Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada executives were briefed on the final drafts of BCR plans for all Canadian BCRs. By the end of January, the plans will be

released for review and a broad public review will be complete by March 31, and published by September 2011. The supporting database will be publicly available and contain both qualitative and quantitative data.

**Action Item:** (Deb and Jennifer) Consult with tri-national partners about the desire of the US NABCI Committee to possibly move forward on contiguous marine BCRs for the entire continent. Allison will work with Nanette and others at USFWS to prepare for a discussion at the Tri-lateral meeting in May as appropriate.

## **NABCI/ AJVMB Award**

**Summary:** The mission of the award is to recognize exceptional achievement in bird conservation in furtherance of the principles of NABCI and the national/international bird initiatives. They are typically presented at WMI's North American conference. Full guidelines for the award can be found [here](#). The Awards Subcommittee is composed of representatives from the bird conservation Initiatives as well as the NABCI JV representative. For reasons discussed at the Committee meeting the Committee voted not to bestow an award in 2011.

**Action Item:** (NABCI Partners and Allison) Engage in more robust communications in 2012 to garner a suitable number of nominees. NABCI Committee Members can directly nominate people to the Awards Subcommittee.

**Action Item:** (NABCI Partners and Allison): Review the published award criteria to ensure that it is clear regarding the need for the nominee's work to have implications to bird conservation at a national scale.

## **Tri-Initiative Science Team**

The Partners in Flight, Waterbird and Shorebird Initiatives are partnering in the creation of the 'Tri-Initiative Science Team'. This group will function analogous to the National Science Support Team (NSST) that supports the work of the waterfowl conservation community and NAMWP.

At this point, the mechanics of how the group will function still need to be worked out. The membership will fluctuate based on the agenda items for each meeting but the intent that the group will be relatively small and focused on a few priority issues at each meeting. The meetings will be held on one day immediately following the NSST meetings so that the Joint Venture science staff and other individuals involved with both groups can easily participate.