

# **U. S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Council Terms of Reference**

1 August 2009

## **Introduction**

The U. S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Council (Council) serves as the steering committee for the U. S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (Plan) and oversees the implementation of the regional, national, and international goals of the Plan. The Council is open to all private and public organizations that support implementation of the goals and objectives originally developed in the 2001 Plan and subsequent policies and Plan updates. Plan Council Terms of Reference were originally adopted by the Council on 17 March 2001 and were amended on 5 April 2002.

## **Vision**

The vision of the U. S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, which guides the work of the Council, is to ensure that stable and self-sustaining populations of all shorebirds are distributed throughout their range and diversity of habitats in the U. S. and across the Western Hemisphere, and that species which have declined in distribution or abundance are restored to their former status to the extent possible at costs acceptable to society.

## **Goals**

The Council endorses all of the hemispheric, national, and regional goals established in the Plan. The Council also endorses additional goals identified in the original regional shorebird conservation plans and any subsequent updates.

## **Philosophy**

The Council believes that the most effective way to advance the conservation goals of the Plan is through cooperative partnership efforts. This approach of cooperative action will guide all efforts related to implementation of the Plan. Council members agree to work openly and cooperatively toward these common goals and to support the work of partner organizations whenever possible.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Council is to provide guidance and support for the implementation of all aspects of the U. S. Shorebird Conservation Plan and primarily exists to:

- 1) provide coordination among the partner organizations who are implementing the Plan,

- 2) support regional shorebird conservation efforts, mainly through Bird Habitat Conservation Joint Ventures, and focal species working groups,
- 3) monitor the progress toward implementing objectives of the Plan and evaluate achievement of goals at five-year intervals,
- 4) help support shorebird conservation work of individual partner organizations by guiding development of coordinated implementation programs, sharing information on opportunities for funding, and coordinating fund-raising efforts where appropriate,
- 5) provide input to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Shorebird and Waterbird Working Group on shorebird conservation issues and needs, and
- 6) select and provide guidance to the Plan representative on the U. S. North American Bird Conservation Initiative Committee.

### **Participation**

The Council includes representation from a wide variety of public and private organizations, including industry, who support the conservation of shorebirds. Participation on the Council is open to any organization committed to implementing objectives of the Plan. New members can be officially added at any regular meeting of the Council and are approved by the current members. Each participating organization will determine who should represent them on the Council and the term of appointment. The list of Council members is provided in Addendum 1. Council members may participate on three standing working groups, Research, Outreach/Education, and Monitoring or on any ad-hoc working group appointed by the Council to address specific issues.

### **Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Council will appoint two members to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair for two-year terms that can be renewed at the discretion of the Council. The Chair is responsible for governing Council meetings, overseeing Council business, and reporting on the activities of the Council to other national and international conservation initiatives as appropriate. The Vice-Chair will support the Chair in conducting regular duties, and will assume responsibility for the duties of the Chair if requested to do so by the Chair.

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee will be responsible for assisting in organizing and planning meetings of the Council, and for assembling an agenda for Council meetings from the suggestions of Council participants. The Executive Committee will consist of 11 members. Designated positions on the Executive Committee include the Chair, the Vice-U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Council Terms of Reference - 5 April 2002 3

Chair, a representative to the NABCI Committee, a Chair of the IAFWA Waterbird/Shorebird Working Group, a Joint Venture representative, and the three technical working group chairs. The Committee, excluding the three technical working group chairs, is composed of at least two representatives of state agencies, at least two representatives from non-governmental organizations, and between two and four representatives from Federal agencies. Executive Committee members will serve fixed three-year terms, commencing in April 2002, and can be renewed at the discretion of the Council.

Because the Council meets only twice annually, situations may arise where timely action on behalf of the Council is appropriate. The Chair and Vice-Chair will determine whether specific situations warrant Council action and will determine an appropriate course of action by convening the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will consult with the full Council whenever practical but is authorized to act on behalf of the Council if necessary.

### **Technical Working Group Chairs**

The Outreach and Education, Monitoring, and Research Working Groups will implement objectives identified in their respective plans. Each working group will be administered by a chair that is approved by the Council. A separate Terms of Reference for general operating procedures of technical working groups has been developed (Addendum 2). As Executive Committee members, chairs will serve three-year terms, which can be renewed at the discretion of the Council.

### **Staff**

The USFWS National Shorebird Coordinator will serve as the staff person for the Council. The duties of the Coordinator will include:

- 1) compiling and distributing minutes of Council meetings and reporting on progress of action items identified by the Council,
- 2) developing and maintaining a website that provides updated information on the U. S. Shorebird Conservation Plan,
- 3) keeping a current list of contact information of Council members and others interested in implementation of the U. S. Shorebird Conservation,
- 4) supporting the Chair, Vice-chair, and Executive Committee in developing Council meeting agendas and facilitating discussions of issues,
- 5) assisting regional working groups in meeting conservation objectives, and U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Council Terms of Reference - 5 April 2002 4

6) serving as liaison between the Council to other national bird conservation initiatives, international shorebird initiatives, and other bird conservation groups as appropriate.

### **Meetings**

The Council will meet twice annually, and meetings will be planned to coincide with other events attended by Council participants to facilitate attendance. A quorum of 6 of 10 members of the Executive Committee is required to conduct business. Council participants, particularly Executive Committee members, are urged to attend each meeting. If a Council participant is unable to attend a meeting, a proxy may be designated to serve on their behalf who will be authorized to participate fully in the Council discussions. Meetings will be open to participants, alternates, staff working with participants, other people invited by council participants, and the general public. The Council may choose to hold meetings, or portions of meetings, that are not open to the general public if appropriate to encourage discussion on complex topics.

The staff person, or a designated alternate, will keep minutes of each meeting. Minutes will include items that were discussed and any actions that were agreed upon. Minutes will be distributed to all Council participants and others interested in implementation of the Plan (Addendum 3).

### **Decision-making**

The Council will strive to obtain consensus on all issues and to work cooperatively to advance the goals of the Plan. In situations where consensus is not possible, but a decision or action is required, the Council will take official action only with approval by seven Executive Committee members.

### **Amendments to the Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference can be amended by the Council at any regular meeting. Proposals for amending the Terms of Reference must be provided to the Executive Committee at least two weeks prior to the regular meeting so that they can be distributed to Council members.