

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership Comments and Tasks from the January NABCI/Bird Plan/JV meeting

27 February 2015

Endorsements

Support increased use of the branches of Social Science in addressing bird conservation issues. Work on the definition and applicability at the US-NABCI level.

Structural Change

Support increased communication and collaborative via current (e.g., TriST) or enhanced channels (e.g., NABCI Science Team).

Immediate Actions

1. Develop clear messaging for Pacific and Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Conservation Business Plans and ensure appropriate JVs are aware and involved (distribute current status, invite to workshops). Also reach out to Flyway Nongame Technical Committees to inform and engage shorebird flyway conservations plans and strategies.

a. Update provided to JVs and Pacific Flyway Nongame Technical Committee on 24 February 2015.

b. Communication made to Flyway Nongame Technical Committee Chairs on 24 February 2015.

“On a recent call with the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership (USSCP) Council, Joel Jorgensen (Nebraska Game and Parks) suggested that the Council approach the flyway nongame technical committees about asking state partners how well shorebirds, and their conservation actions, are being captured in State Wildlife Action Plan revisions. We understand many of the flyway councils will be meeting in the next few weeks, and we were hoping that, as committee chair, you might be able to query participants during the meeting on:

- 1) are shorebird conservation concerns being included in their SWAP revision,
- 2) how is shorebird information being incorporated, and (most importantly)
- 3) can the USSCP be of assistance in providing shorebird expertise or information if needed?

Thanks for your time and assistance. Any state partners needing information or assistance can contact me at brad_andres@fws.gov or 303-275-2324.”

2. Keep abreast of flyway-scale programs developing at the hemispheric scale (e.g., Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative, Convention on Migratory Species, Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative) and represent Pacific and Atlantic partners' interests.

3. Re-assess technical capability and management representation of JVs to plan and deliver shorebird habitat conservation, starting with JV/BP matrix exercise for the meeting. Strategically identify biological priority, need, and opportunity among Joint Ventures to deliver effective shorebird conservation. Work with JVs to build capacity if needed.

a. Comments provided for the JV/NRCS meeting 23 February 2015.

- To meet many JV habitat objectives, there is a need to find mechanisms/create programs to incentivize practices annually over the long term that have high wildlife values but that may not significantly contribute to the producer's bottom line.
- Current policies restrict producer re-enrollment in some programs. In many areas there are a finite number of producers who are open to participation in Farm Bill programs, and excluding them from re-enrollment when contracts expire may limit achieving Joint Venture habitat objectives. For wildlife benefits, having a reliable number of suitable habitat acres available annually is likely more important than the overall number of producers participating.
- Short-term programs such as the Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (MBHI), which was enacted in response to habitat impaired by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, provide significant wildlife benefits. Objectives for habitat provided by the MBHI, however, existed prior to the oil spill. How can successful short-duration programs such as the MBHI and California Central Valley wildlife-friendly EQIP practices become long-term programs offered annually to producers?
- Include periodic (in some cases annual) habitat disturbance and/or maintenance needs into short- and long-term contracts with producers to ensure habitat provides optimal wildlife benefits over the long term.
- Implementing effectiveness monitoring should be a priority, because it contributes to refinement and delivery of practices that optimize benefits to wildlife and producers. Effective but not overly burdensome monitoring and evaluation strategies should be developed for commonly used conservation practices.

4. Depending on outcome of #3, discuss interest/need of periodic Management Board attendance of USSCP National Coordinator or Council member with JV Coordinators. Develop objective and outcomes for attendance.

5. Consider additional participants for USSCP Council.

Longer Term

1. If appropriate, develop multi-year schedule for attendance at JV management boards.
2. Find volunteers from the USSCP to participate in national teams that develop as NABCI evolves.
3. As Communications Education Outreach Team for help on specific shorebird conservation issues. Find financial support for assistance. Support or participate in Hill visits for targeted Joint Ventures.

Tracking

1. Actions will be included in USSCP work plan and tracked by USSCP Council.

Hesitation

1. Capacity to be successful at communication requirements and additional social science needs.
2. Potential dilution of national coordinator's focus on shorebirds with vacancy in other national coordinator positions.

Contact: Brad Andres, National Coordinator, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership;
brad_andres@fws.gov; 303-275-2324.