

USSC Council Teleconference Notes – 11 April 2016

Present: Stephen Brown, Larry Niles, Matt Reiter, Sara Schweitzer, Susan Skagen, Brian Smith, Bill Vermillion.

Staff: Brad Andres

Guests: Monica Iglecia, David Mizrahi, Joe Smith

Absent: Catherine Hickey, Joel Jorgensen, Judith Scarl, Brad Winn

Most of the time was spent discussing the recently released “Biological Opinion on the Effects of Existing and Expanded Structural Aquaculture of Native Bivalves in Delaware Bay, Middle and Lower Townships, Cape May County, New Jersey on the Federally Listed Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*)”. Larry Niles, David Mizrahi, and Joe Smith gave a review of the overall process that lead to the opinion of “no jeopardy” and the inclusion, or lack of inclusion, of relevant biological datasets. Larry circulated a number of documents to the Council to draw on for preparation of a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife that would comment on the use of the best scientific information, question how the process will use an adaptive management approach, enforcement of conservation measure restrictions, and ask about the opportunity to comment. As the letter is developed, Councilors should consider the policy of their organization in supporting the letter and can abstain if necessary (e.g., USFWS employees). Stephen, Susan, Larry, and Brad will work on a draft within one week of the call.

Monica Iglecia is the USSCP representative on the NABCI Private and Working Lands Subcommittee and reported that the Joint Ventures will be developing a workshop with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) in 2016 modeled after the successful workshop with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). A summary of this meeting is attached.

Bill and Brad will be attending the joint TriST/NSST meeting in Memphis next week. Agenda and the Unified Science Team Statement of Purpose were circulated last week. If you have any comments or thoughts on agenda items, please send them to Brad or Bill. Brad has circulated a first cut at partitioning North American shorebird populations among the Flyways. Bill has taken a first look to see where discrepancies occurred for the mid-continent. The idea is this can spark a top-down/bottom-up discussion of setting population objectives at BCR and JV scales. The file is attached.

Matt provided a synopsis of the monitoring workshop held in Panama City in February. A report will be forthcoming at the end of April, which will provide the next steps for developing a unified protocol for monitoring nonbreeding shorebirds. The National Wildlife Refuge System’s Inventory and Monitoring Program is interested in having, and incorporating, this document.

Lastly, the Canadian Wildlife Service is seeking comments on the Recovery Strategy and Management Plan for the Red Knot in Canada (all three subspecies). See:

https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/plans/rs_mp_red_knot_e_proposed.pdf

