

MINUTES OF THE U.S. SHOREBIRD PLAN COUNCIL MEETING

7 November 2001, 1:00 - 5:00 pm
Annual Waterbird Society Meeting
Sheraton Fallsview, Niagara Falls, Ontario

INTRODUCTIONS. Jon Andrew opened the meeting and Council members and observers were introduced. Additions to Council membership and changes in positions were discussed. Catherine Hickey, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, was nominated and approved to serve as Vice-Chair of the Council. Thanks to Bob Gill for previously serving in this capacity. An updated Council list is attached to the minutes.

NATIONAL COORDINATOR ACTIVITIES. Brad Andres presented a report that covered highlights of his activities from March through the end of September. Council members agreed that his activities were addressing implementation of the shorebird conservation plans. This report is attached to the minutes.

CANADIAN AND MEXICAN PLANS. The Canadian Shorebird Conservation Plan has now been printed. Contact Brad if you would like to receive a copy. A proposal for a Mexican Shorebird Conservation Plan has been prepared by DUMAC and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. The plan will primarily focus on identification and management of sites important to shorebirds in Mexico.

IMPORTANT SHOREBIRD AREAS. John Cecil, National Audubon (NAS) Society Science Division, provided an update on Audubon's IBA program for shorebird sites. NAS is working with Birdlife International to ready databases for use in the U. S. The database should be operable in the next few months. Brad and Council members will be working with John to develop fields that would be useful to characterize shorebird sites. Council members interested in this effort include: Bob Russell, Jon Bart, Stephanie Jones, Brian Harrington, Susan Skagen, Catherine Hickey. A preliminary list of sites have been distributed for review, and a draft set of fields will be distributed for comments.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE. Heather Johnson presented a report on accomplishments of the Outreach and Education Committee over the last year. The report highlights the many great activities that are happening for shorebirds from the Atlantic coast to the Prairie Potholes to Japan. Please contact Heather (Heather_Johnson@fws.gov) if you would like to receive a copy of the report. As of the Council meeting, Heidi Luquer, WHSRN, will serve as chair of the Outreach and Education Committee. Thanks for your effort, Heather.

Several Council partners have been involved with the development of an electronic field trip to the Copper River Delta, Alaska. The live broadcast, to target grades 4-8, will air on May 8, 2002, at 1:00 pm EDT.

Hilary Chapman gave an update on the Shorebird Sister Schools Program (SSSP). Over the last year, regional coordinators have been established in all seven USFWS regions. These coordinators will hold regional workshops and assist in adapting the curriculum to address regional issues. Funding was provided by the USFWS Division of International Conservation to support coordinators in Argentina and Mexico. SSSP also received a grant from Phillips Petroleum to fund regional and national activities. Hilary acknowledged the work of Heather Johnson to develop the program by presenting her with a framed shorebird print.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE SHOREBIRD RESERVE NETWORK. Heidi Luquer gave an update on activities of the WHSRN. A shorebird conservation award (\$1,000) has been established for work in Latin America as a memorial to Pablo Canevari. Several new site nominations are being pursued in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America. WHSRN has been awarded a Phase II NAWCA grant to address shorebird habitat restoration and education in Sinaloa, Mexico. A new poster has been produced and a new brochure is being developed. Heidi now had an electronic network to distribute *WHSRNews*. WHSRN is

working with the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture on a Prairies to Patagonia website. For more information, please contact Heidi at luquer@vermontel.net.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING. Jon Bart presented the results of a workshop, held during the previous week in Denver, on the use of migration counts to monitor population trends of shorebirds. The next step in the process is to undertake regional evaluations of how site selection and measurement bias can be overcome to achieve unbiased estimates of trends in population sizes. Jon, Susan Skagen, and many other members of the Research and Monitoring Committee have drafted a comprehensive strategy, *Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (PRISM)*, for monitoring shorebird population trends and estimating population sizes. Thanks to Jon and Susan for leading this effort. This strategy builds on the initial monitoring plan and focuses on a four-tiered approach to survey shorebirds in accessible breeding areas, in inaccessible breeding areas, at migration stopovers/staging sites, and on the wintering grounds. The PRISM document will soon be broadly distributed for comments. The Council supported the general approach outlined in PRISM.

Although initial efforts have focused on migration areas, the intent of the committee to eventually address all shorebird species through one of the tiers of surveys. To that end, the Council charged the Research and Monitoring Committee to organize a workshop to consider surveys of temperate-breeding species, particularly those occurring in grasslands (late summer, early fall 2002). Stephen Brown and Brad Winn convened a workshop on an Atlantic coast shorebird network prior to the Council meeting. The objective of this group is to coordinate efforts for shorebirds that are resident on the western Atlantic coast. Stephen will be distributing information on this workshop at a later date. Lastly, the Council charged the committee to examine ways to reinvigorate the research component of the research and monitoring committee.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS. As implementation of the shorebird conservation plan expands, the Council suggested that structure and function of the technical committees be re-examined. The Outreach and Education Committee already has in place a 12- to 15-member "steering committee" that assists the chair with decisions of the committee. As similar structure has been proposed for the Research and Monitoring Committee. The general notion is to have a structure that most efficiently and effectively uses all of the talent of the shorebird community and ensures that goals and objectives of the plan are being addressed by specific activities. The Council Executive Committee will work with the technical committee chairs to draft a proposal to be incorporated into the Terms of Reference.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES. Steve Miller will chair the IAFWA Waterbird and Shorebird Working Group meeting in early December. Brad will present information on implementation of the shorebird plan. The IAFWA meeting presents an opportunity to solicit greater state participation in implementation of regional shorebird conservation plans. Development of integrated bird workshops will also be discussed. Brad will distribute minutes of this meeting to the Council.

PARTNERS IN FLIGHT ASILOMAR CONFERENCE. Brad previously distributed information on the *Third International Partners in Flight Conference: A Workshop on Bird Conservation and Implementation and Integration*. Several shorebird conservationists have been asked to contribute papers. For more information on the conference, please visit the conference web site (<http://www.prbo.org/PIF/NPIF2002.htm>) and read through the Draft Program (<http://www.prbo.org/PIF/program.htm>) to understand the scope and intent of this conference.

REGIONAL WORKING GROUPS. Several representatives from regional working groups furnished information on activities within the regions. Catherine Hickey, through a grant received by Point Reyes Bird Observatory, will be working to refine and implement shorebird conservation objectives in the Southern Pacific planning region. The Hawaii plan is in draft form and should be ready for distribution sometime next year. Laura Leschner and Maura Naughton are working with Jon Bart on Western Shorebird Survey site identification in the Northern Pacific region. Don Paul is continuing to develop an project among the Great Salt Lake in Utah, Chaplin Lakes in Saskatchewan, and Marismas Nacionales in Nayarit. Stephen Brown and Larry Niles are working to step-down regional conservation objectives for

state integrated bird planning workshops. Bob Russell is working to get shorebirds into the planning process for National Wildlife Refuges in the Great Lakes region.

The role and vigor of regional working groups was also discussed. Brad and Jon Andrew will draft a suggested outline of roles of the regional groups and will solicit comments and input from the chairs and others in the regions. The Council suggested that a brief annual report that highlights regional activities would be useful. Brad will solicit input from regional groups on development of this report. Brad has also begun developing a document that highlights funding opportunities for shorebird conservation and will distribute a copy for comments by 31 January 2002.

NORTH AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE. Brad has been involved with a number of meetings regarding NABCI issues and has provided Steve Miller with updates on progress made on tasks assigned by the NABCI committee. Principal among these tasks is refinement of the funding needs of the initiatives. The staff is working to produce a document that incorporates requests for staffing and operational funding. Shorebird interests have been well-met in these documents so far. A communications strategy has been developed for NABCI and a website is under development. Brad will distribute results of the NABCI committee meeting that will be held in mid-January.

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act has received a \$3 million appropriation for this federal fiscal year. Seventy-five percent of the allocation is to be spent in Latin America, and the remaining 25% of the funds will likely focus on upland projects in the U. S. A 3-1 (non-Federal) match is required for both components. Projects can address habitat, outreach, education, monitoring, and applied research. The grant program will be managed by the USFWS. Brad will distribute more information when the official request for proposals is released. In the meantime, begin to think about possible projects and collaborators in Latin America.

Heather Johnson reported on the international aspects of NABCI. An international agreement is being drafted to further bird conservation among the U. S., Canada, and Mexico with the potential to expand across the entire Western Hemisphere. A committee is also developing a set of characteristics to identify projects that illustrate aspects of integrated bird conservation. Further information should be available after the NABCI committee retreat in January.

A WESTERN HEMISPHERE PERSPECTIVE FOR SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION. A report outlining the justification, challenges, and actions for promoting a western hemisphere perspective for shorebird conservation was distributed with the agenda of the Council meeting. Thanks to Jim Corven, Carol Lively, Garry Donaldson, and Heather Johnson for drafting the report. The Council endorsed the ideas presented in the report and suggested that the action items be further refined and specific tasks and timelines be assigned. Heather Johnson will oversee this effort. With consideration of extending PRISM south of the U. S. - Mexico border, the funding possibility of the Neotrop bill, and efforts by WHSRN and Wetlands International to identify and manage, opportunities are ripe for increasing the Council's involvement with Latin American colleagues.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING - The next Council meeting will be held in conjunction with the 67th North American Conference on Friday, April 5, 2002 from 1:00 - 5:00 pm in the Sanger Room at the Hyatt Regency Dallas in Dallas, Texas.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Jon Andrew, Division of Migratory Bird Management, USFWS, Chair
Catherine Hickey, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Vice-Chair
Stephen Brown, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Executive Committee
Susan Skagen, Midcontinent Ecological Science Center, USGS, Executive Committee
Jon Bart, Snake River Field Station, USGS, Chair, Research and Monitoring
Heidi Luquer, WHSRN, Chair, Outreach and Education

Brad Andres, USFWS, Coordinator
Brian Harrington, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Atlantic
Bob Russell, USFWS, Great Lakes
Brad Winn, Georgia Wildlife Resources Division, Southeastern Coastal Plain
John Cecil, National Audubon Society (for Frank Gill)
Jennifer Wheeler, North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (for Melanie Steinkamp)
Hilary Vinson Chapman, Shorebird Sister Schools Program
Stephanie Jones, USFWS Non-Game Coordinators
Heather Johnson, USFWS Division of International Conservation
Marshall Howe, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center

MEETING OBSERVERS

Mark Shieldcastle, Ohio Division of Wildlife
Steve Lewis, USFWS, Migratory Bird Management
Scott Johnston, USFWS, Migratory Bird Management
Scott Hector, Massachusetts Audubon
Joanna Klima, Rochester, New York
Paul Smith, University of British Columbia

submitted by: Brad Andres, 20 November 2001. Please direct any questions, corrections, or comments to Brad_Andres@fws.gov