



PRISM Steering Committee and
USSCP Council Executive Committee
Meeting Notes

5–7 September 2007
PRBO Conservation Science, Petaluma, CA

The Executive Committee of the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (USSCP) Council met in Petaluma, California, following a two and one-half day meeting of the Steering Committee of the Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (PRISM). The purpose of the PRISM meeting was to review the progress that has been made towards implementing PRISM's goals and to chart future PRISM directions. Items discussed by the Executive Committee are summarized below followed by a brief overview of the PRISM meeting. The Executive Committee meeting, chaired by Catherine Hickey, ran for three hours on 7 September. Thanks to PRBO Conservation Science for hosting the meetings and to Susan Skagen and Garry Donaldson for organizing the PRISM meeting.

Executive Committee Items

Harmonization of Conservation Assessment Process

There is a growing need for conservation organizations to have a single process to assess the conservation status of birds. Because the Partners in Flight criteria have changed since the USSCP conducted its initial, independent assessment in 2000, the Executive Committee (EC) decided it would be worth investigating how the new PIF ranking compares with the shorebird assessment completed in 2004. The EC believes the USSCP should remain the “holder/approver” of assessment information. A preliminary assessment using the current PIF process will be conducted and distributed for review and discussion by those who served on November 2004 review. A list of reviewers will be forwarded to the EC for approval. **(Andres; 30 Nov 07)**

Committee to Review Population Size and Trend Information

It has been suggested that the USSCP and Canadian Shorebird Conservation Plan (CSCP) should have a more formal process for reviewing information on shorebird population sizes and trends and for making recommendations to change shorebird assessment scores. This idea was motivated by an opinion piece that will soon be published in the *Auk*. A set of potential committee members from the U.S. and Canada will be identified and submitted for approval by the USSCP and CCSCP Councils. The committee will help develop a Terms of Reference for operation of the joint committee. At a minimum, a review schedule should align with Wetlands International's publication schedule of *Waterbird Population Estimates*. **(Andres, Adrian Farmer; 31 Dec 08)**

Interaction with Joint Ventures

In 2001, Carol Lively produced an assessment of the involvement of Joint Ventures (JVs) with the USSCP. The EC believes we have a good relationship with JVs, but thought it might be useful to re-assess the representation of shorebird interests on JV Management Boards and Technical Committees and if USSCP objectives are incorporated into JV activities (**Andres, with other; 28 Feb 08**). The purpose of this assessment would be for the USSCP members to offer support to the JVs where shorebird representation is insufficient. Over the last several years, USSCP representatives have provided comments on shorebird sections of JV implementation plans. More recently, for example, Sue Thomas will be organizing the waterbird sections of the implementation plan update for the Intermountain West JV. The Council should discuss having representatives present recent USSCP activities at JV management board meetings. The Council needs to confirm Andrew Milliken's desire to participate on the EC (**Brown; 30 Nov 08**).

WHSRN-US

Last year, we developed a list of sites that were deemed internationally important, by the numeric criterion of 100,000 shorebirds supported per year, but are not yet included in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN). A letter asking site managers to consider nomination of these numerically important sites into WHSRN still needs to be drafted (**Cecil, Hickey, Andres; 31 Dec 07**). We also decided to pursue identification of internationally important sites that support shorebird populations of high conservation concern and to solicit WHSRN nominations from land owners. Given the current conservation status of Red Knots, a focus on sites along the North American Atlantic coast would be a good start. (**Niles, Cecil, Andres; 31 Mar 08**). USSCP regional representatives are encouraged to promote the use of the site assessment tool, developed by WHSRN, to network sites in their region and to solicit nominations of new sites that support internationally important numbers of populations of high conservation concern.

Species Conservation Plans

Partners from the USSCP continue to help WHSRN develop Species Conservation Plans for high priority shorebirds. Plans will gradually be added to the web at <http://www.whsrn.org>. The hope is that these plans will generate more funding streams to address the needs of high priority shorebirds. Many species working groups have been, or are being, formed to address priority species. This effort complements the Focal Species strategy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (see http://www.nbii.gov/portal/community/Communities/Ecological_Topics/Bird_Conservation/FWS_Focal_Species/). Among new groups forming are ones for Hudsonian Godwit, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and Mountain Plover. The EC suggested that they should reach out to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Shorebird/Waterbird/PIF Working Group on the development and availability of these plans (**Andres; done 12 Sep 07**).

Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group

The second meeting of Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group (WHSG) was held in conjunction with the VIII Neotropical Ornithological Congress (NOC) in Maturin, Venezuela, on 16 May 2007. The WHSG was well attended by 50 people from 16 countries, including Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, Columbia, Venezuela, Suriname, French Guiana, Guyana, Panama, Cuba, Mexico, Australia, Canada and the United States. Latin Americans expressed their desire to form a WHSG, although the role of the group varied by person. Discussion included enabling the transfer of information within and across hemispheres via meetings, websites, and newsletters, and various people expressed the need to share and learn about conservation, research, and outreach/education issues. Follow-up communications were discussed and it was suggested that the USSCP Council should make an effort to have representatives attend the NOCs to enhance communications with colleagues to the south. The Shorebird Research Group, as a component of the WHSG, plans to meet in Sinaloa, Mexico, in March 2009.

Accomplishments

Last year, the USSCP Council realized that some sort of outreach on the plan's accomplishments is probably needed and would be beneficial to the initiative. The first step, not yet initiated, would be to review models and draft an outline of an accomplishment report, which would build on the goals and objectives of the USSCP. It might make sense to address Canada and the U.S. simultaneously (**Hickey, Donaldson, Jones, Cecil, Skagen, Stephanie Jones, Thomas, Andres to form ad-hoc committee; outline drafted by 31 Jan 08**).

Next Meeting

The next USSCP Council meeting has not yet been scheduled but will likely be during late summer of 2008.

PRISM 2007 Overview Meeting

Presentations

Goals and objectives of the meeting (Susan Skagen, USGS)
Overview and history of PRISM (Brad Andres, USFWS)
Recent activities in the boreal forest (Vicky Johnston, CWS, by phone)
Canadian arctic advances (Vicky Johnston)
Alaska North Slope work (Rick Lanctot, USFWS)
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge breeding surveys (Stephen Brown, Manomet)
Comprehensive arctic analyses (Jon Bart, USGS)

Arctic peer review process and results (Bruce Peterjohn, USGS)
 Range-wide Snowy Plover breeding survey (Sue Thomas, USFWS)
 Breeding shorebirds in the Prairie Potholes (Diane Granfors, USFWS)
 Migration monitoring along the Atlantic coast (Stephen Brown)
 Estimating populations of passage migrants in the Prairie Potholes (Susan Skagen)
 Neotropical/austral overview (Garry Donaldson, CWS)
 Estimating numbers of Whimbrels and Hudsonian Godwits in Chile (Brad Andres)
 PRISM and the three biases (Jon Bart)
 Summary of Fort Collins workshop on detectability (Jim Lyons, USFWS)
 Accounting for bias during breeding — the Long-billed Curlew example (Susan Skagen)
 Accounting for bias during passage (Farmer and Durbian paper given by Susan Skagen)
 Discussion: ISS future – do we need design-based adjustments?
 Pacific Shorebird Migration Project (Nils Warnock, PRBO)
 Regional scale approach to monitoring management action (Jim Lyons)
 Integrated approaches in the Intermountain West (Don Paul, IMWJV)
 Indices to assess recovery of Red Knots in Delaware Bay (Larry Niles, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey)
 Roundtable discussion of the state of data repositories (Brian Sullivan, Cornell)
 Meshing NABCI monitoring subcommittee report with PRISM objectives (Brad Andres)

Partial Bibliography of PRISM-related Documents and Published Papers

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Harrington B. A., S. C. Brown, J. Corven, and J. Bart. 2002. Collaborative approaches to the evolution of migration and the development of science-based conservation in shorebirds. *Auk* 119: 914–921.

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Revision of PRISM Goals

Former Objectives

- 1) Estimate the size of breeding populations of shorebirds
- 2) Describe shorebirds' distribution, abundance, and habitat relationships
- 3) Monitor trends in shorebird population size
- 4) Monitor shorebird numbers at stopover and wintering (non-breeding) locations

Revised Draft Goals

- 1) Identify species at risk (or "over-abundant" species)
- 2) Contribute to the identification of causes of declines or other disturbing trends
- 3) Help develop, evaluate, and refine management/conservation programs
- 4) Document progress towards, or away from, management/conservation objectives
- 5) Assist managers and policy-makers in meeting their shorebird conservation goals

PRISM Action Plan – 2007

- 1) Update the PRISM overview document, including acceptance of revised goals. Separate boreal and arctic sections. For actions, group by topic but do not prioritize. Produce a glossy executive summary as a tool for fundraising. **(Donaldson/Skagen to lead, Johnston, Lanctot, Lyons, Brown; 1 Apr 08)**
- 2) Revise PRISM funding document to include a one-page summary and a more detailed document that outlines current goals and accomplishments **(Andres (lead), Johnston, Brown, Niles, Peterjohn, Thomas, Skagen; 1 Mar 08).**
- 3) Produce a general overview of data management needs **(Andres, Bart, Peterjohn, Sullivan, Brown, Donaldson; 15 Dec 07).**
- 4) Develop a color-flag reporting and feed-back web portal **(Niles, Bart, Dey, Andres; 31 Jan 08).**
- 5) Address NABCI task 1.2.1 ("Review and prioritize the species most in need of new, enhanced, or different types of monitoring information...") for shorebirds **(Skagen, Bart, Peterjohn; date dependent on NABCI action).**
- 6) Evaluate the International and Maritime Shorebird Survey as a key tool for meeting PRISM goals: what questions can be answered confidently, or less so; what are the strengths and weaknesses; what are the components of evaluation; and, how do we move this forward? The value added from the continuation of other monitoring efforts, e.g., arctic PRISM, should be recognized. **(Brown, Bart, Warnock, Guy Morrison, Niles, Peterjohn, Skagen; 30 Sep 08)**

7) Expand and improve the PRISM web site, which would include case studies (**Andres, Bart, Niles; 31 Dec 07**).

8) Enhance capacity for non-breeding neotropical/austral surveys. Increase communication with the Neotropical Ornithological Congress and Wetlands International to discuss capability and application of PRISM. (**Donaldson, Bart, Dey, Andres, Paul, Rob Clay, Guillermo Fernandez, Daniel Blanco, Russell; call by 15 Nov 07**)

9) Produce a document on general guidance for implementing rigorous shorebird surveys that follows PRISM's recommendations. Include Latin American partners in development. Make it available on the PRISM web site and, possibly, translate to Spanish (**Lancot, Andres, Peterjohn, Skagen, Brown; 1 Dec 07**).

10) Provide updates on PRISM developments to Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) and Waterbird Plan Council at their joint January meeting in Mexico (**Dave Mehlman, Donaldson; Jan 08**).

11) Work with the Shorebird Research Group of the Americas to develop a clear strategy for addressing factors that limit positive shorebird population growth (**Donaldson, Brown, Lancot; 28 Feb 08**). Submit FY09 National Conservation Need proposal for consideration by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Science and Research Committee (**Andres; done by 10 Sep 07**).

Attendance (^{EC} = Executive Committee member; ^{PS} = PRISM Steering Committee member)

Brad Andres
Jon Bart^{SP}
Stephen Brown^{EC, SP}
John Cecil^{EC}
Amanda Dey
Garry Donaldson^{SP}
Diane Granfors
Catherine Hickey^{EC}
Vicky Johnston^{SP} (by phone)
Rick Lancot^{SP}
Jim Lyons^{SP}
Guy Morrison^{SP} (by phone)

Larry Niles^{EC}
Gary Page
Don Paul
Bruce Peterjohn^{SP}
Jennie Rausch^{SP} (by phone)
Bob Russell^{EC} (for Stephanie Jones)
Susan Skagen^{EC, SP}
Lynne Stenzel
Brian Sullivan
Sue Thomas
Nils Warnock^{SP}

Submitted by Brad Andres, 19 November 2007.