

USSCP Teleconference Notes – 19 June 2017

Present: Catherine Hickey, Matt Reiter, Judith Scarl, Sara Schweitzer, Bill Vermillion, Brad Winn; Brad Andres

I. NABCI

A. Human Dimensions Case Studies (notes from Ashley Gramza)

1. Committee has developed a work plan. Joel and Brad are on the HD Committee.
2. Bird Conservation HD Success Stories - Received 21 success stories with wide representation regarding geography, organization involved, type of bird involved, and social science field employed. Next steps are to determine template for displaying stories (e.g., Story Map, info to include for each) and discuss roll-out/dissemination strategy. The goal is to summarize stories received and report on dissemination strategy at August NABCI meeting. A number of shorebird examples were submitted.
3. Data from the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) HD survey is being compiled and analyzed → September Future of Waterfowl Workshop. Viewing included and surveyed birders as well as hunters.
4. Pathways HD Conference and training held at Estes Park, CO, September 17-20, 2017.

B. Working Lands (from Monica Iglesia)

1. 2017-2019 work plan developed with next steps and action items. Some of the goals and actions are below. I plan to reach out to shorebird partners to ensure that work relating to shorebirds is adequately represented.
2. A major goal is re-authorized of a Farm Bill that establishes bird-friendly policies and programs that are funded annually at desired levels. The group is compiling a list of partner groups to collaborate with on advocacy efforts that are not already represented on the subcommittee. They are going to highlight successes relating to partner biologists and conservation initiatives working on Farm Bill related conservation delivery, compile resources that have been developed in support of Farm Bill conservation programs (e.g. decision support tools, bird identification books), develop a database of partner biologists and their capacity to further Farm Bill programs to deliver to NRCS staff, leadership, and partner organizations, continue building relationships between JVs and FSA and NRCS.

3. There is an effort to work to engage land trusts in bird conservation and integrate bird conservation metrics into land trust conservation efforts and engaging Forest Service, State Forest Agencies, Partners for Conservation, and NGOS not currently represented on subcommittee in bird conservation.

4. State of the Birds 2017 is focusing on the Farm Bill and will be much briefer than previous editions. Draft will be available by 23 June and will have a one-week turnaround.

C. Hemispheric Vision – As part of the Migratory Bird Treaty centennial, NABCI has been working on for the past year on a Hemispheric Vision for bird conservation. One of the next steps will be to look at existing projects/partnerships and see how the hemispheric vision fits into these and how the trinational NABCI's can support/promote these partnerships both in North America but also in Latin America. NABCI is also going to look at existing actions that are happening to mainstream bird conservation/align bird conservation goals with other human goals, such as economics or human health. NABCI will definitely want to coordinate among the bird partnerships, so it would be useful to get USSCP's input on how best to engage both USSCP and the Pacific/Atlantic Plans. Timeline is two years and then a longer vision at 10-15 years.

Action: Work plans/documents for the above items are attached to these notes.

II. WHSRN and WHSRN-US (Brad Andres)

A. On the heels of the WHSRN Hemispheric Council meeting at the end of April, Rob Penner of TNC expressed interest in getting more involved with the US Plan/Partnership. I suggested to him, along with Dave Mehlman, that WHSRN might be a good fit for TNC. I shared the WHSRN-US report with Rob, as a way to provide some background. Rob manages Cheyenne Bottoms, in Kansas, and drafted the WHSRN nomination for the Flint Hills. I suggest the Council consider adding Rob as WHSRN representative for the USSCP and Brad A., in coordination with Rob Clay, work to implement the recommendations in the report, including the re-invigoration of the WHSRN-US Committee.

Action: Brad A. to work with Rob to develop a workplan for the WHSRN-US Committee that also addresses purpose and structure of the group (21 July 2017).

B. The USSCP has received a nomination for the Georgia Barrier Islands to be included in WHSRN as a landscape of hemispheric importance due to supporting >30% of the flyway population for *rufa* Red Knot and Great Lakes-breeding Piping Plover:

Action: Review the Georgia Barrier Islands nomination by 7 July 2017.

III. TrUST/JVs

A. TriST/TrUST

1. Bill and Brad A. attended the TriST/TrUST meeting in May. Relative to shorebirds, the daily rationing models were discussed. There are a few ways the USSCP could assist with standardizing inputs into these models, including using a set of agreed upon shorebird biomasses. Brad A. will work with Bill and other JV staff to identify needs. One of the suggestions was the development migration chronology curves from eBird data.

2. TRACT (Targeted Resource Acquisition Comparison Tool) represents the National Wildlife Refuge System's (NWRS) newly revised attempt to bring science into the land acquisition process (after LAPS). It is founded on the NWRS strategic growth policy which sets clear priorities for the growth of the NWRS. Policy requires the NWRS to evaluate proposed land acquisitions, proposed new refuges, and proposed expansions based on their contribution to these priorities. Brad A. has worked previously with NWRS staff to develop a preliminary tool, which will be re-evaluated in the next year or so. One of the discussion points was the inclusion of social values in determining "high priority" areas, which is also used in NAWCA proposal scoring.

3. After some rumination of the value of assessing Net Landscape Change at the continental scale, relative to new technological advances and the issue of the scale of utility, it was decided that a position paper would be drafted (by 1 July) that focused on: 1) increasing opportunities to update the National Land Cover Database, 2) fulfilling agency mandates to update the National Wetland Inventory, 3) improving ways to determine QUALITY for grassland and scrub shrub, and 4) providing regular updates to delineate marsh elevation at fine scale (Bill and others).

4. The TrUST Executive Committee will work to complete a unified work plan with individual actions items that are shared and other action items that are more specific to bird initiatives as needed. Brad A. will take on Chair of the TriST group on 1 October 2017.

5. There was some discussion and subsequent follow-up on the regional scoring for the Avian Conservation Assessment Database.

B. JVs

1. The Lower Mississippi Valley has recently been working on updating the shorebird habitat objectives for their region.

2. The PPJV has a draft update to their shorebird implementation plan. They have also been involved with the development of the Northern Great Plains Business

Plan (all bird targets are land birds). There is interest in considering common objectives across the northern and southern Central Plains.

3. As a follow-up to a workshop in January, the Rio Grande JV is leading the development of a ecoregional conservation plan for the Chihuahuan Grasslands, which will focus on Grassland Conservation Priority Areas.

4. The Central Valley JV has an updated shorebird implementation plan available. The process was outlined in a series of papers in a special issue of San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science (15[1]). The nonbreeding shorebird energetics paper is: Dybala, K. E., M. E. Reiter, C. M. Hickey, W. D. Shuford, K. H. Strum and G. S. Yarris. 2016. Bioenergetics Approach to Setting Conservation Objectives for Non-Breeding Shorebirds in California's Central Valley. San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science 15(1): 2. Matt Reiter is working with Mark Petrie and others to better include shorebirds in the update to the TrueMet energetics model. The results will be presented in a scientific manuscript.

IV. PRISM

A. Nonbreeding Shorebird Monitoring Protocol – A meeting was held in Denver in March to further the development of a standardized approach to monitoring numbers of nonbreeding shorebirds and determine how to reconcile data management and analysis issues across the hemisphere. Information discussed at that workshop has been developed into an outline which will present monitoring recommendations.

Action: Matt and Brad A. will flesh out a draft, which will be sent to workshop participants and others for comments (31 August 2017)

B. Population Sizes and Trends – 2017 is five years since the last updated publication of shorebird population sizes and trends. It is probably worth updating this document, which does get cited quite a bit. Arne Lesterhuis is interested in expanding to all Western Hemisphere shorebirds.

Action: Brad A. is beginning to collect some information and will need to engage an ad-hoc group (30 June 2017) to work on the publication (31 December 2017).

V. Flyway Plans

A. Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative

1. NFWF has funded another series of proposals for the AFSI.

2. An additional \$500K will go to projects in Brazil, Barbados, and the Guianas via a USAID earmark to USFWS.

3. There is an active group working to implement the Brazilian National Action Plan for Migratory Shorebirds.

B. Pacific Americas Shorebird Conservation Strategy

1. English version was released in April 2017 (see <https://www.shorebirdplan.org/international-shorebird-conservation/>), and a Spanish version will be available in the next few weeks.
2. National Audubon has successfully submitted a grant to the Packard Foundation to begin to implement the Strategy.
3. The Packard Foundation, along with Advanced Conservation Solutions and Cornell University, also sponsored a workshop in June in Panama City to get input on the development of a Coastal Solutions Fellows Program along the Pacific Coast. The purpose is to build, train and support a collaborative network of scientists, developers, and planners who are designing and implementing evidence-based solutions to coastal environmental challenges in Latin America. Fellows will target Latin Americans, but mentors from the USA and Canada can play a role.
3. There is a current USAID earmark (\$350K) in the Federal budget for implementing the Strategy.

C. Americas Central Flyway – There is growing interest in the development of a flyway plan for the mid-continent. The Mississippi Flyway Council Nongame Tech Committee will bring up this item for discussion at their September meeting.

VI. USSCP

1. Plan Update – We previously discussed the need for some sort of update to the USSCP. I hope to send an outline before the call for review and suggestions. The idea was to focus on past accomplishments and future direction, rather than a technically heavy document.

Action: Brad A. to draft an outline for USSCP “update” focusing in collective accomplishments and the future direction (12 July 2017).

2. Recruitment – We need to discuss how we can get more engagement in the cooperative work of the Council. Attached is a previous attempt to lay out some of the “admin” needs.