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Shorebird Conservation Trust - Barbados

## Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Harvest Workshop: Towards a Region-wide Sustainable Harvest of Migratory Shorebirds

Monday 21 – Wednesday 23 March, 2016

### Workshop report



### Summary

The Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Harvest Workshop in Barbados (21–23 March, 2016) represents the first ever multi-stakeholder meeting focused on the shorebird hunting threat along the Atlantic Flyway. It is a major contribution to the *Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative: a business plan* (2015) in relation to hunting – one of the four primary threats to shorebird populations identified in the plan. Unsustainable shorebird hunting has been identified as a potential threat in Barbados, Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Suriname and possibly Guyana and Brazil. Responding to this, the workshop convened 28 shorebird hunting stakeholders from: government agencies (Barbados, Canada, France, Guadeloupe and USA); hunting associations/federations (Martinique and Barbados); NGOs (Barbados, Caribbean, Guadeloupe and French Guiana); academia (University of the West Indies); and the BirdLife Secretariat (representing BirdLife Partners along the Atlantic Flyway).

The workshop provided representatives of hunter and conservationist groups, government and NGO representatives, the first opportunity to come together at the same table in a positive atmosphere of mutual respect. Field visits to a range of managed shooting swamps (including Woodbourne Shorebird Refuge), a warm welcome and hospitality provided by the Barbados Wildfowlers Association, and a day of presentations and discussion at the University of West Indies – Cave Hill Campus provided an enabling environment for learning and understanding, exchanges of ideas, and discussion.

## Workshop Context

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Four primary threats to shorebird populations were identified through the multi-partner effort that culminated in the 2015 *Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Business Plan*. These threats are: habitat loss and change; predation; human disturbance; and hunting. Efforts are ongoing through the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative to address each of these threats, and the **Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Harvest Workshop** in Barbados (21–23 March, 2016) represents the first ever multi-stakeholder meeting focused on the hunting threat for the Atlantic Flyway. Unsustainable shorebird hunting has been identified as a potential threat in Barbados, Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Suriname and possibly Guyana and Brazil.

The Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Harvest Workshop convened 28 shorebird hunting stakeholders from: government agencies (Barbados, Canada, France, Guadeloupe and USA); hunting associations/federations (Martinique and Barbados); NGOs (Barbados, Caribbean, Guadeloupe and French Guiana); academia (University of the West Indies); and the BirdLife Secretariat (representing BirdLife Partners along the Atlantic Flyway).

The broad Objectives of the workshop were to:

- Explore regional context of shorebird hunting in the Caribbean and northern South America
- Examine methods to sustain the cultural practice of shorebird hunting
- Develop approaches for sustainable shorebird hunting along the Atlantic Flyway
- Share and learn from the advances in sustainable shorebird management and harvest in Barbados

To achieve these objectives, the workshop was split into two main components:

- A full day of (simultaneously translated) presentations and discussion at the University of the West Indies – Cave Hill Campus reviewing the science, policies, and practices of shorebirds and shorebird hunting in the Atlantic Flyway. Specifically, presentations examined: shorebird biology; harvest management theory; recent research; monitoring; conservation investments; the shorebird hunting situation in represented jurisdictions; and steps toward and approaches to sustainability.
- A day and a half visiting shorebird shooting swamps around the island, starting with Woodbourne Shorebird Refuge (an ex-shooting swamp, managed in the same way as a shooting swamp but for the purpose of shorebird conservation) and the southern swamps (including those within the St Philip Shooting Swamps IBA: Tom's Pond, Congo Road, and Golden Grove), and a half day visiting the northern swamps of the St Lucy IBA (Fosters, Alaska, and Cave). The purposes of these visits were for participants to: gain knowledge about the shorebird hunting practice on Barbados; build relationships among the shorebird hunting communities; and assess the feasibility of establishing a second “Shorebird Refuge”.



## Meeting the Objectives

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**The regional context of shorebird hunting in the Caribbean and northern South America** was explored through presentations from: the Office Nationale de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage, Délégation Inter Régionale Outre-mer (French government agency, based in Guadeloupe, with responsibility for hunting in all of the Atlantic Flyway French DOMs); Canadian Wildlife Service (focusing on an analysis of shorebird harvest in Barbados); the Fédération des Chasseurs de la Martinique (Martinique Hunting Federation); BirdsCaribbean (for Martinique and Guadeloupe) and GEPOG (looking at shorebirds, hunting and conservation in French Guiana).

**Methods to sustain the cultural practice of shorebird hunting** were demonstrated by the Barbados Wildfowlers Association out in the field where it is clear that the rich culture of swamp shooting (whistling birds, carving decoys, the colourful history and the social aspects) thrives after their self-imposed restrictions (numbers of birds shot for different species and per swamp, numbers of hunters at any one time, bag limits for particular species of concern) on hunting. The focus of the entire workshop was on meeting the cultural and subsistence needs of people who harvest shorebirds, while achieving a sustainable shorebird harvest along the Atlantic Flyway.

**Approaches for sustainable shorebird hunting along the Atlantic Flyway** were elaborated through examples from the USA (looking at cooperative migratory bird harvest management in North America), from along the Atlantic Flyway, and from Barbados specifically where the data related to the harvest are most available, accurate and robust in terms of assessing sustainable harvest levels.

**Advances in sustainable shorebird management and harvest in Barbados** were shared through presentation of the work with the Barbados Wildfowlers Association over the last eight years; the analysis and presentation of detailed harvest data from the Barbados shooting swamps (by CWS); presentation of the initial isotope analysis of shorebirds harvested in Barbados (indicating which populations/ geographies these birds originated from); and direct discussion and conversation with Barbados hunters.

## Key messages from the workshop

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- The Lesser Antilles and Guianas (including the French DOMs) are of critical importance to migrating shorebirds along the Atlantic Flyway.
- The biology of shorebirds (long-lived, low reproductive output, migratory, tendency to flock) makes them highly vulnerable to population level impacts from sport and subsistence harvest.
- Over the last 30 years, 49% of North American breeding shorebird populations are declining, while only 8% are increasing; 43% are stable or unknown.
- Hunting is one of four major threats to shorebird populations along the Atlantic Flyway, the others being: habitat loss and change, predation, and human disturbance.
- The migratory nature of shorebirds (80% of 41 shorebird species that nest in North America and occur in the Atlantic Flyway, winter in the Caribbean and South America) necessarily requires a Flyway approach to their conservation and sustainable harvest.
- The Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative represents such a flyway approach, and stakeholders are currently active in efforts to address each of the four major threats to shorebirds.
- The Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Harvest workshop in Barbados represents the first ever multi-stakeholder meeting focused on the hunting threat for the Atlantic Flyway.
- Unsustainable shorebird hunting has been identified as a potential threat in Barbados, Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Suriname and possibly Guyana and Brazil.
- The scientifically robust harvest data from Barbados shows that six species of shorebirds make up 97.5% of the total harvest
- For four of the shorebirds harvested on Barbados (Lesser Yellowlegs, American Golden Plover, Short-billed Dowitcher and Greater Yellowlegs), the Barbados harvest represents a significant percentage of the global Potential Biological Removal (PBR; up to 29% of the Lesser Yellowlegs PBR in the highest harvest year since 2000).
- With less than 80 shorebird hunters on Barbados and orders of magnitude more hunters in the other shorebird hunting countries, the potential for exceeding the PBR for some species is clearly real and concerning (e.g. for the declining Lesser Yellowlegs).
- Scientifically robust harvest data does not exist for any other country (other than Barbados) along the Atlantic Flyway but are crucial for the effective management of the harvested shorebird populations.
- We know even less about hunting in Guyana and north-east Brazil than the Caribbean/ French Guiana, and these countries were not represented at the workshop.

- Woodbourne Shorebird Refuge in Barbados has been a successful initiative to establish a “no-shooting” reserve within the shooting swamp landscape of southern Barbados where habitat for stop-over shorebirds is restricted to the shooting swamps.
- A number of shooting swamps (abandoned and current) in Barbados may be suitable for the establishment of additional shorebird refuges to create a network of “safe havens” for shorebirds on the island.
- Hunters play an important role in shorebird/ shorebird habitat resource management.
- The shorebird hunter population in Barbados is in decline, and pressure on shorebirds (from hunting) is in decline too. However, with the decline in shooting swamps comes a direct reduction in available freshwater habitat (already a rare resource on the island) for all waterbirds and aquatic biodiversity.

## Key outputs

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- The workshop provided representatives of hunter and conservationist groups, government and NGO representatives, the first opportunity to come together at the same table in a positive atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Clearer understanding of shorebird hunting culture, regulation and monitoring between shorebird stakeholders in North America, Caribbean and French Guiana.
- A better understanding of both opportunities for and constraints on regulating/reducing shorebird harvest in some jurisdictions.
- Agreement that it is important to maintain the shorebird hunting heritage/tradition in the region.
- General understanding that the harvest must be sustainable in order to maintain that hunting tradition, and that Potential Biological Removal calculations are currently the best baseline against which to establish a sustainable harvest.
- Appreciation that the Barbados Wildfowlers Association’s willingness to collaborate, their interest in discussing shorebird conservation, combined with agency expertise in harvest management (CWS) has resulted in a sustainable hunt retaining its rich cultural diversity.
- Willingness of the Barbados hunters to continue to monitor and regulate their harvest.
- Recognition that securing harvest data from the main hunting countries and territories is the top priority in the establishment of an Atlantic Flyway-wide sustainable harvest.
- Determination between ONCFS, CWS and USFWS to collaborate at a government agency level (through a partner agreement) on the subject of sustainable hunting of shorebirds.
- Willingness of the Fédération des Chasseurs de la Martinique to make harvest data available for analysis (data filled in by c.100 hunters at the end of each season).
- Commitment of all participants to actively work towards setting in place the necessary measures and mechanisms and monitoring to implement a sustainable shorebird harvest strategy that will sustain the cultural practice of shorebird hunting whilst allowing populations of focal species to increase over the next 10 years.
- Commitment (including strong interest from the Barbados Wildfowlers Association) to develop feasibility assessments for establishing additional Shorebird Refuges in Barbados to

create a network of protected wetlands (with a focus on the potential management of Congo Road, Golden Grove, Cave and the east end of Graeme Hall Swamp).

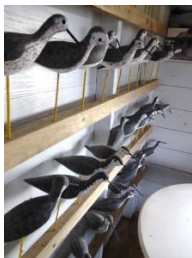
## Key follow-up actions

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1. Compile existing harvest records for Barbados, Martinique, and Guadeloupe to determine contemporary harvest levels by species, for comparison with Potential Biological Removal estimates of sustainable annual harvest.
2. Follow up with the Fédération des Chasseurs de la Martinique to secure annual hunting data from Martinique for analysis.
3. Explore coordinated mechanisms for ongoing contribution, collation and analysis of hunting data from all hunting nations/ territories.
4. Explore opportunities through shorebird harvest management activities to improve current shorebird population monitoring strategies
5. ONCFS, CWS and USFWS to develop a collaboration agreement in relation to sustainable shorebird harvest, monitoring and management (including habitat management).
6. Explore collaborative research opportunities between University of the West Indies (Cave Hill) and UAG (University of French West Indies and Guiana).
7. Explore the potential for a regional coalition or network of wildfowlers/ hunter associations, as a means for hunters to continue to share information, discuss bag limits, regulations etc.
8. Publish, in a scientific journal, the Potential Biological Removal calculations for migratory Atlantic Flyway shorebirds and the Barbados shorebird harvest case study.
9. Consider a follow-up Shorebird Harvest Workshop in Martinique/ Guadeloupe during fall migration (hunting season).
10. Develop funding proposal for undertaking feasibility assessments for establishing additional Shorebird Refuges in Barbados to create a network of protected wetlands (with a focus on the potential management of Congo Road, Golden Grove, Cave and the east end of Graeme Hall Swamp).
11. Explore opportunities through the current review of the Barbados National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) to include provision for/ creation of a network of protected/ managed wetlands on the island.

## Acknowledgements

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This shorebird hunting workshop – the first of its kind in the Atlantic Flyway – was made possible through financial support to BirdLife International from the Bobolink Foundation, Environment Canada, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (through the US Fish and Wildlife Service). On the ground, the workshop was made possible (and enjoyable) due to generous assistance and support from the University of the West Indies – Cave Hill Campus (thanks to Julia Horrocks), the Shorebird Conservation Trust (thanks to Wayne Burke), and the Barbados Wildfowlers Association (thanks to Bruce Skeete).

## University of West Indies workshop attendees

<b>David Wege</b>	Head of Conservation Action and Science - Americas, BirdLife	UK
<b>Brad Andres</b>	National Coordinator, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, US Fish and Wildlife Service	USA
<b>Paul Padding</b>	Atlantic Flyway Representative, Division of Migratory Bird Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service	USA
<b>Eric Reed</b>	Biologiste, Gestion des Populations, Environment Canada	Canada
<b>Christian Roy</b>	Migratory Bird Population Analyst, Environment Canada	Canada
<b>Blandine Guillemot</b>	Responsable de la Cellule technique Antilles françaises. Office Nationale de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage, Délégation Inter Régionale Outre-mer	Guadeloupe
<b>David Rozet</b>	Chef du SMPE, Office Nationale de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage, Délégation Inter Régionale Outre-mer	Guadeloupe
<b>Anthony Levesque</b>	BirdsCaribbean	Guadeloupe
<b>Nyls de Pracontal</b>	Directeur, Groupe d'études et de protection des oiseaux en Guyane (GEPOG)	French Guiana
<b>Bertrand Trolliet</b>	Responsable de nos programmes scientifiques sur les limicoles. Office National de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage	France
<b>Jean José Julien</b>	Secrétaire Fédéral, Fédération des Chasseurs de la Martinique	Martinique
<b>Jean Pierre Lemoine Busserole</b>	Administrateur, Président de la Commission "Informations - Législation", Fédération des Chasseurs de la Martinique	Martinique
<b>Alain Audinay</b>	Member, Fédération des Chasseurs de la Martinique	Martinique
<b>Julia Horrocks</b>	Chair Biodiversity Committee (Government of Barbados), and Professor, University of the West Indies - Cave Hill Campus	Barbados
<b>Georgina Trew</b>	Biology Undergraduate, University of the West Indies - Cave Hill Campus	Barbados
<b>Kim Downes-Agard</b>	Environmental Officer (Biodiversity), Ministry of Environment and Drainage	Barbados
<b>Rohan Payne</b>	Environmental Officer, Ministry of Environment and Drainage	Barbados
<b>Wayne Burke</b>	Shorebird Conservation Trust (BirdLife Project Partner in Barbados)	Barbados
<b>Ronald Webster</b>	Fosters Shooting Swamp. Member, Barbados Wildfowlers Association	Barbados
<b>Damien Edgehill</b>	Past President, Barbados Wildfowlers Association	Barbados
<b>Harrold Skeete</b>	Member, Barbados Wildfowlers Association	Barbados
<b>Angus Edghill</b>	Member, Barbados Wildfowlers Association	Barbados

<b>Rusty Edghill</b>	Member, Barbados Wildfowlers Association	Barbados
<b>Joe Edghill</b>	Member, Barbados Wildfowlers Association	Barbados
<b>Also at Tom's Pond/ Barbados Wildfowler's Association-hosted reception</b>		
<b>Bruce Skeete</b>	President, Barbados Wildfowlers Association (and Tom's Pond owner)	Barbados
<b>David Archer</b>	Tom's Pond hunter. Member, Barbados Wildfowlers Association	Barbados
<b>John Innis</b>	Member, Barbados Wildfowlers Association	Barbados
<b>Robin Dash</b>	Polly's Pond/ Searles Swamp. Member, Barbados Wildfowlers Association	Barbados





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### Objectives

- Explore regional context of shorebird hunting in the Caribbean and northern South America
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- Develop approaches for sustainable shorebird hunting along the Atlantic Flyway
- Share and learn from the advances in sustainable shorebird management and harvest in Barbados

### Agenda at a glance

Date	Activity	Notes
Monday March 21	<b>Objectives:</b> <i>Gain a knowledge of the shorebird hunting practice on Barbados; Build relationships among the shorebird hunting communities.</i>	<b>Meet in the lobby of your hotel at 9:00 am.</b> The driver will pick people up at the Southern Palms Hotel at 9:00 am, at the South Winds Hotel at 9:10 am, Accra Hotel at 9:20 am. Bring water and sunscreen.
	<b>Morning:</b> Field visit to Woodbourne Shorebird Refuge. Discuss shorebird reserves and the Woodbourne approach (Wayne Burke)	
	<b>Afternoon:</b> Field tour of south-eastern shooting swamps	
	<b>Evening:</b> Social event with Barbados Wildfowlers Association at Tom's Pond Shooting Swamp	
Tuesday March 22	<b>Presentation Session</b>	
	<b>Objective:</b> <i>Review the science, policies, and practices of shorebirds and shorebird hunting in the Atlantic Flyway</i>	<b>Location:</b> University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, The Demonstration Room at the Department of Biological and Chemical Sciences. <b>Meet in the lobby of your hotel at 8:00 am.</b> The driver will pick people up at the Southern Palms Hotel at 8:00 am, the South Winds Hotel at 8:10 am
	<b>Morning:</b> Shorebird biology, harvest management theory, recent research, monitoring, and investment	
<b>Afternoon:</b> Shorebird hunting situation in represented jurisdictions, steps toward and approaches to sustainability		
Wednesday March 23	<b>Objective:</b> <i>Gain further knowledge of the hunting practice on Barbados; Assess feasibility of establishing a second "Shorebird Refuge".</i>	
	<b>Morning:</b> Field tour of the northern (St Lucy IBA) shooting swamps	
	<b>Afternoon:</b> Beach outing and departures.	

**Presentation Session**  
**University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus,**  
**Room: The Demonstration Room at the Department of Biological and Chemical**  
**Sciences**  
**Tuesday March 22, 2016**

Objective: Review the science, policies, and practices of shorebirds and shorebird hunting in the Atlantic Flyway

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter</b>
9:30 – 9:45	Welcome. Introduction and overview of the workshop.	David Wege, Eric Reed, Brad Andres, Julia Horrocks, Wayne Burke
<b><i>Shorebird biology, harvest management theory, recent research, monitoring, and investment</i></b>		
9:45- 10:15	Why a Flyway Approach is Needed for Shorebird Conservation Biological connections across the Atlantic Flyway and efforts to address shorebird conservation throughout the complete annual cycle of migratory shorebirds	Brad Andres, US Shorebird Conservation Partnership and United States Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>10:15- 10:30</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
10:30- 11:10	Shorebirds know no borders: Sustainable use in an interconnected world and the Barbados case study. Assessing sustainable harvest levels of shorebirds at the hemispheric level and recent contributions from Barbados hunters.	Eric Reed, Canadian Wildlife Service
11:10- 11:30	Cooperative migratory bird harvest management in North America. Processes for cooperative harvest management between the U.S. and Canada and among the many state and provincial jurisdictions throughout North America, and for involvement of various stakeholder groups	Paul Padding, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
<b><i>Shorebird hunting situation in represented jurisdictions, steps toward and approaches to sustainability</i></b>		
11:30- 12:00	Barbados hunting: history and current practice	Harrold Skeete, Barbados Wildfowlers Association
<b>12:00- 1:15</b>	<b>Lunch (Provided)</b>	

<b><i>Shorebird hunting situation in represented jurisdictions, steps toward and approaches to sustainability (continued)</i></b>		
1:15- 1:45	Shorebird hunting policy, practice and law in the French Atlantic Territories and the work of the national hunting and wildlife agency, ONCFS Towards a better understanding of shorebird hunting laws and practices in all French Atlantic territories, and developing coordinated management opportunities.	Blandine Guillemot and David Rozet, Office Nationale de la Chasse et de la Faune Sauvage (ONCFS), Guadeloupe
1:45- 2:05	Shorebird harvest practices and conservation efforts in French Guiana The case of French Guiana: knowledge, conservation, protection and management of shorebirds issues.	Nyls de Pracontal, Groupe d'études et de protection des oiseaux en Guyane (GEPOG), French Guiana
2:05- 2:25	Current Knowledge of Shorebirds in Guadeloupe Recent shorebird monitoring efforts on Guadeloupe will be discussed, including fieldwork on the Petite Terre Nature Reserve and work done by the ONCFS and Fédération Départementale des Chasseurs de la Guadeloupe.	Anthony Levesque, BirdsCaribbean, Guadeloupe
2:25- 2:45	Shorebirds in Martinique Information on trends and species-specific sampling.	Jean-José Julien, Fédération Départementale de Chasseurs de la Martinique, Martinique
<b>2:45- 3:00</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
3:00- 4:05	Open discussion Suggestions from hunters on what is needed from a regulatory approach and suggested methods to achieve these. Determine if there are data and analytical needs to inform management decisions	Facilitated discussion
	<b>Adjourn</b>	