

USSCP Council Teleconference Notes – 11 December 2017

Present: Brad Andres, Catherine Hickey, Monica Iglecia, Joel Jorgensen, Rob Penner, Matt Reiter, Debra Reynolds, Judith Scarl, Sara Schweitzer, Brian Smith, and Bill Vermillion

External Committees, Working Groups, and Meetings

NABCI Private Lands Subcommittee (Monica)

Monica stepped through recent discussions concerning conservation goals for the committee (below). A number of groups are now addressing greater inclusion of “non-traditional” partners in bird conservation. There was an October Congressional event in DC highlighting the release of the State of the Birds 2017, which focused on the Farm Bill.

Conservation Goal I: An authorized Farm Bill that establishes bird-friendly policies and programs that are funded annually at desired levels. The following actions were identified:

- Compiling the policy priorities of partner organizations to have a database of information so that NABCI can serve as a nonpartisan clearinghouse for Farm Bill messaging that has been developed by partners. (NABCI cannot develop a formal platform on these items);
- Collaborate with National Geographic on their Year of the Bird messaging to help get Farm Bill information out; and
- Reach out to a prioritized group of organizations that are not represented on the committee to partner with on advocacy efforts (e.g. commodity groups, American Forest Foundation, National Extension Organizations).

Conservation Goal II: Implement the Farm Bill to maximize conservation outcomes for birds. The following actions were identified:

- Developing a list of priority non-bird interest groups to meet and discuss integration of bird conservation efforts in the Farm Bill;
- Highlight successes resulting from landscape conservation initiatives and partner biologists who assist in Farm Bill conservation delivery – package and share these stories; and
- Provide successful examples of monitoring efforts that show value added benefits to multiple species from species specific programs and/or evaluate the effectiveness of practices on the ground.

ACTION: Monica to continue to participate on committee and report to USSCP Council.

NABCI Human Dimensions Subcommittee (Brad)

The subcommittee continues to have (usually) monthly calls, of which Brad A. and Joel participate. Notes from the November call were previously distributed to the Council. The group also met and participated in the Pathways Human Dimension Conference in September. As mentioned above, the subcommittee has also had a focus on private lands and growing the “non-traditional” partner base for bird conservation. We have had input into developing this list, working with the Private Lands Subcommittee, includes: American Forest Foundation, National Association of Conservation Districts, National Cattlemen’s Association, Partners in Conservation, Pheasants Forever, and rice growers. The subcommittee produced a brief description of human dimensions (previously distributed) and is currently compiling a series of case studies. A series of human dimensions webinars are also being developed.

ACTION: Joel and Brad Andres to continue to participate in the subcommittee to solicit shorebird human dimensions examples, provide input on webinars and other products, and report to the Council.

ACTION: Stephen Brown and Brad Andres to attend NABCI US-Committee meeting at the end of January in Washington, D.C. Meeting agenda and materials will be distributed to the Council as received.

AFWA Partners In Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group (Sara)

1. AFWA Work Plan. Notes on the agenda and accomplishments of the work plan were previously distributed. The anticipated activities and objectives in the work plan for 2018 are presented below:

Goal 1. Integrate outcomes of landbird, shorebird, and waterbird initiatives.

- Identify common or similar priority actions within Conservation Plans that can be implemented using state wildlife action plans and grants, as well as AFWA programs such as the Southern Wings program.
- Participate in PIF, USSCP, and Waterbird Council meetings and contribute to initiatives.
 - ~ PIF VI, October 30 – November 3, 2017, San Jose, Costa Rica.
 - ~ Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group, November 10-14, Paracas, Peru.

Goal 2. Clearly identify significant threats to landbird, shorebird, and waterbird populations.

- Continue contributing to Feral and Free-Ranging Cat Working Group efforts.
- Evaluate whether there is a need to further define impacts of bird collisions with buildings, and insecticides on bird food resources. Evaluate what approach would be necessary to examine population-level impacts of these stressors and identify what role the WG can play in this process, as needed.

Goal 3. Evaluate new strategies for bird conservation action and make recommendations to AFWA leadership.

- Advance data management and assessment tools, especially for full annual cycle focused projects.
 - ~ Provide workshops and/or webinars at Flyway and other meetings that clarify the purpose and benefits of different data management and assessment tools, and try to increase collaboration between large-scale data management efforts.
 - ~ Continue contributing to multi-state projects.
 - ~ Engage states during enhancement of ACAD (Avian Conservation Assessment Database)
- Contribute to Grassland Working Group efforts to enhance conservation of grassland habitats.

Goal 4. Support policies, legislation, and funding initiatives that favor landbird, shorebird, and waterbird protection and restoration.

- Identify high priority issues affecting conservation of landbird, shorebird, and waterbird populations and habitats and provide recommendations on these issues to the Bird Conservation Committee.

2. Avian Conservation Assessment Database (ACAD). We also discussed the current review of regional (Bird Conservation Region) scores in the ACAD. This effort is being led by the JV Science Coordinators, particularly those with a focus on landbirds, who are reaching out to local expertise to help with the assessment.

ACTION: Brad Andres to distribute current shorebird regional scores in ACAD to Council members.

3. Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative (AFSI). A tracking tool has been developed to report on accomplishments of the initiative. Along those lines, an accomplishment report was produced for the Harvest Working Group (2011–2017). The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation posted a request for proposals that focused on the following program priorities: 1) integrate green and grey infrastructure needs at important sites along the Flyway, 2) restore wet and dry sand habitats for shorebirds along the Atlantic coast lost to incompatible coastal engineering practices, 3) reduce the impact of predation and human disturbance on populations of breeding shorebirds along the U.S. Atlantic coast, and 4) fill information gaps. Funds appropriated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through the U. S. Agency for International Development have been obligated for projects, primarily addressing shorebird hunting, in Barbados, Brazil (3), Guyana, and Suriname.

4. Pacific Americas Shorebird Conservation Strategy (PASCS). There was a question about funding for the PASCS. In July 2015, National Audubon received a generous grant from the David & Lucile Packard Foundation to develop the plan, which enabled them to hire a part-time coordinator. In addition, the Canadian Wildlife Service, MUFG Union

Bank Foundation, National Audubon Society, Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and private individuals provided funds. Flyway partners provided in-kind support through staff time, travel funds and institutional and professional expertise. In July 2017, National Audubon received another generous grant from the Packard Foundation to begin implementation of the PASCs, which will have a major focus on Latin America. National Audubon also submitted a Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act proposal under the AFSI and PASCs planning category.

Joint Venture Meeting (Bill/Debra)

For the first time in a number of years, Joint Venture Coordinators, Science Coordinators, and Communicators met in Tucson in early December. Both science and communicators had their own break-out sessions for part of the meeting. Relevant to the Council was a discussion on the joint-initiative science team (now termed the Unified Science Team; formerly TriST). The JV Coordinators were supportive of the team and will review the draft work plan by the end of January 2018. The communication staff worked on the idea of developing a strategy for telling the JV story, initially to U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service leadership. A crucial first step is having an understanding of the target audience before focusing on development of a tool. The idea is that a more comprehensive JV staff meeting would be held every three years.

ACTION: Bill and Brad Andres to distribute Unified Science Team work plan after incorporation of JV Coordinator comments.

Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group Meeting (Matt/Brad)

The Centro de Ornitología y Biodiversidad (CORBIDI) hosted a very successful seventh meeting of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group in Paracas, Peru in November. Besides the general science papers, we held a one-day joint Atlantic-Pacific Flyway workshop on shrimp aquaculture and shorebirds. As a result, we are forming a working group and have developed an outline to assess the aquaculture production situation and its effect on shorebirds, with a focus on the Gulf of Fonseca. Cornell University, in conjunction with Conservation Solutions, are developing a shorebird conservation fellowship program, funded by the Packard Foundation, to address the needs identified in the PASCs. There was also a presentation on the use of eBird as a monitoring tool for shorebirds, and planned changes relative to ancillary data collection and spatial delineation may enhance the utility of eBird for shorebird monitoring.

USSCP Committees

PRISM (Matt)

Matt and Brad Andres recently drafted and distributed “Standards for Monitoring Nonbreeding Shorebirds in the Western Hemisphere” to PRISM Committee members and others who participated in a topical workshop in March of 2017. Comments are coming in on the standards and the hope is to have a final draft by early 2018. There is a need to balance the amount of detail in the document, so we will likely need to produce more detailed appendices (e.g.,

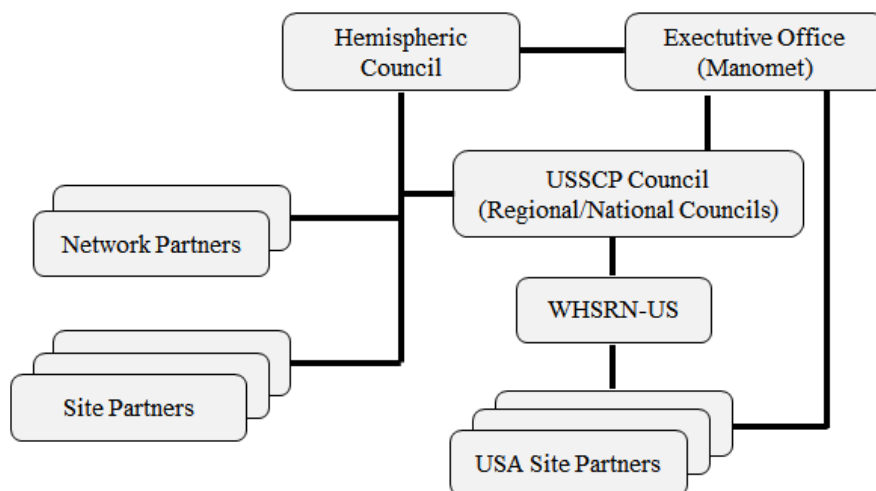
analytical approaches, training outlines) to address the needs of partners. Another key point will be the agreement on a set of key core variables that will allow for datasets to be combined to produce a more complete picture of shorebird status. The standards will likely be converted to a monitoring protocol within the National Wildlife Refuge System's Inventory and Monitoring program. We also discussed that we need to address the monitoring components of the PASCs and recommend the PRISM Committee as a monitoring committee for the Strategy, as was adopted by the AFSI. The question of the status of the NRCS Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) was raised; current information can be found at: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/nra/ceap/>

ACTION: Catherine and Brad Andres to insert monitoring as an agenda item for next PASCs Steering Committee teleconference.

WHSRN-US (Rob)

As previously reported, we have resurrected the WHSRN-US Committee and have distributed an updated Terms of Reference, Committee member list, and work plan (through December 2018). Items currently being worked on or have been worked on, include: 1) review of U. S. site/landscape nominations, 2) recommended changes for land owner agreement language for nominations, and 3) identification of potential sites for total numbers of shorebirds and populations of greatest conservation concern (not listed under the U. S. Endangered Species Act. We will also be working on building communications with and among current U. S. sites. Based on a question raised on the call, below is a schematic of the relationships of the WHSRN-US Committee.

ACTION: Rob and Brad to track accomplishments of WHSRN-US work plan.



Relationships among stakeholders involved in WHSRN. Note that network partners are entities not associated with a physical network site but are interested in and contributed to the mission and operation of WHSRN.

Shorebird Population Sizes and Trends (Brad)

An effort to update the Andres *et al.* 2012 publication on shorebird population sizes and trends has been initiated. This publication is widely used by shorebird conservation partners. All past co-authors have agreed to participate. In addition, Arne Lesterhuis, from Manomet, will be working with partners to address Central and South American species not previously covered. We have discussed publication with the editor of Wader Study, and he is amenable to receiving a manuscript, although the page count may require some financial assistance.

ACTION: Brad Andres to facilitate manuscript production by the end of 2018.

Council Structure and Function (Brian/Brad)

Given the changing landscape of bird conservation, it seemed prudent to assess the structure and functioning of the USSCP Council to ensure we are providing the most effective mechanism for shorebird conservation. Over the years, we have had Council members that were higher up the administrative chain but repeatedly returned to more of a model of a “working board”. Folks on the call agreed that we should continue to use this model, but there is likely a need to develop a better communication strategy. Before we develop a structure for an update to the U. S. plan, we should have a clear notion of the target audiences and what type of messages and information they need or want on accomplishments of the USSCP. We did discuss the use of the name and decided that we would retain the acronym of the USSCP, but use the term we previously developed as U. S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership, followed by other descriptors such as Council or Coordinator. From the technical side, the AFSI and PASCS have represented updates to the original 2001 U. S. Plan. We have certainly updated much of the biological information since then, completed the performance assessment in 2011, and developed a strategic plan in 2012. There was a question of overlap among the “steering committees” of the AFSI, PASCS, and USSCP Council. The result is there is no much redundancy among U. S. members, so communication among is important. To pursue the idea of the need to understand the communication pathways before developing the structure of the message, we identified four main audiences: 1) Flyway Council Nongame Tech Committees, 2) Joint Venture Coordinators, 3) Regional Chiefs, USFWS Migratory Bird Program, and 4) the JV/NABCI/BCPP Workshop Outcomes Oversight Team (when time is right). We also discussed how to engage the new-found interest of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

<u>Pacific (8)</u> Brad Andres Catherine Hickey Stan Senner	<u>USSCP (11)</u> Stephen Brown Catherine Hickey Joel Jorgensen Matt Reiter Larry Niles Judith Scarl Sara Schweitzer Susan Skagen Brian Smith Bill Vermillion Brad Winn
<u>Atlantic (17)</u> Brad Andres Stephen Brown Ian Davidson Scott Johnston Walker Golder David Mizrahi Debra Reynolds Lisa Sorenson	Brad Andres Monica Iglecia Robert Penner Debra Reynolds

ACTION: Bill, Judith and Deb to work with Brad Andres to develop strategy to engage the audiences identified above.

ACTION: Matt to invite Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology to participate on PRISM Committee.