

The U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership

Building Collaborative Action for Shorebird Conservation

Brian W. Smith, Chair
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Birds, Region 6
134 Union Blvd.
Lakewood, CO 80228 USA

Brad A. Andres, Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bird Habitat Conservation, HQ
755 Parfet, Suite 235
Lakewood, CO 80215 USA

25 July 2018

Ms. Marcelle Shoop
Coordinator, Saline Lakes Initiative
National Audubon

Dear Ms. Shoop,

The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) was established in 1985 and serves as a voluntary, non-regulatory network of public and private partners working to protect the most important breeding and nonbreeding habitats for shorebirds throughout the Americas. In collaboration with the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership, we re-established a WHSRN-US Committee in the fall of 2017, with the purposes of supporting WHSRN site partners in the U.S., identifying new WHSRN sites, and promoting the Network among site partners. One of the first actions of the committee was to identify sites in the U.S. that met established criteria for inclusion in WHSRN, but had not been nominated. We evaluated sites based the total numbers of shorebirds using the area or the proportion of populations of shorebirds of high conservation concern.

Being familiar with Audubon's *Water and Birds in the Arid West: Habitats in Decline* report, it was not surprising that a number of Intermountain West saline lakes rose to the top. Of the 11 priority sites identified by Audubon, six are already recognized as WHSRN sites (Colorado River Delta, Salton Sea, Owens Lake, Mono Lake, Lahontan Wetlands and Great Salt Lake), and most of the remaining sites would meet WHSRN criteria for the percentage of the breeding Snowy Plover population ($\geq 1\%$; Honey Lake, Lake Abert and Summer Lake) or for annual use ($\geq 20,000$ shorebirds; Klamath Basin). We also identified Surprise Valley in northeastern California (for Snowy Plover) and the Harney Basin, Oregon, based on annual use. We did not identify Pyramid Lake, although this primarily a pelican and waterbird site.

Because the WHSRN-US Committee is interested in supporting existing WHSRN sites as well as designating new sites, we would like to explore how we might work with National Audubon to advance shorebird, and other waterbird, conservation at already designated saline lakes and raise the profile of other saline lakes with WHSRN designation. The Committee, and the USSCP Council, has weighed in on conservation issues facing some of these sites in the past and can bring a wealth of shorebird expertise to the table. If you believe the WHSRN-US Committee

could add value to your efforts for saline lake conservation, we welcome a discussion on how that might happen.

Please feel free to give me (620-786-4745) or Brad Andres (303-275-2324) a call to discuss potential collaboration. Brad will likely have the opportunity to meet with you, along with Stan and Rob, on the August 13th Salt Lake City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert L. Penner II".

Robert L. Penner II
Chair, WHSRN-US
The Nature Conservancy, Kansas

cc: Andrea Jones, Audubon California
Stan Senner, National Audubon
Khara Strum, Audubon California
Rob Clay, WHSRN