

USSCP Council Teleconference Notes – 30 May 2019

Attendees

Brian Smith, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USSCP Council Chair
Catherine Hickey, Point Blue, USSCP Council Vice-Chair
Robert Penner, The Nature Conservancy, WHSRN-USA Chair
Matt Reiter, Point Blue, PRISM Chair
Sara Schweitzer, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, AFWA PIF/Shorebird/
Waterbird Working Group Chair
Bill Vermillion, Gulf Coast JV, Unified Science Team/JV representative
Judith Scarl, AFWA, US NABCI Coordinator
River Gates, National Audubon, Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative
Coordinator
Scott Johnston, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlantic Flyway Shorebird
Initiative Executive Committee Chair
Rebecca McGuire, Wildlife Conservation Society, Alaska Shorebird Working
Group Chair

Brad Andres, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USSCP National Coordinator
Monica Iglesia, Manomet, NABCI Private and Working Lands Subcommittee
representative

Council Participation. Based on previous discussions, representatives from the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative (AFSI), Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative (PSCI), and the Alaska Shorebird Working Group (ASWG), with ties to the East Asian Australasian Flyway, were invited to participate on the Council. Scott Johnston (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Northeast Region) was designated to represent the AFSI, River Gates, (National Audubon, Anchorage, AK) the PSCI, and Rebecca McGuire the ASWG (Wildlife Conservation Society, Fairbanks, AK). Welcome to the USSCP Council.

Brad, on behalf of Brian, sent an email to current USSCP Council members to confirm continued participation on the Council. Thanks to those who have responded.

Action: Re-send email to affirm continued participation by current Council members (Brad, 3 Jun 2019).

Status of Current Shorebird Conservation Issues. The Council drafted a letter urging the continuation of a recently enacted law to require a firearm and hunting license in French Guiana. This is a concern to the Council

because of the hunting of shorebirds along the coast. Due to national elections in France, action on a proposed change to the license requirement was delayed, and discussions will resume in the French Parliament on 20 June. The Council letter has been received favorably by the Prefet of French Guiana and has been distributed widely. No additional action needed at this time.

The **Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group Meeting** will be held in Panama City from 24 to 28 October 2019, where a number of symposia relative to flyway-scale monitoring and conservation efforts will be held. See for details and registration.

Spanish WHSG 2019:

<https://audubonpanama.org/index.php?id=80:whsg2019-esp&catid=21>

English WHSG 2019: <https://audubonpanama.org/index.php/2-all/89-whsg2019-eng.html>

Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (PRISM). Matt reported holding a successful workshop on shorebird monitoring, in conjunction with the Wildlife Conservation Society, on the Pacific coast of Guatemala, which engaged a number of landbird biologists who were very familiar with monitoring protocols but lacked shorebird identification skills. Additional workshops and inclusion in the Migratory Shorebird Project are being considered. In developing the *Standards for Monitoring Nonbreeding Shorebirds in the Western Hemisphere*, several core variables were identified for inclusion in all nonbreeding shorebird surveys. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is considering adding a protocol in eBird that includes these recommendations. A symposium on shorebird monitoring is planned for the WHSG meeting.

Action: Touch base with eBird about timeline and costs (Matt, 31 Aug 2019). Explore inclusion of shorebird survey standards in agreement between USFWS with Cornell (Brian, 31 Aug 2019).

Action: Hold a PRISM Committee call to discuss next steps for the nonbreeding monitoring guidance (Matt, 31 Aug 2019).

The U.S. Committee of the **Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN-USA)** continues to hold regular calls and develop implementation actions (last teleconference notes attached). The WHSRN-USA work plan was revised to align with the draft WHSRN Executive Office Strategic Plan. The work plan, teleconference notes and nomination support letters are all posted at: <https://www.shorebirdplan.org/shorebird-habitat->

[management/whsrn-us-committee/](#). Manomet recently revised their website and included an interactive forum, which a number of WHSRN-USA Committee members reviewed and tested. There is still a need to engage potential users (see <https://whsrn.org>, “Shorebird Forum” in upper banner). Robert distributed the *Standards for Monitoring Nonbreeding Shorebirds in the Western Hemisphere* to all USA WHSRN site contacts.

Action: Develop a NABCI blog post to encourage use of the forum; forum topics address most of the NABCI priorities (Monica, Laura Chamberlin, Robert, Judith; 31 July 2019).

Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative. Scott reported that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will soon release the proposal selections for the last RFP round. NFWF also recently updated their business plan for the AFSI (<https://www.nfwf.org/amoy/Documents/afsi-business-plan.pdf>), which will focus on three key species (American Oystercatcher, Whimbrel and Red Knot) in 10 key areas/landscapes along the USA Atlantic Coast. AFSI partners recently published comprehensive guidance and best practices on human disturbance (<https://atlanticflywayshorebirds.org/human-disturbance-guidance-and-best-practices-document/>) and predation management for breeding shorebirds (<https://atlanticflywayshorebirds.org/guidance-bp-predation/>). An AFSI Executive Committee meeting will likely be scheduled at the WHSG meeting in Panama, and an AFSI Shorebird Harvest Working Group meeting will be held in conjunction with the BirdsCaribbean meeting on Guadeloupe from 22-23 July 2019. A dashboard has been developed for reporting AFSI accomplishments, and there is an ongoing effort to populate it with projects. A joint Atlantic-Pacific Initiative symposium will be held at the WHSG meeting that will highlight accomplishments and provide examples of how to implement the plans’ strategic actions.

Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative. To reduce confusion among the flyway-scale initiatives in the Americas, the steering committee of the Pacific Americas Shorebird Conservation Strategy (PASCS) decided to adopt the name Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative for the implementation of the PASCS. A website is being developed to share information on the strategy and initiative and will launch this summer. A central landing page for all flyway-scale initiatives pertinent to shorebirds breeding in the USA (and Canada) will also be developed in the future. River reported that a major project of the PSCI in the last two years has been an assessment of the interaction of shorebirds and shrimp aquaculture in the Gulf of Fonseca and elsewhere in Central America, which was conducted by Salvadora Morales of Quetzalli Nicaragua, Manomet and others. A joint Atlantic-Pacific working group was formed to guide the assessment. Once the assessment is

complete, a set of actions will be developed by the working group. A second major project was the generation of a guidance document on how to engage international conventions and lending institutions in funding projects that benefit birds. A draft has been developed and is currently being reviewed.

A **Midcontinent Shorebird Conservation Initiative** is in the early stages of development. The purpose is to develop a comprehensive, flyway-scale initiative for shorebird conservation in the midcontinent regions of North and South America. The Midcontinent Americas Shorebird Conservation Initiative will consist of 1) building a strategic framework through a logical process and practitioner engagement throughout the Midcontinent Americas Flyway; 2) forming an engaged steering committee to guide development and promote implementation; and 3) developing new and leverage existing revenue streams to accomplish implementation. A multi-lateral steering committee has been formed, and a launch symposium will be held at the WHSG meeting. The Mississippi Flyway Nongame Technical Committee has been very supportive of the effort. Brad, in cooperation with Canadian colleagues, presented the concept of a midcontinent strategy, along with accomplishments of the PSCI and AFSI, at the Trilateral meeting of the governments of Canada, Mexico and the USA in April 2019.

Rebecca reported the **Alaska Shorebird Working Group** recently released the third revision of the Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan (<https://www.fws.gov/alaska/pages/migratory-birds/shorebirds>). The working group produces annual summaries of projects and minutes of meetings can be found at the link above. Information on the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership's Shorebird Working Group can also be found at the above link.

The **U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative** (NABCI) is interested in highlighting how the USSCP is implementing the NABCI priorities that were developed last year. Judith asked that the USSCP Council think of some examples where shorebirds benefited from conservation decisions were made to benefit human wellbeing. This is related to the current discussions of relevancy to the greater U.S. society. A relevancy toolkit and guidance on its use has been developed and is available here (<http://nabci-us.org/resources/relevancy-toolkit/>). As the USSCP develops an update on accomplishments (see below), shorebird examples may feed into the NABCI effort. The 2019 State of the Birds Report focused on the roles the states play in bird conservation is currently under review and will soon be published. Efforts like the State of the Birds require some level of funding from NABCI partners. Brian asked the USSCP Council members think of ways their organizations might support

general operations of the NABCI office. Even a small level of funding shows the commitment of the organization and partnership to NABCI.

Action: Seek examples of “putting shorebirds second” in achieving conservation benefits when the call goes out later this summer (Judith, Brian, Brad; 31 Aug 2019).

Action: Contact Brian with ideas for supporting NABCI (30 Jun 2019).

Action: Brian and Brad to attend August NABCI meeting.

The **NABCI Private and Working Lands Subcommittee** is developing a new work plan and has been busy with several projects. One of the projects is to improve outcome-based monitoring for private lands conservation programs. Geoff Guepel, Point Blue, is organizing a symposium at the upcoming Wildlife Society meeting to address this issue. This work links to the monitoring and human dimensions subcommittees. The subcommittee will be developing a new Farm Bill Guide to include changes to the law passed in 2018. The past 2014 NABCI guide can be found at: <http://nabci-us.org/how-we-work/private-and-working-lands/>. The focus will be on large working lands programs and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The subcommittee is also developing content for a series of regional forums for private lands biologists that will be delivered within the four AFWA regions. The first will be in 2020 in Missouri. The purpose is to build a community of practice among new and experienced private lands biologists to provide better service to land owner clients.

Action: Provide Monica with any ideas on good shorebird examples for the Farm Bill Guide (31 July 2019).

The purposes of the **Unified Science Team (UST)** are to 1) provide coordination and guidance to the Bird Conservation Plans (BCPs) in advancing and strengthening the scientific foundation and delivery mechanisms for each BCP’s population objectives within individual Joint Ventures (JVs); 2) coordinate among JVs to identify priority information needs that are most effectively addressed at multiple JV, Bird Conservation Region, or flyway scales; 3) capitalize on synergy among JVs and BCPs to develop projects that will address identified priority information needs; and 4) create a forum to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas across scales that improve effectiveness of bird conservation efforts. To that end, a five-year work plan was developed last year, and Bill reported that teams are being formed to address three main themes: 1) establish full annual cycle conservation objectives within bird groups, 2) integrate and evaluate objectives across bird groups, and 3) integrate biological and human

dimensions objectives. A prospectus on the general approach to accomplish this task is attached.

Action: Provide any suggestions of individuals you think might contribute to the development of the themes (to Bill, 30 Jun 2019).

In conjunction with the third theme above, the **NABCI Human Dimensions Subcommittee** is soliciting ideas to continue the successful human dimensions of bird conservation webinars given in 2018. As chair of the UST, Brad is working with Jessica Barnes, National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator/Virginia Tech, to solicit suggestions on human dimensions topics that would be particularly useful for your work, and specific groups or individuals who have human dimensions experiences that would be of interest to the bird conservation community.

Action: Send ideas on human dimensions webinar topics and or presenters (to Brad by 13 Jun 2019).

We discussed the scope of the **update/accomplishment report for the USSCP** and decided that we would prepare a synopsis (20ish pages) highlighting the progress made since plan development in 2001 and identifying future key priorities. The document will be used as a "pointer" to other resources. We will include examples of key partner accomplishments, which will showcase partner contributions to the bigger picture. We will ensure review by partners for use of their projects and will ask partners for help in writing sections on their projects.

Action: Review current outline and suggest additional items/projects for inclusion in report (to Brad by 30 Jun 2019).