

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership Council Video Call Notes 8 January 2021

Present: River Gates, Catherine Hickey, Monica Iglecia, Scott Johnston, Rebecca McGuire, Robert Penner, Matt Reiter, Judith Scarl, Sara Schweitzer, Brian Smith, Bill Vermillion, Brad Winn; Brad Andres

New Council Member

Congratulations to Monica who will take the position of U.S. Coordinator of the Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture in February. She has joined the USSCP Council and will remain on the NABCI Private Lands Subcommittee as the USSCP representative.

Boca Chica Conservation Concerns from SpaceX Expansion

Brad Winn brought forth the issue of the expansion of the SpaceX operations at Boca Chica, Texas, which could have major implications for shorebirds and recreation/access to the Lower Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge. We discussed drafting a letter of concern that focuses on the inadequacy of the current EIS to cover expanded operations, loss of recreation/access opportunities to NWR lands and effects on passage and wintering shorebirds. Attached are some background materials on the issue.

Actions

1. Brad Winn to draft letter raising concerns.
2. Sara to contact NWR Project Leader Brian Winton to assess USFWS position.
3. Determine Texas state position (Las Palomas Wildlife Management Area, Boca Chica State Parks) - ??
4. Brad Andres to distribute to Council for review by 18 January 2021.
5. Letter signed by Rebecca or Catherine by 21 January 2021.

Midcontinent Shorebird Conservation Initiative (MSCI)

The third workshop in North America to gather input on the development of the strategic framework for the MSCI will occur 13 and 14 January 2021 (Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes region). Previous workshops were held for the Great Plains and Western Gulf of Mexico. South American colleagues are currently planning and implementing workshops. All of these have, or will occur, virtually, which has allowed broad participation. Online platforms have also been developed to gather post-workshop feedback. Staff from the

USFWS National Conservation Training Center have provided technically facilitation of moveable break-out rooms in Zoom, and Foundations of Success staff have provided and facilitated the use of Mural to capture feedback. Jennie Duberstein, Sonoran JV Coordinator, has been instrumental in organizing workshops, facilitating virtual sessions, and building a website to share and capture information.

MSCI's second Update Webinar will be held on 28 January 2021 from 2:00 to 3:30 pm (EST, UTC-5). A quick update on the development of the MSCI hemispheric strategic framework will be followed by a panel discussion with four partners from the Americas sharing examples of how other flyway-scale shorebird conservation strategies have facilitated on-the-ground local actions. These examples will help partners in the Midcontinent Flyway better understand how the strategic framework we are developing now could serve as a tool to launch and support actions in our geography.

Action: Request invitation from Brad Andres if interested in attending.

Action: Consider how the development of the MSCI, and other flyways, links to NABCI's Five Game-changing Paradigms.

Past Action: Make sure to loop in the appropriate Joint Venture Coordinators (Done). Science Coordinators have been contacted and will be invited to workshops.

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI)

The winter meeting of the US-NABCI Committee will be held virtually on 13 and 14 January 2021. Brian will be able to attend to represent the USSCP. A number of products we reviewed in the past will be adopted. Other items included in the distributed agenda will be discussed and further input from the USSCP Council will likely be needed. The Human Dimensions Subcommittee has been working to integrate human dimensions and social science into the Five Game-changing Paradigms, which will be discussed. The Private Lands Subcommittee has delayed the Private Lands Forum until the fall of 2021 (in-person). An update to the Field Guide to the Farm Bill is in the final stages of completion.

Brian briefly mentioned that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Migratory Bird Program response to the "3 Billion Birds Lost" paper is moving forward with discussions with other agency. The new administration may offer opportunities to continue the momentum. Strategic and cooperative messaging is needed to help ensure success of the 3 BB Lost Campaign.

Action: Review the strategic plan document and diversity statement and provide high-level comments to Brian by Tuesday, 12 January 2021.

USSCP Update

Completion of the update to the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, as described in the previously distributed outline, is ongoing with a target of completion in the next two months. One the technical assessment has been completed and reviewed, we will hold a strategic planning to develop goals for the partnership over the next five years. Specific actions for increased engagement with the states at national and regional scales should be addressed, along with implementation of flyway strategies and inclusion of human well-being considerations.

Action: Complete assessment and distribute for Council review by 15 March 2021.

USAID/USFWS Funding

Another round of funding of \$1.5 million to implement flyway actions outside of the USA was included in the FY2021 budget. The USFWS is working with USAID on the transfer and dispersal of the FY2019 and FY2020 funding