



**Waterbird Conservation Council
Inaugural Meeting
June 4 and 5, 2003; Reston, Virginia, USA**

General Summary

Attendees

Council Members: Ghisselle Alvarado, Jack Capp, Mauricio Cervantes, Francie Cuthbert, Ian Davidson, Naomi Edelson, Frank Gill, Bill Howard, Jim Kushlan, Judith McIntyre, Gerry McKeating, Eric Mellink, Kathy Parsons, Pat Patterson, Paul Schmidt, Betty Ann Schreiber, Gerald Winegrad, Jim Woehr, Kent Wohl. Coordinators: Jennifer Wheeler, John Cecil.

Day 1

Introductions.

Review of initiative activities and progress. This information served as the basis for discussions of Council role and operations, need for Council committees, and priority tasks. Discussion yielded beginnings of Terms of Reference and identification of the following committees:

- Executive Committee
- Technical Services Committee
- Regional Planning Committee
- Communications and Marketing Committee
- Resources Committee
- International Advancement Committee
- Conservation Action Committee
- Nominations Committee

Day 2

Formation of Executive Committee. A small group (Paul Schmidt, Gerry McKeating, Kathy Parsons, Ghisselle Alvarado, Mauricio Cervantes, Pat Patterson) met to determine the structure and process for establishing an Executive Committee for the Council. The recommendations of this group were adopted and the Council broke into national/regional subgroups to select vice-chairs for the Executive Committee. These new vice-chairs then chose a Chair and Chair-elect, developed recommendations for the remaining positions on the Executive Committee, and proposed a meeting schedule for the Executive Committee and full Council. Relevant decisions were incorporated into the Terms of Reference.

Meeting of Council committees. Council members signed up on committees of interest (most volunteered to serve on two) and met during two sessions to identify scope/issues, priority tasks, membership/leadership, and operation/timeline for each committee.

Next Full Council Meeting. The next assembled meeting of the entire Council is scheduled for the second week of January 2004 in Miami; after which the Council will meet annually.



Executive Committee

June 5, 2003

Membership

•5 “geographic” Vice-Chairs representing five nation/regions of Initiative (Canada, US, Mexico, Central America, Caribbean.

Gerry McKeating,
Kathy Parsons (Chair)
Eric Mellink (Chair Elect)
Ghisselle Alvarado
Eric Carey

•Past Chair

Jim Kushlan

•3 Additional Council Members (at-large) representing strengths in priority action areas (i.e., fund-raising, communications, conservation implementation).

Melanie Steinkamp
Pat Patterson
Ian Davidson

Actions for the next 6-12 months

Meetings: The first teleconference of the Executive Committee will take place shortly after the minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Council have been distributed (probably late June or early July).

The next assembled meeting of the entire Council is scheduled for the second week of January 2004 in Miami; after which the Council will meet annually.

Correspondence:

- Commendations to original Plan Steering Committee members (Jim Kushlan)
- Letter to USGS regarding Waterbird Monitoring Partnership
- Letter to FWS regarding Coordinator Position
- Emails regarding Committee Assignments
- Letter to US NABCI Committee appointing Kathy Parsons as representative for the Waterbird initiative and Jennifer Wheeler as staff for the initiative (*done 6/17/2003 via Bob Ford*)

Appointments:

The Executive Committee will appoint liaisons to the IAFWA Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group and the Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group.

Major Initiatives:

The Executive Committee will report on plans/strategies for implementing 3 major Council initiatives.

1. ‘Petrels and People’ Conservation Initiative (an initiative focusing on the highly imperiled seabirds identified in the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.)
2. Water and Birds in Mesoamerica: A Workshop at the Mesoamerican Society for Biology and Conservation (meeting Fall 2003 in northern Mexico?)



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

3. A targeted communication campaign on some aspect of waterbird conservation or signature species.

Technical Assistance Committee

June 5, 2003

Scope/Role

To promote the research and monitoring objectives of the plan; coordinate status assessments (including marsh birds); facilitate setting population and habitat goals for regional plans.

The Technical Committee will interact with the US NABCI Monitoring and Research Committee.

Membership

Kathy Parsons

Francie Cuthbert

Eric Mellink

Ghisselle Alvarado

(no Chair yet selected)

Actions for the next 6-12 months

Recruit additional members. Defer to Melanie Steinkamp concerning monitoring.

(Highest Priority) Provide guidance on setting resource goals. Create a task force looking at existing models and protocols and with outside experts.

(High Priority) Marshbird status assessment. Create strategy for incorporating marsh bird information in the NAWCP.

Revisit and update the research needs expressed in the NAWCP when as the regional plans are completed.

Respond to call for endorsement of monitoring strategy proposed by US NABCI Monitoring and Research Committee.



Regional Planning Committee

June 5, 2003

Scope/Role

The scope of this committee is the entire plan area (all regions), and both planning and implementation. Its role is to “cheer-lead” the development and implementation of regional plans; review and approve plans; identify and facilitate delivery of resources needed for planning and implementation. Issues are the (1) pace of regional planning (i.e., needs to be accelerated); (2) connection to JVs and states (needs to be strengthened); and (3) adoption of plans by the Council (need a process and clear communications to working groups).

Note that this committee has a close overlap with the International Advancement Committee, thus close communication is needed.

Membership

Paul Schmidt
Kathy Parsons
Naomi Edelson
(no Chair yet selected)

Actions for the next 6-12 months

Recruit additional members. Establish broader committee membership.

Obtain “diagnoses” of regional planning issues. Jennifer Wheeler will diagnose the problems/challenges each working group facing and develop recommendations for solving, with committee facilitating this process.

Ask Technical Assistance committee to assist with protocol for setting population and habitat goals.

Ask Council members to become involved in regional planning within their regions. Ensure that each region has a Council member engaged in regional planning; ensure that each JV has a Council member active on Technical committees or Management Boards; ask States (through Naomi) how plans can be created to meet state managers’ needs with regard to Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans.



Communications and Marketing Committee

June 5, 2003

Scope/Role

To reach target groups, making them aware of the activation and activities of the Council.

Membership

Frank Gill (Chair)

Pat Patterson

Bill Howard

Jim Kushlan

Actions for the next 6-12 months

Outreach to diverse partners and audiences. It was agreed that a reasonable goal was for Council members to make in-person presentations to 10 groups in the coming year. This involves creating a list of opportunities.

Initial list—(expand this!)

- Outdoor Writers of America Association. (Paul Schmidt)
- Joint Ventures, particularly all the coastal JVs
- Governments (State, Provincial, National)
- North American Wetlands Conservation Committee.
- U.S. NABCI Committee.
- State Department Environmental staff.

Make a special effort to reach birders and engage them in conservation. A strategy for outreach to the 50 – 60 million bird watchers in the U.S. should be developed and this will be a topic for a future meeting of the Committee.

Work on the communications aspects of the Major Initiatives to be taken on by the Council:

The Executive Committee is to develop plans and strategies for implementing three major Council initiatives:

1. ‘Petrels and People’ Conservation Initiative (an initiative focusing on the highly imperiled seabirds identified in the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.)
2. Water and Birds in Mesoamerica: A Workshop at the Mesoamerican Society for Biology and Conservation (meeting Fall 2003 in northern Mexico?)
3. A targeted communication campaign on some aspect of waterbird conservation or on a signature species, in order to raise the visibility of the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative.

This third program requires the **development of a positive theme and message for the initiative** for use in a wide variety of outreach materials and efforts. (Might also consider offsetting negative publicity for “problem” birds). Pat Patterson offered a connection with advertising executives in a firm in New York who will probably be willing to help us on a *pro bono* basis to think about these things.



Communications and Marketing Committee, cont.

Vehicles:

Increase web links to www.waterbirdconservation.org. Begin with affiliated organizations. This need and how to meet it need further discussion by the Committee.

Increase visibility in magazines and other media (e.g., film, video). Make use of public relations staff and resources at existing organizations, initiatives, programs, committees.

Initial list—(expand this!)

- Birdscapes
- Cornell labs publication
- ABA publication
- National Audubon Society's magazine



Resources/Fund-Raising Committee

June 5, 2003

Scope/Role

Acquire resources for meeting objectives of the NAWCP.

The Resource Committee will interact with the U.S. NABCI NGO Committee (which has taken on the goal of raising U.S. federal capacity for bird conservation).

Membership

Jim Woehr (Chair)

Gerry McKeating

Pat Patterson

Frank Gill

Naomi Edelson

Ian Davidson

Paul Schmidt

Mauricio Cervantes

Actions for the next 6-12 months

Identify existing avenues for funding across NAWCP area.

Discuss with appropriate staff (FWS) opportunities available in NAWCA and Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (Neotrop Act), exploring how to submit proposals and the scoring criteria.

Identify general Council financial needs including staffing needs. Did discuss funds needed for operation of Council; primary need is for travel funds for non-US and non-Canada members. Pat Patterson volunteered to raise \$10K for travel for next Council meeting

Solicit resource needs and ideas from other Council committees. Double-check the Resource Needs table prepared for the Wildlife Management Institute's January 2003 Workshop (and distributed at the June 4 and 5, 2003 meeting of the Council).

Work toward reauthorization of Neotrop Act.

Interface with States on their resources and resource needs.

Encourage full-time, permanent status for Waterbird Coordinator in USFWS.



International Advancement Committee

June 5, 2003

Scope/Role

To catalyze and participate in an Americas-wide flyway approach including:

- Linkage and coordination
- Identify tools and processes to enhance migratory waterbird conservation
- Increase visibility of the Plan
- Identify and evaluate priority projects in and throughout the Americas
- Inform Council of international issues and events

Focus will be on the area identified by NAWCP (i.e., Mexico, Caribbean, Central America), but would take advantage of opportunities to facilitate in South America, Arctic. If there were issues that were of hemispheric remit (merit?), then we would engage.

Note that this committee has a close overlap with the Regional Planning Committee, thus close communication is needed.

Membership

Ian Davidson (chair)

Gerry McKeating

Bill Howard

Ghisselle Alvarado

Jim Kushlan

Kent Wohl

Mauricio Cervantes

Additional key players need to be identified over the next 6 months for inclusion on committee and possibly full Council.

Actions for the next 6-12 months

Create summary of international “players” or experts. Put together a “Who’s Who” to inform selection of additional members.

Compile institutional background information for each relevant country that could impact our implementation of the Plan (Compilation of this material is a first step in regional planning).

- List those migratory birds regularly breeding, wintering, or staging in each country, their approximate numbers, conservation status, and coverage in international instruments;
- Describe the legislation protecting, conserving, and managing birds in each country (including a description of legal jurisdiction);
- Describe the formal and informal international instruments that each country is signatory to, the instrument's domestic implementing legislation, regulations or other national guidance relevant to bird conservation, hunting, mitigation of impacts, etc ;
- Describe the country organizational structure for bird conservation, management, and research;
- Describe/ list the government and NGO programs and activities concerning bird research, inventory, monitoring, education/public outreach, and management;



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

International Advancement Committee, cont.

- Describe the protected area system relevant to birds conservation in each country;
- Describe high priority waterbird species and their research, management, and conservation gaps; and
- Describe the importance and roles that NGO's play in each country concerning bird conservation.

Communicate the Plan to key actors or at key events in the Americas (e.g., Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds in Tobago, July 2003; Neotropical Ornithological Congress in Chile, November 2003). Work with Communications and Marketing Committee.

Coordinate workshops in Mexico, Central America and Caribbean to communicate the Plan and develop regional business plans (proposal to be passed on to Resources Committee). In specific, **host a high profile workshop** at the Mesoamerican Society for Biology and Conservation in Mexico, November 2003 to develop strategy for Central America and Mexico [This is a Major Initiative for the Council].

Training and developing capacity of individuals or institutions to help in determining population ecology of species in Caribbean, Mexico and Mesoamerica.

Maintain connection to partners and other initiatives (e.g., major bird initiatives underway) via outside membership.

Appointment: The International Advancement Committee will appoint representatives to the US NABCI International Subcommittee.



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Conservation Action Committee

June 5, 2003

Scope/Role

Ensure persistence of Highly Imperiled and High Concern Birds in order to prevent extinctions, address pressing conservation issues in a proactive way.

Committee will meet by phone three or more times per year, and face-to-face once a year.

Membership

Pat Patterson (chair)

Jim Woehr

Francie Cuthbert

Gerald Winegrad

Actions for the next 6-12 months

Secure significant funding for the Neotrop Act.

Address priority issue of control of invasive species (predators, competitors) on islands (one of the Major Initiatives for the Council – the “Petrels and People,” an initiative focusing on the highly imperiled seabirds identified in the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.)

Facilitate solutions to socioeconomic controversies (i.e., longline fisheries problem, and aquaculture/agriculture/fisheries depredation), by offering Council as a forum for debate and solution-development. Committee could propose ad hoc meetings to address issues, inviting relevant guests to discuss issues.

Document pressing issues in short vignettes on web and other publicly accessible media.

Continue to resolve role of Council vs. individual members with regard to advocacy and policy positions.



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Nominations Committee

June 5, 2003

Scope/Role

Adequate representation of the Plan's breadth of geography, taxonomy, and issues requires continual recruitment. As of June 2003, two new members from Canada are expected (to be selected by Canada's NABCI Council), more members from Central America, Mexico, and Caribbean needed, and representation from other stakeholder groups should be considered.

Membership

Pat Patterson (chair)

Ian Davidson

Actions for the next 6-12 months

Seek additional committee members.

Consider need for new Council members.