



**Waterbird Conservation Council  
Annual Meeting  
January 13 and 14, 2004; Key Largo, Florida, USA**

**General Summary**

**Attendees**

Council Members: Ghisselle Alvarado, Paul Baicich, Stephen Brown, Jack Capp, Eric Carey, Francie Cuthbert, Ian Davidson, Naomi Edelson, Jim Kushlan, Kevin Loftus, Gerry McKeating, Eric Mellink, Kathy Parsons, Pat Patterson, Don Paul, Rosabel Miro, Ann Sutton, Gerald Winegrad, Kent Wohl.  
Coordinators: Jennifer Wheeler, John Cecil, Bob Milko.

Guests: Walker Golder (North Carolina Audubon, Co-lead for Southeast U.S. Regional Plan), Myra Finkelstein (environmental toxicologist, working with American Bird Conservancy), guest speakers (see below).

Executive Committee met the evening of January 12 to review agenda and meeting goals.

**Meeting Notes for January 13**

**Greetings and Introductions**

**Overview of Council Purpose and Challenges**

Jennifer Wheeler gave an overview on the purposes and challenges of the Waterbird Conservation Council.

**Review of Committee Vision and Workplan Documents.** Each of the Council committees presented on their purpose, progress, and upcoming plans, in order to seek input and approval by the full Council. The major points of discussion and any modifications or decisions are described below. *See also the most up-to-date Vision and Workplan documents for each committee, available from Chairs or from Jennifer Wheeler.*

**Regional Planning and Implementation Committee**

Don Paul, representing Committee Chair Paul Schmidt, shared committee Vision and Workplan.

The committee showcase was the Northern Prairie and Parkland Region Waterbird Conservation Plan, presented over speaker-phone by co-author Neal Niemuth.

Discussion and decisions:

- All Council members were requested to identify a “home” region, and participate in associated planning and implementation activities. Liaisons (Council members who would formally represent a region) are particularly needed.
- In the U.S. State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans, now being drafted, are important vehicles for taking waterbird conservation “to the ground.” The Regional Committee will make



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the development of linkages between regional planners and State and JV a priority task for the first part of 2004.

- The Northern Prairie and Parkland Region Waterbird Conservation Plan was submitted for endorsement by the full Council. This plan was endorsed, noting that endorsement need be accompanied by continued support of the Council.
- The endorsement requirements and process, piloted with the Northern Prairie and Parkland Region, will be documented by the Regional Committee. This will be made available to regional planning leads as soon as possible, in order that regional plans are as effective as possible and emphasize implementation.

### Technical Services Committee

Stephen Brown, representing Committee Chair Melanie Steinkamp, shared committee Vision and Workplan.

The committee showcase was the Great Lakes Colonial Bird Surveys, presented by Council member Francie Cuthbert.

### Discussion and decisions:

- Development of population and habitat objectives was identified as a time-sensitive issue and the Committee will develop a hierarchy of approaches for regional groups. The idea would be to give the regions a range of approaches in preferred order that they could use given their relative interests and resources.
- The Council agreed that updating research needs was an appropriate task, but several people suggested it was not as pressing as the others.
- Council agreed with the Committee's approach to developing a large scale monitoring strategy. As far as coordination with other initiatives, specifically endorsement of and participation with CBM, it was felt that a waterbird monitoring approach should be developed first, and would guide the process of determining where coordination with other initiatives made sense.
- It was noted that complex efforts like the ones assigned to this committee are difficult to move forward without someone who has the job of overseeing the project (not currently in place).

### Resources Committee

Pat Patterson, Chair, shared thoughts on ommittee strategies.

The Committee showcase was Federal Grants for Waterbird Initiative Needs, presented by U.S. NABCI Coordinator Bob Ford.

### Discussion and decisions:

- The Resources Committee will meet and develop a vision and workplan.
- Each Waterbird Committee will identify its top resource needs (including dollar amounts) as appropriate to provide guidance to the Resources Committee in seeking new money and partners.
- An *ad hoc* group will develop continental geographic priorities for waterbirds, not only in response to recent changes in the NAWCA grant guidelines, but for purposes of creating guidance for the initiative.



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### **Evening Keynote Presentation**

Dr. Bernie Tershy, Island Conservation Center for Ocean Health, presented on Protecting Birds by Removing Introduced Species from Islands. The presentation included suggestions on how the Council could support this work, needed to improve the status of Highly Imperiled species identified in the plan.

### **Meeting Notes for January 14**

#### **Review of Committee Vision and Workplan Documents (cont.)**

##### Communications Committee

Pat Patterson, representing Chair Frank Gill, shared committee Vision and Workplan.

Discussion and decisions:

- Council endorsed the Vision and Workplan submitted by the Committee, supporting the Council charge referenced in the document (development of a Communications Plan for the “Petrels and People” project focusing on Highly Imperiled waterbird species.)
- National Audubon Society’s program “Waterbirds on Working Lands” was announced. Funded by Monsanto, this project will help identify and research farming practices that will improve environmental health and wildlife habitat by focusing on waterbirds, water quality and the health of aquatic ecosystems.
- The theme for IMBD 2004, “Conserving Colonial Waterbirds” was shared, and the inclusion of IMBD as a vehicle in any communications plan was discussed.

##### Conservation Action Committee

Gerald Winegrad, Chair, shared committee Vision and Workplan.

The Committee showcase was Seabird ByCatch, also presented by Gerald Winegrad.

Discussion and decisions:

- Council approved vision of the Committee, but proposed that the 2004 task list be streamlined to focus on 1. the analysis of threats, 2. strategies to address threats, 3. including approaches outside U.S. , and 4. increasing U.S. Congressional funding.

##### International Committee

Ian Davidson, Chair, shared committee Vision and Workplan.

Committee showcase was Advancing Bird Conservation in Latin America, presented by Alberto Yanosky, with Guyra Paraguay.

Discussion and decisions:

- The Committee, formerly known as “International Advancement” Committee is to be known simply as the “International” Committee.
- Ghisselle Alvarado will act as Co-Chair with Ian Davidson.



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- Based on extensive discussions during the two days of the meeting, the International Committee would submit a proposal for funding under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation (Neotrop) Act. Members were requested to have their organizations send in letters of support for this proposal.
- Committee will articulate 2004 tasks and products for itself that can be advanced prior to or in the absence of funding from the Neotrop Act.
- The Committee will meet for one full day prior to the next Waterbird Conservation Council meeting. (January 2005).

### Nominations Committee

Kathy Parsons, Chair, shared committee Vision and Workplan.

### Discussion and decisions:

- All Council Members were asked to complete the Questionnaire made available at the meeting). Information from these (plus photos of Council Members) will be used in a members directory.
- Council suggested that future nominations to the Council emphasize members from Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The invitation for Georgita Ruiz, Director of Wildlife, SEMARNAT to nominate someone from Mexico's wildlife agency had not received a response. Eric Mellink would follow up.
- Gerald McKeating announced that he had passed chairmanship of the Canadian national waterbird working group (keepers of Canada's national waterbird plan) to Paul Kluckner of Canadian Wildlife Service. Paul Kluckner is nominated to the Waterbird Council, and if accepted, will be appointed as the Canadian representative to the Council Executive Committee.
- The Committee will consider an awards/recognition program for the initiative.

### **Next Steps for the Waterbird Conservation Council**

Initiative Coordinator (Jennifer Wheeler) will make revisions to each committee's Vision and Workplan documents based on discussions at the meeting. Chairs of Committees are tasked with approving these revisions.

Chairs are charged with scheduling their next committee meeting/conference calls, and providing their tentative meeting schedule to Jennifer.

Chairs are charged with progressing on committee tasks, including making budget projections for their highest priority tasks to share with the Resources Committee.

All Council Members are urged to take advantage of upcoming conferences and meetings as opportunities to confer and advance Council business. Jennifer will provide a list of upcoming meetings which more than one Council member are likely to attend.

### **Next Full Council Meeting.**

The Council will meet on an annual basis. Members felt that an independent meeting was most effective and requires at least two full days, with committees meeting before the full Council. Locations will be selected based on ease of transportation and arrangements, costs, and other considerations.



## Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

The next assembled meeting of the entire Council is scheduled for the second week of January 2005, specifically January 10 (for Committee meetings), 11 and 12 (for full Council). A social field trip can be arranged for the preceding weekend, January 8 and 9.

The proposed location is Nassau, Grand Bahamas. (This location is comparable in cost, convenience, and distance to the alternative location, Miami. In addition it offers the benefits of local assistance in meeting planning, accessibility to Council members who have difficulty obtaining visas for the U.S., and conveys the international nature of the Council.)