



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Executive Committee of the Waterbird Conservation Council Conference Call August 10, 2007

Participants

Executive Committee: Paul Kluckner, Paul Schmidt, Paul Baicich, Kathy Parsons, Don Paul, Also: Coordinator Jennifer Wheeler. Unable to participate: Lisa Sorenson, Ian Davidson, Don Paul, Eric Mellink, Ghisselle Alvarado, Garry Donaldson.

Next Call: Thursday, September 27, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Eastern.

Discussion and Decisions

Report from the Integration Task Force that Met in Panama

The Executive Committee was provided with a draft report from the Integration Task Force, which met in Panama at the end of May. As of the date of the call, the report (which included notes from the meeting and a proposal for an alliance) was still in internal review by members of the Task Force. The Executive was not explicitly asked to review the documents; however, it was felt important that the Executive have a sense of preliminary recommendations as they have bearing on the tasks before the Executive and other committees.

Members of the Executive acknowledged and appreciated the time and energy that Integration Task Force members had expended on meeting and preparing documents. However, the Executive Committee had concerns about these documents and recommendations contained within, particularly since members interpreted them differently. They felt they did not have a clear or focused understanding of the support or actions that the Task Force desired from the Waterbird Conservation Council. Additionally, they felt it important to gain this understanding prior to the annual meeting in January 2008, since the Executive Committee would like the Council to act on this information before and at the meeting.

Decision: The Executive Committee tasked Jennifer, a member of the Task Force who was unable to be in Panama, with delivering the Executive's concerns to the Task Force along with her own comments. The Executive would like for its next conference call in September to be able to discuss a clarified version of the Task Force recommendations, with the involvement of one or both of the Task Force co-chairs (Carol Lively and Alberto Yanosky) in the conference call.

Addendum 16 August: Don Paul provided written feedback, which was forwarded to the Task Force.

**Report from Committees/Working Groups –
Progress on Priority Tasks Since May 24 (date of most recent call)**

Policy and Critical Issues: Based on a workplan approved by the Executive in May, Jennifer Arnold and Jennifer Wheeler have reached out to Council members and affiliates to identify in-country contacts in Panama, Ecuador, and the Caribbean, with whom we could collaborate on seabird policy/advocacy work (i.e., recommendations to participate in ACAP). Rosabel Miró and Francisco Rilla have already pursued or are interested in pursuing engagement with the Panamanian government, since this country has one of the largest ship registries in the world. Sandra Loor, Aves y Conservación, Ecuador has also expressed an interest in collaboration, especially because of their work to conserve the Waved Albatross. In the Caribbean, specific partners have not been identified, but the Seabird Working Group of the SCSCB provides a forum for pursuing this.

Communications: Paul Baicich reported on the two committee conference calls since May, the efforts to update the website, support for the Rice and Waterbirds Working Group communication needs, and how the committee stands ready to assist with promotion of the “Range-wide” project in partnership with Birdlife. The committee has also provided review of the draft Communications Piece, a much awaited initiative update that satisfies our commitments for a Version 2. This brochure will be revised to reflect comments, then circulated to the Executive and whole Council prior to publication.

Technical Services: Kathy Parsons discussed technical tasks, including planning and technical support for the Rice and Waterbirds Working Group symposium and proceedings project; a plan by Garry Donaldson to use Canadian Wildlife Service funds to hire a consultant to work on a waterbirds monitoring framework; and the task of assembling research needs from regional plans and national reports.

Regional Planning and Implementation: Jennifer reported that the committee had met by teleconference on July 11. The call had been dedicated to a verbal report and discussion on the recommendations of the Integration Task force, and how they might affect the committee’s work. The committee decided to delay additional regional committee discussions -- especially regarding South American representation -- until we could see the Task Force’s recommendations in writing.

Membership: Jennifer reported on these member issues:

-- Class of 2007: members whose terms were ending this year were queried as to their interest in continuing on Council. It is the recommendation of the Membership Committee that these members be invited for another term, as they are willing to continue: Ghisselle Alvarado, Stephen Brown, Ian Davidson, Jim Kushlan, Lourdes Mugica, & Don Paul. Kent Wohl felt it was appropriate to step down, as he is quite near retirement. The preferences of Beth Flint and Melanie Steinkamp are unknown, although they have concerns about their institutional support for another term.

Decision: Jennifer was tasked with extending invitations as described above.

-- New Member Recruitment: The Membership Committee has assembled recruitment priorities and some names of individuals. It is proposed that recruitment for 2007 focus on three priorities: seabird expertise, fund-raising ability, and experience in local-scale project

implementation. It is also reinforced that decisions to invite new members must be accompanied by a commitment to actively integrate them into the work of the Council.

Decision: The Membership Committee was approved to focus on the three priorities. They were encouraged to act quickly so that any new members have a good opportunity to attend the January 2008 annual meeting.

-- Membership on the Executive Committee: Ideally, a Chair Elect should be identified as soon as possible, although he/she would not begin as Chair until 2009. There are some emerging vacancies: Ghisselle Alvarado is stepping down as the Geographic Representative for Central America; a new representative must be identified; and the Past Chair (Eric Mellink) does not necessarily serve as a Geographic Representative, so the Mexico representative must be clarified. Since Geographic Representatives have two year terms, at every other the Annual Meeting, members from a given geographic region must confirm their Geographic Representative. In 2008 (an "even" year), it is proposed that representation for U.S., Central America, and South America be revisited, if appropriate.

Decision: Executive must discuss the Chair Elect position. Jennifer will assist in contacting members to address gaps in geographic representation.

Other Business

Issues for Annual Meeting, Week of January 14, 2008: Briefly, it was noted that the meeting should certainly involve a discussion of progress on seabird conservation tasks and developments in waterbird conservation in Latin America.

Upcoming UNEP/CMS/CREHO-Ramsar workshop in Panama, 25-29, 2007. The Executive Committee agreed to endorse Rob Clay as a representative of the Waterbird Conservation Council at this meeting.

Addendum 21 August: Rob Clay will not be participating in the meeting; he has approached Rosabel Miró to represent Council as appropriate.

Rice and Waterbirds Working Group funding request. The Executive was reminded of the funding assistance request made to the Council from the Rice and Waterbirds working group.

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