



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Executive Committee of the Waterbird Conservation Council Conference Call July 20, 2004

Participants

Executive Committee: Kathy Parsons, Ghisselle Alvarado, Ian Davidson, Gerald Winegrad, Paul Kluckner, Jim Kushlan, Paul Schmidt. Other: Jennifer Wheeler, coordinator. Unable to participate: Eric Carey, Eric Mellink, Melanie Steinkamp, Pat Patterson, coordinator Bob Milko.

Next Call: Tuesday September 21, 2004, 3 p.m. Eastern

PLEASE RSVP

Committee Chairs will be asked to provide write-ups by Tuesday, September 14.

Discussion and Decisions

Brief working committee progress updates were made available in advance of conference call. All committee chairs were asked to comment briefly on their progress, but most time was dedicated to issues associated with the Regional Planning and Implementation Committee and the International Committee. A final topic on the agenda was to address progress towards Version 2 of the continental-level plan.

❖ Committee Discussions

See Working Committee Updates (attached below).

Technical (Jennifer Wheeler for Chair Melanie Steinkamp). The committee is currently focused on the topic of large-scale monitoring. The need to revise species assessment and formulate an approach to setting of continental population goals was raised, primarily because the waterbird initiative stands out from the other major bird objectives in not having taken these steps. These tasks are not included in the 2004 workplan for the Technical Committee (the task regarding guidance on setting population objectives is for the regional level).

Decision: The topics of revised continental species assessment and continental goals will be considered by an *ad hoc* group of the Executive Committee formed to examine expectations for Version 2 of the continental-level plan (see below). The Technical Committee will be asked to discuss these topics as potential tasks for 2005.

Regional Planning and Implementation: (Chair Paul Schmidt). This committee is currently undertaking the review of various planning documents and sought the Executive Committee's feedback on its process for comment submission and endorsement.

Decision: The Executive Committee approved the Regional Committee's proposed standard process (as follows), which can be modified based on circumstances:

- Regional Committee provides guidance to planning leads on expectations as early as possible.



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- Regional Committee reviews plan documents prior to completion (preferably well before).
- In cases where Plans seem be of interest to wider membership, comments will be solicited from full Council.
- Regional Committee formulates and agrees on comments; Regional Committee Chair and regional liaison (if available) send them to planning leads.
- Based on response by lead authors and revisions to plans, Committee requests endorsement by full Council (if requested).

The Regional Committee's review of the USFWS Pacific Region Seabird Conservation Plan would include solicitation of comments from the full Council, since conservation of Pacific Coast seabirds touches on issues relevant to several committees (Technical, Conservation Action, etc.) Also, a modification in this case would be that Regional Committee's comments would be submitted by Chair of the full Council (rather than the Committee Chair due to his position in USFWS).

Communications: (Jennifer Wheeler, as no current Chair.) Paul Baicich has been approached about being Chair for this committee. He is seriously considering taking on this responsibility, but cannot answer definitively until 1 August. A potential vice- or co-chair will also be identified and approached.

Resources: (Jennifer Wheeler for Chair Pat Patterson). Committee needs to meet.

International: (Co-Chairs Ian Davidson & Ghisselle Alvarado). This committee's work is largely organized around the "Advancing Range-Wide Waterbird Conservation in the Neotropics" project. One portion of the project – translation of the continental plan – can soon be commenced. The International Committee must review a number of documents in order to move on the other parts of the project, particularly the creation of country reports by country partners. The Executive Committee was queried as to its interest in receiving progress reports on the project.

Decision: Executive Committee will rely on the Chairs to keep them informed of the project progress. The full Council should be made aware of the availability of the formal quarterly reports to be produced during the project (via the Chairs, coordinator Jennifer Wheeler, or on the web¹).

Another update: A member of the International Committee (Rob Clay, with Guyra Paraguay) is on the Interim Steering Committee for the Western Hemisphere Conference, meeting in August.

Conservation Action: (Chair Gerald Winegrad). Detailed committee report available; will ultimately be on the web. Executive Committee welcomed the news that Craig Harrison has agreed to serve as Vice Chair for the committee.

Nominations: (Chair Kathy Parsons). Comments received on the draft principles document are being integrated.

¹ It is desirable that the web serve as a clearinghouse for Council documents generally. Jennifer will work with Chairs to determine which Committee-related documents are posted.



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All Committees:

All Chairs were asked to review their 2004 workplans, as the year is about half over. Also, to be considering what efforts they might showcase at the January 2005 full Council Meeting.

The next conference call will again focus on a few committees, but all Chairs are requested to again submit short updates.

❖ **Progress towards Version 2 of the continental-level plan**

We have stated: "Version 2 (due out 2004) will include more guidance on conservation of non-colonial waterbirds and more details on the needs and priorities of various regions within the overall Plan area, especially the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America." In order to maintain credibility, and to address expectations, the Council should devise a statement and process for developing Version 2. The Chair requested that an ad hoc group form to discuss this; Kathy Parsons, Jim Kushlan, Paul Kluckner agreed to join this group.



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Waterbird Conservation Council Working Committee Updates

Revised July 21, 2004

Updates since May 25, 2004, date of last Executive Conference Call

Technical Services Committee

Chair: Melanie Steinkamp

- Preparing a "mission statement" and objectives for a large-scale waterbird monitoring strategy
- Considering unveiling draft strategy at the joint Waterbird Society/Pacific Seabird Group meeting
- Met by phone July 6, 2004.

Regional Planning and Implementation Committee

Chair: Paul Schmidt

- Tracked regional progress via status reports collected from the regional planning leads.
- Determined that although progress is being made, the potential schedule for completion of regional plans outlined in January is delayed 2-6 months depending on plan.
- Websites have been prepared and launched for regions well along in planning.
- Now reviewing three documents that form elements of regional planning: an implementation plan for a Northern Great Plains BCR Joint Venture, a strategy for the Boreal Forest Initiative, and draft Seabird Conservation Plan for USFWS Pacific Region.
- Received final plans from Canadian Wildlife Service's Quebec and Pacific/Yukon Regions.
- Planning the celebration of the completion of the Northern Prairie and Parkland Plan via support of a wetlands restoration project.
- Working with IAFWA to provide waterbird information to State Wildlife Comprehensive Plans.
- Met by phone on July 16.

Communications Committee

Chair: Open

- Frank Gill resigned position as Chair (but will remain a Council member)
- New Chair is being sought from Council membership.

Resources Committee

Chair: Pat Patterson

- Draft Vision and Workplan written and committee members solicited
- To meet by phone SOON.

International Committee

Co-Chairs: Ian Davidson, Ghisselle Alvarado

- Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act proposal for "Advancing Range-Wide Waterbird Conservation in the Neotropics" awarded US\$200,000.



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- Final match of \$35K identified; all others secured.
- Operational document, revised budget, and international coordinator position description drafted; to be reviewed by Committee
- Workplan for country partners drafted; to be reviewed by Committee
- Met by phone May 21, have kept a “rolling agenda” by email.
- Targeting September 1 for hiring of coordinator and transfer of funds to country partners.

Conservation Action Committee

Chair: Gerald Winegrad

- Vice-Chair identified (Craig Harrison)
- Submitted comments on a preliminary report produced by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, a report that assessed the U.S. system for managing oceans and coasts, but neglected to discuss seabird needs.
- Seen re-authorization and enhancements of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act pass the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in June (passed the House Resources Committee in May)
- Continued to support albatross conservation efforts, including preparation for the International Albatross Conference and work to resolve lead poisoning in Laysan Albatross chicks on Midway Island (meeting scheduled with top U.S. FWS Refuge and Contaminant officials to develop a game plan for remediation and contacts have been made with the U.S. Navy at the Pentagon to gain DOD support for remediation).
- Provided testimony against efforts to shift migratory bird management from the U.S. FWS and place the authority in USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services
- Presented on seabird bycatch at an ABA Ocean Policy Conference at the Maryland Law School in June with many key policy makers in attendance.
- Submitted comments and held a meeting with USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services opposing plans to kill DCCOs at colonies in Michigan.
- Met by phone May 24.

Nominations Committee

Chair: Katharine Parsons

- Prepared a draft principles document for enhancing membership, participation and efficacy of Council; under review by committee. Revised document will be drafted by the end of July and shared with Council in August.
- Will consider (by email) the slate of new members we'd like to submit to the Council for endorsement by mid-September.
- Met by phone June 24.

Ad Hoc Committee of Geographic Priorities

Representative met with US NAWCA Council staff to present on the waterbird plan and discuss our map of priority BCRs. Presentation was well received; US NAWCA Council has indicated that they will document their use of maps provided by the initiatives which we can use when we revisit the topic.