



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Executive Committee of the Waterbird Conservation Council Conference Call May 31, 2005

Participants

Executive Committee: Eric Mellink, Ghisselle Alvarado, Jack Capp, Ian Davidson, Paul Kluckner, Jim Kushlan, Paul Schmidt. Also Jennifer Wheeler, Garry Donaldson, coordinators.

Unable to participate: Kathy Parsons, Paul Baicich, Eric Carey, Melanie Steinkamp, Gerald Winegrad.

Next Call: proposed July 26, 2005, 2 p.m. Eastern

Discussion and Decisions

Recognition of new Chair and new committee members

Eric Mellink has now succeeded Kathy Parsons as Chair as the Waterbird Conservation Council. Kathy now serves on the committee as the immediate Past Chair, and Jack Capp now serves as the U.S. representative. The overall structure of the Executive Committee was reviewed: it includes representatives from six major areas of the plan (Caribbean, Central America, Canada, U.S., Mexico, and in the future, South America) plus chairs of six working committees, plus the immediate Past Chair.

Selection of Chair-Elect

On the April conference call, the committee agreed that the selection of the Chair-Elect should be made by the Executive Committee and that this individual should be drawn from Executive Committee. Kathy offered to work with Jennifer Wheeler to move the selection process forward; the process they undertook was for Jennifer to individually interview Executive Committee members about their interest and opinions on the position. The full Council was also notified and encouraged to express their opinions to the Chair or other Executive Committee members.

By May 31, Jennifer reported having interviewed 8 of the existing Executive Committee members. She summarized as follows: Not all members agree that it was preferable that the next Chair-Elect be from a "new area" (other than the U.S. or Mexico), believing that experience and ability outweigh an immediate need to rotate the leadership roles to other parts of the Plan area. One of these members nominated Paul Baicich. (He has not yet been contacted for his response.) However, the majority of those interviewed did prefer to see the Chair-Elect drawn from outside the U.S. Both Ian Davidson and Paul Kluckner were nominated. In subsequent discussion with Ian, he declined the nomination. Paul Kluckner responded that he would consider the nomination, but felt strongly that the remaining Executive Committee members be interviewed, and that the decision be deferred until end of September, at which time Environment Canada would have completed a re-organization. It was also noted that by that time, there might be new Executive Committee members resulting from the addition of South America to the initiative and turnover in working committee chairs.



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Action Item for EC: Given the above, continue to provide feedback on best process for identifying and elevating an Executive Committee member to office of Chair-Elect. Specifically, provide comments individually to Jennifer.

Ad hoc committee on setting geographic priorities

The Executive Committee was reminded of their responsibility to oversee the *ad hoc* committee on geographic priorities. This committee was to produce guidance on identifying the most important sites for waterbirds at various scales (hemispheric down to national or smaller). Some of the complexities of this issue were discussed as well as some of the tools to address the issue (e.g., Important Bird Areas system).

Action Item for EC: Provide feedback on approaches and tools to support this effort. Jennifer will contact John Cecil, who at the January 2005 Nassau meeting, expressed a willingness to lead on this effort.

Resources

The Resources Committee has an up-to-date work plan and members willing to serve but no leader. As on the previous call, Executive Committee members are asked to consider possible candidates who could be recruited to lead committee or perhaps to develop a new model for meeting the resource needs of the council/initiative. On this call, members suggested sending the Resources Committee Vision and Workplan to the full Council to stimulate further discussion.

An immediate need is to secure the operational budget for the 2006 annual meeting (January 10-14, 2006, San Jose, Costa Rica), primarily for travel expenses. Executive Committee considered and accepted a proposal for approaching individual Council members to seek a pledge of support from their organizations to fund one other member's support.

Action Item for EC: Review the Resources Committee Vision and Workplan document sent out by Jennifer. Assist in seeking organizational pledges for travel support by approaching your own organizations.

Technical

Jennifer briefly reviewed tasks of the Technical committee; the conversation was focused on the Marshbird status assessment now underway at Manomet (overseen by Kathy). The need to encourage participation by species experts and managers, especially live participation at a workshop at the Waterbird Society Meeting in October 13-16. It was noted that federal agencies with mandated responsibilities for these birds ought to take special interest.

Action Item for EC: Jennifer will re-circulate the prospectus describing the Marshbird status assessment. Executive Committee members will review in order to solicit and support participation.

Regional

Paul S. reported on the work of the Regional Committee, primarily the progress in various parts of the Plan area. Eric M. discussed ideas for moving forward on waterbird work in Mexico. He and Eduardo Palacios thought they would submit a proposal to NAWCA Mexico funds in order to have a couple of



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meetings to assemble waterbird experts – the first focusing on baseline information, the second set focused on planning by stakeholders. He felt that the Council could assist the effort by reviewing the proposal: namely, providing guidance on how to extract the maximum effect out of 2-3 day meetings. (On an earlier Regional Committee call, Rosabel Miro had expressed a similar view on assistance).

Ian brought up the subject of the Regional Committee assisting then overseeing regional plans developed in Central America and the Caribbean. For example, the Regional Committee could work to ensure compatibility of those plans with other regional plans, and assist with securing support for their implementation. Paul S. expressed the willingness of the Regional Committee on this, and Ian suggested that Rob Clay, the coordinator for the Neotrop Project (funding the acquisition of baseline data in Central America and the Caribbean) would be a good liaison to discuss regional strategy development.

Paul S. also brought up an issue raised at a recent meeting between Canadian, US, and Mexico under the auspices of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. He passed along a stated desire on the part of the Mexican federal agencies for initiatives to use NABCI Mexico as a point of contact for national bird planning and projects. Specifically, they were interested in having NABCI Mexico and the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas to have a closer association.

Action Item for EC: Chairs for International and Regional Committees will be in communication.

Communications

Paul K. reported on behalf of Paul Baicich, who was not able to attend. The Communication Committee has essentially completed development of “key messages” for the Waterbird initiative: critical points to be made in any presentation of the initiative. The Committee is working to present these broadly with an appropriate vehicle: web presentation, fact sheet, and ultimately the Communications Piece due at the end of the year.

Action Item for EC: None at this time.

Conservation Action

The current Chair of the Conservation Committee, Gerald Winegrad, communicated his desire to step down from the committee and the Council, now that he has retired from his position at American Bird Conservancy. Similar as for the Resources Committee, members suggested sending the Conservation Action Vision and Workplan to the full Council to stimulate further discussion on identifying a new Chair.

Action Item for EC: Jennifer will work with Gerald to announce his departure and wrap up any loose ends from his Chairmanship. Executive Committee members will provide feedback on a potential new committee chair.

International

Ian reviewed progress under the Neotrop project, namely a workshop held in conjunction with the IBA meeting recently held in Belize, the signing of contracts with a majority of partners, and the upcoming workshop to be held at the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds meeting (first



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week in August). He also discussed how the coordinator for the project, Rob Clay, was integrating into other hemispheric networks, specifically by attending the upcoming international Ramsar and Convention on Migratory Species meetings in Africa.

As a follow-up to the Nassau annual meeting, and as a result of the Regional Committee assisting with regional plans in Caribbean and Latin America, Ian has been thinking about articulating the new vision for the International Committee, which would be focused on addressing hemispheric-wide issues.

Action Item for EC: None at this time.

Membership

Jennifer reported on behalf of Kathy, who was not able to attend. The Membership Committee has a variety of tasks ongoing; this call focused on the means of expressing appreciation to departing Council members. The Executive Committee agreed that some attractive token or keepsake (e.g., framed artwork) was appropriate, and that it should be accompanied by a letter signed by the full Council or by the Chair on its behalf. Ideally, recognition should be made at the Council meeting, but if that was not feasible, another public event might be found.

Action Item for EC: None at this time.