



Executive Committee of the Waterbird Conservation Council Conference Call November 1, 2005

Participants

Executive Committee: Eric Mellink, Ian Davidson, Paul Kluckner, Paul Schmidt, Kathy Parsons, Paul Baicich.
Also Jennifer Wheeler, Garry Donaldson, coordinators.
Unable to participate: Eric Carey, Melanie Steinkamp, Ghisselle Alvarado.

Next Call: Proposed: Tuesday, November 29, 2005, 8 a.m. Pacific/11 a.m. Eastern. This call would focus on the issues of functioning Council committees (see third Action Item below).

Discussion and Decisions

Action Item for All Council Committee Chairs: With the Annual Meeting approaching, all chairs must reflect on their expectations for that meeting: specifically, the need/feasibility of a working committee meeting, the development of progress reports and revised workplans, discussion points for the agenda, and showcase presentations related to their committee work.

Action Item for All Executive Committee Members: Make plans for attending the Annual Meeting, and encourage attendance by all Council members!

Action Item for All Executive Committee Members: One of the most important tasks of the Executive Committee is to ensure functioning committees with active membership and necessary representation. The Council committees are in varying states of activity/inactivity and turnover, which the Executive can use as an opportunity and challenge to improve committee health. Jennifer will circulate a document describing the state of Council committees, and the Executive will undertake an email dialogue culminating in a conference call (scheduled November 29).

Communications Committee report. Paul Baicich reported some small activities, including postings to the listservs and some website corrections. Explained that Communications Committee is functioning, but noted that the committee is made up of a variety of creative active/semi-active members that act as individuals rather than representing institutions. This is significant because these members cannot bring institutional resources to bear; few are likely to be able to attend the annual meeting. Jennifer still needs to re-circulate a revised draft of the Communications Piece to Committee Chairs.

Technical Services Committee report. Kathy Parsons reported on the Marshbird Species Assessment workshop that took place on Jekyll Island, GA in conjunction with the Waterbird Society. The workshop was well attended, had good international representation, involved members of the Council (e.g., Eric and Ghisselle, as well as Kathy). The next steps are to wrap up comments compilation on 15 November, and revise materials to present a final report for the Council at the annual meeting. Paul Schmidt inquired about the concerns raised to members of the Council by members of the PIF Science Committee, which prompted the letter from our Council Chair to the PIF leadership. Kathy and Jennifer explained that the Marshbird Assessment was moving ahead under the mandate of the Council using a process that had been developed by a large cadre of waterbird scientists, but that process comments were being compiled, responded to, and ultimately the initiative would work towards integration without other initiatives if bird conservation would be benefited by such a move.

It was also noted that Melanie Steinkamp, current Chair of the Technical Services Committee had requested to step down from that role.



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Regional Committee report. Regional planning documents for the Southeast U.S., Upper Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic/New England/Maritimes, and Caribbean should be in final or near-final state by the annual meeting. The committee continues to explore the most appropriate structure and operations for serving the regional interests. A brief gathering for regional planning leads was held at Waterbird Society (it was notable that at least one planning lead for 9 of 14 regions attended this meeting). The gathering was intended to strengthen relationships between individuals with similar challenges/responsibilities with regards to regional conservation, remind them about communication tools (contact lists and listservs), and encourage them to look upon the Council members among them as advocates for regional-scale interests.

International Committee report. Ian Davidson reported. Rob Clay, who has been coordinating the Neotrop Range-wide Waterbirds Project was selected for the position of senior conservation manager in the BirdLife Secretariat regional office, beginning 1 November. As a result of this change, the day-to-day coordination of the range-wide waterbirds project will now be led by Cristina Morales (leading the implementation of the project in Paraguay) but Rob will continue with a role in the project, though one more focused on strategies and monitoring and evaluation. National reports for Central and South America under this project have been drafted and are being reviewed. The CA reports will be presented at a workshop during the upcoming MesoAmerican Society for Biology and Conservation (Nov 22, Honduras). Another accomplishment is that the Spanish version of the continental plan should be available by the annual meeting.

In general, the International Committee continues to struggle with communications. The Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative may be a vehicle for improving this. A relationship with Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network is another promising approach. The Annual Meeting will be a good opportunity to for continuing to explore this; participation by Latin Americans will be encouraged and supported by some of the Neotrop funds.

Report on Recent Conversations regarding Hemispheric Bird Partnerships

Paul Kluckner reported on a brainstorming session that took place at a WHSRN meeting held in conjunction with the Panama Bay WHSRN designation celebration last month. The participants would like to have national environmental ministers, which gather under the auspices of the Organization of American States next summer, to endorse a statement of principles that support international bird conservation. This statement would be essentially identical to the NABCI Trinational Declaration of Intent signed by Canada, U.S. and Mexico. The leadership of Environment Canada envisions a partnership across governments complemented by a partnership in civil society (NGOs), and believe that NABCI provides that model. The incorporation of NABCI into WHMSI would appear to be a logical step forward.

Membership Committee report: Committee has essentially been inactive since the Chair, Kathy, has been leading on the marshbird status assessment. The committee will regroup for the annual meeting; however, Chairmanship will pass to the current Council Chair, Eric Mellink.

Resources Committee report: Committee is currently inactive, and Executive must focus will be on funds necessary for the annual meeting. Council members with travel support will continue to be asked to seek support for one other member. Jennifer drafted a request to Forest Service, including an invitation for International Programs to send a participant (Followup: Jim Chu has offered up to \$6,000 in travel support for Latin Americans).

Conservation Action Committee report. Committee is currently inactive.