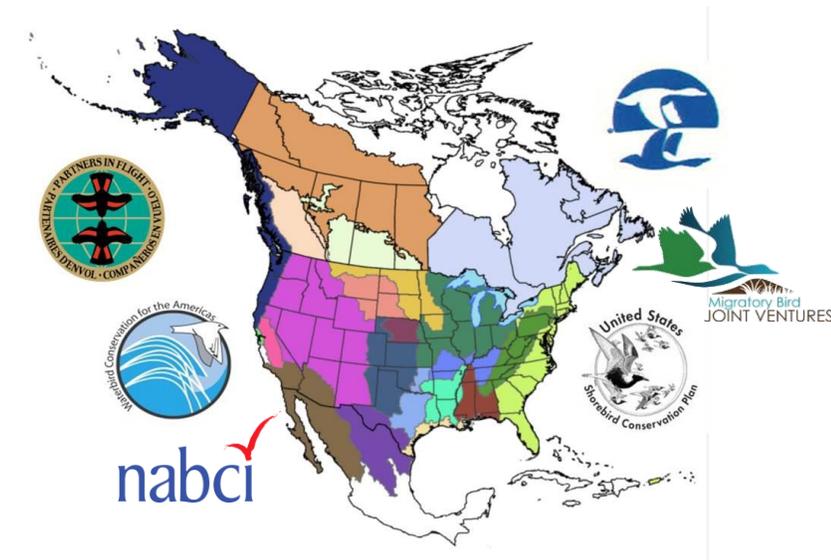


Bird Partnership Workshop: One Year Summary of Progress

Prepared by the Workshop Outcomes Oversight Team:

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Bird Partnership Workshop: One Year Summary of Progress

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bird Partnership Workshop, held January 2015 in Texas, brought together key personnel from the bird conservation community to discuss needs for promoting more effective coordination, collaboration, and integration of priorities and activities among three networks—Migratory Bird Joint Ventures (JVs), the four major Bird Conservation Plan Partnerships (BCPPs) and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). The workshop was intended as a first step in an on-going process among the greater bird conservation community towards achieving more effective and efficient bird conservation, and much progress has been made in the year since the Workshop. Below are highlights of progress relative to major themes that emerged during the Workshop.

Workshop Theme: Explore the unification of all science capacity

PROGRESS: Initiated and continuing

- Tri-Initiative Science Team (TriST) and Partners in Flight (PIF) Science have engaged the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Science Support Team (NSST), and together they have developed a draft prospectus for a Unified Science Team. The mission for this team would be to provide the science support necessary for successful implementation of coordinated and full life cycle bird conservation actions across all taxa and geographic scales by maximizing creative synergy and efficiency through increased communication and collaboration on projects of shared priority.
- To maintain continuity of existing efforts, NSST, PIF Science, and TriST decided they should continue to function independently while at the same time exploring potential areas of synergy and organizational consolidation during a two-year trial period.

- In October 2015, TriST joined a scheduled meeting of the NSST in Fort Collins, Colorado, and contributed agenda items for a day of shared discussions. A second joint NSST/TriST meeting is scheduled for 19-21 April 2016 in Memphis, Tennessee. At that meeting, the unified group expects to finalize its prospectus of future joint projects and to continue work on two projects that are already recognized as shared priorities.

Workshop Theme: Fill the empty coordinator positions (North American Bird Conservation Initiative, Partners in Flight, Waterbirds for the Americas)

PROGRESS: Initiated and continuing

- The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Bird Conservation / North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) Coordinator position has been filled by Dr. Judith Scarl.
- The Partners in Flight (PIF) Coordinator position has been filled by Bob Ford.
- The Waterbird Coordinator position remains vacant, with the USFWS anticipating it to be filled in 2017.

Workshop Theme: Identify strategies to increase communication among the National Joint Venture Coordinator, Bird Conservation Plan Coordinators, and NABCI.

PROGRESS: Initiated and continuing

- The Waterbird, Shorebird, and Landbird coordinator positions are now located in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, Branch of Science and Planning, with the national Joint Venture (JV) and NAWMP coordinators.

Workshop Theme: Build social science capacity within the bird conservation community

PROGRESS: Initiated and continuing

- Members of the Workshop Outcomes Oversight Team, in conjunction with the NABCI Human Dimensions (HD) Subcommittee, drafted a proposal for a National Social Science Coordinator position.
- The NABCI Committee endorsed further refining and seeking partner support for the position at the August 2015 NABCI meeting. Members of the HD subcommittee are discussing the position with various agencies (e.g., U.S. Forest Service, Farm Services Agency) and are receiving support for the position.

Workshop Theme: Promote NABCI with strong, driving leadership.

PROGRESS: Initiated and continuing

- An advocacy coalition was formed at the August 2015 NABCI meeting between NABCI, AFWA, and the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards. The purpose of this coalition is to more closely align advocacy efforts and messaging, and ultimately develop coordinated messaging and a strategy that can be used by the broader bird community.

Additional Next Steps

The Workshop Outcomes Oversight Team suggests the following as next steps for continuing to advance the themes and actions items from the Bird Partnership Workshop. These next steps consider progress to date on items as well as input from the broader bird conservation community.

- **Initiate planning efforts for a Bird Partnership Workshop 2.0**, tentatively in 2017 or 2018. The first workshop was considered very successful, generating several short-term actions, many of which have been completed, while identifying longer-term ideas and opportunities for how the bird conservation community can improve its coordination and collaboration. Through continued collaborations among NABCI, the Joint Ventures, the Bird Conservation Plan Partnerships, the Flyways, AFWA, and game bird initiatives, the bird community will evaluate its structure, identify areas of overlap as well as additional priority areas that are not covered, and re-envision a model for US bird conservation. A second workshop would be a focal point of this process, further developing concepts from the first workshop while expanding the scope to include additional key partners in the bird conservation community. Potential priorities for a second workshop may include:
 1. Continue the development of NABCI as a strong, driving leader.
 - Advance and further strengthen coordinated advocacy efforts for bird conservation, including exploration of novel funding sources.
 2. Developing a framework for unified science capacity.
 3. NABCI, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Bird Conservation Committee, the Flyways, the Joint Ventures, and the Bird Conservation Plan Partnerships work collaboratively to evaluate, refine, or even redefine, their respective roles and responsibilities to ensure each is providing a value added role to advancing bird conservation.
 4. Define a small set of strategic priorities that are pervasive and relevant across the entire bird conservation community by:
 - Engaging additional constituents in the discussion, such as AFWA’s Bird Conservation Committee, the Flyways, and Resident Game Bird groups.
 - Evaluating consistent themes in newly available resources, such as the trinational State of North America’s Birds Report, the revised Partners in Flight Continental Landbird Plan, and updated State Wildlife Action Plans.

Work together to develop collaborative strategies to address these priorities that incorporate communication across the bird conservation community, define specific objectives that can be stepped down from a national (or even international) to a regional to a state or local level, and identify tasks specific to partners and organization that work most effectively at each level, promoting integration of effort across scales and organizations and minimizing competition within the bird conservation community for finite resources.

Many of these items are components of the additional next steps listed below. Proper planning would be critical to ensuring the success of a second Workshop, not only requiring a comprehensive planning team, but also an early commitment by individual organizations wanting to participate in the workshop to work closely with the planning team to accomplish any preliminary meetings or other internal tasks necessary to develop the framework for the workshop.

- **Empower NABCI to identify and advocate for national-level funding priorities.** NABCI's coordinated advocacy efforts, as well as momentum from the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations, may direct more funding for bird conservation in the future. NABCI could serve as an advisory role to advocate for increased distribution of funds to local, regional, and national projects that support national priorities.
- **Continue development of coordinated advocacy efforts** between AFWA, the AJVMB, and NABCI, focusing especially on creating a strategy that demonstrates how different programs (e.g., JVs, Farm Bill, NMBCA) are integrated and collectively add value to bird conservation efforts. These efforts also apply to the unification of science capacity, and advocacy needs to include messaging regarding the resources required to efficiently and effectively address bird conservation science priorities.
- **Continue to engage game bird organizations and initiatives** (e.g. Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, Pheasants Forever) to identify new opportunities for partnerships, and enhance their overall regional-level involvement with JVs and Bird Conservation Plan Partnerships (BCPP) including:
 1. Conservation delivery capacity
 2. Advocacy
 3. Communications
- **Continue to engage the Flyway Councils**, potentially identifying a point person for the Flyways to coordinate engagement and communications. Discuss their regional-level involvement with JVs and BCPPs and where/how these three sets of partnerships can collaborate to efficiently and effectively advance shared priorities.
- **NABCI continues to support and encourage the unification of all science capacity** by working with partner organizations to evaluate the appropriate long-term role for NABCI in this unification and working with partners to advocate for the resources required to efficiently and effectively address bird conservation science priorities.

- **NABCI, JVs, NAWMP, PIF, US Shorebird Conservation Plan Partnership review the progress made** by other organizations and develop new internal recommendations or action items that augment and build on this progress.
- **JVs hold periodic all JV staff meetings** (at least once every two years) to share ideas across JVs. Newer JV staff members would benefit from hearing discussions of the more established JV staff, and the established JV staff need to plan for the "institutional knowledge" and foundational principles of JVs to be passed on to our next set of leaders.

Bird Partnership Workshop: One Year Summary of Progress

INTRODUCTION

The Bird Partnership Workshop, held in January 2015 in Texas, brought together key personnel from the bird conservation community to discuss needs for promoting more effective coordination, collaboration, and integration of priorities and activities among three networks—Migratory Bird Joint Ventures (JVs), the four major Bird Conservation Plan Partnerships (BCPPs) and the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). The four major BCPPs were Partners In Flight (PIF), the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan (USSCP), the Waterbird Plan, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP).

The workshop was intended as a first step in an on-going process among the larger bird conservation community towards achieving more effective and efficient bird conservation, and much progress has been made in the year since the Workshop. The [Bird Partnership Workshop Final Report](#) was completed in April 2015 and distributed to the Workshop participants, and the Workshop Planning Team has transitioned into the Workshop Outcomes Oversight Team (WOOT). The WOOT continues to meet monthly (via conference calls) and works with the bird conservation community to continue the momentum established during the Workshop and facilitate progress on the recommendations and action items that developed there.

PROGRESS ON WORKSHOP THEMES

The following themes regarding needed changes to improve and enhance coordinated bird conservation developed during the course of the Bird Partnership Workshop. These themes were generally supported by the majority of attendees. While they should not be considered as final decisions or conclusions, they are serving as guiding concepts or initial steps that are facilitating longer-term actions to be taken by the bird conservation community. Specific recommendations and action items, many related to these themes, also were developed by those entities and organizations present at the Workshop. The emergent themes and organizational specific items are outlined in the [Bird Partnership Workshop Final Report](#). Below is a summary of progress made relative to these themes and corresponding organizational action items.

Workshop Theme: Explore the unification of all science capacity within the bird conservation community (e.g., Tri-Initiative Science Team (TriST), North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Science Support Team (NSST), PIF Science, waterbird and shorebird science).

- Corresponding organizational specific recommendations and/or action items:

- NABCI: Help create team of science (PIF, NSST, TriST), including social science, and determine that role at national level. Look into what role NABCI can play to enhance social science at the national level need.
- JVs: (a) TriST is integrated or aligned better with NABCI. (b) TriST is recognized as the science forum for the three initiatives (PIF, shorebird, waterbird) and the Joint Ventures.
- NAWMP/NSST: Explore consolidation of technical teams, NSST, TriST, and PIF. NSST will commit to discussion of this idea at upcoming meeting.
- PIF: Endorse the integration of science teams and support nongame science
- U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Partnership: Support increased communication and collaborative via current (e.g., TriST) or enhanced channels (e.g., NABCI Science Team).

Progress to date:

At the conclusion of the Texas Workshop, the Tri-initiative Science Team (TriST) and Partners in Flight Science Committee members attending the Workshop met for an additional half-day to discuss and draft the next steps needed to implement this desired collaboration. This was followed by a joint four-day TriST and PIF Science meeting held at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory in April. TriST and PIF Science have engaged the NSST and together they have developed a draft prospectus for a Unified Science Team. The mission for this team would be to provide the science support necessary for successful implementation of coordinated and full life cycle bird conservation actions across all taxa and geographic scales by maximizing creative synergy and efficiency through increased communication and collaboration on projects of shared priority. The draft prospectus is currently being circulated among representatives of oversight bodies (e.g., the NAWMP Plan Committee) for edits and endorsement. Review and prioritization of shared projects is expected to be finalized in April 2016.

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) and Partners in Flight (PIF) both have active science support in the form of the NAWMP Science Support Team (NSST) and the PIF Science Committee, respectively. The U.S. Shorebird Plan has a less formalized science team, and Waterbirds for the Americas currently has virtually no organized technical support in the U.S. TriST was organized in 2009 as a forum for Joint Venture Science Coordinators to share ideas and work on collaborative projects in a national context represented primarily by the PIF, USSCP, and Waterbird coordinators (the NAWMP Coordinator was also officially a member of TriST). With the upcoming hiring of a U.S. national coordinator for Waterbirds for the Americas, the collective bird conservation community expects that a framework for waterbird science support will emerge.

Since NSST, PIF Science, and TriST already have specific science projects and work plans underway, the group decided they should continue to function independently while at the same time exploring potential areas of synergy and organizational consolidation during a two-year trial period. The NSST in particular viewed this experimental collaboration opportunity among the science teams representing the NSST, TriST, and PIF as "separate and

additive to extant waterfowl-centric planning responsibilities as reflected in mandates and relationships with NAWMP's Plan Committee and other waterfowl conservation partnerships across multiple geographies (i.e., flyways and regions)." In October 2015, TriST joined a scheduled meeting of the NSST in Fort Collins, Colorado, and contributed agenda items for a day of shared discussions. Members from both groups who participated in the joint session recognized the increased richness and breadth of insight when expertise from both the game and non-game perspectives was included. Consequently, the NSST agreed to provide a greater opportunity for TriST involvement in the selection of dates, venue, and agenda topics for the next joint meeting, now scheduled for 19-21 April 2016 in Memphis, Tennessee. At that meeting, the unified group expects to finalize its prospectus of future joint projects and to continue work on two projects that are already recognized as shared priorities: assessment of net landscape change (now being facilitated by NABCI) and development of working full life cycle population models that can help direct conservation action to the most critical locations and times in the annual cycle.

With NABCI's endorsement of the Avian Conservation Assessment Database (ACAD), TriST hopes to more formally engage the JV science network in the task of assessing the conservation vulnerability of landbirds, shorebirds, and especially waterbirds at both global and regional (JV and BCR) scales in order to realize the vision of one-stop conservation assessment via the ACAD. Although not specifically a TrUST (Transitional Unified Science Team) project, many individual JV Science Coordinators serve on both the NSST and TriST, and discussions are continuing regarding how NAWMP priorities might be served with the inclusion of waterfowl in the ACAD.

Workshop Theme: Fill the empty coordinator positions—NABCI, PIF, and Waterbirds, and provide operational funding to support BCPP activities.

- Corresponding organizational specific recommendations and/or action items:
 - PIF: Hire the PIF coordinator. Leverage that coordinator for additional national level positions from other federal agencies.
 - USFWS: Move forward with hiring two initiative coordinators and support staff.

Progress to date:

- The AFWA Bird Conservation Program Manager/ NABCI Coordinator position has been filled. Judith Scarl started work on June 15th, 2015 at the AFWA offices in Washington, DC.
- The PIF Coordinator position has been filled. Bob Ford accepted the position as Partners in Flight (PIF) Coordinator with the USFWS' Migratory Bird Program, Division of Bird Habitat Conservation. Bob will also serve as the USFWS' North American Wetland Conservation Council staff member, reviewing North American Wetland Conservation Act proposals and representing the USFWS' Director on the Council Staff. Bob started work on November 29th and is based out of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Headquarters in Falls Church, VA.

- The Waterbird Coordinator position remains vacant, but the USFWS Migratory Bird Program has reiterated their commitment to fill this position. As of March 2016, USFWS anticipates that this position will be filled in 2017.

Workshop Theme: Identify strategies to increase communication among the National JV Coordinator, Bird Conservation Plan Coordinators, and NABCI. Coordination should be collaborative and integrated, but more discussion is needed about how that can best be achieved organizationally and geographically. As part of this theme, develop and endorse a series of standards that exemplify high quality bird conservation plans.

- Corresponding organizational specific recommendations and/or action items:
 - NABCI: (a) Need to improve communication within the NABCI committee and outreach from the NABCI committee. Let senior level leadership know why it is important for them to be involved. (b) Address trust issues in order for NABCI to be effective; the partners and the plans need to see the value and no threat of being involved in NABCI.
 - JVs: (a) Develop and endorse a series of standards representing high quality bird conservation plans. (b) Reorganize migratory bird FWS organizational chart with the BCPP coordinators under a common supervisor and with JV national coordinator.
 - USFWS: Internal assessment of FWS Migratory Bird Program support of integrated bird conservation. Look at structural changes to further bird conservation.

Progress to date:

- In July 2015, the USFWS altered its Migratory Bird Program structure, relocating the Waterbird, Shorebird, and Landbird partnership positions in the Division of Bird Habitat Conservation, Branch of Science and Planning, under Dave Gordon. They had previously been located in the Division of Migratory Bird Management. This move places them in the same Division and Branch as the NAWMP Coordinator and JV National Coordinator. This change addressed the concern voiced by many within and outside the Service that the alignment of the bird partnerships (three bird plans coordinators located in one Division and the one coordinator plus the oversight of the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures in the other Division) makes little sense and at times is a hindrance to better working relations. The goal of this reorganization is improved synergy, coordination, and cooperation between all four bird plans and the Joint Venture partnerships.
- Increased coordination among the JV National Coordinator, NABCI Coordinator, and the BCPP coordinators is an ongoing discussion. Currently, all five Coordinators sit on the WOOT team and help to guide and advance recommendations from the January meeting. In addition, Dave Gordon is working with the four coordinators under his jurisdiction (PIF, Shorebird, NAWMP, JV) and Judith Scarl to develop strategies for effective communication.

- Develop and endorse a series of standards that exemplify high quality bird conservation plans. After the February 2015 NABCI meeting, a group of six JV staff worked with the Ad Hoc Conservation Business Planning Working Group to further develop a document describing a series of standards that represent high quality bird conservation plans and develop linkages among the different planning efforts between entities and across scales. These standards were presented at the August 2015 NABCI meeting and are hosted on the NABCI website.

Workshop Theme: Build social science capacity within the bird conservation community, including (a) educating existing staff about how human dimensions (HD) and social science tools can be used to plan and implement bird conservation, (b) incorporating social science throughout the Strategic Habitat Conservation model, and (c) consolidating and coordinating existing HD capacity under NABCI.

- Corresponding organizational specific recommendations and/or action items:
 - NABCI: Help create team of science (PIF, NSST, TriST), including social science, and determine that role at national level. Look into what role NABCI can play to enhance social science at the national level need.
 - NAWMP/NSST: Incorporating social science into overall NAWMP efforts; there is a missed opportunity to incorporate a larger bird conservation message with NAWMP public engagement. We need a national bird conservation human dimensions/public engagement working team. Also incorporate social science specifically into NAWMP technical groups.
 - PIF: Engage social science for our conservation plan and work with stakeholders, e.g. land managers. Identify key stakeholders/audiences and prioritize research questions and the target audiences.
 - U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan Partnership: Support increased use of social science in addressing bird conservation issues. Work on the definition and applicability at the US-NABCI level.

Progress to date:

Members of the Workshop Outcomes Oversight Team, in conjunction with the NABCI Human Dimensions (HD) Subcommittee, have drafted a proposal for a National Social Science Coordinator. The proposal has received extensive review from partners throughout the bird conservation community. The HD Subcommittee has drafted a new workplan that incorporates this position, should it become a reality, and at the August 2015 NABCI meeting, the Committee endorsed further refining and seeking partner support for the position. The HD Subcommittee continues to develop the details of this position, and the chair and co-chair of the NABCI HD Subcommittee are meeting with potential supporters for the Social Science Coordinator position including Farm Service Agency, USFS State and Private Forestry, and USGS.

Workshop Theme: Build communications capacity within the bird conservation community, including (a) create a national communications strategy, and (b) consolidate and coordinate existing communications capacity under NABCI.

- Corresponding organizational specific recommendations and/or action items:
 - NABCI: Endorse the national communication strategy and consolidate communication arms, including JV Communications Education and Outreach Team (CEOT), Bird Education Alliance for Conservation (BEAC), and State of the Birds.

Progress to date:

- After further consideration of the recommendation to consolidate communications capacity, those involved in the various bird conservation communications groups (e.g., JV CEOT, NABCI Communications subcommittee) feel improved coordination is needed, but not consolidation. The bird conservation community in general needs more communications capacity, and consolidation of existing efforts could have the unintended consequence of further reducing that capacity. Thus, the revised recommendation is to strengthen and expand the current communications capacity.
- NABCI is redesigning its website to serve as a clearinghouse for national bird conservation information. This redesigned website, with an anticipated launch in summer 2016, will present an overview of the bird conservation community, using the Bird Community Infographic as a tool to visualize the interrelationships among U.S. bird conservation entities. In addition, the website will provide a roadmap to guide users to national bird conservation resources and partnerships.
- The U.S. NABCI Committee is partnering with the NABCI Committees in Canada and Mexico to produce the first tri-national State of America's Birds report; this report will complement communications and outreach activities for the Migratory Bird Centennial in 2016 and serve as an international call to action to reinvest in bird conservation. Judith Scarl is the communications team lead for the State of the Birds report.

Workshop Theme: Promote a NABCI with strong, driving leadership, including (a) a comprehensive reconsideration of NABCI committee membership, and (b) the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards (AJVMB) consider aligning funding strategy more closely with NABCI.

Throughout the Workshop, one recurrent theme was the need for NABCI to emerge as a stronger leader within the bird conservation community and to engage leadership to garner support for bird conservation. Engaging leadership has two challenges: one, what mechanism can we use to strengthen communication channels and engagement with leadership? Second, and more importantly, what are our goals for promoting a strong, driving leadership within NABCI? What specific actions can leadership help to further?

- Corresponding organizational specific recommendations and/or action items:

- NABCI: (1) Need to engage the executive leadership within the NABCI committee. As a leadership body, it is not as effective as it can and should be without executive leadership. (2) Be more encouraging in facilitating a unified voice for advocacy efforts. Enable AFWA to be more involved and advocate for bird conservation programs. Re-invigorate the NABCI funding committee.
- JVs: (1) Comprehensive reconsideration of NABCI committee membership (for example, participation of at least four state directors). (2) Promote a strong driving NABCI that JVs can support. (3) AJVMB considers aligning funding strategy more closely with NABCI.
- PIF: Reinvigorate NABCI at a very high level and ensure engagement by agencies and foundations that are necessary for landbird conservation. Engage directors at a high level (state, BLM, USFS, foundation) and engage as a management board team.
- USFWS: (1) Will assist in advancing leadership participation in NABCI with AFWA. (2) Will work with partners to identify and seek additional funding support. (Agree with recommendations to seek alignment between JV and NABCI for funding support for integrated bird partnerships).

Progress to date:

- At the August 2015 NABCI meeting, partners formed an advocacy coalition to more closely unify advocacy efforts between NABCI, the Association of Joint Venture Management Boards, and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The goal of this advocacy coalition is that a broad base of partners will use coordinated, national-level messaging to supplement their own messaging, tying organizational asks and priorities to a broader message to demonstrate how five national priorities are broadly applicable across bird community. Representatives from all three partnerships have met monthly since October 2015 and have developed or compiled up-to-date, national-level messaging for North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, State Wildlife Grants, Joint Ventures, and the Farm Bill, as well as an overview document that explains how these five national priorities yield comprehensive support for all-bird conservation across the United States.
- At the August 2015 NABCI meeting, the NABCI Committee agreed that refined communication tools would help Committee members to engage leadership within their organizations. After each meeting, the Coordinator will produce a one-page summary reporting the executive-level highlights of each meeting that Committee members will use to initiate discussions with appropriate leadership within their organization, agency, or partnership. To address the second challenge, the NABCI Executive Committee met in December 2015 to identify 1) specific barriers the bird community faces that leadership can help to overcome, and 2) decisions NABCI strives to advance that leadership can support. Through this process, NABCI will pursue further steps in its internal evaluation of how best to engage leadership in national bird conservation.

- In response to the recommendation that NABCI reconsider current Committee membership, and also evaluate whether the Committee has the appropriate membership/perspectives to achieve the NABCI Strategic Plan goals, the Committee and partners held an open discussion at the February 2016 meeting that focused on four key questions:
 - Question 1: How can NABCI represent the bird conservation community without placing every bird conservation organization or partnership on NABCI?
 - Question 2: What perspectives are missing or underrepresented on the NABCI committee?
 - Question 3: What characteristics of an individual, representing an organization on the Committee, are most important?
 - Question 4: What are the pros/cons of limiting NABCI's size, versus being more inclusive?

As a result of these discussions, NABCI accepted five new members onto the US Committee: The Wildlife Society, Institute for Bird Populations, American Birding Association, Biodiversity Research Institute, and the Avian Knowledge Network. NABCI will continue to consider representation and membership as it develops its next strategic plan.

Progress on other Organizational Specific Recommendations/Action Items

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan:

Structural Change

- Support increased participation, communication and collaboration via current (e.g., TriST) or enhanced channels (e.g., NABCI Science Team).

Progress to date: Solicited, or confirmed, USSCP representation on all US-NABCI subcommittees.

Immediate Actions

- Develop clear messaging for Pacific and Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Conservation Business Plans and ensure appropriate JVs are aware and involved (distribute current status, invite to workshops).

Progress to date: Invitations sent to Joint Ventures along the Pacific coast to attend workshop in San Diego in January 2016. Active participation in the Atlantic, but need to get JV staff involved with habitat working group.

- Re-assess technical capability of JVs to plan and deliver shorebird habitat conservation. Work with JVs to build capacity if needed.

Progress to date: Summarized JV response to preparatory questions for the workshop. Suggested discussion at a future JV Coordinators meeting focus on the interaction of JVs with the greater shorebird community.

- Discuss interest/need of periodic attendance at JV management board meetings of USSCP National Coordinator or Council member with JV Coordinators. Develop objective and outcomes for attendance.

Progress to date: Will pursue after JV coordinators meeting in November 2015.

Partners in Flight (PIF):

- Support the JVs in all-bird conservation

Progress to date: PIF is undertaking a revision of their 2004 North American Landbird Conservation Plan, and JVs will be highlighted as a significant delivery mechanism for landbird conservation. PIF and JV staff have been working together to develop a unique two-page spread for each JV to highlight their landscape, major threats, and implementation strategies, a featured conservation story, and future actions regarding landbirds. PIF is also assembling tables that list the Watch List species and Common Birds in Steep Decline that occur within each Joint Venture. Working together has already enriched collaborations, information sharing and appreciation between the partnerships, and will continue to provide an avenue for better communication in future efforts. Ultimately this effort will demonstrate the benefits of working together within TriST and the new Unified Science Team.

North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI):

- Many recommendations of the Workshop focused on NABCI's role as a leader in the bird conservation community and called for NABCI to emerge as a strong leader that unified and supported national bird conservation efforts. However, members of the community expressed concerns that such a strong NABCI would interfere with the autonomy of other partners. In order for NABCI to serve a strong leadership function, it is essential for NABCI to build trust within the bird conservation community and for members of this community to consider ourselves all a part of NABCI; that is, a strong NABCI would reflect the self-identified needs and priorities of the bird conservation community.
- NABCI is taking several steps to build trust within the bird conservation community:
 - The Joint Ventures are a critical implementation partner for NABCI. NABCI Coordinator Judith Scarl will attend a number of Joint Venture Management Board meetings (Lower Mississippi Valley in October 2015, Central Hardwoods in November 2015, East Gulf Coastal Plain in December 2015 to start) to discuss WOOT recommendations with each JVMB and solicit feedback on JV priorities and vision for NABCI. Todd Fearer, both a Joint Venture Coordinator as well as the Joint Venture representative to NABCI, has been proactive about taking information from

NABCI meetings to the JV Coordinators and soliciting thoughts and ideas from this group. Lastly, the Joint Ventures are not represented on NABCI's six-seat Executive Council, and the Executive Council and NABCI Coordinator are working with Todd Fearer to evaluate possibilities for including JV representation on this subcommittee.

- Insufficient communications between NABCI Committee members, their organizations, and their partnerships, leads to a disconnect between the 28-member US NABCI Committee and the broader community it represents. At the August 2015 NABCI meeting, Committee members discussed a proposed set of minimum standards of communication for each Committee member before and after each meeting. The draft standards include: a) distribute All-Bird Bulletin and NABCI notes within organizations or partnerships; b) to facilitate high-level communication with partner leadership, the NABCI Coordinator will develop and distribute a 1-page summary of the highlights of each NABCI meeting; Committee members will present or discuss NABCI one-page highlights document with organizational leadership; c) Reach out to organization/partnership prior to each NABCI meeting for feedback; d) Evaluate subcommittee lists annually and recruit organizational staff to join where there are gaps. In addition, the redesigned NABCI website will help to distribute materials generated by the NABCI Committee; an updated website will help provide clarity about NABCI's priorities and projects to the broader bird conservation community.
- The Bird Partnership Workshop was the first step in a broader conversation towards a unified and better-coordinated bird conservation community, and not all interest groups were included in this initial discussion. As a result of this and other communication challenges in the bird conservation community, resident game bird groups were not represented in this discussion and expressed the desire to engage further in national-level bird conservation discussions. To respond to these concerns and ensure that resident game bird interests are heard as an equal voice in the bird conservation community, we have taken the following steps:
 - a. NABCI invited the director of the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) to speak at the August 2015 NABCI meeting to describe the partnership the NBCI has built and invite further discussion of how resident game bird groups can more closely partner with NABCI;
 - b. At the Resident Game Bird Working Group meeting at the September 2015 AFWA meeting, Todd Fearer and Judith Scarl facilitated a discussion on how to strengthen partnerships between resident game bird groups and NABCI;
 - c. As a follow-up to this discussion, the NABCI Coordinator arranged a conference call with resident game bird NGOs and partnerships to explore the possibility of additional resident game bird representation on NABCI;
 - d. Regardless of membership on the NABCI Committee, NABCI has encouraged any resident game bird group to consider joining NABCI subcommittees to strengthen the partnership among these entities. In addition, the discussion initiated by the Resident Game Bird community was one of the drivers for NABCI's evaluation of its representation and membership in February 2016.

Migratory Bird Joint Ventures

On November 17-18, 2015, Joint Venture coordinators gathered in Chicago for their annual meeting. Much of the focus of this meeting was on how the Joint Ventures (JVs), collectively and individually, can continue to be effective in the face of rapidly changing social, political and ecological landscapes. Even though the JV community established a solid record of conservation success over the last 25 years, the JVs are at a crossroads of unprecedented threats to bird habitats intersected with declining JV funding.

As a result of this discussion, the JVs drafted an outline that summarizes the challenges, business model, and future direction of the JVs. This document is intended to serve as a starting place for Joint Venture Management Boards, coordinators and staff to think about these issues in a way that honors what Joint Ventures have accomplished, yet honestly outlines the challenges they face in conserving birds.

The JVs reaffirmed their commitment to following the strategic habitat conservation paradigm, with a renewed emphasis on monitoring, while deploying new socio-political science and landscape design techniques that will result in better integrated implementation strategies with partners and others using the landscape. This includes incorporating social science/human dimensions more explicitly into the conservation design and habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration (i.e., implementation) business of the JV enterprise. It also includes working with JV Management Boards to define, prioritize, leverage, and lead implementation of social science/human dimensions work at the appropriate levels in their respective geographies.

Bird Conservation Community Infographic

As a follow-up action item from the Bird Partnership Workshop, Debra Reynolds and Roxanne Bogart of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Matt Cimitile of the Appalachian Mountains JV developed the attached infographic and legend below to illustrate the structure of the bird conservation community in the United States for people new to the community or anyone wanting a more complete understanding of this complex community at the national level. This graphic represents one conceptualization of the bird conservation community as it is currently structured. It should not be interpreted as a final, static, or complete representation, but rather a mechanism for encouraging continued dialog about our current structure and our ongoing efforts to improve how we are organized and operate.

The four squares of the infographic detail the **Partners, Partnerships, Plans and Strategies**, and **Funding Sources** that are the critical cornerstones of the community. The four groups of hexagons represent the four major taxa-specific **Bird Conservation Plan Partnerships** (BCPPs, formerly called **Initiatives**) that provide national and international guidance on the conservation needs of species under their purview. Each BCPP is comprised of three elements represented in three separate hexagons: (1) a guiding body (in bold), (2) various subcommittees and working

groups, and (3) various plans and other documents. Along with the four cornerstones, the four BCPPs comprise the essential elements of **Integrated Bird Conservation**, as signified by the arrows and hexagonal points directed to the center circle. (See legend below for links to more information on most of these elements.)

The **North American Bird Conservation Initiative** in the center circle (the U.S. NABCI Committee and its various subcommittees, see below legend) provides the national level forum for individual partners and partnerships to work together toward a shared vision of **integrated bird conservation**. The Migratory Bird Joint Ventures are the regional partnerships that work to conserve birds and their habitats—the expression of integrated bird conservation at the landscape scale. As a reminder, the 2014-2016 goals of the U.S. NABCI Committee are to:

- Facilitate on-the-ground habitat conservation and management for the benefit of bird populations.
- Foster a well-coordinated bird conservation community focused on priorities of greatest impact to birds.
- Inform and support effective funding and policy to advance bird conservation.

Bird Conservation Community Infographic Legend

AFWA – [Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies](#)

- includes Bird Conservation Committee, Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group, Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group, Resident Game Bird Working Group, Waterfowl Working Group

AHMWG – [Adaptive Harvest Management Working Group](#)

BCRs – [Bird Conservation Regions](#)

Business Strategies – examples: [Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Conservation Business Strategy](#) , [American Oystercatcher Business Plan](#)

CEO Team – [Migratory Bird Joint Ventures Communications, Education, and Outreach Team](#)

Coastal – [National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Coastal Grant Program](#)

Duck Stamp – [Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp](#)

Farm Bill – [The Agricultural Act of 2014](#)

[Farm Bill User's Guide](#)

FSA – [Farm Service Agency](#)

HDWG – [NAWMP Human Dimensions Working Group](#)

LCCs – [Landscape Conservation Cooperatives](#)

LCWF – [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#)

MBJV – [Migratory Bird Joint Ventures](#)

- management boards, technical committees,
[Communications, Education, and Outreach Team](#) (CEOT),
[Association of Joint Venture Management Boards](#) (AJVMBs)

NABCI – [North American Bird Conservation Initiative \(U.S. NABCI Committee\)](#)

- Subcommittees: Private and Working Lands, Monitoring, Human Dimensions, Communications, State of the Birds, and Ad-hoc Business Conservation Plan Working Group

NAWCA – [North American Wetlands Conservation Act](#)

NAWMP – [North American Waterfowl Management Plan](#)

NFWF – [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#)

NGOs – Non-governmental Organizations

NMBCA – [Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act](#)

NSST – [NAWMP Science Support Team](#)

PET – [NAWMP Public Engagement Team](#)

PIF – [Partners in Flight](#)

PR – [Pittman-Robertson Act/Sport Fish Restoration Act](#)

[Resident Game Bird Initiatives – National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative, North American Grouse Partnership, Sage Grouse Initiative, Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan, American Woodcock Conservation Plan, Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative](#)

[Saving Our Shared Birds](#)

[SHC Handbook – Strategic Habitat Conservation Handbook](#)

[SWAPs – State Wildlife Action Plans](#)

State Wildlife Grants – [State Wildlife Grants Program](#)

TriST – Tri-initiative Science Team

USSCP- [U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership](#)

WCA – Waterbird Conservation for the Americas



Partnerships

- Flyway Councils & Technical Committees
- Bird Initiative Councils/Committees
- AFWA Bird Committees
- LCCs



Partners

- NGOs
- Federal Agencies
- State Agencies
- Academia
- Private Land Owners
- Industry
- Tribes/Nations

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Council

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Regional Plans, Business Plans

Technical Committees, Regional Working Groups, Communication/Outreach groups, TriST

Partners in Flight Steering Committee

Saving Our Shared Birds, PIF Continental Plan, Physiographic Plans

Regional Working Groups, Science Team, Communication/Outreach groups, TriST

Shorebirds

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership

North American Bird Conservation Initiative

Migratory Bird Joint Ventures

Waterfowl

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Landbirds

Partners in Flight Resident Game Bird Initiatives

Waterbirds

Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, Regional Plans

Waterbird Conservation for the Americas Council

Waterbird Initiative, Technical Committees, Working Groups, Communication/Outreach groups, TriST

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Funding Sources

- NAWCA
- Neotrop
- Coastal
- NFWF
- Duck Stamp
- State Wildlife Grants
- Farm Bill
- PR - LWCF
- LCC

NAWMP Revision

NSST, AHMWG, HDWG, PET, Communication/Outreach groups

North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee

Plans & Strategies

- Continental Bird Plans
- BCR Plans
- State of the Birds
- Business Strategies (AF, PF, Focal Species)
- JV Implementation Plans
- SHC Handbook
- State Wildlife Action Plans