**Outcomes and Next Steps**

4-5 February 2014 US NABCI Committee

USFWS, Arlington, VA

***NABCI Committee Member Attendees****:* **David Pashley**, American Bird Conservancy (ABC); **Gordon Myers**, Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA); **Geoff Walsh**, Bureau of Land Management (BLM); **Ken Rosenberg**, Cornell Lab of Ornithology (CLO); **Skip Hyberg and** **David Hoge**, Farm Services Agency (FSA); **Glenn Olson**, National Audubon Society (NAS); **Jimmy Anthony**, National Flyway Council; **Doug Parsons,** National Park Service (NPS); **Greg Butcher**, US Forest Service; **Catherine Hickey**, US Shorebird Conservation Plan; **Steve Hilburger**, US Geological Survey; **Mike Johnson**, US Fish & Wildlife Service; **Tammy VerCauteren**, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO); **Todd Fearer**, Migratory Bird Joint Ventures; **Dave Mehlman**, The Nature Conservancy; **Danielle Flynn**, NRCS; **Scott Yaich**, Ducks Unlimited; **Bob Ellis**, North American Waterfowl Management Plan

***Guest Attendees*:** Dean Smith, AFWA; Cyndi Perry, FWS; Guy Foulks, FWS; Dave Gordon, FWS; Antoinette Condo, US State Department; Deb Hahn, AFWA; Bridget Collins, AFWA; Dave Gordon, USFWS; Alicia King, FWS; Ron Regan, AFWA; Mark Humpert, AFWA; Vicki Arthur, USFS; Steve Guertin, USFWS; Eric Kershner, USFWS; David Younkman, ABC; Anne Law, ABC; Charisa Morris, USFWS; Natalie Sexton, USFWS; Ruth Ostroff, USFWS; Terry Rich, USFWS; Brad Andres, USFWS; Roxanne Bogart, USFWS; Rob Clay, BirdLife International

**Agenda Item: Overview of outcomes and progress since August 2013 NABCI meeting***, Allison Vogt*

An electronic version of the memo provided to Committee members is included as part of the Handouts packet attached to this email.

**Outcomes:** The Committee would like to spend time at the September meeting working with Rachel Penrod to explore opportunities for collaboration on the 2016 Migratory Bird Treaty Act Centennial.

As part of NABCI’s commitment to monitor and maintain close connections with the NAWMP-NFC human dimensions effort to ensure that there is benefit to all birds and all-bird conservation partners from what is learned in that effort, a small group will review the NAWMP HD proposal and provide comments to the authors and Cal DuBrock prior to the April NAMWP Plan Committee meeting. Tammy VerCauteren and Terry Rich will be part of that group; other Committee members interested in being involved should contact Allison.

**Agenda Item: The 2014 Farm Bill** *Bridget Collins, AFWA*

An electronic version of the handout outlining the conservation provisions of the farm bill is included as part of the Handouts packet attached to this email.

**Outcomes:** Bridget will assist the private and working lands subcommittee to identify the important opportunities to engage with NRCS and FSA as rulemaking and the development of new programs included as part of the 2014 Farm Bill.

**Agenda Item: The future of Partners in Flight, Waterbird, and Shorebird Initiatives**

**Outcomes:** Due to the vacancies created from Jennifer Wheeler’s recent departure from the USFWS and Terry Rich’s planned retirement in spring 2014, a small working group including representatives from the Waterbird (Rob Clay), Shorebird (Catherine Hickey), Partner In Flight (David Pashley),and Waterfowl initiatives will discuss a vision for the initiatives and how the FWS might best support that vision through national-level coordination staff. Allison will serve as liaison between the working group and NABCI and the FWS will be represented by Brad Bortner, Cyndi Perry, and Charisa Morris. Charisa will convene a series of working conference calls with a goal of arriving at a consensus recommendation by May 1 2014.

Committee members suggested that the working group consider the relationship of US-based bird conservation with the Migratory Specie/ Global Flyway effort underway by the Convention on Migratory Species.

**Agenda Item:** **Report from the Monitoring Subcommittee**

**Outcomes:** The Committee endorsed the Subcommittee’s proposed 2014 work plan (see priority items below) and additionally asked that the monitoring subcommittee engage in the planning of the Net Landscape Change (see agenda item on 2/5) in the workshop and assist the Private and Working Lands subcommittee with their work items that relate to monitoring outcomes/demonstrating success of private lands programs.

* Coordinate efforts to increase awareness and implementation of reference grid standards in avian monitoring programs and projects.
* Update the NABCI Monitoring Subcommittee webpage
* Encourage all federal and state agencies, NGOs, and their consultants to manage and share bird monitoring and habitat data using nodes of the Avian Knowledge Network and other collaborative data repositories.
* Endorse metadata standards being developed through the Avian Knowledge Network to ensure robust datasets maintain integrity and utility over time.
* Assist the NAWMP Science Support Team (NSST), whenever possible, with efforts to develop standards for vegetation sampling (remote and field-based).
* Host a workshop to better address demographic monitoring needs throughout the western hemisphere.
* Coordinate future discussions and form working groups to address priority monitoring needs identified at the PIF V International Workshop.

**Agenda Item**: **Report from the NABCI Private and Working Lands Subcommittee**

**Outcomes:** The Committee endorsed the Subcommittee’s proposed 2014 priority work items (top-level goals below, detailed priority strategies and actions included in the Handouts packet attached to this email). Committee members recommended that the Subcommittee look to Audubon Vermont for a successful case study (Greg Butcher can provide), consider linking with USDA Pollinator effort and FSA’s GIS-based monitoring (Skip Hyberg can provide), work with Monitoring Subcommittee on goals that overlap with their expertise (Allison Vogt will oordinate), and connect with Ashley Dayer’s work with land trusts at Cornell (Ken Rosenberg can assist).

**Conservation Goal I: An authorized Farm Bill that establishes bird-friendly policies and programs that are funded annually at desired levels.**

**Strategy ii:** Non-federal NABCI partners will regularly engage and build relationships with Members of Congress who serve on the House and Senate Ag and Appropriations committees to advocate for annual funding of farm bill conservation programs. Conduct at least bi-annually with private lands sub-committee chairs, other team members, and other relevant organizations (e.g. AFWA, CRCC) in conjunction with NABCI meetings.

**Conservation Goal II: Implement the Farm Bill to maximize conservation outcomes for birds**

**Strategy i:** NABCI partners will encourage NRCS leadership to continue support for and funding of strategic, landscape-scale initiatives (e.g., Working Lands For Wildlife).

**Strategy ii:** Assist NRCS in building and maintaining field delivery capacity by cost-sharing existing partner biologist positions and expanding the number of partner biologists in regions currently underrepresented and identified as high priority areas by Joint Ventures, LCCs ,SWAPs, and bird initiatives.

**Strategy iii:** NABCI partners will pursue opportunities to invest in and develop user-friendly decision support tools (based on a synthesis of existing plans and data) to assist NRCS and other partners in targeting conservation on private lands and eligible public lands for the greatest benefit to birds and other wildlife.

**Strategy v:** NABCI partners will update the Field Guide to the 2008 Farm Bill for Fish and Wildlife Conservation document and distribute to partners.

**Conservation Goal III: Advance and support private lands conservation for birds outside of NRCS/FSA programs**

**Strategy i:** Engage land trusts in bird conservation (Land Trust Alliance as well as regional and national land trusts), educating them on what they can do for birds, resources for them. Use current examples from AMJV, IWJV, RMBO, others where land trusts are valuable partners.

**Strategy vii:** Game and conservation NGOs and initiatives with strong private lands programs and overlap. Focus on messaging, how their work benefits birds and why benefits to birds are important, and how they can plug into the work of our partners.

**Agenda Item:** **Prioritizing NABCI Goals and Strategies 2014-2016**

**Outcomes:** Allison and the NABCI Executive Council will meet at the North American conference to organize and summarize the material generated during the facilitated session at the meeting. Allison will circulate a draft set of goals, strategies, and work items to the Committee shortly thereafter.

**Agenda Item: Understanding human dimensions understanding and capacity within the USFWS**

**Outcomes:** Natalie Sexton, chief of the Human Dimensions Branch of the Natural Resource Program Center/National Wildlife Refuge System, shared results of a survey conducted as part of an effort to understand need and build the capacity of FWS conservation practitioners to address the human dimensions of natural resource conservation.

Her presentation is attached as a PDF.

**Agenda Item: Funding for NABCI Coordination**

**Outcomes:** The Committee continues to pursue the target cost share for NABCI coordination of 70% from federal sources and 30% from state and NGO sources. Currently, four federal agencies, three NGOs, and one state contribute, with federal agencies supporting 90% of the costs. State Fish & Wildlife Agencies plan to propose using the Flyway Councils as a mechanism to collect state funds in support of the NABCI/AFWA Bird Conservation Coordinator. Glenn Olson and Gordon Myers plan to approach additional federal partners with a request for support in 2014.

**Agenda Item: NABCI/AJVMB 2014 Gary T Myers Bird Conservation Award**

**Outcomes:** The Committee endorsed the Awards Subcommittee’s recommendation to bestow the 2014 Gary T Myers award to a single individual. That individual will be recognized at the North American Wildlife Resources Conference. Allison will likely seek the help of NABCI partners in identifying a suitable venue to present the award as the Awards portion of the FWS/NFWF Directors reception is canceled this year.

The Awards Subcommittee has been asked by the Committee to convene a call to consider and discuss how NABCI might recognize those champions of bird conservation whose work is less in the policy (broadly defined) realm and instead focuses on implementation. All agreed that it is important for NABCI to continue to recognize those making a big difference for birds at the big-picture, continental scale but that there is value to recognizing those making a difference on the ground as well. Allison will provide information regarding the PIF and NAWMP awards to the Awards Subcommittee to inform their conversation.

**Agenda Item: USFWS Branch of Bird Conservation Impact Management**

**Outcomes:** Charisa and Eric briefed the committee on the Fish and Wildlife Service's non-regulatory approach to reducing anthropogenic impacts on migratory birds and their habitats. They shared the benefits of a more structured approach, described the process (i.e., stressor management), and briefly presented tools used to implement this approach (e.g., IPaC).

A PDF of the presentation is attached.

**Agenda Item: Proposal for NABCI role in advancing community-wide conversations of net landscape change**

**Outcomes:** The Committee endorses Allison’s continued engagement in coordinating a team of NABCI, JV, and LCC representatives to implement the proposal for a training workshop that creates a forum to exchange information between the bird conservation and the remote sensing communities. The ultimate goal of the workshop is to enable the development of accurate and reliable bird habitat conservation planning tools that leverage the best available remote sensing tools and technologies to track net landscape change. Steve Hilburger and Duane Pool (representing RMBO) will assist in the effort.

The complete proposal is included in the handouts packet.

**Agenda Item: Discussion of NABCI’s role in assisting Joint Venture-Bird Initiative Coordination**

**Outcomes:** Todd Fearer summarized his findings from a survey of JV Coordinators and lengthy discussion at the recent JV Coordinators meeting regarding a potential role for NABCI in facilitating improved coordination and communication between Joint Ventures and the Shorebird, Waterbird, and Partners in Flight Initiatives. The goals of improved coordination are for 1) the Initiatives to best understand what tools and resources they can provide to the Joint Ventures; 2) to better quantify the collective contributions of Joint Ventures towards continental habitat and population goals; and 3) improve the ability for mutual accountability and "cross-advocacy" (i.e., initiatives advocating for and advancing JVs, and vice versa). There are lessons to be learned from the reporting between Joint Ventures and the NAWMP Plan Committee, but the majority of JV Coordinators would prefer a less formal approach.

The Committee approved a recommendation from Todd to host a summit among Joint Venture staff, Initiative staff, and a few NABCI representatives to exchange foundational information and determine a set of clear next steps to advance coordination among these groups. Todd, Allison, Tammy VerCauteren, Mike Johnson (or another FWS representative), and David Pashley will represent NABCI in planning the workshop.

**Agenda Item: 2014 State of the Birds report**

**Outcomes:** Allison reviewed the summary provided (see complete summary in handouts packet) and shared the State of the Birds Subcommittee’s tentative plans to collaborate with the Smithsonian Institution on the release of the report during the week of September 8th, timed with the centennial of the death of Martha the last passenger pigeon.

**Next NABCI Meeting:** Please hold Sept. 9-11, 2014 for the NABCI summer meeting and the 2014 State of the Birds release and outreach events. We are tentatively planning that one day will be dedicated to the State of the Birds press release, Hill briefing, and one-on-one meetings between NABCI Committee members and Members of Congress, Agency leadership, etc. Another 1 ½ -2 days will be for our typical summer NABCI meeting.