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**North American Bird Conservation Initiative- US Committee**

**8-9 February 2017**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

5275 Leesburg Pike

Falls Church, VA 22041

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***Presentations and supporting materials from the NABCI meeting*** [***can be found on our website***](http://nabci-us.org/committee/meetings-and-membership/feb2017/) ***and are hyperlinked throughout the notes.***

**Host Welcome-** *Steve Guertin, Deputy Director for Policy, USFWS*

Guertin emphasized the overlap between USFWS and NABCI’s missions and stressed the importance of partnerships. He encouraged NABCI to bring its vision to the new administration to make positive changes for bird conservation.

**NABCI** [**Coordinator Updates**](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Coordinator-Introduction.pptx)**-** *Judith Scarl, NABCI*

Highlights since last meeting include: hiring the first [National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator](http://nabci-us.org/meet-new-national-bird-conservation-social-science-coordinator/), launching a [new NABCI website](http://nabci-us.org/), and releasing a draft [Hemispheric Vision](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Vision-Statement.pdf) for Bird Conservation. NABCI also voted to update its Vision, which is now *Healthy and abundant populations of North American birds are valued by future generations and sustained by habitats that benefit birds and people*. This reflects the need to build connections beyond the bird conservation community and demonstrate bird conservation’s relevance to landscape conservation, human health, and economic benefits, which will be a theme throughout the meeting. Committee members are also asked to think about: 1) the role they can play as leaders within NABCI, and 2) the time and financial investment they can make in NABCI to ensure we have the resources to accomplish our Strategic Plan goals.

**Human Dimensions:** [**report**](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Human-Dimensions-Subcommittee-Presentation.pptx)**, discussion**, **and work plan presentation-** *Ashley Dayer, Virginia Tech/Tammy VerCauteren, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Action 2Aii:*** *Enable bird conservation partners to integrate**human dimensions**science and tools into bird conservation efforts.*

Interest in HD is growing; this was a focus of the JV Coordinators’ last meeting, SEAFWA has a new HD Subcommittee, and organizations such as NPS, USFWS, and TNC are hiring social science-focused positions. Ashley Gramza started as National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator on January 3, 2017; 2 years of funding for this position have been secured through USDA FSA, USDA Forest Service, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and Virginia Tech. Gramza will initially focus on building connections to start to understand HD needs, updating the Subcommittee work plan, drafting a HD fact sheet specific to bird conservation, and initiating work on a CRP private lands research project. This position will be 50% research coordination and 50% capacity building and outreach.

Subcommittee Projects include:

1. **National Survey**: In partnership with NAWMP, the Flyways, USGS, and others, NABCI is collaborating on a national survey of hunters, viewers/birdwatchers, and the general public to study attitudes about wildlife-based recreation and outdoor experiences. The Bird Viewer survey received 33,230 responses (26% response rate) from a sample of eBird members, and a report is anticipated in late March. Hunter survey has received 5300 responses (15% response rate), and general public survey was first mailed on January 30. Canada will begin survey administration in March.
2. [**Pathways Conference**](https://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/pathways/): Major human dimensions of fish and wildlife conference to be held September 17-20; working with USFWS and partners to develop bird conservation topics/symposia.
3. **Social Science One Pager**: Discussion on how NABCI Committee would use a one-pager explaining social science/human dimensions, with the NABCI Committee and partners as intended audience. Ideas include:
* Information on why bird conservation practitioners should use social science and what it should be used for (Greg Butcher, USFS)
* Document that can be used to sell social science to senior staff leadership and volunteers (Scott Yaich, DU)
* Advice on how to reach underserved communities; how do we get bandwidth beyond an aging demographic? (Glenn Olson, National Audubon)
* Understand how to connect, especially with landowners re: habitat conservation and other demographics that are disconnected from wildlife (David Whitehurst, PIF)
* How can we identify Congresspeople who might support our cause? (John Alexander, AKN)
* Convey information to organizational leadership; provide examples of how Human Dimensions can successfully be used to move forward decision making (Keith Norris, TWS)

Next Steps and Action Items:

* Ashley Gramza’s work plan is set for her first quarter, but send feedback about future tasks/actions for the National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator’s work plan to Ashley Gramza (agramza@vt.edu) or Ashley Dayer (dayer@vt.edu).
* Subcommittee will continue with work plan revisions and implementation.

**9:50-10:15 Private and Working Lands: report, discussion**, **and work plan presentation-** *Todd Fearer, Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Action 2Av***: *Promote and advance bird conservation objectives on both private and public lands.*

This presentation focused on the [Private and Working Lands Subcommittee Work plan](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2-NABCI-Private-Lands-Work-Plan-1-20-17-FINAL.docx). Work Plan Conservation goals include:

1. An authorized Farm Bill that establishes bird-friendly policies and programs that are funded annually at desired levels.
2. Implement the Farm Bill to maximize conservation outcomes for birds
3. Advance and support private lands conservation for birds outside of NRCS/FSA programs

Todd discussed opportunities to collaborate with other subcommittees:

* Partner with HD Subcommittee to evaluate why landowners engage in conservation in order to address science and monitoring needs related to improving targeted conservation on private lands
* Partner with Monitoring Subcommittee to evaluate effectiveness of citizen science monitoring programs on private lands

Subcommittee will also branch out beyond Farm Bill conservation programs to continue with Land Trust Work, as well as engage new partners such as USFS State and Private Forestry and State Forest Agencies, Partners for Conservation, USFWS Partners Program, and game and conservation NGOs with strong private lands programs.

Suggestions on additional groups to engage: American Forestry Foundation, forest products industry (Henning Stabins from Weyerhaeuser as potential contact), Audubon’s grass-fed beef initiative, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Elk and Mule Deer Foundations, National Association of Conservation Districts, Forest Resources Advisory Committee, early seral forest health groups, rice growers’ association.

Private and Working Lands Subcommittee Work Plan was approved unanimously by the Committee.

Next Steps and Action Items:

* NABCI Committee members are encouraged to let Todd Fearer (tfearer@abcbirds.org) know if they would like to be engaged in this Subcommittee.
* Committee members (and others) are encouraged to share examples of success stories from market-based incentives on private/working lands, or suggest ways to help understand how to interface with market-based incentive opportunities.
* Subcommittee will move forward with work plan and reach out to Communications Subcommittee and Legislative and Policy Subcommittee.

**Communications:** [**report**](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Communications-Subcommittee-presentation.pptx)**, discussion, and work plan presentation-***Matt Cimitile, Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 1B***: *Strengthen communication within the bird conservation community.*

Website: NABCI’s [new website](http://nabci-us.org/) launched in mid-October; its goals are to serve as one-stop shopping for bird conservation in the US, serve as a road map for understanding the bird conservation community, and serve as an online home for key NABCI and bird community documents and products. 1300 individuals visited the site within a month, with 17000 visiting in the second month, since participants in the NAWMP “Viewer” survey were directed here upon completion of survey.

All-Bird Bulletin Blog: Historically, NABCI’s All-Bird Bulletin was released twice a year as a PDF, but NABCI is now transitioning to a blog series. We will release 2 blogs per month and ask each NABCI partner to contribute one blog per year that will be posted on the website and sent through distribution lists; partners are also encouraged to share blogs through their own distribution lists. The target audience will be the NABCI partnership, as well as policy makers, birders, hunters, etc. Blog posts will be associated with themes, similar to the original All-Bird Bulletin, but partners can choose from among the ~4-6 themes for their contributions.

NABCI Brand: Communications Subcommittee will work to develop a “brand” for NABCI so that our products will be linked by similar appearance.

Communications Subcommittee Work Plan was approved unanimously by the Committee.

Action Items/Next Steps:

* Each Committee member organization will contribute one blog post per year to NABCI’s new All-Bird Bulletin blog.
* Judith Scarl or Matt Cimitile will send out a link for Committee members to sign up for a blog topic and date; Committee members will sign up by the end of February.
* Matt Cimitile will create and distribute a template for writers to use when they create their blogs.
* Subcommittees are asked to think about their top communication needs over the next 1-2 years.

**Monitoring:** [**report**](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Monitoring-Subcommittee-presentation.pdf)**, discussion, and work plan presentation-** *Viviana Ruiz Gutierrez, Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Action 2Ai***:*Promote and advance bird monitoring that is integrated into strategic habitat conservation.*

The Monitoring Subcommittee’s charge is to foster science on bird populations that can generate information relevant to conservation, and to help different stakeholders make management decisions using the best available science. David Pashley has stepped down as Chair of this Subcommittee, so the Subcommittee is looking for a new Chair.

Demographics Document: The Demographics Document is completed; the Subcommittee identified ten recommendations to put forward ([see presentation](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Monitoring-Subcommittee-presentation.pdf)). Document will be released in summer 2017.

Work Plan: The Work Plan has three primary goals: 1) linking science to management; how can we make the best use of available information and data? 2) citizen science and structured monitoring; 3) advances and best practices for data integration.

American Ornithological Society Symposium: August 2017- Tools in Ornithology- Advances in estimating patterns of bird abundance and distributions at relevant spatial and temporal scales.

NABCI’s Vision and Bird Conservation Relevance: Bird monitoring can support efforts to demonstrate bird conservation’s relevance beyond birds; monitoring birds as ecosystem indicators is often more cost-effective than monitoring other taxa and can provide information about outcomes of broader conservation efforts.

Next Steps and Action Items

* Judith Scarl will continue to work with Subcommittee and NABCI Committee to find a Chair for Monitoring Subcommittee
* NABCI Committee members should provide feedback about their information needs to Viviana Ruiz-Gutierrez (vr45@cornell.edu)
* Subcommittee will release completed demographics document in summer 2017.
* Subcommittee will present complete work plan at August 2017 NABCI meeting, pending the nomination of a Chair.

**International: report, discussion, and work plan presentation-** *Deb Hahn, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Action 1Ai.*** *Work collaboratively across countries to support partnership development that will advance full annual cycle conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.*

Greg Butcher (USFS) is now Chair and Deb Hahn (AFWA) is Co-Chair of this Subcommittee.

The Charge of this Subcommittee is to: 1) serve as the US NABCI Committee’s sounding board and expertise on international migratory bird conservation; 2) help integrate North American bird conservation efforts between the US, Canadian, and Mexican NABCI Committees; 3) advance bird conservation through supporting or developing international partnerships/projects with traditional and non-traditional bird conservation partners; 4) develop synergy with resident bird conservation efforts in other countries.

Major Work Plan tasks include:

1. Work with NMBCA Advisory Group to reach out to non-traditional partners to develop broader relationships that benefit birds and people;
2. Integrate NABCI’s goals and the goals of our international partners into the Hemispheric Vision framework to develop a common hemispheric vision;
3. Support PIF VI conference by engaging international shorebird, waterbird, waterfowl, and nontraditional communities;
4. Support AFWA grassland bird efforts and work to expand these collaborative efforts beyond the US and Canada

NABCI Committee had a brief discussion on how NABCI can provide policy and funding support for birds internationally, especially through habitat mitigation targeted at wintering grounds, using National Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) funds available for remediation. David Whitehurst suggests that in keeping with NABCI’s full-life cycle conservation focus, it would be appropriate for NABCI to put forward policy development/communication recommendations to assist with the process of getting funding from the US to species’ wintering grounds.

Hemispheric Vision: The governments of US, Canada, and Mexico, with input from NABCI’s international Subcommittee, released a framework for a [Hemispheric Vision for Bird Conservation](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Vision-Statement.pdf) for the next century. The NABCI Committee voted unanimously to endorse the Hemispheric Vision, but also to propose suggested edits to the Trilateral Committee, which include modifying language to increase focus on people and cooperation, rather than primarily on birds.

Committee voted to approve [International Subcommittee Work Plan](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/5-International-Subcommittee-Work-Plan-Draft-2017.pdf) (this vote took place during Thursday’s session).

Next Steps and Action Items:

* Hemispheric Vision with suggested edits will be brought forward to Trilateral Team prior to May 2017 Trilateral meeting. (Assigned to Judith Scarl and Deb Hahn)
* Committee will move forward with Work Plan.

[**NABCI Canada Executive Council report**](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/NABCI-Canada-presentation.ppt)**-** *Veronica Aponte, Interim NABCI Canada Coordinator, Environment and Climate Change Canada*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 1A:*** *Support, develop, integrate, and promote priorities of regional, national, and international bird conservation partnerships.*

Veronica Aponte, NABCI Canada’s interim Coordinator, started her role in October 2016, and she will help begin the process of renewal for NABCI Canada. NABCI Canada’s past accomplishments include a [State of Canada’s Birds report](http://www.stateofcanadasbirds.org/) in 2012, the [State of North America’s Birds](http://www.stateofthebirds.org/2016/) collaboration in 2016, development of Bird Conservation Region strategies in 2014, and supporting JVs to develop 5-year plans incorporating more all-bird components. Currently, NABCI Canada’s Executive Council, which contains representatives from the federal and provincial governments, Joint Ventures, non-profits, and industry, is consulting with NABCI Canada members to identify 3-4 primary roles of NABCI Canada moving forward, as well as evaluate what worked/didn’t work in the past for NABCI Canada. Potential opportunities for collaboration with the US include reinvigorating the tri-national NABCI representative meetings and work on grassland bird issues.

**How does NABCI Inform Policy? Committing to a Direction-** *Keith Norris, The Wildlife Society/Judith Scarl, NABCI*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 3****: Inform and support effective policy to advance bird conservation*

NABCI’s Role in Policy (Keith): At August 2016 meeting, NABCI partners brainstormed ways that NABCI can inform and support strong bird conservation policy. A small team consisting of Keith Norris (TWS), David Whitehurst (VA/PIF), EJ Williams (ABC), Judith Scarl (NABCI), Greg Butcher (USFS), and Jennifer Cipoletti (ABC) met to evaluate these suggestions and develop recommendations regarding NABCI’s role in policy. The team recommends that NABCI should engage in policy from a communications perspective, working to inform Congressional and agency policy development, as well as policy implementation. NABCI should serve as a resource for member organizations by generating fact sheets and common messaging for partners. State of the Birds reports should be closely linked to policy initiatives. Team also recommended that NABCI Executive Council should meet with agency leadership to communicate NABCI priorities and to better understand how NABCI can support leaders in their decision-making.

Leadership Meetings (Judith): Executive Council met with two outgoing leaders in December 2016: Dan Ashe (now former Director of USFWS) and Robert Bonnie (now former Under Secretary of Natural Resources and Forestry for USDA). We asked each leader how NABCI could have been more relevant to them during their tenure.

**Dan Ashe summary**: Felt that NABCI was not relevant, and the bird community is complex and fractured; he didn’t see a central vision that ties bird programs and partnerships together. He felt that the bird community does things because they have done them in the past, not because they still have impact (he mentioned NAWCA and State of the Birds reports, for example). While Ashe didn’t see NABCI as relevant to him, he also recognized that the USFWS Director position is filled with urgencies, and if NABCI is taking a longer-range view, it may not need to be relevant to the Director. He suggested that NABCI could address four issues to be more relevant:

1. MBTA permitting- analyze the MBTA, what it means to bird conservation, and what it might look like in the future;
2. Climate change and land protection- are we purchasing federal lands that protect migratory birds not just currently but into the future?
3. International effort- Need an authoritative voice telling us how much we should be investing outside our borders to help prioritize expenditure of limited resources
4. Prioritizing- Look at priorities across bird organizations about high-level issues and determine how to address those priorities; by identifying common priorities in bird conservation we could also help USFWS with their own budgeting and prioritization.

**Robert Bonnie summary**: Bonnie emphasized a strong role for NABCI in policy: making sure the bird conservation story gets told on the Hill, to the Secretary of Agriculture, and to other leaders. He recommends getting conservation stakeholders to tell their story- audience would be Congress, public, and agencies. He suggested that NABCI talk to incoming administration to help them understand their role in conservation and why it’s important for them to put effort into bird conservation; he suggested the importance of linking the economics of birds, such as recreation, bird watching, and hunting, back to public policy, and more generally selling the value of conservation to agriculture and forestry.

Bonnie emphasized a top-down/bottom up approach, that NABCI can play a role in communicating to leadership, but also working through our partners at a local level to tell the story and help them with implementation, deliver landowners to conservation programs, provide matching funding to help implement programs. He indicated that USDA agencies operate nationally and locally, and NABCI can again operate at multiple levels and steer local budgets- especially if we are willing to bring resources to the table that would help us dictate projects and priorities. This becomes reinforcing- as field reports bring back success, then the national level pays attention.

Discussion: NABCI can be the group that brings together information for our partners to use; help make bird community less fragmented by facilitating communication with a unified voice. NABCI can help “raise the bar” on communication about pressing issues, including showing linkages between the key programs and partnerships within bird conservation. NABCI agreed to reinstate its dormant Legislative and Policy Subcommittee; the first step of the Subcommittee will be to develop a Work Plan.

Action Items and Next Steps

* A team, consisting of Keith Norris (temporary Chair), Todd Fearer, Dave Mehlman, Geoff Walsh, David Whitehurst, Jennifer Cipoletti, and Judith Scarl will develop a Work Plan for NABCI’s re-formed Legislative and Policy Subcommittee. Work Plan will be presented at next NABCI meeting. Once the Work Plan is approved, NABCI will determine who is the most appropriate longer-term Chair for this Subcommittee.
* Executive Council will continue to hold meetings with agency leadership to develop relationships, communicate NABCI priorities, and ask leaders how NABCI can help them make decisions.

**US NABCI Collaborative Project-** *Greg Butcher, USFS*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 1:*** *Maintain a well-coordinated bird conservation community to achieve strategic conservation.*

Introduction: What cutting-edge issues in 2017 might NABCI work to move forward? In the past, NABCI Committee has brought up pressing needs and the Committee has moved them forward; for example, as a result of need for more integration of GIS and conservation design, NABCI arranged a conservation design workshop.

Discussion:

 Consolidated Communications:

1) Developing a communications piece that allows each Initiative to demonstrate how they fit into the bigger bird conservation picture, to send a clear message (John Alexander)

2) Many groups are working on climate change, but the messaging isn’t getting through; we need to communicate together (John Alexander)

3) Communicate about need to increase funding for key bird conservation programs, such as Farm Bill (Steve Holmer)

4) Unifying role of NABCI in consolidating messaging in an innovative way, possibly through State of the Birds; NABCI can consolidate and express priorities across bird conservation (Ken Rosenberg)

NABCI’s Role: Although NABCI has not coalesced around a single role (Jerome Ford), NABCI has had some big successes with consolidation (Greg Butcher); increasing collaboration between game and non-game, supporting the unification of science among Initiatives.

Other potential priorities to address: Renewable energy siting (Dave Mehlman); Southwest as regional priority regarding water, renewables, or urbanization (Geoff Walsh);

No single issue came to the surface that all agreed on, and several Committee members cautioned that we should not seek out a project just for the sake of doing a project; many of the high-priority issues in the bird community are already being addressed by our Subcommittees. Several Committee members brought up Dan Ashe’s perception that the bird community is fragmented (or, put in a more positive light, diverse), which highlights the importance of having a unifying communications message and a communications strategy that shows how different programs fit together across the country. Participants also mentioned the governmental transition as one element that is unique in 2017, and the importance of communicating with the new administration and Congress, as well as being responsive to pressing needs as they emerge over the next several months. We also need a clear message of why non-bird people should care about birds; what is the value of birds and why are they relevant, and how can the bird community be useful to potential partners outside of our sphere?

**Identifying National Priorities for Bird Conservation-** *Judith Scarl, NABCI*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 1A****: Support, develop, integrate, and promote priorities of regional, national, and international bird conservation partnerships.*

***NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 3A:*** *Facilitate coordinated communication with government leadership about highest priority programs, initiatives, and needs of bird conservation.*

[Presentation](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Identifying-Shared-Priorities.pptx): The purpose of this discussion is to define NABCI’s role in identifying and communicating shared priorities for bird conservation; how can NABCI look across priorities identified by our partners and roll those up into a communication tool that partners can use to understand the most critical needs in bird conservation. Identifying, integrating, and supporting common priorities across bird conservation partners and partnerships is a recurring theme in NABCI’s strategic plan and value proposition, and several NABCI partners have indicated the need for a centralized, consolidated, shared priorities list in the bird conservation community. Several products exist that priorities can be drawn from, including State of the Birds reports, Bird Conservation Partnership Plans, the Transitional Unified Science Team science/research priorities list, and priorities identified at the Bird Partnership Workshop.

Discussion: **Would your organization or partnership use a compiled priority list**?

Elsa Haubold (National LCC Coordinator): NABCI Priority list could help inform LCC planning; they have used the PIF plan to help with this, and she sees tremendous value in a NABCI list.

Steve Hilburger (USGS): Agency struggles with how to focus bird research, since there are so many priorities; he would like more prioritization.

Geoff Walsh (BLM): BLM has its own priority list

Keith Norris (TWS): Is not sure how TWS would use such a list; depends on focus of the list

Ken Rosenberg (Cornell): We already have several priorities lists (SOTB, species priority lists); is this just a communication challenge of making sure existing lists are communicated?

Steve Holmer (ABC): We need a short list, not a long-document; the success of the first State of the Birds report was due to hard-hitting recommendations. We need a tough and challenging list.

Iain Stenhouse (BRI): Need to keep making lists and putting them in front of people- this is an ongoing task.

Todd Fearer (JVs): NABCI should be relevant at all the different scales, from DC to a local level; would we have a list for every scale?

Jennifer Cipoletti (ABC): We need to streamline; every organization needs to find its niche within some of the priorities identified.

Jerome Ford (USFWS): We need a list- not of birds, but of priorities. If NABCI has a few top priorities, not all organizations may play a role in each priority, but should support the priority through its involvement in NABCI.

Tammy VerCauteren (BCOR): Identifying these priorities is a core role for NABCI, and we should demonstrate relevancy at different scales.

**Additional Discussion Summary**

Although not total agreement, we had significant support suggesting that the NABCI Community did think NABCI should develop messaging that communicates about a short list of key priorities coming out of the broader bird conservation community. We talked about the audience for a Priorities document- one audience would be the NABCI Committee and the leadership of NABCI Committee organizations, but the audience could be broader than this; this document could be used to figure out where highest-priority bird conservation issues overlap with priorities in other sectors. There was some discussion about needing to understand the priorities of our audience in order to know what type of messaging would resonate with them.

We brought up the question of scale- different scales would be relevant for different partners, and we’d want to consider how to come up with something that was useful for multiple partners. We also talked about not wanting to be redundant- if our partnerships already have identified and communicated priorities, we asked how NABCI could create something that was value added.

We agreed to form a team consisting of the self-identified audience as well as additional target audiences to outline what type of document and priorities would be most useful. This team will develop a conceptualization document, outlining the scope and focus of a NABCI priorities list, and develop suggestions for how such a list could be layered or scaled so as to be relevant to a broad audience.

Next Steps and Action Items

* A team consisting of Jerome Ford’s proxy (Lead/Chair), Tammy VerCauteren, Steve Hilburger, Danielle Flynn, and David Hoge (with Elsa Haubold and Ian Davidson) will discuss how this messaging would be used and bring forward a conceptualization document to the NABCI Committee.

**State of the Birds- Options for Focused, Policy-Oriented Messaging-** *Ken Rosenberg, Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

Background: The Department of the Interior called for the first State of the Birds report in 2009; this initial report started by summarizing the priorities from the four bird groups and creating indicators for different habitats. Subsequent reports have been thematic (climate change, public lands, private and working lands, etc), with the fifth year revisiting the original recommendations to evaluate changes. Based on advice to create shorter reports that are more closely linked to specific policy initiatives, the State of the Birds team recommends producing a 2017 report focused on the Farm Bill, which is one of the most pressing upcoming policy issues. This document should stress the value of birds for people; we need to figure out what makes bird conservation relevant.

Discussion: The Committee agreed that a Farm Bill focus was relevant and important. Group suggested including data from CRP, WRP, EQIP and focusing on private and working lands. Discussion stressed the importance of using HD to understand what makes bird conservation relevant, as well as the importance of demonstrating the economic value (direct and indirect) of conservation activities. We also stressed the importance of being strategic about report release and engagement; consider in advance how to galvanize the bird watching community and create grassroots support for Farm Bill.

Some additional discussion focused on Blue Ribbon Panel and whether a State of the Birds report could support emerging legislation. For example, NABCI could produce a document that shows how states could use BRP funding. Another suggestion focused on Joint Ventures and their ask for increased funding, with a sidebar about how JVs help implement Farm Bill programs.

Action Items and Next Steps:

NABCI will pursue a State of the Birds related to the Farm Bill. A first scoping meeting will be held in late February/early March. Data analysis will be completed by 1 June and a complete report will be available by August 2017. Initial State of the Birds Team identified: Ken Rosenberg, Tom Moorman, Todd Fearer, Jerome Ford (or proxy), Tammy VerCauteren, Breck Carmichael, Steve Hilburger, Keith Norris, Dave Mehlman, Danielle Flynn, (someone from North Carolina), David Hoge.

**Special Recognition Ceremony for Scott Yaich and David Pashley**

NABCI honored the only two founding members that remain on our Committee, both of whom will be retiring after this meeting. Gordon Myers spoke about the accomplishments of Scott Yaich and David Pashley and presented them each with an award on behalf of NABCI. Ken Rosenberg and Todd Fearer accepted the award on behalf of David, who was unable to attend.

**NABCI Strategic Plan:** [**Overview and Next Steps**](http://nabci-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Strategic-Planning-Presentation.pptx)- *Judith Scarl, NABCI/NABCI Executive Council*

NABCI’s strategic plan helps to define our scope, focus, and goals, as well as focus NABCI’s meetings to maximize productivity. Since summer 2016, our 2017-2021 strategic plan has undergone six rounds of revisions, including:

1. Committee member survey and discussion at NABCI meeting (August 2016)
2. Three teams met to work on Vision, policy, and Goal language (September-November 2016)
	1. Executive Council drafted language for new Vision
	2. Policy Team developed recommendations for NABCI’s role in policy
	3. Plan Language team revised Plan language to more clearly represent what we want to achieve (goals) and what we want to do (actions) (2 rounds of revisions)
3. Executive Council provided feedback on draft Plan; high-level actions incorporated under Goals and Sub-Goals
4. Subcommittees, BCPP Coordinators, and JV Coordinators offered opportunities to provide feedback (December 2016)
5. Plan distributed to broader community; feedback provided through NABCI Committee members (December 2016-January 2017)

Currently, NABCI has a complete draft Strategic Plan with high-level actions. Executive Council recommends accepting draft of Strategic Plan and moving forward with work plan development.

Discussion: Have we missed anything major in this Plan?

Conclusion: Coordinator/Executive Council will modify Goal 1A to include stronger statement about broadening our vision to support bird conservation throughout the Hemisphere.

The next step is to build the Work Plan. Committee supported the proposed process, which will be:

1. Coordinator works with Subcommittee leadership to incorporate high-level elements from Subcommittee Work Plans
2. Executive Council reviews Plan and vets actions and tasks
3. Feedback requested from NABCI Community via NABCI Committee members
4. Bring to NABCI Committee for final approval at August 2017 meeting

Action Items/Next Steps

* Committee will move forward with building a Work Plan, and Judith Scarl will incorporate minor edits into Strategic Plan, including:
* Remove parentheses from “regional” in 1A and add Harvard comma for consistency
* Modify 1A/1Ai to strengthen importance of broadening our bird conservation vision across the hemisphere
* Work Plan will incorporate several rounds of feedback from Subcommittees, Executive Council, and Community prior to August 2017, and completed Work Plan will be presented for approval at August 2017 NABCI meeting.

**Communicating Bird Conservation Relevance**

The final action in NABCI’s strategic plan is to “demonstrate bird conservation’s strong ties to healthy land, water, and people in order to communicate relevance beyond birds.” What messaging can we develop to help communicate bird conservation relevance?

Discussion: We need to identify our audience and find out their priorities, so that we can tailor messaging to the needs and interests of the audience, but we also need an initial “hook” to start the conversation. For example, we need a few conversation starters for the Executive Council when it holds initial meetings with incoming leadership. We can have a broad “elevator speech,” that allows us to communicate a unified message, and then each presenter should know their audience and tailor their message to the needs and interests of the audience. Some of this messaging already exists in Initiative plans, Audubon and Cornell messaging, etc. For many of our agency partners, birds are only a tiny piece of their work; we need to convey how birds make their jobs easier and how birds are indicators for other topics.

Example of understanding partner priorities to establish relevance (Ashley Dayer): After the State of the Birds on Private Lands, group held extensive conversations with land trusts and determined that their highest priority in incorporating bird conservation was to access funding. Cornell created a grant program for land trusts to consider bird priorities.

We discussed the importance of balance between listening to the priorities of the incoming administration, but also our responsibility of communicating our own priorities and finding areas of overlap. We suggested a short-term strategy of having initial talking points when reaching out to new leadership/new partners, but listening to partner priorities over the long-term to better develop strategies for collaboration.

Gordon Myers proposes a short document with key, bulleted issues on one side, and NABCI Committee members (“Who is NABCI”) on the back, to use as initial talking points for demonstrating relevance of bird conservation.

Action Items and Next Steps

John Alexander, Matt Cimitile, and any interested others will pull together existing information about the broader relevance of bird conservation so that Executive Council has initial talking points when it meets with incoming agency leadership. Product will be a one-pager that includes “Who is NABCI” (organizations and their representatives). Deadline: ASAP.

**NABCI Governance**

1. **NABCI Charter Updates:** NABCI Committee voted to approve the following updates to the NABCI Charter:
	1. Approve language that indicates that the Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Chair of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ Bird Conservation Committee will serve as Co-Chairs of the NABCI; Chairmanship will no longer rotate every two years between these two positions (Page 3).
	2. Remove language indicating that the Executive Council will self-select a chair among its members every 2 years. The Coordinator serves as facilitator of the Executive Council meetings and the group felt that it did not need a formal Chair (Page 4).
	3. Remove language that lists current NABCI Subcommittees (Page 5)
	4. Add the phrases “or their designee” and “or co-chair” to the last sentence under “Subcommittees,” so that the sentence reads, “A member of the US NABCI Committee or their designee will chair or co-chair each Subcommittee.” This expands eligibility of Subcommittee Chairmanship outside of the NABCI Committee to ensure the best fit for Subcommittee leadership, but retains a strong link to the NABCI Committee.
2. **Setting expectations for Subcommittee leadership**: Judith Scarl presented a document that outlines expectations for Subcommittee leadership. Based on the Charter discussion, Judith will revise this document and share with Committee members and Subcommittee leadership.

Action Items and Next Steps

* Judith Scarl will incorporate Charter revisions as approved during meeting and distribute revised Charter to Committee.
* Judith Scarl will re-draft list of responsibilities for Subcommittee Leadership and distribute.

**NABCI Gary T. Myers 2017 Award** *Scott Yaich, Ducks Unlimited*

Awards Subcommittee presented recommendation to Committee and Committee unanimously approved Subcommittee’s recommendation. 2017 Gary T. Myers award will be presented at the North American meeting.

**Next NABCI meeting**: David Hoge or Geoff Walsh will find us a space and propose a set of dates no later than mid-March. The Committee discussed pairing the NABCI meeting with a Hill briefing, or inviting some Hill people to a segment of the NABCI meeting. David Hoge will look into holding a meeting at the Capital building, and Stephen Brown will cover the cost of refreshments, if necessary.