



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

**1-2 August 2018**

Bureau of Land Management, 20 M St SE, Washington, DC 20003

MEETING NOTES



NABCI Meeting Attendees, 1 August 2018



Meeting Chairs David Whitehurst (left, representing AFWA) and Jerome Ford (right, representing USFWS), with NABCI Coordinator Judith Scarl

**Day 1**

**Host Welcome- Bureau of Land Management- *Kristin Bail, Assistant Director for Resources and Planning***

Kristin notes elements that bring us together: partnerships, integration, and communication. BLM is increasingly focused on monitoring outcomes through specific metrics. Kristin notes overlaps between NABCI's National Bird Conservation Priorities and BLM's activities through land and water conservation, research and evaluation, engagement and partnerships, and addressing threats such as fires in the West

and invasive species. Partnerships and collaborations, including working with state and local partners, remain at the core of BLM's work.

**NABCI [Coordinator Overview](#)**- *Judith Scarl, NABCI/AFWA*

NABCI welcomes one new Committee member organization (Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, represented by Pete Marra) and two new Committee members (Alicia Hardin, representing AFWA's Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group, and Karen Waldrop, representing AFWA's Resident Game Bird Working Group).

This meeting's theme is "Promoting a Unified Voice that Resonates." One of NABCI's key role is to identify consistency across bird conservation and help elevate areas of consensus. NABCI also helps the bird conservation community communicate in ways that its audience will understand and appreciate. Topics like the National Bird Conservation Priorities, State of the Birds report, NABCI Key Messages, and Relevancy Toolkit align with this theme.

NABCI is in Year 2 of a 5-year strategic plan, and meeting agendas are organized around strategic goals and actions. The purpose of this meeting is to: 1) Support and guide Subcommittees; 2) Release National Bird Conservation Priorities and Relevancy Toolkit, and commit to strategies for their use; 3) Provide guidance on 2018 State of the Birds Report; 3) Develop relationships within the bird conservation community.

## **National Bird Conservation Priorities Session**

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

**NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 3, Subgoal 1:** *Facilitate coordinated communication with government leadership about highest priority programs, initiatives, and needs of bird conservation.*

**Purpose:** Provide overview of Priorities document and address remaining questions about intended usage, function, and what document represents; highlight how partners are using document

**Presentation of final [National Bird Conservation Priorities document](#)**- *Judith Scarl, NABCI*

[See presentation for more details.](#) *Download the PDF and View →Comment →Annotations to see notes for each slide.*

**Background and Need:** Part of NABCI's role is to help the bird conservation community speak with a unified voice about top priorities that we all agree on. Given the complexity of the bird conservation community, it can be challenging to identify areas of consensus across the many opinions, priorities, and areas of focus. Other national reports, such as the State of the Birds reports or the Partnership Plans (Partners in Flight, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, US Shorebird Conservation Partnership, Waterbird Conservation of the Americas) identify national priorities but are often still quite broad and comprehensive. NABCI worked to identify a short list of top priorities that NABCI should support, promote, and communicate to leadership and potential partners over the next 3-5 years, to advance NABCI's vision. These priorities represent actions that *most urgently need to happen AND for which it will be possible to make progress* over this timeframe. The primary audience is federal leadership, foundations and other funders, and leadership of other organizations whose goals may overlap with bird conservation goals but who do not have an exclusively bird focus.

**Why is this Important:** Identifying a short list of top priorities is important to ensure that consistent, cross-cutting needs are being effectively communicated to the target audience. The

National Bird Conservation Priorities document will provide emphasis to priorities that the entire community supports.

**Process of Development:** NABCI extracted priorities from past State of the Birds reports, the Partners in Flight Landbird Plan, North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and the Pacific and Atlantic Shorebird Strategies/Plans. We identified five themes into which these Priorities could be classified (Land and Water Conservation, Research and Evaluation, Engagement and Partnerships, Addressing Threats, Policy and Funding), each of which had 3-6 strategies. NABCI Committee members voted on Priority Actions within strategies to identify which actions the community thought NABCI should elevate or promote over the next 3-5 years.

**The Product- what it is and what it isn't:** The National Bird Conservation Priorities document is a four page brochure ([download online](#)) that contains a short list of priorities that the bird community agrees we should elevate over the next few years. This is meant to serve as a strong communication tool for NABCI partners and can be used as voluntary guidance for partner activities and resource allocation. This document is not an attempt by NABCI to establish priorities for bird conservation- rather, it highlights priorities from across our broad partnership. This document is not a comprehensive list of all bird conservation priority actions, since those can be found elsewhere and are often used to communicate with a different audience. And finally, although there should be overlap between these Priorities and NABCI's strategic plan, this is not a list of actions that NABCI itself will take on as a partnership, since not all of the identified actions are within NABCI's niche.

*The National Bird Conservation Priorities Document is best distributed as a hard copy; please [let Judith Scarl know](#) if you'd like to order additional copies.*

**Cross-walking National Bird Conservation Priorities with Partner Priorities/Initiatives-** *Judith Scarl, NABCI; Jerome Ford, USFWS; Tammy VerCauteren, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies*

NABCI members have initiated conversations with three partners about how the work of these organizations is aligned with the National Bird Conservation Priorities, and how these groups can elevate these Priorities in the future.

**National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF):** NFWF is a working foundation formed by an act of Congress in 1985, dedicated to conservation of fish, wildlife, and their habitats. They are driven by landscape and species plans and focus on measurable outcomes. NFWF collaborates with several NABCI partners on projects such as the American Oystercatcher business plan, a Delaware River Watershed plan, Great Plains grassland bird monitoring, Pacific seabird conservation, and identifying critical habitat on the Gulf of Mexico's coast. Ian Davidson, NFWF's Director of Birds and Wildlife, has identified many areas of overlap between the National Bird Conservation Priorities and NFWF's existing programs. Opportunities for NFWF and NABCI to more closely collaborate in the future include: providing input on species demographics/modeling, developing common monitoring approaches to migratory species (e.g. grassland birds, shorebirds), raising new public and private sector funding, etc. Next steps may involve working with NFWF to examine future funding needs for achieving Priorities.

**US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):** USFWS is developing a migratory bird strategic plan- "A World Where Birds Thrive." Each USFWS region has different priorities, and their national plan attempted to focus these, initially through a focus on birds of conservation concern. Many themes and goals in the USFWS draft plan are aligned with National Bird Conservation Priorities. Jerome Ford and USFWS will work to promote the Priorities document within the USFWS- to

regional directors, within the migratory bird division, and through the North American Waterfowl Management Plan Committee.

**Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (BCR):** BCR recently completed a strategic plan, which includes highlighting measurable outcomes for western bird conservation. Tammy VerCauteren cross-walked BCR's strategic plan with NABCI's priorities. Of the four habitats highlighted in the Priorities document, BCR works in two of these: grasslands and aridlands. [See Tammy's presentation](#) for ways BCR is working within the five Priority Themes. Tammy challenges other NABCI partners to cross-walk organizational priorities with the National Bird Conservation Priorities, and she suggests using the Priorities to keep us on target and focused as a community, both in our actions and in our messaging. BCR is already using the Priorities document in the development of a Multi-State Conservation Grant proposal to seek funding to create a unified framework for grasslands. Tammy also commits to talking with her leadership team and the Board of BCR about these Priorities.

**Committee Member Round Table:** How are Committee member organizations already advancing these priorities, and how will Committee members commit to using Priorities document?

NABCI Committee members participated in a roundtable to: highlight ways our partners are already advancing these Priorities, provide opportunities to make connections and build collaborations for priority work, and to make commitments for how each partner organization will advance these Priorities. In addition, this round table will provide the basis for a gap analysis to determine where across the community we may need to invest additional effort to ensure we are addressing the 10 identified Priority Actions. *Summaries below are not comprehensive overviews of each organization's efforts but rather represent snapshots or highlights of a few ways in which organizational efforts align with National Bird Conservation Priorities.*

#### [American Birding Association \(ABA\)](#)

ABA has been working to highlight ways that birders are contributing to conservation. Commitment to Advance Priorities: They will use Priorities to get audience of engaged birders focused on what professionals think are areas that most need attention; find ways to challenge their members to participate directly in Priorities. Priorities can help ABA become an organization that birders go to in order to seek guidance on decisions about conservation actions. Will use Priorities to talk to staff, membership, and beyond as they go through strategic planning process. With ABA's upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary planning, Jeff Gordon will bring Priorities to ABA's Board and ask them to advance these goals.

#### [Natural Resource Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#)

NRCS supports conservation on private lands and easement programs. NRCS can provide shallow water on croplands and within grazing systems, aligning with Priority strategy of restoring management that mimics natural disturbance. NRCS is encouraged to look at the economic bottom line in order to quantify outputs and benefits of their work, which aligns with Priority action to implement agricultural practices that provide economic and conservation benefits.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: NRCS will use Priorities internally as a rallying point and also a pat on the back that shows they are on target. Can use to guide areas where they should focus collaboration efforts. Will message within NRCS on how these Priorities should be used to guide funding. Will elevate Priorities within NRCS leadership, but also outwards to biologists/staff.

#### [Cornell Lab of Ornithology \(CLO\)](#)

Since CLO is primarily a research organization, their work aligns mostly with Themes 2 and 3- Research and Evaluation, and Engagement and Partnerships. CLO teaches people about birds and engages them in projects and works on full life cycle research and conservation. eBird has advanced beyond data collection and engagement and now represents the cutting edge of computer science and statisticians. Making eBird data reliable and delivered in usable ways will help eBird be more useful in supplementing other monitoring approaches.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: Ken commits to completing a thorough cross-walk of CLO activities and Priorities and will bring the document to CLO's Program Directors Council for their feedback and to inform future work.

### **Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird WG (MSUGBWG)**

This Working Group, part of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agency's Bird Conservation Committee, focuses on research and evaluation and looks at the priority needs of relevant species; the "Purple Book" presents a summary of priority needs by species to focus research.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: Will cross-reference Priorities as she works to identify MSUGBWG priority needs, and will present this document at next WG meeting.

### **Institute for Bird Populations (IBP)**

Most of IBP's work focuses on research and evaluation, with MAPS and MoSI as primary programs that help evaluate where within annual cycle bird populations are restricted or declining. Their work helps land managers make better decisions about how to manage fire and develop BMPs, and there are MAPS/MoSI on land held by every federal land management organization.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: Steve will present Priorities at September all-staff, all-board meeting.

### **Department of Defense (DoD)**

DoD is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest land manager of all federal agencies; they have a lot of unencumbered land that they use for training/practice. Collaboration between federal agencies at a broad scale: DoD stood up a collaborative initiative with federal agencies and NGOs to see where they are working on similar species, and how they can collaborate. Potential pilot working on Least-billed Vireo in collaboration with BLM and USFWS. DoD also developed guidance re: mig birds and how they handle these on NR management plans. 2/3 of their installations have significant natural resource management plans. Research: DoD Legacy program. Ensure the relevancy of bird conservation: One of their priorities is education- internal and external. They educate training/testing staff that natural resources are not your enemy; healthy natural resources means healthy training environments and more realistic testing.

### **Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC)**

Engagement and Partnerships- Support and develop collaborative international efforts: One of SMBC's primary foci is international work, and how to influence conservation of private land internationally. They provide certification for coffee and other agricultural crops (cacao, wine, etc). SMBC's residential areas program tries to build consistency among residential landowners and develop an understanding of how to coordinate complex residential systems for birds. Research and Evaluation: SMBC celebrated 50 years of demographic work at Hubbard Brook, developing models to pinpoint where birds are limited in their annual cycle. Addressing Threats- SMBC developed a metric for how many birds are killed by different anthropogenic threats.

### **Partners in Flight (PIF)**

The Partners in Flight VI meeting fostered partnerships internationally, which helped to reinvigorate PIF in Canada, and built efforts for conservation business investments. PIF's fall meeting will focus on engaging with industry. PIF Science Team used the Priorities themes to

shape and focus their discussions at a recent meeting. Since the Priorities document emerged from Bird Plan Partnership priorities, the document has a direct link to the actions in the PIF 2016 plan; the priorities document will be helpful to provide a framework and demonstrate alignment of PIF actions with broader scale conservation priorities.

### **Ducks Unlimited**

Ducks Unlimited's work engages all five Priority themes; although wetlands are not called out as a habitat most at risk, this habitat is embedded throughout all Priorities. DU engages people by communicating about water quality benefits, and communicates with corporations on sustainability platforms.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: Tom Moorman will present Priorities to DU's National Leadership Team.

### **Migratory Bird Joint Ventures (MBJV)**

MBJVs are involved in all five Priority themes, and Priorities document has strong overlap with many JV implementation plans. Priorities document can be used to elevate MJBVs and their work and talk about MJBV relevance at a national level. Appalachian Mountains JV and several other JVs can use Priorities document to demonstrate to NFWF and other funders how their JV is delivering on Priorities at regional and national level. Priorities can also be used internally to help elevate the successes of the JVs.

### **US Forest Service (USFS)**

From an International Subcommittee perspective, this document is a good follow-up to the Hemispheric Vision; if you replace many of the US examples with international examples, this can serve as an international blueprint. For USFS International Programs, Grasslands is a priority for Western Hemisphere conservation, and Latin America does not have a no net loss policy for grasslands. The Americas Flyways Task Force is working to increase cooperation for conservation at broad scales, including to conserve the Atlantic Forest (which is where the recent meeting was held), most of which is already gone. For seabirds, there is an international Agreement for the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: Greg Butcher and Wilhelmina Bratton will convene colleagues from across all 4 USFS divisions and develop a more detailed response on how USFS can use Priorities.

### **National Flyway Council (NFC)**

NFC is mostly focused on Research and Evaluation, and Priorities document clearly states a need for a multi-state, multi-agency partnership. Gray anticipates using a new Monitoring Subcommittee Work Plan in combination with the Priorities to demonstrate to Flyway partners justification for conducting monitoring at a national level. Can also take this to state biologists to demonstrate where we need to go at a national level.

### **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

Greater Sage Grouse efforts touched on all Themes of the Priorities. BLM builds partnerships through MOUs with other organizations, such as DU, AFWA, and WAFWA. BLM is also working on standardized data collection to develop large, consistent data sets.

### **US Geological Survey (USGS)**

USGS is an agency that develops science in support of management; their work spans multiple themes but focuses primarily within Research and Evaluation. However, all of their science and research is in support of land and water conservation, as well as policy and funding. Steve

Hilburger is particularly interested in priority actions under the Research and Evaluation theme, since USGS attempts to align their priorities with partner priorities.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: USGS will use document for inreach to better tie research projects with national needs that will lead to priority management decisions; Priorities can improve relevancy of science to needs.

### National Park Service (NPS)

Research and Evaluation: NPS is working at a national level to connect with conservation groups to integrate what's going on within parks to what's going on outside of parks. Engagement/Partnerships: The NPS has a MOU with the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative to develop grassland restoration and maintenance using quail as a sentinel for grassland birds. Additional partnerships include working with private permit holders in western parks to graze in ways that protect the habitat. Individual parks have partnered with a variety of other agencies or groups such as the Institute for Bird Populations to run MAPS stations, FWS, and the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

Addressing Threats: NPS works extensively on both plant and animal invasive species control.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: NPS will move Priorities up to leadership, sideways to regional wildlife biologists, and down to Avian Community of Practice.

### US Shorebird Conservation Partnership (USSCP)

USSCP can use this document as a guidepost; partners are already focused on many priority actions. USSCP working on a non-breeding shorebird monitoring protocol, and developing an RFP for funds from USAID to support parts of Atlantic and Pacific Shorebird Plans/Strategies; this work mirrors National Priorities.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: USSCP will use Priorities as they revisit their strategic plan, can be used to revise strategy for next 5-10 years and can also align some of their successes around this document.

### American Bird Conservancy (ABC)

ABC works extensively with partnerships, and also engages in partnerships within the JV community. Much of Priorities document mirrors ABC's own priorities.

Commitment to Advance Priorities: EJ Williams will take Priorities to JV Management Boards and discuss them, and will use document to strengthen the ABC board's connection to NABCI.

### National Audubon Society

Priorities document mirrors Audubon's strategic plan. Land and Water Conservation: Audubon works to sustain many locations for bird conservation, such as Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, flooded rice fields, etc. They work in partnership with groups like the MO Department of Conservation to develop bird-friendly beef programs in the Northern Great Plains. On policy, they work on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and are part of a lawsuit against the Department of the Interior regarding the interpretation of the MBTA.

### Actions/To Do for National Bird Conservation Priorities

-Continue to work with NFWF to evaluate how to build closer partnership and guide future funding opportunities (Jude, Tammy, others?)

-Jerome- Promote National Bird Conservation Priorities within USFWS, including to assistant regional directors of USFWS; promote Priorities within other partnerships (e.g. NAWMP)

-Tammy- Continue to build project in central grasslands to develop unified framework; incorporate Priorities into upcoming talks to BCR leadership team and Board of Directors.

-Individual partner commitments to promote and advance Priorities (see above)

-Conduct informal Priorities gap analysis to identify priority actions that need additional focus (Jude, Sara S., Tammy? Others?)

-Follow up with Committee members that did not commit to specific ways to advance Priorities, and work with them to identify how they can promote this document (Jude)

**The Relevance of Bird Conservation: Communication Tools for Partner Outreach-** *Steve Albert, Institute for Bird Populations/Greg Butcher, USFS*

**NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 3, Subgoal 2b:** *Demonstrate bird conservation's strong ties to healthy land, water, and people in order to communicate relevance beyond birds; Subgoal 2b2:* *Develop initial talking points supporting bird conservation relevancy for meetings with agency leadership, funding organizations, and non-traditional partners*

**Related Materials:** [Completed Relevancy document](#), plus [example](#) of communication tool that can be derived from broader document

**Purpose:** Present final Relevancy document; discuss anticipated uses for relevancy examples; present examples of how information can be extracted from document to initiate conversations. Provide example of how one partner (USFS- Greg Butcher) envisions using this for outreach.

The [Relevancy Toolkit](#) provides sourced examples, mostly of peer-reviewed studies, that demonstrate the link between bird conservation and other human goals, such as economic benefits, human health, clean air, or clean water. The toolkit is meant to help partners engage different constituencies and reach out to people whose primary focus is not bird conservation. This document can help us understand how we relate to other groups that are trying to save the planet in various ways, and empower the bird conservation community to reframe how we engage partners.

This toolkit is a living document and we welcome additional examples; please [send these to Steve Albert](#). The 13-page toolkit is not meant to be used as is; rather, partners are encouraged to understand their audience and the priorities of their audience, and highlight examples that are interesting or relevant to them. The Communications Subcommittee can help people develop fact sheets, if there are specific examples you'd like highlighted. [Here's an example of a fact sheet with US Department of Agriculture as a potential audience.](#)

US Forest Service: Case Study of Uses of Relevancy Toolkit: Greg Butcher from USFS International developed a document evaluating how USFS International programs contribute to sustainable development. We need to ensure bird conservation is represented in sustainable development initiatives. NABCI's International Subcommittee is considering a roundtable to engage partners with interests in common; we need messages like the Relevancy Toolkit examples to engage groups like US AID, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and convince them that spending money in ways that is good for birds, is good for everyone. Greg encourages us to use the Relevancy Toolkit to "get us out of the bird bubble."

#### **Discussion:**

-Relevancy Toolkit will provide a great addition to NABCI's Private Lands forum; enable us to start conversations with private landowners from a bird perspective.

-Bird conservationists need to understand how to "communicate in a different language," because the way we communicate (i.e. primarily about birds) doesn't resonate with others

#### **Talking about the importance of birds, vs aligning bird conservation with other goals:**

-One Committee member states that we can talk about ecosystem services, but also the deeper importance of birds to all of us in society.

-Other Committee members emphasize that we don't need to talk about the aesthetic value of birds to everyone or convince everyone to love birds- we really need to focus on emphasizing where bird conservation goals align with other goals. Sometimes we want people to like birds so we communicate about birds and why they matter; other times the end goal is most important, and we don't have to go through the bird filter.



-Consider when our messaging needs to build “birds matter” message and when we can emphasize common goals that aren’t exclusively about birds.

**Challenge to Partners:** To bolster this document, we need more examples- try to find an example from your state, or another example that is not already included here.

**Action for Next Meeting:** At NABCI’s Winter 2019 meeting, we will ask partners to report back on how they have used this document to build partnerships or develop relationships.

#### Actions/To Do for Relevancy Toolkit

-Use this document as appropriate, and report back in Winter 2019 how this document helped you start conversations, build partnerships, or otherwise achieve your goals

-If you need additional communications tools based on document (e.g. targeted one pager), work with EJ and Rachel to communicate needs and ask for specific tools

-Provide additional, sourced, peer-reviewed examples to Steve so that we can expand this document and increase its utility (all)

### Supporting State Agencies for Bird Conservation Session

**NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 2, Subgoal 1d1:** Produce State of the Birds reports that synthesize science and align with key policy programs or initiatives to provide an effective communication tool to encourage science-based conservation policy

**NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 3, Subgoal 1b:** NABCI non-federal partners will develop or compile messaging that communicates how emerging legislation or funding could impact bird conservation.

#### Recovering America’s Wildlife Act: Updates and Progress- David Whitehurst, VA DGIF

**Summary:** Currently a bill in the House of Representatives with 80 co-sponsors (goal is 125). A companion bill was introduced in the Senate which includes an annual appropriation provision (rather than dedicated, permanent funding), so this element is undesirable. Increase in bipartisan support for these bills; your organization can join the [Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife](#) to join the coalition in support.

**State of the Birds Subcommittee discussion-** Ken Rosenberg, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and American Bird Conservancy/Tom Moorman, Ducks Unlimited/Jennifer Cipolletti, American Bird Conservancy

**Purpose:** Provide overview of 2018 anticipated State of the Birds report focused on the critical role state agencies play in bird conservation; update Committee on report focus, format, and presentation; present and evaluate legislative strategy.

The [2017 State of the Birds report](#) focused on a single policy issue that is critical for bird conservation- the Farm Bill. This year’s State of the Birds report will focus on the critical role of state agencies in bird conservation; it will highlight the efforts of states to reverse declines, the urgency and magnitude of the challenge, and the economic cost of a species conservation backlog. Report will have a backdrop of bird conservation data that show a net population loss of 2 billion native landbirds since 1970; this is a loss across all habitats and represents a loss across 258 Species of Greatest Conservation Need, as designated by at least one state. This report is meant to offer the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA) as a solution to the conservation funding crisis.

See [Ken’s presentation](#) for more details.

Discussion:

General agreement that the report should focus on the science, the role of state agencies in bird conservation, the need for additional resources, and state-based successes. RAWA can be mentioned as

one solution to the problem, but the report will be structured around the need and the solution/desired outcomes, rather than around the legislation. This will ensure that all NABCI partners can support this report, which will be a general communication tool rather than an advocacy document. The general content of the report can include: 1) Science message of large-scale population declines; 2) Role of state agencies in bird conservation, and examples of state bird conservation successes; 3) Need for additional funding to implement State Wildlife Action Plans, with a backdrop of Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations; 4) RAWA as one potential model to create and drive funding to enable State Wildlife Action Plan implementation

#### Points to Emphasize in Report

- Science of bird conservation and population declines, from the lens of state-based conservation and Species of Greatest Conservation Need
- Roles state agencies play in bird conservation (many people still don't know what state agencies do)
- Need for additional funding
- Focus on partnerships; matching funds will be secured from NGOs and foundations
- State-based successes in bird conservation

#### Timing

- Current goal is October, but is that when it will be most impactful, given elections?
- Goal is to have content set by mid- to late-August

#### Engaging States

- Use Wildlife Diversity Program Managers network/email list to engage states
- Partners in Flight (or other partner) can discuss at Flyway Non-game Tech Section meetings; Bob Ford requests content for presentations

#### Additional Content

- Need best and most compelling content ASAP (what bird species to highlight? Economic benefits to highlight?)
- Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife has one-pagers for several states, many of which feature bird conservation examples. NABCI can direct users to these one-pagers if they want more state-specific information.
- Additional back and forth on one-pager inserts, their content, and who will develop them. Some feel that we need inserts for each state so that states can take additional information to the Hill for lobbying. Others feel that states should take care of their own messaging or use existing messaging, and NABCI's focus should be on the bigger-picture communication tool. Conclusion: NABCI will not produce state-specific inserts/fact sheets; existing content (such as Alliance fact sheets) can be used for a state-focused perspective, or states/other partners can develop more local content tailored specifically to their own communication needs.

#### Actions/To Do for State of the Birds

- Incorporate NABCI feedback into report outline and content (SOTB team)
- Provide content for PIF or others to pass along to states through Flyways (Ken and SOTB team)
- Send Ken suggestions for most compelling content to use- what species? What states to highlight? What are the economic metrics? Need this within 2 weeks.

## **Human Dimensions of Bird Conservation**

*NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 2, Subgoal 1b: Enable bird conservation partners to integrate human dimensions science and tools into bird conservation efforts.*

**Human Dimensions Subcommittee report and discussion-** Ashley Gramza, Virginia Tech/Tammy VerCauteren, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

**Purpose:** Present HD Success Story Map and discuss how to use and promote Map; present guidance document for Joint Venture implementation plans; provide CRP project update; provide short overview of future of National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator position.

A third major project NABCI is releasing this fall is our Human Dimensions Success Story Map, highlighting successful examples of how human dimensions has been used to address bird conservation issues. The map features location information and a short summary of each story, as well as more in depth information about each project. Anticipated release: early September 2018. Next step is to develop a Communications strategy and monitor web traffic after release to gather feedback on usage.

Subcommittee is also developing a Joint Venture guidance document that suggests how to integrate HD information into JV implementation plans. This document will be available by the Winter 2019 meeting.

Third project is a Playa Lakes CRP project to understand landowners' motivations and needs in order to encourage CRP participation, retention, and ongoing stewardship. Results anticipated spring 2019.

Ashley Gramza has accepted a position with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and NABCI thanks her for her accomplishments and hard work. The National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator Advisory Team is conducting a search for a new Coordinator. Much of the Subcommittee's work plan is complete, so Subcommittee will reassess needs for the next few years. There will be some shift in Coordinator's focus- more emphasis on translating science as well as outreach and capacity building.



What do you get the National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator when she moves on to another job? Bird T-shirts, bird temporary tattoos, and flamingo lollipops seem like good choices.

**NAWMP Survey of Public Attitudes towards Birds and Conservation-** Ashley Dayer, Virginia Tech

**Purpose:** Provide overview of results of national NAWMP public survey, as relevant to NABCI; discuss how survey results can help bird conservation community be relevant outside of current core community of supporters and how to reach new audiences

[See Ashley's presentation for background and more data details.](#)

National public Nature and Wetlands survey on participation in and attitudes towards waterfowl and wetlands-based activities. Classified respondents into four wildlife recreation groups: Hunters, Anglers, Viewers, and None. Ashley highlights several lessons from these data:

Lesson 1: Many people hold negative attitudes towards hunting (even though they know hunters), and attempting to recruit them is unlikely to be effective.

Lesson 2: All types of wildlife recreationists are engaged in conservation behaviors, but this is less so for wetland/waterfowl specific behaviors.

Lesson 3: Recreationists are aware of wetlands and visit them more often than non-recreationists. More people prefer hummingbirds and hawks to ducks.

Lesson 4: People might be engaged by a focus on the loss of ecosystem services, but only hunters care about loss of hunting. This emphasizes the importance of linking bird conservation to other human goals; for example, healthy wetlands provide clean water and also a home for wildlife.

Lesson 5: It is most effective to reach out to people through personal experiences, web, cable. The most effective messenger is ideally friends/family or scientific organizations/universities.

**Take Home Messages:** There is value in a unified voice to engage the public in wetland conservation issues. A good strategy is to focus on wildlife recreationists, even if they are general viewers. It's important to think outside of the wetland/waterfowl box. Also, note that there is a constituency for backyard habitat.

Discussion focused on the challenge of engaging people who are classified as "None" (that is, they do not engage in wildlife recreation), who engaged in conservation behaviors at far lower rates across the study. It's unclear what is causative- if we turn people into viewers, would they be more likely to engage in conservation behaviors? One suggestion that since converting people is a very heavy lift, it is more productive to focus on categories where we might be successful. Emphasis on focusing on messaging that resonates, such as water.

#### Actions/To Do List

-Continue to develop communications/release strategy for Social Science Success Stories map (HD Subcommittee/CommComm)

-Submit additional HD success stories for next iteration of story map (all)

**Private and Working Lands Subcommittee report and discussion – Todd Fearer, Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture**

**NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 2, Subgoal 1e:** Promote and advance bird conservation objectives on both private and public lands.

**Purpose:** Discuss progress on Subcommittee's short- and long-term action items and deliverables, focusing on Farm Bill communications and development of a Private Lands Biologist staff forum.

**Private Lands Forum:** Need for a forum for private lands field staff who work directly with landowners to discuss successes and challenges and build a community of practice in order to improve conservation delivery. PWL Subcommittee developed a set of questions to understand what topics might be most useful in a forum, gauge interest, and understand logistics needs (e.g. frequency and duration of forum). Based on responses, majority of agencies would be supportive of this type of forum. 75% felt that regional-based forum would be most useful; some suggested having more regular regional forum with national forum every 3-5 years. Next Steps: Identify planning team for forum. PWL will take this to AFWA (Alicia Hardin and Tammy VerCauteren volunteer to help) and facilitate discussions at Bird Committee and Ag Committee.

Subcommittee asks NABCI to 1) Look at [forum document](#) and give feedback- going in right direction? Are there other issues we should try to address? 2) Volunteer- is there anyone who will help plan this forum?

#### Discussion:

- Multiple Committee members see the benefits of this forum
- Suggestion that another issue to address would be helping supervisors select private lands staff that want to work with people, and establishing work conditions that support longevity. Note that these programmatic/growth aspects may be beyond scope of current forum.
- Opportunity to link this forum back to National Bird Conservation Priorities
- Use momentum in grassland conservation world to support forum
- Suggestion that NABCI may need to more formally approve this forum

#### Actions/To Do List

- Provide feedback on [Private Lands Staff Forum proposal](#) (by mid-September)
- Any volunteers to help with planning committee for private lands forum?

## DAY 2

Opening remarks from Chair: Let's think about where we came from and how we can get to the right place- how can NABCI sustain ourselves and maintain our capacity?

**International Subcommittee report and discussion-** *Greg Butcher, US Forest Service/Deb Hahn, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*

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

**Related Materials:** [Subcommittee Draft Work Plan](#)

**Purpose:** Present Subcommittee work plan for approval, provide overview of Americas Flyways Framework and explore mechanisms for NABCI to engage in this collaborative partnership.

Americas Flyways Task Force: In 2014, the Convention for Migratory Species created an Action Plan for an Americas Flyways Task Force; this Task Force met in July 2018 in Brazil. Greg recommends looking at CMS High Priority Species and ensuring that our neotropical migratory birds are listed in Appendix 1 for CMS- this would create an opportunity for governments to work together.

Additional Projects/Initiatives: Subcommittee should look for other venues to promote our [North American Vision for Hemispheric Bird Conservation](#). Greg will promote this and the Priorities at the Vancouver Bird Festival in August.

- One possibility is to convene a roundtable for sustainable development organizations.
- Greg is engaged in NWF's America's Grasslands Conference, which might be trinational, and asks for feedback on things that could be accomplished at this meeting.
- Partners are working on a Species Assessment from Panama, north throughout Central and North America, and this could provide the potential for a future State of the Birds report or other analysis.
- We should also build on our relevancy work in the international arena and examine how funding through NMBCA is contributing to sustainable development in Latin America.

#### Discussion

-Although social science capacity is limited in Latin America, HD Subcommittee has some contacts, and it may be worth reaching out to them. Note book chapter, "Human Dimensions of Neotropical Bird Conservation", in upcoming *Neotropical Birds* book (Jeff Stratford, editor) as opportunity to encourage people to incorporate social science.

-Ecoagriculture partners in Costa Rica have a sustainable landscapes initiative, similar to what ABC is doing with birdscapes. This partnership is not aware of PIF business plans- opportunity to bring these platforms together.

**Motion: Jerome Ford moves to accept the International Subcommittee work plan as presented. EJ Williams seconds, and this passes unanimously.**

**Monitoring Subcommittee Report and Discussion-** *Gray Anderson, Virginia DGIF/Viviana Ruiz Gutierrez, Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

**NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 2, Subgoal 1a:** *Promote and advance bird monitoring that is integrated into strategic habitat conservation*

**Purpose:** Present and discuss draft Subcommittee work plan, provide overview of path forward for Subcommittee

Gray presents a draft work plan that has not yet been approved by the Subcommittee. Next steps are to send to Subcommittee for feedback and review, and then bring back to Committee for formal approval. Still need to consider how best to engage with the Unified Science Team and support net landscape change work.

### **Discussion/Comments**

-Several of NABCI's new member organizations are heavily engaged in bird monitoring- make sure to reach out to new groups

-American Ornithological Society has a Conservation Committee (Pete Marra is Chair)- it is important to integrate AOS and NABCI activities. AOS may do Horizon Scanning process to articulate current problems for birds of North America.

-Incorporate the timely availability of information to make decisions; often data takes too long to disseminate, and agencies often can't wait for data to be peer-reviewed before making decisions, since decision makers have less and less time to make decisions. Consider this for Monitoring Subcommittee- how to address.

Monitoring Data-Poor Species Groups:

-Consider creative ways to monitor groups of birds (e.g. seabirds) where data are poor; can this be a priority for the Monitoring Subcommittee? Western Working Group of PIF

-Western Working Group of Partners in Flight has looked at gap analysis of species data. North America-wide data gap analysis should be done, but make sure not to duplicate existing efforts.

Waterbird Coordinator:

-Importance of (at least) part time waterbird coordinator noted. Recent monitoring workshop concluded that colonial waterbird database is highest priority to work on.

-State of the Birds and Species of Greatest Conservation Need have heavy emphasis on waterbirds, but the best data is on landbirds. We don't have continent-wide, consistent data for waterbirds, since there is no long-term monitoring or standardized data collection.

-Possibility of "supercoordinators" within USFWS due to declining budgets? 2-3 coordinators that work across the board?

-Could partners cost-share a waterbird position? Ducks Unlimited offers to contribute \$10k if others can put this together.

**Motion: Ken Rosenberg moves that we make this a formal agenda item for the next NABCI meeting, and that a group does homework behind the scenes to come up with a proposal. Motion passes.**

Group consists of: Tom Moorman, EJ Williams, Ken Rosenberg, Sara Schweitzer, (Sarah Mott- not present). Tom and EJ will organize.

## Actions/To Do List

-Circulate draft plan to Subcommittee within 1 week, and hold conference call with Subcommittee to go through Plan

-Gray will reach out to new NABCI groups to see whether anyone else wants to join Subcommittee

-Gray and Pete will talk about ways to better integrate NABCI monitoring/science and AOS

Action: Waterbird Coordinator will be formal agenda item for next meeting, and group will come up with a proposal for how to move forward.

Group includes: Tom, EJ (they will organize), Sara Schweitzer, Sarah Mott (?), Ken R.

**NABCI Key Messages-** *Judith Scarl, NABCI/EJ Williams, American Bird Conservancy*

**NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 1, Subgoal 2a:** *Facilitate effective development, promotion, distribution, and communication of NABCI products to target audiences.*

**Purpose:** Some of NABCI's recent products, such as the National Bird Conservation Priorities and the North American Vision for Hemispheric Bird Conservation, could have greater impact if our target audiences better understood what NABCI is and who we represent. To enable Committee members to consistently describe and explain NABCI, we will discuss and develop key messages about NABCI.

NABCI has been working over the past several years to better define itself and explain who we are, what we represent, and how we are value added to bird conservation. Our mission, vision, value proposition, and strategic plan help to define these elements, and the January 2015 Bird Partnership Workshop helped to identify the unique niche of NABCI and the Bird Plan Partnerships. However, improved communication about NABCI could help colleagues (especially leadership) of Committee representatives understand why it benefits their organization to engage with NABCI. Also, some of the power of our recent documents (e.g. National Bird Conservation Priorities) stems from these representing a unified voice across the national bird conservation community; the more our audience understands what NABCI is, the better they will understand the weight of this voice. In order to help partners quickly and easily explain what and who NABCI is within their organization, to leadership, within the bird conservation community, and to new potential partners, NABCI aims to develop key messages for NABCI.

Existing elements of these key messages include: Mission, Vision, Value Proposition, Strategic Goals, Website, and descriptions in our reports/publications. Committee members discuss the following recurring elements within existing key messages:

Coordination, Collaboration, Communication

NABCI:

- facilitates collaborative partnerships that advance biological, social, and scientific priorities for North American bird conservation.
- represents broad interests across the bird conservation community (federal, state, NGO, bird partnerships)
- integrates priorities of regional, national, and international bird conservation interests
- facilitates coordinated communication about highest priority programs, initiatives, and needs of bird conservation.
- creates a unified voice for conservation.

## Discussion

Generally the group thought that these statements described NABCI but didn't necessarily represent an "elevator pitch." Some partners felt that the "creates a unified voice for conservation" was the core message that could be used as a springboard or umbrella for other messaging. Some partners liked the three Cs (Coordinate, Collaborate, Communicate) as a potential tag line/slogan/jumping off point for messaging. There was discussion about whether this should incorporate messaging about why bird conservation is important; however, several partners felt that this would represent a different

conversation and would not be communicated through an elevator pitch about NABCI. Additional discussion about how/how much to emphasize birds; we are a bird conservation partnership, so we need to include bird messaging, but we should also include the relevancy piece in which NABCI translates the relevancy of birds to other societal values. Multiple partners mentioned that we could have different “elevator speeches” depending on the audience. At least one partner emphasized the importance of developing a list of NABCI outcomes/outputs to demonstrate how NABCI has been successful in advancing bird conservation.

Partners agreed that messaging should have four parts:

- 1) Why do we need a NABCI (why is NABCI relevant within community)?
- 2) What is NABCI (build on unified voice)?
- 3) How does NABCI connect with broader community
- 4) What has NABCI done- successes?

#### Actions/To Do List

-Refine key messages with small team (Jude and EJ to lead- who else?) and circulate

**Communications Subcommittee All-Bird Bulletin report-** *EJ Williams, American Bird Conservancy*  
**NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 1, Subgoal 2:** *Strengthen communication within the bird conservation community.*

**Purpose:** Update Committee on All-Bird Bulletin blog progress, solicit opinions on future blog themes, and obtain commitments from additional Committee member organizations to submit blogs

NABCI aims to distribute the [All-Bird Bulletin blog](#) twice per month, and EJ encourages members to contribute blogs. Blogs are organized along seven themes. Rachel Levin will distribute the sign-up sheet to Committee members.

#### Discussion

- What are the outcomes of these blogs? Who reads them?
- Direct distribution to 900 seems low; how can the Committee work together to grow that distribution?
- Committee members encouraged to forward blogs within their organizations

#### **Additional Items**

##### **USDA Bird Day**

USDA holds a Farmer’s Market on Fridays; this summer they hosted a Pollinator Awareness event. As part of the Year of the Bird, USDA will host a Bird Day on September 28. There are room for 20 partners to have a table to exhibit. Consider non-traditional messages.

Contact Greg Butcher, [Danielle Flynn](#), [David Hoge](#), or Wilhelmina Bratton to learn more or if you are interested!

*Related Bird Day Question from NABCI Committee member: “Do we have a motion to allow our Coordinator to dress up as a big white pelican?” Unfortunately, no motion was brought forward.*

##### **Recognizing David Whitehurst**

Jerome Ford thanks David Whitehurst for his contributions to NABCI and the bird conservation community.





Many thanks to David Whitehurst for his many years of hard work, partnership, and collaboration!



*Take NABCI Out To The Ball Game:* NABCI partners enjoyed an outing to watch the Nationals crush the Cincinnati Reds after the meeting