



**North American Bird Conservation Initiative- US Committee  
13-14 January 2020**

**Meeting Theme  
Changing Populations: Birds and People**

Wednesday, 13 January 2021 11am-1pm Eastern time

**NABCI Coordinator Overview**

*Judith Scarl, NABCI*

**Purpose:** Provide high-level overview of NABCI accomplishments, future directions, meeting themes, and meeting goals; connect meeting sessions to NABCI bigger picture

[See Judith's slides](#) (switch Presentation Notes on to read a transcript of the presentation).

Overview of Accomplishments since August 2020 meeting:

- Finalized Field Guide to Developing Partnerships
- Finalized Relevancy Toolkit 2.0
- Finalized International program brochures
- (Almost) Finalized Farm Bill Field Guide
- Proposal for NABCI's role in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice
- Advanced 5 Game Changing Paradigms, including Road to Recovery Workshop

The theme of this meeting is **Changing Populations: Birds and People**. The loss of 3 billion birds has a human population and social context that must inform our pathways to success. Over the last 50 years, the US population has increased almost 70%, from ~200 million to ~340 million people. Population demographics have changed significantly, too, with increases in Black, Asian, and Hispanic populations. To do effective bird conservation, we need to understand people's values, priorities, and circumstances, as they relate to bird conservation, to understand how to implement strategies and policies that will get broad public and professional support. We need to ensure that we are linking bird conservation goals to other human goals and outcomes- and that we minimize competition as much as we can between these goals. Finally, we need to make sure that our champions, our conservation professionals, and our constituents are representative of a changing society and changing demographics.

Throughout this meeting, consider some key questions:

- What are the key **Human Dimensions questions** that will help us **build stronger partnerships, better target conservation efforts** and **remove barriers to bird conservation**?
- **Who do we need** at the "conservation table" who is not there?
- **What "tables" outside of conservation can we join** to be more effective and have more influence?

**3 Billion Birds Game-Changing Paradigms: Progress and Setting the Stage**

*Todd Fearer, Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture*

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

Bringing Back 3 Billion Birds team was formed to establish NABCI's response to 3 Billion Birds declines. Last meeting, the team presented the 5 Game Changing Paradigms. These paradigms form a framework around which we talk about 3 Billion Birds:

1. Unprecedented coalition to address the bird crisis
2. Advanced "Road to Recovery" science to identify the specific causes of bird declines
3. Road maps for population recovery and full annual cycle conservation
4. Bold, new legislative agenda
5. Unified messaging to bring back 3 billion birds

Putting this conversation in the context of current events, the pandemic has led to an increase in outdoor activities/citizen science, political uncertainty in the deregulation and redesignation of federal public lands, social unrest has led to an increased awareness in the role of DEI, and there is an increase in faith based, grassroots "caring for creation". How can we weave NABCI's efforts into this context?

#### Short Summaries of Game-Changing Paradigm Progress

**Road to Recovery Science:** Focused on honing the science, focused on 73 species that are of high concern, experiencing steep declines, and showing high urgency re: declines in future. Developing R2R pyramid approach- where are we on knowledge for each of these species? They have some rough estimates of cost of doing the research we need to begin recovery on these birds: ~\$45 million. Held ~500 person workshop in December, focused on methodology and technology for understanding birds. Engagement from conservation and science community- this is an opportunity to engage the science community. Next steps: 1) how do we build a more inclusive community? 2) developing a proposal as "proof of concept" that would include a Road To Recovery leader, and work on 1-3 identified species to identify limiting factors. 3) Perspectives paper that outlines the focus of the effort and the Game-Changing Paradigms; 4) Next workshop, focused on social sciences.

**Communications:** Communications group to provide support for unified messaging- specialty is translating the science into relevant, accessible messaging. Looking at three arenas: science, policy, and lifestyle. NABCI plays a huge role in establishing priorities that communications team can focus on. Importance of identifying those communication priorities. Some elements of communications:

- ABC and Audubon are organizing around a "Bird Agenda" with 15 bird protection policy priorities. How can we start developing test cases to promote storytelling and use as learning models to see what is successful?
- Supporting and amplifying the Road to Recovery efforts

**Bird-friendly coalition** is example of "lifestyle" effort that communications group can support. Launched in April 2020 to bring together groups that are using the term "bird friendly" and leverage shared audiences. Includes bird-friendly coffee, cocoa, beef, communities, backyards, forestry, maple syrup, infrastructure. Bring groups together to identify: what are shared standards, who are audiences, and how can we better communicate? Currently includes 52 initiatives with ~200 participants. Concept of "living bird friendly" from production, to purchasing, to other support. Objectives: 1) integrate bird conservation into broader sustainability initiatives; 2) build and support thriving markets for products and actions that conserve birds; 3) advance the science and communication around management actions; 4) advance shared monitoring/evaluation tools. Currently will work on defining a bird friendly framework across sectors, advancing research on their current and potential audiences, and forming sector-specific working groups. [Contact Ruth Bennett](#) for more information or to participate.

**USFWS Perspective:** Looking to weave bird conservation through USFWS, including programs not specifically focused on birds. Including collisions in their conservation plans, as well as seabirds. Have started to reach out to regional directors, Science Applications, etc, to incorporate 3BB into broader USFWS discussions. Also, USFWS is updating the Birds of Conservation Concern list. They are trying to reinvigorate Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds to look for opportunities to collaborate with federal partners, and coordinate with other partners to create enduring vision.

**Next Steps:** Continue to define NABCI's role both in 5 Game Changing Paradigm and current events. Make more deliberate effort to engage people and expand our constituency.

## **The Role of Social Science in the 5 Game Changing Paradigms**

*Jessica Barnes, NABCI/Virginia Tech, Tammy VerCauteren, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies*

**NABCI 2017-2021 Strategic Plan Goal 1, Subgoal 1:** Promote and advance the use of ecological and social science in design and evaluation of bird conservation practices; Enable bird conservation partners to integrate human dimensions science and tools into bird conservation efforts.

[Watch the recording of the social science presentation.](#)

Definition Reminder: Dimensions is/are: this can encompass everything in conservation that is not about wildlife and their habitats, but it can also be more specific: a suite of issues related to how people value natural resources and want them to be managed, and how they affect/are affected by natural resources and related decisions. We understand human dimensions through the conservation social sciences, which include: geography, humanities, economics, political science, communications, sociology, etc.

Key questions that social sciences can help us understand:

- Why do (or don't) people care about birds?
- What factors contribute to human behaviors that benefit or threaten bird populations?
- What kinds of messages and methods are effective at changing human attitudes and actions towards birds?
- What are the economic and social benefits of birding and bird-related tourism?
- How can policy be structured to support bird conservation across landscapes and geopolitical boundaries?

For examples of how social science has been successfully integrated into bird conservation, check out [NABCI's Human Dimensions Success Stories](#).

### Integrating Human Dimensions into the 5 Game Changing Paradigms

[See the team's suggestions on how HD can be integrated into the paradigms](#) (draft document).

- **Unprecedented Coalitions:** Emphasize the shared interests of partnerships, that provide collaborative learning opportunities. Emphasize the need for new partners, which aligns with the focus of NABCI's Field Guide to Developing Partnerships. Mentions the need to consider how to avoid power imbalances.
- **Science to Identify Limiting Factors:** Consider the social element of limiting factors, since human behavior and structural constraints are often at the root of limiting factors. Also consider cultural appropriateness and ethical nature of potential conservation activities. Finally, understand the social and ecological causes of the current situation to understand a complex system.
- **Road maps for population recovery:** Identify human behaviors tied to limiting factors, and the drivers of these behaviors. Consider the likelihood of change of human behavior and impacts on human livelihoods and well-being when selecting a strategy.
- **Bold, new legislative agenda:** Consider how individual enterprising efforts can be used, evaluate how we can build political will and coalitions, and be aware of how regulatory change can benefit both birds and people.
- **Unified Messaging:** Strategic communications and effective community engagement requires social science input, such as identifying audiences and identifying what will cause audiences to take action. Also, include evaluation of social and ecological outcomes.

*Breakout Groups: For each paradigm, what do we need to know about people to advance the paradigm and bring back 3 billion birds?*

- **Unprecedented Coalitions:** We need to know what people trust and what makes things relevant to them. What interests do they have that we can connect to birds? How can they be engaged?
- **Science to Identify Limiting Factors:** We can use best bird science to identify proximate limitations, but then delving deeper to figure out distal human dimensions underneath. Make strategic decisions about which limiting factors can be addressed. For example, it's hard to change values, but we may be able to change policies.
- **Road maps for population recovery:** Need to identify examples of people and groups who have worked in the planning realm of bird conservation, where they have thought purposely about the human elements, behaviors, and drivers of behaviors that link to limiting factors. There may be shorebird examples for this.
- **Bold, new legislative agenda:** We sometimes need to separate politics from policy- what may look good to the public, and what actually has a positive effect for conservation (e.g. planting 2 million trees has good political optics, but how will that really impact bird conservation?) Also, consider the economic aspects of policies, and have talking points that aren't directly related to birds. Talk about family, culture, things that are important to the audience.
- **Unified Messaging:** We spend a lot of time talking to our core groups- need to put more focus on identifying and focusing on groups outside of this core constituency. Working with landowners has been an example of success in bird conservation.

Many of the groups emphasized the need for more examples of how this has been done.

## **Unprecedented Coalitions: Relevancy and Partnerships**

***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 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*

### **Overview and Approval of NABCI's Field Guide to Developing Partnerships**

*Judith Scarl, NABCI*

The NABCI Committee approved NABCI's [Field Guide to Developing Partnerships](#), which provides tips and guidance on how to identify potential partners with common goals, reach out to new partners, and build relationships and develop trust, especially with organizations or individuals whose primary focus is not bird conservation. An [Executive Summary](#) provides bulleted suggestions on elements of partnership building, while the full [Field Guide](#) offers extensive advice on how to build partnerships based on goals that benefit birds and people, elements of communicating with partners whose culture, values, and goals may differ from yours, and feedback on how to build lasting, mutually beneficial relationships. A [partnerships worksheet](#) guides professionals through the concepts in the Field Guide as they relate to your own projects.

### **Overview and Approval of Relevancy Toolkit 2.0**

*Steve Albert, Institute for Bird Populations*

The NABCI Committee also approved the "[Shared Outcomes for Birds and People: Relevancy Toolkit 2.0](#)," which offers new, sourced examples of how bird habitat is linked to human health, the economic

benefits of bird conservation, and the many benefits of natural areas, along with examples of how birds benefit agricultural and timber producers.

### **Overview and Approval of International Relevancy Brochures**

*Greg Butcher, US Forest Service/ Andrés Anchondo, American Bird Conservancy/Amy Upgren, American Bird Conservancy*

Based on concepts from the Relevancy Toolkit, NABCI partners also produced a set of International Relevancy Brochures, short documents aimed at [governments](#), [impact investors](#), and [environmental organizations](#) in Central and South America that connect bird conservation with other human goals and outcomes. These brochures are [available in English and Spanish on NABCI's International Subcommittee page](#). Partners at the American Bird Conservancy also produced a story map with examples of how birds and bird conservation can benefit tourism, pest control, pollination, timber production, soil and water conservation, etc.

### **Case Studies: Creative Partnerships for Complementary Goals**

Western Rivers Brewers' Council: Protecting Rivers and Birds through Non-Traditional Partnerships

*Steven Prager, Audubon Southwest*

Brewers know that an adequate and reliable water supply is critical to their craft. Audubon knows that it is critical to healthy rivers, habitats, birds, and other wildlife. Together, they are working to protect rivers and water across the West. This coalition of conservation-minded breweries, the Western Rivers Brewers' Council, is taking action by helping Audubon reach new audiences, recruit volunteers, advocate for sound water policy, and yes – brew beer. Learn more about how the WRBC is making a difference for birds and their habitats: [Watch Steven's presentation online](#).

Prioritizing Community Restoration and Youth Engagement in Priority Bird Conservation Areas

*Ken Elkins, Community Conservation Manager, Audubon CT and Audubon NY*

The success of Audubon Connecticut's Urban Oases program is derived from the community partnerships that have connected the youth of New Haven with nearby nature and conservation action. To develop a presence in the city, Audubon Connecticut identified key partners, developing programs that benefit all the partner's goals as well as our bird conservation goals. To increase their impact, they developed a GIS-decision support tool that includes biodiversity, landscape, and socio-economic layers in order to prioritize areas for creating urban oases that could most benefit both migratory birds and underserved communities. [Watch Ken's presentation online](#).

### **Breakout Groups: "Workshopping" partnerships**

In breakout groups, partners heard about a developing USFWS partnership with fraternities and sororities, and a Partners in Flight effort to build stronger partnerships to conserve western forests. Participants provided feedback on future directions for these partnerships and how they can be improved.

*Thursday, 14 January from 11am to 1pm Eastern Time*

### **Unprecedented Coalitions: NABCI's Role in Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in Bird Conservation**

**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 2b:** Demonstrate bird conservation's strong ties to healthy land, water, and people in order to communicate relevance beyond birds;

In August 2020, NABCI Committee members voted unanimously to continue to explore NABCI's niche in DEIJ work, and a team used feedback from that meeting to develop a proposal for NABCI's role in DEIJ, along with specific actions NABCI can take to promote DEIJ.

### [NABCI Proposal](#)

*Judith Scarl, NABCI*

A team of interested NABCI partners drafted a proposal for NABCI's role in DEIJ efforts. [See the full proposal](#). The proposal contains three objectives:

*Objective 1: Provide a consistent forum for organizations to learn from each other, develop creative new strategies, and promote accountability between partners.*

*Objective 2: Create a space that encourages diverse participation and different voices within NABCI.*

*Objective 3: Provide additional resources to help expand diversity/partnership opportunities*

NABCI Committee members voted to move forward with DEIJ work through NABCI as detailed in this proposal, with the understanding that NABCI's strategy will evolve over time. Over the next several months, NABCI will develop a Community of Practice to share insights, give and receive feedback, and hold each other accountable for commitments. This Community of Practice will include regular presentations and opportunities for follow up. As part of the foundation for this Community of Practice, two individuals provided models and guidance for DEIJ work within conservation organizations. **Videos of each presentation are linked below.**

### **DEIJ Initiatives: Models and Lessons Learned**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Model and Actions

*David Buggs, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*

The [presentation by David Buggs](#) introduces a model to inform, educate, perform, model, and lead on DEIJ issues. David provides examples of how the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is implementing each of these steps.

Connecting Diverse People to Nature and Bird Conservation

*Sue Bonfield, Executive Director, Environment for the Americas*

Sue and her colleagues at Environment for the Americas [highlight more than a decade of this organizations' work](#) to engage different groups of people in bird conservation.

### **Breakout Groups: NABCI Community of Practice Needs**

*NABCI's Community of Practice will provide a forum where partners can share information and lessons learned on DEIJ initiatives. This community will provide a system of accountability for partners to commit to and report back on progress on specific DEIJ goals. In a series of breakout groups, NABCI partners identified highest priority needs for topics to be addressed in NABCI's proposed Community of Practice. **The main themes for topics for the Community of Practice include:***

Demonstrate to the value of increasing diversity/representation within an organization. This can include:

- Demonstrating the value of diversifying the leadership of an organization
- Discussing strategies for how to encourage organizational leadership to embrace DEIJ; helping leaders identify why it is important to an organization's mission to increase diversity
- Making the connection between diversity/equity/inclusion and declining bird populations

How to create a welcoming culture that embraces true representation. This may include:

- Helping organizations to understand the difference between efforts that lead to true integration and support, vs efforts that are more tokenistic
- Navigating the chicken-and-egg situation of diversifying staff and creating an inclusive culture; which comes first, or can these be done simultaneously?

Considering an organization's hiring practices to ensure they are broad and inclusive, including:

- Recognizing barriers to internships;
- Recruiting candidates from spheres outside of our usual "comfort zone" or "recruitment bubble"
- Evaluating hiring practices to identify and eliminate bias throughout the process

#### **Additional Suggestions for Areas of Focus for NABCI Community of Practice**

- Learning to listen
- Show examples of organizational goals, approaches, pitfalls
- How to integrate DEIJ into operating principles
- Identifying barriers that make it difficult for others to participate in online and in person meetings
- Recognizing bias
- How do you know who you should be engaging?
- The importance of mentorship, and ensuring professional mentorship
- Help partners anticipate and prepare for difficult situations at the intersection of DEI/politics/organizational representation

**3:00-5:00pm Eastern Time: NABCI Business Meeting (Committee Members Only)**