



U.S. NABCI Committee Meeting Notes
North American Bird Conservation Initiative- U.S. Committee
August 9-10, 2022

Meeting Theme:
 Reimagining Conservation

Tuesday, August 9, 2022

Welcome and Introductions

This summer's meeting theme is reimagining conservation. We don't always need to lead with birds to foster and facilitate unprecedented and authentic partnerships. Our meeting sessions involved learning more about our role in uplifting and empowering our partners to lead. The Central Grasslands Summit is an exemplar of how to engage and bring together many partners from industry to Indigenous communities. As NABCI, we need to reimagine how we work together and how we engage current and future partners.

U.S. NABCI Coordinator Overview ([slides](#))

Susana Mateos, U.S. NABCI

- Susana will transition out of the U.S. Coordinator role at the end of August 2022. Sessions were not recorded to provide a space for open and meaningful discussions around Equity and Inclusion. We are welcoming new [NABCI Committee](#) representatives:
 Amanda Rodewald, Cornell Lab of Ornithology
 Nikki Belmonte, American Birding Association
 Russ Lawrence, Department of Defense
 Alan Lange, USDA, Farm Services Agency
 Kara Dolch, USDA Farm Production and Conservation

- NABCI's [Community of Practice](#): Steering committee meets monthly. Nicole Michel is the Community of Practice Chair and has been active throughout the entire strategic plan process to ensure there is an equitable and inclusive lens. The community of practice has started planning a series of Happy Hours, informal/slightly structured conversations around building a shared understanding of what Equity and Inclusion culture looks like in the environmental field. Everyone is welcome to attend. The first happy hour is Tuesday, September 20th from 4-5:30 pm EDT. Register using this link:
https://audubon.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwvd--sqDItGdxOyPXa0Le-s1G_RAjEIEsN

- The strategic plan process was reinitiated in December 2021 and we began Committee conversations at our February 2022 NABCI meeting. Todd Fearer has been facilitating and leading sessions with the full Committee, Subcommittee Chairs and Co-Chairs, the Bringing Back 3 Billion Birds group, and the NABCI Executive Council. There has been tremendous partnership input, collaborative editing, and continuous feedback from NABCI leadership.

U.S. NABCI Social Science Coordinator and Human Dimensions Subcommittee ([slides](#))

Katie Holland, NABCI & Road to Recovery Social Science Coordinator

- Welcoming Katie Holland, the new National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator. She will be serving the bird conservation community by providing social science support to ongoing work and new projects.
- 2023 Pathways Conference Theme is Managing Wildlife in an Era of Mutualism in Fort Collins, CO from May 31 – June 3, 2023. The NABCI Human Dimensions Subcommittee is partnering with the AFWA Bird Conservation Committee to organize sessions related to bird conservation.
- Human dimensions and social science informational document is protected to finish in fall 2022. This document will distinguish between human dimensions and social science, how to move forward with social science integration in bird conservation, and provide resources related to beneficial practices in integrating human dimensions.
- Interested in joining the Human Dimensions subcommittee? Email Katie at kkholland@vt.edu to be added to the listserv.

Central Grasslands Summit and Indigenous Engagement ([slides](#))

Tammy VerCauteren, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

- This presentation focuses on the [Central Grassland Summit's](#) approach and the relationship journey with Indigenous and First Nation communities. There are more than 500 tribal nations- we must know and understand where we stand and who stood before us. The Central Grasslands Summit worked with roadmap partners with the knowledge and a history of working with tribes. Ensured tribal voices were elevated across the virtual and in-person summits, from grounding talks to breakout sessions. The Summit planning committee made sure to identify what messages and conversations were identified by Indigenous partners for the summit- including food sovereignty and Indigenous engagement. Working with local partners helped forge relationships and build trust to have open, honest, and hard conversations. No relationship building is perfect, there are always lessons to be learned.
 - Miscommunication on treating Indigenous First Nation as a sector versus Nation- Need to recognize and honor sovereignty and their own nations.
 - Work with the local community, liaisons, and community leaders to adapt the approach to honor different cultural traditions and communicate about these traditions.
 - Make sure to invite early, provide honorariums, gifts, and travel support.
 - Make sure venues for meetings are compatible and appropriate to customs and traditions.
 - Recognize the strengths and limitations of Western Science and open eyes and ears to Indigenous peoples who have thousands of years of living with the land.
 - Create an equitable space for all voices to be heard and shared- don't just add a seat to the table- may need to change the table/design, don't just ask for approval but provide a channel for authentic engagement.
 - It is okay to be uncomfortable and not have all the answers. Make sure to not default to business as usual-It's a journey- be open to new routes, and ideas.
 - Honor social and cultural connections to the environment.
 - When asking for 1-2 priorities, we tend to get the majority perspective, make sure to make space for multiple voices to contribute to priorities. Equity in voices.
 - Accommodate people with families- make space for children. Ensure access for caregivers to participate including virtual options as travel may be a barrier.

Equity and Inclusion in Conservation Discussion and Activities

Susana Mateos, U.S. NABCI, Nicole Michel, National Audubon Society, Elva Manquera-DeShields, Klamath Bird Observatory, and Renee Chi, Bureau of Land Management

- Centering Equity and Inclusion in the environmental field. We recognize the issue of lack of representation in the environmental field, we witness colleagues leave while organizational culture makes them assimilate and conform to the current culture. Many of us in the Black and Brown community, the LGTBQIA2+ community, the people with disabilities community, and beyond, experience oppression on a daily basis. I often hear about how we can get People of Color to the conservation spaces. There are barriers to arriving in these spaces like formal education, time, opportunities, and beyond and the biggest discouragement is that once we make it, there are cultural barriers we are confronted with like not always being welcomed because of our identities. One part of the recipe is folks getting to environmental spaces and the most important and certainly the one that makes people feel valued is to keep us here and not on your terms, not assimilation but a genuine sense of belonging. How can we move forward and use our sphere of influence to be allies (a verb not a noun) and uplift and amplify the voices of those who are not welcomed and supported in the current culture.
- In-person and virtual participants participated in small group activities to identify barriers to centering Equity and Inclusion culture in their workplace. These sessions had rich conversations and we attempted to address the identified barriers with solutions. We identified institutional-level barriers and personal-level barriers. We continued the conversation to have more conversations about comfort level, group care, and how we can leverage our strengths to advance Equity and Inclusion in this field.

U.S. NABCI Communications Subcommittee Role in Broader Conservation Network ([slides](#))

Scott Anderson, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

- The Communications Subcommittee met to discuss how to be most valuable to the NABCI partnership and most of this discussion centered around a greater understanding of the connections between the bird conservation partnerships and using them efficiently.
- How could NABCI recreate the [NABCI napkin](#) so partners and future partners can see themselves in the overwhelming bird conservation network? Possibly create a visual with stories for each node connection so folks can navigate the network and harness efficient partnerships.
- Along with the Human Dimensions Subcommittee, both committees will be working to add to the existing [Success Stories Map](#). Each new story will be added to the existing map and highlighted on our blog and through the email newsletter. We can track interest in these stories by groups.
- Some in the Communication Subcommittee members are working with the State of the Birds (SOTB) Subcommittee to identify partners and align the key messages from the SOTB to the most interested groups. The hope is to tailor the messages to the interests of the partner and make the content more useful.
- The Subcommittee encourages any other subcommittees working on projects who might need communications support to contact us early in the process so that we may help develop a plan for sharing your work.

State of the Birds Report: Release and Committee Responsibilities ([slides](#))

Miyoko Chu, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

- The 2022 State of the Birds report is now in the final phases of review and revision. The exact rollout date this fall 2022 is still to be determined in coordination with partners. This year's report puts a national spotlight on the authoritative science showing the continuing decline of birds and the recommendations for effective conservation action. The report is framing bird conservation in terms of the benefits to people's lives.

- We recognize that having a unified voice externally means first having a unified voice among our NABCI community. Saving them will require all of us to contribute our diverse skills and perspectives, and support one another's efforts.

USFWS Migratory Bird Program Update ([slides](#))

Eric Kershner, USFWS and Jerome Ford, USFWS

- This proposed rulemaking is a significant part of the Service's strategy to better protect bird populations by addressing human-caused mortality with common-sense regulations. The Service's goals in developing these proposed regulations are to better protect migratory bird populations and address human-caused mortality through regulating incidental take of migratory birds.
- Eagle Protection Act Regulation update: Publication of Proposed Rule – on or before September 16, 2022. Publication of Final Rule – on or before September 2023
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act update: Publication of Proposed Rule – November 2022. Publication of Final Rule – November 2023
- Partners in Flight Coordinator position and the United States Shorebird Conservation Coordinator position are being reimagined and the USFWS is awaiting the FY2023 budget. You can view the USFWS budget justification report [here](#).

End of Day 1 Sessions

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

Government Affairs and Partner Engagement Subcommittee Report and policy update

Jennifer Cipolletti, American Bird Conservancy

- It is looking very promising that Recovering America's Wildlife Act ([S2372](#)) will advance to the Senate floor for a vote in September 2022 with strong bipartisan support. The House version of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, [HR2773](#), passed by a 231-190 vote in June. An editorial on Recovering America's Wildlife Act from the [Washington Post](#) highlights that Congress has the opportunity to pass the most significant conservation law in decades.
- A bipartisan bill was introduced to reauthorize the [Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act](#) (NMBCA)
 - An increase in NMBCA funding could provide greater participation from Latin American and Caribbean partner groups.
 - The bill, ([S.4187](#)), proposes lowering the required cost-sharing for grant recipients from 3:1 to 2:1, making conservation programs more accessible to smaller organizations. It would also increase the amount of funding that can be provided to the program annually from \$6.5 million to more than \$20 million.
- [American the Beautiful](#)
 - The first grant cycle closed on July 21st with over 900 applicants.
- Bird-Safe Buildings Act
 - A bill that would help protect birds from glass collisions — one of the greatest human-caused threats to birds. U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2, which includes [H.R. 919 – Bird-Safe Buildings Act](#). This bipartisan bill is designed to reduce bird mortality by calling for federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features.
- Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act ([H.R. 4057](#))
 - The Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act would implement the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP), an international conservation agreement that covers 31 species of albatrosses, petrels, and shearwaters.

- The U.S. already protects the three species of albatrosses and petrels that breed within the U.S. via the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Endangered Species Act. However, this level of protection is not available to these birds once they leave U.S. waters.
- Government Affairs and Partner Engagement Subcommittee
 - Staying active and participating in the State of the Birds legislative subgroup. The Subcommittee welcomes new members who would like to engage and help improve the integration of the work plan and NABCI strategic plan.

Avian Knowledge Network (AKN): Leveraging Partnerships, Data, and Technology to Revolutionize Avian Conservation and Management ([slides](#))

John Alexander, Klamath Bird Observatory

- This presentation focused on building awareness about links between AKN and NABCI priorities and goals and opportunities for partners to get involved. As well as, explore how AKN can more directly support NABCI efforts including through working with the State of the Birds and Monitoring Subcommittees.
- Federal agencies via the Council for Conservation of Migratory Birds recognized that they could collectively invest in the AKN to overcome their data management and access challenges to AKN capacities, unlocking the best available data and decision-support tools would help their agencies and constituents implement informed bird conservation actions and comply with bird conservation regulations.
- The AKN's alignment with the NABCI strategic plan
 - Facilitate unprecedented and authentic coalitions
 - Focus on collaborative and strategic investments from Council for Migratory Birds partner agencies
 - A model AKN uses for developing management-relevant decision support tools involves a Participatory Action Research approach Partner in Flight Strategy that was developed using a mix of social science methods.
 - AKN supports a data management system for a suite of monitoring protocols that are then homogenized based on methodological standards and commonalities.
 - AKN decision support tools use birds as indicators as ecosystem function measures.
 - Promote community science programs that engage local communities in monitoring efforts

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) Bird Conservation Committee Working Group Role with NABCI Committee Concept ([slides](#))

Judy Camuso, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Susana Mateos, U.S. NABCI, and Alicia Hardin, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

- There are currently seven AFWA Bird Conservation Committee (BCC) working groups, two of which are on the NABCI Committee. The AFWA BCC work group rotation concept would keep State voices represented on the NABCI Committee and allow the BCC Chair to appoint two BCC work group Chairs on the NABCI Committee every 3-4 years. The BCC Chair will identify the two Chairs by the work group Chair's interest and engagement. The BCC working groups that would be eligible for this rotation would be Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Work Group, Resident Game Bird Work Group, Bird & Fish Related Conflict Work Group, and Grassland Birds Work Group. The NABCI Committee will further discuss this concept at the 2023 winter NABCI Committee meeting.

End of Public Sessions