



**Partners in Flight
Southeast Working Group
McAllen, Texas**

**Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 16 February 2005**

Welcome and Introductions, Catherine Rideout and Laurel Moore Barnhill

The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. See attendance list at end of minutes.

See the following site for abstracts and more information about each session:

<http://www.partnersinflight.org/sewg/>

Update from National Coordinator, Terry Rich

- Able to attend as a result of steering committee support and will be attending the southeast meetings annually.
- Coordinated Bird Monitoring (cbm): a panel discussion is planned for the Friday morning session.
- Monitoring assessment document from PIF Science committee has been routed for review and comment. For species not adequately covered at the continental scale in the C-Plan, there has been a proposal of options on how to meet the needs at the large scale. This has been a primary objective of the Science Committee now that the plan is complete. This report has been circulated for review and will ultimately be sent to the NABCI monitoring subcommittee as raw material for design and coverage of landbird monitoring; will likely change as discussions continue. Need to figure out what the role of the regional working group will be in this process.
- IAFWA report from last year was heavy on monitoring related to evaluating management; many recognized as a shortcoming; response was generally that surveillance monitoring was not addressed well enough in this document.
- NABCI subcommittee was formed in response to the IAFWA report and this subcommittee will address how to evaluate population status of birds that we don't know much about; Jon Bart is the PIF representative on this NABCI subcommittee.
- USFWS is hiring six fulltime new positions in the monitoring arena; likely three at Patuxent and one each with waterbird, shorebird, and landbird initiatives.
- BBS routes are not being run; brochure has been created to appeal to birders who can help out with the program (pdf format); Alicia Craig at ABC will be helping with this effort. Federal agency support is necessary as some of these routes are on federal lands.
- Mexican colleagues have largely completed their assessment as a part of the next C-Plan; reconciling scores for border birds that have been assessed by US and by Mexico has occurred. Mexico is considering this an all-bird plan for the country.
- Best Management Practices Project: David has been working with Randy Gray at NRCS to develop best management practices for landbirds across the US; could be a terrific way to impact management on private lands; want to do this for all birds, not just landbirds so that landowners or district conservationists can use this information; want to address habitats and management that are most affected by Farm Bill programs; need to figure out how to prioritize habitats, etc and this work is going to be contracted out. See <http://www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/leaflet.htm>

- USFS State and Private Forestry: same idea to do BMPs for forest types and focus on private lands; can use the NRCS effort as an outline. These will also be 1 to 2 page documents.
- BBS: which routes are on DOD lands in the PIF newsletter.
- Asilomar proceedings should be out soon (August 2005). Will be 2 printed volumes, possibly also on CD; contact Linda Long with any address changes (llong@fs.fed.us).
- PDF of continental plan is available online. See http://www.partnersinflight.org/cont_plan/default.htm

Report from the Science Committee, Chuck Hunter and Dean Demarest

- Species Assessment Database: the issue of funding for the PIF species assessment database kept updated by RMBO, Arvind Panjabi, was discussed. Are people using this tool? Southeastern Directors need to hear from their PIF coordinators that this information is being used in the CWCS.
- For the southeast region, the breeding assessment scores (PS, BD, etc) have been completed but still need to tackle non-breeding scores. Chuck is also working with RMBO on incorporating waterbird and shorebird scores.
- Refinement of population objectives: panel led by USGS to review protocol of methods for population estimations in C-Plan. Submitted to AUK.
- Habitat implementation framework: how to take a planning document and get work done on the ground (idea started floating around at the TX stepdown meeting). How to get this message to the right people, another potential workshop? Modeling habitat objectives based on population objectives (Tom Will, Randy Dettmers, Jane Fitzgerald).
- National Conservation Need: support for landscape design, bird population-habitat models: important source of funds and needs to come out of BCC as recommended.
- Update of physiographic plans on the web: need to update executive summaries and bird priorities for SE Plans on the website; could possibly contract out work to someone who would work with those most familiar with plans. NE has contracted this task and all plans are updated and on the web. Need a standard format of executive summaries and priority species and updated scores. Potential funding from USFWS to get this done may exist; duration of 4-6 months; approach, SKEP student or graduate student project. Would be good to make sure all regions are presenting information in the same manner.

Implementation Committee, Chris Eberly

- Advocacy Issue: CA PIF developed a decision making process for addressing advocacy issues. Some believe that the success of PIF has been because we provide scientific information and do not advocate a particular position. The Bird Conservation Alliance can tackle advocacy issues and we need to be bringing these issues to them. Others partners may be available at state and regional levels to carry specific messages. SEPIF does not advocate; it's our job to provide the scientific information.

SEQSG & Partners in Flight Joint Discussion

- The partnership between these two groups has been fostered for many years and a spirit of cooperation has developed. The discussion today was promoted due to CP-33's monitoring requirement, a commitment was made that we need to

monitor quail and songbird response to CP 33 buffers. This spring is a trial year because little habitat has been put on the ground. Gathering population response data as a way to demonstrate that the funding is well deserved. If done well, this could provide future dollars for coordinated bird monitoring.

- The Research Working Group within SEQSG was tasked with providing a monitoring protocol, which has been developed (Wes Burger). The primary issues are manpower to count in the summer, fall and winter; and training to identify species. For quail, only need to conduct fall and spring counts; another visit would be necessary to monitor response of wintering birds.
- Discussion: winter is a PIF issue, not enough resources on the quail side to conduct winter counts; 40 points per state is the minimum for monitoring each year and more points will be added as acreages increase; current monitoring requirement does not come with funding but possibly will have money attached in the future; Is this the most important thing we should be monitoring from a PIF perspective? No. But, are we creating good opportunities for ourselves by doing this? Yes; existing bird workshops need to include quail and FSA folks; a positive showing here could create great opportunities within USDA programs for monitoring; Southeast PIF role: PIF coordinators need to make friends with their quail folks; Great opportunity for evaluating management; breeding season info is important; Step 1 is to monitor response; step 2 is to evaluate demographics and breeding season parameters.
- Action: develop an MOU between SEPIF and SEQSG to outline our intentions and needs for signing at the spring Director's meeting (group to work on this issue: Don McKenzie, Steve DeMaso, Dave Godwin, Dan Figert, and Laurel Moore).
- Action: issues of protocol for monitoring songbirds in breeding and wintering seasons will be developed in the SEPIF Monitoring Working Group (Randy Wilson).
- Action: Analysis and data management will be completed by Wes' group.
- Action: Implementation needs to be organized at the regional level (JV's) and occur at the state level (state coordinators).

SEPIF Poster, Cliff Shackelford

- Printed and distributed over 120,000 to 20 states. Spanish version would require translator; have funding from the English version to print a Spanish version. Need to expand the map to include Mexico and the Caribbean.
- Action: motion and second to pay for an interpreter.
- Action: motion and second ship out of country for free.

Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans, EJ

- National Advisory Acceptance Team made up of FWS, State Directors and IAFWA representatives. SWG strategies due October 1st. Species experts will review technical aspects; consideration of reference material will be done.

New Co-chair

- Shawchi Vorisek, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, will be the new Co-chair replacing Laurel.
- Treasurer: EJ can no longer serve in this capacity due to conflicts of interest. A possible replacement may be Nathan Klaus, GADNR, due to the location of the account.

- Discussion: need to have more participation at steering committee meetings, especially State Coordinators; effort to create a type of flyway council to focus on regulatory issues that impact states and non-game birds to improve the communication between USFWS and States (cormorants, golden eagles, etc) is on-going; possibility develop a memo to SE Directors about the need for PIF coordinators to attending annual meetings, and re-emphasize that the meetings are for state coordinators and information exchange; is the current format of meetings appropriate? Could we include wading bird, shorebird, marsh bird folks? Possibility of combined meetings; reassessment of our role in the bird conservation and identify what niches are we filling and how can we develop meetings that revolve around these niches; identify what you need from PIF; outline accomplishments when we get together; look at the Western Working Group model of getting things done; emphasis the value of federal agencies sending staff to these meetings.
- Action: group to further discuss participation issues, poll people on the needs of PIF and structure of these meetings; members include: Dean Demarest, David Pashley, Terry Rich, EJ Williams, Joni Ellis, Bob Cooper and David Buehler and Catherine Rideout.

Flying WILD, Mark LeFebre, Council for Environmental Education

- Newest program for the Council for Environmental Education sponsored by NFWF and CononcoPhilips and program partners include PIF, FWS, NWF, Cornell Lab, ABA, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, and American Zoo and Aquarium Association.
- In the last two years, developed a guide and field tested for middle-school students to learn bird conservation through classroom activities and school bird festivals. Working on a distribution network at the city level for different groups to play a role in teaching teachers —Bird Education Networks. One objective is to connect communities and schools.
- Also seeking city partners to host bird festivals. Guide centers around seven concepts with activities for each concept. See further: <http://www.flyingwild.org/index.htm>
- Activities and concepts outlined in Flying WILD are designed to complement Project WILD.

Other Business

Special session at SEAFWA in St. Louis focusing on Bird conservation; discussion on the structure and involvement needed for this session to occur. Drew Lanham from Clemson might be involved as editor.

Adjourn 1:30 p.m.

List of Participants

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