



## Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

### **Executive Committee of the Waterbird Conservation Council Conference Call November 30, 2004**

#### **Participants:**

Council Members: Kathy Parsons, Paul Baicich, Eric Carey, Jim Kushlan, Paul Schmidt, Gerald Winegrad. Coordinators: Bob Milko, Jennifer Wheeler

Not Available: Ghisselle Alvarado, Ian Davidson, Paul Kluckner, Eric Mellink, Pat Patterson, Melanie Steinkamp.

#### **AGENDA**

##### **1. Preparation For Annual Meeting, January 10-12 in Nassau, Bahamas.**

**Discussion and Decisions:** A webpage has been set up to provide details on the meeting:

**<http://birds.fws.gov/waterbirds/council/2005annualmeeting/announcement.html>**

The Annual Meeting is hugely important because when present in-person, the Council members are better able to engage in in-depth discussions of strategy, work together to solve problems, and agree on direction and re-direction.

Preparation by Committees is essential. Chairs are needed to encourage all committee members – Council members or not – to attend the annual meeting, as well as the field trip.

To prepare, Chairs are asked to update their Vision and Workplan documents with their committees prior in time for circulation as pre-meeting materials. In these updates, committees should review their accomplishments and assess the reasons for outstanding tasks. Because of the volunteer nature of the Council, most if not all committees have been unable to accomplish the tasks laid out for 2004. The Annual Meeting is the opportunity to re-set timelines and strategize approaches for overcoming challenges.

The agenda for the meeting is underdevelopment. The suggestion was made that the full Council convene the morning of January 10 not only for greetings and logistics, but as a way to set the tone for the meeting and to introduce the “questions of strategy” in front of each Committee. The remainder of the day would be Committee breakouts for in-depth discussion of committee issues. Example: The Nominations Committee would discuss strategy in regards to raising capacity of the now all-volunteer Council. Review, discussion of most significant issues, and endorsement of Committee plans will be the focus of the full Council meeting on January 11 and 12.

It was agreed that brief “showcase” presentations would add interest to the meeting. However, given time and financial restraints, it was recommended that Chairs draw from “their ranks” and focus on topics very tightly related to Committee work.



# Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

## **Decisions:**

- Responsibilities of Chairs with regards to preparation will be summarized and circulated to Chairs by Kathy/Jennifer.
- Kathy/Jennifer will work with Chairs to draft up the agenda by mid-December.
- Chairs will have revised Vision and Workplans to Jennifer by December 23 for circulation as pre-meeting materials.
- Executive will meet on the evening of January 9 in Nassau. Executive as a whole is responsible for ensuring a productive and effective meeting.

## **2. FINANCIAL NEEDS**

A number of Council members have expressed a need for financial assistance. Thanks to International Programs of Forest Service and the Neotrop Grant, travelers from Latin America and the Caribbean are likely covered. Travelers from U.S. or Canada are more problematic. Sources must be sought for this.

Meeting costs will be kept down by meeting at Bahamas National Trust.

Field trip details coming together. See website.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VERSION 2**

An Ad Hoc committee has developed a series of recommendations regarding the commitments the initiative made for a Version 2 of the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.

**See Below, pages i - iv.**

It was decided to circulate these to the full Council for input and review. Also, these recommendations can inform the deliberations of the Committees as they revise their Vision and Workplans. A commitment to some strategy for Version 2 will be an outcome of the Annual Meeting.

## **4. BRIEF COMMITTEE SUMMARIES**

**See Below, pages I and II.**

## **5. NEXT MEETING**

Executive Committee will meet the evening prior to the start of the Annual Meeting: January 9, 2005 at the Wyndham resort in Nassua.



# Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

## ADDRESSING VERSION 2 OF NAWCP PROSPECTUS

### DRAFT FOR FULL COUNCIL REVIEW

**Ad Hoc Committee Members:** Kathy Parsons, Jim Kushlan, Paul Kluckner, Jennifer Wheeler, Bob Milko

**Charge:** To develop recommendations for Council regarding the publication of NAWCP Version 2. The recommendations should detail the scope, timeline, and alternative options for the effort. These recommendations should be available to Council prior to annual meeting (January 2005) at which time consensus will be developed regarding selected options and follow-up actions.

**Background:** The publication of the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan Version 1 in 2002 established a common framework for achieving a vision of sustainable populations and habitats of seabirds, wading birds and marshbirds throughout the lands and oceans of continental North America. Version 1 affirmed the dynamic nature of conservation planning and identified immediate next steps in completing the framework.

- "Effective waterbird conservation requires an innovative, dynamic, iterative process of planning, implementation, evaluation of that implementation, and revision of action plans when necessary."
- "The first version of the Plan provides detailed information on the waterbirds that nest colonially, as they were the original focus of the Waterbird initiative....Subsequent versions of the Plan will address solitary-nesting waterbirds, generally the marshbirds, in greater detail."
- "Version 2 (due out 2004) will include more guidance on conservation of non-colonial waterbirds and more details on the needs and priorities of various regions within the overall Plan area, especially the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America."
- "Assessing habitat use and requirements is a necessary preliminary step to establishing habitat goals that can translate into actual habitat acreage on the ground. However, goal setting at the continental scale is not possible at this stage. Habitat goals must first be established at regional and local scales, and then extrapolated to the continental scale."

In addition, the Regional Planning and Implementation Committee of the Waterbird Council has adopted as a priority task (2004 Action Plan) to "Perform a review across regional plans to inform the revision of the continental plan in December 2004."

**Rationale:** Effective waterbird conservation requires the Initiative to address these information and planning needs. In addition, meeting the expectations articulated in Version 1 and expressed in the Council's working committees is necessary to maintain credibility and momentum.



## Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL REGARDING DEVELOPMENT OF VERSION 2 OF THE NORTH AMERICAN WATERBIRD CONSERVATION PLAN

**A principle of iterative planning:** The Waterbirds for the Americas Initiative has made a strong commitment to comprehensive waterbird conservation. Planning at hemispheric, continental, and regional scales is a preliminary but prerequisite step to effective conservation action. Conservation plans provide a framework and guidance for actions at many scales. The dynamic nature of natural resource status and the expected progress made toward conservation goals as a result of research, management and education activities establish the need for iterative planning. In the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (NAWCP), the Waterbird Council was committed to a long-term program of updating and expanding the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan as appropriate, specifically, a Version 2 in 2004 and updates at least every five years thereafter.

**Recommendation 1:** The Council should communicate to the Initiative and partners by early 2005 our commitment to iterative planning and our progress and intentions with regard to the updates and expansions described for a NAWCP Version 2.

**Scope of updates and supplements:** Opportunities to improve the plan exist in both revisions and expansion of information and include:

- Fuller treatment of marshbirds (status assessment, threats, habitats, partners, etc)
- Fuller treatment of Latin American regions of plan area (also South America?)
- Revision of colonial waterbird status assessment based on regional input
- Revision of other plan components based on regional input (threats, partners, monitoring, research, etc)
- Articulation of resource (populations, habitats) goals based on regional input or other sources of information
- Greater emphasis on conservation actions needed based on integration of regional analyses

**Recommendation 2:** The Council should address each of the above areas. Each is important to the advancement of waterbird conservation, so findings on these topics should be made available to the conservation community as soon as they become available.

**A dynamic venue:** The English-language version of NAWCP was published in hard-copy form in fall 2002 and a .pdf version of the printed plan can be downloaded from the Initiative's web site. The provision of errata sheets has been discussed but not designed. A Spanish-language



## Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

version of NAWCP Version 1 is being funded under the International Committee's Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act project; its production is expected in 2005.

Hard-copy forms of reports are valuable for their visibility and readability. However, they are more costly, less accessible, and less reflective of the dynamic nature of conservation in general. While it may be appropriate to distribute future Council products in hard-copy form depending on communication needs and opportunities, the distribution needs for the short-term revision and expansion reports could be best achieved on the web, that is, rather than waiting for distribution in a full "Version 2" document.

**Recommendation 3:** The Council's revision and expansion reports discussed above should be published in electronic form on the web as they become available. All documents should be in multiple translations.

**Accomplishing plan improvements:** Improving the plan requires the guidance and efforts of all committees of the Waterbird Council. Council committees could be assigned the lead on addressing specific areas for revision and expansion. Committees would be responsible for preparing reports on new assessments or recommendations, or at a minimum, identifying the approaches and programs underway to acquire information to inform assessments or recommendations. Lead committees would be as follows:

1. Marshbirds (status assessment, threats, habitats, partners, etc)—Technical Services
2. Latin American regions of plan area (also South America?)—Regional Planning and Implementation; International
3. Revision of colonial waterbird status assessment based on regional input—Technical Services
4. Revision of other plan components based on regional input (threats, partners, monitoring, research, etc)—Regional Planning and Implementation; Technical Services
5. Continental resource (populations, habitats) goals based on regional input—Technical Services
6. Integration of conservation actions based on regional analyses—Regional Planning and Implementation; Conservation Action

**Recommendation 4:** The above committees should include the development of plan revision and expansion reports into their annual work plans. Though specific timelines for completion of reports can be determined by each committee, Council committees should be able to generate products in 2005.

**Maintaining and improving initiative visibility:** While the web is the best venue for the release of plan revision and expansion reports, a hard-copy communications piece has great value for stimulating participation, keeping our profile, and generally affirming the contributions of the initiative.



## Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

**Recommendation 5:** The Council, via the Communications Committee, should develop a new “Executive Summary”-like piece (short, attractive, compelling, etc) in lieu of a full Version 2 as a tool to direct audiences to our updates and expansions to Version 1 information, and generally provide info on what we've accomplished as an Initiative and what our short-term (2005-2010?) priorities are.



# Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

## Waterbird Conservation Council Working Committee Updates

*Updates since September 21, 2004, date of last Executive Conference Call*

### **Technical Services Committee**

*Chair: Melanie Steinkamp*

- Conference call held October 7 committee expanded to include two regional planning leads with a strong interest in monitoring issues.
- Comments solicited and compiled in response to US NABCI request for review of “Monitoring Avian Conservation: Rationale, Design, and Coordination” report.

### **Regional Planning and Implementation Committee**

*Chair: Paul Schmidt*

- Conservation call held November 12; held jointly with Regional Waterbird Planning Leads (individuals responsible for writing regional plans)
- Discussion of appropriateness of objectives for population reductions in conservation plans; written policy on this requested of Committee.
- Need for better communication of Committee goals and tasks to regional planning leads; this should be taken into account as Vision and Workplan revised
- Regional planning updates: approach for comprehensive Pacific Coast planning charted out with partners; SE section on management drafted and reduction objectives to be revisited; Intermountain West section on monitoring drafted; several Upper Miss/Great Lakes sections drafted; initiative represented at MS, SD, CA, ND all-bird meetings and PIF Western Working Group meeting.

### **Communications Committee**

*Chair: Paul Baicich*

- Conference call held October 25; next planned for December 6.
- Statement of purpose and activities approved.
- Committee immediate task is increased use of listservs (WaterbirdCouncil and WaterbirdsNetwork) to share information on relevant topics, such as conservation action issues or summary of conferences.
- Other immediate task is improvement of website.

### **Resources Committee**

*Chair: Pat Patterson*

- Manomet will cover outstanding needs from Annual Meeting 2004 (to ABC and to individual Council members).
- Immediate task is to ensure costs covered for Annual Meeting 2005.



# Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

## **International Committee**

*Co-Chairs: Ian Davidson, Ghisselle Alvarado*

- Revised budget for Neotrop project submitted to USFWS.
- Terms of Reference for overall Neotropical Waterbird Coordinator finalized and circulated in Spanish and English; handful of applications received thus far.
- “Country partner workplans” finalized; country partners contacted for development of contracts with Birdlife.
- Approach for Caribbean discussed among partners; proposal is now to combine Neotrop funds with other projects to hire a SCSCB staff person to forward waterbird strategy, IBA and West Indian Whistling Duck work in Caribbean.
- Promotional factsheets for Neotrop project and initiative made available in English and Spanish; project and initiative presented at PIF workshop at El Congreso de la Sociedad Mesoamericana para la Biología y la Conservación meeting in Managua, November 15-19.
- Translation of continental-scale North American Waterbird Conservation Plan underway.

## **Conservation Action Committee**

*Chair: Gerald Winegrad*

- To Be Added

## **Nominations Committee**

*Chair: Katharine Parsons*

- George Finney identified as new Canadian “NGO representative” (replacing Gerald McKeating)
- Slate of three individuals from Latin America and placeholders for Mexican representative circulated to full Council; decision made to wait on these invitations until Nominations Committee further develops policy statements about expansion of Council.
- Conference call scheduled December 16 or 17.

## **Ad Hoc Committee on Developing Version 2 of NAWCP**

Call held November 9; recommendations ready for forwarding to Executive Committee.

## **Ad Hoc Committee on Geographic Priorities**

- Decision on map for NAWCA US Standard Grant TAQ 3 due soon. Topic discussed with regional planning leads; ad hoc group to meet by call ASAP.