



ASSOCIATION *of*
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

**Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Bird Conservation Committee -Part II
Committee Report
Meeting of March 28, 2008
Gary Myers, Chair
John Hoskins, Vice-Chair
Phoenix, Arizona**

The meeting convened during 8:30 AM-10:00 AM, chaired by Gary Myers. There were 48 attendees participants in attendance, including 22 Committee members.

Scheduled Discussion Items:

Waterfowl Working Group report

- **Legislative and Policy Report** – The President’ Budget for FY 09 includes the same budget request for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) as last year. Ducks Unlimited is circulating a sign on letter in the House and Senate. Once they are complete they will be sent to the appropriations committee. There will be a hearing in the spring on the Clean Water Restoration Act in both the House and the Senate. Ducks Unlimited would like to encourage everyone to support the Act. While the Association does not support the language in the current bill before congress, the Association does support legislation that would return wetlands to pre-SWANCC protection.
- **North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) Committee** – The NAWMP Committee met in February and focused on addressing the recommendations of the 2007 Assessment. The July meeting will be held in conjunction with four Joint Ventures. Wayne MacCallum and Terry Steinwand are the Chair and Vice-Chair of the NAWCA Council respectively.
- **Scaup Action Team** - A Scaup action team has been developed. They have a science based agenda to set priorities and objectives for Scaup populations. They also are writing a Scaup action plan to develop on the ground conservation actions.
- **Federal Duck Stamp** – The President’s budget asked for the development of legislation to increase the price of the Duck Stamp from \$15.00 to \$25.00. The Duck Stamp price has not increased since 1991. The Waterfowl Working Group asks the Bird Conservation Committee to ask for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ formal support of an increase to the Duck Stamp at their Business meeting. The Electronic Duck Stamp pilot projects were a success.

- **Wetlands Loan Act** – Ducks Unlimited is looking for a second sponsor of the Wetlands Loan Act. There was a discussion about whether an increase in the Duck Stamp will have an affect on the passage of the Wetlands Loan Act.
- **Mallard Satellite Telemetry Study** – The Study will be used to test assumptions of the NAWMP and help with modeling efforts. It could also be used to determine how actions on the ground are affecting duck populations.
- **Future of Waterfowl Management Workshop** – The workshop will be critical to waterfowl management. The intent is to bring together the current science on species, the implementation of the plan on the ground and the human dimensions aspect of recruitment and retention. The workshop will be held on August 26-28, 2008 in Minneapolis. Each State Fish and Wildlife Agency has two seats. The Working Group encourages the State Directors to attend (See recommendation below).
- **State Grant Program to Canada** - Last year 34 states participated in the State Grant Program with Canada and provided \$2.87 Million.

Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group Report –

- **Mourning Dove Task Force** – They had a meeting in December 2008 to look at harvest strategies for the four Flyways. The Strategies have been forwarded to the Flyways for approval. Three of the four Flyways have approved the strategies. The Pacific Flyway will consider the approval of the strategy in July 2008.
- **Status of Banding, Interim Harvest Management Strategy Development, and Recruitment Study** – This past summer, 34 states banded close to 40,000 doves. About 150,000 doves have been banded over the past 5 years. This is the 4th year of a study on wing collection. The intent is to develop a wing collection program over the next 5 years much as they do with waterfowl.
- **Non-toxic shot** – Texas Parks and Wildlife is working to demonstrate that non-toxic shot does kill doves. They are also conducting a survey of hunters to learn their opinions about using non-toxic shot.
- **Woodcock Task Force** – The Working Group approved the Woodcock Conservation Plan in March 2007. The Working Group asks that the Bird Conservation Committee formally endorse the Plan (see recommendation below).
- **Northern Forest Woodcock Coalition** - The Wildlife Management Institute has assembled a coalition of 32 public and private conservation entities to address the decline in Woodcock populations. A website has been developed. It provides a source of information on woodcock management. The address of the website will be www.timberdoodle.org. Please contact Scot Williamson with any comments on the website.
- **Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Support Task Force** – The Task Force was created primarily to develop strategies for obtaining funding for primary research and management needs for webless species. The 16 MSUGB species have been combined into 5 groups for ease of evaluating the needs and preparing a strategy to gain additional funding to meet those needs. They are focusing on mourning and white-winged doves first. The Task Force conducted a dove workshop in 2008. They developed five priority needs for doves in the US. They include making the banding program operational,, developing a parts collection survey, getting an independent measure of abundance and

trend, identifying environmental factors that affect the distribution of doves, and improving the harvest regulations program.

- **Webless Migratory Game Bird Research Program** – Additional funding has been obtained for the Program with \$280,000 being available for projects in 2008. There were 11 proposals submitted for funding. The proposals were evaluated by the Flyway's webless game bird committees. They approved 5 proposals to do research on Yellow Rail, Woodcock and Sandhill Crane.

Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group Report

- **Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act** - The Working Group discussed early reauthorization of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (Neotrop Act). The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) along with a coalition of partners is seeking early reauthorization. A Bill will be introduced next week by representatives Ron Kind (WI) and Wayne Gilchrest (MD). The Bill includes a 5 year reauthorization that ramps authorization up to 25 M. The Neotrop Act is not well known within the bird community. Therefore, ABC would like to build a brand for the Neotrop Act to improve grassroots support from birders. They are developing a campaign called the Act for American Songbirds to promote the Neotrop Act.
- **Bird Conservation Funding Coalition** - The Bird Conservation Funding Coalition submitted a letter to congress on their funding request for Joint Ventures, State Wildlife Grants, Neotrop Act, North American Wetlands Conservation Act, US Forest Service International Programs, USFWS Wildlife without Borders, and USFWS science support. They also supported an increase to the Breeding Bird Survey.
- **Conservation on Corporate Lands** - Nancy Gloman, USFWS, presented information on a project that she is working on with ConocoPhillips (CoP). She is developing a bird conservation strategy for CoP. Although CoP has been involved in migratory bird conservation to date (E.g., support for Joint Ventures, a grant program through NFWF, etc.), they want to take a more strategic approach. This is an opportunity to develop new and innovative partnerships for migratory bird conservation on corporate lands.
- **Breeding Bird Survey** - The Working Group heard from Keith Pardieck, USGS, on the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). They have developed a strategic plan to improve the scientific credibility; scope and coverage; and data management of the survey. Increasing the scope includes increasing the density of BBS routes and expanding the BBS into Mexico. The BBS has consistently lacked resources to provide the services that the bird conservation community needs from BBS. Adjusting for inflation, they have fewer resources now than they did in the 1970s. They have used new technologies to become more efficient but are reaching a point where they can no longer sustain their current level of work. The FY 2009 President's budget requests an additional \$1 Million for BBS. The Working Group encourages everyone to support increased resources for the BBS.
- **PIF International Conference** - The 4th International PIF Conference in McAllen was a great success. Nearly 700 people attended the PIF conference, and well over 100 were from outside the U.S. 45 sponsors contributed over \$125,000 in support. There were nearly 500 oral and poster presentations.

- **International Conservation** - The Working Group discussed international conservation of migratory birds. Robert Mesta, Sonoran Joint Venture presented on the topic of working with Mexico. He discussed various issues surrounding culture, language, capacity, and education/outreach. The Working Group was reminded about the NABCI Continentally Important Proposals and their link to the conservation of migratory birds in the US, Canada, and Mexico. Dave Erickson, MO DOC, reported on the progress of the Southern Wings Task Force (see recommendation below).

Resident Game Bird Working Group Report

- **Resident Game Bird Plans** - The Working Group discussed the Prairie Grouse Plan, Spruce Grouse Plan, Western Quail Plan, National Wild Turkey Plan, Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI), and the national Pheasant Plan. The Spruce Grouse and Western Quail plan will be completed before the September 2008 meeting. The NBCI is in the process of updating the NBCI Plan. The National Wild Turkey Plan is still a work in progress. They anticipate completing the plan in the fall of 2009.
- **Prairie Grouse Plan** – The Prairie Grouse Plan has been reviewed by the States and endorsed by the Midwest State Regional Association. The Working Group asks that the Bird Conservation Committee ask for endorsement of the Plan at the Association’s Business meeting (See recommendation below).
- **Pheasant Plan** – They have a group in the Midwest that is supporting the technical development of information for the Plan. However, they are looking for a funding source. They have not decided whether to plan by Bird Conservation Region (BCR) or State. The Working Group encouraged them to plan by BCRs so that the Plan is easily integrated with other resident game bird plans and other planning efforts.
- **Game Bird Planning Session at the 2008 North American** – Breck Carmichael co-chaired a special session at the meeting with Dan Dessecker.
- **Northern Bobwhite Conservation Awards** – Quail Unlimited presented the NBCI awards. Two awards were given to groups and one award was given to an individual. The Georgia DNR, Wildlife Resources Division and a number of partners in Scott County, Missouri received the group award. The Missouri Department of Conservation stepped down the state level NBCI population objectives to the county level. Scott County is the first County to reach its objectives. John Johnson, Deputy Administrator of FSA received the individual award.
- **Pheasants Forever** – They have put approximately 5 Million acres on the ground in the last 25 years. They have a goal to put an additional 5 Million acres on the ground in the next 5 years. Quail Forever now has 100 chapters that are approximately one year old.
- **Presidential Executive Order on Hunting Heritage** – The Working Group reminded everyone about the Executive Order. There is a White House conference in September to help perpetuate the North American Model.
- **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)** – NFWF has supported the development of numerous resident game bird plans including American Woodcock, Spruce Grouse, and Prairie Grouse etc. The Working Group asks that the Bird Conservation Committee send a letter to Jeff Trandahl, NFWF, thanking them for their support (See recommendation below).

Other Discussion Items

Threats and Emerging Issues Identified:

N/A

Action Items:

1. The PIF/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group recommends that that Bird Conservation Committee send a copy of the Interim Report along with a series of specific questions to State Fish and Wildlife Agency Directors asking for their feedback and comment. The information that is collected from the States will be used by the Southern Wings Task Force to develop a final recommendation. The recommendation will be brought to the Bird Conservation Committee in September 2008.
2. The Waterfowl Working Group asks the Bird Conservation Committee to ask for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' formal support of an increase to the Duck Stamp at their Business meeting.
3. The Waterfowl Working Group asks that the Bird Conservation Committee mention the workshop on the Future of Waterfowl Management at the Business meeting and encourage State Director and staff participation.
4. The Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group asks the Bird Conservation Committee endorse the Woodcock Conservation Plan.
5. The Resident Gamebird Working Group asks the Bird Conservation Committee to bring a recommendation of endorsement of the Prairie Grouse Plan Conservation Plan to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Business meeting.

Submitted by: Gary Myers, Chair