

D R A F T : 03-10-04

Minnesota Bird Conservation Initiative Workshop: Part II

**April 12-13, 2004
MN Department of Transportation Conference Center
Lower Level
3725 12th Street North
St. Cloud, Minnesota 56303
320-255-4181**

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Monday, April 12, 2004

9:00 a.m. Registration
Coffee and treats

10:00 a.m. Welcome, Introductions, Purpose of Meeting, Agenda

- Jackie Lind, Minnesota DNR, Division of Ecological Services
- Lee Pfannmuller, Minnesota DNR, Director of the Division of Ecological Services
- John Christian, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Assistant Regional Director, Migratory Birds & State Programs

10:20 a.m. Update on the Minnesota Bird Conservation Initiative (MNBCI)
Summary of input and direction from October 2003 Workshop
Summary of Steering Committee's progress in implementing suggestions
Presentation of draft vision/mission/principles/goals
Discussion

- Jaime Edwards, DNR Nongame Wildlife Program

11:15 a.m. Links with Minnesota Comprehensive Wildlife Plan (CWP)

- Emmett Mullin, Minnesota DNR, CWP Project Leader
- Rob Blair, University of Minnesota, Fisheries, Wildlife, Conservation Biology

11:30 a.m. Lunch (provided on site)

12:30 p.m. Technical Discussion Groups: Breakouts by Major Bird Initiatives

1. LANDBIRD PLAN (Partners in Flight) WORKSHOP

- Tom Will, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Partners in Flight Midwest Regional Coordinator
- Jaime Edwards, MN DNR, Nongame Wildlife Program

Part A: What are the priority landbirds on which we should focus? (1 hour)

- 114 species of Minnesota landbirds have been identified as priorities by various plans. Which of these should drive our conservation efforts? (List with supporting data will be distributed prior to the workshop.)
- How do we balance a focus on rare species with a focus on stewardship species (species with sizeable and perhaps even stable populations in Minnesota that may be in trouble elsewhere)?
- Discussion outcomes:
 - 1) Criteria and a protocol for selecting a MNBCI priority species list.
 - 2) A list of top priority landbirds. (Depending on the number of people in the workshop, we may break into subgroups focusing on grassland, southern forest, and northern forest birds.)

Part B: How do we set Minnesota population and habitat objectives for priority species? (2.5 hours)

- The recently published PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan estimates population sizes for 448 species and sets continental-scale population objectives for 100 Watch List species. A recent national workshop recommended a process for stepping down these objectives to regional and state levels. How does this process apply to Minnesota? How can local Minnesota data be used to refine continental objectives?
- We will form subgroups to work through the stepping-down/rolling-up process for three species: Golden-winged Warbler (BCR 12), Red-headed Woodpecker (BCR 22/23), and Dickcissel or Grasshopper Sparrow (BCR 11). Based on data and tools that will be available at the workshop for these species, we will strive to:
 - 1) Evaluate assumptions of population estimates (continental and local) and recommend model changes.
 - 2) Evaluate population targets for Minnesota.
 - 3) Explore available models for linking population targets to habitat goals and recommend population-based habitat goals for species.
 - 4) Identify appropriate monitoring and evaluation protocols at state and local scales.
 - 5) Identify information/research needs.

Part C: How do we continue the process begun in this workshop? (1 hour)

- A desired outcome of this 2nd MNBCI workshop is the formation of continuing work groups to complete the biological foundation for Minnesota bird conservation at regional scales. Specifically, we need to:
 - 1) Develop ideas for forming links with other bird initiatives in order to achieve community-based, integrated all-bird conservation at the BCR scale.
 - 2) Provide a list of next steps, with time frames and leadership.

2. WATERFOWL PLAN

- Barb Pardo, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Joint Venture Coordinator
- Ray Norrgard, MN DNR Division of Wildlife

Part A: What are the priority waterfowl species?

Priority waterfowl species in Minnesota's Bird Conservation Regions (BCR's), based on continental population priorities, and importance of/need for breeding and non-breeding habitats (source: North American Waterfowl Management Plan 2003 Update and MN DNR Section of Wildlife).

Part B: How do we set Minnesota population and habitat objectives for priority species?

Species and habitat priorities in Minnesota as currently described in the Joint Venture Implementation Plans of the Prairie Pothole and Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Region Joint Ventures.

Other habitat and program priorities of Minnesota's waterfowl conservation partners (e.g. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Minnesota Waterfowl Association).

Part C: Part C: How do we continue the process begun in this workshop?

Develop ideas for forming links with other bird initiatives in order to achieve community-based, integrated all-bird conservation at the BCR scale.

Provide a list of next steps, with time frames and leadership.

3. SHOREBIRD PLAN

- Bob Russell, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Shorebird Coordinator
- Lisa Gelvin-Innvaer, MN DNR Prairie Pothole Shorebird Representative

Part A: Prioritizing species (1 hour)

1. Step down the two regional shorebird plans to the state level. What contributions from MNBCI can effectively help the Upper Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes and Northern Plains/Prairie Pothole Shorebird Conservation Plans in Minnesota?
2. List priority species identified by both plans. Are there additional species MNBCI may want to add to this list?

Part B: Population and Habitat (2.5 hours)

1. Do we set population and/or habitat goals for Minnesota's breeding and migratory shorebirds? If we set population goals, evaluate assumptions of population estimates both local and continental. Can we identify additional key stopover sites?
2. How does one allow for environmental variation (Great Plains climatic cycles) in setting goals, particularly in the Prairie Potholes BCR. If we set habitat goals, what are the links to goals set by the Waterfowl Plan?
3. We will form subgroups to work through the stepping-down/bottom up process for three shorebird species (one migrant, two breeders): Spotted Sandpiper; Marbled Godwit; Buff-breasted Sandpiper using a variety of tools and available data including BBS population trends and range maps, DNR data, International Shorebird Survey data, expert opinion, and available models.

Part C: Implementing Management Strategies (1 hour)

1. How do we implement shorebird habitat goals? population goals?
2. For breeding species, we need to identify core concentration areas on which to focus our conservation efforts. How many protected core areas are sufficient to protect a species in the state? How can we identify these core areas without a breeding bird atlas?

3. Is piggybacking on Joint Venture's goals going to give us what we need for habitat goals? Can shorebird conservation efforts be linked with other bird conservation initiatives at the local level?
4. Identify information, research, other state shorebird goals, and monitoring needs.

4. WATERBIRD PLAN

- Linda Wires, University of Minnesota, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Conservation Biology, Upper Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes Waterbird Plan
- Steve Lewis, USFWS, Upper Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes Waterbird Plan
- Katie Haws, MN DNR, Regional Nongame Biologist, Northern Plains/Prairie Pothole Waterbird Plan

Part A: Prioritizing species (1 hour)

1. Stepping down the two regional waterbird plans to the state level. Identify contributions from MNBCI to effectively help implement the Upper Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes (UMVGL) and Northern Plains/Prairie Pothole (NPP) Waterbird Conservation Plans in Minnesota.
2. List priority species identified by both plans. Reach collective agreement on a priority list for MN, and identify any additional species MNBCI may want to add to this list.

Part B: Setting Population and Habitat Objectives and Conservation Strategies (2.5 hours)

1. In the UMVGL planning effort, population data have been assembled to the extent that they were available for each species, and population objectives were developed for some breeding waterbird species at the BCR level (will be presented). We will discuss importance for MN (in BCRs 12, 22, 23), and how BCR objectives may be refined and stepped down to state or site levels.
2. Habitat objectives may be available for some species that breed in the UMVGL. We will discuss how they can be stepped down to MN, and identification of priority habitats, landscapes, and sites, especially IBAs, that can be identified in MN to help reach waterbird conservation goals.
3. Habitat Associations: The usefulness of Joint Venture goals to waterbird habitat needs in MN.
4. Identify important sites for staging waterbirds in MN.
5. In addition to habitat, identify other factors that need to be addressed to conserve waterbirds in MN (e.g., human disturbance, predation, competition, lead sinkers, depredation conflicts, lack of population data, lack of knowledge of limiting factors and management needs, etc.).

Part C: Implementing Management Strategies (1 hour)

1. How do we implement waterbird conservation goals in the context of all-bird conservation?
2. Linking waterbird habitat conservation efforts with other bird conservation initiatives, such as shorebird and waterfowl plans at the state and local levels.
3. For breeding species, we need to identify important colony sites and nesting areas on which to focus our conservation efforts. Can we identify important sites without a consistent colonial waterbird monitoring effort or breeding bird atlas?
4. Identify non-habitat conservation efforts needed for MN waterbirds, e.g., surveys and monitoring, habitat/landscape modeling and GIS, research, education/outreach.
5. Identify key players and next steps MNBCI partners can take to implement the UMVGL and NPP waterbird plans in partnership with others.

5:00 p.m. Adjourn for dinner (on your own)

Tuesday, April 13, 2004

8:10 a.m. Convene
Coffee and treats

8:30 a.m. **What did we learn yesterday?**
How do we continue science-based planning and prioritization?
What are some specific tasks for implementation of bird conservation in Minnesota?

- Tom Will, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Partners in Flight Midwest Regional Coordinator
- Jaime Edwards, MN DNR, Nongame Wildlife Program
- Barb Pardo, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Joint Venture Coordinator
- Ray Norrgard, MN DNR Division of Wildlife
- Bob Russell, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Shorebird Coordinator
- Lisa Gelvin-Innvaer, MN DNR Prairie Pothole Shorebird Representative
- Linda Wires, University of MN, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Conservation Biology

9:15 a.m. Break

9:30 a.m. **Breakouts: Develop Scope and Action Plans**

A. Enhanced Partnerships for Implementation

- Cheryl Miller, Conservationist
- Jaime Edwards, DNR Nongame Wildlife Program

How can MNBCI strengthen partnerships with public and private organizations in Minnesota to foster more effective and efficient delivery of conservation? A panel representing government, tourism, and conservation will discuss what is needed to integrate MBCI into existing programs.

B. Public Support and Education

- Jim Williams, Minnesota Ornithologists Union
- Brian Stenquist, Minnesota DNR, Division of Ecological Services

How can we better share and spread information about bird conservation? How can we best engage land managers in bird conservation? What is the best way to engage future partners?

C. Leadership and Resources

- Mark Martell, Audubon, Director of Bird Conservation
- Scott Lanyon, Bell Museum of Natural History, Director

How do we provide effective leadership and an action-oriented organizational structure for MNBCI? What resources can be accessed to promote MNBCI's mission?

D. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Tom Will, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Partners in Flight Midwest Regional Coordinator
- Andy Paulios, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Coordinator

Some national, regional, and state Coordinated Bird Monitoring programs are forming or are already in place. What are the components of these programs, and how do these components relate to Minnesota? How do we initiate objective-based, coordinated bird monitoring in Minnesota in order to evaluate the success of our bird conservation strategies? Does MNBCI's monitoring effort require a separate committee, or should planning for monitoring be integrated with BCR-level subcommittees?

Noon **Lunch** (provided on site)

1:00 p.m. **How Can We Launch a Breeding Bird Atlas in Minnesota?**

- Bob Russell, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Shorebird Coordinator
- Jan Green, Author and conservationist

1:30 p.m. **Moving from Talk to Action: What Are the Next Steps**

- Reports from morning discussion groups
- Actions needed to further MNBCI
- Formation of workgroups and standing committees
- Establishment of timeline for next steps and next meeting

2:30 p.m. **Technical Discussion Groups: Breakouts by BCRs**

Integrated all-bird conservation requires that the various initiatives address both compatible and competing objectives in implementing the most efficient community-based bird conservation strategies. The MNBCI Steering Committee feels that the best way to achieve this integration is via regional science teams that are coordinated at the state level and connected to broader BCR and continental efforts. We anticipate that the following breakouts will continue as MNBCI science working groups:

- **Prairie Potholes (BCR 11)**
leader: Diane Granfors
- **Prairie Hardwood Transition (BCR 22/23)**
leader: Jaime Edwards
- **Boreal Hardwood Transition (BCR 12)**
leader: JoAnn Hanowski

Using the products of Monday afternoon's breakouts as well as example tools provided by breakout group leaders, we will:

- 1) Develop protocols to continue the work of formulating population-based habitat objectives for priority species.
- 2) Identify the decision support tools we will need for integrating objectives.
- 3) Identify the biological support tools we will need for managers and others in order to implement conservation objectives.
- 4) Draft a meeting schedule and a 24-month action plan for delivering the products we identify.

4:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

Minnesota All-Bird Workshop: Part II

April 12-13, 2004

Report to the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Draft: 05-10-04

Minnesota held the second part of its two-phase all-bird workshop on April 12-13, 2004, thanks again to the financial support from the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

This report provides a summary of the workshop activities and outcomes. The workshop agenda, evaluation results, Steering Committee members, and list of participants are included as attachments. An appendix is being prepared with detailed outcomes from each of the eleven discussion groups that met during this workshop, and will be available upon request.

BACKGROUND AND STRATEGY

A nine-member, multi-agency design team was organized by the Minnesota DNR in January, 2003. The team gained IAFWA approval to hold their all-bird conservation workshop in two parts. The first part focused on creating a collaboration or network of partners who would work together to support the second part of the workshop, dedicated to furthering on-the-ground implementation of bird plans.

The first workshop was held October 1-2, 2003, and was attended by 59 people who confirmed the need for a Minnesota Bird Conservation Initiative (MNBCI). Between October 2003 and April 2004, a Steering Committee was formalized (*Attachment F*). They drafted a mission statement, organizational structure, and desired outcomes for MNBCI (*Attachments A & B*), and designed the agenda for the second workshop (*Attachment C*).

PARTICIPANTS

There were 60 participants for part two of the workshop, held April 12-13, 2004, in St. Cloud, Minnesota (*Attachment G*). Invitations were sent by e-mail to 156 people on a list that the MNBCI Steering Committee had created during the past year. Of the 60 people attending, 23 were employees of state fish and wildlife agencies, and 37 represented a diverse set of other partner organizations.

AGENDA AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

The agenda had four primary sections (*Attachment C*). Participant evaluations for each section are included (*Attachment E*). The first morning gave participants an overview of the first workshop and the work of the Steering Committee. The mission and desired outcomes of MNBCI was presented for discussion.

The second part of the workshop focused on implementation strategies for each of the four major, national or continental bird conservation initiatives. Each discussion group discussed priority species, population and habitat objectives, and a plan for continuing this work.

The next morning provided an opportunity to form four MNBCI committees, and each held their first meeting: management implementation, public support and education, leadership and resources, and monitoring and evaluation. Participants signed up to continue working on these committees.

Participants during the final afternoon were divided into three technical discussion groups, one for each of the Bird Conservation Regions in Minnesota: Prairie Potholes, Prairie Hardwood Transition, and Boreal Hardwood Transition. Each group will be a sub-committee of MNBCI's Conservation Planning Committee.

OUTCOMES

Summaries from the 11 discussion groups are included at the end of this report (*Attachment D*). In addition to the information provided by the speakers and the opportunities for formal and informal dialogue among the participants, this workshop achieved the following specific outcomes:

- Continued agreement from 60 key stakeholders that a coalition with a committee structure and leadership is needed in Minnesota to accomplish all-bird conservation,.
- Continued commitment from workshop participants to provide support for this initiative through membership on committees, technical expertise, funding, volunteer time as a match for federal grants, or other support from their organizations.
- Formation of 5 committees, in addition to the Steering Committee:
 - * Leadership and resources
 - * Monitoring and evaluation
 - * Management implementation
 - * Public support and education
 - * Conservation planning (with sub-committees for 3 BCRs)

- Confirmation of a draft mission statement for the Minnesota Bird Conservation Initiative (attached).

BUDGET

The IAFWA expenditures for this second workshop will be less than \$3,323 (facility \$350, food \$1,334, and estimated travel expenses \$1,639). We spent \$3,035 on the first workshop in October 2003. Together, both workshops totaled \$6,358, with \$1,642 remaining from our \$8,000 IAFWA grant.

NEXT STEPS

The Steering Committee is meeting in May to review the results of the second workshop, explore options for funding a MNBCI Coordinator, confirm the committee structure and leadership, and prepare a work plan for the next phase of the initiative.

CONTACT

If there are questions or requests for further information, they may be directed to the MNBCI Steering Committee through Jackie Lind, Minnesota DNR, 651-772-7877, jackie.lind@dnr.state.mn.us (before June 1) or to Jaime Edwards, Minnesota DNR, 507-280-5070, jaime.edwards@dnr.state.mn.us (after June 1).

List of Attachments

- A. MNBCI mission and desired outcomes
- B. MNBCI organizational structure
- C. Agenda for April 2003 workshop
- D. Summaries of workshop discussion groups
- E. Participant evaluations for April workshop
- F. Steering Committee members
- G. List of April 2003 workshop participants

Minnesota Bird Conservation Initiative

“To deliver the full spectrum of bird conservation through regionally-based, biologically-driven, landscape-oriented partnerships.”

A new collaboration is forming in Minnesota to keep birds common and reverse species declines. This voluntary partnership builds upon efforts already underway in government, tourism, and conservation. The Minnesota Bird Conservation Initiative will improve partnerships working on mutual goals.

The strategies for achieving this mission are:

1. ***Developing regional conservation plans*** for all birds based on available data and ongoing research, a scientific approach, and priority birds and habitats.
2. ***Enhancing partnerships*** for implementing bird conservation through communication, coordination, information, and action.
3. ***Building public support*** through education, tourism, and bird-friendly communities.

Desired outcomes for the conservation strategies:

Conservation planning outcomes:

- Minnesota’s priority birds and habitats are identified.
- Population and habitat goals are set.
- Regional step-down plans for each MN bird conservation region are complete.
- Decision support tools for integrating bird conservation objectives are identified.
- Biological support tools necessary for implementing conservation objectives are developed.
- An information and data clearinghouse that is accessible, user-friendly, and understandable by the broader conservation community is established.

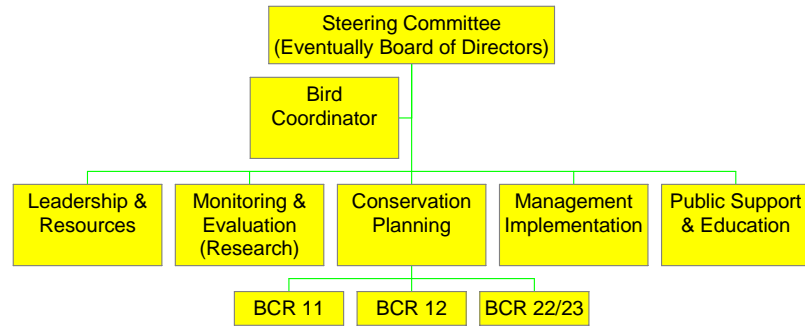
Implementation outcomes:

- Partners are engaged and working cooperatively toward common conservation goals.
- The missions of participating partners are advanced.
- Common birds remain common and declining birds are stabilized or increasing.
- A bird monitoring plan is in place.
- A MN Breeding Bird Atlas is complete.
- Bird needs are integrated into federal, state, and local conservation programs.

Public support outcomes:

- A well-informed public understands the importance of conservation and birds.
- Communities incorporate bird and habitat needs in development planning.
- Bird-related tourism is well-developed, yet grounded in sound conservation principles.
- MNBCI has permanent funding.

MINNESOTA BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE STRUCTURE



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AGENDA

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 - Lee Pfannmuller, Minnesota DNR, Director of the Division of Ecological Services
 - Barb Pardo, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Joint Venture Coordinator
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Discussion
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- 11:15 a.m.** **Links with Minnesota Comprehensive Wildlife Plan (CWP)**
- Emmett Mullin, Minnesota DNR, CWP Project Leader
 - Rob Blair, University of Minnesota, Fisheries, Wildlife, Conservation Biology
- 11:30 a.m.** **Lunch** (provided on site)

12:30 p.m. Technical Discussion Groups: Breakouts by Major Bird Initiatives

1. LANDBIRD PLAN (Partners in Flight) WORKSHOP (*Lewis Central Room*)

- Tom Will, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Partners in Flight Midwest Regional Coordinator
- Jaime Edwards, MN DNR, Nongame Wildlife Program
- Brian Stenquist, Minnesota DNR, Division of Ecological Services

Part A: What are the priority landbirds on which we should focus? (1 hour)

- 114 species of Minnesota landbirds have been identified as priorities by various plans. Which of these should drive our conservation efforts? (List with supporting data will be distributed prior to the workshop.)
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Part B: How do we set Minnesota population and habitat objectives for priority species? (2.5 hours)

- The recently published PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan estimates population sizes for 448 species and sets continental-scale population objectives for 100 Watch List species. A recent national workshop recommended a process for stepping down these objectives to regional and state levels. How does this process apply to Minnesota? How can local Minnesota data be used to refine continental objectives?
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Part C: How do we continue the process begun in this workshop? (1 hour)

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 - 1) Develop ideas for forming links with other bird initiatives in order to achieve community-based, integrated all-bird conservation at the BCR scale.
 - 2) Provide a list of next steps, with time frames and leadership.

2. WATERFOWL PLAN (*Lewis North Room*)

- Barb Pardo, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Joint Venture Coordinator
- Ray Norrgard, MN DNR Division of Wildlife

Part A: What are the priority waterfowl species?

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Develop ideas for forming links with other bird initiatives in order to achieve community-based, integrated all-bird conservation at the BCR scale.

Provide a list of next steps, with time frames and leadership.

3. SHOREBIRD PLAN (*Lewis South Room*)

- Bob Russell, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Shorebird Coordinator
- Lisa Gelvin-Innvaer, MN DNR Prairie Pothole Shorebird Representative

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4. Identify information, research, other state shorebird goals, and monitoring needs.

4. WATERBIRD PLAN (*Room I-West*)

- Linda Wires, University of Minnesota, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Conservation Biology, Upper Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes Waterbird Plan
- Steve Lewis, USFWS, Upper Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes Waterbird Plan
- Katie Haws, MN DNR, Regional Nongame Biologist, Northern Plains/Prairie Pothole Waterbird Plan

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- Linda Wires, University of MN, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Conservation Biology

9:15 a.m. Break

9:30 a.m. **Breakouts: Develop Scope and Action Plans**

A. Enhanced Partnerships for Implementation (*Lewis North Room*)

- Cheryl Miller, Conservationist
- Jaime Edwards, DNR Nongame Wildlife Program

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- Jim Williams, Minnesota Ornithologists Union
- Brian Stenquist, Minnesota DNR, Division of Ecological Services

How can we better share and spread information about bird conservation? How can we best engage land managers in bird conservation? What is the best way to engage future partners?

C. Leadership and Resources (*Lewis South Room*)

- Mark Martell, Audubon, Director of Bird Conservation

How do we provide effective leadership and an action-oriented organizational structure for MNBCI? What resources can be accessed to promote MNBCI's mission?

D. Monitoring and Evaluation (*Lewis Central Room*)

- Tom Will, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Partners in Flight Midwest Regional Coordinator
- Andy Paulios, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Coordinator

Some national, regional, and state Coordinated Bird Monitoring programs are forming or are already in place. What are the components of these programs, and how do these components relate to Minnesota? How do we initiate objective-based, coordinated bird monitoring in Minnesota in order to evaluate the success of our bird conservation strategies? Does MNBCI's monitoring effort require a separate committee, or should planning for monitoring be integrated with BCR-level subcommittees?

Noon **Lunch** (provided on site)

1:00 p.m. **How Can We Launch a Breeding Bird Atlas in Minnesota?**

- Bob Russell, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Shorebird Coordinator
- Jan Green, Author and conservationist

1:30 p.m. **Moving from Talk to Action: What Are the Next Steps**

- Reports from morning discussion groups
- Actions needed to further MNBCI
- Formation of workgroups and standing committees
- Establishment of timeline for next steps and next meeting

2:30 p.m. **Technical Discussion Groups: Breakouts by BCRs**

Integrated all-bird conservation requires that the various initiatives address both compatible and competing objectives in implementing the most efficient community-based bird conservation strategies. The MNBCI Steering Committee feels that the best way to achieve this integration is via regional science teams that are coordinated at the state level and connected to broader BCR and continental efforts. We anticipate that the following breakouts will continue as MNBCI science working groups:

- **Prairie Potholes - BCR 11 (*Lewis North Room*)**
leader: Diane Granfors
- **Prairie Hardwood Transition-BCR 22/23 (*Lewis Central Room*)**
leader: Jaime Edwards
- **Boreal Hardwood Transition - BCR 12 (*Lewis South Room*)**
leader: JoAnn Hanowski

Using the products of Monday afternoon's breakouts as well as example tools provided by breakout group leaders, we will:

- 1) Develop protocols to continue the work of formulating population-based habitat objectives for priority species.
- 2) Identify the decision support tools we will need for integrating objectives.
- 3) Identify the biological support tools we will need for managers and others in order to implement conservation objectives.
- 4) Draft a meeting schedule and a 24-month action plan for delivering the products we identify.

4:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

SUMMARIES OF DISCUSSION GROUPS

1. LANDBIRD PLAN: Partners in Flight (*Tom Will, Jaime Edwards, Brian Stenquist*)

Collectively, we reviewed the Partners in Flight (PIF) species vulnerability assessment process and the methodology for generating continental-scale population estimates and objectives in the new PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan. We then divided into three BCR-related groups to review and refine a proposed list of Minnesota species in terms of meeting PIF's and MNBCI's goals of helping species at risk and keeping birds common. Using a single species as an example of what might be involved in stepping down continental population objectives to the state level, each group was then asked to evaluate assumptions of continental and local population estimates and explore models for linking population targets to habitat goals. The exercise was designed to provide an opportunity to explore the process of "stepping forward" with population objectives and not necessarily to arrive at a final habitat target for the selected species.

Sub-group for the northern forest (BCR 12): Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA)

Based on regional and local knowledge (e.g., declines detected on long-term forest point counts), we added 8 species to the PIF-based list. We identified limitations of the current population model for the GWWA that was completed by PIF. We felt that the PIF population estimate is likely low compared to the model provided by NRRI. Finally, we discussed at length a species versus ecosystem approach (NRRI's Range of Natural Variation forest system model) for bird conservation in MN. We also identified some specific management objectives for GWWA in BCR 12.

Sub-group for grassland birds (BCR 11): Dickcissel

We developed a species priority list for landbirds in BCR 11 based on grassland obligate species listed in the PIF North American Plan; Tier1, 2a, 2c, or 4a species in PIF physiographic area plans; and additional species that occur only in the BCR 11 portion of Minnesota. We discussed the pros and cons of developing population goals for grassland landbirds, using Dickcissel as a model species. We decided that the best approach to developing population goals would be to group species by habitat types, identify key species, and develop population goals for those key species.

Sub-group for transition belt birds (BCR 22/23): Red-headed Woodpecker (RHWO)

We discussed the merits of adding focal birds to the species list to better represent habitat types viewed as priorities in the BCR (notably oak savannah and sedge meadow). We agreed that the BBS probably detects RHWOs fairly well since, in general, over-detections (because they are detectable for long distances and females are almost as likely to be observed as males) probably balance under-detections (because they have large territories, move around a lot, and males don't constantly sing). We could not address population targets for Minnesota because we lacked data. We looked at the USGS predicted abundance maps and the list of habitats identified by the MN GAP program. We decided that doubling the amount of habitat may only increase the population by 50% because all restored habitat may not be suitable and because trees grow slowly. We felt more information and research is needed to identify what factors are critical to the success of habitat restorations in the Minnesota portion of BCR 23. The group suggested that high school biology students comprised a large group of potential citizen scientists who could help in monitoring and evaluation. The group also suggested that a species-by-species approach may not be the best approach, particularly for this BCR. We thought that birds should be grouped by

habitat, and management strategies should be focused around habitat needs. Keystone and stewardship species could be identified as champions of particular habitat types, but that developing management plans for each priority species was not only impractical, but also took away from the overall MNBCI mission of keeping birds common as well as reversing declines.

2. WATERFOWL PLAN (*Barb Pardo, Ray Norrgard*)

- a. Using the North American Waterfowl Management Plan 2004 Update as guidance, the group identified waterfowl species in MN of breeding importance and non-breeding importance in each of three BCRs (11, 12, 23), and categorized those species by general habitat type.
- b. By BCR, the group also identified existing seasonal waterfowl surveys, and existing habitat prioritization tools in MN.
- c. Follow-up: Several members of the waterfowl breakout group signed up for MNBCI BCR committees. It was also discussed that this group should continue meeting separate from MNBCI as a "MN Waterfowl Technical Committee."
- d. Attendees: Rex Johnson, Jon Schneider, Steve Cordts, Ray Norrgard, Tex Hawkins, Brad Nylin, Sheldon Myerchin, Mark Oja, Barb Pardo.

3. SHOREBIRD PLAN (*Bob Russell, Lisa Gelvin-Innvaer*)

The shorebird breakout, six strong, met to discuss and formulate a series of goals for both breeding and migrant birds. We examined the habitat requirements for each Minnesota breeding species and identified specific questions or research needs. We approached migrant shorebirds by looking at management needs by foraging guilds in each of the state's Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) and considering both site and landscape-level habitats needs. Foraging and roosting habitats (including significant habitat gaps along migration routes) and integration with other key bird groups (e.g., waterfowl, grassland birds) should also be considered. Finally, we set population goals for 4 species: Marbled Godwit (double current population within 15 years); Upland Sandpiper (double current population within 15 years); Wilson's Phalarope (5x population within 15 years); and American Avocet (establish 2 separate breeding populations consisting of at least 10 pairs in each population). These population goals are only preliminary based on very limited information of current populations and understanding of population viability factors for these species.

4. WATERBIRD PLAN (*Linda Wires, Steve Lewis, Katie Haws*)

- a. We prioritized 30 breeding species for conservation, management, and stewardship concern in MN, identifying 14 that are high or moderate conservation priority (Common Loon; Horned, Eared, and Western Grebes; American White Pelican; American and Least Bitterns; Black-crowned Night-Heron; Franklin's Gull; Black, Forster's, and Common Terns; and Yellow and King Rails), 5 that are stewardship species (high proportion of regional population in MN; Common Loon, Red-necked Grebe, American White Pelican, Franklin's Gull, and Black Tern), and 5 that are of management concern (real or perceived problems causing human conflicts; Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Sandhill Crane, and Ring-billed and Herring Gulls).
- b. We set numerical objectives for 3 species: Common Tern, Common Loon, and American White Pelican.
- c. We identified a need for inventories to collect first time, or update old, data on distribution and abundance of Horned, Eared, and Western Grebes, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black-crowned Night-heron, and Forster's Tern.

d. For Franklin's Gull, we recommended continuing surveys at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, the only breeding site in MN.

e. For the following species, we recommended adopting the North American Marshbird Monitoring Program's protocol to track abundance and trends: Yellow, King, and Virginia Rails; Sora; American and Least Bitterns; Common Moorhen; and American Coot. This protocol is still being refined and, ultimately, needs a statistically based sampling framework within which to be applied before reliable estimates of abundance and trends are possible.

f. For Black Tern, we will follow the monitoring and management recommendations in the 1999 document, "Status Assessment and Conservation Plan for the Black Tern in North America." This will include increasing the number of MN marshes that are managed in a manner conducive to this species' needs.

g. Other recommendations include:

Develop habitat/landscape models to guide habitat protection, restoration, and management.

Endorse the Important Bird Areas program as it will be especially important in identifying and protecting significant sites for colonial waterbirds.

Educate the public on lake shore protection.

Integrate waterbird habitat management with waterfowl management activities.

Strive for no net loss of wetlands.

Assess the impacts of Farm Bill measures that could affect wetland birds.

Address non-habitat limiting factors such as human disturbance, lead sinkers, predation, and competition.

A. ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION (*Cheryl Miller, Jaime Edwards*)

A panel commenced, representing the conservation and tourism communities, to discuss avenues for incorporating bird conservation concepts and actions into existing programs. We identified Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) as a key component for delivering on-the-ground bird conservation. Every county has a SWCD which implements land programs from the local to federal level. There are other conservation delivery avenues depending on location in MN. For example, Drainage Districts in NE MN are a key delivery avenue. Aside from conservation programs, tourism is a growing outlet for delivering the conservation message to the general public. Communities are starting to recognize the potential that natural resources hold for bringing economic gain to their community. The key is making the habitat connection with the tourism message. In the end, both avenues indicated that birders and the birding community need to take a more active role in being present when and where decisions are made. Providing information is important, but if we don't deliver it in person and multiple times, and show the economic benefit of conservation, we will make few inroads toward integrated bird conservation in MN.

B. PUBLIC SUPPORT AND EDUCATION (*Brian Stenquist*)

The group identified a goal for MNBCI public support and education: link knowledge about birds (populations and habitats) to actions taken by people (e.g. personal behaviors, political activism, habitat projects, lifestyle choices). The group will follow-up with another meeting in June 2004 to evolve the following strategies:

- Enhance existing youth/family programs
- Create a conservation curriculum for older adults
- Support recruitment of new birding recreationists
- Strengthen a conservation commitment within existing birding organizations
- Develop integrated, all-bird oriented, land stewardship technical assistance information.

C. LEADERSHIP AND RESOURCES (*Mark Martell*)

The session participants reaffirmed the need to hire a MNBCI coordinator. The individual should be able to coordinate and advance the MNBCI agenda, support the work of the committees, and be familiar with bird conservation. We prefer a state DNR position; a second option is a contracted position with an NGO. The following items could be considered as the focus of a position description:

- Coordinator/manager/facilitator/organizer
- Outreach/public relations/education
- Fundraiser/organizational development/grant-writer
- Bird knowledge/capacity to implement bird plans
- Ability to produce a MN breeding bird atlas
- Manage committee structure and committee meetings.

A steering committee should include the chairs of the MNBCI sub-committees (leadership, monitoring, conservation planning, management implementation, and public support), as well as members from MNBCI contributing partners (i.e., those groups that contribute cash, match, or staff support). Include members representing DNR Ecological Services, DNR Wildlife, MWFA, Audubon, MOU, DU, USFWS, TNC, and other NGOs. Include 2 at-large representatives.

Potential funding sources for either cash or match might include: USFWS Joint Venture, Audubon, DNR via SWG and license plate sales; DNR volunteer time on loon surveys as match; MOU; US Forest Service; Ducks Unlimited, and others. Session participants: Mark Martell, Barb Pardo, Jon Schneider, Al Williams, Katie Haws, Jackie Lind.

D. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (*Tom Will, Andy Paulios*)

We took an open-ended, scoping approach to considering monitoring and evaluation of Minnesota birds by brain-storming answers and then discussing the following questions:

What is the value of monitoring? Why monitor birds?

What monitoring are we currently doing?

What types of information does monitoring give us?

What is missing from the current monitoring picture?

What are the big questions that we need to answer in Minnesota?

How might MNBCI work to answer those questions?

Monitoring was perceived as providing essential and invaluable information, from providing baseline information, tracking changes in abundance and distribution, tracking the effects of management actions, determining limiting factors, providing credibility for decision makers, validating models, setting priorities, and providing tools for education, citizen science, and coalition building.

There was consensus that among the many monitoring projects in the state, there was a substantial need to avoid duplication of effort, better coordinate surveys, and make information more readily available. After discussing differences between monitoring and inventory, we realized that many apparently different activities could be grouped under the monitoring umbrella if we first clarified the types of questions the monitoring was designed to answer. We felt we needed statistically sound, scale-sensitive, and well-designed sampling frameworks, integration among different surveys, special surveys (nocturnal birds, colonial waterbirds, exotics, migration monitoring), a breeding bird atlas, and a central repository for data.

Big questions that needed answers in Minnesota included the effect on birds of landscape-level changes like development, farm bill implementation, or conversion of red pine to jack pine or conifer to aspen. We also wanted to know how our highest priority species were doing, what is causing changes in population trends, when we should take conservation action, how policy changes affect birds, where the bird hotspots are, what effects wind and communication towers have on birds, what the optimal configuration of habitat patches might be, how well are birds are doing (production, survival, and recruitment), and how much habitat we need (from both the biological and social points of view).

We ended with a strong consensus that some sort of integrated coordinated bird monitoring plan was lacking in the state and that MNBCI could help facilitate the creation of a monitoring plan by forming a committee dedicated to this task. Participants thought that the committee should have a statewide focus but still be linked to BCR conservation planning groups. Specifically, we felt the state monitoring plan should:

- Integrate and coordinate our monitoring effort.
- Create an intelligent framework for making decisions.
- Identify questions.
- Build on recommendations, methods, strategies that already exist.
- Start with what we need to know, and be sure that surveys are designed to answer those questions.
- Bring partners together to answer questions relating to bird conservation.
- Link regionally to other states, nationally, and to Canada.

BCR 11 - PRAIRIE POTHOLE (*Diane Granfors*)

The BCR 11 technical team will review species priority lists developed by each of the bird initiative groups on 12 April afternoon. D. Granfors (leader) will develop a straw-man aggregated list for review by the BCR 11 team. The list will integrate the species covered by the four initiatives by habitat use (e.g., short grass, mixed grass, shallow marsh) and/or impacts of management actions (e.g., burning, grazing). Once species groups are established, the BCR 11 team will identify species for which population goals can be established, spatial models developed, and/or further research is needed to identify conservation status and needs. The next group meeting will be by conference call in July 2004.

BCR 22/23 - PRAIRIE HARDWOOD TRANSITION (*Jaime Edwards*)

During this group's meeting, they agreed to follow up with the following tasks. Jaime Edwards, Linda Wires, and Bob Russell will work on a list of bird species for the BCR. Thurman Tucker will work on a list of partners in the BCR, and Jeanne Holler will start working on land cover for the BCR.

BCR 12 - BOREAL HARDWOOD TRANSITION (*JoAnn Hanowski*)

Things that we agreed to do:

- Generate a list of all bird species that are known to occur in Minnesota within BCR12 and their habitat association.
- Start with the PIF priority species list and add, subtract species to come up with final list of priority species for BCR 12. From this list, we would group species that have similar habitat, microhabitat or landscape limitations or needs (reasons why they are on the list).
- Decide on a habitat matrix for forests. Suggestions include MN-WRAP 49 class that is derived from TM data or range of natural variation ecosystem types and successional stages.

- Members of the committee should visit the following web sites and look at documents that have been created based on the RNV principal for the Drift and Lake Plains and Northern Superior Uplands Sections in northeast MN:
 - <http://www.nrri.umn.edu/sustain/>
 - <http://www.frc.state.mn.us/Landscp/Landscape.html>
 - <http://www.frc.state.mn.us/Spatial/SpatialIntro.html>
- Decide on aquatic habitat matrix. We should review the matrix that the Comprehensive Wildlife Technical Team decides to use for their assessment (this should be available within the next 4 weeks).
- We also discussed the “audience” for our plan (management prescriptions) and how it would be marketed.
- We decided to invite more people to be a part of our committee. Including private landowners, industry, foresters, silviculturalists,
- A 1-2 day meeting will be held in Duluth in mid-August. The length of the meeting will be determined after the agenda is set (we will avoid the week of 16-21 due to a conflict with the AOU meeting).

COMMITTEES

During the workshop, several participants signed up to work on committees (listed below). We hope that others will join these committees, including people who were not able to attend the April workshop.

Overall Planning Committee

Tom Will, Chair
 Chairs of BCR groups
 Chair of M & E team?

BCR 11/22: Prairie Potholes

Diane Granfors, Chair
 Rex Johnson
 Jon Schneider
 Steve Cordts
 John Schladweiler
 Lisa Gelvin-Innvaer
 Soch Lor

BCR 23: Prairie Hardwood Transition

Jeanne Holler
 Rex Johnson
 Jon Schneider
 Steve Cordts
 JV Science Coord.
 Bob Russell
 Tom Cooper
 Melinda Knutson
 Carol Carter

BCR 12: Boreal Hardwood Transition

Peg Robertson
 JoAnn Hanowski
 Wayne Brininger

Jan Green
Steve Cordts
JV Science Coord.
Al Williamson

Partnerships

Cheryl Miller, Chair
Tex Hawkins
Thurman Tucker
Sheldon Myerchin

Public Support and Education

Bob Holtz, Chair
Carrol Henderson
Brad Mylin
Bonnie Sample
Mark Martell
Pam Perry
Ray Norrgard

Leadership & Resources

Mark Martell, Chair
Jan Green
Al Williamson
Barb Pardo

Monitoring & Evaluation

Tom Will, Chair
Melinda Knutson (BCR 23)
Lisa Gelvin-Innvaer (BCR 11)
Carol Carter (BCR 23)
Maya Hamady
Diane Granfors (BCR 11)
Soch Lor (BCR 11)
Wayne Brininger (BCR 12)
Linda Wires
Tom Cooper (BCR 22-23)

April 2004 Bird Workshop Participant Evaluations

Evaluation forms received from 16 (out of 60) participants.

	Overall	Mon p.m.					Tues a.m.					Tues p.m.			
Rank	Workshop	1	2	3	4	?	A	B	C	D	?	11	22	12	?
0															
1															
2	1														
3							1					1	2		
4													1		
5	1		1												
6		1		1					1	2				1	
7	1	3			2	1	1	1	1	1		3			2
8	6		1				1			1			1	1	
9	4	1			2			1	2	1		1		1	
10	2			1						1					

Written Comments

Each paragraph contains comments from one participant.

Overall Workshop

Good meeting. Well organized. Groups well focused to achieve goals. Good chemistry.

Great work! Thank you.

Good involvement by multi agencies.

Lots of good networking, covered a range of great topics. Just too much to do in such a short time. Great job, Jackie! Thank you.

I didn't know much before this workshop about the MNBCI. This was very helpful. Give more detail to new-comers about what the purpose of the MNBCI is and why it is/was formed. Thank you.

I focused mainly on birds and issues I already knew because of my area of expertise.

I met people from other agencies and learned what they are doing, etc. The same time I was already aware of many ongoing projects.

Collectively, the presentations and breakouts provided a comprehensive overview of bird conservation needs and opportunities in MN. A presentation on MNGAP_MNWRAP would have

been useful. As for MNBCI, the Design Team/Steering Committee did a good job of organization and logistics. Thank you!

Networking that took place, names and faces, and activities that they are involved with; synthesis of those activities.

Overall, very productive and product-oriented. Great format! Should have skipped Tuesday afternoon powerpoint on modeling given by Tom Will. We already saw this in first workshop, and the time would have been better spent in BCR breakouts. I didn't see this on agenda.

Need broader representation from DNR Wildlife, private industry (wild bird unliim) and some additional NGOs. Hire coordinator. Need to dovetail with NWCS. Tom Will was not on the agenda (2:15 - 2:45). He burned up valuable time that the BCR breakouts could have used. He should have just reported on his group recommendations. Should have limited morning breakout reports from Monday to 5 minutes.

My impression so far is that the term "all-bird" conservation is a misnomer. As a representative of an NGO which promotes the conservation of a non-migratory game bird, I feel as if the MNBCI is strictly driven only by the needs of migratory and species at risk, and by the agenda of those associated individuals. While those species certainly should be considered in conservation planning, no single group should direct future habitat planning and management. I believe those representing the common birds do not have a voice, and have only been included for their potential monetary contributions. The term "all-bird" conservation is only lip service, and is not in fact the direction I see MNBCI headed. Groups such as mine will continue to create, enhance and protect wildlife habitat, not just our "single species." We have, and will continue to keep common birds common, and in the process develop habitat for a variety of bird species.

I know these workshops are not easy to pull off, and you seem to do them so effortlessly. Thanks for setting it all up and inviting me to participate. It is a really helpful thing for the CWCS effort.

Good meeting. Future needs to be more concise and productive, shorter if possible. Monday morning topics could have been shortened or eliminated. A noon Monday to noon Tuesday format would have been better.

Monday afternoon

Discussion group spent a lot of time flailing.

Could have benefited from better facilitation.

The group did not agree on the basic assumption that we were to proceed on a single species approach. We finally agreed that we will use a different approach (session 1).

It seemed a little disorganized and moved between big picture and specifics; too much, without organization (session 1).

I think there should have been a statement of some background and what we were expected to do or get done and why (session 2).

We accomplished a lot for our small group, and we committed to followup. Did not get to population objectives, but I did priority species (session 2).

We stepped down regional goals (many of them) to the state level (session 4).

Did not have enough time to accomplish all tasks (session 4).

Prioritization and objective-setting discussions went well, but ran out of time to thoroughly discuss conservation needs, especially non-habitat related factors (session 4).

Tuesday morning

Lots of good ideas. Needed to spend time on the purpose, direction and focus of the committee.

It was very good. It was very helpful to get direction and understand the goals (session B).

We had many ideas for leadership and resources to MNBCI, but few people were able to offer either. More people should have attended this breakout (session C).

We identified several monitoring and plan approaches (session D).

I feel that we did not reach our objectives. We spent too much time "brainstorming" (session D).

Good overall discussion but ran out of time to clarify where it goes from here (session D).

This is a difficult topic. Some species/guilds have much more known information than others and how to synthesize and make it manageable and give direction (session D).

Tuesday afternoon

Decision on meeting again, and process to follow.

Not detailed enough. Could have accomplished more (BCR 11).

I thought it was very informative and interesting (BCR 11).

Lost a little momentum because of lateness of day, but came up with a chair (Diane Granfors), an e-mail task (developing habitat suites), and approximate timeframe for next meeting (late June - early July). (BCR 11)

Goals weren't well enough defined for session (BCR 22).

People felt overwhelmed with so many different issues. Hard to focus down to feasible work. Too much to focus down for busy people. But, we started (BCR 22).

Had a hard time defining what we should do. Most of the discussion focused on forest birds, but wetland/lake birds need to be integrated, too (BCR 12).

Not enough time to get very far, and not all the BCR committee members were present.