

BCR 30 Workshop, December 7-9, 2004
October 22, 2004, Draft Agenda

Purpose of the Workshop:

To coordinate the bird conservation planning and implementation efforts in the New England Mid Atlantic Bird Conservation Region (BCR) and create opportunities to collaborate and pool resources on activities directed towards the conservation of priority bird species, populations and habitats. By working together to plan and implement at the BCR scale, each partner will have a better understanding of what contributions they need to make in order to contribute to regional and continental bird conservation needs.

Workshop Objectives:

1. Exchange information on status of bird conservation efforts by the major bird initiatives and major partners including states, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, other federal agencies and NGOs;
2. Build off of existing plans and previous workshops to come to consensus on priority species, habitats and geographic areas;
3. Review information developed for State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies and information in existing bird conservation plans to identify overlaps and/or gaps in priority species, their associated habitats (e.g., species-habitat suites), and focus areas;
4. Review and refine step down population objectives from the continental level to the BCR and state for the major bird plans;
5. Determine need and process for determining population-based habitat objectives for priority species at the state and BCR scales;
6. Summarize overall threats and limiting factors for suites of species and major conservation actions to address those threats;
7. Review information contained in existing plans and develop a list of specific regional priority projects (e.g., management, restoration, acquisition, research, monitoring, education, and outreach) and select several projects as first step projects;
8. Identify priority information needs and tools;
9. Identify existing grants and partnerships for achieving priority projects;
10. Develop a partnership process and/or structure to coordinate overall implementation of bird conservation at the BCR scale.

Workshop Products:

1. Consensus on priority bird species, habitats and conservation needs at the BCR scale;
2. Identification of sites and projects that overlap;
3. Consensus on a list of priority projects within the BCR contributing to regional bird conservation goals including research, monitoring, education, acquisition, restoration, management, etc.;
4. A network of committed partners who will work over the next year to develop proposals for submission to funding programs to implement priority projects;
5. A list of priority information needs;
6. A process for moving forward and finalizing the BCR 30 Plan and for implementing priority projects;
7. Information on regional bird conservation priorities to be included in SCWCS, refuge planning documents and other partner plans.

Tuesday 7 December 2004

8:30 Welcome and Introductions (*Marty McHugh/Andy Manus opening comments*)

9:00 Meeting Objectives, logistics, plans for next 2.5 days (*ACJV, NJ and other meeting organizers – Milliken, Niles, Castelli, Steinkamp*)

9:15 SHORT (10 minute) Updates on Bird Conservation Initiatives and information available including step down population objectives (PIF, NAWMP, Shorebird Plan, Waterbird Plan, Upland Game Bird Plans) (*representatives from the bird plans – Gwen Brewer, Paul Castelli, Stephen Brown, Kathy Parsons, Don McKensie, others*)

10:30 Break

10:45 Presentations on results of previous workshops, state plans, refuge plans, and materials and tools available for participants to use during the breakout sessions.
Previous workshops - (*Niles, Milliken, Johnston*)
State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies (SCWCS) – state reps.
(Status of Bird Conservation Information to be included in State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans and information still needed (short reports from each state). May include information from state all-bird workshops.
Refuge information – (*Schlegel, McCauley, others?*)
Partners-In-Flight Managed Lands/Habitat Assessment Database – (*Bryan Watts, College of W&M*)

12:15 Lunch

1:15 Instructions to breakout groups

1:30 **Breakout session 1 – Species Group breakouts**

Outcomes: priority species, habitats, population and habitat objectives, limiting factors, conservation needs, focus areas. Groups to develop consensus on priority species lists using matrix of species listed in each state plan, refuge plans, and initiative plan; group priority species by habitat (land cover class); step down population and habitat goals where appropriate and feasible; identify major threats, limiting factors, and conservation needs; identify focus areas for conservation and/or identify species that need further habitat mapping/modeling to define important geographic areas.

SCWCS Outcomes: regional priority species lists with population and habitat goals for each state where appropriate, projects for each state to address regional priority species needs.

Tools available: matrix of priority species from bird plans and species included in SCWCS, step down population and habitat goals from bird plans for BCR and states where available, focus area maps for each species group identified in previous workshops and in plans, IBA maps and data for the region, Managed Lands/Habitat Assessment database;

Groups:

Waterfowl (*group leader: Castelli?*)

Waterbirds (*group leader: Parsons?*)

Shorebirds (*group leader: Brown?*)

Landbirds (*group leader: Brewer?*)

Upland Game Birds (*group leader: McKensie*)

3:15 Break

3:30 Resume Breakout Session 1

5:30 Adjourn – Dinner

Day 2, Wednesday 8 December 2004

8:30 Entire Group Together for Summary Presentations on outcomes of species breakout session and instructions for second breakout sessions.

9:15 Presentations on tools available for breakout sessions:

Audubon IBA program – (*Cecil?*)

WHSRN – (*Stephen Brown?*)

9:45 **Breakout Session 2 – Habitat Group breakouts**

Outcomes: regional habitat priorities, threats, conservation needs, habitat mapping needs. Compile list of habitat threats and needs, review habitat, ownership management status and gaps; Identify general strategies for addressing gaps, determine needs for mapping suitable habitat for priority birds and identify

projects for developing a better regional habitat mapping and monitoring capability.

SCWCS Outcomes: regional habitat conservation needs within each state, regional habitat mapping needs to be included in state plans

Tools available: species lists grouped by habitat from previous day, land cover maps of BCR, College of William and Mary managed lands inventory/database and maps, results of initial radar ornithology analyses, matrix of habitat mapping projects by each state (e.g. Landscape project in NJ, BIOMAP in MA, etc...)

Groups:

Salt Marsh (Leader:)

Beaches (Leader:)

Freshwater Wetlands (Leader:)

Forests (Leader:)

Early Successional - Grassland/Scrub/Shrubland (Leader)

10:30 Break

10:45 Breakout Groups Reconvene

12:15 Lunch

1:15 Entire group together for summary presentations on outcomes of habitat breakout session and instructions for afternoon breakout sessions.

2:00 **Break Out Groups – geographic areas**

Outcomes: Map and database of integrated focus areas for conservation, actions needed at each focus area, including regional (BCR) and sub-regional conservation actions that must happen at regional scale to address priority needs.

SCWCS Outcomes: Integrated bird conservation focus area needs that states can contribute to and include in SCWCS.

Tools available: Focus area definitions, results of species and habitat breakouts, focus area maps from 2002 meeting, ACJV waterfowl focus areas, MANEM focus areas, IBA maps and database, land cover and land ownership maps of BCR, College of William and Mary inventory/database/map, project lists from previous meetings and plans, specific geographic priorities from SCWCS

Groups:

Southern New England (ME, NH, MA, RI, CT)(Leader:)

New York Bight (NY, NJ)(Leader:)

Delaware Bay (NJ, DE)(Leader:)

Chesapeake Bay (DE, MD, VA)(Leader:)

3:00 Break

3:15 Breakout groups reconvene.

4:15 States and partners convene to discuss incorporating results into state plans.

5:15 Adjourn for Dinner

Day 3, Thursday 9 December 2004

8:30 Whole Group Together
Summary Presentations from geographic break out group. Instructions for morning breakouts.

9:30 **Break out Groups - Categories**

Outcomes: Prioritized list of projects at regional scale for that category.

SCWCS Outcomes: Lists of regional projects for states to include in plans.

Tools available: Lists of priority projects from previous workshops, lists of regional projects from each state plan.

Groups:

Habitat protection (Leader:)

Habitat Management/Restoration/Enhancement (Leader:)

Research/Monitoring/Evaluation (Leader:)

Education and Outreach (Leader:)

10:30 Break

10:45 State Wildlife Conservation Planning

12:00 Reconvene entire group for workshop summary, next steps

12:30 Lunch/Adjourn for full group (except for steering committee)

1:00 Steering Committee reconvenes to discuss structure/process needed to move forward with coordinated bird conservation in the BCR

2:00 Adjourn for Steering Committee

New England – Mid-Atlantic Bird Conservation Region

Purpose for Integrated Bird Conservation Planning

The vision for the New England – Mid-Atlantic Bird Conservation effort is a cooperative, coordinated approach across jurisdictional boundaries for addressing conservation issues and restoring and maintaining populations of the region's birds as key components of healthy ecosystems. This effort will integrate planning and implementation efforts among bird conservation initiatives across the New England –Mid-Atlantic Region and will restore and sustain, at the landscape level, populations of native birds and their habitats, including marine habitats, at the regional scale, and contribute to their range-wide conservation.

Goals

- Identify information gaps and develop materials, including specific project ideas, to contribute to State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies.
- Identify priority projects (e.g., management, restoration, acquisition, research, monitoring, education, and outreach) and focus areas that will help meet population and habitat objectives at both state and bird conservation region (BCR) scales, and implement these projects using state, regional, and international partnerships.
- Using information developed for State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies and information in existing bird conservation plans, identify priority species, their associated habitats (e.g., species-habitat suites), and focus areas for conservation actions at the BCR scale.
- Develop population and habitat objectives for priority species (where applicable) that implemented collectively, will meet continental population objectives.
- Where habitat availability is not a major limiting factor, develop objectives for reducing impacts of other limiting factors.
- Undertake targeted research and monitoring to fill gaps in our basic knowledge of priority species, including population size, trend and limiting factors.
- Determine overlap in resources and opportunities between major bird initiatives, and create partnerships to take advantage of these overlaps.
- Develop geospatial resources for mapping and tracking habitat/land use trends, modeling habitat associations, and identifying focus areas.
- Develop evaluation protocols for monitoring progress toward population and habitat objectives for adaptive management purposes
- Develop maps, tools and supporting information to guide grant funds to the highest priorities in the region.

Immediate needs

There is a need to have information on integrated bird conservation available at the regional scale to assist with prioritization of North American Wetland Conservation Act grants and other grant programs and to seek funding from additional sources.

Process and roles of partners

ACJV and other USFWS Regional Division of Migratory Bird staff will coordinate planning for a December, 2004 workshop and compile relevant information for the workshop and plan. As part of this process they will interview each state within the BCR to find out where they are in developing their Comprehensive State Wildlife Conservation Strategies, what type of information the BCR Plan could produce that would benefit the state process, and how to make the BCR planning process complimentary or additive to the state process. They will also coordinate with other key bird conservation partners in the region.

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife will host the workshop and help to coordinate among state agency staff in the region.

IAFWA will provide guidance on the workshop and provide financial support for the meeting costs and state agency travel associated with the workshop.

A steering committee of representatives from each state and from key federal and regional organizations associated with bird conservation in the region and ACJV staff will provide guidance on the participant list, agenda and outcomes, and materials needed for the workshop.

The outcomes of the workshop would be consensus on priorities at the BCR scale, an outline of a bird conservation plan and a process for the region, specific goals, projects and information to be included in the State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies and a structure for implementing priorities.

Existing Plans

Partners in Flight Continental Plan just released

(<http://www.partnersinflight.org/cplan.htm>)

Two physiographic plans completed – New England and Mid-Atlantic Coast

(<http://www.blm.gov/wildlife/pifplans.htm>). A combined plan for the New England Mid-Atlantic Region was also produced in 2002 by Ken Rosenberg.

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan

National Plan complete (<http://shorebirdplan.fws.gov/USShorebird/PlanDocuments.htm>)

Northern Atlantic Regional Shorebird Conservation Plan completed

(<http://shorebirdplan.fws.gov/RegionalShorebird/downloads/NATLAN4.doc>)

North American Waterbird Conservation Plan

International Plan completed for Colonial-Nesting Waterbirds
(<http://www.waterbirdconservation.org/pubs/ContinentalPlan.cfm>)
Regional Planning Underway for the Mid Atlantic New England Region.
(<http://birds.fws.gov/waterbirds/MANEM/>)

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

2004 Update to be released soon

(<http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NAWMP/2003nawmpdraft.htm>)

Atlantic Joint Venture Regional Plan to be completed this year

(http://northeast.fws.gov/migratorybirds/acjv_planning.htm)

Workshops completed and information produced

Joint PIF/Shorebirds meeting, Avalon, NJ, September 2002 and Follow-up Waterbird Meeting in October, 2002

(<http://nyfo.fws.gov/partnersinflight/files/BCR30%20priority%20projects.pdf>)

These meeting identified priority projects for consideration in State Wildlife Grants and other funding sources.

Coordinated Bird Monitoring Meeting

Meeting in January, 2004 to determine highest priorities for bird monitoring in the region.

Mid Atlantic New England Habitat Assessment

Completed by the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary. The specific objectives of this project were to 1) identify parcels controlled by PIF partners, 2) identify land managers, 3) quantify priority habitats within parcels, 4) conduct a collective assessment to determine status relative to conservation goals, and 5) develop parcel-specific management recommendations. Scales down region-based conservation goals to the management of land parcels while simultaneously scaling up local management actions to achieve regional goals.

(http://fsweb.wm.edu/ccb/habitat/habitat_home.cfm)

Applied Shorebird Habitat Management in the Atlantic Flyway

Hosted by USFWS Refuges and the ACJV, May 2003. Explored partnering on shorebird projects within the flyway, from the U.S. to South America. There was enthusiasm by refuge managers to partner with managers of sites in South America sharing shorebird species. There was no point person to carry this forward but there is a meeting summary and a list of contacts of interest.

Atlantic Coast Joint Venture Hosts New England Mid Atlantic Bird Conservation Workshop

Summary

The Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies hosted a bird conservation workshop December 7-9, 2004 in Cape May, New Jersey. This workshop brought together 85 state, federal and non-governmental organization partners from ten states to review and reach consensus on the highest priorities for bird conservation in the New England Mid Atlantic Bird Conservation Region, the region encompassing the coastal plain from southern Maine to northern Virginia. Using information from the major continental and regional bird conservation plans as well as the draft State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies, partners reached consensus on priority bird species, habitat-species suites, threats to these species and habitats, approaches for determining population and habitat goals, focus areas, and priority conservation actions (habitat and non-habitat conservation projects as well as monitoring, research and outreach projects). Databases and maps created for the workshop allowed state partners, refuge biologists and others to compare priorities among their state and refuge plans and to determine their ability to meet habitat objectives in the region.

Breakout Sessions

Workshop attendees participated in 3 breakout sessions during the workshop. Breakout sessions focused on species, habitat, and geographic area bird conservation priorities. The first breakout session was the species breakout session and was composed of individuals with expertise in waterfowl, waterbird, shorebird and landbird conservation. Species breakout groups centered discussions on major threats and limiting factors to priority species (at BCR scale), priority non-habitat conservation actions (such as by-catch issues for seabirds), priority research and monitoring needs, and priority bird conservation actions. Groups were asked to develop (1) regional priority species lists with population and habitat goals for each state where appropriate, (2) a list of regional threats and priority non-habitat conservation actions, and (3) lists of monitoring and research needs.

The second breakout session was the habitat breakout session. Workshop attendees divided into habitat groups focused on coastal habitats (estuaries, bays, salt marsh, marine, beaches, mud flats), freshwater wetland habitats (palustrine forested, palustrine emergent, palustrine shrub-scrub), forest habitats (deciduous, mixed, pine, other), and grasslands/early successional habitats (agricultural grasslands, shrublands, barrens, other). Groups reviewed existing information including habitat maps and habitat information available for the BCR. Groups discussed (1) habitat and population goals for priority species using specific habitats, (2) the capability of the BCR for meeting habitat objectives on and off conserved lands, and (3) the contributions of each state, refuge and other landowner towards meeting habitat goals. Groups identified geographic areas within the BCR that could make significant contributions to habitat goals, listed the greatest threats/stressors to habitat types within the BCR, and identified priority habitat conservation and management actions needed for addressing these threats. Groups developed lists of the highest priority habitat conservation actions to be initiated within the BCR over the next few years. Groups also discussed regional habitat mapping and modeling needs and questions.

The final breakout session of the workshop focused on priority bird conservation needs by geographic area. The geographic areas were New England/NY, Delaware Bay/NJ Coast, and the Delmarva/Chesapeake Bay. Breakout groups reviewed (1) information on species and habitat information from the previous two breakout sessions with respect to the geographic area, (2) maps and resources for the geographic area, and (3) priority habitat, non-habitat, and monitoring and research actions for the geographic area. Groups developed lists of priority conservation actions for the geographic areas, discussed potential contributions/responsibilities of partners within the geographic areas towards accomplishing priority actions and came up with lists of projects to be included in state and refuge plans.

At the end of the workshop, partners convened by state, to discuss incorporating results from the workshop into state, refuge and other plans.

Next Steps

In early 2005, ACJV staff will summarize the results of the workshop and produce a report for distribution to workshop participants and other partners. This report will include a list of priority actions that came out of the breakout sessions. ACJV staff will post powerpoint presentations, digital files of materials in the workshop notebook, and workshop results on the ACJV web site as soon as possible. The USFWS Division of Migratory Birds (Division) will update the species conservation database created for the workshop to compare the priority species and actions among the state plans. This database will be posted on the web and will allow states to update their information directly or to send information to the Division to update.

In early January, the BCR 30 Steering Committee will meet via conference call to review the results of the workshop and plan the next steps for getting the resources to implement high priority projects. Priority projects applicable to particular states will be assessed for possible funding through State Wildlife Grants. The results of this workshop and subsequent analyses will be used to draft a bird conservation plan for the BCR over the first half of 2005, and will be used by states to refine their Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies.