



**Report to the Bird Conservation Committee from the
Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group**
**Chair: Sara Schweitzer, NC Wildlife Resources Commission; Vice-Chair: Eric Gardner, Washington
Department of Fish & Wildlife**

85th North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference
Hilton Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska
Thursday, March 12, 2020, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Nine (9) people attended the WG meeting representing 2 state agencies, 2 federal agencies, and 4 nongovernmental organizations.

Landbird (PIF), shorebird (USSCP), and Waterbird **conservation initiatives** provided updates on activities.

Geoff Geupel (Point Blue) gave a summary of actions undertaken by **PIF** since our last meeting, presented in a 1-page document provided by Bob Ford (USFWS), the PIF Coordinator. Geoff focused primarily on “**New Game-Changer Opportunities**” that will be pursued during the 2020-2021 year, the **30th Anniversary of PIF**. These topics include: strong and growing collaborations; new science and technology that will provide improved data for species’ full annual cycle models; integration of PIF business plans using the open standards for the practice of conservation; legislation such as the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, U.S. Farm Bill, and USFWS’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program; and, communication and engagement to get more people outdoors and birding, using common language from the NABCI Communications Committee, and especially rallying around the Bring Back 3 Billion Birds (BB3BB) campaign.

Sara Schweitzer of the **USSCP Council** provided a 1-page summary of recent accomplishments, drafted by Brad Andres (USFWS), the Shorebird Coordinator. In 2020, the USSCP will draft a synopsis of progress achieved since the 2001 Plan was completed, as well as future directions. A paper on shorebird population sizes and trends will be published in 2020, and Brad Andres is accepting survey estimates and other information from state biologists and others. Atlantic and Pacific Flyway Shorebird Initiatives are continuing to complete collaborative projects, and each has a web site where much information can be found. A Mid-Continent Shorebird Conservation Initiative is well underway, and additional progress will be made during workshops in 2020.

The **Waterbirds Conservation for the Americas initiative** has not had a coordinator since 2015. Working from a sub-committee of NABCI, Dave Gordon (USFWS) and Sara Schweitzer (NCWRC) identified several former members of the Waterbird Council who are willing to become active again. They will work on the Council’s Terms of Agreement and revisit the Plan to begin to update it. A significant task for the Waterbird Council will be to get the Waterbird Coordinator position filled. There is great need for a coordinator for work with waterbirds because there are separate groups (e.g., Pacific Seabird Group, Atlantic Marine Bird Cooperative, Bird-Fish Human Conflict WG of AFWA, etc.) pursuing conservation, management, research, and policies associated with waterbirds, but this work is not coordinated. Further, there are large data gaps for seabirds, a group that is declining rapidly, as noted in Rosenberg et al.’s 2019 paper in *Science*, and a group for which there are scant data for the Avian Conservation Assessment Database (ACAD).

To address **threats** to landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds, the WG concluded that a **common threats analysis** should be conducted to identify significant issues common to all birds. The Avian Conservation Assessment Database and open standards for the practice of conservation will be used to begin this process that will be led by John Alexander (Klamath Bird Observatory).

Second, due to loss of grassland habitat and avian species, this WG strongly supports the development of a **national grassland policy** coordinated by the National Wildlife Federation, NABCI, and World Wildlife Fund.

Regarding the WG's recent focus on **Avian Conservation Database Management**, Phase 1 of a project with the Avian Knowledge Network has been completed (Pacific and Mississippi flyways' CWB data), and a project through the University of Maine (Atlantic Flyway CWB data) has also been completed. Phase 2 will bulk upload existing CWB datasets (Pacific, Mississippi, and Atlantic flyways) and ensure uploading capabilities and capacity for large datasets from future, coordinated surveys. The Atlantic Flyway Council approved \$15,000 for Phase 2, which will ensure proper uploading capability for the 2023 CWB survey to be conducted within the Atlantic, Mississippi, Central flyways and Great Lakes. This will be an unprecedented, coordinated survey of CWBs and management of survey data.