



**MIGRATORY BIRD WORKING TABLE – ACTION ITEM REPORT**  
**XX Trilateral Committee Meeting**  
**National Conservation Training Center**  
**Shepherdstown, West Virginia**  
**April 9-13, 2018**

The Migratory Bird Working Table conducted its working sessions between April 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The following Action Items were agreed upon and address the current priorities of the Trilateral Committee.

<b>SUBTITLE: Advancing a shared 100-year Vision for bird conservation across the Americas</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
<b>Action Item 1:</b> Identify highest common priorities in bird conservation for tri-national collaboration.	Charles Francis (CWS), Ryan Zimmerling (CWS), Ken Richkus (USFWS); Judith Scarl (NABCI-US); Humberto Berlanga (CONABIO / NABCI-Mexico)		
<p><b>Goals:</b> To develop shared priorities that represent the highest, hemispheric conservation needs</p> <p>The Co-chairs of the Migratory Bird Working Table and the three countries’ NABCI coordinators will continue to evaluate implementation plans (the “we will” statements in the vision) and identify common priorities across all three nations. These priorities should allow well-coordinated conservation actions that are science-based and engage a broad audience in conservation mainstreaming. NABCI provides a forum for tri-national discussion on these priorities.</p> <p><b>Requested Action from ET (if any):</b></p> <p><b>Results:</b> Over the past year, both the USFWS Migratory Bird Program and US NABCI continued work on updating their strategic plans and conversation priorities. In Dec, NABCI completed and shared their plan with the migratory bird conservation communities. The USFWS is in the final stages of releasing their strategic plan and should be readily available in April 2019. In Dec 2018, Judith Scarl and Ken Richkus met to begin to crosswalk the conservation priorities between NABCI and the USFWS. Further discussion is planned for after the release of the Service plan to identify commonalities and differences to begin to develop better roles and responsibilities to further advance migratory bird conservation in North America. In Canada, NABCI Canada has continued to update its priority actions and has formed several working groups dedicated to individual priority actions.</p>			
<b>SUBTITLE: Advancing a shared 100-year Vision for bird conservation across the Americas</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
<b>Action Item 2:</b> Increase international bird conservation engagement through collaboration with Americas Flyways Framework and the Convention on Migratory Species.	Guy Foulks (USFWS), Rob Clay (WHSRN), Brad Andres (USFWS), Greg Butcher, and Deb Hahn (NABCI-US); Natalie Sadoie (CWS), Humberto Berlanga (NABCI-Mexico), Ryan Zimmerling (CWS)	Summer 2018	Summer 2018
<p><b>Goals:</b> To explore opportunities to expand country engagement in the implementation of the shared 100 year conservation vision.</p> <p>The Migratory Bird Working Table is interested in increasing international participation in hemispheric conservation actions. The America’s Flyways Framework is one avenue that should be explored for future collaboration with other Latin American</p>			



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countries to advance the North American vision plans. The MBWT seeks to evaluate opportunities to engage in other hemispheric discussions while ensuring that the cost and effort to participate are balanced with actionable outcomes.

**Requested Action from ET (if any):**

**Results:** USFWS biologists continue to remain involved with the task force. Coordination includes review and comment on documents and participation in various meetings. The facilitation of the Shorebird Harvest Working Group of the Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative under the MOU with CWS, FWS and ONCFS (France). Attached is the letter from Jerome on our (FWS) position.

Natalie Savoie (CWS) attended the task force meeting in Brazil. The Americas Flyaway Framework Task Force met for the first time in Brazil in July 2018. A list of activities, with deadlines, was developed with the participants present, and is available at [https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/Activities-AFTF\\_e.pdf](https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/Activities-AFTF_e.pdf). The list of activities is very optimistic; most activities are due in the summer of 2019. It was discussed that many of these activities would be dependent upon funding, for which a working group was to be set up to discuss and get back to the participants. The location and date of the next meeting was discussed and is being planned for the fall of 2019, possibly in Panama, before the next COP, to update on the progress of the activities. There have been no updates, other than sharing materials from the meeting, since the meeting in the summer.

Humberto participated in the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) meeting in April 2018. There are many challenges, include working with northern species. The report from the meeting is available on the ACAP webpage. Canada supports ACAP in principle, but through working with industry to reduce bycatch rather than signing the agreement. Within the US, staff track ACAP developments, but USA has not signed onto ACAP.

**SUBTITLE: Reducing Bird Mortality through Mainstreaming**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
<b>Action Item 3:</b> Develop a standard set of guidelines to reduce anthropogenic mortality to be vetted and approved by Trilateral Committee	Eric Kershner (FWS), Ryan Zimmerling (CWS), Vicente Rodriguez (CONABIO)	<b>Spring 2019</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>

**Goals:** To improve tri-national communication, collaboration, and information sharing for actions that reduce anthropogenic mortality.

The Trilateral committee is a venue that should be used to improve collaboration to develop and implement standard guidelines to reduce anthropogenic impacts to migratory birds. This collaboration will allow best practices to be widely disseminated and implemented with ultimate goals to address anthropogenic sources of mortality on a hemispheric scale. Many different initiatives are on-going across the three countries. The Trilateral committee can be a catalyst for coordination.

The MBWT seeks to establish working groups to share and implement practices to address priority sources of human-related mortality such as towers, windows, energy infrastructure, etc. This action will result in the development of options for housing shared standards. These options might include the possibility of using the Trilateral Webpage or other options such as Wiki or Google Drives or other available tools.



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**Requested Action from ET (if any):**

**Results:** Judith Scarl has been leading a call as part of an AFWA Bird Conservation sub-committee task. This group is making progress collecting and discussing what BMPs are available, priority needs for new BMPs, and how states and partners currently use the existing BMPs.

Preliminary discussions were held with the Avian Knowledge Network Steering Committee regarding establishing the AKN as the repository for BMPS for reducing impacts to migratory birds. Further discussions are on-going and will be had at the 2019 Trilateral Meeting.

**SUBTITLE: Reducing Bird Mortality thru Mainstreaming**

Action	Responsible Party	Due	Date Completed
<b>Action Item 4:</b> Establish a tri-national communication tower working group.	Joelle Gehring (USFCC), JoAnna Lutmerding (USFWS) Ryan Zimmerling (CWS), Vicente Rodriguez (CONABIO)	Summer 2018	Summer 2018

**Goals:** To develop a shared approach to reduce communication tower collisions across the three nations.

To fully address the number of communications towers that are a threat to bird collisions, an innovative approach to mainstream bird conservation by focusing on energy and cost savings for tower owners should be explored. Data show that towers lit with only flashing lights at night are involved in 70% fewer bird collisions than towers lit with non-flashing lights. Using only flashing tower lights simultaneously reduces tower construction, operation, and maintenance costs by an estimated \$3,700-8,600 per year per tower. The goal of this action is to establish a tri-national working group to develop strategies for mainstreaming changes to communication towers that can reduce bird collisions across the hemisphere. This working group would develop materials to make available to all interested countries via the avenues developed in Action Item #3.

**Requested Action from ET (if any):**

**Results:**

Canada and the US have met three times in the past year and continue to make progress. The US has shared outreach and tower lighting materials and the countries have exchanged suggested contacts within Canada. Canada is in the process of acquiring a database of Canadian communications towers. No Canadian database comparable to the US-ASR is readily available. We are exploring alternative sources of information but it will likely be more disjoint than the US data. The US translated the tower lighting requirements for Mexico to evaluate the status of non-flashing lights on towers, and spoke with the tower lighting industry that serves Mexico for clarification. Many towers in Mexico include non-flashing lights and the industry is unaware of any efforts to reduce the number of non-flashing lights in Mexico. The US continues to develop video outreach materials and the US is exploring pro bono legal assistance for tower owners not comfortable navigating online FAA forms used for tower light changes.

**Initial Next Steps:**

- Continue to work to engage Mexico
- Determine the availability of a Mexican communications towers database.
- Develop Canada-specific outreach materials.
- Initiate outreach to owners of Canadian communications towers.

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<b>SUBTITLE: Mainstreaming Grassland Bird Conservation</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
<b>Action Item 5:</b> Finalize actions required to hold the planned workshop to address urgent conservation concerns in Chihuahua related to loss of grasslands	Arvind Panjabi (BCOR), Humberto Berlanga (CONABIO), Charles Francis (CWS), Ken Richkus (USFWS)		
<p><b>Goals:</b> To conserve the remaining Chihuahuan grasslands through engaging multiple sectors (e.g., agriculture, water, biodiversity) to find common solutions that work for all parties in the region (mainstreaming biodiversity conservation).</p> <p>The Chihuahuan grasslands remain a conservation concern for the Trilateral Committee because several rapidly declining grassland birds are dependent upon these habitats for their survival. These habitats are threatened by conversion of rangelands to irrigated crops, which also affects the livelihood of ranchers and threatens the water resources in the region. Mainstreaming conservation of these habitats has the potential to benefit both birds and people. The mainstreaming concept engages multiple sectors (e.g., agriculture, water, biodiversity) in an effort to find common solutions that benefit all parties in the region. Mainstreaming can create a sense of responsibility not just from the conservation partners but also from other government and industry partners. A workshop is proposed to bring together these diverse sectors to explain the conservation urgency – both for birds and for people – and to work together to seek common solutions. CWS has committed to provide partial funding through collaboration involving NGOs and CONABIO.</p>			
<b>Requested Action from ET (if any):</b>			
<p><b>Results</b></p> <p>A contract from Canada is in place with ProNatura to organize the workshop. A draft plan for the workshop was completed at the end of March 2019, and details will be shared at the upcoming Trilateral committee meeting. A decision was made to postpone the workshop itself until September 2019 to allow enough time for all necessary travel approvals, especially from the USFWS.</p>			
<b>SUBTITLE: Coordinated Bird Monitoring and Information Sharing</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Due</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
<b>Action Item 6:</b> Conduct a meeting to develop the scope and workplan for completing the North American waterfowl monitoring review	Ken Richkus (USFWS), Humberto Berlanga (CONABIO), Charles Francis (CWS), Ryan Zimmerling (CWS)	Summer 2018	Fall 2018
<p><b>Goals:</b> To commit to the completion of a joint comprehensive review of the spring waterfowl surveys and waterfowl banding program.</p> <p>The cooperative North American waterfowl monitoring programs, including the western air-ground surveys, the eastern waterfowl surveys, arctic goose surveys, winter surveys and banding programs among others, form the basis for management of harvest of waterfowl species in North America. They also involve a significant budget investment by federal, state and provincial agencies. It is important to ensure they are both efficient and effective, and targeted at the highest priority areas. A comprehensive review of these programs has not been undertaken for many years. Since that time, there have been many new developments in statistical analysis methods (e.g., hierarchical models) that allow for more efficient analyses of data. There may also have been changes in information needs related, for example, to changes in waterfowl populations or hunting</p>			



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pressures. A joint review of waterfowl surveys, including banding, is needed, but with a realistic workplan and time frame, and adequate allocation of resources to ensure its completion.

**Requested Action from ET (if any):**

**Results:** The USFWS and CWS held a joint meeting Dec 11-13, 2018 at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center to discuss a formal review of the annual Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey. Over the course of those 3 days, Migratory Bird staff from the two agencies discussed and agreed upon the WBPHS objectives, priority species, funding strategies, governance plan, and a survey review timeline and workplan. Subsequent to that meeting, the USFWS devoted funds to hiring a post-doctoral analyst through USGS to provide dedicated expertise in survey design and estimation with a specific emphasis on GIS based assessment of the spatial sampling frame, statistical review of sampling units, design vs model based estimation, and sources of bias. Funding was secured for 2 years. CWS also agreed to support evaluation of some analyses, specifically related to evaluating the potential benefit of adopting hierarchical models to estimate Visibility Correction Factors within the current framework. CWS will be reviewing how to complete this work after completion of staffing some new population analyst positions later this the summer.

**SUBTITLE: Coordinated Bird Monitoring and Information Sharing**

Action	Responsible Party	Due	Date Completed
<b>Action Item 7:</b> Implement actions under Letter of Intent between CWS, USGS and CONABIO to support a bird-banding program in Mexico	John French (USGS), Charles Francis (CWS), Ken Richkus (USFWS), and Humberto Berlanga (CONABIO)		

**Goals:** To improve alignment of the three nations on bird banding standards and implementation

Bird-banding provides essential information for managing bird populations, related to demography, movements and migratory connectivity. Banding activities are occurring across all three nations. Canada and the USA run a joint bird-banding program under a CWS/USGS MOU. In 2015, a LOI was signed among the 3 parties (Canada/USA/Mexico) in which Canada and USA agreed to help support Mexico to develop its own program in ways that would be consistent with the Canada/USA model. Currently, Mexico needs a commitment of internal resources to develop their program.

**Requested Action from ET (if any):**

**Results:** The US bird banding lab is prepared to share database expertise, when Mexico is ready. Canada is leading development of international manual for bird-banding programs through the International Ornithology Union. This manual covers many topics related to developing a banding program including ethics, scientific standards, animal care and use, different types of markers, etc. The manual was advanced at a recent meeting of the international bird marking committee in conjunction with the International Ornithology Congress in Vancouver, in August 2018. A draft should be ready for circulation in the next few months.

**SUBTITLE: Coordinated Bird Monitoring and Information Sharing**

Action	Responsible Party	Due	Date Completed
<b>Action Item 8:</b> Develop a strategic plan for implementing the Breeding Bird Survey across all three nations	John French (USGS), Charles Francis (CWS), and Vincente Rodriguez (CONABIO)	March 2019	

**Goals:** To evaluate opportunities to improve implementation of the Breeding Bird Survey.



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The breeding bird survey is an important survey used to assess the status and distribution of landbirds in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. The MBWT agreed that there is value to review and update a 10-year strategic plan for continuing to improve and implement this survey. The review should include discussions with external stakeholders (e.g., USFWS, States, NGOs, and academia) to ensure that the survey and resulting data meets the needs of those using it for on-the-ground conservation actions across the hemisphere.

**Requested Action from ET (if any):**

**Results:** A workshop to develop the strategy was planned for March 2019, but owing to the US government furlough, this had to be postponed. Currently the proposed dates are September 17-19 2019.

There is a need for further discussion about the role of the BBS in Mexico and whether the methodology is appropriate and practical in a Mexican context. There is ongoing collaboration with Cornell on expanding adoption of eBird in Mexico, which may prove to be a more appropriate monitoring tool in that country, at least for some purposes.

**SUBTITLE: Coordinated Bird Monitoring and Information Sharing**

Action	Responsible Party	Due	Date Completed
<b>Action Item 9:</b> Evaluate ways to enhance the use of the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN), for sharing data and analysis tools	Eric Kershner (USFWS), John Alexander (KBO), Charles Francis (CWS), and Humberto Berlanga (CONABIO)	Summer 2018	March 2019

**Goals:** To provide opportunities for supporting bird conservation through the use of consistent decision making tools and data sharing.

The AKN was developed as a mechanism for managing and sharing data among projects. The AKN Steering Committee is interested in gaining a better understanding of data and tool needs for both Canada and Mexico. In addition, what tools are currently in use across all three nations and how can the AKN help align and integrate the use of these tools. This action will create opportunities to dialogue about data tools in all three nations and determine where synergies can be used to assist with conservation decision support needs.

**Requested Action from ET (if any):**

**Results:** The AKN continues to finalize and roll out useful tools to assist partners in conservation. The rollout of these tools will occur in March 2019. CWS has received significant funding to support development of open data platforms for biodiversity data, particularly to support cumulative effects assessment in the context of environmental impacts assessment. This includes funding to support NGO and universities to make their data available. Some of this funding is supporting Bird Studies Canada, the Canadian node of the Avian Knowledge Network, to enhance their platform and tools for haring bird data.

**SUBTITLE: Conservation Tools and Information Sharing**

Action	Responsible Party	Due	Date Completed
<b>Action Item 10:</b> Evaluate how to expand the USFWS data catalog to other databases in all three countries	Emily Silvermen (USFWS), Charles Francis (CWS), and Humberto Berlanga (CONABIO)		

**Goals:** To explore opportunities to make migratory bird data discoverable.



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The migratory bird management community engages in a wide variety of highly collaborative, long-term, and large-scale monitoring efforts. These efforts often involve a variety of partners; and they evolve through time, with changing names, protocols, and purposes. As a result, it can be difficult to find data, data descriptions, or even an appropriate contact. A catalog-system with standard searchable metadata and persistent identifiers would improve data discoverability, and consequentially, data standardization, integration, and use. The U.S. FWS data management community is currently working to develop standard metadata, documentation, and procedures for data resources; an important first step is cataloging and describing our data assets. Involving the broader migratory bird community in this effort is necessary to ensure it is successful and broader adoption of this approach will benefit bird conservation and management.

**Requested Action from ET (if any):**

**Results:** None at this time