



PARTNERS IN FLIGHT NEWSLETTER

<http://www.partnersinflight.org>

January 2004

NATIONAL

PIF Awards

Partners in Flight is still accepting nominations for the 2003 National Awards. The deadline for submission - 9 January 2004 - is quickly approaching. There are many individuals and organizations doing great things for bird conservation that are worthy of recognition. Please consider submitting a nomination to recognize these people. Eligible nominations will be accepted for individuals or groups from the U.S., Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Please visit the Partners in Flight website (PartnersInFlight.org) for submission guidelines and nomination forms.—Richard A. Fischer (fischer@wes.army.mil)

North American Landbird Conservation Plan

Numerous detailed comments on the PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan have been received and addressed since the comment period ended on 31 October 2003. These comments have substantially improved the clarity of the Plan and the coauthors truly appreciate the time that reviewers invested. A few significant changes also have been made as a result.

First, the population objective for all Stewardship Species will be changed to “maintain.” This is a result of many reviewers arguing that it was not realistic to ask for increases in populations of species that are still numerous and not highly vulnerable at this time. However, as a number of these species are experiencing population declines, Stewardship Species will be particularly closely tracked. Second, an assessment of the accuracy of global population estimates will be added. Each estimate will have an “Accuracy” rating a “Precision Code,” each in 6 categories. Third, as a result of some adjustments in data for a few species, all new tables, maps, and appendices will be produced. Thus, the September draft pdf file that was circulated for review should not be used. The final plan should go to press in late January.—Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov)

Bird Population Objectives Step-Down Workshop

PIF is sponsoring a workshop to define a process for stepping down continental bird population objectives for all birds to state, Joint Venture, BCR, Forest,

district, and local levels for conservation action. We invite all interested partners to participate.

Dates: 4-6 February 2004

Location: Sandcastle Conference Center (www.sandcastlecondo.com)
800 Sandcastle Drive, Port Aransas, TX 78373

Objectives of Workshop are:

1) To discuss the background and development of Continental Plans for landbird, shorebirds, and waterbirds, including species assessment, population estimates and population objectives.

2) To discuss how population objectives can be stepped down from continental to regional/local levels and how they can be converted into habitat area objectives.

3) To discuss how regional/local levels can provide feedback to the continental scale for improving population estimates and objectives.

4) To discuss and identify metrics, such as habitat area protected, bird population size, and bird population trends, that are needed to evaluate success in reaching continental objectives.

5) To reconcile approaches so that implementation in the same geographical area is coordinated.

Deadline for registration and room reservations **has been extended** to 16 January 2004. For further logistical details, contact John Herron (john.herron@tpwd.state.tx.us) or Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov). The registration form should be sent to Laurel Moore (lamoore@fs.fed.us).

PIF Population Estimates Committee and Workshop

As a result of great interest in PIF's estimation of global population sizes, based largely on Rosenberg and Blancher (in press), PIF will create a new committee that will be dedicated to 1) examining the science of population estimation, 2) improving landbird population estimates based on new information and methodology, and 3) devising a system for tracking and regularly reporting the best population estimates for landbirds. The committee will be comprised of representatives of the PIF Science Committee and outside scientists from USGS and academia. A workshop to be held in late 2004 on these topics is in the early stages of planning. Anyone interested in either of these should contact Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov).

Asilomar Proceedings

All of the approximately 200 manuscripts submitted for publication in the proceedings of the Asilomar conference are now final and in for copy-editing and layout. We continue to seek additional funds for publication and have asked all authors to contribute page charges at a rate comparable to ornithological

journals. Contributions from PIF partners also are still needed.—Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov) and C. J. Ralph (cjr2@humboldt.edu)

Best Management Practices for Landbirds Being Developed

PIF, NRCS, the FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the American Bird Conservancy, and IAFWA have formed a new workgroup to develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) for landbirds. The target audience are those federal employees who work with private landowners to implement various federal programs. BMPs will be very concise – perhaps only 1-2 pages of the most important actions. Species accounts, background, and other information will be referenced but not repeated. These are meant to be useful to those who need to get to the bottom line quickly. This task is a direct result of the PIF Strategic Plan's highest priority for short-term action with no increases in funding or personnel. Anyone interested in this project also should contact Terry.

Vegetation Assessment for Point Count Sites Being Developed

As part of the Coordinated Bird Monitoring initiative, experts from the Breeding Bird Survey and the PIF Science Committee will be developing a rapid assessment protocol for vegetation at point count sites. Goals are to have a system that can be used at all BBS stops, that takes no longer than 1-2 minutes, and that is as consistent as possible with current vegetation assessment standards.

Neotropical Ornithological Congress and Western Hemisphere Conference

The Neotropical Ornithological Congress and Western Hemisphere Conference on Migratory Species were held at Termas de Puyehue, Chile, on 7-9 October 2003. In their Action Plan resulting from the Summit of the Americas meeting in Quebec in 2001, leaders in the Western Hemisphere issued a call to “advance hemispheric conservation of plants, animals and ecosystems through...the development of a hemispheric strategy to support the conservation of migratory wildlife throughout the Americas.” The 25 country representatives in Chile identified priority needs and established an interim committee to take numerous follow-up actions, including the production of a proceedings and an overall strategy for implementation. Partners in Flight can provide specific assistance for many of the identified needs.—Terry Rich

PIF Mesoamerican meeting

We are planning to hold a PIF Mesoamerican meeting in conjunction with the Mesoamerican Society for Conservation and Biology (MSCB) in Managua next year (probably November 2004). This will be a 2-3 day meeting to identify and prioritize needs while building links with the MSCB and, hopefully, the Austral and Neotropical Section of the Society for Conservation Biology. Jose Manuel

Zolotoff has the lead for starting on the agenda and making logistical arrangements. George Wallace and Megan Hill continue as cochairs of the PIF International Working Group. They, Carol Beidleman, and I participated with several Mesoamerican reps in the IWG meeting in Chile. If you have ideas for next year's meeting, please share them with the group or with individuals, as appropriate.—Terry Rich

SinksWatch

SinksWatch is a new initiative of the World Rainforest Movement (WRM; www.wrm.org.uv) to track and scrutinize carbon sequestration projects related to the Kyoto Protocol, and to highlight their threats to forests, other ecosystems, forest peoples, and the climate. Large-scale tree plantations are one example of carbon sequestration where the environmental and social costs often greatly exceed the benefits. For further information see www.sinkswatch.org and www.fern.org.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act

The deadline for submission of grants under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act is 16 January 2004. Applications and instruction forms are available on the web at: http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NMBCA/eng_neo.htm

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act is a matching grants program to fund projects that promote the conservation of these birds in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The Act defines conservation as protection and management of neotropical migratory bird populations, maintenance, management, protection, and restoration of habitats of these birds, research and monitoring, law enforcement, and community outreach and education. There is a requirement of a 3:1 nonfederal to federal match; in the United States, the match must be in cash, outside of the U.S. the match can be in kind. Approximately \$4 million in funding is available for FY 2004. A minimum of these funds is targeted for Latin America and the Caribbean. It is possible (and encouraged) to submit projects that have components in both the U.S. and outside the U.S.

Any U.S., Latin American, or Caribbean individual, corporation, government agency, trust, association, or other private entity can apply for funding. The cap for any one project is \$250,000 but typical projects are less than \$100,000.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act

The deadlines for submission of North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) standard grant applications for the coming year are March 5 and July 30, 2004. Although final instructions and application forms for 2004 will not be available in final form until the second or third week of January, if you and your partners are interested in applying in March, you may want to use last year's

instructions to begin planning. These instructions and other critical information are available on the web at: <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NAWCA/grants.htm>.

For those not familiar with the Act, its purpose is to encourage voluntary, public-private partnerships to conserve North American wetland ecosystems and important migratory bird habitats associated with wetlands. Eligible activities are long-term wetlands conservation projects for acquisition, restoration, and/or enhancement. There is a requirement of at least a 1:1 non-federal partnership match. The standard grants program has a cap of \$1 million in grant funds. The funds that will be used for these two grant rounds are from FY 2005 so the available funding is unknown. The FY 2004 appropriation was \$37.7 million for North American projects and there was approximately \$34.7 million in appropriated and other funds available for U.S. standard grant projects.

An additional \$2 million will likely be available for the small grants program with a \$50,000 cap in grant funds for each project. The deadline for the small grants program will likely be the last Friday in November 2004.

National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program

The deadline for submission of grants under the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program is typically the first week of June to the Regional Office Division of Federal Aid and the last week of June from the Regional Office to the Washington Office. Grant information is available at: <http://www.fws.gov/cep/cwgcover.html>.

Eligible applicants for this program are state agencies appointed in coastal states (typically the coastal zone agency and/or the natural resources agency), although other entities can prepare the applications. Under the program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides matching grants for acquisition, restoration, management or enhancement of coastal wetlands. The cap for any one project is \$1 million and there is typically between \$11-15 million available nationwide. States and their non-federal partners must provide at least 25% of total project costs.

NWF Species Recovery Fund

The National Wildlife Federation's Species Recovery Fund encourages habitat restoration, species reintroduction, private land conservation activities, and other creative endeavors that directly improve conditions for species listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. During the past four years, the National Wildlife Federation has awarded over forty grants to support innovative species conservation efforts.

The Species Recovery Fund invites applications from any organization, agency, tribe, university, or individual working to improve on-the-ground conditions for imperiled species. Preference will be given to local grassroots organizations.

Grant awards will range from \$3,000 to \$7,000. Key criteria are the degree to which the project will improve on-the-ground conditions of listed species and the degree to which the project will involve people that have not previously been involved with species and habitat conservation. The deadline for submission of grant applications is February 16, 2004. For further information, see <http://www.nwf.org/keepthewildalive/speciesrecoveryfund.cfm>. --Colleen Fahey (fahey@nwf.org)

Wyoming Bird Conservation Plan

Version 2.0 of the PIF Wyoming BCP is now available on the internet. Go to www.partnersinflight.org, click on the link to all bird conservation plans, then scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on Wyoming. If anyone would like a CD version, please contact me.—Andrea Cerovski (Andrea.Cerovski@wgf.state.wy.us)

ABC's Important Bird Areas Book

The American Bird Conservancy Guide to the 500 Most Important Bird Areas in the United States is now available. This new book describes the top sites for birds and bird conservation in all 50 states, and provides key information to birdwatchers who want to visit them. The book is the culmination of six years of research by ABC scientists working in collaboration with hundreds of biologists across the country. Complete with color illustrations, maps, and a comprehensive index, it is the perfect companion to all bird field guides and a must have for any bird enthusiast's collection. The book is available from ABC's new online store at <http://shop.abcbirds.org/>.—George Fenwick (gfenwick@abcbirds.org)

Digital Distribution Maps of the Birds of the Western Hemisphere

NatureServe (<http://www.natureserve.org/>) is part of a consortium of conservation organizations that have joined forces to develop a digital library of the distributions of the birds and mammals of the Western Hemisphere. The goal of the project is to make these maps easily accessible to conservation planners and other interested users.

The data presented here represents a major product of this collaboration - a digital map library of the distributions of the birds of the Western Hemisphere, covering 4,336 species. The maps are annotated to indicate sources, migratory status, historic versus current ranges, origin (native or introduced) and taxonomic decisions. The migratory status indications are particularly detailed, distinguishing where birds are permanent residents, breeding residents, non-

breeding residents, or passage migrants. These maps, provided in ArcView format, are presented as a free resource for conservationists, researchers, and the general public. [Editor's Note: Natureserve's digital maps were critical to allowing us to produce state-of-the-art presentations of continental priorities for landbirds in the PIF Continental Plan.—TR]

North American Wetlands Conservation Council

Highlights from this month's Council meeting, held in Lake Charles, Louisiana, on 9 December 2003, have been posted at:

<http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NAWCA/nawccminutesDEC03.htm>.

Global Register of Migratory Species

There are estimated to be about 5,000 migratory species (all taxa) on the planet. The Global Register of Migratory Species (GROMS) contains a first list of 2,880 migratory vertebrate species in digital format, together with their threat status according to the International Red List 2000, and digital maps for circa 800 species. GROMS summarizes our state of knowledge about migratory species. It consists of a relational database connected to a Geographical Information System (GIS). GROMS supports the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS; <http://www.wcmc.org.uk/cms/>) and will serve both scientific as well as conservational goals, trying to bridge existing gaps.

Migratory species as defined by CMS include: "*the entire population or any geographically separate part of the population of any species or lower taxon of wild animals, a significant proportion of whose members cyclically and predictably cross one or more national jurisdictional boundaries;*" which is close to the biological concept of "true migration" (Dingle 1980), to be used by GROMS. GROMS has prepared species fact sheets for 520 migrants, with maps and short notes on migration, at http://131.220.109.5/groms/Species_HTMLs/Notes.html.

We are now updating this information and will include it into the next GROMS CD. We therefore need your feedback, and would like to ask you to search for your favourite animal, and check the information we provide, suggest other, better links, etc.—Klaus Riede (k.riede.zfmk@uni-bonn.de)

America's Wildlife Refuges: Lands of Promise

After two and a half years in the making, the book *America's Wildlife Refuges: Lands of Promise* was released in October. You can order books from <http://shop.refugenet.org>, which benefits the National Wildlife Refuge Association, or from other book sellers.—Jeanne Clark (Jeanne_Clark@fws.gov)

International Migratory Bird Day 2004

The 2004 International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) Catalog of Products is now available. For information check www.BirdDay.org. IMBD celebrates the incredible journeys of migratory birds between their breeding grounds in North America and their wintering grounds in Mexico, Central, and South America. The event, which takes place on the second Saturday in May each year, encourages bird conservation and increases awareness of birds through hikes, bird watching, information about birds and migration, public events, and a variety of other education programs. Join us in the celebration!—Jennifer Wheeler (Jennifer_Wheeler@fws.gov)

The All-Bird Bulletin

Bird conservation news and information from the *North American Bird Conservation Initiative* is distributed in The All-Bird Bulletin. The latest newsletter is always available at the NABCI web site (<http://www.nabci-us.org/>). Please consider submitting a piece for the upcoming February 2004 issue. The deadline is 31 January 2004.—Roxanne Bogart (Roxanne_Bogart@fws.gov)

National Public Lands Grazing Campaign

Reps. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) and Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) have introduced legislation to enact a voluntary federal grazing permit buyout program that would compensate public lands ranchers and could eventually protect 257 million acres of federal public lands in the United States. The Voluntary Grazing Permit Buyout Act (H.R. 3324, "Shays-Grijalva") would allow federal public lands ranchers to waive their interest in grazing permits in exchange for compensation in the amount of \$175/animal unit month (or AUM, the amount of forage to sustain one cow and calf for one month). The bill authorizes \$100 million for the program, enough money to retire an estimated 7.8 million acres of federal lands grazed by domestic livestock.—Andy Kerr (andykerr@andykerr.net)

Online Encyclopedia of Conservation Projects in Neotropics

The Rainforest Alliance announced the redesigned and updated Eco-Index (www.eco-index.org), an online bilingual reference of conservation projects underway in Latin America and the Caribbean. Online since February 2001, the site has been redesigned to implement new technologies and an updated, user-friendly interface. "The Eco-Index is the premiere communications vehicle for conservation researchers based in the Neotropics to easily share data, lessons learned, methodologies, and reports and studies," explained Diane Jukofsky, director of communications and education at the Rainforest Alliance. "Historically, researchers have lacked an easily accessible communications mechanism, leading to unnecessarily duplicated results, and even mistakes. As

the time to conserve the Earth's remaining tropical ecosystems grows shorter, effectively sharing available information is becoming more crucial."

The Eco-Index is sponsored by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, the Costa Rica-USA Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Spray Foundation, and the Global Environment Facility - Small Grants Program of Costa Rica. For sponsorship information, visit <http://www.eco-index.org/sponsors/index.cfm>.

New Survey Protocols Now on Web

The Golden Eagle Rangewide Survey Protocol, Standard Operating Procedures, and locations of the survey routes are posted on the web at: http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/species/birds/golden_eagle/. The Long-billed Curlew Rangewide Survey documents are also posted at: http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/species/birds/longbilled_curlew/. The survey locations and timing maps will be posted as soon as we finish the sampling framework.—Stephanie Jones (Stephanie_Jones@fws.gov)

Yellowstone To Yukon

Featuring scientific research and conservation results from nearly 50 projects funded over the past five years by the Y2Y Conservation Science Grants program, the our new webpages (<http://www.y2y.net/science/sciencegrants-overview.asp>) contain a complete catalogue of the program's science grantees, project summaries, and study area maps, plus information on the grants program and the current Request for Proposals. Simply by clicking on project summaries or mapped study areas, you'll discover a wealth of information regarding critters and connectivity in the Y2Y ecoregion, learn about innovative field sampling and modeling techniques, and see how conservation groups are using the findings.—Marcy Mahr (marcy@y2y.net)

Website for Wind-Energy EIS

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate issues associated with wind-energy development on BLM lands. To provide the public with information throughout the EIS process, and to offer a mechanism for participating, the BLM launched a new website. Over time, the website will be updated to support dissemination of the draft programmatic EIS and to offer further opportunity for public involvement as the EIS is finalized. Current plans call for the draft EIS to be published in August 2004 and the final EIS in June 2005. For more information, see <http://windeis.anl.gov/>.

Estimating Numbers of Terrestrial Birds Reprinted

The classic "Estimating Numbers of Terrestrial Birds," edited by C. John Ralph and J. Michael Scott (ISBN 1-930665-77-6, 630 pp.), has just been brought back into print by The Blackburn Press, making it available to libraries, scholars, researchers, ecologists and field ornithologists who would like to own or replace a copy of an invaluable reference. The original work was published by the Cooper Ornithological Society in its Studies in Avian Biology series. This volume remains a primary source of information on censuses of birds and other animals, and it is frequently quoted in the primary literature of today. Since this volume went out of print some six years ago, demand has markedly increased for copies, which have been essentially unavailable. For more information, see <http://www.blackburnpress.com/esnuoftebi.html>. —Andrea Herbert (AHerbert@BlackburnPress.com)

FLYWAY Newsletter Issued

The annual issue of the FLYWAY Newsletter (Vol. 10), a Texas Partners in Flight (TX PIF) publication, has recently been printed and mailed out. If you did not receive a copy but would like one, please send your mailing address in typical label format to Clifford Shackelford (clifford.shackelford@tpwd.state.tx.us). Make sure that the word "FLYWAY" appears in the subject line of your message. This issue will be available on the web as a pdf document with past issues of FLYWAY at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/birding/flyway_news/.

MEETINGS

Next National Partners in Flight Meetings

The next National PIF Committee Meetings will be held prior to and during the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference on 15-19 March 2004, in Spokane, WA. As always, we are eager to have participation of anyone interested in contributing to the direction of Partners in Flight. Information on the North American can be found at <http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/>. Details on PIF Committee meetings will be delivered to the various listserves as the dates draw nearer. —Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov)

Fourth Important Bird Areas Conference

Dates for the Fourth Important Bird Areas Conference have been set for 11-15 August 2004 in Sierra Vista, Arizona. A full conference announcement and details will be distributed in early 2004. Mark your calendars, and feel free to share this information with others that you think may be interested in attending. —Connie Chen Sanchez (csanchez@audubon.org).

NEWS OF PEOPLE

New co-chairs for Boreal Partners in Flight

Nancy DeWitt and Christopher Harwood are the new co-chairs for Boreal Partners in Flight. Nancy is the Executive Director of the Alaska Bird Observatory (<http://www.alaskabird.org>) and brings to our leadership her diverse background in public relations, conservation, and research. Nancy can be reached at (ndewitt@alaskabird.org). Chris Harwood is an Avian Ecologist with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge. He brings to our group many years of experience working on a broad range of avian taxa on the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Chris helped pioneer methods for conducting Breeding Bird Survey on rivers by establishing 30 river routes on the lower Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers in western Alaska. Chris can be reached at (christopher.harwood@fws.gov).—Steve Matsuoka (steve_matsuoka@fws.gov)

WHSRN Director Named

The Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences has named Charles Duncan as the director of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) Coordinating Office. WHSRN is a voluntary consortium working together across the Americas to protect and manage habitats to benefit shorebirds. Duncan brings an extensive and accomplished background to the Network's Coordinating Office, based at Manomet. Prior to joining Manomet, Duncan was director of the *Gulf Wings* project of The Nature Conservancy. Fluent in Spanish, Duncan built informal coalitions with conservation groups, government agencies, scientists and supporters between U.S. and Mexican portions of the Gulf of Mexico. This effort identified and conserved key stopover habitat for migratory landbirds. Other positions he has held include founder and director of the Institute for Field Ornithology, and president of the Association of Field Ornithologists.

The next newsletter will be issued on 1 April 2004. Items are due 15 March 2004 to Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov) by e-mail only. Please put "Newsletter Item" in the subject line.