



PARTNERS IN FLIGHT NEWSLETTER

<http://www.partnersinflight.org>

April 2004

North American Landbird Conservation Plan on the Streets!

After two years in development, the PIF Continental Plan is now available. Before requesting plans from me, please check this list to see if your agency or organization already has a quantity available for internal distribution. Boxes of plans have been distributed to: each USFWS regional office, each USFS regional office, the USFS Washington office, DOD-PIF, the National Park Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Bird Studies Canada, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, IAFWA, certain states (AZ, CO, ID, KY, NJ, NV, TX), Ducks Unlimited, the American Bird Conservancy, the National Audubon Society IBA program, the Playa Lakes and Sonoran JVs, Plum Creek Timber Company, and Weyerhaeuser Company.

We are sending 1-5 copies to any requester free of charge. But as we still need to recover some of the costs of publication, we are requesting donations of \$10 per plan for orders of more than 5 plans. BUT – very important – we will not let finances stand in the way of getting these plans out there. Everyone who can use a copy will get a copy. They're of no value sitting in a warehouse. We expect to put a pdf of the plan on the internet for downloading, as soon as a few technical details can be worked out. Contact Terry Rich (208-378-5347 or terry_rich@fws.gov) for details on obtaining plans.

PIF Awards for 2003

Winners of the 2003 Partners in Flight National Awards were recognized during the USFWS Director's Reception at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference on 18 March 2004 in Spokane, WA. This years' awards were jointly sponsored by the American Birding Association (www.americanbirding.org) and Swarovski Birding (www.swarovskibirding.com/). The awardees by category are:

Leadership—

C. J. Ralph, USFS, for the Klamath Demographic Monitoring Network.

Tim Burr, DOD, for the conservation, protection and management of sensitive avian species on military lands in the western United States, including Hawaii.

Stewardship—

Marjorie Schock Derrick, for using USFWS Communication Tower Construction Guidelines to make County law to save birds.

Steve Lowrimore, for the conservation of Swallow-tailed Kites in the Gulf Hammock region of Florida and the Southeast.

Public Awareness—

Merrie Morrison, American Bird Conservancy, for continued excellence in the production of Bird Conservation Magazine.

Investigations—

Peter Blancher, Bird Studies Canada and Canadian Wildlife Service, for technical and mapping contributions to the North American Landbird Conservation Plan.

The Institute for Bird Populations, for developing and implementing landbird conservation strategies by modeling.

Kirtland's Warbler Training and Research Project, for conserving the Kirtland's Warbler, the Bahamas' most elusive bird.

We also express our appreciation to Richard A. Fischer, chair of the PIF Awards Committee.

International Migratory Bird Day – 8 May 2004

The 2004 *International Migratory Bird Day* (IMBD) Catalog of Products is now available at 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. This year's focus is on the conservation of colonial birds. There are more products than ever before so check it out now!—Jennifer Wheeler (Jennifer_Wheeler@fws.gov)

Keep Your Cat Indoors Day and Poster Competition

Now is an excellent time to plan for *National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day*, which also occurs on 8 May. There are several effective and fun ways you can publicize the day and the *Cats Indoors!* Campaign. One way is through the *Children's*

Poster Competition. For example, last year the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Nongame Wildlife Program sponsored a state-wide competition, and received 375 posters. They awarded prizes to 45 regional and 3 state winners. Winning posters were displayed at the University of Minnesota's Bell Museum of Natural History. Articles announcing the competition appeared in many newspapers across the state, and stories also ran about the winners. If you are interested in sponsoring a poster competition, please contact me for a sample announcement and press release. Send me the top 3 winning posters **by May 30** and we'll pick 3 national winners to post on our web site.—Linda Winter (lwinter@abcbirds.org)

Canada's Great Basin Landbird Conservation Plan

PIF British Columbia/Yukon has just published version 1.0 of its Great Basin plan, the first regional PIF plan in Canada. This document is densely packed with data and management information and uses some novel new approaches to presenting information. There are ideas here, not only for the rest of Canada, but for the rest of us. An electronic version will soon be available at www.pifbcyukon.org.

CA Bird Conservation Plan Update

The second version of the Riparian Bird Conservation Plan is now available for downloading at the CalPIF web site (www.prbo.org/calpif). Thanks to everyone who contributed to this latest accomplishment of California Partners in Flight.--Kim Kreitinger (kkreitinger@PRBO.ORG)

Coordinated Bird Monitoring

Now that the Continental Plan is completed, CBM is the next big product push for PIF. The Monitoring Working Group has been working steadily for a couple of years now, and numerous aspects of the monitoring framework are coming to fruition. Importantly, Directors of the FWS and USGS are jointly recommending agency participation in an *ad hoc* bird monitoring technical working group to be established under the IAFWA Science and Research Committee. This working group will address technical and operational issues involved in coordinated bird monitoring, building on efforts by biologists on behalf of PIF, NABCI, and others to date. Contact Jon Bart (jon_bart@usgs.gov) to obtain current draft reports and other information on CBM.

Special Issue of Bird Conservation Magazine

The American Bird Conservancy is devoting the next issue of Bird Conservation magazine to the PIF North American Bird Conservation Plan. We'll be taking important excerpts from the Plan to both highlight particular issues and to make the Plan accessible to a more general bird conservation audience. Any partner

interested in paying for an additional run of this issue for PIF landbird education and outreach efforts should contact Merrie Morrison (mmorr@abcbirds.org) at ABC.

Species Assessment in Mexico

The final two regional workshops for the assessment of the Mexican avifauna have now been set for Culiacan and Saltillo. Once Mexican ornithologists are comfortable with the final assessment scores, we will begin to produce an update of the North American Landbird Conservation Plan that includes approximately 450 additional species of landbirds from Mexico. This will not replace the current plan but rather will portray priorities at a yet larger scale that will be of great value to international funding and conservation entities.—Eduardo E. Iñigo-Elias (eei2@cornell.edu)

PIF Operational Budget

Various PIF committees have been working on ways to create and maintain a central operating budget for PIF activities. Examples of expenses include annual costs such as support for the National Coordinator, support for the critical PIF databases at Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, and maintenance of the web site. There also are one-time expenses such as publication of the North American Landbird Conservation Plan, publication of the Asilomar Proceedings, and travel support needed for particular PIF leaders to attend particular meetings. A budget has been drafted and is now available for comment or review by any partner.—Terry Rich

Implementation Committee

The PIF IC met for two days prior to the North American. A major topic was integration of PIF objectives into state Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies. A key piece in accomplishing this is a step-down user guide being produced for IAFWA by Ken Rosenberg at Cornell. Many state diversity coordinators and others involved in writing the CWCSs have already requested copies of the Continental Plan to use directly. We also discussed steps that the new Integration Committee needs to take to integrate objectives into federal land use plans. A full day was devoted to Coordinated Bird Monitoring. Several specific actions were developed and carried through both PIF and IAFWA committee meetings later in the week. IC minutes will be distributed as soon as they are complete.—Chris Eberly (ceberly@dodpif.org)

Bird Conservation Funding Coalition

In January 2003, bird conservation partners met in Washington DC and agreed to pursue a unified set of goals for increased funding for bird conservation. The five items that everyone agreed to work together for include: The North American

Wetlands Conservation Act, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, Joint Ventures, State Wildlife Grants, and Science Support, recently explicitly recognized as the research and monitoring components of the USFWS Division of Migratory Bird Management. Although the amounts vary among different budget alternatives, everyone is pulling in the same direction. This is already proving to be a wise approach as budget officers appreciate the efficiency that is obvious in a coordinated effort.

USFWS Strategic Plan and BLT

“A Blueprint for the Future of Migratory Birds: Strategic Plan 2004-2014” has now been finalized by the USFWS (see <http://www.fws.gov>). The Service will follow this strategic plan with implementation plans that outline specific actions to be taken. The Service also challenged other land management agencies to write analogous plans to bring bird conservation to the forefront of their activities. In a related effort, the Service is creating a Biological Landscape Team that will work to design a cross-programmatic approach to applied science and biological planning. Refuges, Migratory Birds, Ecological Services, and Fisheries will all be involved.

Bird Population Objectives Step-Down Workshop

The PIF population objectives step-down workshop in Port Aransas, TX, in February 2004 proved to be a big success. Details of objective setting were explored by using data for four species (Long-billed Curlew, Little Blue Heron, Cerulean Warbler, Loggerhead Shrike), and a number of issues were advanced. The next steps for PIF at the implementation level are already familiar to JVs who have the GIS and other technical capacity to conduct serious conservation design: 1) Characterize and assess current landscape conditions, 2) Develop management/population response models, 3) Assess conservation opportunities across the landscape, 4) Produce optimal solutions, 5) Implement on-the-ground actions, and 6) Monitor, evaluate, and adapt. Detailed minutes are available (dave_krueper@fws.gov). As a result of the workshop's effectiveness, the PIF Council approved a motion to hold more workshops in other locations around the country. Both the Western Working Group and Southeastern Working group have already had at least one special meeting on this topic. Expressions of interest from the Midwest and Northeast are particularly sought. Contact Terry Rich with any suggestions.

Population Estimates Review Workshop

There has been great interest in PIF's estimation of global population sizes for landbirds and now everyone can see the numbers and read about the methodology in the PIF plan. We have already received ideas for refining the estimation process further. Because these estimates are so fundamentally important to setting objectives, USGS has agreed to take the lead in a workshop

that will provide a peer review of the estimation process. The review will be conducted by invited biometricians from USGS, USFS, states, and academia, and it will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Society in La Crosse, WI in May. A report of recommendations to PIF and a peer-reviewed publication will be produced.

Research Needs Crosswalk

The PIF Research Working Group and USGS will be working to complete and refine the PIF Research Needs Database. The database currently consists of all research needs identified in various PIF Bird Conservation Plans (BCPs). However, this information is uneven as it depends on the degree to which particular BCPs addressed research needs. An effort will now be made to ensure that the research needs are complete for the highest priority Watch List species and to then work down the priority list, as time and interest allows, to complete the assessment for other species. Equally important, more thought needs to be devoted to seeing that needed research is actually accomplished. Some obvious avenues that deserve more attention are within-agency research arms such as those in USGS and USFS.—Janet Ruth (janet_ruth@usgs.gov)

Best Management Practices for Landbirds

The high, short-term PIF priority of developing Best Management Practices for landbirds for private lands programs continues to evolve. A long-time expert in Farm Bill programs and NRCS provided further information on this issue in the Joint Shorebird/Waterbird/PIF Working Group meeting in Spokane in March. For NRCS, there are two places to engage. One is during revision of NRCS national conservation practice standards where our main objective will be to ensure there are no roadblocks to the sorts of activities PIF is most interested in. Roughly 40 of the 150 standards impact bird habitat.

More importantly, we need to ensure that the Field Office Technical Guides, which are the primary scientific references for NRCS, contain the information we need. These are developed, revised, and maintained at the state level by State Technical Committees and require direct involvement by PIF partners in each state if we are to be effective. Further guidance and ideas on how to do this are being developed in cooperation with IAFWA, the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and NRCS.—David Pashley (dpashley@abcbirds.org)

Best Management Practices for Pinyon-Juniper Birds

The subject draft guidelines have been developed by Scott Gillihan of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory and the Western Working Group of PIF. This is another in a series of detailed guidelines produced by PIF for high priority habitats. An invited review is currently underway. Partners are encouraged to consider the value of producing these for particular habitats or species suites.

BMPs are already available for sagebrush, Wyoming grassland, Wyoming riparian, and shortgrass prairie, to name a few. Contact Terry Rich for examples.

NAWCA Technical Question 3

The PIF Science Committee has been working with the North American Wetlands Conservation Council to produce maps to help address geographic priorities for wetland-associated landbirds. The current map follows the pattern of maps in the PIF Continental Plan by showing priorities by lat-long block. Weighting factors for each block include: 1) mean Area Importance score, 2) number of species on both the PIF Watch List and the NAWCA list for a given BCR, and 3) mean vulnerability score for species at that geographic location. The usefulness of the current approach will be reviewed and revised again, if necessary.

Joint Ventures and Implementation of Bird Conservation

A white paper is available which nicely describes the role of JVs in all-bird conservation. The paper addresses Coordination; Planning; Project Development and Implementation; Monitoring, Evaluation, and Applied Research; and Communications and Outreach. Contact Seth Mott (seth_mott@fws.gov) for the latest version.

North American Grouse Management Plan

The first draft of this plan was distributed to selected reviewers at the North American. Grouse not only have great value in and of themselves, they serve as umbrellas for other species, as flagships for ecosystems, and bring more traditional hunter-wildlifers together with less traditional birders and biodiversity proponents. Of the 11 species of North American grouse, 5 are on the PIF Watch List and 4 are Stewardship Species. Part of the plan is to create a new working group under IAFWA to pursue conservation actions on behalf of grouse.

Flying WILD Review

PIF will be providing an invited review of *Flying WILD: An Educator's Guide to Celebrating Birds*. Flying WILD has been created by the Council for Environmental Education, the creators of the enormously successful and effective *Project WILD*. Both programs consist of a variety of classroom activities that teachers, volunteers, or even students can lead that involve birds in the teaching of language arts, science, social studies, math, expressive arts, physical education, and environmental education.

Neotropical Ornithological Congress

The Neotropical Ornithological Congress was, by all accounts, a tremendous success. Held in October 2003 in Puyehue, Chile, the meeting hosted nearly 400 scientists and representatives of bird conservation organizations from 30 nations around the world. There were 103 poster presentations, 107 oral presentations, 6 workshops, three roundtables, 19 symposia, 5 plenary talks, and many planned and ad hoc meetings among those with mutual interests. This type of networking is incredibly important in furthering conservation effectiveness. The NOC meets every four years.—Ellen Paul (ellen.paul@verizon.net)

Western Hemisphere Conference

The Western Hemisphere Conference on Migratory Species was held at Termas de Puyehue, Chile, on 7-9 October 2003, in conjunction with the NOC (see above). The first draft of the proceedings is near completion. This will be reviewed by the Interim Steering Committee and then distributed in both Spanish and English. The matrix of tools available for addressing needs prioritized by the country representatives is still being developed. The Interim Steering Committee is planning to meet in fall of 2004 to continue to follow up on actions needed.—Jeff Flocken (jeff_flocken@fws.gov)

Asilomar Proceedings

All of the approximately 200 manuscripts submitted for publication in the proceedings of the Asilomar conference are either final or have galley proofs out for final author review. We continue to seek about \$10,000 in additional funds for publication. Publication is expected this summer.—C. J. Ralph (cjr2@humboldt.edu) and Terry Rich.

Birding Nebraska

NEBRASKAland Magazine devoted its entire January-February 2004 issue to an issue called *Birding Nebraska*. This 178-page, glossy, full-color magazine has spectacular bird photographs, and a tremendous amount of great information. Following introductory sections on Early Bird Study and Ecoregions and Destinations, the bulk of the issue is devoted to site-specific descriptions with all the logistical and bird information you could possibly need. This is a first-rate product that you'll enjoy even if you've not been anywhere near the state. You can order on line from <http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/catalog/category.asp> (click on "publications").

PIF Mesoamerican Meeting

We continue to make plans for a PIF Mesoamerican meeting in conjunction with the Mesoamerican Society for Conservation and Biology (MSCB) in Managua on

or around 15-19 November 2004. This will be a 2-3 day meeting to identify and prioritize needs while building links with the MSCB, the Austral and Neotropical Section of the Society for Conservation Biology, the Mesoamerican Corridor Project, and BirdLife's IBA program. Jose Manuel Zolotoff has the lead for the agenda and for logistical arrangements. George Wallace and Megan Hill continue as co-chairs of the PIF International Working Group. If you have ideas for this meeting, please share them with the group or with individuals, as appropriate. And be sure to make plans to attend yourself!—Terry Rich

ECOS-Río Plátano

A group of people has begun a small nonprofit organization called ECOS-Río Plátano that has now been granted 501(c)(3) status. ECOS (Education for Conservation and Sustainability) provides scholarships to the indigenous and ethnic peoples of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve. The Río Plátano is an international Man and the Biosphere Reserve, World Heritage Site, and one 35 world sites on the UN's List of World Heritage in Danger. It also is the home of 5 peoples: The indigenous Miskito, Tawahka-Sumu and Pech, and the ethnic Garífuna and Ladino. Traditionally subsistence farmers and hunters, these peoples are threatened by uncontrolled logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, mining, market hunting and other transient land uses.

The Río Plátano is the largest protected area in Honduras and part of the largest contiguous rain forest in Central America. One of the most biologically rich areas on earth, it also is located in one of the most economically-starved regions of the Western Hemisphere. The Reserve has no roads, electricity or running water. Few children have opportunities to attend school beyond the fifth grade. Please check out our web site at www.education-for-conservation.org/home.htm. We are an all-volunteer staff; more than 99 percent of contributed funds go directly to our students.—Eric Greenquist (eric_greenquist@or.blm.gov)

Raptor Migration Reports Available Online

Hawkwatch International has placed raptor migration reports online for Smith Point and Corpus Christi, TX (fall 2002 migration), Sandia Mts, NM (Spring 2003), Manzano Mts, NM (Fall 2003) and the 2 Grand Canyon, AZ sites (Fall 2003). Go to www.hawkwatch.org/, and click on Publications/Reports and then on Technical Reports: Current Projects. There also are reports from previous years and a number of papers on various raptor-related topics available at that site.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act – FY04

Congress appropriated \$4 million for FY 2004. Following the 16 January 2004 deadline, the FWS received 139 proposals from throughout the Western Hemisphere. The total request was for about \$12 million. All proposals have

been reviewed by evaluation teams. Final decisions on projects will be made in mid-April and applicants will be contacted soon thereafter. The quality of proposals continues to be very high.—Doug Ryan (neotropical@fws.gov)

Find Transmitter Towers

This site (www.berkana.com/tower.php3) displays maps (as well as company name, address, latitude, longitude, elevation, height, etc.) of any wireless radio (and presumably, television) tower in the USA that is registered with the FCC. The site is run by a professional programmer who does this as a hobby by downloading data from the FCC ULS ASR database weekly. On 28 March 2004, the site listed 105,530 entries.

New Global Bird Migration Map from National Geographic

National Geographic has produced a complete revision of their popular Bird Migration maps for the Eastern and Western Hemispheres with new data, routes and bird art. Maps were distributed in the April 2004 issue of National Geographic magazine. To obtain copies, contact NG at 1-800-962-1643 or check the web site www.nationalgeographic.com/maps. [However, as of this date, the new Bird Migration map was not yet posted on the web site.]—Terry Rich

Developing and Implementing an Adaptive Conservation Strategy

Thanks to a grant from the Packard Foundation and support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, PRBO Conservation Science now has available the recently completed subject strategy, subtitled, *A guide for improving adaptive management and sharing the learning among conservation practitioners*. Download a copy at www.prbo.org/cms/index.php?mid=284&module=browse. The guide includes case studies of applied Adaptive Conservation Planning in terrestrial, wetland, and ocean realms, as well as over 30 specific recommendations for conservation parishioners.

Golf Courses and Bird Communities in the South Atlantic Coastal Plain

As a significant landscape element across the country, golf courses play a unique role in bird conservation planning. Researchers Stephen G. Jones, David H. Gordon, and Gary M. Phillips from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Clemson University are assessing the value of golf courses to breeding bird species within the South Atlantic Coastal Plain by evaluating how birds occupy golf course landscapes with different designs and habitat configurations. For a more information, contact Stephen Jones (stephen_jones@fws.gov) and visit <http://usgatero.msu.edu/v02/n16.pdf> for a full-descriptive article.

MEETINGS

Next National Partners in Flight Meetings

The next National PIF Committee Meetings will be held prior to and during the annual conference of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies on 13-14 September 2004, in Atlantic City, NJ. As always, we are eager to have participation by anyone interested in contributing to the direction of Partners in Flight. Information on the IAFWA conference can be found at <http://www.iafwa.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.—Connie Chen Sanchez (csanchez@audubon.org).

See additional meeting announcements in the OSNA Newsletter.

NEWS OF PEOPLE

Bill Eley Hired at Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory (GCBO) has hired Bill Eley to fill our conservation biologist position. With over 25 years of experience birding the Gulf Coast, Mexico, and South America, and over 15 years involvement with computers, project management, and data analysis, Bill brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to GCBO as its Conservation Science Director. He received his B.A. in Anthropology and his M.S. in Zoology from Louisiana State University, where he participated in four separate scientific expeditions to Peru with the Museum of Natural Science. Bill has maintained an intense interest in all conservation issues throughout his varied career, and has been an active supporter of the Ornithology program at the LSU Museum. He is serving as the primary liaison and technical consultant to GCBO's site partners around the Gulf, and will be participating in the development of the PIF ecoregional landbird plan for the coastal prairies and marshes. Bill will also participate in other GCBO projects, and will be coordinating activities with other conservation organizations throughout the Gulf Coast region.—Cecilia M. Riley (criley@gcbo.org)

Michael Roedel Now with Tennessee WRA

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency has just hired a new State Ornithologist: Michael Roedel. Mike is known to many in Tennessee Ornithological Society (TOS) as a fine birder and past TOS Board member. He has worked for the past decade as a wildlife biologist with a primary emphasis on the conservation and management of birds and biodiversity. From 1995 - 1998 he worked with the Tennessee Conservation League collecting and synthesizing information about neotropical migrant birds in TN. He was very active in the early formation of Partners in Flight in the state and helped train TWRA biologists and wildlife officers in the field methodology for PIF point counts. He took a position with The Nature Conservancy in 1998 where he gained experience with GIS and worked with a range of partners to plan and implement projects, share information, and prepare ecoregional, regional, state and site management plans. His knowledge of the birds of Tennessee is extensive and he brings to the position experience that will be a great asset to the conservation and management of birds in the state.—Richard Kirk

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