



## **BIRD CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (BCC1)**

**Chair: Judy Camuso (Maine)**

**Vice-Chair: Austin Booth (Arkansas)**

**Date: Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Time: 10:00-12:00 a.m. CST**

88th North American Fish and Wildlife Conference Meeting, St. Louis (MO)  
Room: Majestic D – Conference Center Upper Level

### **NOTES**

#### **Southern Wings Progress Updates**

- *Deb Hahn, AFWA*
- *Eric Gardner*

Eric indicated that the program is growing, and that Michigan is a new participant. This brings the participation to 39 states. They wish to be more inclusive of diversity and are looking at expanding with the councils. He indicated that the relationship needs to be more than just funding. We need to share knowledge and create more connections.

They are working with Cornell as a partner and leverage the eBird data. It gives abundance per state. Audubon also has migration data on 458 species. ➔ See slides from presentation. SW is also leveraging the data from the banding program, geospatial group and the Motus towers. He indicated the ABC/Audubon and Cornell all wish to create a website to provide states with data.

Southern Wings has existing projects **ready to be implemented** and has a match for SWG, PR and fingers crossed RAWA. RAWA may provide an amazing opportunity to contribute more to Southern Wings. BUT protection and conservation of stop-over sites and the wintering grounds are basic conservation needs for these species; many of which need our help now more than ever.

#### **Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group Report**

*Scott Anderson, NC Wildlife Resources Commission*

Scott reported on the workgroup informal meeting at the Conference. He indicated the lack of leadership, no chair, no co-chair. He shared that the group 1) wanted to escalate the need to have a leader so that other organizations such as NGO could potentially be the co-chair, and 2) passed the motion proposed by the Waterfowl WG to increase the funding for birds conservation efforts. The

motion was read and the group agreed to increase the ask for \$25 million. The below motion was agreed upon:

The Bird Conservation Committee and National Flyway Council recognize that the USFWS Migratory Bird Program is no longer funded at a level appropriate to fully support migratory bird conservation needs. Given the urgency of the situation, these groups recommend that the Association pass a motion to request AFWA's President and the Executive Director meet with the Director of the USFWS to discuss strategies that will result in fully funding migratory bird conservation needs including,

- a \$1 million annual increase for the Duck Stamp Office to better engage with artists and promote sales within the Duck Stamp program,
- fully funding of the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures at \$25 million annually, and
- an increase of \$20 million/year for monitoring and surveys of waterfowl and other bird species populations.

The group also discussed means to encourage state people to sign up as a chair. We agreed that a letter should be sent to the state asking for their members' participation. Another proposal was to send a letter to the BCC members and the Flyway Council.

### **Grassland Bird Working Group Report**

- *Greg Link, North Dakota Game and Fish Department*

Greg reported on the various presentations and topics discussed in the Grassland Bird working group: For instance:

- Nebraska and its success with the funding from the America the Beautiful. He related the work they did with the Santee tribe around the sandhill cranes.
- Steve Riley from the ABC Bird and its request to work with Ranchers to improve the grassland and the opportunities offered by the Farm Bill.
- Tammy VerCauteren and her update on the central grassland progress. The group recently had a big launch about their new map and efforts. Their goal is to impact at least 10 millions acres. The new story map was pretty revealing. Finally this workgroup is working towards hiring a program coordinator.
- Kathy Weigman talked about the JV8 effort and about how international that group was. The coordinator for the WG is a contractor presently.
- Jim Giacomo talked about Eastern grassland and the Mississippi Flyway

Greg shared that no action items had been taken.

### **Bird and Fish Related Conflict Working Group**

- *Scott Anderson, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Discussion on change of leadership*

Scott shared that this workgroup did not meet during the conference. In addition Scott has stepped in as chair for this working group. The last cochair is now retiring. He also indicated that the membership for this WG has been declining.

The original focus for the work was about the double crested cormorants. However now it is the time to expand to other species. Potentially the white pelicans.

The group will have a virtual Spring meeting as there were too few participants the last time and this mean could make it easier for the members to join. They have met 2 times and developed some white papers on birds and fish conflict. They will share that content at the next 2023 AFWA meeting.

## **Resident Game Bird Working Group Report**

- *Todd Bishop, IA Department of Natural Resources*

The resident game bird has used in the past translocation techniques to relocate game bird. They wish to now focus more on habitat restoration as the main means to reestablish populations. Pheasant Forever has been a very successful endeavor. They have received \$516 million in funds and employ more than 350 people. How can we help this group to be successful and have their talents grow. The workgroup wants to invest in the retention of that personnel.

Todd discussed the challenges to get access to Federal grants. There seems to be a lot of funds available from the USDA, however it is a little bit unclear as how to access them.

Todd also indicated the concern around decline of the wild turkey population in the South. Why? Is it avian flu, is it a combination of things? We need research about this discovery.

Finally he discussed the emergence of racoon populations and the detrimental effects it has on game birds. There may be opportunities to work with the fur bearer biologists.

## **Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group Report**

- *Shawn Oldenburger, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department*

Shawn shared the success of the Webless Migratory Gamebird Program (WMGBP). With \$100,000 they worked around 16 species. The group hopes to pursue this program as it has been really successful. He indicated that the Duck workgroup had a productive meeting and wished to focus on the decline of the mourning dove. He also shared the group's concerns about not enough funds to perform monitoring activities especially from US FWS. The group voted on the motion for additional fundings as well.

## **Harvest Information Program Working Group Report**

- *Josh Avey, Arizona Game and Fish*

Josh shared the HIP workgroup did not meet. He shared the latest developments with the group outreach campaigns and showed to the audience the various logos and art work they had developed. Next step is to engage with the hunter community and the states to select which outreach logo will be the most useful for their campaigning.

As part of the wg next agenda they wish to do a solicitation with the state to provide the WG with their list of migratory birds. They wish to stand up a workgroup for understanding how to best impact the migratory birds' populations. The solicitation will be done by April 2023. Josh requested from the state the list of HIP type of hunters so that they can reach out to them.

## **Waterfowl Working Group & National Flyway Council Report**

- *Jeff Ver Steeg, CO Parks and Wildlife, Todd Bishop, IA Department of Natural Resources*

The waterfowl committee is the group that initiated the motion request. They also indicated that there is a significant effort underway to prepare the 2024 Update of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), which is being co-chaired by Tim Sopuck (Canada) and Tom Moorman (USA).

Action Item:

- The BCC2 Committee passed a motion requesting AFWA's President and the Executive Director meet with the Director of the USFWS to discuss strategies that will result in fully funding migratory bird conservation needs.

**Information Item:**

- Significant effort is underway to prepare the 2024 Update of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) which is being co-chaired by Tim Sopuck (Canada) and Tom Moorman (USA).