



Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group
Chair: Sara Schweitzer, NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Vice-Chair: Eric Gardner, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

84th North American Wildlife & Natural Resources Conference
Sheraton Denver Downtown, Denver, CO

Thursday, March 7, 2019, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Report to the Bird Conservation Committee II

Twenty-two (22) people attended the WG meeting, representing 10 state agencies, 2 federal agencies, the Canadian Wildlife Service, 4 non-governmental organizations, and 1 university.

Updates from the landbird (Partners in Flight), shorebird, and waterbird initiatives

- For the **PIF Steering Committee**, Geoff Geupel provided a 1-pg. handout (attachment 1) summarizing recent accomplishments:
 - October 2018 meeting between the forestry sector and Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team
 - Engagement with industry and the Wildlife Habitat Council resulting in a PIF-hosted webinar on grasslands management for the WHC in early spring 2019
 - Formation of an Eastern PIF WG, and an initial meeting in April 2019
 - PIF will celebrate its 30-year anniversary in 2020 and is planning events to celebrate
- For the **USSCP Council**, Sara Schweitzer presented the:
 - release of the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Shorebird Plan (<https://www.lmvjv.org/shorebird-plan>);
 - 8th meeting of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group, from Oct. 24-28, 2019, in Panama City, Panama. Abstracts are due by May 01, 2019 (<http://westernshorebirdgroup.org/next-meeting/>).
- For the **Waterbird Conservation Council**, Sara Schweitzer led a discussion on the need and initial work to re-activate the Council and find support for a Coordinator for the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas Initiative. There is initial support from NABCI Committee members to create a term position on soft money for a Waterbird Coordinator. It would be optimum to engage a re-activated Waterbird Conservation Council in this effort.

Geoff Walsh provided an update on a summary of BMPs that address **threats within birds' airspace habitat**

- A draft summary of existing BMPs was distributed and discussed;
- Focused on wind energy, powerlines, window strikes, communication and other towers;
- The summary will be finalized and distributed to appropriate state agency representatives for suggestions;
- Will coordinate with others in BCC working on incidental take threats and provide a report in September.

Zachary Loman provided an update on tasks from the **Avian Conservation Data Management Workshop**, March 2018:

- Reactivated a colonial waterbird database initiated by former Waterbird Coordinator with data from several sources, primarily from the Atlantic Flyway, but focusing on 5 species of concern (Common Tern, Least Tern, Double-crested Cormorant, Laughing Gull, Black Skimmer);
- Data can be visualized in maps, figures, and tables; data can be sorted to assist evaluations and decision-making;
- Database will be housed in the AKN and may be part of a larger data hub project;
- A second workshop is planned for April 04, 2019, Raleigh, NC and via webex.

Discussion of policies, legislation, and funding initiatives that favor landbird, shorebird, and waterbird protection and restoration.

- John Alexander provided information on a **strategy** PIF has developed and tested **for using land management- and policy-relevant science to improve ecosystem management**. This approach ensures accelerated forest restoration efforts are effective and they reduce risks of uncharacteristically severe fire, protect threatened and endangered species, manage for sustainable timber yields, maintain functioning ecological processes, and conserve at-risk migratory birds in western fire-adapted forests.
- Eric Gardner mentioned HR 919 – **Bird-Safe Buildings Act of 2019**, to incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features into public buildings, and for other purposes; introduced, January 30, 2019;
- Jennifer Cipolletti mentioned HR 1305 – **Albatross and Petrel Conservation Act**, to implement the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, and for other purposes; introduced, February 15, 2019.
- WG participants were encouraged to support these strategies and legislative efforts to the extent their affiliations could, and to acknowledge legislators who had been instrumental in getting the Farm Bill, Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Act, and other positive legislation passed recently.

Partners in Flight

Helping Species at Risk | Keeping Common Birds Common
Voluntary Partnerships for Birds, Habitats, and People



Partners in Flight Steering Committee Action Brief North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference March 2019

Partners in Flight 2019 Work Plan Focus Areas

Partners in Flight (PIF) is a broad collaboration among individuals and organizations working to meet landbird conservation needs at multiple scales including implementation of the 2016 Conservation Plan

Kirtland's Warbler management and conservation was the focus of an October 2018 meeting hosted by PIF between representatives of the forest sector and the Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team.

- a. The objective was to discuss first steps for joint sustainable action for delisting of the species, including jack pine management objectives and long term monitoring and science needs.
- b. The facilitated session has led to continued dialogue between invested stakeholders to explore new and innovative ways to sustain forest management and quality habitat across public and private lands.

Grassland bird conservation remains a major focus, PIF is instrumental in the development and implementation of science needs and habitat implementation strategies across their full annual cycle.

A focused effort to engage more fully with **industry and the Wildlife Habitat Council** has resulted in several opportunities. For example, PIF will host a webinar for grasslands management with the Council in early spring.

An **Eastern PIF Working Group is set to launch** in April 2019 to focus on key bird conservation issues in the eastern United States and Canada. The working group intends to align with and complement the priorities and geographies of flyways, Joint Ventures, and multi-state efforts for bird conservation. In that way, the group can increase work efficiency by providing a forum for coordination and collaboration at the scale of eastern North America on issues such as single species working groups, monitoring, and other priorities to be identified by partners during the April meeting.

The **Desert Thrasher Working Group** was revitalized in response to the 2016 plan update and is working with BLM and Sonoran JV to fill data gaps and identify both short and long term conservation actions.

Using a **Strategic Habitat Conservation** approach, explore bird conservation needs and capacity gaps that are obstacles for Joint Venture to **deliver Partners in Flight habitat and population objectives**; once identified, Partners in Flight with Joint Ventures coordination will work to help fill those needs and gaps.

Provide PIF **leadership for the US NABCI Committee's 2018 State of the Birds report**, which will highlight the dramatic decline in North American avifauna and illustrate the importance of state wildlife agencies contributions to bird conservation.

Partners in Flight remains an active voice for bird conservation in the conservation community and beyond. Join us!

- a. PIF is instrumental in developing peer-reviewed publications and hosts major symposia at scientific conferences, such as a full day symposium at The Wildlife Society's 2018 meeting and the upcoming American Ornithological Society meeting.



- b. The PIF website (partnersinflight.org) provides conservation resources, news, and access to conservation tools for land managers, biologists, citizen scientists, educators, community organizers and others.
- c. The PIF Facebook page provides opportunities for partners to interact and share stories for bird conservation.
- d. PIF has updated its use of email listserves for disseminating information to partners; contact PIF to be added to the PIFCOMMUNITY list for updates 2 – 4 times a month.

PIF celebrates our **30 year anniversary** in 2020. Planning is underway for specific events; make your plans to attend!

Embrace and help **World Migratory Bird Day** priorities and messages throughout the hemisphere. In 2019, the is to protect birds by reducing plastic pollution. (<https://www.migratorybirdday.org/resources/>)



Partners in Flight Management Steering Committee

Our strategic goals have remained unchanged since 1990:

- 1) Maintain healthy bird populations in natural numbers, in healthy sustainable habitats and ecosystems;
- 2) Keep species from becoming threatened or endangered through proactive measures and science based planning;
- 3) Promote full life-cycle conservation of migratory birds throughout the Western Hemisphere; and
- 4) Promote the value of birds as indicators of environmental health and human quality of life.

For more information, contact Bob Ford (Robert_P_Ford@fws.gov)