



ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

---

**BIRD CONSERVATION COMMITTEE PART II**  
**30 March 2018**  
**North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference**  
**Norfolk, VA**

**PIF/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group Report**

*Sara Schweitzer, Wildlife Diversity Biologist NC Wildlife Resources Commission*

See [formal report](#), which includes information about:

- Atlantic Coast Joint Venture's Coastal Marsh Initiative
- Partners in Flight projects  
US Shorebird Conservation Partnership accomplishments
- Formation of a group to summarize threats to migratory birds in their flight space, actions underway to address threats, and those that need further attention
- Avian Conservation Data Management Workshop
- Discussion of MBTA legal opinion

Based on a motion approved by this WG, Sara makes the following **motion**:

*I make a motion that a joint ad hoc work group on Bird and Fish Conflicts be established between the AFWA Bird Conservation Committee and AFWA Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee to provide a framework within which bird and fish experts will discuss and address these unique cross disciplinary conservation challenges moving forward. The work group should include a representative from each Flyway's Nongame Technical Committee and social science expertise. I further recommend that this joint ad hoc work group be populated with state and federal experts by the respective committee chairmen and formally report to both committees on updates and actions of relevance."*

Rick Jacobsen (CT) seconds, and encourages the Chair to work with the Flyway Councils to identify tech section people to serve on this WG.

The motion carries unanimously.

**Migratory Bird Treaty Act Solicitor's Opinion Follow Up**

The Committee discussed the MBTA Solicitor's Opinion during the BCCI meeting. Following up at BCCII, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission committed to engaging a legal intern to conduct a state by state compilation of regulations, to provide starting point for evaluation of how MBTA opinion may impact states. NCWRC will aim to circulate draft of this compilation prior to September AFWA meeting.

**BCC Grassland Work Group Report**

*Judith Scarl, NABCI Coordinator/Bird Conservation Program Manager, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*

[See presentation for more details.](#)

**Resolution:** In September 2017, AFWA Directors passed a [Grassland Resolution](#) submitted by the Bird Committee that recognizes the urgent plight of North America's grasslands and supports increased trilateral resources for conservation, research, monitoring, and evaluation of grasslands and the fauna that depend on them.

**Funding Opportunity:** A National Conservation Need focused on funding for grassland conservation was accepted at the March 2018 AFWA Business Meeting.

**Evaluation:** Working Group is conducting a gap analysis to evaluate grassland conservation efforts, identify tangible gaps/what is missing from current delivery programs. Evaluation was piloted in Mississippi Flyway (see slides for map of current results) and will continue throughout other Flyways and Joint Ventures after some fine-tuning. Second phase will involve extending into Canada and Mexico.

### **Feral and Free-Ranging Cat Work Group Report**

*Sara Schweitzer, Wildlife Diversity Biologist NC Wildlife Resources Commission*

[See presentation.](#)

Activities and Focus Elements:

**Legal/Regulatory:** This working group conducted a Legal/regulatory survey, which resulted in a [report](#) compiling states laws and administrative rules that pertain to feral and free-ranging cats. Group also recommends further study on American Bar Association 102B, which supports Trap-Neuter-Release.

**Survey about Cat Impacts and Challenges:** Group developed and released an anonymous survey asking states about challenges and threats posed by feral cats, actions agency has taken to remove feral cats and how effective those actions are, and what states would like to see from AFWA in response to this issue.

**Best Management Practices:** Group will use survey results to develop best management practices for addressing challenges of feral and free-ranging cats.

Note that the Western Governor's Association recently approved a [list of significant invasive exotic species](#), and feral cats was recognized as one of these species.

### **Resident Game Bird (RGB) Working Group Report**

*Judith Scarl, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*

RGB WG nominated Karen Waldrop (Deputy Commissioner, KY Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources) and Todd Bishop (Head of Wildlife Bureau, IA Department of Natural Resources). Karen will Chair and Todd will Vice-Chair. Note that Chair of RGB WG is also representative to NABCI.

7 partners reported on their resident game species initiatives. Several of these initiatives are working on guidelines for the translocation of birds across state or country boundaries- some, like the NWTF, have been successfully facilitating translocations for a long time. Others, like NABCI, have compiled the available science on translocated bobwhites, but are still developing recommendations based on that science. The National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan is working on a similar set of guidelines for pheasants, and have shared their working outline with NABCI. The Western Quail Working Group is farthest along and hopes to have a final draft of their guidelines available in a few months. The group discussed the potential role of the Resident Game Bird WG to address this issue at a national level, and this will be a discussion item at the next meeting.

### **Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group (MSUGBWG) Report**

*Alicia Hardin, Wildlife Division Administrator, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission*

**Doves:** 49 states participated in modified dove call count survey; preliminary results are available, but recommendations have not yet been released.

**Cranes:** Mid-Continent Sandhill Crane Plan was approved by 3 Flyways and includes changes to how population estimates are done.

**Woodcock Task Force:** Group discussed young forest initiative and is looking to improve early successional habitat. They are not ready to update conservation plan. Note that Task Force is no longer asking to become independent WG under the BCC, but instead will remain a task force under the MSUGBWG.

**Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Management in North American (“Purple Book”):** Group discussed whether this needed updating. Alicia and small technical team will review priority needs on USFWS Migratory Bird site and evaluate what needs to be updated/added.

Discussion: Member of BCC encouraged Woodcock Task Force to develop a timeline for updating their conservation plan.

### **Waterfowl Working Group Report**

*Diane Eggeman, Director, Hunting and Game Management Division, FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission*

Gordon Myers acknowledged Diane Eggeman’s many contributions to bird conservation. Diane also received State Achievement Award at DU breakfast. Diane retired from FL FWCC in April.

40 states are currently contributing to waterfowl conservation in Canada for a total of \$3.6 million in 2017; several states have met their ambitious AFWA goals already. The NAWMP Canvasback Award presented to Dave Case and DJ Case and Associates.

The Waterfowl Working Group voted to undertake one action: Support the efforts of the Human Dimensions Working Group and Public Engagement Team to

1. find additional resources for further analysis of the human dimensions survey data
2. encourage states to include waterfowl hunting in their R3 planning
3. initiate development of a birdwatching R3 Plan

The WG will explore ways to engage a post-doc to help with Element 1. Element 3 will be a collaboration with the Wildlife Viewing/Nature Tourism Committee.

Discussion:

- MS Flyway Non-Game Technical Committee is discussing how to engage in R3 efforts from a non-game perspective
- NABCI HD Subcommittee is also discussing how to better engage birdwatchers
- General encouragement to work together on engaging birdwatchers