



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

**108<sup>th</sup> Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting**  
**Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel, Tampa, Florida**

**Report to Bird Conservation Committee II, Wednesday, September 12, 2018**  
**8:00 – 10:00 a.m.**

Twenty-three (23) people attended our meeting representing 8 state agencies, 7 federal agencies, 2 NGOs, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and Nature Conservancy Canada.

There are no action items from the meeting, and we created no new Working Groups.

The meeting's agenda outline followed the Working Group's Goals.

First, we discussed the Bird Conservation Initiatives that unite this Work Group: Partners In Flight (landbird), U.S. Shorebird Conservation Partnership, and Waterbirds of the Americas Initiative.

- PIF will have a Steering Committee meeting in mid-October in Michigan and will meet with forest industry representatives to highlight conservation work done to bring back the population of the Kirtland's Warbler (attachment 1);
- An Eastern Working Group of PIF is forming to replace the SE and NE Working Groups which have not been active in recent years (attachment 2);
- PIF will have a full day symposium at The Wildlife Society Conference in Cleveland on Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>
- PIF had a full day meeting and was involved with several other activities at the International Ornithological Congress, Vancouver, CAN, in early August;
- The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network's Hemispheric Council met on September 4 & 5 at the U.S. Forest Service International Programs office to finalize the development of a new Strategic Plan for WHSRN, and to provide strategic guidance that helps strengthen the network, and the capacity of the Executive Office and partners to deliver shorebird conservation (attachment 3).
- The Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative (AFSI), Executive Committee met at the National Audubon Society offices in Washington D.C., September 6 & 7, 2018 (attachment 4) to –
  - Receive AFSI Executive input into a short-term fundraising strategy for implementation of the AFSI business plan;
  - Strengthen the capacity of the AFSI Executive to provide guidance and support implementation of the AFSI business plan;
  - Strengthen the ability of AFSI to deliver effective full-life cycle conservation of priority shorebirds and monitor and communicate success.
- The Waterbirds of the Americas Initiative
  - Lack of Coordinator was discussed at the summer NABCI meeting where an Action passed that will have a task group work to acquire funding support for a full-time, term-limited coordinator to activate the Waterbird Council and work on updates to the initiative's plan.

Second, we discussed threats to bird populations and work initiated in March 2018 to address factors in birds' "air space" habitat that increase mortality. Geoff Walsh (BLM) is leading this group of WG participants (E.J. Williams

[ABC], Geoff Geupel [Pt. Blue], Ken Richkus [USFWS], Ruth Boettcher [VGIF], Holly Goyert [ABC], Bryan Lenz [ABC]) to address these threats.

- common threats: wind energy, communication towers, solar arrays, meteorological towers, powerlines (summary of air-space threats)
- BMPs are available to avoid or reduce impacts, as well as guidance documents
- Will work to produce a summary document of available BMPs and guidelines, including recommendations for further actions to take, for distribution to the WG and BCC. Draft work below:

<b>Threats to Migratory Birds in their Airspace</b>	
<b>Identified Threat</b>	<b>Measures Taken to Address Threats</b>
Powerlines	Avian Powerline Interaction Committee Guidelines
Windmills	FWS Wind Energy Guidelines
Communication Towers	FCC Lighting and light frequency guidelines
Buildings and Glass	

Third, we reviewed work completed from the March 2018 Avian Conservation Data Management Workshop (attachment 5)

- Completed survey of Atlantic coast states to obtain states' 2013 and 2018 CWB breeding survey data, as well as previous years' data;
- Created a CWB data management website currently hosted by USGS; still mostly under construction;
- Updated CWB data entry spreadsheet complete with data entry and submittal instructions and definitions of data fields;
- Initiated preliminary discussions on pulling data into the AKN; this effort will require additional resources and funding;
- Next will write a prospectus of next steps, including estimated costs for completion;
- Second Workshop will be held before the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference at a site near Denver, CO.

Last, we discussed policies, legislation, and funding initiatives that affect landbird, shorebird, and waterbird protection and restoration:

- Recovering America's Wildlife Act
- M-opinion
- Proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act under review
- Secretary Zinke's 10 September 2018 Memorandum – State Fish and Wildlife Management Authority on Department of Interior Lands and Waters (attachment 6)

Our meeting ended after we reviewed our Work Plan and made suggestions for the 2018-2019 period (attachment 7)

# Partners in Flight

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



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## Partners in Flight Steering Committee Action Brief Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting September 2018

**Partners in Flight 2018 Work Plan Focus Areas**  
Web site: [partnersinflight.org](http://partnersinflight.org)

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 Landbird Conservation Plan*. The following are a few examples new and ongoing PIF priority work areas in 2018 – 2019.

Engage **Forest Products and other Industry** to explore shared priorities and opportunities for implementing bird conservation actions in key areas for Watch List species.

- a. PIF's Fall Steering Committee meeting in Roscommon, Michigan on 15 – 17 October will have the added dimension of facilitating a full day meeting with industry, NGOs, state and federal government agencies and others to move forward on several aspects of Kirtland's Warbler conservation.
- b. This is the first in a series of annual Fall meetings where the PIF Steering Committee will encourage, facilitate, and support regional bird conservation efforts that lead into full annual cycle conservation.
- c. PIF continues to engage with industry on several aspects of bird conservation such as bird-friendly lighting on towers.

Launch the **Eastern PIF Working Group** to help facilitate and lead actions on critical issues in key areas for Watch List species.

- a. The Eastern PIF WG, modeled on the success of the PIF Western WG, is envisioned as a natural evolution that merges previously separate regional PIF working groups in the Northeast, Southeast, and Midwest U.S. while also incorporating interests from eastern and central Canada.
- b. The group will address the most important unmet needs of bird conservation efforts, in the spirit of traditional PIF working groups.
- c. The WG affords opportunity to coordinate on shared conservation priorities for many species' full annual-cycle needs.
- d. PIF has consulted with invested partners, such as the state Nongame Technical Committees of Flyways and Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, to ensure a value-added organization and purpose.
- e. Government agencies along with NGOs, industry, and academic institutions are encouraged to enable their staff to participate in the Eastern Working Group and to help set the Group's direction.

**Cutting edge science** forms a foundation of scientific knowledge about birds and the threats they face, guiding conservation planning and action.

- a. The PIF International Science Committee is forming a special working group to address grassland bird conservation priorities.
- b. The Avian Conservation Assessment Database or ACAD, formerly the PIF Species Assessment Database, now addresses all bird species, not just landbirds, from Canada to Panama - updates for regional scores and applications of the ACAD tool ongoing.
- c. PIF and the ACAD rely heavily on the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), a one of the most reliable and cost effective citizen science programs in the world.



Engage **Professional Societies** to continue to ensure PIF's conservation approach is relevant to forestry and wildlife professionals.

- a. PIF will lead a full day symposium at The Wildlife Society meeting on 9 October 2018 in Cleveland. Paper and discussion topics range from the history of PIF and vision for the future, PIF science priorities, active engagement with habitat delivery, full annual cycle conservation and more.
- b. PIF has engaged with symposia or invited papers at several professional societies in the past year, including the American Ornithological Society and the International Ornithological Congress.

In August PIF hosted a full day meeting and information booth with NABCI Canada at the **27<sup>th</sup> International Ornithological Congress** in Vancouver B.C.

- a. More the 50 people from over 12 North and South American countries attended presentations on Avicaching, Full-life cycle bird conservation, bird friendly coffee, cat issues and MOTUS research.
- b. PIF was instrumental in launching a Certified Bird Friendly coffee campaign for Bird Friendly Cities.
- c. PIF helped arrange the Stewardship Roundtable gathering of more than 140 people from government, industry, academia and NGOs from around the world to discuss innovative practices for bird and wildlife conservation.
- d. PIF and the Canadian Wildlife Service supported the Artists for Conservation "Silent Skies Student Mural Project" - over 1,600 students participated and submitted art; 100 young artists displayed their alongside a 100 foot long professional mural.
- e. PIF presented awards for 'Leadership' (Bob Elner of CWS) and Public Awareness (Nicola Koper of University of Manitoba) at Canada night in front of 1400 people.

### Partners in Flight Steering Committee

Our strategic goals are to:

- 1) Maintain healthy bird populations, in natural numbers, in healthy sustainable habitats and ecosystems;
- 2) Prevent 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.
- 5) Share information about migratory birds and their conservation with the public through education, outreach, and communication.

The Steering Committee supports the mission of Partners in Flight in many ways, including:

- 1) Developing and tracking progress towards annual work and longer-term strategic plans;
- 2) Providing guidance and synergy among partners to maximize the benefits of shared expertise and capacities;
- 3) Advancing international and full life-cycle conservation of birds;
- 4) Recruiting needed expertise into working group activities; and
- 5) Proactively supporting adaptive natural resource management programs to better maintain and enhance self-sustaining populations of landbirds.
- 6) Incorporating PIF messaging through education, outreach, and communication.

To contribute your talents or for more information, contact Bob Ford ([Robert\\_P\\_Ford@fws.gov](mailto:Robert_P_Ford@fws.gov))



**The Partners in Flight Eastern Working Group**  
**Advancing Bird Conservation in Eastern North America**



**BACKGROUND:** Since its inception, Partners in Flight (PIF) has empowered regional working groups in the Southeast, Northeast, Midwest, and West to foster enhanced partner collaboration around PIF's mission. Each of these working groups developed very different kinds of relationships among their constituent partners, built different operational structures, and achieved very different, often unique but always laudable accomplishments. The recent proliferation of separate working groups devoted to coordinated monitoring, single species and full life cycle conservation, and threats abatement have significantly challenged both jurisdictional boundaries and organizational capacity. During the past year, representatives from the eastern PIF working groups have met to gather the unique insights of the Northeast, Southeast, and Midwest partnerships and to develop a proposal to leverage increased coordination and collaboration while achieving more efficient and productive use of existing personnel capacity and supporting resources.

**PROPOSAL:** Merge the Northeast, Midwest and Southeast working groups into a single entity, involving U.S. and Canadian partners, and welcoming participation from partners working on all bird taxa. The following core functions of an Eastern Working Group would be value-added and complementary to existing bird conservation partnerships and structures. Functions would include:

- 1. Foster coordinated, proactive conservation action at scales large enough to address major conservation issues shared across organizations and to prevent the need for regulatory actions.**
  - Address species-, issue-, and science-based needs representing gaps in our collective bird conservation planning and implementation efforts (e.g., aerial insectivores, conservation of migratory stopover habitat, large scale habitat mapping, secretive marshbirds).
  - Promote and support standardized monitoring methodologies and data management (e.g., through the Avian Knowledge Network or other programs that enable collaborative collection and sharing of information).
  - Promote on-the-ground implementation activities within the context of full life-cycle conservation and landscape design and focused on the “right places at the right time.”
- 2. Provide a venue to promote information sharing, collaboration, and networking among Eastern Working Group participants.**
  - Through annual meetings, provide a venue for species-specific or issue-oriented working groups to meet, thus allowing participants to effectively engage in multiple working groups (e.g., Wood Thrush Conservation Alliance, eastern grassland conservation, impacts of regulatory changes, impacts of wind power development).
  - Improve efficiency in achieving bird conservation objectives for birds of concern through sharing knowledge and experiences and promoting collaboration among organizations in eastern North America. Such information transfer and collaboration would benefit states, provinces, Joint Ventures, NGOs, and international partnerships (e.g., habitat management guidelines develop by one state or JV are widely shared at the scale of Eastern N.A).
  - Engage the academic community, including students and young professionals, in advancing bird conservation science.

### Operations

The PIF Eastern Working Group would be open to all parties and would meet annually. A small Executive Committee would be charged with oversight and activity planning. Ad Hoc Committees established by the Executive Committee will address specific Working Group needs. The geographic scope would entail all U.S. states east or mostly east of the 95th meridian (including Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana) and Canadian provinces from Ontario east.

### Value to Other Entities

The PIF Eastern Working Group would provide organizations with a forum for addressing shared bird conservation issues not currently being addressed in a comprehensive manner at the regional/flyway scale and across jurisdictional boundaries. It would improve staff efficiency through information sharing, project collaboration, and opportunities to engage in multiple species- or issue-centered working groups during the same meeting.

**REQUEST FOR SUPPORT AND INPUT:** State, provincial, and federal agencies along with NGOs, industry, and academic institutions are encouraged to enable staff to engage in and help direct an Eastern Working Group and regularly attend meetings. Input is also requested from these organizations on important species and issues an Eastern Working Group could address and how it might operate in order to be most effective.

# WHSRN HEMISPHERIC COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING 2018 AGENDA AND PROGRAM

4-5 September, US Forest Service International Programs  
1 Thomas Circle NW, Suite 400

The focus of the 2018 WHSRN Hemispheric Council meeting is to finalize the development of a new Strategic Plan for WHSRN, and to provide strategic guidance that helps strengthen the network, and the capacity of the Executive Office and partners to deliver shorebird conservation.

## **Agenda**

### *Targets*

By the end of the WHSRN Hemispheric Council meeting, we will have:

1. Received Council input on the draft WHSRN strategic plan for 2018-21, identifying a process and timeline to finalize the plan.
2. Strengthened the capacity of the Hemispheric Council and Executive Office to provide guidance and oversight to WHSRN.
3. Strengthened the ability of WHSRN to deliver full-lifecycle conservation of priority shorebirds through strategies to consolidate and connect the network.

### *Objectives*

To accomplish the targets we will undertake the following during the meeting:

1. Review the draft WHSRN Strategic Plan 2018-21 (three years).
2. Define criteria for a WHSRN Rapid Action Fund.
3. Address issues arising from Council member reports.
4. Review proposal for a new “Linking” award and approve first awardee.
5. Review proposed guidelines for use of the WHSRN logo by partners.
6. Provide guidance regarding working with business at WHSRN sites.
7. Review proposed changes to the WHSRN criteria, and identify process to review/adopt proposed changes.
8. Review and accept any new site designations (as appropriate).
9. Review a strategy for consolidating the network.
10. Develop a vision for shorebird conservation in the post-2020 world.

(In closed business session)

11. Review Executive Committee membership and replace at least one member.
12. Review Council membership and identify any priority new members to be invited.
13. Invite one new Councilor emeritus.
14. Review 2018-19 implementation plan and budget.

## Program

### Tuesday, 4 September

13:00 Welcome & plan of the meeting (Greg Butcher, local host; Catherine Hickey, Council Chair)

13:15 Introductions (All)

13:30 Overview from the Executive Office (Rob Clay)  
Brief overview of major activities, achievements, and challenges since the April 2017 Council meeting, including summary of the “shorebird conservation landscape”.

14:00 Review of the draft Strategic Plan 2018-2021  
Executive Office provides an overview of draft strategic plan  
Feedback from council, discuss and define next steps

Expected results:

- Revisions to draft strategic plan agreed
- Next steps to finalize plan agreed, with timeline

15:30 Break

16:00 Launching a WHSRN Rapid Action Fund  
Discussion regarding a “WHSRN Rapid Action Fund” - intended to help facilitate and support conservation actions in the case of emergency situations that pose a significant threat to shorebird species and critical habitats at WHSRN sites. Council to discuss potential criteria, including how to define “emergency situation”, “significant threat” and which species, habitats and types of action to consider.

Expected results:

- Criteria determined for awarding funds from the WHSRN Rapid Action Fund

16:45 Reports from the Network (Various)  
Council members are encouraged to submit written reports. However, this is an opportunity for Council members to highlight particular issues and for Council to discuss actions that could be taken.

Expected results:

- Council identify next steps as a result of issues arising from Council member reports

17:30 End of first day

## Wednesday, 5 September

08:30 **Advancing shorebird conservation through linking communities (Laura Chamberlin)**  
Laura will give an overview of the results and lessons learned from the CEC Linking Sites project, and the Linking Sites, Linking Communities initiative, as an example of WHSRN's approach to connecting the network.

09:00 **Linking award (Rob Clay)**  
Proposal from the Executive Office for an award recognizing individuals who provide extraordinary leadership and vision for linking WHSRN sites

Expected results:

- New award and first awardee approved

09:15 **Using the WHSRN brand: Use of the logo and working with business (Rob Clay)**  
Currently there is no guidance regarding who can use the WHSRN logo and when/how. The Executive Office will provide an overview of proposed guidelines for use of the logo.

WHSRN partners are increasingly working with industry at WHSRN sites on shorebird-friendly best practices. The Executive Office seeks guidance from Council regarding developing a "WHSRN approach" to working with shorebird-friendly businesses.

Expected results:

- Guidelines approved for use of the WHSRN logo
- Hemispheric Council provides guidance regarding the principles and conditions under which the Executive Office and partners can work with business on behalf of WHSRN.

10:15 **Break**

10:30 **Proposed changes to the WHSRN criteria**  
Changes to the criteria have been proposed by the WHSRN-US Committee, and have also been suggested as a result of the nomination of Southern James Bay-Pei lay sheesh kow as a WHSRN site. The Executive Office will provide an overview of some of the implications of the proposed changes, and seek guidance.

Expected results:

- Hemispheric Council provides guidance regarding proposed changes to the criteria
- Agreed approach for moving forward with proposed changes to criteria

11:30 **Expanding the Network**  
Opportunity to discuss new site nominations / site expansions  
Brief overview of nominations "in the pipeline"  
Updating the network (overview of progress reviewing the status of existing sites)

Expected results:

- New site(s) and/or extensions approved
- Agreed approach for updating the network

12:30 **Lunch**

14:00 **WHSRN in the Wider World**  
The international conservation community is preparing for the processes that will lead to adoption of a post-2020 biodiversity strategy. In recent years, there have been calls to dramatically scale up area-based



conservation and for large proportions of the planet to be protected in an interconnected way. Both are fundamental elements of WHSRN. Council and guests are invited to discuss how WHSRN can best contribute to the post-2020 biodiversity agenda.

Expected results:

- Draft vision for “shorebirds in the post-2020 world”
- Council helps identify ways and opportunities WHSRN can contribute to development of the post-2020 biodiversity agenda.

15:15 Closing remarks for and from guests

15:30 Closed Business Session (Hemispheric Council members only)

Election of Executive Committee  
Discussion of Council membership and potential new members  
Election of new Councilors *emeriti*  
Review of projected 2018-19 implementation plan and budget  
Next Council meeting  
Any other business

17:00 WHSRN Hemispheric Council meeting closes

<b>Thursday, 6 September</b>
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08:30 - 17:30 AFSI Executive meeting (WHSRN Hemispheric Council members are welcome to attend)

<b>Friday, 7 September</b>
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08:30 - 12:00 AFSI Executive meeting (WHSRN Hemispheric Council members are welcome to attend)

**Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative (AFSI)  
Executive Committee Meeting  
National Audubon Society  
1200 18th St NW  
Washington D.C., USA  
September 6-7, 2018**

**Meeting Targets:**

1. Receive AFSI Executive input into a short-term fundraising strategy for implementation of the AFSI business plan.
2. Strengthen the capacity of the AFSI Executive to provide guidance and support implementation of the AFSI business plan.
3. Strengthen the ability of AFSI to deliver effective full-life cycle conservation of priority shorebirds and monitor and communicate success.

**Meeting Objectives:**

1. Review activities of the Working Groups to inform priorities and actions
2. Develop approaches which address gaps in Working Group participation and coverage (geographic, thematic)
3. Identify geographic and thematic multi-country, multi-stakeholder priorities for immediate fundraising efforts
4. Ensure all Committee members are informed and engaged in current fundraising efforts
5. Review monitoring and communication tools to increase their effectiveness
6. Review AFSI Executive Committee membership and representation
7. Develop plans to update the business plan

***Thursday, September 6***

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|---------------|---|
| 08:30 - 09:00 | Welcome, Introductions, and Ground Rules (Scott Johnston)   |
| 09:00 - 09:30 | Brief review of AFSI to date and objectives for the meeting (Scott Johnston)  |
| 09:30 - 10:30 | Brief reports from Working Groups (Leads for Habitats, Harvest, Monitoring, and Flyways Engagement)   |
| 10:30 - 10:45 | Break   |
| 10:45 - 12:30 | Resourcing AFSI <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- BirdLife Digital campaign (David Wege)</li><li>- Report from Resources Working Group (Rob Clay)</li><li>- Vision for resourcing AFSI in the short term (John Hannan)</li><li>- Management / administration of funds (John Hannan)</li><li>- Open discussion</li></ul> |
| 12:30 - 14:00 | Lunch   |

- 14:00 - 14:30 Report from Communications Working Group – review of story map and database tools (Debra Reynolds)
- 14:30 - 16:30 Breakout groups to identify geographic and thematic multi-country, multi-stakeholder priorities for immediate resourcing efforts (e.g. an exchange of experience to build capacity to manage human disturbance in southern South America). (Includes Break)
- 16:30 - 17:30 Breakout groups report back
- Group Dinner - To be confirmed

***Friday, September 7***

- 08:30 - 09:00 Review of Day 1, and revise agenda as needed (Scott Johnston)
- 09:00 - 10:00 Addressing gaps in Working Group coverage and participation (Open discussion)
- 09:30 - 12:00 Business meeting  
 - Strengthening Executive Committee functionality  
 - AFSI Executive membership and representation
- 10:30 - 10:45 Break  
 - Updating the business plan  
 - Upcoming meetings  
 - Next steps for Executive Committee
- 12:00 End of meeting

***Ancillary meetings (Sep 7)***

**AFSI Resources Working Group**

- 14:30 - 17:00 Next steps and planning for Americas Flyways donor meeting

**Atlantic and Pacific joint meeting**

- 14:30 - 17:00 Opportunity for representatives of the two flyway initiatives to meet and identify opportunities for collaboration (e.g. communications, monitoring, resources)

**Embassy outreach**

- 14:30 - 17:00 AFSI (and WHSRN Hemispheric Council) participants from Latin America are encouraged to visit their respective embassies and brief relevant environmental staff

## Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group

### Goal 3: Evaluate new strategies for bird conservation action and make recommendations to AFWA leadership

#### Avian Conservation Data Management Workshop Update

At the March 2018 AFWA meeting, an overview of a one-day Avian Conservation Data Management Workshop that was held in Virginia Beach on March 26, 2018 was presented to the Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group (Working Group). The purpose of the workshop was to move towards developing an avian data management system that enhances data management, storage/archiving and sharing, *and* promotes consistent, broad-scale analyses necessary for effective management of migratory birds. The major action item that resulted from the meeting was to use the USGS Colonial Waterbird (CWB) database that later morphed into the Mid-Atlantic Northeast and Maritime (MANEM) database (hereafter referred to as the CWBD) as a case study for creating an avian data management system. The overarching goal of this pilot effort is to update the CWBD with 2013 and 2018 Atlantic Coast Colonial Waterbird breeding survey data and upload the revised database into the AKN for further data management and to analyze the data for trend analyses, distribution, and population estimates at regional scales.

#### *Progress made to date:*

1. Completed survey of Atlantic coast states to obtain the following information: states' willingness to contribute any/all 2013 CWB breeding survey data; states' willingness to contribute any/all breeding survey data from previous years; years (and species) previous surveys were completed; and CWB survey plans for 2018.
2. Created a CWB data management website that is currently hosted by USGS; it is still mostly under construction.
3. Updated CWB data entry spreadsheet complete with data entry and submittal instructions and definitions of data fields and posted it on the aforementioned USGS CWB website for states to download.
4. Sent an email to Atlantic coast state CWB POCs with a request for 2018 data and link a to the USGS CWB website.
5. Began inventory of the CWBD; still awaiting 2013 data from a few states.
6. Initiated preliminary discussions on pulling data into the AKN; this effort will require additional resources and funding.



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

SEP 10 2018

Memorandum

To: ~~Heads of Bureaus and Offices~~

From: Secretary 

Subject: State Fish and Wildlife Management Authority on Department of the Interior  
Lands and Waters

In 1983, the Department codified in the United States Code of Federal Regulations, 43 C.F.R. Part 24, establishing a policy that Federal authority exists for specified purposes while State authority regarding fish and resident wildlife remains the comprehensive backdrop applicable in the absence of specific, overriding Federal law. This 35-year-old rule is more relevant today than ever.

Therefore, I reaffirm the authority of the States to exercise their broad trustee and police powers as stewards of the Nation's fish and wildlife species on public lands and waters under the jurisdiction of the Department. Each of us must recognize the fundamental role of the States in fish and wildlife management, especially where States have primary authority and responsibility, foster improved conservation of fish and wildlife, and encourage a good neighbor policy with the States.

Because fish and wildlife are fundamentally dependent upon habitats on private and public lands managed or subject to administration by many Federal and State agencies, and because provisions for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of fish and wildlife and the regulation for their use are established in many laws and regulations involving a multitude of Federal and State administrative structures, the effective stewardship of fish and wildlife requires the cooperation of the various States and the Federal Government.

The 50 State governments have extensive capacities and competencies to exercise their responsibilities to serve as trustees for fish and wildlife species resident in the respective States. These capacities and competencies are grounded in State constitutional and statutory laws, as well as an extensive body of administrative rules that collectively form a comprehensive legal underpinning to ensure that State governments effectively function as trustees of fish and wildlife resources with broad police powers to enforce those laws and regulations.

State governments have established fish and wildlife agencies that are charged with the responsibility and mandate to implement those statutes ensuring effective, appropriate, and efficient conservation and management of fish and resident wildlife species, including providing citizens with the opportunity to enjoy those fish and wildlife species through regulated hunting,

fishing, and trapping. Moreover, State governments have consistently demonstrated their commitment to sustaining fish and wildlife resources in perpetuity for the benefit of both current and future citizens. To that end, State governments have taken extensive measures to protect and conserve rare fish and wildlife species, including invertebrate species, and through the actions of State governments, they have sought additional funding to strengthen their capacity to implement management strategies at a landscape level. State governments practice sound fish and wildlife conservation and management focused on sustainable practices that protect the Nation's natural heritage, while providing for appropriate and highly regulated opportunities for citizens to enjoy fish and wildlife resources.

The States' fundamental responsibility for fish and wildlife management includes responsibility for appropriate regulation of public use and enjoyment of fish and wildlife species. The Department recognizes States as the first-line authorities for fish and wildlife management and hereby expresses its commitment to defer to the States in this regard except as otherwise required by Federal law.

In full recognition of the authority of the State fish and wildlife agencies to regulate fish and resident wildlife within their respective boundaries and jurisdiction, I request the following:

- Within 45 days of this Memorandum, all Bureaus and Offices complete a review of all regulations, policies, and guidance that pertains to the conservation and management of fish and wildlife species on lands and waters under their jurisdiction that are more restrictive than otherwise applicable State provisions for the management of fish and wildlife, including all such regulations, policies, and guidance that pertain to public recreational use and enjoyment of fish and wildlife species;
- Within 90 days, each Bureau and Office referenced provide the Deputy Secretary a report containing detailed recommendations for the respective Bureau or Office to better align its regulations, policies, and guidance with State provisions.
- After receiving the reports containing detailed recommendations, the Deputy Secretary shall appropriately consult with the State fish and wildlife agencies regarding the recommendations and deliver an implementation plan to me within 120 days of this Memorandum.

This Memorandum and any resulting reports or recommendations are not intended to, and do not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

cc: Deputy Secretary  
Assistant Secretaries

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## Long-Term Working Groups

### ***PIF/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group***

Chair: Sara Schweitzer (NC)

Vice-Chair: Eric Gardner (WA)

#### Work Group Charge:

To serve as a forum for discussion of bird conservation initiative-related issues among representatives of State, Territorial, and Provincial fish and wildlife agencies, and other Association organizations. The WG may advance issues to the BCC from which information and requests can be presented to state directors.

#### **Focus Area and Goals**

1. To integrate outcomes of landbird, shorebird, and waterbird initiatives (Bird Conservation Plan Partnerships);
2. To clearly identify significant threats to landbird, shorebird, and waterbird populations;
3. To evaluate alternative strategies for bird conservation action, come to agreement, and make recommendations to AFWA leadership;
4. To align priorities and actions of the national Bird Conservation Plan Partnerships with implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans.

#### Major Activities and Accomplishments in 2018:

##### **Goal 1. Integrate outcomes of landbird, shorebird, and waterbird initiatives**

1. Representatives from this WG served on a NABCI subcommittee to develop the 2018 State of the Birds report highlighting the importance of state agencies' conservation programs to birds.
2. Members of this WG served as PIF/SB/WB WG representatives to the Grassland WG
3. Members of this WG served as PIF/SB/WB WG representatives to the Bird-Fish Conflicts WG;
4. Representatives from this WG served on a NABCI subcommittee to develop plans to support a term Waterbird Coordinator on funds from multiple sources.

##### **Goal 2. Clearly identify significant threats to landbird, shorebird, and waterbird populations**

1. Members of this WG, including the Chair, participated on the Feral and Free-Ranging Cat WG, which originated from a proposal by the PIF/SB/WB WG.
2. Members of this WG drafted a summary of threats to migratory birds in "air space" habitat and measures that have been taken by agencies to address them.

**Goal 3. Evaluate new strategies for bird conservation action and make recommendations to AFWA leadership**

1. Provided a forum to discuss the Avian Conservation Assessment Database (ACAD) and states' involvement in ACAD
2. Helped to facilitate participation in multi-state projects, using the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN) for data management (e.g., Workshop on Avian Conservation Database Management with the Atlantic Colonial Waterbird Database being a case study for full development).
3. Provided feedback on AKN design and implementation, which led to progress on development of a national node and bulk upload tool for data management through the AKN

Anticipated Activities and Objectives for 2018-2019:

**Goal 1. Integrate outcomes of landbird, shorebird, and waterbird initiatives**

1. Identify common or similar priority actions within Conservation Plans that can be implemented using state wildlife action plans and grants, as well as AFWA programs such as the Southern Wings program;
2. Participate in PIF, USSCP, and Waterbird Council meetings and contribute to initiatives
  - a. Partners in Flight Executive Steering Committee, and Steering Committee meetings;
  - b. USSCP Council and regional shorebird initiatives;
  - c. Discussions to activate US Waterbird Council, and development of plans to support a temporary Waterbird Coordinator.

**Goal 2. Clearly identify significant threats to landbird, shorebird, and waterbird populations**

1. Continue contributing to Feral and Free-Ranging Cat Working Group efforts;
2. Members of this WG will complete a summary of threats to migratory birds in "air space" habitat and measures that have been taken by agencies to address them.

**Goal 3. Evaluate new strategies for bird conservation action and make recommendations to AFWA leadership**

1. Advance data management and assessment tools, especially for full annual cycle focused projects;
  - a. Provide workshops and/or webinars at Flyway and other meetings that clarify the purpose and benefits of different data management and assessment tools, and try to increase collaboration between large-scale data management efforts;
  - b. Continue contributing to multi-state projects;
  - c. Engage states during enhancement of ACAD (Avian Conservation Assessment Database).
2. Contribute to Grassland Working Group efforts to enhance conservation of grassland habitats.

**Goal 4. Support policies, legislation, and funding initiatives that favor landbird, shorebird, and waterbird protection and restoration.**



1. Identify high priority issues affecting conservation of landbird, shorebird, and waterbird populations and habitats and provide recommendations on these issues to the Bird Conservation Committee.