



25th Alaska Shorebird Group Meeting
USGS Alaska Science Center
Alaska Pacific University, Glenn Olds Hall
4210 University Dr.
Anchorage, Alaska
December 2, 2019

Monday, 2 December 2019

Welcome and Introductions – Rebecca McGuire, Chair, ASG

Rebecca welcomed the group and a round of introductions occurred. Rick Lanctot provided a summary of where to find information about the Alaska Shorebird Group.

Website: <https://www.fws.gov/alaska/pages/migratory-birds/shorebirds>

The website includes terms of reference, members of the executive committee, presentations, meeting minutes, and a list of shorebird projects occurring in Alaska. All presentation from this meeting will be posted here as well.

Announcements and Updates

Alaska Bird Conference will be held in Homer, Alaska in 2020

- *Tentative dates are November 30 – December 4, 2020*
- *Updates can be found at <https://www.alaskabirdconference.org/>*

Dedicated Alaska Shorebird Plan Version III to Dave Tessler

CAFF's Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative – Rick Lanctot

Additional information on the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (AMBI) can be found at: <https://www.caff.is/arctic-migratory-birds-initiative-ambi>

including details on the Americas Flyway Workplan and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Workplan that are pertinent to Alaska.

Priority species (includes all flyways) in the 2019-2023 Americas Flyway Workplan includes –

Bar-tailed godwit

Dunlin

Great knot

Red Knot

Spoon-billed sandpiper

Curlew sandpiper

Semipalmated sandpiper

Red phalarope

Red-necked phalarope

Buff-breasted sandpiper

Long-tailed duck

Velvet scoter

Black Brant

Emperor Goose

Thick-billed murre

Ivory gull

Snowy owl

Common eider

*Lesser white-fronted
goose*

Monday, 2 December 2019 (cont.)

CRIMBI Update – Erin Cooper

Working throughout the flyway for the conservation of waterbirds connected to the Copper River Delta.

- *Assist NGOs in Latin America with capacity through information sharing and small financial assistance (USFS IP)*
- *Supports Key Coastal Wetlands through Environment for the America's intern support as well as Shorebird Festival support.*
- *Connecting important shorebird sites through festivals (Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network)*
- *Connections with USFWS Region 5 through Phalarope working group*
- *Assist throughout the flyway with adding capacity to the Migratory Shorebird Project*
- *Assists NGOs in Central America*
- *Supports Ecuador and Peru with school programs*

Website: <https://www.fs.fed.us/global/wings/birds/crimbi/welcome.htm>

Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative – River Gates

The last time we saw this document it was a “strategy” it is now an “initiative” because we are now implementing the plan.

Website: <https://pacificflywayshorebirds.org/>

Updates occurred to the Executive Summary of the document.

- *Hoping it can be a tool to help with fundraising*

Shrimp farms in Latin America

- *Destroying/reducing habitats for shorebirds*
- *Salt flats adjacent to mangroves*
- *Fertilization*
- *Improving farming practices to help shorebirds*

Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group – Rick Lanctot

This group has been meeting since 2006. Meetings occur every 2 years between North and South America.

- *The 8th WHSG met in Panama City, Panama, 24–28 October 2019.*
- *The next meeting will be held in Puerto Madryn, Argentina, 5-10 September 2021*

Website: <https://whsrn.org/>

Monday, 2 December 2019 (cont.)

International Wader Study Group –Dan Ruthrauff

Tributes and remembrances to Clive Milton on website.

The 50th meeting will be held in Sylt, Germany from 9-11 October 2020.

Website: <https://www.waderstudygroup.org/>

Global Flyway Network and Yellow Sea Issues Update – Dan Ruthrauff

Focuses on shorebird ecological demographics and conservation

Instrumental in recognizing global declines

- *East-Australasian Flyway destruction, particularly in Yellow Sea*
 - *In 2018 China slowed down development/conversion of the Yellow Sea mudflats*
- *Several sites were recently nominated as World Heritage Sites in China*
- *Another site in Korea may be nominated too (Casey Burns)*

Website: <http://globalflywaynetwork.com.au/>

East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) Partnership - Rick Lanctot

1st EAAF Shorebird Science Meeting in Seocheon-gun, Republic of Korea, 5-8 May 2020;

Abstracts due on 31 December 2020 but will likely be extended.

Website: <http://eaafssm.com/>

11th EAAF Partnership meeting, Brisbane, Australia, 14 – 19 March 2021

Includes a large group of countries. A total of 7 working groups and 7 task groups.

Arctic Breeding Birds Conditions Survey Annual Forms – Rebecca McGuire

Website: <http://arcticbirds.net/>

Information has been collected on Arctic conditions since 1998. All sites operating in the Arctic are encouraged to submit their information.

Annual Summary Compilation – Lisa Kennedy

Rebecca, presented update on behalf of Lisa.

In the process of compiling annual summary. Please submit annual summaries by the end of the week (December 6th). All summaries can be found on the ASG website. A story map has also be incorporated into the annual summary. This map provides a visual representation of all the projects occurring in Alaska. Final summary to be completed in December/January. Includes list of publications and gray literature.

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Story map can be found at the following website:

<https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/24062d881c0d738b741054e3c7078996/alaska-shorebird-group-annual-report/index.html>

Lisa will be stepping down as Secretary due to her new position as Executive Director of the Copper River Watershed Project. A new secretary will be chosen this afternoon (see below).

2019 Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan Version III – Rebecca McGuire

The 3rd version of the Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan was released in March 2019. Thanks to all of the people who helped finalize the plan. A total of 5 editors and 30 contributors. The Plan was dedicated to Dave Tessler.

- *Please use the plan to develop new project ideas and justify funding*

The Plan can be found at the following link:

https://www.fws.gov/r7/mbsp/mbm/shorebirds/pdf/ASC_Plan_full_version2019.pdf

A discussion followed about whether the plan was useful, and how it was being used.

- *Good resource to help justify projects and get funding for different projects.*
- *Excellent background that is useful to those people not in the shorebird world.*
- *Are some birds not covered in any conservation plans, such as cranes, herons?*
 - *Many waterbird species are covered under other plans*
 - *International crane foundation covers cranes*
- *Do we need an implementation plan?*
 - *Good to have tangible results.*
 - *Not just documenting what we do but show how we are striving toward conservation*

Where do we go now?

- *Currently hold meetings yearly. Is that enough?*
- *How is ASG engaged in the Plan being implemented?*
 - *Conservation, minimizing development in priority areas?*
- *How do we fold the Plan into other initiatives, plans?*
 - *Integration*
 - *USFWS – Refuges complete monitoring for resources of concern.*

Monday, 2 December 2019 (cont.)

- *Specific objectives for the next couple of years?*
 - *Identifying important objectives within the plan and then revisiting.*
 - *Break down the larger goals in the plan into smaller tasks that be accomplished in a year (e.g. commenting on EIS) in order to put the plan into action*
 - *Where are concerns?*
 - *Can we answer questions/concerns?*
 - *Sharing upcoming events/issues*

AK is the only region that has an updated plan. Most regional plans in the lower 48 were written in early 2000s.

Other business

A letter was sent to Clive Minton's family from ASG expressing condolences. Clive was the founder of the International Wader Study group in Europe, and is known for developing cannon-netting as a practical capture method for waders. Clive moved to Australia where he was instrumental in large banding efforts that helped us understand how important the Yellow Sea was to shorebirds..

A good leader is when people see what you do and want to follow what you believe in. Clive was one such person.

Clive's address for cards is 165 Dalgetty Road, Beaumaris, Victoria 3193

Website: <https://www.waderstudygroup.org/news/tributes-and-remembrances-page-for-clive-minton/>

Election of Officers

Lisa Kennedy will be stepping down as Secretary. Nominations were opened to the group. Melissa Gabrielson was nominated by Rebecca and accepted the position.

Melissa is currently an Executive Committee. Nominations were held to fill behind her. River Gates nominated herself and was accepted.

Katie Christie was elected to continue her position and accepted.

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New Executive Committee

Rebecca McGuire – Chairperson

Melissa Gabrielson – Secretary

River Gates – member

Ben Lagasse – member

Dan Ruthrauff – member

Shiloh Schulte – member

Katie Christie – member (reinstated)

Rich Lanctot – staff member

The following talks were presented and pdfs are available on the ASG website.

Model-based estimates of population trends and the importance of vital rates in Arctic-breeding shorebirds -- *Emily Weiser, et al.*

Remote Monitoring of Shorebird Nests – *Sarah Hoepfner*

Migratory patterns of a declining boreal-breeding shorebird: Lesser yellowlegs - *Laura McDuffie*

Responding to Pacific America Flyway conservation priorities for migratory shorebirds in Guatemala – *Varinia Sagastume Pinto, et al.*

Caribbean / South America Shorebird Hunting – *Brad Andres*

Revisiting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – PRISM surveys 15 years later – *Sarah Saalfeld et al.*

Year-round satellite-tracking of Buff-breasted Sandpipers – *Rick Lanctot et al.*

Update on the Mid-Continental Flyway Shorebird Conservation Strategy – *Kelli Stone*

Two videos were shown that highlight the importance of shorebirds to different groups along the Pacific Flyway, and the value of having a WHSRN site.

Voices of the Pacific Flyway – *Cornell Productions*

English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qb-2eGuXGmM>

Yupik: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nU71_1dtlY

The Value of Being a WHSRN Site – *National Audubon*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lSHp_0GcNAU&feature=youtu.be

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Future focus area, collaborations – brainstorming session – all

Hats –

- *Is group interested in ordering hats*
- *Approximately \$10/12 per hat*
- *Rick sent out an email and would like a response by **December 20***

Patches/Stickers –

- *Can we purchase?*
- *How many?*
- *USFS (Erin Cooper/Melissa Gabrielson) willing to purchase*
 - *Ordered 200*

Role of ASG –

Commenting on development effects on shorebirds.

- *Pebble mine*
- *Should continue to comment as needed*
- *Write to agency leadership to effect change*
- *Best strategy is to state scientific facts that state directly any effects to wildlife*
- *USFWS/USFS personnel are not always able to comment, depending on project.*
Great to have a group like ASG provide comments in these situations.
- *Kristine Sowl has developed a spreadsheet of upcoming projects and deadlines.*
However, some of the deadlines are being missed due to the over whelming number of projects being pushed right now.
- *How do we have meaningful input?*
 - *Confound impacts*
 - *Scale*
- *Important to also send letters/comments to agencies about what ASG priorities are and have statements that include “we think you should do more to study X, because...”*

How does group prioritize projects?

- *Where should group focus their time?*
- *What are the priority habitats?*
- *Do we have advocates to help with upcoming comments?*
- *Proactive vs reactive*
- *Want to engage leadership*
- *Having input during scoping may help to address concerns*
- *Is there a goal? Does the group want to set a goal of how many comments should be addressed per year? Something tangible?*
- *What are upcoming projects?*

Monday, 2 December 2019 (cont.)

Should executive committee meet a few times a year

- *Via phone?*
- *Quarterly to address some of the issues that are occurring.*
- *Would be nice to send out a couple of letters a year, though this will vary per year.*

What is in Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan -

Tie what is in the plan back to projects and funding. Can also help to prioritize areas of concern/comments.

Mid Continental Flyway Shorebird Conservation Initiative -

ASG will be involved in the development of the mid-Continental Flyway because of issues in the Boreal Arctic.

Additional comments -

Flyways are moving toward larger scale projects, and larger scale funding rather than smaller buckets of \$5-10K.

East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network (EAASRN) sites vs Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) sites

- *EASRN sites are committed to multi-use*
- *WHSRN sites are committed to shorebirds*

Consider being a shorebird advocate!

- *Opportunities for bird talks in schools, industry, businesses, chamber of commerce, corporations, etc.*
- *Need to be engaging public as often as possible.*

Drinks and dinner was at the King Street Brewery.

Tuesday, 3 December 2019 (joint meeting with the Boreal Partners in Flight)

8:00 – 8:15	1. Welcome, introductions, agenda overview	Rebecca McGuire, Wildlife Conservation Society Melanie Smith, National Audubon Steve Matsuoka, USGS
8:15 – 8:30	2. Video: St. Matthew Island, Alaska expedition	Andy Johnson, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Rachel Richardson, USGS ↓

Tuesday, 3 December 2019 (cont.)

8:30 – 9:10	3. Management Subcommittee update and next steps	Kristine Sowl, USFWS
9:10 – 9:30	4. Boreal bird monitoring: ALMS, BBS, and review of the continental BBS program	Colleen Handel, USGS
9:30 – 9:35	5. Filling vacancies in the BBS, Alaska	Laura McDuffie, FWS ↓
9:35 – 10:05	6. Trans-boreal models of boreal bird densities and population sizes	Peter Sólymos and Diana Stralberg, Boreal Avian Modelling Project* ↓
10:05 – 10:25	Break	
10:25 – 10:40	7. Evaluating broad-scale occurrence and fine-scale habitat association of boreal species of concern	Emily Weiser, USGS ↓
10:40 – 11:00	8. National Audubon's Boreal Conservation Program	Jeff Wells, National Audubon*
11:00 – 11:20	9. National Audubon's Migratory Bird Initiative	Melanie Smith, National Audubon
11:20 – 11:40	10. Audubon Alaska's boreal work	Natalie Dawson, Audubon Alaska
11:40 – 11:50	11. CAFF's State of the Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity Report - Bird Section Summary	Casey Burns, BLM ↓
11:50 – 12:10	12. Movement ecology and population trends of Snowy Owls	Jean-Francois Therrien, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary * ↓