



20<sup>th</sup> Annual - Alaska Shorebird Group Meeting  
Centennial Hall  
Egan Room  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014  
Meeting Notes

*See full agenda at back of this document. No formal talks were given as part of this group meeting. Rather all talks were given during the Alaska Bird Conference.*

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**8:30** – Welcome and opening announcements, *Roy Churchwell, Chair, ASG*  
*Roy outlines the schedule*

**8:40 – 10:40 - Announcements and updates**

*International Wader Study Group (IWSG) – Dan Ruthrauff + Rick Lanctot*  
*Haapsalu, Estonia Meeting, September 2014*

This was an informal meeting very similar to the Alaska Bird Conference. Next year's annual meeting is in Iceland during the first week of October right after the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group (WHSB) meeting in Virginia. Next meeting IWSG meeting may have a workshop on Arctic shorebird monitoring and demographics. The group just launched a new website located at <http://www.waderstudygroup.org/>. This group and the WHSB are trying to ensure future meetings are spaced further apart.

“Wader Study” – the new name for the “International Wader Study Group Bulletin”  
The journal and logo have been redesigned to have a new look – thank you Jessie Conklin. The redesign is geared toward having the journal appear in citation indices and thus give it more credence. The lead editor continues to be Humphrey Sitters but five new Associate Editors have been added. Paul Smith, Brett Sandercock and Bob Gill serve as North American editors. Editorial staff are asking biologists from throughout the world to submit articles.

<http://www.waderstudygroup.org/publications/bulletin/>

*Global Flyway Network and Yellow Sea issues update – Lee Tibbitts*

The Global Flyway Network (GFN) is a partnership between researchers worldwide who are devoted to long term — usually demographic — work on long distance migrating shorebirds. The partnership aims to build on the strengths of comparative demographic shorebird studies worldwide, with the aim to understand and analyze the factors determining shorebird numbers in a rapidly changing world. In practice it also tries to fill major gaps in coverage of fieldwork of the world's most threatened shorebird flyways.

This initiative started 5-6 years ago and focuses on waterbird issues in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. This initiative integrates research efforts between Alaska, China, Asia, Australia etc. Lee has outfitted various shorebirds with transmitters in Australia to track their progress and site use on the flyway. Demography work is ongoing. Seawall built along China shores coined as the “next great wall”.

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

*East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership - Rick Lanctot*

This is a consortium of 22 countries that go from Alaska to New Zealand, including crane, seabird, shorebird, anatidae, and other issued-oriented working groups. By putting people in these partnerships and there can be a consolidated effort for conservation. Connects the countries and gives people a voice. YK Delta is part of the shorebird network. Efforts are underway to nominate part of the National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska (e.g., parts of Teshukpuk Lake or major river deltas) as part of this network.

<http://www.eaaflyway.net/>

*Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group: – Rick Lanctot*

*VIth WHSG, Wallops Island, Virginia, 13-16 Sept 2015*

WHSG – New logo. Rick will make hats for the meeting in Virginia.

This coming September is the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting and promises to be the largest meeting yet with many species and issue focused side meetings. The Atlantic Flyway and Pacific Flyway Shorebird Business Plan groups will meet, as will the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Piping Plover, and Red Knot (roselaari) working groups. Historically organizers of the WHSG meetings have been challenged with raising dollars to help pay travel costs for Latin American professionals and students, as well as North American students. The meeting will be on Wallops Island, right on the Wildlife Refuge. Efforts are underway to formalize the group, following up on discussions held at the Colombia meeting to do more collaboration and work. There is currently a listserve (go to

<https://www.fws.gov/lists/listinfo> and scroll down to Whsg), facebook, and a new

website being developed for the upcoming meeting

<http://vtshorebirds.fishwild.vt.edu/whsg.html>

*Arctic Shorebird Demographic Network (ASDN)*

This network of 16 sites spread across Russia, Alaska and Canada collected demographic data on various shorebird species as well as environmental data (lemmings, weather, predators, insects, etc.) between 2010 and 2014. This past summer represented the last of the planned 5-year study and intensive efforts are being done to analyze the data now. Efforts are also underway to see how portions of the network may continue with different objectives.

- *Canada has 7-8 camps still ongoing.*
- *Alaska may be down to 2 camps.*

- *Potential to do future work on goose foraging and how it influences shorebirds (Canada and snow geese) and climate change.*
- *Opportunities for others to collect data for key work.*

*Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative: -- Rick Lanctot*

The Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI): protecting Arctic lifestyles and peoples through migratory bird conservation is a Conservation of Flora and Fauna (CAFF) project designed to improve the status and secure the long-term sustainability of declining Arctic breeding migratory bird populations.

In 2014, the Arctic biodiversity assessment was conducted and 18 action items were identified. Arctic birds and impacts were one of the key points that will be addressed by AMBI. This CAFF initiative has an overall plan and four step-down plans focused on the Americas, East Asian-Australasian, African Eurasia, and Circumpolar flyways. The stepdown plans are almost finalized. Once the plans are signed off by the CAFF board they can be used and cited as supported by this organization. The U.S. will be Chair of the Arctic Council this spring and will be identifying priorities for the U.S. Norway is taking over the Chair position with CAFF. <http://www.caff.is/arctic-migratory-birds-initiative-ambi>

*Caribbean/South America Shorebird Hunting – Audrey Taylor*

Currently, there is quite a bit of effort looking at hunting in North and South America. This issue is on the radar due to the coverage of the Whimbrel called Hope that managed to fly through a hurricane only to be shot once it landed in Barbados. The topic of shorebird hunting was raised as a priority issue in AMBI's America's plan. Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act has funded work on this issue.

Audrey: She has involvement with the project in French Guiana. The Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Business Strategy is serving as an overarching plan that includes investigating this issue. There are \$250k in funds to work in N and S America and the Caribbean. This work includes increasing law enforcement in Suriname and maintenance of hunting free reserves in Barbados. There is a broad scale initiative from the College of William and Mary looking at policy differences, to assess hunting practices in French Guiana, and a hunter outreach for the initiative. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is looking for where to go next (Ian Davidson). In August of 2014, a pre-proposal was submitted to look at the next steps. This proposal will be submitted to the NFWF committee in January.

*Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative (CRIMBI) - Erin Cooper  
Talked about CRIMBI and Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN)  
joint meeting.*

CRIMBI met in La Paz, Mexico in November 2014. This meeting was in conjunction with the WHSRN and Waterbird Society meetings. Some main topics were the overlap between CRIMBI and WHSRN and how to mesh those two efforts. CRIMBI has finished the first phase of a communication strategy. A Facebook page was launched this fall. Another big topic at the meeting was the work on the red knot *roselarii* subspecies that is ongoing from Alaska to Mexico. One outcome of the meeting was the suggestion of a *roselarii* group meeting at the WHSG meeting in Virginia this fall. Another outcome of the meeting was continued support for a Shorebird Festival working group that continues on the “Connecting Festivals” theme introduced at the Colombia WHSG meeting. Finally, May 2015 represents the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival, May 8-10.

<https://www.facebook.com/CopperRiverInternationalMigratoryBirdInitiative>

<https://www.facebook.com/CopperRiverDeltaShorebirdFestival>

#### *Pacific Coast Joint Venture (PCJV) update – Tom Rothe and Lynn Fuller*

PCJV is a habitat initiative that has spun off the North American Waterfowl Plan. In the last year there has been some strategic work on what the group would like to do, focusing on establishing a new direction, using a flyway and full life cycle viewpoint to determine issues. In the past, most JVs developed local partnerships and weren't linked to Regional priorities. The PCJV will continue to operate in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, California and Hawaii. Tom and Lynn asked members in the group to consider what they thought the priority species in Alaska were, and whether there were habitat issues in Alaska. JV will be working on this on a bigger scale, possibly packaging together multiple state and many bird initiatives, threatened habitat types, etc. There is also work being done on staffing, with questions about whether a Science Coordinator is needed. There is a poster on the group for the ABC poster session. The PCJV plans to do more communication to unify bird conservation over the next year.

Questions:

Rick Lanctot: In the past the JV was primarily southern because it was habitat based. Do you see that changing and Alaska getting more involved?

Tom Rothe: Would like to get into those discussions. Alaska and Hawaii are different animals. Public land is 60 percent federal and 30 percent state. Not likely to get into dirt turning work in Alaska. Could it be policy work, monitoring etc. It's fairly wide open right now. Hope to collectively get a sense of the priority species. What are the issues?

Habitat on private lands then those issues can be addressed (land trust).

What is the difference between the LCC and PCJV? Do you guys work together?

Tom indicated that they interact with the LCC but efforts are underway to ensure they can work synergistically and not duplicate efforts.

Lynn indicated they were looking for information and stories to put in their newsletter as they are committed to sharing information. The newsletter has a regional feel. This helps the JV work on connecting the flyway through information. Lynn also indicated she

would be willing to work on a variety of articles. There is a story being developed about the large-scale land reclamation occurring in the Yellow Sea bordering China and the Koreas. Lynn is willing to take prepared stories and willing to write stories herself.

*Arctic Breeding Birds Conditions Survey Annual Forms - Rick Lanctot*

Pavel Tomkovich and Mikhael Soloviev lead an effort to collect information on waterbirds and associated environmental variables from Arctic and subarctic sites (see <http://www.arcticbirds.net/>). Data have been collected since 1988 at many sites throughout the Arctic.

*Pacific Flyway Shorebird Plan*

Efforts are underway to develop a Pacific Flyway Shorebird Business Plan with meetings held at several venues over the past few years. A formal planning process is underway and a side meeting will likely be held at the upcoming WHSG meeting.

*Alaska Airlines magazine shorebird article – Caroline Van Hemert*

Not much luck getting an article in the Alaska Airline magazine.  
Lynn Fuller could look into Qantas.

Annual summary compilation (summary) – Erin Cooper  
32 project and 7x authors. Good distribution.

*Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan- Rick Lanctot*

In 2018, we will celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> version of the Alaska Shorebird Conservation plan. Last year we discussed. About three years, we discussed whether a revision should be done and only one BCR wanted a revision. We should start talking about a revision now so that it is completed by the time the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary rolls around. We would need to form five BCR sub-group committees and locate a chair for each. There are glaring holes in our existing plan. For example, there is nothing in the 2008 plan on Climate Change. The thought was to form the sub-groups at this meeting and have a big workshop next year. What is the timeline?

*Discussion:*

Is the Alaska Plan linked with the US plan and their schedule? The National plan species prioritization list is updated regularly.

Colleen Handel: What do you want to accomplish by revising the plan and who is going to use it and how? What is in the existing plan and what needs to be revised?

Brian McCaffrey: There should be an analysis of the action items. Is it deriving benefits for shorebird conservation? Are the priorities and tasks relevant and are there new priorities and tasks?

Rick Lanctot: Helpful for us as a group to look at the priority issues, but suggested that we should focus on a smaller level change.

Matt Kirchoff: Would it be possible to update the plan with minor revisions and a facelift and then call it a new plan?

Lynn Fuller: Some sort of combination might be best. Could have a group conduct an in-depth review. Identify where it bogs down. It would be good to make some progress as this issue comes up every year.

Jim Johnson: Suggested that at the next meeting we work in BCR groups.

Rick Lanctot: A work assignment that goes out a month before the meeting. Breakout groups by BCR.

Colleen Handell: Input from a broad array of people if done at a face to face meeting. Good success with the Boreal PIF plan. Dedicated workshop next year is a good idea.

Rick Lanctot: You can help identify priority areas which help in grant writing for priority work.

Action Item: Pre-planning that we will work on action items and issues for each BCR and then have a workshop to update the BCR sections in the plan.

BCR coordinators:

Cheryl Carrothers will take 5

Chris Harwood will take 4 (will be recruiting) John Haddix, Luke Deccico

Debbie Nigro will take 3 (will be recruiting), Dan Ruthrauff, Rick Lanctot

Dan Ruthrauff will take 1

Jim Johnson BCR 2 (will be recruiting) Kristine Sowl, recruit new AK Peninsula Refuge Staff.

Fundraising: We should wait until after the workshop to see what the extent of the revision might be. If we go towards a business plan then there is a bigger re-write in our future. Are granting organizations focused on business plans these days?

Keep the plan the way it is but can tailor the action items to the outreach grant.

### **10:40 – 11:00 - Election of Officers**

Nomination and Election of ASG office positions up for election:

Abby Powell- was nominated for the ASG secretary position

Erin Cooper – was nominated for ASG president

Kelly Overduijn (executive committee)

Audrey Taylor (executive committee)

Deb Nigro (executive committee)

All positions were unanimously elected.

Dan Ruthrauff – executive committee

Lynn Fuller – executive committee

**11:00 – 11:30 – Setting priorities for shorebird conservation in Alaska-- input for Alaska's Wildlife Action Plan – Matt Kirchhoff**

Money appropriated by Congress to the states for wildlife conservation. These dollars require a strategic plan. People who are interested in pursuing this please contact Matt directly.

There are eight required elements. Population size, trends, Distribution, Habitat, Conservation Need, Threats, Action Items.

Need feedback on the input data: Pop size and trends

Discussion:

Brian McCaffrey: Concern is a scoring on trend if you don't know what the trend is. The uncertainty is a risk factor. That unknown data is skewing the results.

Matt Kirchhoff: Unknowns could get an increase.

Brian McCaffrey: The conservation score could be a mean score.

Carole Jorgenson: Building in a relativity factor taking into population declines despite population size.

Matt Kirchhoff: tried to keep the two factors separate (trend and population size). Large number may not have huge threats.

Nils Warnock: Would disagree that bottleneck areas that would influence the whole population may cause large declines in species with large populations. (Copper River Delta, Yellow Sea).

Roy Churchwell: Could we add another metric. Migration strategy. Hop, skip and jump. Do they make one stop or many?

Colleen Handel: Didn't we used to have a metric that was non-breeding distribution. How dispersed are they?

Nils Warnock: breeding distribution and non-breeding distribution could be highly correlated.

Colleen Handel: if it's concentrated in any part of its annual cycle then it could be more at risk.

Dave Tessler: Matt has gone through multiple iterations on ranking systems. The more factors you incorporate the harder it is to figure out what the scores mean. Keeping it parsimonious helps us figure out what is important.

Tom Rothe: Habitat types, what is the plan for assessing those.

Matt Kirchoff: will start at BCR level and will go down one more level to wetland and forest types.

Jim Johnson: two million dollars a year to spend on a suite of species that are identified as priority sites. Can they be spent out of the state?

Dave Tessler: there is some flexibility. We have to make sure that the work we are doing benefits Alaska species. We may be able to spend outside of the state. Spending money in-state is attractive both biologically and politically. These items aren't spelled out and won't be spelled out to provide flexibility.

Jim Johnson: What if the problem for a species lies outside the State, in Mexico perhaps?

Matt Kirchoff: Some species require work outside the state for conservation.

Dave Tessler: Are all breeders secure on their breeding grounds? Where are the issues? How we look at conservation of these species is the key?

Matt Kirchoff:  
Alaska issues versus other areas.

Rick Lanctot:  
Part of the reason that the ASDN was to get demographic data on adults is that it reflects the annual cycle if you collect it over a big enough dataset.  
Data collected in Alaska reflects on areas outside of Alaska.

Carole Jorgenson: Don't implement standard practices to prevent declines.  
Build in protection up front for species.

Dave Tessler: Doesn't have any regulatory power or statute behind it. We could write in recommendations.

Matt Kirchoff: Possibly add education and outreach.

Nils Warnock: We are lacking trend data. Recommends putting funds into demography and distribution data. Boreal Forest and YK delta still have some unknowns.



Matt Kirchoff: Establishing monitoring programs for shorebirds (ASDN and PRISM).

Nils Warnock: Possible recommendations for trend information.

Tom Rothe: Some of these topics relate to policy related issues. Threats tend to be hard to pinpoint in many plans. Hard to find the specifics that relate to conservation units etc...

Matt Kirchoff: Let's use Climate Change as an example. What BCR will be most influenced by Climate Change?

Rick Lanctot: Arctic has been identified as most vulnerable.

Matt Kirchoff: There won't be a plan for every vertebrate species in the state.

Would like to have a draft out by the end of March. The goal is to have this finished by September.

*Arctic Shorebird Demographics Network discussion:*

Colleen Handell: Why are we going down to 2 sites in Alaska?

Stephen Brown: NFWF and the NMBCA were unwilling to continue funding this beyond 5 years. They wanted a finite number of years for monitoring.

Colleen Handell: We don't have anything in the Boreal.

Rick Lanctot: Quite a bit has been done in the Arctic. Going to the YK Delta to fill in gaps on shorebird numbers.

Rick Lanctot: ALMS, Waterfowl etc. have annual monitoring programs. Shorebirds do not have a monitoring program. Can we do annual monitoring for shorebirds? Some money may come from USFWS but can we do this as a group with multiple agencies. Can we go different places annually and then on a rotating panel.

Dave Tessler: the question of monitoring in a state plan is a good one. Monitoring for taxa that don't have a mechanism for funding. There will always be resistance in the system for anything that is ongoing.

Rick Lanctot: need to do a smaller chunk each year around the state. We have shorebird experts in the state and could get volunteers. We could train the ALMS staff to work on shorebirds in the early season.

Will meet later this week to discuss a statewide program for monitoring shorebirds. Wed at noon.

**11:30 – Adjourn**



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**8:40 – 10:40 - Announcements and updates**

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  - *Haapsalu, Estonia Meeting, September 2014*
  - *Wader Study – the new International Wader Study Group Bulletin*
- Global Flyway Network and Yellow Sea issues update – *Lee Tibbitts*
- East Asian Austral-Asian Flyway Partnership - *Rick Lanctot*
- Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group: – *Rick Lanctot*
  - *Vlth WHSG, Wallops Island, Virginia, 13-16 Sept 2015*
- *Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative: -- Rick Lanctot*
- Caribbean/South America Shorebird Hunting – *Audrey Taylor*
- Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative (CRIMBI) - *Erin Cooper*
- Arctic Shorebird Demographics Network – *Rick Lanctot*
- Pacific Coast Joint Venture update – *Lynn Fuller*
- Arctic Breeding Birds Conditions Survey Annual Forms - *Rick Lanctot*
- Alaska Airlines magazine shorebird article – *Caroline Van Hemert*
- Annual summary compilation (summary) – *Erin Cooper*

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Directions to the Centennial Hall Convention Center:

