

**Minutes of the 8th Annual Alaska Shorebird Group Meeting,
10-12 December 2002
Anchorage, AK**

Tuesday, 10 DECEMBER, 2002

Boreal PRISM preliminary meeting; 8:30-10:30

Present: Vicky Johnston, CWS- Yellowknife (by phone)
Rick Lanctot, USFWS, Migratory Bird Management, Alaska
Lee Tibbitts, USGS, Alaska Science Centre, Alaska
Garry Donaldson, CWS-Ottawa
Brian McCaffery, USFWS, Yukon Delta NWR, Alaska
Chris Harwood, USFWS, Yukon Flats NWR, Alaska
Bob Rodrigues, LGL Alaska Research Associates, Alaska
Steve Kendall, USFWS, Arctic NWR, Alaska
Steve Matsuoka, USFWS, Migratory Bird Management, Alaska
Joe Liebezeit, Wildlife Conservation Society, California

1. Boreal breeding species list

We confirmed that for our committee's purposes, we consider the boreal forest to be the non-alpine parts of BCRs 4,6,7 and 8.

We reviewed a draft species list that Keith Larson prepared. We deleted a number of species that are alpine, or whose main distribution lies outside of the boreal forest. The final list of 12 species for inclusion is:

Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Hudsonian Godwit
Red-necked Phalarope
Least Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher
Semipalmated Plover
Solitary Sandpiper
Spotted Sandpiper
Upland Sandpiper
Common (Wilson's) Snipe
Marbled Godwit (high priority and very restricted boreal distribution in Alaska, Ontario)

2. Priorization of species list

We need prioritize species from the list above based on a) their priority status (using regional shorebird plan information) and b) how widespread the species is. This information will help us assess the best way to progress within a boreal monitoring program.

Action- Rick- lists for Alaska

Action- Vicky- lists for Canada; roll up and distribute final lists.

3. Evaluation of monitoring potential for boreal species

The discussion started with a review of the PRISM goals that apply to the boreal breeding grounds. These are:

- *Estimate the size of breeding populations of shorebirds in North America.*
- *Describe shorebirds' distribution, abundance, and habitat relationships.*
- *Monitor trends in shorebird population size.*
- *Assist local managers in meeting their shorebird conservation goals.*

We discussed various ways that the committee could move forward with an assessment of monitoring possibilities for boreal species. Some possible approaches are:

- examine individual species throughout their life cycle to identify most likely times/locations where monitoring could be successful.
- examine the distinct boreal forest habitat types to determine which, if any, monitoring methods would work for a majority of species present in that habitat type; VJ indicated she thought there were 4 distinct types of boreal forest in Canada
 - 1) Taiga plain (NWT): consists of easy-to-survey large tracts of taiga, interrupted by ponds
 - 2) Taiga shield (e.g., Yellowknife): finely grained mishmash of bog, forest, ponds (i.e., no discrete habitat types)
 - 3) Boggy (James Bay): hard to ground surveys in this...quaking sphagnum bogs are unstable
 - 4) tracts of boreal forest interrupted by strings of bogs
- examine various monitoring methods that have been suggested so far, and determine how many species could be adequately monitored across the boreal forest with a particular method.

The first option seems to be the most popular one at present. Participants felt that when the prioritized list is completed, the appropriate assessment method might be clearer. We will return to this decision when the list is complete.

4. Upcoming boreal monitoring in 2003, 2004

a) off-road Breeding Bird Survey routes (Alaska)

Steve Matsuoka explained that there the current off-road routes are conducted too early in the season to survey resident landbirds or other species such as shorebirds. The program coordinators are considering advancing their survey dates by a few days, or surveying a subsample of points twice (early and late). This would make it possible for shorebird data to be collected. This is going to be discussed in more detail on Friday, and a decision should be made in time to plan for this coming field season.

(note from Rick- “unfortunately, not much of this was discussed on Friday as most of the meeting focused on how to implement an off-road survey (i.e. generating funds, obtaining buy-in from agencies). There was talk of writing an application for a Challenge-Share grant to provide funds for the preparation of a standardized protocol book that could include information on changing survey times to better address shorebird monitoring”).

It is unclear how well the off-road BBS point count system would work for surveying boreal shorebirds (some species are notoriously partial to observers). At the very least, though, the method would help fill in the very spotty distributional map that we have for most boreal species.

b) helicopter surveys (Canada)

Tests of a helicopter survey method are planned for 2004 in Canada. Vicky proposes a collaboration with Ducks Unlimited’s (DU) Western Boreal Forest Initiative staff to a) conduct helicopter surveys at various DU 2004 survey sites; b) conduct ground observations at the same sites to determine shorebird reactions to helicopter surveys; c) determine if ground-based detectability estimates are derivable for boreal shorebird species. Preliminary discussions with DU staff have taken place. Vicky will also seek other collaborators to do similar work in other parts of the boreal forest (e.g. Alaska, eastern Canada).

c) river-based bird surveys (Alaska)

Rick advised that a number of refuges in Alaska undertake annual boat-based bird surveys. Surveys are done at stops (point counts) or in transit (river transects), depending on survey location. Rick will encourage refuge staff to conduct such surveys as opportunities arise, and will ask refuge staff to work with one another to standardize protocols as much as possible.

4. Specific projects for graduate students

Rick asked for advice on any particular Alaskan species or issues that would be worthwhile to solicit graduate student support funds for? Solitary Sandpipers were suggested because they nearly nothing is known about their distribution, population size, life history, etc. Common Snipe was suggested because it is common, widespread, has bizarre breeding behaviours, and no recent work has been conducted on the species. Finally, Short-billed Dowitcher and Hudsonian Godwit were suggested because of (apparently) limited range.

5. Next meeting

The committee’s next meeting will be by conference call in January. Purpose of meeting- to decide how to do monitoring assessment, and to allocate workload among committee members.

Shorebird Activities in Alaska – General Meeting

Introduction and Welcome

Brian McCaffery welcomed everyone to the meeting

Rick Lanctot indicated that the ASG Terms of Reference is available and will be formalized on Thursday morning. He encouraged people to review it and provide input into the Plan.

Marbled Godwit Habitat Analysis / Black Oystercatcher Disturbance at Kenai Fjords National Park, Julie Morse and Abby Powell

Julie Morse asked for feedback in response to her MAGO work and BLOY proposal, her talk is posted on the web. http://mercury.bio.alaska.edu/~julie_morse

Philip Martin asked if there was a better map available for MAGO work.

Doug Schamel asked about the effects of banding on BLOY, RL said you can catch BLOY during brood-rearing with mist nets.

Nest Survival and Density of Tundra-nesting Birds in Relation to Development on North Slope of AK, Joe Liebezeit and Steve Kendall

Preliminary results of their first field seasons on the North Slope was presented. Provided Mayfield estimates of nest success at Kuparuk. The researchers also conducted predator counts using 10 minute point counts, and used wireless time lapse zoom video cameras placed 5 m from nests to look at predators. At ANWR, most nesting occurred in the river deltas. Researchers surveyed 9 of 20 plots originally identified. Joe and Steve will hold a workshop in Fairbanks on Feb 18, 2003 with collaborators to discuss the 2003 field season.

Questions were asked about the impact of cameras on individual nests – they did not see any differences in DSR, but sample sizes were small. The cameras were very expensive (wireless), costing \$8,000 for 4 cameras. Joe would like to try another system.

Dave Payer asked about egg flotation to get better estimates of nests not found.

Black-bellied Plover Breeding Biology, Phil Bruner

Phil examined the territories of Pacific and American Golden Plovers for habitat differences, also the selection of the nest site within territories. Nest cups were placed in areas with low cover by vascular plants. He collected similar data on Black-bellied Plovers this year.

Bob Gill asked about early “false” scrapes. Phil has seen them but did not take any measurements.

Doug Schamel applauded the student (8th grader) who worked on this project.

Pacific Golden-Plover Migration, Wally Johnson

Wally indicated that Deb Rocque’s stable isotope study needs funding. 27 out of 100 radio tagged birds were found in Alaska, a lot around King Salmon. No time for questions.

Lunch Announcement: Tim Bowman is putting together a photo guide of tundra-nesting birds and is asking for photo contributions.

Outreach Efforts and Subsistence Hunting

Subsistence Hunting of Shorebirds in Alaska, Bill Ostrand

Bill presented an overview of proposed regulations allowing hunting of shorebirds by rural Alaskans. He showed a list of species that will be legal for hunting; a few species were removed because they were on Birds of Conservation Concern lists. There will be a 30-day comment period and the proposed rule will be published early 2003. No law enforcement policy has been developed yet. ASG will circulate information when it becomes available.

Shorebird Virtual Field Trip, Paul Meyers

Paul described a semester-long curriculum for grades 4-5 in urban schools that followed shorebirds through migration. Another virtual field trip is planned for spring of 2004 (either in Canada or South America). This was a pilot study and seemed to be a big success. Paul did not know the cost of the program.

Shorebird Sister School Program, Tamara Mills

Tamara said an ID guide to allow information on the level of subsistence hunting to be gathered was close to being finished, but was now delayed because of the impending subsistence hunting legislation. She provided a sign-up sheet for joining the SSSP Listserv and Rick Lanctot encouraged people to sign up. Tamara also asked for volunteers for the International Migratory Bird Day for this year, which will be held at the zoo. The focus will be on refuges, so she encouraged refuge personnel to participate. Introduced Sue Thomas, SSSP Coordinator for Region 1, USFWS.

National/International Programs

U.S. Shorebird Council Highlights, Rick Lanctot

Rick provided an overview of what happened at the recent U.S. Shorebird Council meeting held in La Crosse, WI in November 2002. Rick introduced Garry Donaldson who is the national shorebird coordinator for Canada. Rick indicated there will be meeting in January 2003 where the Wildlife Management Institute and The Nature Conservancy will try to develop top priority needs by all the bird groups. Rick also talked about becoming more involved with the Pacific Coast Joint Venture. Philip Martin asked who was on the council. This information can be found at <http://shorebirdplan.fws.gov/>. Until today, the Alaska seat on the council was shared by Robert Gill and Brian McCaffery. Brian was elected President later in the meeting and thus assumes the full responsibility for this position.

Beringian Shorebird Database, Rick Lanctot

Rick described this relational database that was developed by Brad Andres, Misha Stishov, and Paul Cotter. He indicated that there was a large amount of Russian data already entered, and that plans were to begin entering Alaska data in the near future.

Efforts will focus on arctic breeding data first, with an effort to collate unpublished data, gray literature, and published works. A short discussion followed about putting the data on the internet, issues of privacy and sharing of data, etc.

WHSRN/EAASSN, Kent Wohl

Kent indicated there are currently 5 locations designated within the WHSRN network in Alaska. These include the Copper River Delta, Kachemak Bay, Yukon Delta, Kvichack Bay, and Nushagak Bay). There are no plans for further designations, although the Migratory Bird Management office would support people interested in designating new sites. Efforts are underway to designate the Yukon Delta as the first North America site within the East Asia-Australasian Shorebird Reserve Network. The Yukon Delta would be recognized as being on “top of the flyway” for Alaska. To date the focus has been on the southern portions of the Asian flyway. Should this designation occur, most of the recognition would be within the USFWS, and no plans are being made for a celebration.

Working Groups, Kent Wohl, Rick Lanctot, Bob Gill

Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee – Kent Wohl described this committee. The U.S. primarily through Kent and Bob Gill have become increasingly involved, and shorebirds have emerged as a large component of the non-game program. The Committee is promoting the flyway concept to nongame management. Alaska has several species that use the East Asia flyway. Japan and Australia are the big players to date. Three working groups exist, including Shorebirds (Bob Gill is U.S. representative), Waterfowl, and Cranes. The Committee meets annually (Singapore in 2003). At the 2003 meeting they will propose forming working groups for Seabirds and maybe Loons.

Conservation of Migratory Breeding Birds Outside the Arctic – this effort recognizes the need to conduct range-wide management, as it explores the number and type of species that travel outside the Arctic. 38/41 species migrate outside of the U.S. Report will be out in 2003.

Central Pacific Bird Working Group—A workshop was held in the Cook Islands last July (Bob Gill and Kent Wohl attended from Alaska). Bob and Kent convinced the Central Pacific folks to expand their thinking to include the entire flyway, including shorebirds that travel from Alaska to the Central Pacific. The workshop resulted in the creation of an all-bird working group that includes the following United States representatives: Bob Gill and Lee Tibbitts (USGS), Kent Wohl and Rick Lanctot (USFWS, Alaska), Eric Vandenberg and Tara Zimmerman (USFWS, Region 1 – Hawaii). The first coordinated expedition to the Tuamotu Islands will take place in March 2003.

Bird Projects in Chukotka — Kent Wohl described the ECORA program that will provide \$8 million (over 5 years) for environmental studies in Russia in the coming years. People have been preparing proposals for the past 2 years and fieldwork will

likely begin in 2004. Soliciting proposals for shorebird/seabird work. USFWS is major U.S. player.

International Wader Study Group – Bob Gill is the North American Representative to this group. He encourage people to become members, as there are not many from North America. A two day workshop will be held the 1st week in October in Spain to focus on globally declining populations of shorebirds.

Latin American Program — Rick Lanctot described an effort to develop a bird working group for Latin America. He noted that 18 species from Alaska migrate to South America. Earlier efforts to conduct work in Latin America have included the Pan-American Shorebird Program that coordinates color-banding schemes for all countries, the Shorebird Sister School Program, and the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. People interested in forming a bird working group for Latin America may attend a workshop occurring during the Neotropical Ornithological Congress in Chile in October 2003.

New Shorebird Activities in Alaska – Future Studies/Projects

Miscellaneous Projects

Dunlin surveys in China, Bob Gill

In the first week of February 2003 there will be a cruise on the lower Yangtze River to assess the presence of non-breeding Dunlin. At present, biologists can only account for 20% of dunlin on wintering grounds. Large adjacent wetlands on the Yangtze have potential to support Dunlin. A 10 to 15 person crew will survey all waterbirds and search for marked birds.

Dunlin banding on the North Slope, Rick Lanctot

USFWS and USGS biologists will collaborate with Japanese biologists to band dunlin in Barrow and Prudhoe Bay during June 2003. Previous efforts to band dunlin at Barrow were very successful and resulted in a high resighting rate in Japan. These resightings of dunlin is important for conservation of wetland sites in Japan. The program may also be expanded to mainland Russia.

Curlew Genetic Study, Bob Gill

Funding was obtained to conduct a Bristle-thighed Curlew genetic study to determine whether the two distinct breeding populations winter in different parts of the Pacific Ocean. Lee Tibbitts, Rick Lanctot, and Verena Gill will try to capture curlews in the Tuamotu Islands in March 2003. This objective is only a small part of a much larger expedition. Bob Gill indicated that tissue samples may also be sampled from birds collected during early expeditions.

USFWS Shorebird Website, Rick Lanctot

Rick indicated that he is going to construct a website that would host information about the Alaska Shorebird Group, provide links to other shorebird sites, and provide

basic information about Alaska shorebirds. The IRM office in the USFWS regional office will help construct this site.

Migration Surveys in Coastal Alaska, Rick Lanctot

Rick indicated he was trying to coordinate activities of people in Southcentral and Southeastern Alaska who might be interested in monitoring migrating shorebirds.

Contaminants in breeding shorebird eggs, Rick Lanctot

Rick indicated 45 eggs from 13 species were collected during the summer of 2002 so that baseline levels of heavy metals and persistent organochlorines could be determined. Brian McCaffery suggested that refuges could help pay for some of the sample analysis. Dave Yokel suggested DOE as potential source of funds (oil fields).

Winter ecology of Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Rick Lanctot

Ms. Juliana Almeida has begun her first field season studying the wintering ecology of Buff-breasted Sandpipers in Brazil. She will determine turnover rates, site fidelity, and movement of these birds among three major wintering sites. She was partially funded by the USFWS, Endangered Species group.

Status of Wilson's Snipe, Brian McCaffery

Brian presented an informative and fun presentation that indicated the Common Snipe should now be called the Wilson's Snipe.

Shorebird Monitoring Part I – Species-specific Programs

Rock Sandpiper surveys on Alaska Islands, Lee Tibbitts, Dan Ruthrauff, Bob Gill

Lee presented a summary of surveys conducted for Rock Sandpipers on St. George and St. Paul islands. She indicated surveys were planned for St. Matthew and Hull islands in May/June 2003.

Bar-tailed Godwit Age Ratio Counts, Brian McCaffery, Dan Ruthrauff, Bob Gill

Field observations of fall staging Bar-tailed Godwits on the Yukon Delta over the past three years have found very low numbers of juveniles (<1%). Potential biases in the sampling effort indicated no evidence that low numbers were because of spatial or temporal segregation of juveniles and adults. Whereas these low rates are alarming, the species long life span may require successful breeding in only one or two years of an adult's life. In 2003 they will improve the sampling scheme and have a larger geographic scope.

Wally Johnson asked if migration timing was different. There is a lot of overlap in timing. Tamara asked if wintering areas in Australia and New Zealand would be accessible for looking for juveniles? Need people to be properly trained to identify juveniles. Bob Gill said there was almost no production of Bristle-thighed Curlews at Neva Creek during the past few years. Ted Swem asked if eggs were being collected for contaminants analysis. They will be in 2003.

Montane surveys in northwestern Alaska National Parks, Dan Ruthrauff, Bob Gill, Colleen Handel, Lee Tibbitts

Dan discussed survey methods and results from the previous two-years of work on parks in Northwestern Alaska. Two annual survey reports are now available. This work is part of a nation-wide survey of national park lands. Doug Schamel asked if there were plans to resurvey plots in the future? This is unlikely because the work is very labor intensive, phenology may be difficult to replicate, and funds are limited.

Wednesday, 11 December 2002

Shorebird Monitoring Part I – Species-specific Programs (continued)

Black Oystercatcher Breeding Surveys, Paul Meyers

Paul presented information on marine surveys conducted by himself and Aaron Poe during the past two summers in Prince William Sound. He indicated mapping the location of Black Oystercatcher territories was important given the increased amount of tourist activities (e.g., kayakers) in these waters.

Shorebird Monitoring Part II – PRISM (Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring)

Review of PRISM / Review of North Slope Activities, Rick Lanctot

Rick presented an overview of PRISM, describing efforts to conduct Arctic and Boreal surveys, Temperate Non-breeding surveys, Temperate Breeding surveys, and Neotropical surveys. A special focus was places on explaining how Arctic PRISM was currently planned and the goals of the program.

Rick then discussed results from surveys conducted in Northeast Alaska during June 2002.

Following this review, presentations were made for sites where PRISM activities occurred during the past two years. Jon Bart is preparing a document that has summaries for each of these sites.

Selawik National Wildlife Refuge, Tina Moran and Catherine Wightman

Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Brian McCaffery and Catherine Wightman

Alaska Peninsula/Becharok National Wildlife Refuge, Catherine Wightman and Susan Savage

Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Heather Moore, David Krueper, Tony Godfrey

Reconnaissance of alpine nesting shorebirds along Dempster Highway, 4 – 14 June, 2002, Pam Sinclair

- Exploration of Richardson and Ogilvie Mountains

- AMGP, LTJA, WISN, WHIM most common shorebirds/shorebird predators, but very low densities
- 6 nests containing 0 to 5 eggs found 5 – 13 June
- Extremely low densities may preclude implementation of PRISM-type monitoring; unlimited distance point counts perhaps more appropriate

Overview of Shorebird PRISM surveys in Canada, Garry Donaldson

Gary reviewed the work done in Canada in 2001 and 2002, and the proposed work for 2003.

Current Status of PRISM – Panel Review of Arctic PRISM and Needed Studies, Rick Lancot

Concerns with Arctic PRISM include:

1. Are we detecting 85% of territorial males on intensive plots?
 - a. Why 85%? Because double-sampling methodology assumes that observers find 100% of territorial males; this assumption relaxed to 85% because of desired level of accuracy in surveys.
 - b. Are variance estimates and biases small enough to look at trends?
2. Given the huge logistical and biological constraints of arctic fieldwork, is the sampling approach statistically sound?

A panel review is underway:

1. Jon Bart currently preparing a detailed methodological document to be assessed by five independent external reviewers.
2. Any modifications will be made under auspices of US Shorebird Council Monitoring Committee

Overall, the review will ensure reliable methodology that in turn produces accurate population estimates.

Intensive plot PRISM methodology, Brian McCaffery

How intensive is intensive enough?

Current methodology assumes 85% detection of territorial males; are we meeting this assumption?

Work conducted 1998-2002 on Western Sandpipers at Kanaryarmiut Field Site on Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge suggests that we are not meeting this assumption:

1. Without marked birds, very difficult to determine territorial status
2. Without marked birds, double counting of individuals may occur (high estimate)
3. Alternatively, cannot distinguish between multiple individuals at same site at different times (low estimate)

By dividing the number of successful nests by a Mayfield hatching success estimate, one can estimate the total number of nests that *ought* to have been present at a particular site. One can incorporate the percent of first-nest attempts to generate an estimate of the number of first-laid nests (i.e. no re-nest attempts included) that *ought* to have been present. Using this technique, Brian estimates that at Kanaryarmiut, despite an effort ~3 times greater than that required under PRISM protocol, crews on average discovered

slightly less than 85% of first-laid nests. Thus, the intensive surveys only generated an index of nesting pairs, not an absolute estimate of nests on plot.

How can we improve this estimate?

1. Multiple site effort necessary to evaluate the methodology
2. Canada: because little data exist on distribution, crews will continue with intensive survey methods as before in order to satisfy basic inventory and monitoring questions
3. A nested approach needed to test assumption that one finds 85% of nests:
 - rapid surveys: generate presence/absence
 - rapid and intensive surveys: generate presence/absence as well as abundance of nests.
 - mark-recapture approach (i.e. one crew nest searches, followed by another crew; all previously detected nests are counted as a “recapture” to generate an index of number of nests present)
 - rope dragging? Not necessarily a panacea: rope dragging uncovers new nests, but does not necessarily uncover all previously-detected nests (work conducted in Chukotka demonstrated this...)

Are nests a better unit of measure than territorial males?

Pros: an objective unit, unlike territorial males (observer interpretation introduces subjectivity)

Cons: actual nest discoveries during rapid surveys rare, but could estimate number of nests on plot just as one currently estimates numbers of territorial males

Current methodology assumes that each nest or territorial male has an equal detection probability. If certain subpopulations have lower detection probabilities (i.e. non-displaying males from recently depredated nests, or species that sit extremely tight on the nest...), this will adversely affect abilities to estimate numbers on plots.

Employing multiple methodologies is a good approach because each methodology likely detects different species at different rates. So, employing double observer searching may not be as effective as, say, nest searching combined with rope dragging.

Thus, 2003 field season is an excellent opportunity to test some of the assumptions of the methodology in an effort to improve the protocol. Brian plans to commit a 6-person crew to the task in 2003: 4 individuals with 2 intensive plots/person; each plot with 2 observers; 2 individuals working as rope draggers/banders. Thus, 6 people for ~1 month's time...

Checklist Surveys in CANADA, Gary Donaldson

Checklist surveys have been conducted since 1995. They generate information on distribution. Site visits are short, usually 24 hours or less. Data are collected over 10 km x 10 km region or smaller, and by all types of observers: experts, novice, etc.

Information collected includes location, skill level of observer, weather, habitat, species, general numbers of critters, breeding evidence, predators, etc. Through 1998, over 5,000 checklists have been compiled from over 1,000 locations. To access database:

<http://www.mb.ec.gc.ca/nature/migratorybirds/nwtbcs/index.en.html>

This data roughly compares to the checklist program initiated by Brad Andres. Alaska's checklist program has fallen into disuse during the past few years.

Glacier Brewhouse Dinner Get-together

Over 30 people celebrated our first banquet together. Although there was no MC, everyone had fun getting to know each other and the food was excellent.

Thursday, December 12, 2002

Alaska Shorebird Group

In attendance: Rick Lanctot (RL), Brian McCaffery (BJM), Wally Johnson (WJ), Pat Johnson (PJ), Phil Bruner (PB), Kristine Sowl (KS), Ellen Campbell (EC), Linn Shipley (LS), Lee Tibbitts (LT), Dan Ruthrauff (DR), Tamara Mills (TM), Bob Gill (REG), Steve Kendall (SK), Philip Martin (PM), Todd Eskelin (TE), Julie Morse (JM), Tina Moran (CM), Sue Thomas (ST), Bob Rodrigues (BR), Kent Wohl (KW), Melissa Cady (MC), Pat Walsh (PW), Doug Schamel (DS), **Chris Harwood (did minutes)**

Roundtable Discussion

Acceptance of February 2002 minutes

Minutes were reviewed and accepted.

Modifications/adoption of charter, Rick Lanctot

Rick lead a discussion that proceeded to review line by line all aspects of the draft charter (subsequently called Terms of Reference). The goal was to get an acceptable version of the Terms of Reference prepared by the end of the meeting.

Rick explained Terms of Reference were beneficial because this will spell out who runs the group, what we do, what are our goals, and allows us to speak with a collective voice.

It was agreed that there would be no fees for membership to the Alaska Shorebird Group and that everyone was responsible for paying own transportation to meetings.

What are voting implications (vis-à-vis conflicts of interest) for those federal and state employees who come to this meeting while being paid?

RL- requires people to excuse themselves from votes that may be conflict of interest or obtain permission to vote. Also people must make it clear that their views don't necessarily represent those of the agency.

Dave Yokel indicated he frequently disagrees with his agency, but he sees it as part of his job; he doesn't see it as a conflict of interest

Todd Eskelin – employees of KNWR have been warned that if they have opposing views (e.g., drilling) outside of work, USFWS must not be represented by the individual.

Participants decided that the Alaska Shorebird Group would function in an advisory role, as well as providing basic information to people who request it.

The attendees decided to change the name from the Alaska Shorebird Working Group to the Alaska Shorebird Group. BJM suggested the AK Shorebird Conservation Group. People decided the word “conservation” would scare people

The wording and placement of goals and objectives was discussed.

Participants indicated we need to be careful how we use the words “Alaska Shorebirds” because many are only here for a short time prior to migrating.

We decided secretary should be part of the executive committee, and that there should be no term limits. It may be difficult to get enough volunteers to participate as it is. RL indicated he didn’t want the chairperson to be the driving factor behind the group because Brad Andres left the Group waned. DY indicated we should strive to have representation from desired groups (i.e., we want different perspectives) but we should not assign weight (i.e., # of slots) to specific groups. There are 5 positions left after top 3 (chair, Rick, USGS); we should strive to have representation from State govt., NGOs, private industry...but we are not saying how many from each

Participants decided chairperson would handle administrative questions between annual meetings, and Executive Committee would handle advisory (i.e., controversial) questions between annual meetings. A discussion on how issues should be brought into the Group was also made. Everyone agreed that anybody can be a member of the Alaska Shorebird Group.

There was a discussion of the responsibilities of the “chair” (BJM) vs. MBM shorebird coordinator (RL). Decided the chair would also be the chair of the Executive Committee and the chair would represent Alaska on the U.S. Shorebird Council.

Participants decided that Executive Committee meetings would be open to the public, but non-committee members could not actively voice/participate (i.e., voting would be restricted to Exec. Comm.). BJM – suggests that we explicitly state that all members will be notified of all meetings

Decision-making protocols- agreed that we 2/3 majority (of members present at annual meetings) to consider and pursue/implement issues.

There was a discussion about recalling/impeaching chair...DS brought up point but points out that we already have language under “Exec. Comm” section to cover this scenario

Participants were divided about having a Black Turnstone or Bristle-thighed Curlew, and whether the logo should depict just a head or an entire body. REG will ask Max to draw each one and a vote would take place via the list serve. RL will put 4 design options on web site: circle w/ head, circle w/ body, curlew, and turnstone

Alaska Shorebird Priorities and Modifications of the AK Shorebird Plan

Monitoring – Rick Lanctot

Need to add monitoring section

Goal:

-To determine status and trends of shorebirds that occur in AK.

Objectives:

-take last objective under population/habitat and move under monitoring section

Group Comments:

-need regional assessment

-follow national plans

-precedence set by U.S. Shorebird Plan

-organize by geographic or BCR region

-put goals and objectives related to monitoring from population and habitat section into new monitoring category

Research – Bob Gill

Group Comments:

-continue to assist with the design and testing of monitoring protocols (PRISM)

Public Outreach, Technical Support, and Environmental Education – Tamara Mills

Group Comments:

-work with harvest/subsistence hunters

-spearhead “all-bird” outreach team

-emphasize Shorebird Sister Schools Program (SSSP)

-offer NCTC training for NGO’s/State/etc. on shorebird ecology and management (tailored to Alaska)

-Maintain Alaska Region coordinator for SSSP

International Activities – Kent Wohl

Goals: (suggested by Kent)

-increase communication, collaboration, and cooperation

-promote/enhance multilateral international cooperation (by participating in Intl. Forum in N/S/C Americas, CPF, EAF, Circ. Arctic)

Objectives: (Kent)

-participate in APMWCC/ Shbd.WG/CPF/WG

-implement applicable action items in EA/CPF...etc plans

-exchange information

-implement SSSP in other countries

-participate in the CAFF shbd. mon. network

-harmonize field/reptg protocols

Priorities (Action Items – Kent)

-continue East Asian Dunlin banding

- support Dunlin Population Survey in China
- Survey BTCU etc. in South Pacific
- Identify AK shorebirds / stopover sites / intl. institutes / wintering areas
- improve assessment of shorebird harvest in Intl. arena
- develop a compendium of shorebird projects by flyway
- continue populations in Beringian Shorebird database

Group Comments:

- suggested separate international category in plan but participants voted to integrate into other categories
- voted to bolster introduction and shorebirds of Alaska section to highlight the international connection
- voted to bolster shorebird conservation issues to add international issues

Conservation Issues – Philip Martin

Group Comments:

- Habitat Loss : promote study (quantify)
 - urban development (NWI)
- Ecotourism
 - identify sensitive situations
- Climate Change
 - sea level rise
 - loss of intertidal
 - loss of permafrost – maintained wetlands
- work toward priority setting process for conservation issues

Species of Concern – Brian McCaffery

Not enough time for discussion

Other Group Comments:

- work with AMBCC should be a priority in the management section
- new category “Management and Planning”
- species of concern bolstered in management section
- keep immediate priorities under goals and objectives of each category
- put PRISM “testing” under research category
- bolster section on AK shorebirds to include species of concern
- create section on species of concern
- suggested categories in plan: monitoring, management, outreach, research

Tasks

- a) Terms of Reference – Rick Lanctot
 - provide members one last opportunity to review and comment before adoption
- b) NGO process – Rick Lanctot and Brian McCaffery
- c) Nominations for Executive Committee– Rick Lanctot has list
- d) Shorebird Plan Revision
 - Monitoring – Rick Lanctot

- Outreach- Tamara Mills
- Research – Bob Gill
- Conservation Issues – Philip Martin
- International Issues – Kent Wohl
- Species of Concern – Brian McCaffery
 - each leader will revise and edit categories above by mid-February 2003
 - leaders will meet 1st March, 2003
 - Chair of meeting will be Bob Gill
- e) Hard copy and electronic copy of shorebird projects in AK – Bob Gill
- f) Publications List (on listserv, include gray literature) – Brian McCaffery
- g) Website – Rick Lanctot and Tamara Mills
- h) Minutes of meeting – Rick Lanctot will collate

Next ASG Meeting – 2nd Week of December in 2003 !!!

Minutes of the meeting were taken by Chris Harwood, Tamara Mills, Dan Ruthrauff, Abby Powell, and Rick Lanctot

Thursday Afternoon

There currently are no monitoring goals stated in the plan, however there is an objective within Populations and Habitats as well as Research.

The plan was written in '00, major projects have been initiated that are not mentioned in the plan (i.e., PRISM) or completed. In order to target agency funding, projects should be mentioned in the plan with as much specificity as possible. Thus the need to revise the plan.

Major Category Revision:

Monitoring
Management
Research
Outreach
?International

Add immediate priorities under each goal/objective section
Add more info to the Shorebirds of AK section, including BCC designation.
The 6 leaders will remove completed tasks.

Monitoring Goal: Determine status and trends of shorebirds that occur in AK.
Objective: Implement rigorously designed protocols for monitoring the status and trends of shorebird pops. in AK.
Priority: Implement Arctic PRISM
Initiate studies toward Regional Assessments

Research Objective: Continue to assist with design and testing of monitoring protocols (PRISM), and others approved by the U.S. Shorebird Council.

Priority Research Projects:
Identify important post breeding staging areas of the N Beaufort and Chukchi Seas as well as staging areas on the coast (geographic extent and scale of use)
Determine population size of PGPL through wintering studies in HI
WATA study in HI (wintering on ponds and shorelines of the islands)

Outreach – Tamara

Outreach has completed many of their objectives:
WHSRN nominations
Maintain the AKSWG
Maintain outreach objectives

New Priorities for outreach:

Maintain AKSWG

Pursue community-based programs and workshops

Increase outreach to rural AK

Continue involvement in SSSP

Communicate with AMBCC on new subsistence harvest regs and provide recommendations (perhaps should be an objective for management)

ID key contacts in other agencies, NGOs and the public domain

Establish a regional working group to pursue efforts in shorebird education and outreach (Tech comm. or ad hoc comm.?)

Work with the media

Spearhead all bird outreach

International Shorebird Management – Kent

There are 6 flyways used by birds in AK (incl East Asia & Central Pacific)

41 shorebirds regularly occur here, 38 are

breeders

23 MX

23 CR

26 SA

6 EUO

7 AO

Common Bird Conservation Issues:

Oil/contaminants

Exotic predators

Invasive Sp

Subsistence harvest

Illegal harvest

Recommended changes to the plan:

Intro – highlight international issues

Shorebirds of AK – Highlight international scope

Integrate international goals into the rest of the sections:

3 C's communication, coordination, collaboration

Promote/Enhance multilateral cooperation (by participating in international Flora mtgs in N/C/S AM, CPF & EAF circumpolar

Promote an Americas MB shorebird Agreement – tie in with MX, Cen AM, S AM

Objectives:

Participation in APMWCC/ Shorebird WG

Participation in CPFWG

Implement applicable action items in EA/CPF etc plans

Exchange info

Participate in SSSP

Participate in the CAFF shorebird monitoring network

Harmonize field/reporting protocols

Action Items:

Continue EA for Dunlin

Support Dunlin Pop Survey

Survey BTCU etc in S, P

ID AK shorebird status and trends, int. CAFF wintering ranges (CAF)

Improve assessment of harvest of shorebirds in AK

Develop compendium of shorebird projects

Continue promoting BS database

AK Shorebird Plan Conservation Issues – Phil

The plan is non-explicit with respect to ranking threats, but emphasizes oil and gas as an issue

Potential Revisions:

Additions contaminants
 international and intra-national issues

Habitat loss due to development (urban development)

Ecotourism/recreational – id sensitive situations/areas

Climate change – sea level raise, loss of intertidal areas, permafrost melting in the interior, long term altitudinal shifts in vegetation

Communicate with groups working on these issues to identify these as top priorities for shorebirds

Move toward explicit mechanisms of impacts whenever possible (direct mortality, food chain contaminants) – the plan should help guide research and monitoring

Quantify the threat whenever possible – habitat loss associate with NS oil and gas development

Limit to anthropogenic threats

Do we need more explicit pathways to meet goals and objectives?

This is leading toward developing a group process, changing the plan according to committee

Need to develop a mechanism for prioritizing changes to issues and priorities

Perhaps break the group into BCRs?

Have the revisions done before the next meeting – the section leaders will revise their sections with the help of those who are interested

Will post on the list serve

Tasks:

AKSWG charter – Rick (with one last review)

NGO nonprofit incorporation – Rick and Brian

Nominations of EC – Rick

Each elected EC member must read the conflict of interest document

Shorebird plan revisions – 6 section leaders

Initial Draft Due - Mid Feb

Leaders meet to discuss revisions – 1st of March

Projects in AK abstract to Bob Gill within a few weeks

Send Brian citations of work published, including gray literature, on an annual basis

Web site – Rick, others send any pictures, videos, audio to Rick

Next mtg – 2nd week in December (will try to maintain this date)