

Rice and Waterbirds Working Group
Conference Call: 11th October 2007, 2 pm US Eastern Standard Time.

Present on call: Paul Baicich, Daniel Blanco, Garry Donaldson, Charles Duncan, Chris Elphick, Catherine Hickey, Lourdes Mugica, Kathy Parsons, Jennifer Wheeler.

Apologies from: Sammy King

1. Southern South America workshop (Daniel)

Workshop will take place 25-26th Oct and 30-40 people are expected to participate, including representatives from Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Brazil, Bolivia. Day 1 will focus on presentations and research; day 2 on working groups to focus on topics such as best management practices, outreach, etc. Workshop is planned as a forum for exchanging information among researchers and people involved in wildlife management at agencies. Plan is to have future meetings that involve direct communication with industry representatives. The main goal of the meeting is to seek ideas for benefiting waterbirds in rice fields that are practical and could actually be implemented.

2. Barcelona meeting (Chris)

The symposium has now expanded and will fill two sessions on the first day of the meeting, and include 15 talks, plus 3 posters in the evening. Jennifer will lead a discussion that will aim to explore (a) ways in which researchers can actually help to advance conservation actions, (b) research gaps (this may not be necessary, depending on what is addressed in the talks), (c) communication of research (what audience(s), how to communicate). We had some discussion about whether the output from this discussion should be written up in some form, but did not meet any resolution (better to wait and see how the discussion goes).

3. Funding update for proceedings (Kathy)

We currently have \$10K in promised funding. A hoped for ~\$20K from CWS will not be forthcoming due to budget cuts in that agency. Kathy will provide a summary of the current funding status and distribute it to the group.

Charles discussed a possible NFWF application that could possibly include some funding for the proceedings. (Note: subsequently, this grant proposal was scaled back and it became apparent that it would not be able to include proceedings funding.)

4. University of Maryland student consultants (Kathy and Jennifer)

UMD students have been contacted to develop a report describing aspects of the rice industry that interact with waterbird conservation related issues. In September, Kathy, Jennifer and Chris participated in a call with the students to provide them more information on what we were looking for and to answer questions. Their report is due in September.

5. Industry connections via Rice Foundation/Cal Rice Commission (Kathy and Catherine)

Catherine talked about how plans for a workshop in California are now focusing on early in 2008 (perhaps Feb??), but that continued discussions with the rice industry are needed to determine where common ground might lie, and what the focus of the workshop would be.

Kathy has had some interactions with the Rice Foundation and there seems to be some interest in what our group is doing.

6. NFWF proposal (Charles)

Charles summarized his current thinking on a Manomet/WHSRN proposal to NFWF, with the plan of putting together a 2-year project focused on shorebirds in rice fields. More information on this initiative is likely to be forthcoming in the future.