

## **Rice and Waterbirds Working Group**

Conference call 16 August 06; 2pm-300pm DST

**Next Call: Week of September 11 (13<sup>th</sup>? - date to be determined by Catherine and Sammy) (rescheduled – date to be determined)**

Participating on call: Chris Elphick (Chair), Garry Donaldson, Jennifer Wheeler, Charles Duncan, Paul Baicich. Unable to participate: Daniel Blanco, Lourdes Mugica, Ghisselle Alvarado, Catherine Hickey, Sammy King, Kathy Parsons, Rafael Antunes Dias

### **Agenda**

1. NAOC update
  - Meeting space and development of a fact sheet
2. Symposium/Proceedings update
  - Symposium plan tentatively accepted
  - Need to identify authors/speakers and funding
3. Best Management Practices Workshop
4. Web site mock up
5. Group composition – anything new?
6. Any other business

1. **NAOC:** There is a meeting tentatively planned at the NAOC in Veracruz, MX for 5:15-6:15 on Wed Oct 4th. The purpose would be to get to know each other a bit better and to share information on the goals of the group. Chris will obtain confirmation from the NAOC organizing committee and let others know as well as advertise the meeting more broadly. All are welcome, please spread the word.

The purpose/audience of a fact sheet was discussed. We agreed it would be to introduce readers to the issues of rice and waterbird conservation, describe the nature of our working group, and to invite participation in our activities. It could mirror closely the website. Readers will be encouraged to submit their names/emails if they are interested in being kept informed about activities (possibly by a future listserv). We will work to have the fact sheet in both English and Spanish.

2. **Symposium at Waterbird Society:** As described in Chris' 7/21 email, we have an initial go ahead for the symposium in Barcelona in 2007. Chris has circulated an initial draft prospectus (exact symposium length and number of talks are not yet set, and will depend a bit on input from the organizing committee) as well as an updated version of the chapter list for a follow-up proceedings volume. He invites anyone with expertise/interest in speaking or writing on a particular topic, or suggestions for chapter authors, to let him know. He would also like to identify an editor with a rice growing perspective. Funds will be needed to assist speakers and targeted audiences attend the Waterbird Society meeting as well as for the proceedings costs.

Proposed timeline: Sept/Oct 06: Identify authors. Nov 06: Identify speakers from list of authors. Nov 07: Manuscripts for proceedings.

3. **Workshops on Best Management Practices.** Not discussed as key players unavailable for the call. Felt it would be best to have the next call devoted solely to that subject led by Catherine and Sammy.

4. **Web.** Jennifer will send a reminder request for review by end of August. She will work to launch the site publicly by mid-September, in time for promotion at the NAOC.

5. **Group Composition:** Charles mentioned John Sterling. He is with the Central Valley Bird Club, who with CA Rice Commission and perhaps the Sacramento Audubon Society and others are in the preliminary stage of developing a Birds and Rice Symposium for either 2007 or 2008 based in Sacramento. He has been put in touch with Catherine.

6. **Other business: NFWS and measurable objectives.** Charles described his meeting with Peter Stangel, program officer of the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). A subsequent email on 8/16 elaborated: "He and I discussed a variety of topics, including our group's interest in rice and waterbirds (and in my case, particularly, rice and shorebirds). Peter and I also discussed some new approaches to funding that NFWF is likely to implement—defining clear numerical goals for conservation objectives, and then being able to show how a given proposed project makes measurable progress toward that goal. If implemented this strategy would result in "fewer and bigger" grants, according to Peter."

Charles is working with authors of WHRSN's species conservation plans to integrate this approach and believes that shaping the Rice & Waterbirds working group in these terms would be beneficial both for clarity of our own thinking and for working with funders such as NFWF to attract the resources needed for implementation of projects. Chris encouraged the working group to think about types of goals: straight numeric (e.g., hectares of rice managed for wildlife, number of birds using rice fields), research-oriented (e.g., what are the 10 top research questions that need to be addressed), marketing (e.g., the development of direct links with industry representatives), and others. It could be the topic of a future call.

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