

Rice and Waterbirds Working Group

Conference call 25 January 2007; 2pm-300pm Eastern

Next Call: 29 March 2007, 2 p.m. Eastern

Participating on call: Chris Elphick (Chair), Paul Baicich. (Apologies from many.)

Various updates

1. Future meetings

2pm US Eastern Time on the following Thursdays: 29th Mar, 31st May, 26th July, 27th Sept, 29th Nov.

2. Veracruz meeting update

The RWWG met at the North American Ornithological Conference (NAOC) in Veracruz on 4th Oct 2006. 7 RWWG members were present, with at least 12 others joining the discussion. Jennifer took notes on the discussion which are posted on the website.

3. List-serve /Group membership

At the NAOC, there was a lot of interest in the creation of a list-serve. Also, the email notices about the creation of the RWWG last fall have resulted in a lot of contacts about ways in which people can participate in the group's activities.

Jennifer has looked into the details for setting up a list, probably using yahoogroups. I will ask her to provide details at the next meeting – and, if possible, we will have the list up and running by then.

The amount of interest in the topic raises questions about the structure of the RWWG. I propose that we use the list-serve as a means of communication for anyone interested in being part of the group's discussion. The current, smaller group, will form a Steering Committee for the group's activities, and will draw on other members of the list serve for particular activities as appropriate. This structure is something we can discuss in more detail in March.

4. Barcelona symposium

The Waterbird Society meeting will take place in Barcelona, Spain ~31st Oct – 3rd Nov. Xavier Ruíz, who is organizing the meeting, was at the Veracruz meeting and has given his blessing to the inclusion of a rice/waterbirds symposium as part of the conference. Several people have already expressed interest in participating in the symposium and we plan to draw up a list of speakers to invite over the next 2-3 months as we work on developing an author list for the rice/waterbird review publication.

5. Review publication

Work on the review publication is on-going. Mauro Fasola, of the Università di Pavia, Italy, was also in Veracruz and has agreed to help edit the volume. I have begun contacting authors and have people lined up for about half the proposed chapters. Next week I will send out an updated outline and a list of confirmed authors.

Via Garry and Kathy, we have also been in contact with the President of the Waterbird Society and the Editor of *Waterbirds*, and both are supportive – in principle – of publishing the volume. We need to provide them with a formal proposal and list of authors, which we will do in the next week or two. We also need to develop a budget and determine how to cover the costs of publication. Kathy will take the lead on the funding. In March, I hope we can report back on each of these issues.

6. Best management practices workshops

Catherine has continued to work on a planned BMP workshop in California. In the late fall she submitted a proposal (to a very competitive program) to fund the workshop, but unfortunately, the funding was not forthcoming. There continues to be considerable interest in putting on this workshop, which is currently planned for the fall.

Daniel is also working on this issue and Wetlands International South America is planning to organize the first South American workshop on shorebirds (and other waterbirds) and rice fields in Argentina later this year, thanks to the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences / NFWF support

7. Developing ties with industry

Finally, I wanted to renew the discussion about how we can start to develop better ties with the rice industry and find out what things our group can do to try to promote actual change that benefits bird conservation. We need someone to lead this effort, perhaps drawing on the list-serve members to form a small sub-committee ??? I would like this topic to be the focus of a future meeting.

8. Agenda items for future meetings

Given the length of the list above, I'd like to propose that we focus our March meeting on a discussion of the Barcelona symposium and the review publication, and the May meeting on BMP workshops and the development of ties to industry. If anyone has any other issues they would like us to discuss, please let me know.