



# Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative Update

*November 2008*

Dear WHMSI colleagues:

Since our last update, a lot has happened regarding the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI). Below you will find a summary of recent events. If you have questions or comments about any of these issues, please contact me or any member of the Interim Steering Committee.

Sincerely,  
Herb Raffaele  
Chair of the WHMSI Interim Steering Committee

## *Third Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative Conference*

The Third Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI) Conference took place in Asuncion, Paraguay, July 22-25, 2008. The Conference - hosted by Paraguay's Ministries of Tourism and Environment and the organization Guyra Paraguay - was attended by more than sixty public- and private-sector representatives from twenty-seven countries in the hemisphere and twenty-six NGOs and Conventions.

### **Conference objectives were as follows:**

1. Facilitate coordination among migratory species initiatives, to foster synergies for better collaboration and more efficient use of resources, and to enhance Latin American participation in these initiatives.
2. Update participants on WHMSI activities undertaken since the second WHMSI Conference (Costa Rica, 2006).
3. Refine capacity building workshops funded by the Organization of American States (OAS).
4. Conduct thematic sessions on priority hemispheric issues, including:
  - a. Marine Turtle conservation
  - b. Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program
  - c. How to adapt habitats of importance to migratory species in the face of climate change



The Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) migrates from the sub-Arctic to the tip of South America, more than 15,000 kilometers away - and back.  
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5. Refine the collaborative mechanism under which WHMSI functions.

### **Major updates announced at the conference included:**

- Seven Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed with key international organizations active in the field of migratory species conservation.
- A new WHMSI website is under development.
- The WHMSI mailing list now includes more than 600 individuals interested in the conservation of migratory species in the Western Hemisphere.
- A Western Hemisphere Bird Banding Network has been created.

- The OAS conducted a study on international conventions and regional agreements related to migratory species.

- A new WHMSI logo and brochure on the value of migratory species are currently under development.

Documents related to these updates will be made available via the WHMSI website, and comments and suggestions regarding these initiatives will be taken into consideration by the WHMSI Interim Steering Committee.

In addition, a number of important outcomes were accomplished during the course of the conference. Participants refined the processes for development and implementation of three sub-regional capacity building workshops to be funded by the OAS. The workshops will provide training to key audiences working on the conservation of migratory species in Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.



Leatherback hatchling *Earl Possardt/USFWS*

Three thematic sessions on priority issues for the hemisphere were well attended and resulted in recommendations for follow-up that will be available in the Conference proceedings.

Finally, a process was identified to further develop the WHMSI document "Purpose and Organization" (formerly called Terms of Reference). A number of key issues were addressed, including the nature of WHMSI; strategic planning; resources (including finance); and the importance of constructive, purposeful language rather than concepts.

The English-language version will be further edited and distributed for comment, and a translation group will translate the revised English-language text into Spanish.

## Our Shared Commitment to Migratory Species



Biological link between a Canadian province and the rest of the Hemisphere, as revealed by the wintering grounds of 54 migratory bird species that spend the summer in Saskatchewan (blue). The strength of the link is indicated by the intensity of the grid color.  
Map source: adapted from Partners in Flight

The WHMSI website will serve as an additional communication mechanism for participants to provide input and request clarification regarding this important document.

We are aiming for the proceedings from the WHMSI conference to be distributed before the end of 2008.

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