



17th Annual - Alaska Shorebird Group Meeting
USGS Alaska Science Center – Glenn Olds Building
4210 University Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99503
Thursday, December 8, 2011

MINUTES FROM MEETING

Presentations Given at Meeting

- 8:40-9:00** - Spring Migration in Prince William Sound: Where Are the BLTU's and SURF's? – *Mary Ann Bishop*
- 9:00-9:20** - Avian influenza prevalence in Alaskan shorebirds revisited – *John Pearce and Dan Ruthrauff*
- 9:20-9:40** - Breeding Ecology of Whimbrels on Kanuti NWR – *Chris Harwood*
- 9:40-10:00** - Shorebirds in the Interior? (...not so you'd notice) – *Jeff Mason*
- 10:00-10:20** - Distribution, ecology, and migratory movements of Red Knots breeding in Alaska – *Jim Johnson*
- 10:40-11:00** - Climate, wetland invertebrate communities, and breeding shorebirds – *Kirsty Gurney*
- 11:00-11:20** - Unraveling the biometric complexity of Beringian Dunlin: Sex and subspecies determination at various geographic scales – *River Gates*
- 11:20-11:40** - The early bird gets...to live - factors affecting apparent annual survival rates of *arctica* Dunlin – *Brooke Hill*
- 11:40-12:00** - Tidal influences on food availability to shorebirds on coastal mudflats of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska – *Roy Churchwell*
- 1:30-1:50** - Breeding shorebird science for conservation outcomes in Arctic Alaska - *Joe Liebezeit*
- 1:50-2:10** - Evaluating the importance of the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area within the NPR-A: Predicting shorebird occurrence and abundance – *Rick Lanctot*
- 2:10-2:30** - The Arctic Shorebird Demographics Network: Understanding the mechanisms behind shorebird counts – *Stephen Brown*
- 2:30-2:50** - Predicting Shorebird Habitat on the Arctic Coastal Plain of Alaska – *Sarah Saalfeld*
- 2:50-3:10** – Caribbean sport hunting and the impact on shorebirds – a discussion led by *Chris Harwood*

Announcements and Updates

International Wader Study Group – *Nils Warnock*

- Membership form distributed for IWSG (<http://www.waderstudygroup.org/>)- it's a great organization to be a member of as well as the Stilt (Journal of the Australasian Wader Studies Group; (<http://www.awsg.org.au/stilt.php>)).
- Annual meeting in Scotland this year
 - 15 countries represented, mostly European, few North American including Steve Dinsmore, Deb Buehler, and Guy Morrison
 - Composed of workshops and presentations
 - West Eurasian Africa Flyway population reviews

- Quarterly bulletin is a good place to post notes and news about anything shorebird, including thesis abstracts.

Global Flyway Network and Yellow Sea issues update – Nils Warnock

- GFN was started by Thuenis Piersma to study global avian migration
- Recent conservation focus is on Yellow Sea and consequences of reclamation for shorebirds
- Also encompasses the Pacific Migration Flyway Project---will be finishing final report and papers soon!
- More conservation focus needs to be placed on the YELLOW SEA!!!!!!
- Disappearing quickly by land reclamation efforts for coastal development, mostly oil and gas development.
- Yellow Sea is particularly important due to its size and large shallow sea and mudflats—for migratory birds including the entire world population of BARG *baueri* (AK breeders)
- Studies have documented a decline in mid to long distance migrants who frequent the Yellow Sea during staging, migration and wintering.
- NGOs trying to organize and strategize for conservation of the Yellow Sea.
- Focus has been on coordinating a message to reach the high levels of Chinese government to have an impact on future development planning.
- Alaskan banded Dunlin (and geolocator Dunlin) and BARG have been documented to use the Yellow Sea
- Nil's asked if ASG Executive Council and membership would be in support of would be interested in signing a letter, against building a tidal power plant in South Korea---Membership indicated support for signing the letter as a group.
- Joe Liebezeit suggested that the results of the DUNL geolocator project be used as science based evidence and advocacy for the importance of the Yellow Sea by AK Dunlin populations.
- Susan Savage queried about the US's efforts to expand treaties to gain and facilitate government support
- Nils' also mentioned a good paper to read on the topic of Conservation Ethics in China: Creating a 'Conservation with Chinese Characteristics' Biological Conservation, Volume 144, Issue 5, May 2011, Pages 1347-1355 by R. Edward Grumbine, Jianchu Xu
- Paper suggests that different approaches should be used in China to encourage conservation

East Asian Austral-Asian Flyway Partnership - Rick Lanctot

- Focus is to promote conservation of migratory birds—especially cranes, waterfowl and shorebirds
- Possible meeting in Alaska in 2013

Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group: status, updates and next meeting – Rick Lanctot

- 4th meeting was in Vancouver in early August. About 150 people, lots of presentations, side meetings, field trips
- Organized by Dov Lank and Ron Ydenberg at Simon Fraser University
- 14K left over from the meeting to help support next meeting
- Brian McCaffery provided recorded entertainment from Bethel
- 4K was raised by Silent Auction for student travel
- **5th meeting will be in Santa Marta, Columbia** and organized by Calidris- Richard Johnston. No date has been set yet either March or August.

Arctic Breeding Birds Conditions Survey Annual Forms - Rick Lanctot

- <http://www.arcticbirds.net/>
- Annual summaries of Arctic breeding birds, compiled annually by Russian colleagues, Mikhail Soloviev and Pavel Tomkovich
- Summary includes camp metadata and productivity summaries
- PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR 2011 Field season summary, see website for instructions and forms

Annual summary compilation - *River Gates*

- 10th annual summary- great progress report for our group.
- River handed out 30 hard copies of the 2011 compilations
- # of project abstracts increased from 38 (in 2010) to 43

Position statement on Climate Change - *River Gates & Joe Liebezeit*

- Written to highlight the impact of climate change on shorebirds and included action and priorities for conservation and funding.
- Drafted by a small committee (Joe, River Lee, Dan, etc). Joe and River took the lead in distributing the letter/position statement to foundations and NGOs, and federal and state agencies, respectively. River sent out about 30 letters to USGS, USFWS, BLM, and AK DFG. Joe sent out to 15 foundations.

Alaska Airlines magazine shorebird article? – *River Gates & Joe Liebezeit*

- ASG wants to solicit Alaska Airline magazine to publish a story on Alaska shorebird migration and breeding in the Pacific Flyway.
- The torch has been dropped for 3 years on this initiative
- Brian McCaffery volunteered to take the lead and work on it this winter!!! HORRRAYY!

Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative (CRIMBI) - *Erin Cooper*

- Collective of people conserving waterbirds across the Pacific Flyway
- Not a granting institution
- Sometimes international programs has \$\$
- Last meeting was in October 2010 - Santa Marta, Columbia where representatives from 7 countries were present.
- 2011 projects included the following:
 - Yakutat Tern Festival-chamber supported event
 - New bird festival in 2011
 - Demonstrates the value of birding for a small town
 - Was a huge success in it's first year—focused on seeing Aleutian Tern
 - Pacific Flyways Shorebird Survey
 - Focused on generating population estimates from winter population numbers
 - 10 years of annual surveys needed for analysis
 - Will be conducted by Bird Studies Canada/ and PRBO Conservation Science
 - Position recently funded for 3 years of coordination and to expand to Washington and Oregon through the USFWS Survey, Monitoring and Assessment Program (contingent on Congress giving USFWS a budget)
 - Mimics International Shorebird Survey (ISS) but on the West Coast
 - International Biologist Exchange Program
 - Very successful in 2010 and 2011
 - Looking for project to share a tech for a few weeks during the summer.

- People interested in hosting an international biologist should contact Erin
- Wetlands Live TV Program
 - This year's TV program will focus on the ecology of Wetlands across the Pacific Rim and includes migratory bird populations from the Pacific and the East Asian Australasian Flyways
 - Age group 4 – 8 grades
 - Erin requested that interested people submit short videos (3 mins.) from this summer that include interviews of biologist, etc explaining their work and why it is important for wetlands conservation, focus on opportunities to conserve wildlife not political agendas.
- Copper River Shorebird Festival first week of May 2012- Mr. Whitekeys will be the Keynote Speaker from Alaska Audubon and the festival's theme will focus on the accomplishments of the AK Audubon.

Update on BLM IAP/EIS plan - *Cara Staab*

- Working on developing an integrated activity plan based on results from last year's scoping process
- The BLM is looking for people to submit constructive solutions for developing the petroleum reserve.
- More information is always needed to help evaluate best management practices
- Please submit data or reports if you have them for the NPRA
- Final EIS will be done next Dec 2012 (if all goes well) and a draft will be available for review and comment in April 2012 that will include an effects analysis with alternatives.

Shorebirds in Beringia - *Martin Robards*

- Wildlife Conservation Society wanted to increase its presence in the Arctic beyond AK
- Starting program in Beringia to create a mutual understanding from conservation and science in the Russian Arctic
- Including 2 field camps in Chukotka, one being on the Chuan Delta and the other at Belyaka spit. Breeding bird research data goes back to the 1970s at the Chaun Delta site.
- Began implementing parts of the Arctic Shorebird Demographics Network (ASDN) protocols on Chuan Delta in 2011 and will work with ASDN steering committee to expand protocols in 2012

Update on North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) - *Bill Streever*

- Website: <http://www.northslope.org/>
- Set up by Congress and requires Department of Interior agencies and state of AK agencies to work together to develop resources on the North Slope
- Granted 1.5 million/year
- Group composed of oversight committee who are head of the agencies and meet annually
- Science and technical committee (STC) provides guidance to Oversight Committee
- STC created white papers (on website), short summaries on various topics~ 15 papers

Project/products/accomplishments

- Synthesis paper of above mentioned 15 white papers included 24 co-authors. This paper was recently published in *Arctic* (Vol. 64 (3) – Sept. 2011).
- Created map of potential development and climate scenarios for planning purposes
- Identifying gaps of information

- Coordination of long term monitoring
- Improved communication including Conference in Barrow in March 2011 including 130 attendees
- Identified Migratory Bird Research priorities including
 - Improve monitoring before, after and during development
 - Inventory of key already existing data sets
 - Marine oil spill response
- Next meeting early January

Pacific Coast Joint Venture update – Lynn Fuller

- Primarily a habitat joint venture for the Pacific Flyway
- Protect bird habitat, will protect bird populations
- Protecting lands through conservation easements, acquisitions and leases, outreach, some science research, support activities of land trust
- Recent work included 48 K acres on Knik Island in a conservation easement
- Website: <http://www.pcjv.org/alaska/> hosts a lot of great news, bird conservation, and updates
- PCJV also updates strategic plans and wants to integrate conservation activities in to plan
- Small amount of money/year to support project mostly focused on habitat protection
- If you want to submit a research or monitoring proposal make sure it has clear link to habitat protection—Request for proposal will be out in April.
- Joint Ventures are partnerships and are open to feedback about setting priorities and actions.
- Joe asked if they would consider supporting funds to complete a revision of the Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan – Lynn said “yes”.

5:15–5:30 - Election of Officers

We elected Dan Ruthrauff and Brian McCaffery as new officers! Thanks to Stephen Brown and Erin Cooper

5:30 – Adjourn