



19<sup>th</sup> Annual - Alaska Shorebird Group Meeting  
USGS-Anchorage  
4210 University Dr.  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2013  
Meeting Notes

Find all abstracts, presentations and reports at:

[http://www.fws.gov/alaska/mbmp/mbm/shorebirds/working\\_group.htm](http://www.fws.gov/alaska/mbmp/mbm/shorebirds/working_group.htm)

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Welcome and opening announcements, Roy Churchwell, Chair, ASG

Talks (see full agenda at back of this document)

Announcements and updates

**International Wader Study Group – Dan Ruthrauff**

<http://www.waderstudygroup.org/>

The International Wader Study Group meeting was in late September in Germany and was combined with the Waterbird Society meeting. The week-long conference included talks, field trips and workshops. One highlight was the *Numeniini* (godwits and curlews) workshop at the meeting. It was organized by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Nicola Crockford primarily), and they plan to publish summaries of the proceedings in the near future. The North American representatives at the meetings had strong Alaskan connections. The International Wader Study Group is looking at how to work together with Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group in the future.

**Global Flyway Network – Lee Tibbitts**

Global Flyway Network website: <http://globalflywaynetwork.com.au>

The Global Flyway Network (GFN) is a partnership between researchers worldwide who are devoted to long term — usually demographic — work on long distance migrating shorebirds. The partnership aims to build on the strengths of comparative demographic shorebird studies worldwide, with the aim to understand and analyze the factors determining shorebird numbers in a rapidly changing world. In practice it also tries to fill major gaps in coverage of fieldwork of the world's most threatened shorebird flyways.

**Yellow Sea update – Lee Tibbitts**

[http://www.fws.gov/alaska/mbmp/mbm/shorebirds/working\\_group.htm](http://www.fws.gov/alaska/mbmp/mbm/shorebirds/working_group.htm)

Issues: Unprecedented loss and degradation of wintering and stopover areas important to Alaska shorebirds.

**What can ASG do?**

- Engage more frequently with conservation and research groups throughout the flyway. WF-China, BirdLife International China, Wildlife conservation Assoc.
- Send them a letter along with the ASG summary and point out our shared interests?
- Should we join the Partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway?
  - The EAAF Partnership is a unique initiative that aims to advance the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway while addressing the social and economic needs of communities dependent on these wetlands and waterbirds.
- Review the Partnership document and if it fits us, agree to it and join the EAAF Partnership.
- We would be in the company of entities like BirdLife Australia and the Wildlife Conservation Association.

### **East Asian Austral-Asian Flyway Partnership – Rick Lanctot**

<http://www.eaaflyway.net/>

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) aims to protect migratory waterbirds, their habitat and the livelihoods of people dependent upon them. Partners include National Governments, Inter-Governmental Organizations, International Non-governmental Organizations, and International Private Enterprise, which agree to endorse and support the objectives and actions under this Partnership.

- The Seventh Meeting of the Partners of the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) was held in Anchorage and Seward, Alaska, on 10-14th June 2013, hosted by EAAFP Partner, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.
- The Chinese government is opposed to some coastal development. Local governments have independently decided to build causeways, sometimes illegally and unnecessarily, to promote the local officials. The projects with the highest impacts to the tidal areas include building sea walls and then filling in the area behind them.
- First Alaska site in the EAAF was added to the EAAFP. Adding an Alaska site to the network shows how interconnected sites are along the entire flyway and the importance of Alaska as the breeding grounds for many of the species that migrate along the flyway.
- US Biologists can potentially make a big impact in the flyway. As a visiting scientist in other countries, your opinion seems to be valued more highly than the local biologists.
- In order for conservation to occur it has to have value to humans (economic, religious, etc.)
- The World Wildlife Fund has taken on the shorebird role in China.
- Is there any US organization that the Alaska Shorebird Group can interact with to promote our issues within the EAAFP?

### **Tasks**

- Lee Tibbits and Dan Ruthrauff are going to look into the issue. If this meets our goals for ASG we can write a letter.

- Bob Gill has previously prepared a position paper. We can pull that out and update.
- Who are the targets? State Department, USFWS Director, Secretary of the Interior.....
- Bird Groups in the Australasian flyway get better results from approaching companies. Companies have more power on the ground. Direct economic pressure to companies reclaiming the wetlands. Some of these companies are aware that they need to work on their image (Rio Tinto). If we don't say anything the development will continue at the current pace.
- Two things that motivate people, economics and human health. If we can tie this letter into human health it may make a bigger impact.
- Lee Tibbits has the partnership agreement and it is available for review.

**Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group – Rick Lanctot and other WHSG attendees**

Website: <http://www.calidris.org.co/whsg/home.html>

The Fifth Meeting of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group (WHSG) was held in the Caribbean city of Santa Marta, Colombia, from 17 – 21 September 2013, with 150 registered participants. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a platform for those interested in shorebirds to share their advances in research and conservation projects and to join collaborative initiatives throughout the Western Hemisphere.

At the end there was a meeting on the direction of WHSG.

- Within the US and Canada the shorebird community seems really fractured, PRISM, WHSRN, research, outreach, etc. There isn't one entity that represents shorebirds in general.
- A discussion was held to determine if the group should become more formal, and perhaps establish an executive committee.
- The group also indicated a better method was needed for getting and receiving money. How can people donate money? A Tax deductible arm to raise money for meetings and travel.
  - Jim Johnson and Brad Andres are starting the Shorebird Conservation Fund.
- Are we progressing down the road like the International Wader Study Group (IWSG)? The Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group does not want to start its own journal but would rather coordinate with the IWSG that produces the Wader Study Group Bulletin.
- The PanAmerican Shorebird Banding Program is revising the color flag banding scheme for shorebirds. This new system would group countries in Latin America so that each region would have a single color flag as opposed to two flags as is the current system. There are other changes too related to alpha-numeric markings on flags.

The next meeting is in September 2015 in Virginia. The following meeting in 2017 is slated to be held in Paraguay with BirdLife international.

### **Caribbean/South America Shorebird Hunting**

Roy Churchill: Audrey Taylor has been travelling down to these areas. After the satellite-equipped whimbrels were shot in Guadeloupe a year ago there has been extensive public input and some hunting regulations have been adopted locally.

Chris Harwood: Bag limits have been established in Guadalupe. Other areas have new regulations.

### **CRIMBI – Erin Cooper**

#### *Wetlands LIVE*

WetlandsLIVE: A Distance Learning Adventure was a virtual field trip learning experience offered through free webcasts that provided a year-long focus on the functions of wetlands, threats to conservation, and the connectedness of global wetlands. This program was designed for children in grades 4 to 8 and their educators throughout the Western Hemisphere. WetlandsLIVE featured standards-correlated resources for educators, a dynamic website that served as the project platform, along with a series of engaging webcasts in English and Spanish, which focused on the wetlands of the Pacific Rim.

The program reached 140k children during the 2012/2013 broadcast. The WetlandsLIVE programs continue to be re-broadcast and are available on the Prince William Network site (English and Spanish).

[www.pwnet.org](http://www.pwnet.org)

### **Arctic Shorebird Demographics Network – Rick Lanctot**

<https://www.manomet.org/ASDN>

The ASDN currently has 16 sites. Ten core sites collect all ASDN data. So far, 4 years of data have been collected. In 2013, 2,020 nests were located and 1231 birds were banded. Much of the work is highlighted in the ASG summary.

### **PCJV – Lynn Fuller**

<http://pcjv.org/alaska/>

The PCJV is currently in the midst of a re-assessment. The PCJV has a new coordinator and new members on the management board. The main question addressed by the PCJV is: What is the role of the PCJV in comparison to other Joint Ventures?

In the past the PCJV has focused mainly on working with land trust groups for habitat conservation. The re-assessment will most likely change the focus areas for the PCJV.

The PCJV will focus on habitat priority, outreach and communications, and habitat protections. The new PCJV focus will reach across bird communities and habitats. Communication will continue to occur across states and internationally.

There is a meeting this spring that will include the PCJV regional issues and priorities. A group is coming up from Portland to join the PCJV for the spring meeting.

PCJV continues to publish its newsletter and stories can be published through PCJV.

This newsletter has a wide distribution and includes other Joint Ventures across the country. A few examples of past articles are: Audubon Kenai Peninsula Decision Tool and Wings over Western Waters (an initiative between Alaska and Colorado Land Trusts to create tools for Land Trusts throughout the US).

*Discussion:*

It was suggested that the ASG work with PCJV communication director to produce a Yellow Sea story.

**Alaska Wildlife Action Plan – Dave Tessler**

[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=species.wa\\_pabout](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=species.wa_pabout)

ADFG is updating the Alaska Wildlife Action Plan. The previous name for the plan was the CWCS. The plan covers multiple taxa throughout the State and includes shorebirds. The plan provides extensive information (and thus is a large document) and has been used to provide funding for numerous projects across the State. This plan revision will reference the existing ASG plan. ASG members will then have an opportunity to review. One change that is expected is that the species list in the Appendix will change. This document completion deadline to be turned into the USFWS is October 24<sup>th</sup>.

Additionally: ADF&G is looking for people to apply for the Revision Wage Grade 3 two year position.

**Alaska Species Ranking System (ASRS) – Dave Tessler**

[http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu/zoology/wildlife-diversity/asr\\_s/](http://aknhp.uaa.alaska.edu/zoology/wildlife-diversity/asr_s/)

The ASRS includes all taxa and defines priorities.

It is now available on the Alaska Natural Heritage website.

The ASRS still includes a large number of species. This is a living document and species will most like move positions over time as one the ground conditions change.

**Arctic Breeding Birds Conditions Survey Annual Forms – Rick Lanctot**

Rick encouraged people to submit information from any arctic site on the birds and their breeding conditions. See <http://www.arcticbirds.net/> Such data have been collected since 1988 from many arctic sites across the circumpolar arctic. Thus, collectively this information provides a good indication of on-the-ground conditions.

ASDN folks are encouraged to submit data using forms on the website.

**Alaska Airlines magazine shorebird article – Caroline Van Hemert**

Caroline has a query to the Alaska Airlines magazine on publishing an article on Bristle Thighed Curlews considering that it's a great connection between Alaska and Hawaii.

**Annual summary compilation (summary and potential changes) – Erin Cooper and Rick Lanctot**

We had 38 summaries and 90 investigators. Due to the last minute nature of contributors, Google Docs may be a good choice for submissions next year.

*Summaries: Clumping or Splitting*

Over time people clumped data or split their summaries out.

ASDN: for example had multiple articles but could have had one summary. There are benefits to both sides.

### **Discussion:**

- Benefits: helps people get an overview of the comprehensive work throughout the state.
- Guidelines: Do we need to set different parameters?
- Larger programs: In some cases, a summary is written with participants adding brief description of their project.
- Electronic Age: people can find these documents on the ASG site through searches. It helps get the word out on your projects. These documents are also a nice history of what the ASG has accomplished.
- This year, we added a new section on publications of shorebirds that occurred in 2013 (either already published or in press). We could consider adding publications in review as well as grey literature. If we add reports they should be discoverable on the web.
- BPIF/Raptor Group is developing a database that investigators can use to enter their own summaries. May be a good solution for those who have a hard time submitting summaries.
- Google Docs may be a good first step as we don't have someone as a data steward.

### **Tasks**

- Erin Cooper will explore the option of a Google Docs site for next year's submissions

## **ASG Planning Discussion**

### **Update on the Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan**

After the 2012 Alaska Shorebird Group meeting, each BCR group reviewed the plan. Only BCR 5 felt that the plan needed to be updated. There are still some issues that need to be sorted out in BCR 5 on edit suggestions. We discussed whether the shorebird plan should be a living document and groups that feel that an update is needed can submit potential changes to a web document.

### **Pacific Flyway Business Plan**

A group focused on the Pacific Flyway is developing a business plan that is modeled after the recently completed Atlantic Flyway Plan.

#### *Business Plan versus a Conservation Plan*

Business Plan strategies differ from standard conservation plans by focusing on a set of well-developed actions that link funding to specific, measurable conservation outcomes, rather than producing a long list of tasks.

Atlantic Plan Example: Increase shorebird population levels by 10-15% by 2020 at a cost of xx dollars. The Atlantic Plan has seven conservation strategies and five current focal threats.

- Should we write a business plan for Alaska?
- How are they going to link the funding sources to this plan. There seems to be a disconnect as to who hold the purse strings and who wants the work to be done. This may be used in granting proposal such as NMBCA, NFWF others....
- These flyway business plans may take the place of species specific plans.

### **What is ASG in the future?**

A key question to the group is: Do we continue to only work on meetings or do we work on a group project? ASDN is an example of a collaborative project. An example would be the collaborative project by Colleen Handel from BPIF. This was not discussed in detail and this question will be brought up in subsequent discussions.

### **Election of Officers**

ASG office positions up for election include:

Dan Ruthrauff (executive committee)

Brian McCaffery (executive committee)

Dan will stay in his position if needed. Dan was nominated by Roy Churchwell and seconded by Colleen Handell. Passed with a vote.

Brian McCaffery has declined to renew his position

Lynne Fuller was nominated by Brian Logan and seconded by Susan Savage.

Passed with a vote.

### **Adjourn**

Bob Gill and Colleen Handel kindly offered up their house for a formal dinner party for all shorebird enthusiasts. This gathering was held in the evening.

### **Meeting Attendance:**

Kelly Overduijn

Megan Boldenow

Rick Lanctot

Debbie Nigro

Abby Powell

Caroline Van Hemert

Colleen Handel

Kristy Gurney

Dan Ruthrauff

Jillian Jablonski

Nick Hajoukovich

Kristin Sowl  
Brian Robinson  
Chris Harwood  
Lucan DeCicco  
John Haddix  
Lynn Fuller  
Diane Granfors  
Carole Jorgensen  
Cheryl Carrothers  
Brian Logan  
Julie Hagelin  
Brooke Carney  
David Tessler  
Travis Booms  
Chris Barger  
Susan Savage  
Lee Tibbitts  
Donna Dewhurst  
Audrey Taylor  
Marian Snively  
John Pearce  
Erin Cooper



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## FINAL AGENDA

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- 8:30 – Welcome and opening announcements, Roy Churchwell, Chair, ASG
- 9:00 – 10:40 Talks
- 9:00 – Erin Cooper- Connecting shorebird festivals from Alaska to Argentina
  - 9:20 – Kirsty Gurney – Phenological advancement in arctic-breeding shorebirds: relative importance of snow melt, vegetation, and predation
  - 9:40 – Roy Churchwell – Shorebird use of foraging habitat during the post-breeding season the coast of the Beaufort Sea
  - 10:00 – Tess Forstner & Audrey Taylor – Two new Alaskan shorebird projects: Birds “n” Bogs citizen science program in Anchorage and NPS Seward Peninsula postbreeding shorebird surveys
  - 10:20 – Brooke Carney –  $\delta^{15}N$  and  $\delta^{13}C$  as proxy for diet of black oystercatchers (*Haematopus bachmani*) in the northern Gulf of Alaska
- 10:40 – 11:00 Refreshments Break
- 11:00 – 12:00 Talks
- 11:00 – Sarah Saalfeld – Conservative and opportunistic settlement strategies in Arctic-breeding shorebirds
  - 11:20 – Dan Ruthrauff – Fast food: foraging adaptations of Rock Sandpipers in Cook Inlet during winter
  - 11:40 – Brian Robinson – Effects of diet and provisioning rates on productivity of Black Oystercatchers in Kenai Fjords National Park
- 12:00 -1:30 Lunch Break
- 1:30 – 3:30 - Announcements and updates
- International Wader Study Group – Dan Ruthrauff
  - Global Flyway Network and Yellow Sea issues update – Lee Tibbitts
  - East Asian Austral-Asian Flyway Partnership - Rick Lanctot
  - Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group: – Rick Lanctot, and other attendees to the Vth Meeting
  - Caribbean/South America Shorebird Hunting – Audrey Taylor
  - Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative (CRIMBI) - Erin Cooper
  - Arctic Shorebird Demographics Network – Rick Lanctot
  - Pacific Coast Joint Venture update – Lynn Fuller
  - Alaska Wildlife Action Plan – David Tessler
  - Alaska Species Ranking System (ASRS) – David Tessler
  - Arctic Breeding Birds Conditions Survey Annual Forms - Rick Lanctot
  - Alaska Airlines magazine shorebird article – Caroline Van Hemert

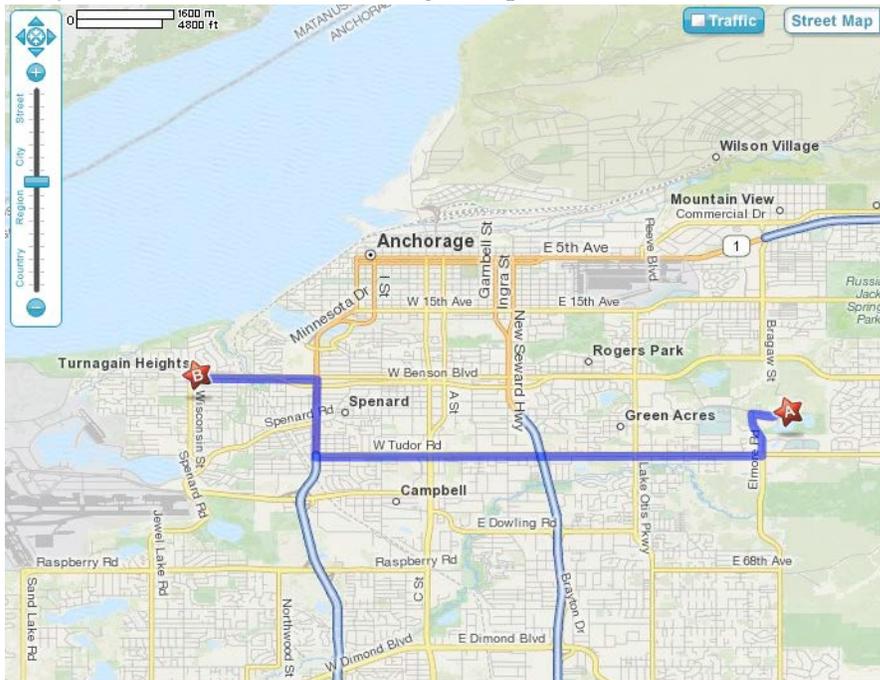
- Annual summary compilation (summary and potential changes) – Erin Cooper and Rick Lanctot
- 3:30 – 3:45: Refreshments break  
 3:45 – 4:30: ASG Planning Discussion
- Update on the Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan
  - Pacific Flyway Business Plan
  - What is ASG in the future?
- 4:30 – 5:00 - Election of Officers  
 Nomination and Election of ASG office positions up for election:  
 Dan Ruthrauff (executive committee)  
 Brian McCaffery (executive committee)  
 5:00 – Adjourn  
 6:00 Dinner at Bob and Colleen's

**Alaska Shorebird Group Annual Social**  
**Hosted by: Colleen Handel and Bob Gill**

Food will be provided but donations will be needed to cover costs. Please bring your own beverages.

Address is 3014 Knik Avenue (B on map)(phone 248-0684).

From the USGS Science Center (A on map), take Tudor Road west to Minnesota. Turn right on Minn. to Northern Lights. Left on Northern Lights heading west. Take NL to the 3rd stop light and turn right onto Turnagain Parkway. The first cross street is Knik. Turn right on Knik. We are the 2nd house on the right (2 story, redwood sided with large carport).



We can fit 3-4 cars in the driveway with ample street parking, but urge folks to car pool if they can.