



18th Annual - Alaska Shorebird Group Meeting
Captain Cook Hotel
Aft Deck
Anchorage, Alaska 99503
Monday, October 22, 2012
MEETING MINUTES

Welcome and opening announcements, *Joe Liebezeit, Chair, ASG*

Email listserver: To sign up for the Alaska Shorebird Group Listserver and information on how to post notices to the listserve

<https://www.fws.gov/lists/listinfo/ak.shorebird>

Alaska Shorebird Group webpage (hosted by the USFWS):

Includes information on executive committee, annual summaries, annual minutes of meetings, plans, etc.

http://alaska.fws.gov/mbsp/mbm/shorebirds/working_group.htm

Alaska Shorebird Conservation plan location

<http://alaska.fws.gov/mbsp/mbm/shorebirds/plans.htm>

International Wader Study Group – Nils Warnock

- *International Wader Study Group Bulletin is a great shorebird literature venue, relevant issues to AK an shorebirds in general, membership is encouraged*
- *Also consider the Stilt, which focuses on the East Asia-Australasian Flyway and shorebirds*
- *Last annual meeting in France in September 2012*
- *Next meeting in Germany in Sept 2013 followed by the Waterbird meeting. There will be a special workshop on the Numenii group of shorebirds and the Eurasian Curlew*

Global Flyway Network and Yellow Sea issues update – Nils Warnock

- ASG Exec committee submitted comments on tidal reclamation project on the Yellow Sea last spring 2012
- Yellow sea reclamation projects are of conservation concern especially for AK popn of BARG
- IUCN recently passed a motion (#32), (both Korea and China signed on) that focuses attention on Asian tidal reclamation, Bird life international was instrumental in motion.
- Global Flyway Network-focuses on Bar-tailed Godwits in Australia and Russia-breeding populations. There is also lots of work on Great Knot populations stopping in the Yellow sea. Beginning to work on demographic analyses

East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAF)- Rick Lanctot

- Consortium of government and non-government groups who are stakeholders in EAAF

- June 8 – 14, 2013 Flyway partnership meeting will be held at Seward, AK
- Doug Alcorn, the USFWS rep to the EAAF partnership, is retiring so we may not have a representative
- Group may consider writing a letter to send to FWS to suggest or nominate a replacement.
- YKD Refuge was designated as an EAAF network site in September 2012.

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

- 5th meeting Sept 17 – 21, 2013 in Santa Marta Colombia.
- Focus on range wide and full life cycle collaborative work, objective to network and meet international collaborators.
- Looking for funds for travel award program
- Bi-lingual translation (English/Spanish)
- Side meeting e.g .WHSRN, writing skills workshop, color banding coordination
- Calidris (<http://calidris.org.co/>) is hosting

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

- This is a collaborative partnership that includes several Pacific Flyway Forest Service regions and the Forest Service International Program. CRIMBI also lots of other partners such as Duck's Unlimited, Audubon, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- CRIMBI promotes meaningful bird conservation work across the Pacific Flyway with a recent focus on range-wide surveys of Western Sandpipers, which is being coordinated by PRBO. This project is called "The Migration Shorebird Project".
 - This work is primarily focused on winter counts,
- Other migratory survey work is also being coordinated by PRBO in CA, OR, and WA under the title of "The Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey". This effort strives to combine existing winter/migration survey work being conducted throughout this region into a meaningful analysis that would allow changes in bird numbers and distribution to be evaluated between now and when prior surveys were conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s.
- The group discussed getting citizen science projects in other areas of Alaska, modeled partly after the work at Kachemak Bay that has taken place for 4 years now.
 - Erin indicated Cordova was considering a spring "pulse" survey in the coming spring
- Wetlands Live- 3 webcasts that focus on different topics: 1st Vancouver, what is a wetland, 2nd Panama how are wetlands connected. 3rd Cordova: how children are connected to wetlands. Live broadcasts
- Post pictures of your site of the Facebook page for Wetlands LIVE
- Next CRIMBI meeting is 14-15 November 2012 in San Diego

Update on BLM EIS plan -*Debbie Nigro*

- Integrated activity plan completed

- Preferred alternative have been made public and a record of decision scheduled for Dec 17, 2012.
- Preferred alternative (B-2) may change with the final EIS. Public comment period is closed.
- Maps and information is on the BLM website.
- ASG wrote letter of support last summer and submitted comments in support of Alternative B.

Arctic Shorebird Demographics Network update – River Gates

- Goal is to collect demographic data on a large range of shorebirds over a large geographic area to inform where in the annual cycle populations may be limited.
- The network uses standard protocols across the circumpolar arctic
- The 3rd of 5 field seasons were completed in 2012, 14 sites of which 3 were new in 2012: 2 in Russia and 1 in southern Canada. In 2012, about 1500 nests were found, 1200 birds were banded, many chicks were banded, and various samples were collected to assess avian health and contaminants (e.g., avian malaria, methyl mercury, gut microbiota),
- The network also focuses on migratory connectivity issues using genetics, stable isotopes, and geolocators.

Shorebirds in Beringia – Megan Boldenow/Martin Robards

- A new ASDN site was added at the Chuan Delta, Iopetchen island, 17 June– 11 July, Diana Soloveyva
- 3 ecotones, Noticed earlier hatching for dunlin and other species: ~2 weeks earlier than North Slope. 14 species shorebirds, 37 species birds, perhaps saw a Steller Sea Eagle, record would be a range extension.
- Belayka Spit may be a site next year, used to be a stronghold of Spoon-billed Sandpiper but no observations in the last few years. Very difficult access, few little resources for research and conservation.
- The second new ASDN site was on the Taimyr Peninsula in western Russia (Mikhail Soloviev)

Pacific Coast Joint Venture update – Lynn Fuller

- Brad Bales is the new regional coordinator. Lynn indicated there was a diversity of interests for a large regional area (AK to CA and Hawaii), and that the PCJF was reassessing their mission and direction. They will be seeking input for the PCJV in the future.
- The PCJV is a public private partnership that works to implement the conservation goals of the International and Pacific Coast Joint Ventures: PCJV focus on habitat conservation for birds, outreach and education, some research, and communications.
- The PCJV has a grant program of about \$25 – 45K /year. Previous projects have included providing funds for planning, wetlands live, signage for nesting colonies, capacity building for upper Cook Inlet conservation. They anticipate a RFP during late winter – early spring. See website pcjv.org, monthly update email.

- Lynn talked about two recent projects: the Knik islands project for fish and Campbell Creek conservation project.
- There may be \$5K available for shorebird outreach project. Please contact Lynn if you have ideas
- The PCJV is giving two presentations during the formal Alaska Bird Conference.

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

- The goal is to collect data on birds and environmental conditions during the breeding season throughout the Circumpolar Arctic
- Data has been collected for the past 15 years or so and is available on their website.
- Data submission includes 2 forms that include a site description and species abundance and occurrence
- Easy to participate and complete, takes about 4 – 6 hours for your first submission, and 1-2 hours thereafter.
- The group produces an annual report compiling data from throughout the Arctic that is available on their website. Data can be downloaded easily.

Annual summary compilation - *River Gates*

- No printed summaries this year to save resources, some copies made for special requests.
- Number of summaries is down by ~ 20 %, and the primary groups submitting data have switched from federal agencies to Non-governmental conservation groups.

Alaska Airlines magazine shorebird article - *Brian McCaffery*

- No work has been done on this project to date. Carolyn Van Hemert agreed to take over project for coming year.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONS:

What is the progress on shorebird color band and alpha flag coordination? Mary Anne Bishop asked and Rick Lanctot responded.

- Trying to coordinate alpha and color marking throughout the Western Hemisphere
- Some species have coordinators (e.g. DUNL) but many do not.
- A North American Committee was formed following the 2011 Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group meeting in Vancouver. The group is chaired by Lesley-Anne Howes, and staffed with Bruce Peterjohn, Rick Lanctot, David Mizrahi, Brad Andres and a few others)
- Lesley has been also meeting with Latin American representatives to discuss how to deal with situations where the number of engraved codes is limited, one option is to change current designation of country flag colors
- Slow progress to make decisions
- Planning a working session in Colombia to clarify issues

What is the future of the ASDN once the 5-year study is completed? Martin Robards

Rick Lanctot responded that the ASDN coordination committee could not commit to facilitating data collection beyond the five-year period but that many of the sites were long-term sites and it was likely that many sites would continue collecting data regardless. The ASDN coordination committee was now focusing on raising funds to continue the Logistic Coordinator position and to hire a research associate to conduct data analysis

Susan Savage provided the following update on Bristol Bay shorebird project

EPA said that Pebble Mine would damage wildlife resources. Susan provided much information for this assessment, much of it was from shorebird migration surveys of the Bristol Bay area in prior years conducted by Bob Gill, Colleen Handel, and others (see summary in ASG annual summaries)

Planning discussion for updating BCRs for Alaska Shorebird Conservation Plan (ASCP)

- Joe Liebezeit provided a summary of why a revision might be necessary.
 - Last revision was 5 years ago.
 - Lots of important new work that needs to be integrated.
 - Existing action items are outdated and new ones need to be inserted.
- Nils Warnock indicated the ASCP is very useful for Alaska Audubon, and the population estimates and important sites were used in their important bird area designations.
- To accomplish a rewrite would require participation of ASG members from all the BCRs
- The group discussed what should be changed or updated, and whether there was a need to revise the conservation plan?
- Discussion
 - The group reviewed the layout of the ASCP
 - Part 1 general shorebird survey in AK, general issues for AK shorebirds
 - Part 2 BCR specific recommendation and action items
 - Revise information that needs to be updated such as accomplished tasks, integrate new info. Once this is accomplished, then you need one person to look at entire plan and evaluate it for consistency across all BCRs.
 - Colleen - Handel suggested we consider a section or “formal document” that can be updated more frequently rather than revising the entire plan. Things may be out dated by the time a 5 year revision is complete. It is a big undertaking to revise the entire plan. Appendix that is updated frequently with action items. Web based version?
 - Last revision was a major task with committees for each BCR, a contractor to compile, and a final copy editing.
 - Rick Lanctot and others - Plan is used to justify current work and projects for research.
 - Lynn Fuller suggested easily accessible and geographic-specific conservation action items are useful for her work
 - Lee Tibbitts and Dan Ruthrauff compiled information from the group during the 2011 Alaska Shorebird Group meeting on the status of action items (i.e., what

has been accomplished). They were surprised that much had been done in particular BCRs.

- Updating the current plan would likely be easier than the v2 revision
- In general there is support to update the plan with different opinions on how to update the plan. A revised v3 or an “appendix version” were two options considered.
- Could the PCJV fund the revision? Likely can support an update.
- Last revision cost about \$10 – 20 K, includes printing cost. This revision would be cheaper, especially if no printing was done.
- Susan-Savage: Same people working on Boreal PIF plan revision will now be available to assist (currently wrapping up the BPIF plan).
- Rick Lanctot suggested compiling AK literature as part of the annual summary if people wanted frequent updates that went beyond the plan updates.
- Nils Warnok- suggested frequently updated bullet point “living document” in a web-based version, with updates completed by ASG members.
- Discussion ensued about what is the most useful format that will have the highest yield.
- Joe Liebezeit advocated for keeping the update relatively simple and an annual update to an Exec Committee member or members.
- Audrey Taylor suggested that we need a timeline for completion to reach our commonly agreed upon plan.
- Colleen Handel indicated that a balance had to be made to make the plan both general and specific to have the most utility for various users.
- Deb Nigro queried the group about who the audience was for this product?
- Mary Anne Bishop indicated funding agencies often require reference to conservation plans to justify research studies.
- Deb Nigro indicated BLM requires review of literature and conservation plans to create EIS and land management recommendations.
- Megan Boldenow uses the ASCP as a “jumping off point” for projects and ideas in habitat conservation projects.
- Nils Warnock suggested that a way forward was to do an evaluation of the current plan and assess whether changes were really needed.
- **Decided to break into BCR committees and to review the necessity of revising the BCR sections of the plan (focusing on Action Items)**
- **Complete review of BCR due: Dec 1, 2012**
 - Present info to Exec committee. Committee will summarize and decide if a revision is necessary.
- Formed committees that will take the lead on reviewing portions of the document (e.g. BCRs). These same committees could potentially be the same folks to do the revisions if the executive committee decides to go that route
 - BCR1: Aleutian, Bering sea islands
 - Chair: Dan Ruthrauff. Carolyn Van Helmert
 - BCR2: Western AK:

- Chair: River Gates. Kristine Sowl, Susan Savage, Wally Johnson and Philip Bruner
- BCR3: Arctic coastal plain and mountains
 - Chair: Rick Lanctot. Joe Liebezeit and Roy Churchwell
- BCR4: Interior boreal forest
 - Chair: Jeff Mason. Audrey Taylor and Chris Harwood
- BCR5: Coastal rainforest
 - Chair: Mary Anne Bisho. Erin Cooper and Melissa Cady

Election of ASG officers:

The following members were elected to the ASG Exec Committee and will take over responsibilities at the end of the year.

Chair- Roy Churchwell (roychurchwell@hotmail.com)

Secretary- Erin Cooper (ecooper@fs.fed.us)

Executive Committee- Kelly Overduijn (koverduijn@usgs.gov)

Executive Committee- Kirsty Gurney (kegurney@alaska.edu)

Executive Committee - Audrey Taylor (artaylor@uaa.alaska.edu)

Thanks were paid to Joe Liebezeit (past Chair) and River Gates (past Secretary) for their service during the past 2 years.

Meeting Attendees

Name	Affiliation	Email
John Terenzi	USGS - ASC	terenzi@usgs.gov
Susan Savage	USFWS - AK Peninsula/Becharof NWR	susan_savage@fws.gov
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