



Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative Update

July 2005

Since the Western Hemisphere Migratory Bird Conference took place in October, 2003, in Termas de Puyehue, Chile, the Interim Steering Committee has continued to move forward in the implementation of the Conference's recommendations as well as preparations for the next hemispheric conference. Please find below an update on efforts that have taken place since last fall.

Sincerely,

Herb Raffaele

Chair of the Interim Steering Committee

Name of the Initiative

The Interim Steering Committee (ISC) has reached a consensus to use the name "Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI)" until a permanent decision is made at the next hemispheric conference.

Draft Structure of the Initiative

In August 2004, the ISC drafted a document describing the vision, mission, guiding principles, objectives, Steering Committee structure, membership, and other elements of the initiative, based upon guidance from the Chile conference. Last fall, letters went out to all of the environmental ministers of the hemisphere inviting them to review the document. These letters were signed jointly by Honorable Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, and Herb Raffaele as Chair of the ISC. Concomitantly with these letters all governmental wildlife directors were contacted to inform

them of developments so that they might play an active role in guiding the process domestically. To further engage the environmental ministers with regard to WHMSI, Carlos Manuel Rodriguez has consulted with a number of them at various meetings he has attended. Countries which have responded, including Canada, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago, have all sent positive feedback.

Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative Slide Presentation

The Interim Steering Committee, with generous assistance from Garry Donaldson (Canadian Wildlife Service), has developed a power point presentation that can be downloaded from the WHMSI website and used to explain the initiative. The WHMSI website is currently posted at <http://international.fws.gov/>. Click on Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference Homepage for an English version or Conferencia del

Hemisferio Occidental para Especies Migratorias for a Spanish version. (We continue to explore ways to make the WHMSI website independent from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website.) We welcome comments on the slide presentation.

Tool Matrix

At the Chile conference, country representatives identified the top wildlife conservation priorities for their nations. The Tool Matrix is a document designed to provide information on available assistance and existing gaps in addressing these conservation needs. The non-governmental organization Rainforest Alliance (RA) will be structuring this document as a user-friendly, bilingual, and searchable database, modeled after their Eco-Index. RA will be contacting all of you in the near future to request information about your conservation tools and to update information. We encourage you to provide this information, as it will contribute towards the continued development of an important tool that can be used by all groups interested in

the conservation and management of migratory species.

Next Plenary Conference

A subcommittee of the ISC has drafted a prospectus for the next hemispheric meeting of the initiative, including a proposed theme, location and preliminary agenda for the event. The full ISC is presently considering this draft and will decide on these details in the very near future. The next plenary conference is anticipated to take place in early 2006.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Division of International Conservation
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 730
Arlington, VA 22203
703/358-1754
703/358-2849 fax
internationalconservation@fws.gov
<http://www.fws.gov/international/>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov
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