



Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative Update

November 2006

Dear WHMSI colleagues:

Below is a summary of progress made on several issues related to the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI). 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 Interim Steering Committee

Proceedings from the Second Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference:

Proceedings from the second Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference, which took place in San José, Costa Rica from January 17th to 20th, 2006, are currently in the final stages of editing. We expect to translate, print and distribute them before the end of 2006.

Draft Terms of Reference:

The draft Terms of Reference to guide WHMSI in the future were developed by the Interim Steering Committee in 2004. The document was shared at the Costa Rica conference in January 2006, and all WHMSI partners were invited to send comments within two months. Subsequently, a revised version was circulated. The next plenary meeting will dedicate time to discussing the revised Terms of Reference. The aim is that all WHMSI partners accept the document in principle rather than formally.

Ministerial Endorsement:

A Meeting of Ministers and High Level Authorities of Sustainable Development is scheduled to take place December 4-5 2006 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

Following up on the plenary decision taken in Costa Rica to seek ongoing ministerial support for WHMSI, the United States has proposed WHMSI related language to be included in the draft declaration being prepared for the event. We encourage all Western Hemisphere countries to work with their appropriate agencies to include text that supports WHMSI in the declaration. The purpose of such text would be to recognize that WHMSI has been a positive step in following up on the 2001 Summit of the Americas declaration; to state satisfaction with the diversity of partners involved in WHMSI; and to urge WHMSI to continue moving forward to fulfill the 2001 declaration.

GEF Proposal:

At the second WHMSI Conference that took place in Costa Rica in January 2006, participants agreed that the project "Cooperation in Conservation: Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI)" is of great value and importance to the region. After incorporating the input from participants at the Conference in Costa Rica, the draft documents have been submitted to the Organization of American States and UNEP. You can

find the Executive Summary and the Project Document at: <http://www.oas.org/dsd/WHMSI/English/Index.htm> (For Spanish: <http://www.oas.org/dsd/WHMSI/Spanish/IHOEM.htm>).

Please note that country letters of endorsement for the WHMSI GEF proposal are still needed in order to maximize chances of obtaining funding from the GEF. The new replenishment process of the GEF was completed very recently, and countries are currently being informed of their allocations. Most of the funding for regional projects such as WHMSI is likely to come from the country or group allocations, therefore national focal point endorsement is key.

The project must be endorsed by as many countries in the region as possible. Letters should include a sentence that states that this project is to be funded from national allocations and the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) funds. The Interim Steering Committee would like to thank those countries which had submitted letters of endorsement earlier. However, please note that these endorsements need to be resubmitted by the countries so that the letters contain the new language.

In summary, we highly encourage you to work with your GEF focal points to obtain their endorsement of the WHMSI project. This will hopefully result in many others following with their own commitment of resources. Please note that countries will benefit from the project (including more than \$10 million in matching funds) in a way that is proportional to their contributions.

For any questions related to the GEF proposal, please contact Marina Ratchford at 703-358-2480 or marina_ratchford@fws.gov

Endorsement by Chile and Suriname to the GEF Proposal:

The Interim Steering Committee is pleased to announce that Chile and Suriname have submitted letters of endorsement for the WHMSI Project, assigning US\$156,250 each from their GEF RAF funds. We congratulate Chile's Environmental Commission-CONAMA (GEF Focal Point) and Agricultural Service-SAG (WHMSI Focal Point), as well as Suriname's Ministry of Labor, Technological Development and Environment-MILIEU (GEF Focal Point) and Forest Service (WHMSI Focal Point) for their leadership and support to WHMSI.

MOU between WHMSI and U.S. NABCI Committee:

Following upon a plenary decision at the WHMSI Conference in Costa Rica to promote Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with partner organizations, a draft MOU between the U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (U.S. NABCI) and WHMSI has been approved by both parties and is ready to be signed. The MOU recognizes the breadth of each party's mission, while focusing on those portions that overlap. WHMSI is concerned with all migratory species that cross international boundaries of the entire Western Hemisphere, while U.S. NABCI is concerned with all birds, migratory and resident, that occur regularly within the boundaries of the United States. U.S. NABCI is part of a trinational effort that also includes

Mexico and Canada, so its concerns extend into those countries, as well as other countries in the hemisphere in which U.S. target birds regularly spend portions of their life cycle. Through this MOU, the parties agree to seek ways to work together more effectively to build on each others' strengths. The MOU will be signed by the Chair of the U.S. NABCI Committee and the Chair of WHMSI's Interim Steering Committee, at a date to be determined. Once signed, the MOU will be announced widely to partners of both entities. This is expected to be the first in a series of MOUs to be signed by WHMSI and partner organizations.

WHMSI Grant to WIDECAST for Conservation of Migratory Marine Turtles:

In support of the training recommendations of the Second Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Without Borders-Latin America & the Caribbean program made \$60,000 available to support one or more projects to address WHMSI capacity building in trans-boundary migratory species, as identified during the sessions on this theme during the Costa Rica Conference. A call for proposals was made in April 2006, and 22 proposals were received. WHMSI's Interim Steering Committee reviewed the proposals and awarded \$24,040 to the project "Building Capacity to Care for Sick and Injured Sea Turtles: Standard Guidelines and Criteria for the Wider Caribbean Region". The project will be undertaken by the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST), with the participation of 55 national coordinators in more than 40 Caribbean States and territories. This project will develop 3 technical manuals to enable professional training of local trainers in (i) first response procedures (what-to-do/what-not-to-do when a sick or injured sea turtle is encountered in the field), (ii) veterinary/clinical care, and (iii) basic husbandry during short-term recovery and rehabilitation. Each manual will propose standard guidelines and criteria, drawing upon the best practices of professionals

active in the region, as well as data forms, species identification guides, photos and descriptions of options and procedures for first-response, treatment and rehab/care, and a list of Wider Caribbean Region contacts (e.g. sea turtle professionals, experienced vets, potential rehabilitation facilities). The grant will be used specifically to develop a comprehensive field manual with recommendations for what-to-do/what-not-to-do when a sick or injured sea turtle is encountered in the field. It remains to be determined what other project(s) will be supported with the funds made available by USFWS' Wildlife Without Borders-Latin America & the Caribbean Program.

In Memoriam

We received with great sadness the news of the death of Mario Ramos, Senior Biodiversity Specialist and Acting Team Leader for Biodiversity in the Global Environment Facility. As Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility, has indicated, Mario joined the GEF at its inception and was greatly responsible for carving out the initial GEF biodiversity strategy that shaped what would become the largest biodiversity portfolio globally. Mario was a strong supporter of WHMSI and participated in the January Conference in Costa Rica. He will be remembered not only for his knowledge and dedication to biodiversity and the environment but also for his kindness, generosity and concern for his friends and colleagues.

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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November 2006

