



PARTNERS IN FLIGHT NEWSLETTER

<http://www.partnersinflight.org>

January 2006

Chan Robbins

Surely everyone is aware by now the Chan Robbins retired in December. The accounts of his contributions over a lifetime of dedication to birds will be showing up in many places, so I will not pretend to repeat them here. Suffice it to say that without Chan, we may not exist. And think where we'd be if we all had just one idea as good as the BBS.

Landbird Monitoring Needs Assessment

The needs assessment for landbird monitoring entitled, "High Priority Needs for Range-wide Monitoring of North American Landbirds", (Dunn et al. 2005) is now complete. The document assesses the adequacy of long-term population trend data for landbirds at the range-wide scale. It develops in greater detail the monitoring needs identified first in the North American Landbird Conservation Plan. Recommendations in this assessment range from improvement of the Breeding Bird Survey to the designing of entirely new, single-species protocols. We hope that this document will be useful for everyone interested in moving forward with coordinated bird monitoring. The document can be viewed at (www.partnersinflight.org).—Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov)

Breeding Bird Survey Birders Needed

We need you to run BBS routes and to recruit new observers. As explained in the above document and as repeatedly stated by BBS staff, the single most important thing we can all do to get better data on long-term population trends for many species is to ensure that all BBS routes are run by qualified observers every year. The BBS is not a difficult methodology and it only requires one morning per year. Many of us like to take an additional morning to scout the route a day or two ahead of time to make sure bridges are still in place and that we can identify everything that's singing. BBS brochures and training CDs are available from me or Keith Pardieck at BBS. To see the status of routes in your state, visit <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/results/routemaps/index.cfm>.—Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov)

Conservation Design and Implementation

The PIF Science Committee recently completed a white paper entitled, “The Five Elements Process: Designing Optimal Landscapes to Meet Bird Conservation Objectives” (Will et al. 2005). The Five Elements process can be used to develop biologically-based, spatially explicit, landscape-oriented habitat objectives that will help support and sustain bird populations at levels recommended through the objectives set by PIF (or any of the bird conservation initiatives). The Five Elements approach to conservation design is a tangible process through which conservation partner’s work together to:

- assess current habitat conditions and ownership patterns,
- evaluate current species distributions and bird-habitat relationships, and
- identify landscape locations where sufficient habitat can be delivered for supporting bird population objectives.

You may view this paper at (www.partnersinflight.org).

PIF Species Assessment Database Updated

PIF has finished a complete update of landbird species assessment scores and those are now available on the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) web site (<http://www.rmbo.org/pif/pifdb.html>). Scores are available for both the global level and by Bird Conservation Region (BCR). This update is the result of extensive review and revision stemming from issues raised both with completion of the North American Landbird Conservation Plan and with the assessment of the Mexican avifauna. Currently only breeding-season regional scores are available for BCRs, but we plan to have non-breeding scores available soon. Previous versions of the PIF Species Assessment Database, including past regional scores for physiographic areas, continue to be available.—Arvind Panjabi (Arvind.panjabi@rmbo.org)

Updated Handbook on PIF Species Assessment

PIF has also updated the Partners in Flight Handbook on Species Assessment (Panjabi et al. 2005). Like the database, the handbook is available on the RMBO website (<http://www.rmbo.org/pif/pifdb.html>) and is linked at the PIF web site. The handbook details the scientific process behind each score and explains how PIF uses species assessment in conservation planning at both global and regional scales. The PIF Species Assessment Process and database have been eagerly sought and used for a huge variety of assessment and planning purposes for many years now. We invite you to peruse the enhanced interactive website and look through the handbook to better understand the assessment process.—Arvind Panjabi (Arvind.panjabi@rmbo.org)

Conservation Design Workshop

Partners in Flight is holding a workshop, "Conservation Design: Exploring Methods for Linking Bird Population Goals with Spatially-Explicit Habitat Objectives," in St. Louis on 11-13 April 2006. The goal of the workshop will be to help participants better understand spatial models and other approaches that can be used to develop landscape-level habitat models, bird-habitat association models, and predictive models. We will discuss how to use these models to inform our population estimates, set population goals, and quantify habitat objectives needed to reach those goals. The target audience is BCR and Joint Venture coordinators and their science staffs, representatives of bird initiatives, researchers in spatial modeling with an interest in applying those approaches to bird populations, and agency personnel involved in conservation planning and implementation.—Jane Fitzgerald (jfitzgerald@abcbirds.org)

Migration Links – The States and Latin America

The Partners in Flight Science Committee is developing a new paper and maps that show state-by-state breeding areas for priority migratory birds, and where these same birds winter. The goal of the project is to demonstrate to state wildlife agencies where they may have an interest in supporting conservation action south of the U.S. border. Content will focus on a set of 49 maps (1 for each state except Hawaii), following those shown in the PIF Continental Plan. There will also be "reverse" maps that show the breeding ranges of priority species that winter in a given state. Maps for Canadian provinces and territories are also being prepared.—Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov)

Bird Conservation NGO List Being Compiled

As a companion to the above analysis, a list of NGOs that work on bird conservation in Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America also is being assembled. If you would like to contribute the name of a partner to be sure they are not overlooked, please e-mail information to Terry Rich. We expect to also assemble a list of partners (NGOs and agencies) in the US and Canada for distribution to the south. The number of entities working on conservation in the US, in particular, is often bewildering to outsiders.—Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov)

USFWS Focal Species

Beginning in 2005, the Migratory Bird Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a new strategy to better measure its success in achieving its bird conservation priorities and mandates. The Service remains committed to

landscape-scale, integrated bird conservation for the full array of species of management concern. However, it has developed the focal species strategy to provide the increased accountability required from all federal agencies. This strategy involves campaigns for selected species to provide explicit, strategic, and adaptive sets of conservation actions required to return the species to healthy and sustainable levels. A fact sheet on the topic is available through a link at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/>. The Cerulean Warbler and Painting Bunting are on top of the focal species list for landbirds.

Colorado Wildlife Conservation Grant Program

The 2006 Colorado Wildlife Conservation Grant (CWCG) has \$200,000 in funding available, with a \$50,000 cap for individual projects. Due date is January 2006. See http://wildlife.state.co.us/habitat/funding_programs/CWCG.asp for more information about this grant program. Applications and questions should be submitted to Guthrie at (jim.guthrie@state.co.us, 303-291-7563).—David Klute (David.Klute@state.co.us)

Secretary of the Interior Offers Private Stewardship Grants

The Private Stewardship Program provides grants and other assistance on a competitive basis to individuals and groups engaged in local, private, and voluntary conservation efforts that benefit federally listed, proposed, or candidate species, or other at-risk species. Diverse panels of representatives from State and Federal Government, conservation organizations, agriculture and development interests, and the science community assess applications and make recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, who awards the grants.

In 2005, the Service awarded more than \$5.7 million in Federal funding under the program. A ten percent match of cash or through in-kind contributions is required. The program is available to private landowners and their partners. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is accepting grant proposals for the 2006 funding period between up to 23 January 2006. For further details, see the Catalog of Domestic Federal Assistance Number 15.632 at http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/private_stewardship/index.html.

Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Science Grants

We are pleased to announce the eighth year of the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Science Grants Program. The 2006 request for proposals has been posted on our website (<http://www.y2y.net/science/grants/sciencegrants-process.asp>). The Y2Y grants program funds innovative science research and partnerships between scientists and non-governmental conservation organizations. Y2Y is a bi-national, cooperative network of more than 500 organizations and individuals working to maintain and restore natural diversity

and landscape connectivity from Wyoming's Wind River Range to the Yukon's Peel River Basin.

The priority research theme for 2006 funding is science that addresses ecological connectivity. Proposals will be relevant if they address one or more of the following issues: habitat fragmentation; reconnection or restoration; species migration, dispersal or recolonization; use of indicator (or focal) species of ecological connectivity; or ecological processes. The deadline for proposal submissions is February 17, 2006. For more information please visit our website. To submit a proposal or make an inquiry please email (sciencegrants@y2y.net).
—Amica Antonelli

Funding for Prairie Research

Prairie Biotic Research, Inc. is a Wisconsin nonprofit established in 2000 to foster biotic research in prairies. Prairie Biotic funds grants up to \$1000 for the study of any grassland taxon in the USA. In 2006, we expect to fund seven or more grants of up to \$1,000 each, including geographically restricted funds for research in southeastern Wisconsin and Iowa. To apply for a grant, contact Michael Anderson at Prairie Biotic Research (pbr-grants@tds.net). Proposals must be received by January 13, 2006.

Great Backyard Bird Count 2006, Encourages First-Timers

Preparations are now underway for the ninth annual Great Backyard Bird Count, which returns for its ninth season February 17-20, 2006. This year's theme, "Count Birds with a Buddy", encourages enthusiasts of all ages to share their love of birds with a friend, a child, a scout troop, a class, or a co-worker, opening new eyes to the joy of birding and the fun of creating a unique snapshot of winter bird abundance and distribution across the continent.

In 2006, for the first time, the Lab of Ornithology and Audubon are launching an element of friendly competition. Awards will be given to localities that submit the most checklists, record the greatest number species, or count the highest number of birds. A photo contest will also be held based on bird pictures taken during the event and submitted for posting on the GBBC gallery. Media may obtain photos, local contacts, and background information by calling Miyoko Chu. For additional information about this year's event or for a copy of the news release, contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at cornellbirds@cornell.edu or contact Audubon at citizenscience@audubon.org. —Pat Leonard (pe127@cornell.edu), Miyoko Chu (mcc37@cornell.edu), and Erica Barton (ebarton@audubon.org).

Boreal Forest Theme for International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) 2006

This year IMBD is celebrating the important role Boreal Forest plays in maintaining the abundance of North American bird life. The official theme this year is "The Boreal Forest: Bird Nursery *of the North*". The poster artwork was created by Radeaux, of Pueblo, Colorado. Please visit (www.birdday.org) to view the new poster and to purchase materials for your 2006 IMBD festivities.

Boreal Forests, Junk Mail, and Catalogs

Speaking of the Boreal, it's become obvious that paper consumption, especially in the form of junk mail and catalogs, is one of the big threats to the Boreal (as well as other forests). Did you know that every American household receives an average of 200 catalogs per year? Less than 5% of these contain post-consumer recycled content. During the holiday season, did you notice that the number of catalogs you get increases. Less than 3% of those catalogs will result in a sale, which means that 97% of them will go straight into the trash!—Joy Korones ([Joy Korones@fws.gov](mailto:Joy.Korones@fws.gov))

Cats Indoors! Campaign News

National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day will occur on 13 May 2006. Now is a good time to start planning a local or state children's poster competition. A sample announcement and press release are available at (<http://www.abcbirds.org/cats/NKYCID.htm>). This competition provides an excellent opportunity to educate cat owners, teachers, children and the general public that cats and birds benefit when cats are kept indoors. Ask your local bird supply or pet store to sponsor the prizes. Local schools can have their whole classes enter the competition. Winning posters from state or local competitions should be sent to me by May 26 at the address below for entry into the national competition. Winning posters from the national competition will be scanned and posted on ABC's web site, and the winners will receive additional prizes. You can also ask your city or county council to pass a resolution endorsing National Keep Your Cat Indoors Day.—Linda Winter, (lwinter@abcbirds.org)

Sagebrush Bird Conservation Plan

Version 1.0 of the Sagebrush Bird Conservation Plan is now available on the CalPIF web site. Congratulations to Aaron Holmes of PRBO Conservation Science and everyone else involved with the plan's development.—Kim Kreitinger (kkreitinger@rmbo.org)

Fire Effects in Forests of Western North America

A paper entitled, "Avian Responses to Fire Effects in Forests of Western North America," has been prepared for the PIF technical series. This paper outlines the effects of fire and succession on 88 species of landbirds in the West. A useful aspect of the paper is an Excel spreadsheet with the species and a number of attributes that can be sorted or altered in various ways by users. Anyone interested in reviewing this paper should contact Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov).

A Wildlife Society Literature Review Now Available

The Wildlife Society has completed a literature review document entitled, "Fish and Wildlife Benefits of Farm Bill Conservation Programs: 2000-2005 Update." This product is the result of a partnership among NRCS, FSA, and TWS pursuant to the wildlife component of the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) and updates the literature synthesis produced by Heard et al. (2000, Tech, Rep. USDA/NRCS/WHMI-2000). The document may be downloaded from <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/ceap/fwbenefit.html>. A limited number of hard copies are also being produced.

Leaflets from the Wildlife Habitat Council

Leaflets are now available online from the Wildlife Habitat Council (<http://www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/leaflet.htm>) regarding the conservation of wading birds, Greater Prairie-Chicken, sage-grouse, cropped wetlands, mule deer, warm water streams, farm ponds, native warm season grasses, Mourning Dove, native pollinators, and swift fox.—Erika Smith (esmith@wildlifehc.org)

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

Shorebird Science in Western Hemisphere

The first Western Hemisphere Shorebird Group meeting will be held at the University of Colorado campus in Boulder, Colorado, between 27 February and 2 March 2006. The purpose of the meeting is to: 1) bring together biologists studying breeding, staging and wintering shorebirds throughout the Western Hemisphere in one location, 2) promote information sharing on methodologies and study design among biologists working on different shorebird species, 3) to promote range-wide studies of shorebirds by fostering collaborations among biologists interested in particular species, 4) integrate science into the implementation of various shorebird conservation plans, and 5) to generate enthusiasm among the shorebird community to conduct additional studies of

shorebirds in the future. Details of the meeting are posted on the US Shorebird Conservation Plan website (<http://www.fws.gov/shorebirdplan/>).—Rick Lanctot (richard_lanctot@fws.gov) and Brad Andres(brad_andres@fws.gov).

Southeast Partners in Flight Meeting

Planning is now in progress for the annual Southeast Partners in Flight Meeting which will take place 1-4 March 2006 in Tallahassee, FL. The Steering Committee will meet on 1 March with papers 2-3 March and field trips on the 4th. Details will be distributed via listservs.—Catherine Rideout (cwrideout@agfc.state.ar.us)

PIF Western Working Group Meeting

The WWG will hold its spring meeting at the University of Montana in Missoula on 15-17 March 2006. An agenda and logistical information will be distributed via the listservs in the near future.—Larry Neel (neel@ndow.state.nv.us)

National PIF Meeting and North American

PIF will hold its national Implementation Committee meetings on 19-20 March 2006 near Columbus, OH. We expect to meet jointly for at least part of the meeting with the Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative (<http://www.obcinet.org/>). As usual, this meeting will immediately precede the 71st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference which will take place in Columbus at the at Hyatt Regency. Details for the IC meeting will soon be distributed via listservs while details for the North American can be found at <http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/>. There are numerous important committee meetings during the North American where bird conservation issues are discussed and progress is made.—Terry Rich

North Carolina Spring Meeting

NC PIF will meet in Wake County near Falls Lake at Blue Jay Point County Park on 28 March. Topics will include Painted Bunting monitoring and research, effects of landscape context on nest success, song rates in Ovenbirds and Black-throated Blue Warblers, enhancing GAP vertebrate models, and developing better information delivery for private forestland owners.—Mark Johns (johnsme@mindspring.com)

Conserving Birds in Human Dominated Landscapes

The American Museum of Natural History's Center for Biodiversity and Conservation (CBC) will focus its eleventh annual symposium on conserving bird diversity in the areas most heavily impacted by human activities. This conference will be held 27-28 April 2006 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, (<http://cbc.amnh.org>). Speakers will examine new approaches for managing bird diversity in urban, suburban, agricultural, and industrial areas; and explore possibilities for conservation in the face of an increasingly developed and industrialized world. Conservation decision-making in these landscapes will necessarily involve ecological and evolutionary considerations as well as an open discussion of ethical and aesthetic implications. Once we begin to understand potential or desired patterns of diversity, we can proceed to integrate the available science with new and adaptive approaches to land management in these areas.

Poster abstracts will be considered for inclusion in the symposium's poster session until March 1. Guidelines for submission are posted at (<http://cbc.amnh.org/symposia/birds/>). Special Student Pricing and Early-Registration Discounts Are Available. In conjunction with the Symposium, the CBC will host the Mack Lipkin Man and Nature Series Lecture, featuring renowned ecologist Gordon Orians on "Biodiversity and the Evolutionary Roots of Beauty." This lecture, on Thursday, April 27, at 7:00 pm, is free, and open to the public. Registration is recommended, as seating will be limited. For detailed information about the Symposium, Poster Session, and Mack Lipkin Lecture, please email (biodiversity@amnh.org) or visit the CBC website at (<http://cbc.amnh.org>).

Tracking Birds of Prey at Hawk Mountain

Earthspan and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary are once again offering a professional development workshop for secondary school teachers, environmental educators, and wildlife professionals with an educational mission. The workshop, "Tracking Birds of Prey at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary: Bringing Conservation Research and Technology to Education", will take place 26-29 June 2006. You may download the full workshop brochure from our web site at www.earthspan.org.—Michelle Frankel (michellefrankel@earthlink.net)

4th North American Ornithological Conference (NAOC)

The 4th North American Ornithological Conference (NAOC) will be held on 3-7 October 2006 in Veracruz, Mexico. NAOCs are only held every 4 years and bring together ornithologists from across the hemisphere. The 4th NAOC is being organized jointly by the American Ornithologists' Union, Association of Field Ornithologists, CIPAMEX, Cooper Ornithological Society, Raptor Research

Foundation, Society of Canadian Ornithologists / Société des Ornithologistes du Canada, Waterbird Society, and Wilson Ornithological Society.

The conference theme is "Wings Without Borders" and will feature a rich scientific program, symposia, plenary lectures, business meetings of societies, and social activities. Pre-and post-conference activities will include training workshops, and birding, culture, and nature tours. Veracruz is home to a large avifauna, with over 700 species reported for the state; >230 species are Neotropical migrants and >20 species are endemic to Mexico. The conference is scheduled to coincide with the peak of the migration season in the world's largest raptor migration bottleneck. Mark your calendars now, plan to attend, and watch <http://www.naoc2006.org/enf> for further details. The conference circular should be out in January.

4th International Partners in Flight Conference

The 4th International Partners in Flight Conference has been scheduled for 13-16 February 2008. The conference will take place in the brand new convention center in McAllen, Texas. Block these dates now!

Other Professional Society Meetings

Be sure to check web sites for other professional societies and arrange a symposium, present a paper, and otherwise get involved on behalf of bird conservation at every opportunity.

NEWS OF PEOPLE

Ricky Dunn

Ricky Dunn has retired as of 2 January. Ricky has been a fundamentally important member of the PIF Science Committee in recent years, contributing ideas and energy to all our meetings and products. Had we (those of us in the US) found her sooner, we would have recruited her sooner! The only way we can make up for this oversight on our part is to try to cajole Ricky into a little part-time help here and there.....nothing too demanding.....really. She won't get too far away as she is President-Elect of the American Ornithologists' Union and we'll know where to find her.

Jina Mariani

After an all too brief stint as the USFS rep to PIF, Jina is off (temporarily we hope) to Denmark on a special assignment. Jina immediately volunteered to

help me assemble this newsletter as one way to stay involved in PIF. We still need help with FS plans so I hope she does come back.

The next newsletter will be issued on 1 April 2006. Items are due 15 March 2006 to Terry Rich (terry_rich@fws.gov).