

OHIO BIRD



CONSERVATION
INITIATIVE

Research and Habitat Committee Meeting Minutes January 13th, 2006

The following committee members were in attendance: Steve Barry (ODNR-Wildlife), Tom Berger (ODNR-Forestry), Suzanne Cardinal (OBCI), Bob Gates (OSU), Scott Hull (ODNR-Wildlife), Jason Steckel (Pheasants Forever), John Ritzenthaler (Audubon Ohio), Paul Rodewald (OSU), and Kurt Waterstradt (USFWS).

Co-Chair Scott Hull started the meeting with introductions and a review of minutes from the previous meeting in March 2005. Scott welcomed a new member on the Research and Habitat Committee, Kurt Waterstradt (USFWS), who recently moved to Ohio from Wisconsin, where he acquired valuable experience working with the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI).

A name change for the Research and Habitat Management Committee was briefly discussed and it was decided that Paul Rodewald and Suzanne Cardinal would bring ideas for a new name to the next meeting to be voted on by the committee.

Scott Hull overviewed the goals of the Research and Habitat Committee which were agreed upon at the March 2005 meeting. These goals were to:

1. Create inventory and executive summary of all partner agency bird conservation plans.
2. Develop map showing boundaries and “commonality” of partner agency bird conservation plans.
3. Regularly review bird population monitoring efforts in Ohio and report gaps in existing efforts.
4. Provide lead role in writing Ohio All-Bird Conservation Plan.
5. Research and Habitat committee should be structured by habitat (forest, wetland, grassland, urban). This structure will be useful for purposes of contributing to the All-bird plan.
6. Identify future bird research, monitoring, and conservation activities that can benefit partner organizations (e.g. Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II).
7. Review continental bird conservation plans (e.g. the Partners in Flight North American Landbird Conservation Plan) and associated population estimates for Ohio. Incorporate findings into Ohio All-Bird Conservation Plan.
8. Continue to meet jointly and possibly rename group to Scientific Management Committee.

In reference to inventorying partner conservation plans, committee members suggested including GIS layers that summarize information from National conservation plans and OBCI partners for Ohio (e.g. Audubon Ohio’s IBAs). Bob Gates discussed the GIS project that his graduate student Joni Downs had

worked on combining some of these layers -- this work was done both prior to and following the OBCI All-Bird Workshop in November 2004. The Committee agreed that the first maps we create should combine the areas already designated by various groups as important to bird conservation. This will allow the committee to look for overlap and gaps in areas that need to be conserved. Future maps will be created to look at overall habitat type by cover. Bob Gates suggested contacting Greg Soulliere (USFWS) because he may have useful data layers already collected. Suzanne Cardinal will be in charge of creating the maps and collecting GIS layers from committee members. Any committee members that have GIS layers that OBCI could use are asked to share them with Suzanne.

There was discussion about OBCI acquiring grant money to support small research/monitoring or habitat management projects. Such an idea would not only help fund projects, but would also help bolster partner involvement in OBCI. Kurt Waterstradt mentioned that WBCI received a SWIG grant and then gave the money out to members for habitat projects and Paul Rodewald mentioned that the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative was doing something similar. Steve Barry and Bob Gates suggested that OBCI could pursue a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant. These grants usually go to projects that have goals that include all-bird conservation. It was also suggested that NABCI might also have grant money that OBCI could pursue.

The Ohio All-bird Plan was discussed at length. Suzanne presented information in a PowerPoint presentation about Wisconsin's All-bird Plan. The WBCI plan consists of several parts, including habitats, species accounts, landscapes, and sites. The plan can only be found on their website and the target audience is anyone from land managers to private land owners that want to conserve birds and their habitats (<http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/plan/>). One nice feature is that the plan is cross-referenced throughout. That is, looking at a habitat type you will find priority species lists which will take you to individual species accounts. Within each species account are the important habitat types which will bring the user to an individual habitat type and vice-versa. The Committee discussed both publishing the Plan both strictly online and possibly also in hard copy, but there was no final decision about publication format.

The committee discussed a time line for the All-Bird Plan. Paul and Suzanne have been hoping to present an expanded outline and draft sections of the Plan at the National PIF meeting on 20 March at Deer Creek State Park. Steve Barry and Bob Gates suggested that the Plan also be presented to the Joint Venture representatives at the North American Conference, which occurs just after the PIF meeting. Steve Barry will discuss this possibility with the Joint Ventures group. Paul and Suzanne mentioned that there is a need to complete a first draft of the All-Bird Plan by the end of June 2006.

Bob Gates suggested that OBCI take a regionally-based (Bird Conservation Region) approach to the All-bird Plan and there was general support for this idea. There was agreement that OBCI focus its efforts on the following topics: species lists, habitats, conservation problems and opportunities, strategies, partners, and funding. Committee members decided that we should start by summarizing parts of each plan that were relevant to Ohio. Committee members will summarize all pertinent information from the Waterfowl, Shorebird, Waterbird, and Landbird Conservation Plans. The national plans were divided up as follows:

Waterfowl and Shorebirds -- Steve Barry and Kurt Waterstradt
Landbirds -- Scott Hull
Waterbirds -- Suzanne Cardinal

The committee scheduled its next meeting for Wednesday February 15, 2006 at 11am at OSU to discuss the summaries and the next steps for the All-bird Plan.