



## MEETING MINUTES

### CALIFORNIA PARTNERS IN FLIGHT MEETING

August 20-21, 2004

Audubon California Starr Ranch Sanctuary

#### EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The Executive Steering Committee is a decision-making body that establishes and modifies CalPIF priorities. CalPIF Co-chair Geoff Geupel welcomed committee members and introduced new members Lyann Comrack of California Department of Fish and Game and Wendell Gilgert of Natural Resources Conservation Service. Items on the agenda included: 1) Review of Working Agreement and Working Committees, and 2) CalPIF Decision-making process.

Committee members in attendance included: Tim Burr (US Navy/DoD), Dan Cooper (Audubon CA), Lyann Comrack (DFG), Geoff Geupel (PRBO Conservation Science), Wendell Gilgert (NRCS), Sherry Hudson (SFBBO), Kim Kreitinger (PRBO Conservation Science), Barbara Kus (USGS), Myrmie Mayville (USBR), John Robinson (USFS), Debra Schlafmann (USFWS), Sarah Stock (Ventana Wilderness Society).

#### WORKING AGREEMENT

The group reviewed the CalPIF Working Agreement document written in January 2003 and discussed the need for changes and/or updates. This document outlines the goals and objectives of CalPIF and defines its current structure. The following is a list of suggested changes:

- Change the terminology on 2<sup>nd</sup> page from “sound science” to “good science.” Tim Burr felt that “sound” now carries negative, political connotations. It was suggested that this be changed throughout the document.
- Define our relationship with the Western Working Group and state that a CalPIF representative should attend each meeting. **Kim will send an email to Executive Steering Committee members to inform them of WWG meeting dates and locations. Kim will make a line item in future agendas for summarizing WWG meetings.**
- Change the verb “promote” in the mission statement to a stronger verb. Include “implementation” within the mission statement.
- Clarify CalPIF voting procedures. A simple majority will prevail in voting situations with all members queried and their vote acknowledged.
- Geoff Geupel will chair the Joint Venture Integration Network. **Geoff will ensure that there are currently two CalPIF representatives on each of the California Joint Ventures.**

- The Workshop (Technical Assistance) Committee will be dismantled. The following tasks will be assigned to the Agency Integration Committee: 1) agency training on how to use plans; 2) agency training on how to prioritize to achieve bird conservation; 3) provide technical/restoration techniques that are region specific (to FWS, NRCS). The Communication and Recruitment Committee will be assigned the task of developing an informal network of experts for bird conservation advice (need list for each plan).
- The Plan-caretaking Committee will be dismantled. The CalPIF coordinator will be responsible for contacting plan caretakers and overseeing plan and species account revisions.
- Sherry Hudson is the new chair of the Research and Monitoring Committee.
- It was left undecided whether to maintain the Policy Network. **Kim will contact Gregg Elliot for more information and feedback.**

**Kim will incorporate these changes to the Working Agreement and send another draft for review.**

The group discussed the need for a CalPIF accomplishments summary. John Robinson suggested that this document detail CalPIF accomplishments over the last 15 years and resemble a proceedings. Others felt that a “fact sheet” would be a simpler method to extract the same information. This fact sheet would define how each of the agencies and organizations has contributed to CalPIF and identify what still needs to be accomplished. **Dan Cooper and Barbara Kus will disseminate a fact sheet template to Kim. Kim will send a request for this information to the Executive Steering Committee. Kim will then compile the information and post to the CalPIF web site.**

#### ***DECISION-MAKING PROCESS***

Dan Strait discussed the CalPIF Decision-making process document, which outlines situations where CalPIF can participate in advocacy for legislation, funding bills, or other potentially political issues. The three categories that were discussed were: 1) providing scientific, technical, or other expert assistance; 2) advocating for, supporting, opposing, or otherwise taking formal positions on legislation; 3) lobbying. This is an internal document that is intended to be used by the Executive Steering Committee. **Dan Strait will incorporate suggestions and circulate a second draft to the Executive Steering Committee.**

#### **GENERAL CALIFORNIA PARTNERS IN FLIGHT MEETING**

Starr Ranch Sanctuary rules and regulations: Gail Hall

#### ***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

Next statewide CalPIF meeting in June-August 2005. Suggested venues/topics included:

- new LA Audubon facility;
- desert focus with meeting near San Diego;
- Susanville, Quincy;
- Mono Lake – joint Chataqua/PIF meeting last weekend of June;
- grassland focus.

### **Proceedings for the 2001 Riparian Habitat and Floodplains Conference**

The proceedings from the 2001 riparian conference held in Sacramento California has been published by the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture. It is titled *California Riparian Systems: Processes and Floodplains Management, Ecology, and Restoration*. The proceedings is 600 pages long and includes 71 manuscripts from presentations given at the conference. Copies of the proceedings can be purchased for \$30 soft cover and \$45 hard cover through the RHJV. Contact the RHJV Coordinator to order at [achrisney@prbo.org](mailto:achrisney@prbo.org) or 916-329-7458. Payment will be by checks and money orders only.

### **Coastal Scrub and Chaparral Bird Conservation Plan**

Hardcopies of this plan are now available thanks to a grant from the Temper of the Times Foundation. Please contact Kim Kreitinger at: [kkreitinger@prbo.org](mailto:kkreitinger@prbo.org) for a copy.

### **Riparian Bird Conservation Plan Version 2.0**

Hardcopies of Version 2.0 will be available soon thanks to Bureau of Reclamation. Watch for an announcement over the CalPIF listserv. Revised Song Sparrow, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Least Bell's Vireo focal species accounts can now be viewed at the CalPIF web site. A new Tricolored Blackbird account has been added and a new Tree Swallow account is being written.

### **Species Account Request**

We are currently looking for species account authors for the following:

- Lesser Nighthawk
- Sage Sparrow
- Mountain Quail
- Nuttall's White-crowned Sparrow
- Western Meadowlark

Additionally, we need reviewers for the draft Shrubsteppe Bird Conservation Plan. If you are interested in becoming a species account author or a reviewer, please contact Kim Kreitinger.

### **CalPIF Database**

New tools have been added to the CalPIF database that allows you to calculate species diversity and perform other queries. Please check out the database at the CalPIF web site and consider contributing your data!

### ***All-Bird Workshop***

All-Bird Workshops are funded through the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA). Typically each state receives approximately \$8,000 to cover conference room costs, catering services, printed materials, 4 bird experts to chair the sessions, and travel expenses for state agency employees (up to \$500/employee). All-Bird Workshops help to coordinate the conservation activities and ensure the smooth delivery of the goals and objectives within the: U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, N.A. Waterbird Conservation Plan, N.A. Waterfowl Plan, and the PIF Bird Conservation Plans. The California All-Bird Workshop is also an opportunity to provide products to be incorporated into the State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan. The IAFWA funding must be used by the end of 2004, thus CDFG and PRBO Conservation Science are trying to organize this event for November 15-16, 2004 at the Radisson in Sacramento. A draft agenda has been set. Watch for more details on the CalPIF listserv.

### ***Decision-making Process***

Dan Strait reviewed the decision-making process (see Executive Steering Committee notes). Questions were raised whether CalPIF should pressure national PIF to address national landbird policies? What do other state PIF groups do for lobbying?

### ***Agency/Organization Updates***

#### **US Forest Service, John Robinson**

In August 2004, the U.S. Forest Service, working in collaboration with the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, initiated efforts to draft a Willow Flycatcher conservation strategy for the Sierra Nevada. A peer-review session will be held later this year and anyone interested in participating in the peer review should contact John Robinson at: [jrobinson02@fs.fed.us](mailto:jrobinson02@fs.fed.us).

Fiscal year 04' is the last year that Forest Service funds to do Partners in Flight (PIF) projects will be available at a regional level. Beginning in 2005, all money formerly used for PIF projects will go directly to the forests. From there, forest supervisors will decide whether they will fund PIF or other bird conservation-related projects. In other words, this funding is no longer specifically designated for landbirds, rather all wildlife. Several people felt that the national PIF should be lobbying for maintaining the PIF "earmark" at a regional level throughout the Forest Service. John Robinson stated that, for now, we need to find the forest districts that are still committed to this effort and engage their support.

#### **Department of Defense, Tim Burr**

Numerous Snowy Plover, Northern Fulmar, and Least Tern chicks have been found dead on southern California beaches this year. Tim is organizing a meeting between biologists and veterinary pathologists to investigate the causes of these deaths. Additionally, Tim would like to create a document that details the procedures for handling these birds, how to determine if a bird can be analyzed, and where to send the specimens. The analyses need to be stored in an accessible database along with pertinent meteorological and climactic data to enable veterinary pathologists to detect patterns with previous years.

#### **Audubon California, Dan Cooper**

Audubon California will be reviewing the Altamont Windfarm Study which is out for public comment. Dan will highlight key points from this document and disseminate to interested CalPIF members. California Partners in Flight may also draft a comment letter. For more information on how to be involved, contact Dan Cooper at: [dcooper@audubon.org](mailto:dcooper@audubon.org).

Dan also discussed the recently completed Important Bird Areas book which contains 150 sites across California. This important book can be purchased on the Audubon California web site: <http://www.audubon-ca.org/IBA.htm>. With the book published, the next steps are to fund and develop monitoring regimes at these IBAs. Please contact Dan if you know of any funding sources. CalPIF will be working with California Audubon to integrate the IBA information into Joint Venture planning documents and other agency management plans.

#### **USGS, Barbara Kus**

Vector Control personnel monitoring for West Nile virus have teamed together with several cowbird control operators in Orange and Riverside counties. The West Nile virus monitors are collecting samples from Brown-headed Cowbirds that are being trapped in association with endangered species recovery.

The San Diego Field Station is getting close to going on line for the California Southwestern Willow Flycatcher informational database. This database will facilitate a system for statewide biologists to enter their Willow Flycatcher information. Password access may be required depending on a particular biologist's association with endangered species management. Finally, several USGS long-term MAPS sites recently burned, thus USGS biologists are now monitoring post-fire wildlife responses.

**California Department of Fish and Game, Lyann Comrack**

The Bird Species of Special Concern team and associated partners have completed the draft species accounts and range maps for this document. However, Lyann is still looking for co-authors for several accounts. Contact Lyann at: [lcomrack@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:lcomrack@dfg.ca.gov) for more information. This document will be published as a special monograph by the Department of Fish and Game, PRBO Conservation Science, and Western Field Ornithologists.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wendell Gilgert**

NRCS administers the Farm Bill programs, Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and Grassland Reserves Program (GRP). In Fiscal Year 2004, EQIP provides \$42 million to private landowners, WRP provides \$16 million, WHIP provides \$1.4 million, and the GRP provides \$1.6 million. Though many of these programs are not specifically targeted for birds, the various projects will positively affect birds by the establishment, restoration, and management of riparian, wetland, upland habitats, as well as conservation buffers in agricultural matrixes. For example, the EQIP program will positively affect Tricolored Blackbirds through partnerships with dairy farmers in the Central Valley.

The California Association of Conservation Districts Annual Conference will be held at the Embassy Suites in San Luis Obispo, Nov. 17-20. Attendees consist of ranchers and farmers in the state, thus it is a good opportunity to outreach to a unique audience. Finally, Wendell is trying to organize a corridor network. This network would identify habitat parcels within the state that can be connected and then work towards connectivity. Contact Wendell at: [Wendell.Gilgert@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Wendell.Gilgert@ca.usda.gov) for more information.

**Bureau of Reclamation, Myrnie Mayville**

USBR will have funds available for the next fiscal year (beginning in Oct '04) for wildlife habitat projects in the Central Valley. USBR is particularly interested in projects benefiting species and/or habitats impacted by the Central Valley Project, for example riparian restoration projects and associated effectiveness monitoring. Contact Myrnie Mayville at: [mmayville@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:mmayville@mp.usbr.gov) for more information.

**Ventana Wilderness Society, Sarah Stock**

VWS has instituted a winter monarch monitoring program.

***Working Committee Updates***

**Agency Integration Committee**

Attendees: Dan Strait (USFWS), Chair; Dan Cooper (Audubon California), Geoff Geupel (PRBO), Jill Terp (USFWS), Peter Beck (USFWS), Myrnie Mayville (USBR).

1. The Chair announced that in August the Committee provided comments on behalf of CalPIF to the US Forest Service on draft Land Management Plans for the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernadino National Forests. Comments were provided on how the Forests could improve their management for the benefit of landbirds. The

- contents of the letter were briefly discussed. It was suggested that the letter be posted for review on the CalPIF website. The Chair agreed to ask the State Coordinator to do so.
2. The Chair informed the committee that the Sierra Nevada National Forests are evaluating their list of Management Indicator Species and will decide if they should add-to or remove species from the list. The Forest Service has requested assistance from CalPIF for recommendations on landbird species that may be suitable to add to the list. It is a unique opportunity for CalPIF to help shape forest management for the betterment of landbirds for years to come. The committee developed a list of names of CalPIF members who would be good to attend the meeting. The Chair will contact them about participating.
  3. A recommendation was made to develop a location on the CalPIF website where persons could obtain information on Resource Management Plans that are up for revision or other public review by the Forest Service, BLM, and other land management agencies. The committee thought it was a good idea. The Chair agreed to ask the Coordinator to establish such a site. Information for posting on the site would be provided by the Committee and other CalPIF members.
  4. The list of established committee goals was reviewed for improvement or clarification. A clarifying change to the goal reading "Strategize on ... WHIP money" will be changed to "Strategize on ...USDA Farm Bill Conservation Program money."

#### **Communication and Recruitment Committee**

Attendees: Kim Kreitinger (PRBO), Chair; Grant Ballard (PRBO), Lyann Comrack (CDFG), Wendell Gilgert (NRCS), John Robinson (USFS).

1. The Chair informed the committee of a funding opportunity with Patagonia Environmental Grants. This grant could provide an opportunity for a formal CalPIF display to be used at nature festivals and fairs. John Robinson agreed to provide the chair with more information on costs and producers of these display boards. The Chair will draft a proposal and send to the committee for review. The deadline for the next Patagonia grant is April 30. Lyann Comrack agreed to provide the Chair with a current list of festivals that CalPIF should attend. Wendell Gilgert agreed to work with the Chair to create a list of non-traditional partners, such as the California Cattleman's Association, wine-grape growers, etc. that should be contacted.
2. Wendell Gilgert proposed that CalPIF create a pocket guide to birds found within specific habitat types. This pocket guide could highlight oak woodland habitats and the birds that use them, then list restoration and management recommendations. This guide would target private landowners, thus we would focus on habitats which are largely found on private lands, such as oak woodlands and riparian. Wendell provided copies of a similar pocket guide that was developed for the Rocky Mountain region. This guide was supported by numerous partners, including NRCS and cost approximately \$10,000 to produce. John Robinson suggested coupling the pocket guide with a CD Rom of birds/bird songs.
3. The group discussed contents of the next newsletter. The focus of the upcoming newsletter will be an extension of this meeting. Several of the presenters at this meeting will be asked to write a short summary of their project/presentation. We also discussed potential funding opportunities for the newsletter. John Robinson suggested that the Forest Service may have funds to publish an edition of the newsletter. Lyann also

suggested that funds might be available through the Department of Fish and Game. The Chair will follow up with both of these offers.

4. The group reviewed the online feedback form available on the web site. Users of the conservation plans are asked to evaluate the plans on this form. We discussed ways to make this form more effective. All agreed that the feedback form should be inserted in hardcopies of the plans, and linked on each of the plan's web pages. Also, we discussed the possibility of making it obligatory to fill out a condensed version of this questionnaire before downloading plans. The Chair will work with Grant Ballard to accomplish this. John Robinson also suggested providing a small cash incentive for people to evaluate the plans.

### **Research and Monitoring Committee**

Attendees: Sherry Hudson (SFBBO), Chair; John Martin (USFWS), Jessica Griffiths (Ventana Wilderness Society), Sarah Stock (Ventana Wilderness Society), Lisa Allen (Chambers Group), Barbara Kus (USGS), Sophie Chiang (Chambers Group), Amber Oneal (UC Riverside, BonTerra Consulting), Tim Burr (US Navy), Dennis Jongsomjit (PRBO), Diana Humple (PRBO), Bob Chapman (SDSU), Viola Toniolo (PRBO)

1. A Migration Monitoring Network is getting underway, and has been led by John Alexander of the Klamath Bird Observatory and CJ Ralph of Redwood Sciences Lab. Several organizations have been involved in the discussion and planning stages, and now a proposal has been submitted to BLM for funding (probably for a part-time coordinator?). The objective of the network is to expand knowledge of the status of landbirds by monitoring their populations with a network of monitoring stations, investigating changes in populations and composition of migratory landbirds, their routes, and their stopover habitat and sites. It will begin as a west-coast based network with the goal of expanding and coordinating with the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network, the Southwest Migration Monitoring Group, and groups in Mexico and Central and South America. Additionally, PRBO is starting a migration project comparing Nexrad data to fall migration banding data. If you would like more information contact Sherry Hudson at: [shudson@sfbbo.org](mailto:shudson@sfbbo.org), Diana Humple at: [dhumple@prbo.org](mailto:dhumple@prbo.org), or John Alexander at: [jda@klamathbird.org](mailto:jda@klamathbird.org).
2. Microphyl woodlands have recently been identified as an important habitat for birds such as Gila Woodpecker and Loggerhead Shrike. BLM has taken the lead by looking at this habitat in OHV areas. More studies on the distribution of this habitat and bird use of it would be useful.
3. Our goal from the last meeting was to create a **list of the highest inventory/monitoring priorities across the Bird Conservation Plans** to ensure that the most important surveys are conducted, analyzed, and shared. To do this we went through each BCP and identified priorities of the plan and gaps in data/geography for each plan, and summarized those common among all or most plans. Further comments welcome. Similarities between plans:
  - Study nest success and survivorship in addition to abundance and distribution.
  - Look at effects of Brown-headed Cowbird (and certain other species, i.e., European Starlings, nest predators, etc.) at critical sites
  - Long term monitoring (>5 yrs, > 10 yrs) crucial, especially at restored sites

- Identify habitat management techniques that are most beneficial to birds (i.e., fire, grazing, etc)
- Study bird responses for each bioregion to: fire, grazing, restoration, fragmentation, human disturbance, different elevations
- Studies must be standardized and well-designed.
- Depending on plan, certain areas are lacking information (vague but true).
- Communication and coordination among all parties involved.

### ***SATURDAY'S SESSION***

Saturday's session included 12 presentations on the conservation and management of coastal scrub and chaparral birds and habitats:

- 1) **Introduction to Audubon California's Starr Ranch Sanctuary** – Gail Hall and Sandy DeSimone - Audubon California;
- 2) **Future Direction of California Partners in Flight** - Geoff Geupel, PRBO Conservation Science;
- 3) **Sonoran Joint Venture, Bi-National Bird Conservation**, Robert Mesta - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- 4) **Setting Priorities and Strategies for Conservation in the Mattoral of Baja California** - Juan Manuel Garcia, Terra Peninsular;
- 5) **Managing Remnant Habitat Patches for Multiple Species** - Edward Stanton, Center for Natural Lands Management;
- 6) **Current Threats to Coastal Sage Scrub Habitat in Southern California** -Pete DeSimone, Starr Ranch Sanctuary;
- 7) **Birds as Indicators of Habitat Disturbance in Coastal Sage Scrub** - Robert Chapman, San Diego State University;
- 8) **Coastal Sage Scrub Restoration at Starr Ranch** - Sandy DeSimone, Audubon California
- 9) **Restoration of Alkali Desert Scrub on Retired Farm Lands in the Central Valley** - Steve Laymon, Bureau of Land Management;
- 10) **A Monitoring Strategy for the Gray Vireo in California** - Lori Hargrove, University of California, Riverside;
- 11) **California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren Monitoring in the Nature Reserve of Orange County, 1999-2004** - Robb Hamilton;
- 12) **Status of Sage Sparrows on San Clemente Island**, Eric Kershner, Institute for Wildlife Studies

Some of these presentations will be summarized in the next CalPIF newsletter. Please watch for this newsletter on the CalPIF listserv. To subscribe to the listserv, visit the web site at: [www.prbo.org/calpif](http://www.prbo.org/calpif).