

**MEETING MINUTES
CALIFORNIA PARTNERS IN FLIGHT (CALPIF) MEETING
JULY 17-18, 2003**

Location: Sagehen Creek Field Station

ATTENDEES:

Bob Allen (California Department of Fish and Game), John Alexander (Klamath Bird Observatory), Grant Ballard (PRBO Conservation Science), Ted Beedy (Natural Heritage 2020 & Placer Legacy), Helen Bombay Loffland, Jim Brown (Sagehen Station Manager), Ryan Burnett (PRBO Conservation Science), Tim Burr (Dept of Defense, US Navy), Heather Chase (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation), Hillary Cooke (Wildlife Conservation Society), Dan Cooper (Audubon California), David DeSante (Institute for Bird Populations), Karen Fullen (Natural Resource Conservation Service), Jim Gaither (The Nature Conservancy), River Gates (PRBO Conservation Science), Geoff Geupel (PRBO Conservation Science), Gail Hall (Audubon California), Bill Hamilton (UC-Davis), Debra Hansen, Paul Hardy (Feather River Land Trust), Sacha Heath (PRBO Conservation Science), Diana Humple (PRBO Conservation Science), Dennis Jongsomjit (PRBO Conservation Science), Kim Kreitinger (PRBO Conservation Science), Erica Lindgren (Cal-Poly, SLO), Tina Mark (U.S. Forest Service), Myrnie Mayville (U.S. Bureau of Reclamation), Chris McCreedy (PRBO Conservation Science), Mike Morrison, Russell Nickerson (U.S. Forest Service), Steve Ogel, Melissa Pitkin (PRBO Conservation Science), Rick Poore (Streamwise), John Ranlett (Wildlands, Inc.), Mark Reynolds (The Nature Conservancy), Will Richardson (UN-Reno), John Robinson (U.S. Forest Service), Steve Robinson (Mountain Meadows Conservancy), Alex Rosenthal (PRBO Conservation Science), Amy Scarpignato (San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory), Debra Schlafmann (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), Sandy Scoggin (PRBO Conservation Science), Jason Scott (Big Sur Ornithology Lab), Todd Sloat, Kelly Sorenson (Ventana Wildlife Society), Jim Steele (San Francisco State University), Rose Stephani (U.S. Forest Service), John Sterling (Jones and Stokes), Chris Stermer (California Dept of Fish and Game), Dan Strait (U.S. Fish and Wildlife), Dave Weixelman (U.S. Forest Service), Margaret Widdowson (Klamath Bird Observatory), William Widdowson (Jones and Stokes), Steve Zack (Wildlife Conservation Society)

EXECUTIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Executive Steering Committee is a decision-making body that establishes and modifies CalPIF priorities. CalPIF Co-chair Geoff Geupel welcomed participants and invited self-introductions among all present. Items on the agenda included: 1) CalPIF Coordinator position, and 2) State Wildlife Grants (SWG).

- 1) **CalPIF Coordinator**--Sandy Scoggin accepted a position with the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture, thus will be stepping down as CalPIF Coordinator. Funding is available to continue this position on a part-time basis for an additional year, although a permanent funding source should be researched. Kim Kreitinger of PRBO Conservation Science has expressed interest in assuming the CalPIF Coordinator

duties. Committee members discussed a handout highlighting the Coordinator's role and attempted to prioritize responsibilities.

The CalPIF newsletter was discussed in detail. The newsletter provides summaries of past CalPIF accomplishments and highlights future changes. The newsletter has traditionally been the responsibility of the Coordinator, though it is becoming increasingly difficult to dedicate the necessary time. Many members expressed the need to broaden the target audience of the newsletter to include readers that are not currently affiliated with CalPIF. Biologists from CalTrans, California Dept of Fish and Game, and regional water districts were suggested as outreach targets. Also discussed was the possibility of an electronic format rather than a paper newsletter. Some felt that an electronic newsletter would be more cost efficient and environmentally conscience; others felt that an electronic format would further exacerbate the problem of email overload.

State Wildlife Grants—Congress passed the Conservation Trust Fund (“CARA lite”) in 2001 at \$50 million overall (\$2.4 m to CA). Funds are to focus on non-game species and are intended to reduce the need for listing many species and for costly recovery efforts. Bob Allen explained that approximately 33% of the SWG funds allocated to California would be used to develop a comprehensive wildlife conservation plan. This plan will ideally integrate elements of CalPIF BCPs and other regional plans to address a broad range of wildlife and associated habitats. Remaining SWG funds will be spent on a statewide biological monitoring program and California Dept of Fish and Game land management. Geoff Geupel expressed the need for NGOs to be involved in the planning process for SWG funds and emphasized the importance of utilizing the BCPs in the comprehensive wildlife plan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS—Geoff Geupel reminded members that CalPIF co-chair is a term position. Members should be thinking about new nominations. It was suggested that Geoff create a Roles and Responsibilities document for the CalPIF co-chair position.

Dates and location of next CalPIF meeting were discussed. Potential dates were **November 6-7, 2003** and **November 13-14, 2003**. The meeting will focus on desert conservation, thus possible venues were the Granite Mountains and James Reserve in the Mojave Desert. The Executive Steering Committee may have a separate meeting at the Central Valley Birding Symposium in Stockton, **Nov 20-23, 2003**.

John Robinson is acquainted with a nature videographer that is interested in creating a documentary to explain the goals of Partners In Flight. The video would highlight PIF accomplishments on a national and international level. This could be an important outreach tool to agencies and private landowners to show how PIF can be effective. Some committee members felt an international scope might be too broad, and that the focus should be California or the western region.

COMMITTEE UPDATES—

AGENCY INTEGRATION COMMITTEE
CHAIR-Dan Strait

PARTICIPANTS: Karen Fullen, Tina Mark, Geoff Geupel, Kelly Sorenson, John Alexander, Chris McCreedy, Aaron Holmes, Bill Hamilton, Myrnie Mayville, Ryan Burnett

1- Forest Management Planning:

Four S. California Forests (Angeles, San Bernardino, Los Padres, Cleveland) are revising their forest plans. They have held public hearings and are now developing alternatives. CA PIF would like recommendations from applicable BCPs included in the plans. The Draft EIS for the plans are scheduled to be out for public review in January 2004. The Chair suggested that would be an appropriate time for CA PIF to provide comments regarding BCP recommendations. Tina Mark and others in attendance felt it important to get our comments in immediately before the alternatives are developed, a feeling that was reinforced by John Robinson during the committee report to the general meeting. Dan Strait agreed to contact Brad Burmark at the USFS to inquire if there is still time to provide comment during the effects analysis prior to DEIS development. Kelly Sorenson agreed to assist in providing comments to the Forests where needed.

John Alexander brought up the concept of Forest Plan Indicator Species, and a discussion ensued about BCP Focal Species as Indicator Species in forest plans. CalPIF should consider recommending to the Forest Service that BCP Focal Species be used as Indicator Species where appropriate. CalPIF recommendations could be conducted at the regional level. Alexander agreed to work to initiate that effort. In future meetings the committee will draft a strategy on indicator species.

Dan Strait, Committee Chair, announced that several N. CA forests will start the first phase of their plan revisions in 2004. The committee looks to its effort to provide comment on the S. CA forest as “cutting our teeth” on the process so that we can be more actively engaged from the start in those N. CA forest planning efforts.

The committee will work with the USFS to address CalPIF priorities in forest plans in the following ways;

- A general statement in the opening section of the Forest Plans that one of the goals of the plan is to help contribute to CalPIF priorities.
- Recommend that the Forests adopt as many as possible of the BCP Focal Species for Indicator Species in the plans.
- Incorporate BCP recommendations into the plans.

It was noted that there are a USFS/FWS MOU and an Executive Order compelling the Forest Service to consider songbirds and migratory birds in their forest planning. Noting the presence of those documents may encourage the Forest Service to consider CalPIF priorities if they haven't already.

2- Strategize on how to take advantage of WHIP (and other Farm Bill Program) monies. Availability of WHIP and other Farm Bill Program funds for habitat restoration is typically intermittent. The committee discussed how to best integrate landbirds into WHIP projects. Dan Strait passed around an example of a WHIP ranking form for the committee to review and expressed the opinion that it will be difficult to work at the programmatic level to get increased consideration for songbirds. (i.e., it will be difficult to add extra consideration for songbirds on the ranking form because duck, shorebird, and waterbird people are also vying for consideration by the program). After discussion it was felt the best way to ensure that songbirds are considered in NRCS restoration programs is to work on a project-by-project basis with local NRCS offices to ensure that staff is aware of the BCPs and their recommendations, and for CalPIF to urge them to consider those recommendations in their habitat restoration project planning.

3- Try to get the FWS, Trinity River Restoration Program, Redwood Sciences Lab, DFG watershed groups and other anadromous fish efforts to consider migratory birds in their fish and aquatic habitat survey and restoration activities (= fish + bugs + birds). Get fisheries biologists to compare fish and instream habitat objectives with the Riparian BCP habitat objectives to see where they mesh and where they can be incorporated. Compare fish data with riparian data. Work with the programs to update their survey protocol for canopy cover, riparian habitat etc. Lots of potential to obtain bird habitat information through instream surveys (i.e., instead of just recording percent canopy cover, record plant species presence and percent canopy cover of each species to achieve a measure of veg. diversity).

Fish programs are prime candidates for PIF outreach. Conduct PIF power point presentations at different offices and programs.

4- FWS Endangered Species Office outreach;
The Chair has had preliminary discussions with the Sacramento Recovery Program about incorporating BCP recommendations into FWS Recovery Plans. The Chair will continue the outreach.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

CHAIR-Melissa Pitkin

PARTICIPANTS: River Gates, Dennis Jongsomjit, Russell Nickerson, Todd Sloat

1. Review Purpose and Vision- as determined at the November 2002 meeting:

PURPOSE: Increase awareness of bird conservation in target audiences.

VISION: CalPIF Riparian Bird Conservation messages will be disseminated to a wide variety of audiences through various media and incorporated into education and outreach programs throughout California.

2. Updates from last meeting, review minutes, pass out table of contacts

We reviewed minutes and Melissa passed out a table containing contact information of educators in California who are conducting bird education projects. The table will soon be available on-line on the education page of the CPIF website (www.prbo.org/calpif/education.html). We are always looking to add new names and contacts!

3. Riparian Bird Conservation Plan Education Chapter revision

Melissa is revising the education chapter of the Riparian Bird Conservation Plan. A new version will be out in mid September. Please review the new draft plan and provide comments to Melissa by email mpitkin@prbo.org. The new draft is available online at the CalPIF education website (www.prbo.org/calpif/education.html). Please fill in the table of resources, our goal is to have a comprehensive table of resources for educators, managers, and the general public that outlines what is available for riparian and bird education and how people can get a hold of it.

Action: review the plan draft and provide comments to Melissa.

4. Do we want to publish a resource guide for CA, similar to the National Resource Guide?

Melissa posed this question to the group following the lead of the National PIF publication of a few years ago entitled “A Guide to Bird Education Resources.” After a discussion, we decided a similar publication would be good for CA Bird Education Resources. It would outline what is available and how to get it for all bird education resources in CA. We will make sure that all activities meet state and/or National standards for education.

Money is needed for printing. We envisioned it being a couple page booklet printed on newsprint. We brainstormed some partners to include and possibilities for funding: Audubon-state and local chapters, small grant opportunities specifically for printing, agency interpretive associations (specifically the Plumas Interpretive Association which may be able to print or contribute to the printing of this document.)

Action: start compiling information on resources including name, brief description, contact info, and cost. Please send to mpitkin@prbo.org.

Action: Keep your eyes out for funding ideas.

5. Do we want to put together a Riparian Bird Education Kit? Containing focal species flash cards, posters etc? Sort of modeled after the Songbird Blues Kit?

We decided that a good goal would be to produce a CalPIF educators kit by next Fall(?). This would be similar to the Songbird Blues Kit of the Montana Natural History Center. It would contain activities and mainly resources like posters, species

flash cards for focal species by habitat, data collection activities for high school students, etc.

We need to get teacher feedback on what should be included. Many teachers want posters, games, and people in the classroom, not necessarily a curriculum binder. We also need to make sure what ever we make is used by teachers, not shelved. River Gates volunteered to create a teacher survey to distribute to teachers. Let her know if you have a teacher who would be willing to fill it out. rgates@prbo.org.

Discussed whether we can make these available for free or sell them. It depends on funding. One idea is to have them at nature centers etc. for teachers to check out in addition to selling them.

Action: let Melissa know other ideas for things to include and what you think about this idea.

Action: think about funding ideas for production

6. Other ideas for CalPIF education projects

- Create CalPIF specific activities or get CalPIF messages incorporated into The National Feathered Frenzie. Todd Sloat will follow up on the contact info for this. It is a National science program where teams of students must learn species id, and general info on a list of species and then take a test. Todd mentioned he has been asked for help by some students before and perhaps it would be a good thing for us to get involved with to make sure it is addressing some of the CalPIF bird conservation messages.
- Create a bibliography of fiction or natural history books on birds or ecology in the West. We could maintain this on the website. This again arose from a lack of information on west coast birds and issues.
- Create an activity for high school students centered on data collection and analysis. We could provide teachers with abbreviated data sets that they could play around with as a follow up to a mist netting demonstration. River will follow up with Grant Ballard on this.
- Outreach focused on private lands

RESEARCH AND MONITORING COMMITTEE CHAIR-Bob Allen

PARTICIPANTS: Sherry Hudson, Grant Ballard, Sacha Heath, Jason Scott, Erica Lindgren, Tim Burr, Amy Scarpignato

We decided to add a new page to the website with/to:

- Links to PIF standardized monitoring protocols
- Literature/bibliography relevant to key issues
- Advantages and disadvantages of various field methods hand-out (from Stat Handbook)
- Links to other resources, such as Natural Diversity Database
- Summary of research priorities from the plans (Sherry Hudson)
- Emphasis on training/consistency/approved monitoring methods
- Facilitate linkages between researchers

We also brainstormed recommended highest priority research topics that may go beyond what the individual plans call for:

- Creating a map of wintering ranges of California's birds and where our wintering birds come from.
 - need communication with UCLA and others who have worked on genetics and isotope data for California's birds.
- Generate population targets for State Wildlife Grants or seek funding from SWG to accomplish this.
- Focal species analysis – how well does the focal species approach work? Are species being missed? Follow up on Chase et al. MS from Asilomar
- Summary of regions of need for research/monitoring projects (Sacha)

Add link to Tricolored Blackbird survey pages from CalPIF pages (Grant)

COMMUNICATION AND RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIR-Sandy Scoggin

PARTICIPANTS: Heather Chase, Kim Kreitinger, Mark Reynolds, John Robinson, Steve Zack

Members discussed the need to create a concise, actionable message regarding the purpose of CalPIF that can be communicated to diverse groups. This message should emphasize CalPIF's strengths and successes as well as its future direction. John Robinson suggested creating a communication strategy to craft this message and better articulate what CalPIF represents. The communication strategy would address some of the following questions:

- What are the impacts that CalPIF wishes to have?
- What are the products CalPIF wishes to deliver?
- Who utilizes the BCPs and how are these groups implementing the recommendations?

Committee members further discussed the PIF video and the possibility of using CalPIF as a template. Decreasing the scope of the video may be more appropriate for local landowners.

DATABASE: Grant Ballard gave an update on the progress of the CalPIF database. The database incorporates range maps for all BCP focal species and includes current and historic distributions. The maps also outline confirmed, probable, and possible breeding areas for each species. The database allows the user to query by plan/habitat, focal species, station name, or project name. Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data may supplement current data in the future. Further information on the CalPIF database can be found at: <http://www.prbo.org/calpif/data.html>

IBAs: Dan Cooper discussed the Important Bird Area (IBA) project. Criteria for IBAs include:

- >10% of CA/1% of global population (breeding and or wintering) of 1 or more sensitive taxa
- > 10 listed/sensitive species regularly occurring
- > 10,000 shorebirds possible on a 1-day period
- >5000 waterfowl possible on a 1-day count

Dan addressed 3 projects that were identified as having high threat levels that benefited from the IBA program: the Owens Gorge, the Santa Clara River, and Moro Rock.

Further information on the Important Bird Areas program can be found at: <http://ca.audubon.org/IBA.htm>.

FARM BILL: Karen Fullen discussed the status of the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), part of the 2002 Farm Bill Conservation Program. The GRP offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property.

For 2003, funding will be available to buy conservation easements, however no money is available for restoration projects. The landowner must submit applications for conservation easements. Therefore, landtrusts cannot directly submit applications. The conservation easements will allow grazing, haying, fence construction, but will not allow any activity that would disturb soil surface. Further information on the Grassland Reserve Program can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP/index.html>.

OR/WA PIF: John Alexander discussed the successes of OR/WA PIF. They recently completed an 8-year point count monitoring effort in late-successional conifer forests and riparian. OR/WA PIF has sponsored several bird monitoring workshops that focus on bird identification and point count training. Also, the Oregon Bird Conservation Plans are underway. OR/WA PIF hopes to begin monitoring programs for certain bird species such as Purple Martin, Black Swift, and small owls that are not adequately monitored with current methods. Further information on Oregon/Washington Partners In Flight can be found at: <http://community.gorge.net/natres/pif.html>.

DESERT PLAN: Chris McCreedy gave an update on the desert bird conservation plan. The plan will include both the Mojave and Sonoran desert, thus will cross state and national borders. Funding has been secured from several sources and AZ Fish and Game may also contribute. Chris will prepare a list of desert bird species nominations to be discussed at the November meeting.

Geoff Geupel concluded the meeting with a presentation on “Developing Population Objectives for CA Landbirds.”

MOUNTAIN MEADOW SYMPOSIUM: A Coordinated Approach to the Conservation of Birds in Mountain Meadows of California.

This symposium successfully incorporated experts in the fields of ornithology, conservation, restoration, and land management to devise strategies to protect the biodiversity of California’s meadow ecosystems. Presentations were divided into 3 different sessions: Habitat and Management, Bird Ecology, and Planning. Thanks to all of the speakers that contributed their time and knowledge to this symposium. Manuscripts from this symposium may be eligible for publication in the journal of Conservation Biology. Please send abstracts to Mark Reynolds mreynolds@tnc.org by August 30, 2003.