

# Department of Defense Partners in Flight

## 2015 Annual Report



### THE CONSERVATION OF BIRDS AND THEIR HABITATS ON DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE LANDS





**Partners in Flight** / Compañeros en Vuelo / Partenaires d'Envol was launched in 1990 in response to growing concerns about declines in the populations of many land bird species, and in order to emphasize the conservation of birds not covered by existing conservation initiatives. The initial focus was on neotropical migrants, species that breed in the Nearctic (North America) and winter in the Neotropics (Central and South America), but the focus has spread to include most landbirds and other

species requiring terrestrial habitats. The central premise of Partners in Flight has been that the resources of public and private organizations in North and South America must be combined, coordinated, and increased in order to achieve success in conserving bird populations in this hemisphere. Partners in Flight is a cooperative effort involving partnerships among federal, state, and local government agencies, philanthropic foundations, professional organizations, conservation groups, industry, the academic community, and private individuals.



Managing over 25 million acres on hundreds of installations, the Department of Defense (DoD) plays a key role in Partners in Flight.

DoD lands represent a critical network of habitats for Neotropical migratory birds, offering migratory stopover areas for resting and feeding, and suitable sites for nesting and rearing their young. A large workforce of dedicated DoD biologists and natural resource managers implement a vast array of initiatives and management actions to conserve and enhance these valuable habitats and public lands. **DoD Partners in Flight** helps facilitate various bird conservation activities and initiatives that include all species of birds. A network of DoD natural resource professionals work as DoD Partners in Flight Representatives to support and communicate with installation resource managers, state and regional Partners in Flight working groups, non-government organizations, academic researchers, and natural resource consultants to collectively promote and coordinate bird conservation across DoD lands.



Bald Eagle drawing by DoD Partners in Flight representative Julie Jeter, USAF



In 1990, Congress passed legislation establishing DoD's **Legacy Resource Management Program** (Legacy) to fund projects that help DoD preserve our nation's natural and cultural heritage. Legacy helps DoD protect and enhance these resources in ways that enable military readiness activities. Three principles guide Legacy: stewardship, leadership, and partnership. Stewardship initiatives help DoD safeguard its irreplaceable resources for future generations. By embracing a leadership role as part of the program, the DoD serves as a model for respectful use of natural and cultural resources. Through partnerships, the Program strives to access the knowledge and talents of individuals outside of DoD. The Legacy Program provides the main financial support for high priority bird conservation efforts that cannot be funded at the installation level – especially those that are regional and encompass lands managed by more than one Military Service. Since 1991, through Legacy support to its Partners in Flight network, DoD has provided approximately \$38.9 million for bird and bird habitat conservation projects.

*Cover artwork: Eastern Bluebird drawing by DoD PIF representative Julie Jeter*

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<http://www.dodpif.org>

## INTRODUCTION

It has long been apparent that Department of Defense (DoD) installations and ranges provide valuable avian breeding, nesting, and overwintering habitat. In addition, DoD lands provide critical "steppingstones" of habitat for birds during their annual migrations to and from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. To mirror similar efforts being implemented through the National and International Partners in Flight (PIF) networks, DoD's collective bird conservation programs and activities are called *DoD Partners in Flight*. Since 1991, when the DoD first partnered with the budding PIF initiative, DoD has been a leader in bird conservation and worked to blend conservation actions with military preparedness on its lands.

DoD PIF works with internal and external partners to develop cooperative conservation programs, to identify and promote bird research that is needed to support the DoD mission, and to provide consulting, outreach, and educational support directly to our DoD installations. The *Strategic Plan for Bird Conservation and Management on DoD Lands*, signed in 2014, outlines the initiatives and efforts of DoD PIF and should be referenced for further information on DoD PIF. This report summarizes some of the accomplishments made by DoD PIF, installations, and natural resource managers toward priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan from mid-2014 through 2015.

As signatories to the federal PIF Memorandum of Agreement, the DoD Military Service branches are part of the national PIF steering committees. A lead DoD representative, appointed by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Environment, Safety & Occupational Health), and a National Coordinator promote and coordinate bird conservation efforts within DoD through the DoD Natural Resources Program. A network of biologists and natural resource managers, collectively referred to as the DoD PIF Steering Committee, represent DoD PIF in various Working Groups. DoD PIF representatives support installation natural resource managers, cultivate and maintain positive working relationships with partners, develop cooperative agreements for implementing bird conservation programs and projects on military lands, facilitate communication and information sharing across geographical and political boundaries, and participate and provide leadership in various state, regional, and national PIF Working Groups and committees.

The DoD PIF "*Strategic Plan for Bird Conservation and Management on DoD Lands*" identifies actions compatible and supportive of the military mission that achieve the overall PIF goal of maintaining secure populations of priority birds (Figure 1). In addition, DoD PIF Working Groups are in place to support and promote actions related to these priorities. The DoD PIF Steering Committee annual planning workshop provides guidance to DoD PIF on development and ongoing bird conservation priorities for DoD.

## DoD PIF MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

### THE DoD PARTNERS IN FLIGHT POLICY

Promote and support our partnership role in the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats by protecting vital DoD lands and ecosystems, enhancing biodiversity, and maintaining healthy and productive natural systems consistent with the military mission.

### DoD BIRD CONSERVATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

DoD's primary bird conservation goals and objectives are to:

- Apply information collected from this partnership to support DoD mission requirements.
- Take proactive management actions to prevent bird species from reaching threatened or endangered status.
- Facilitate cooperative partnership efforts consistent with the military mission.
- Determine the status of migratory and resident bird populations on DoD lands and the causes of population fluctuations.
- Help Air Station Commanders manage birds and habitats in ways that reduce the incidence of bird-aircraft strikes.
- Maintain and restore priority habitats on DoD lands for migratory and resident bird populations.
- Reduce or eliminate pesticide use in sensitive habitats, especially in and around wetlands and riparian areas.
- Reduce the spread and impact to birds and their habitats of invasive and nuisance species on military lands, including feral and free-roaming cats.

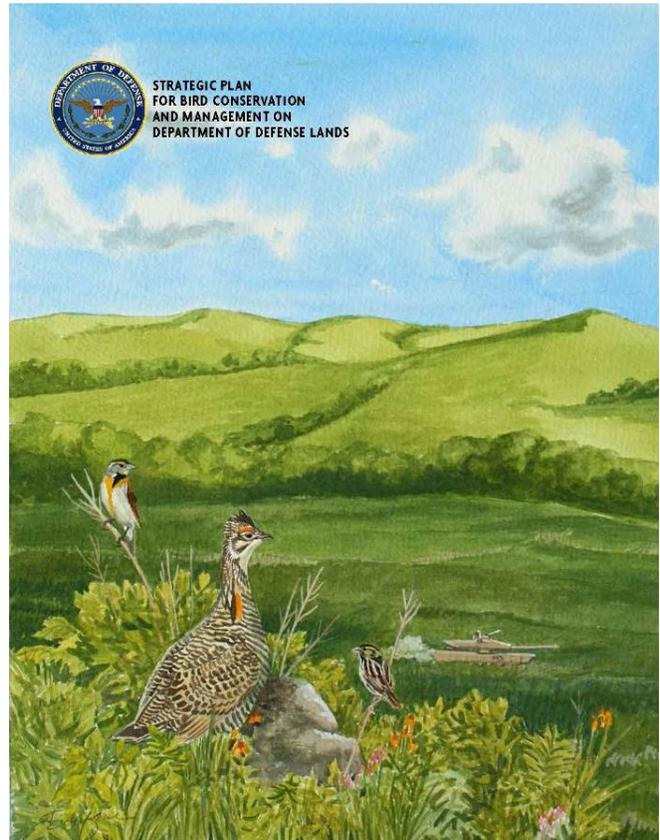


Figure 1. The *Strategic Plan for Bird Conservation and Management on Department of Defense Lands* was signed in 2014.

To help advance research and conservation actions, DoD PIF reviews all bird related pre-proposals and proposals submitted to the DoD's Legacy Resource Management Program (Legacy). Reviewers rank proposals using 10 criteria, and use overall scores to prioritize all Legacy bird proposals. Legacy encourages potential research projects based on priorities in the *Strategic Plan for Bird Conservation and Management on DoD Lands*. Assistance is given to those preparing proposals to more effectively meet Legacy criteria and DoD priorities.

## 2015 DoD PIF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DoD PIF supports and sustains the military mission through our efforts to keep common birds common and avoid species endangerment. Details on DoD PIF's 2015 accomplishments follow.

- **DoD PIF Annual Planning Meeting.** Members of the DoD PIF Steering Committee held their annual planning meeting April 15-17, 2015 in Jacksonville, FL in conjunction with the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) Federal Partners* course. Appendix 1 contains the meeting notes.
- **DoD PIF Steering Committee Consults with NAS Jacksonville.** DoD PIF Steering Committee provided inputs to NAS Jacksonville natural resources manager Angela Glass regarding nesting Least Terns. Multiple rooftops on NAS Jacksonville need replacement, but currently provide nesting habitat for the MBTA protected Atlantic Coast Least Terns. In addition, the nesting tern colony presents a significant Bird/Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) concern due to helicopter operations and an active runway adjacent to the colony. The DoD PIF Steering Committee visited the nesting sites with base personnel on April 15, 2015 (Figure 2) and provided input on how the installation could protect the safety of aircraft and personnel, while avoiding or minimizing impacts to the nesting Least Terns.



Figure 2. DoD PIF Steering Committee meets with NAS Jacksonville staff to provide guidance on Least Terns nesting on a Navy roof, April 15, 2015.

- **Migratory Bird Conservation for Federal Partners Training Course.** The first offering of this course occurred at NAS Jacksonville, FL, April 13-15. There were 40 participants (37 Navy, one Army, one Army Guard, and one Air Force). Significant course topics included MBTA compliance, understanding the Migratory Bird "Readiness" Rule, and incidental take of migratory birds. Instructors worked with natural resources managers at NAS Jacksonville and Naval Station Mayport to address migratory bird issues. One major topic was the in-depth discussion regarding the Migratory Bird "Readiness" Rule, its application to military readiness activities, its misinterpretation,

and its invocation without due process in National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) planning documentation. There is a lot of confusion about what constitutes a readiness activity; as DoD does not want U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to define a readiness activity within the Migratory Bird “Readiness” Rule. The outcome of this discussion was a request for information on how natural resources managers are misusing the rule. The Federal Register defines the Rule and its application. The second and third Migratory Bird Conservation for Federal Partners Training offerings for 2015 were held in San Diego, CA (August 18-20) and Honolulu, HI (December 8-10).

- The DoD PIF Steering Committee sat-in on the last day of the Migratory Bird Conservation for Federal Partners Training Course at NAS Jacksonville, FL, and then met separately April 16-17 after the training course ended. The Committee reinvigorated working groups and addressed a variety of priority issues, including BASH, monitoring, improving Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans (INRMPs), and working with USFWS to obtain a checklist of the top ten mistakes that agencies make during the NEPA process. The Steering Committee also assembled a working group to provide a detailed summary of DoD PIF activities from the last half of Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 and all of FY 2015.
- **Contributions to *Natural Selections***
  - Rich Fischer has contributed to the winter 2013-2014, summer 2014, fall 2014, and spring 2015 issues of *Natural Selections*.
  - Rich Fischer wrote a cover article for the spring 2015 issue of the *Natural Selections* newsletter that focused on Section 7(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), implementing endangered species recovery in a coordinated fashion.
    - The article includes information about how this process has worked for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). USACE and the Military Services spend \$325M per year on endangered species. Section 7 (a)(1) coordination saves money in the long term, improves mission capabilities, and helps species numbers. Rich would like to hear thoughts from DoD installations and others on riparian habitat creation in the southwest, primarily to help the Least Bell’s Vireo, but also for other cross cutting opportunities across the military.
- **USFWS/DoD Migratory Birds Monthly Meeting**
  - February 23, 2015: Discussion topics included: the status of the Notice of Intent (NOI) by USFWS to develop a process for incidental take permits under the MBTA; NEPA concerns on how to address MBTA; how to work together to implement parts of the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); eagle incidental take permits; an update of implementing language for the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (<http://acap.aq/>); and the Migratory Bird Conservation, Compliance, and Management workshops.
  - March 30, 2015: Key discussion topics included: an update on the incidental take NOI from USFWS; requested NEPA guidance for migratory birds from USFWS; and the Migratory Bird Council’s theme for 2016-2018.
    - Eric Kershner is stepping down as the lead coordinator between USFWS and DoD. Lesley Kordella is filling Eric’s position. Eric was previously at Marine

Corps Base Camp Pendleton, so there may be an impact from losing someone with DoD experience.

- May 21, 2015: Key discussion topics included: an update on the NOI for incidental take permits under the MBTA; an overview of tools to fill conservation gaps; and ongoing concerns about Whooping Cranes and aerial training by Nebraska Army National Guard. These discussions helped to proactively address issues that could impact testing, training, and operations on DoD installations.

- **Internal DoD Migratory Birds Monthly Meeting**

On behalf of the DoD's Natural Resources Program director, Rich leads the DoD Migratory Bird Working Group, which is comprised of headquarters staff from the Military Services. Conference calls are held bimonthly to identify high priority DoD migratory bird issues. As needed, these issues are put forward for discussion with USFWS's Office of Migratory Bird Management. Rich provides updates on migratory bird issues at the monthly DoD Conservation Committee meetings.

- March 24, 2015: The group discussed the status of the NOI for incidental take permits under the MBTA, the top 10 NEPA issues fact sheet, an update to the DoD/USFWS Migratory Bird MOU, the USFWS Migratory Bird Liaison to DoD, and the Army National Guard issue with Whooping Cranes in Nebraska.
- April 27, 2015: Key discussion topics included the Migratory Bird Conservation for Federal Partners training course, the latest DoD PIF Steering Committee meeting, the USFWS' incidental take NOI, USFWS withdrawing the Greater Sage-Grouse bi-state Distinct Population Segment (DPS) listing proposal, and the White House Pollinator Initiative. These discussions help to explain migratory bird requirements to installation staff, and prepare Military Service representatives to proactively address issues that could impact testing, training, and operations in their monthly conversations with USFWS representatives.
- May 15, 2015: The group discussed the Migratory Bird Conservation for Federal Partners training course, the latest DoD PIF Steering Committee meeting, the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA) Bird Conservation Working Group, the NOI for incidental take permits under MBTA, and Section 7(a)(1) of the ESA and how DoD can use it as a recovery tool for endangered species.

## **2015 REGIONAL NETWORK ACTIVITY**

A substantial workforce of highly dedicated DoD biologists and natural resources managers work on DoD installations that represent a wide spectrum of avian habitats, bird communities, and conservation needs. The scope of this work is substantial in both area and effort, and frequently, if not typically, at the leading edge of innovation, adaptive management, and avian science. The DoD PIF network of regional and technical representatives provides support to DoD installations to promote these bird conservation efforts and provides installation personnel with the most up-to-date information on bird conservation and management. Some examples of regional and installation accomplishments and activities for 2015 include:

## NORTHEAST

- **Golden-winged Warbler Research at Fort Drum, NY.** USFWS is currently considering listing the Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA), a species that breeds throughout much of Fort Drum, NY as a federally threatened species under the ESA. Hybridization with Blue-winged Warbler (BWWA) plays a major role in the GWWA decline. To better understand GWWA and BWWA dynamics on Fort Drum, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology (CLO) biologists collected blood samples from 121 GWWA, BWWA, and hybrids during 2015, and measured numerous habitat variables at each capture site. CLO is analyzing blood samples to determine the genotypes of all captured birds and how many phenotypic GWWA or BWWA were cryptic hybrids. CLO will compare these genotypes to vegetation data to determine if there are any habitat conditions that favor genetically pure GWWAs. While on Fort Drum, CLO biologists captured 25 GWWA and BWWA and placed geolocators on them. They will return to Fort Drum in 2016 to recover as many geolocators as possible in order to determine where these birds overwinter. These projects will help answer GWWA questions that are critical to species management with minimal impact to the military mission, which will be especially useful if USFWS should list this species. Point of contact: Jeff Bolsinger.
- **Peregrine Falcon nest monitoring supports military mission at NAS Patuxent River, MD.** NAS Patuxent River historically has had Peregrine Falcons nesting on target structures within their training Range. Natural resources staff conduct monitoring surveys to determine the presence/absence of nesting Peregrines on each of the targets (e.g., Bloodsworth Island, Hannibal Target Ship, Point No Point Light, etc.). This allows them to determine when targets are available for mission use and permits immediate target use when nesting territories are vacant and the resumption as soon as young fledge and leave the nest site. Point of contact: Kyle Rambo
- **Biologists work to reduce BASH threats on NAS Patuxent River, MD.** Data from past and current bird inventory and monitoring surveys is contributing to local BASH reduction efforts. Staff incorporate these data into the official Wildlife Hazard Assessments performed for each of the airfields. Flight planners and squadron safety officers for hazard avoidance receive results of the weekly waterfowl surveys and other monitoring efforts. Forensic analysis of study skin voucher specimens from bird strike remains, collected under salvage authority, resulted in habitat modification activities on the airfield. In addition, NAS Patuxent River biologists assist with planning and permitting for dispersal and depredation to keep Ospreys from nesting on mission critical structures (e.g., as radars, theodolites, range clearance cameras, range calibration poles, etc.), thus preventing serious safety hazards. Point of contact: Kyle Rambo
- **Natural resources support facilitates construction projects at NAS Patuxent River, MD.** Our establishment and protection (through facilities planning involvement) of large forest blocks for Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS), as well as documentation of usage by these species of concern, is acknowledged as important mitigation and streamlines permitting and consultation for a number of other large facility construction projects. Point of contact: Kyle Rambo

- **Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan assists in Navy sand replenishment project, NAS Oceana, VA.** At NAS Oceana Dam Neck Annex, the beaches and dunes are the installation's only protection from the ocean and thus protect all military actions occurring on the installation. The installation's INRMP required surveying and management efforts on a stretch of beach where Piping Plovers and Red Knots could occur. The coordinated bird monitoring efforts (5 year comprehensive inventories and annual shorebird surveys) and the survey results were sufficient to allow USFWS to make a quick informed decision with regards to ESA and MBTA requirements. The INRMP and its bird survey data allowed the Navy to conduct a beach and dune sand replenishment project in Piping Plover and Red Knot habitat, thus allowing valuable training to continue. Point of Contact: Michael Wright.
- **Monitoring efforts support the mission at NAS Oceana, VA.** At NAS Oceana, NAS Oceana Dam Neck Annex, Naval Auxiliary Landing Field (NALF) Fentress, and Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads Northwest Annex, the Navy just finalized the first true comprehensive coordinated bird monitoring inventory effort (utilizing the protocols as described by the Coordinated Bird Monitoring (CBM) manual that DoD PIF helped put together). The results of these studies are actively being utilized for NEPA documentation and have helped in coordinating permit requirements with USFWS. NAS Oceana also has a partnership with U.S. Department of Agriculture to help conduct monthly BASH bird surveys at NAS Oceana and NALF Fentress. In addition, the Navy is currently working on a project to stop and relocate a manure spreading operation that is currently attracting a wide variety of birds to the end of an active runway at NAS Oceana. Without these survey efforts, the Navy would not be able to obtain appropriate permitting to continue flight operations, or establish appropriate habitat management efforts to create a safer military flight operations environment. Point of contact: Michael Wright.
- **Habitat management promotes Army training and wildlife at Fort Belvoir, VA.** The Fort Belvoir INRMP identifies the Prairie Warbler as a habitat indicator species for early-successional habitat and requires habitat management for 50 Prairie Warblers. During the 2014 breeding season, the Army recorded no Prairie Warblers at the Training Area Site during the breeding season. Therefore, the Army identified a 35-acre project to address the significant decline of Prairie Warblers during the past several breeding seasons. The project cut all trees greater than 17' tall in the identified project area to enhance early-successional habitat, which provided critical breeding/nesting habitat for the Prairie Warbler (a PIF Species of Continental Concern), and the Brown Thrasher and Eastern Towhee (PIF Species of Regional Concern). Additionally, the habitat project will benefit the American Woodcock, and various other mammals, amphibians, wildlife. The early-successional habitat will also provide numerous songbirds and habitat generalists benefits during the breeding season, over winter, and during migration. The project was completed in an active training area where overgrowth was taking over the edges of a helicopter pad, so the effort directly benefitted training capability. Specifically, by undertaking this project, the Army lowered the vegetation in this area thus improving pad safety for helicopter landing usage. Soldiers are now able to conduct realistic High Capacity Signal Training in the area – previously, soldiers used the roads because the vegetation around the pad was too high. Point of contact: Greg Fleming.

## SOUTHEAST

- **Prescribed burns benefit the military mission and bird conservation at Fort Lee, VA.** The Army conducted two prescribed burns for the purpose of enhancing herbaceous growth and promoting better migratory bird habitat. In addition, the burns removed several dangerous trees and hazardous logs and brush that were impeding the safe use of their Land Navigation (Land NAV) area. In addition, Fort Lee performed a complimentary project, conducting invasive species removal, which opened more new herbaceous growth habitat for ground-nesting birds, while greatly enhancing the use of the Land NAV exercise area as well as providing new placement locations for Situational Training Exercise lanes. Point of contact: Dana Bradshaw.
- **Natural resources coordination helps save money and increase training days for the Army.** Fort Lee reviewed the grounds maintenance contract and modified it to significantly reduce the mowing frequency on their Drop Zone, which is used for parachute and sling-load training. The rationale was to increase the grass height to discourage Canada Goose use and increase cover for grassland birds. In doing so, they cut thousands of dollars off the Army mowing contract, and increased the number of training days, since training opportunities now need to be coordinated with mowing schedules much less frequently. Point of contact: Dana Bradshaw.

## WEST

- **Bald Eagles and Luke Air Force Base (AFB), AZ.** For two decades, Luke AFB (56th Range Management Office) has been contributing to Arizona's bald eagle recovery efforts and serving as a member of the southwest bald eagle management committee. Because, in part, of Air Force's efforts, Arizona's breeding bald eagle population has significantly increased, allowing Luke AFB the opportunity to reduce an avoidance buffer during training flights from 1 nautical mile to 2,000 ft. The reduced buffer provides pilots a more cost-effective and realistic flight scenario. Point of contact: John Arnett.
- **Working Relationships Help Support Army Training at Fort Wainwright, AK.** Staff at Fort Wainwright work closely with the USFWS to maintain open training areas. One example of the positive outcomes this relationship can have is demonstrated in the following example: Fort Wainwright needed to implement a project on River Road. River Road is the only connection to several local training areas on Ft. Wainwright. The road can be accessed by a Stryker, and is the road that allows access to Wainwright's Ammo Supply Point. Without remediation, the road was in jeopardy of eroding away. If the road eroded, the Army would have had to conduct its Stryker training at Yukon Training Area (YTA), which is roughly a 40-mile drive from Fort Wainwright, and would have had to build an alternate Ammo Supply Point at YTA. Without the Ammo Supply Point, the unit would be training without ammunition or hauling ammo with a smaller vehicle. In addition to the increased costs and delays this workaround would have caused, there are seasonal restrictions that prevent Strykers from traveling on public roads, so Stryker training at YTA would not be an option for several weeks in the spring. The extra travel time, construction, and lack of access

to training areas would add additional costs to the training budget. In sum, the eroding bank was jeopardizing the only access to a training area being used by the Stryker vehicles. However, restoring the 700' of stream bank involved addressing anadromous waters, wetlands, and waters of the US – making it a controversial project that required significant coordination among multiple agencies. Additionally, the project needed to be completed before the annual fall freeze and before the end of the fiscal year; waiting until spring would have meant losing unexpended fiscal year-end funds, and resulted in delays to training activities. Due to the personal, trust-based relationship that USFWS has with Ft. Wainwright natural resources staff, USFWS agreed to expedite their review, providing approval in 48 hours (vs. the standard response time of 20 days). The quick turnaround allowed the project to move forward. If USFWS had been unwilling to respond in a timely manner, the training area would have been unusable for the entire next summer and additional funds would have been needed to complete the project. Point of contact: John Haddix.

- **DoD PIF Steering Committee stays on top of new and upcoming issues in order to prevent impacts to the mission.** DoD PIF West Representative Tiffany Shepherd was made aware by USFWS Migratory Birds Region 8 personnel of a draft revision circulating within USFWS to the MBTA Depredation Order for the control of crows and cowbirds. The draft revision being proposed within USFWS, and set to be published within the Federal Register, would have required an increased trap-check frequency (up to three checks per day) for cowbird trapping. Due to concerns with how this proposed change may have affected the successful Brown-headed Cowbird trapping programs at multiple DoD installations and the benefit these programs provide to recovery of listed species, Ms. Shepherd sent out a request to all DoD managers thru the DoD PIF listserv for feedback about specific cowbird control programs in order to determine how this potential change might impact them. After receiving many responses from DoD (and USFWS) managers, Ms. Shepherd compiled the responses in a spreadsheet and shared it with the appropriate personnel at USFWS. After the responses were supplied to USFWS, Ms. Shepherd responded to a few more detailed questions from the USFWS Migratory Bird office in D.C. At this time, we have not heard further from USFWS about this potential revision to the Depredation Order. If this change had gone forward and been approved, the increased trap-check requirement would have caused most Brown-headed Cowbird trapping programs to be cost-prohibitive, which would have severely impacted DoD's ability to manage for the recovery of multiple species, including Least Bell's Vireo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Kirtland's Warbler, and Black-capped Vireo. Cowbird trapping programs have been attributed as a primary factor in the recovery of Least Bell's Vireo populations in southern California over the past 30 years (Kus and Whitfield 2005) and the improved status of the Vireos from trapping has in turn reduced encumbrances by this species on the military mission. Point of contact: Tiffany Shepherd.
- **Impacts are analyzed for Migratory Bird "Readiness" Rule (50 CFR Part 21.15) within Silver Strand Training Complex (SSTC) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Naval Base Coronado, CA.** Naval Base Coronado (NBC) exercised the authority of the Migratory Bird "Readiness" Rule within the SSTC EIS (Record of Decision signed Aug 2012), which allowed for military training to proceed without encumbrances due to acquisition of migratory bird take permits. Within the SSTC EIS, the Navy analyzed the potential impacts to migratory birds from proposed increases in military training around San Diego Bay (both

in-water and on land). Some of the potential impacts to migratory birds included noise from pyrotechnics, foot-traffic, vehicle traffic, and underwater detonations. The EIS analyzed these actions by including an estimate of the effect to local and total population levels of migratory birds. This analysis was possible due to the availability of monitoring data, which had been gathered by the Navy over the years, including large-scale waterbird surveys of San Diego Bay completed in collaboration with the San Diego Port Authority. National population estimates were acquired from the PIF population estimate database. Point of contact: Tiffany Shepherd.

- **Funding spent on bird conservation has a direct benefit to the military mission.** NBC maintains a large conservation program, established over the last 35 years through various Biological Opinions and MOU's, to manage for the recovery of the federally-listed California Least Tern and Western Snowy Plover. Currently, NBC manages approximately 18-20% of the California Least Tern population and 3-5% of the Western Snowy Plover population. Because of the Navy's successful efforts to improve the status of these species on NBC, the Navy was able to "take back" three training lanes (41 acres) for use by Navy SEALs and other amphibious commands, which had formerly been off-limits to training during the nesting season. These lanes can now be scheduled for training, if all other lanes are full or if they provide a specific benefit to training. The Navy was also able to decrease training encumbrances from Western Snowy Plover 'nest buffers' by establishing a cap on the total number of nests that could be buffered at one time. This cap ensured that the continued recovery of the plover population would not lead to ever-increasing off-limits areas on the training beaches. These mission-benefitting management measures were established in 2012 with the signing of the SSTC EIS. Point of contact: Tiffany Shepherd
- **Early coordination and careful planning prevent impacts to sensitive species at Naval Base Coronado, CA.** The Record of Decision for the Coastal Campus EIS was signed on June 12, 2015 and supports the development of a state-of-the-art campus for Naval Special Warfare on Naval Base Coronado. The ESA Section 7 Consultation for this large-scale project was completed on-schedule, due to very early coordination between the project proponents and NBC natural resources staff. This coordination allowed the proponents to develop a project footprint that would avoid adverse effects to listed species. In addition, the EIS includes requirements to implement standards for bird-safe building designs, which will reduce impacts to sensitive migratory birds moving along the Pacific Flyway. The minimization measures put in place through this coordination led to money savings through an environmental analysis that was completed on-time, and contributed to continued public support of Navy projects by showing the foresight and care the Navy puts into developing its projects. Point of contact: Tiffany Shepherd.

## MIDWEST

- **Prescribed fires benefit military mission and sensitive species on Fort Riley, KS.** Prescribed burns are conducted on Fort Riley to maintain realistic training environments for the Army. These burns also positively benefit grassland birds, including the severely declining Henslow's Sparrow. This proactive monitoring and management for Henslow's

Sparrow will pay off in the future should this species ever be federally listed. Point of Contact: Jeff Keating

## **TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS 2015 ACTIVITY**

DoD PIF maintains technical Working Groups (WG) comprised of DoD PIF representatives with the expertise and interest to pursue the WG goals and are led by a group chair. Below are lists of the priorities and accomplishments for each of the active 2015 working groups.

### **MONITORING & RESEARCH**

**2015 Members:** R. Fischer (chair), T. Burr, T. Shepherd, D. Bradshaw, J. Arnett, G. Fleming, M. Wright)

#### **Monitoring:**

- Avian monitoring projects on DoD lands historically occur on an as-needed basis. To facilitate sharing of data among our partners, we are actively involved in two Legacy funded projects. The DoD Coordinated Bird Monitoring Plan (Jon Bart, USGS) will provide a detailed vision for bird monitoring on DoD land – what issues to address, what programs exist and how they can be improved; how to design bird monitoring programs, and what long-term, comprehensive monitoring programs should be conducted on DoD land. The second project, with the CLO, will provide a customized interface and portal for DoD natural resource managers to enter monitoring data (eBird) and view those data combined with non-DoD data (Avian Knowledge Network [AKN]) with visualization tools to better understand bird population trends and distributions. A second component of the CLO project involves acoustic monitoring of nocturnal migrant songbirds. DoD PIF also supports the process of developing standardized regional and national monitoring strategies for various bird taxa and contributes DoD survey data to existing databases. DoD participates in the Natural Resource Monitoring Partnership and the National Biological Information Infrastructure.
- Proper management of natural resources cannot be accomplished without baseline knowledge of the habitats managed by DoD. We help identify DoD lands that lack baseline surveys of bird populations, and began developing methods to provide baseline information until an installation can conduct a survey. We continue to document sites that satisfy criteria for identification as Important Bird Areas (IBA) or potential core bird conservation areas, and work with the IBA groups to address these sites with appropriate partnerships. A key monitoring program used on DoD lands is the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS; see page 21), which provides specific habitat based management recommendations.

#### **Monitoring Priorities:**

- Identify installations lacking baseline avian surveys, and other monitoring needs.

- Review Land Condition Trend Analysis (LCTA) protocol and suggest use of standard avian survey protocols, where appropriate.
- Continue MAPS program on DoD lands and review needs for optimizing placement of MAPS stations.
- Contribute data to and utilize resources in National Point Count Database.
- Communicate with adjoining landowner partners to coordinate monitoring efforts, where appropriate.
- Utilize web site for monitoring protocol, data and information transfer.

### **Research:**

- Avian researchers frequently use military lands as research study sites because these lands provide high-quality habitats not found in otherwise fragmented and developed landscapes. DoD lands can provide needed study sites for several areas of research underway, including the study of the spread of diseases (e.g., West Nile Virus) by birds, determination of bird conservation area requirements, assessment of grassland bird breeding and wintering habitats, determination of optimal placement of MAPS stations, and the research to fill gaps in avian life history knowledge. This research benefits the military by helping determine when and where species are at risk before they require state or federal protection, which can lead to mission encumbrance.
- The DoD PIF Research and Monitoring Needs Database maximizes resource effectiveness and efficiency by linking research needs between partners. We contribute to the database, and access its data elements to assist in our own research needs and future projects. The DoD PIF Bird Conservation Database consolidates information on bird related projects and management on all DoD lands into a searchable web-based database.

### **Research Priorities:**

- Provide access, where conditions permit, to DoD lands to support DoD PIF research priorities.
- Update and maintain the DoD PIF Bird Conservation Database and contribute to the DoD PIF Research and Monitoring Needs Database.
- Identify DoD-wide research needs and issues and encourage research partnerships.
- Identify DoD lands that can contribute to national PIF goals.
- Maintain effective MAPS network.

### **Accomplishments:**

- R. Fischer continues to work on the Monitoring Roadmap for DoD. The goal is to match results of a Legacy effort providing population estimates for each Species of Concern on installations to the DoD PIF Priority Species list to make regional recommendations for monitoring certain species.
- R. Fischer provided monitoring recommendations for priority species to Forts Carson and Hood

- Eric Kershner is spearheading the development of a Federal AKN Node. AKN is an archive for large avian data sets used for environmental review and NEPA analysis. This ultimately will be the primary storage location for many DoD avian monitoring data sets.
- R. Fischer coordinated with the DoD Natural Resources Program support team and Eric Kershner to offer a webinar on the Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) tool and AKN in February 2016.
- Coordinated Bird Monitoring Database/AKN with work being done by Liz Neipert and Dave McNaughton. Dave McNaughton is working on a template for structuring data and entering it into AKN.
- DoD-specific tools need to be identified for the Federal Node of the AKN.
- Dave McNaughton is developing an eBird white paper on how to use eBird on DoD lands. This effort may be highlighted as a feature in *Natural Selections*.

## **INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLANS – MIGRATORY BIRD UPDATES**

**2015 Members:** R. Fischer (chair), T. Shepherd, C. Carroll, B. Schallmann

### **Priorities:**

- Focused on improving avian input to DoD INRMP's and developing a good template for installations to use when developing their INRMP's.

### **Accomplishments:**

- R. Fischer was contacted by Forts Carson and Hood independently asking for help in ramping up their migratory bird management and monitoring programs, as well as input on how to better incorporate migratory bird information into their INRMPs. This demonstrates that there are installations out there in need of information that we have, and the need for this WG to develop a short summary document of the types of information that should go into INRMP updates and revisions, tools and methodologies, e.g., IPaC. We should have both a template and a checklist of important key items.
- The USFWS continues to develop and field tools for addressing migratory bird issues. They continue to enhance conservation measures information to the Migratory Bird Programs Conservation Measures website, particularly with respect to Incidental Take and to assist agencies in implementing MOUs. This information includes comprehensive recommendations for addressing impacts from building glass and lighting, recommendations on urban vegetation management, recommendations for improving bird analyses through NEPA, and improved information on stressor management. <http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/project-assessment-tools-and-guidance.php>
- R. Fischer is working with T. Conkle to review the avian monitoring component of all Navy INRMPs. This includes assessing whether the INRMP provides adequate information on bird monitoring, whether it is focused on priority bird species, and

whether bird programs are sufficient to address key questions that protect the mission. Final products will include text and templates. Work began in October 2014, and final reporting will occur in 2016.

## **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

**2015 Members:** T. Cutler (chair), C. Carroll

### **Priorities:**

- Focused on wind, solar, and other alternative energy issues, as well as Avian Protection Plans (specifically for power lines).

### **Accomplishments:**

- R. Fischer is working on the Green Energy initiative (e.g., solar panel fields) and MBTA. Eric Kershner is USFWS lead, working with R. Fischer.
- A. Schultz was recently told about recent research that shows wind turbines may not be a problem for birds. The rest of the group was unfamiliar with the research and A. Schultz is investigating further.

## **DoD SPECIES OF CONCERN**

**2015 Members:** G. Fleming (chair), R. Fischer, J. Haddix, J. Bolsinger, J. Rubinoff

### **Priorities:**

- Tasked with reviewing and updating the DoD “*Mission-sensitive Priority Species List*”, which are species that, if listed, would have the greatest impact to sustaining the mission. Maintenance of this list ensures awareness for species that may potentially affect future DoD missions.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Each year, DoD PIF reviews its “*Mission-sensitive Priority Species List*.” In 2015, three species were removed since they were recently federally listed (Streaked Horned Lark, Red Knot, Western DPS of Yellow-billed Cuckoo). A designation will be added for those species currently under review by USFWS for listing. The new list will be added to the DoD PIF website.

## **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT TEMPLATE**

**2015 Members:** J. Hautzenroder (chair), G. Fleming, J. Haddix, J. Jeter

### **Priorities:**

- Tasked in developing a NEPA template that would assist DoD with avian input within NEPA documents (categorical exclusions, environmental assessments (EAs), and EISs).

**Accomplishments:**

- The Working Group will interact with USFWS to develop a draft document addressing how to better integrate migratory birds into the NEPA process. J. Hautzenroder and G. Fleming will work with E. Kershner (USFWS).
- G. Fleming is working on a template for Fort Belvoir.

**INVASIVE SPECIES**

**2015 Members:** D. Bradshaw (chair), J. Jeter

**Priorities:**

- Tasked with compiling scientific information regarding invasive species and their impacts to native bird communities. Information will be used to aid installations with invasive species management priorities.

**Accomplishments:**

- Working group is compiling literature on invasive species and birds. All information is being provided to D. Bradshaw to compile. A page on the DoD PIF website may be developed to display this information.
- D. Bradshaw will compile list of vegetation that is of most concern to installations

**ANNUAL REPORTING**

**2015 Members:** T. Shepherd (chair), R. Fischer, J. Arnett, A. Schultz

**Priorities:**

- Focused on developing a thorough annual report of DoD PIF accomplishments, including summaries of avian-related good news stories, information on avian published research conducted on DoD lands, and details of how DoD PIF supported the mission.

**Accomplishments:**

- Working group stood up in April 2015.
- Annual report template developed in November 2015.

## EDUCATION & OUTREACH

**2015 Members:** B. Schallmann (chair)

### **Communication Priorities:**

- Support International Migratory Bird Day and other national PIF outreach efforts.
- Ensure appropriate DoD PIF bird conservation plan information is incorporated into installation INRMPs.
- Provide support and assistance for DoD PIF website, and outreach information for DENIX web site (<http://www.denix.osd.mil>).
- Contribute articles regarding DoD PIF activities to DoD publications, birding magazines, and national PIF publications.
- Enhance conservation objectives through partnerships that facilitate information exchange and coordinated management activities.
- Continue to participate in state, regional, and national PIF conferences.

### **Education Priorities:**

- Work with national PIF and other groups to develop materials for landowners and managers regarding grassland bird habitat and other management priorities.
- Promote DoD accomplishments to the public and other agencies.
- Update DoD display and brochure as needed.
- Give talks to bird clubs and school groups.
- Identify and create needed educational materials.

### **Accomplishments:**

- The DoD PIF Coordinator worked with the DoD PIF Steering Committee to conduct numerous outreach activities during 2015. Mr. Bob Schallmann, Navy Weapons Station Seal Beach, is Chair of the DoD PIF Outreach Committee and worked during 2015 to quantify DoD's involvement in International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) and other outreach events.

Some examples of installation outreach include the following:

*NWS Seal Beach, Fallbrook, Norco, and San Pedro, CA*

- Outreach with local elementary schools, retirement communities, Audubon chapters and libraries
- In-reach with installation personnel and their families (military and civilian) through all-hands trainings, brochures, presentations, etc.
- Special events (beach clean ups, habitat restoration events, National Public Lands Day events, Christmas Bird Counts)
- Monthly tours that include discussion on migratory birds and the DoD
- Specialty bird watching tours

- For the "large" special events, these installations receive 100-200 participants, for the smaller events, maybe 20-30. Local outreach efforts have mentioned the DoD and migratory birds to more than 1,000 people in the last year.
- Occasionally receive press coverage (mostly newspaper and online, but on rare occasions, television and radio) for these events.
- Most of the "return on investment" is in the in-kind sweat of the volunteers, particularly in habitat restoration/beach clean-up events.

#### *NAS Fallon, NV*

- Worked with the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge and participated in the Spring Wings Bird Festival (annually since 1996) on IMBD.
- Constructed an interpretive nature trail on the airfield safety buffer zone and give tours of the wildlife in this area.
- At the end of April, host an Earth Day Celebration where they have organized base cleanups and tree plantings. The agencies and conservation organizations are invited and have booths to provide wildlife and resource management information to the Navy families.

#### *Fort Bragg, NC*

- Annually celebrate Arbor and Earth Days. Most of these events constitute kids, since Ft. Bragg has their own school systems.
- Provide access to the Peterson software to challenge the kids by showing them how many birds they really know. The software first plays the bird's song, then gives some hints, finally shows the picture - first one to shout out name gets a poster.

#### *Ft. Drum, NY*

- Runs one IMBD event annually, a birding tour of the installation led every Memorial Day weekend since 2005. This trip has been very popular with more interest than can be accommodated.

#### *NBC, CA*

- Conduct twice-monthly bird walks at NAS North Island (established 2008, ongoing). Target audience is Navy Lodge guests, but they have housing residents and base personnel that attend frequently, as well. Personnel hand out DoD PIF and IMBD materials at the bird walk.
- Three-day NBC annual beach clean-up is held each February. Last year, they had 397 volunteers (mostly uniform Navy) and each year, it usually produces a few news stories and/or 1-2 newspaper articles. The news stories and articles always highlight the benefit to wildlife and nesting shorebirds.
- Ongoing partnership with the San Diego Zoo's Youth Conservation Corps (starting in December 2014). NBC has hosted four events - (with about 40 volunteers each) conducting a beach clean-up, installing protective fencing, and removing invasive iceplant.
- Over the last 10 years, NBC has hosted multiple Burrowing Owl (BUOW) artificial burrow installation events with different youth groups (including Girl

Scouts, a high school sailing club, and an Eagle Scout completing his Eagle badge requirements). Each of these events begins by providing information on BUOW conservation and the base handed out DoD PIF and IMBD materials to many kids.

- NAVFAC SW often participates in the big Earth Day event at Balboa Park. DoD PIF and IMBD materials (when available) are provided to the public.
- DoD Natural Resources Program webinar series:
  - September 22, 2014: *WebEx demo of the new Injury and Mortality Reporting Tool* by Meghan Sadlowski (USFWS) to describe when and how to use the tool, and how the data can benefit both the USFWS and DoD.
  - December 3, 2014: *Taking the Black Hole Out of Migratory Bird Management: Revealing Migration Routes and Wintering Areas of At-Risk Grassland Birds* by Dr. Rosalind Renfrew.
  - March 24, 2015: *Source/Sink Dynamics of Birds on DoD Lands* by Dr. Pete Marra, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.
  - February 4, 2016: *AKN and IPaC System Presentation Available* by Dr. Eric Kershner, USFWS.
- Presentations:
  - Ball State University (R. Fischer)
  - MBTA Courses (R. Fischer)
  - CECOS (R. Fischer)
- The DoD Bird Conservation Photo Library has been developed to provide installation personnel with a database of photos for use in presentations and outreach materials. The photo library is located at: <http://dodpifphotosite.shutterfly.com>. Contact Paul Block ([paul.block@navy.mil](mailto:paul.block@navy.mil)), if you have photos to contribute.

## **BIRD AIRCRAFT STRIKE HAZARD**

**2015 Members:** P. Block (chair), R. Fischer

A successful BASH prevention program reduces loss of human life and damage to aircraft. By working together, we can achieve mutually beneficial results that will aid priority bird species while reducing the BASH risk for flight crews. Improving communication and education among all stakeholders is a top priority of this working group.

### **Priorities:**

- Implement use of radar, particularly mobile units, as a BASH tool.

- Improve communication with Air Operations personnel.
- Integrate BASH plans into INRMPs.
- Publicize the importance of reporting all bird strike and near strike data.
- Help provide all available current and future hazard detection technology for pre-flight planning.
- Work with the U.S. Air Force (USAF) BASH Team to update BASH guidelines to reflect advances in knowledge of grasslands, seasonal bird movements, and “problem” species.

**Accomplishments:**

- P. Block is new BASH WG chair.
- R. Fischer is acquiring BASH databases (has acquired USAF, Navy, Federal Aviation Authority) and summarizing strikes by species in regions (e.g., California), looking at how BASH species and issues differ regionally, and looking at life histories of problematic species. The WG will be looking at current airfield maintenance guidelines (e.g. are grass height recommendations adequate?).

**NATIONAL MILITARY FISH & WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION LIAISON AND BIRD CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP**

**2015 Members:** D. McNaughton, J. Haddix

**Priorities:**

- To develop an active Migratory Bird WG within the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA).

**Accomplishments:**

- During the past year, R. Fischer worked with D. McNaughton to establish the NMFWA Bird Conservation WG. This WG will provide broader opportunities for installation natural resources managers to raise avian issues to the DoD PIF Steering Committee and the Military Services, as well as to share with others as lessons-learned.



**APPENDIX 1. MEETING NOTES FROM 2015 DoD PARTNERS IN FLIGHT ANNUAL MEETING,  
JACKSONVILLE, FL**

**DoD Partners in Flight**

**Steering Committee**

**Strategic Planning Meeting  
(15-17 April 2015)**



**Participants**

Rich Fischer, USACE  
Joe Hautzenroder, Navy  
John Joyce, Air Force  
Alan Schultz, Army  
Tim Burr, Navy-Retired  
Jeff Bolsinger, Army  
Dave McNaughton, National Guard  
Greg Fleming, Army  
Bob Shallmann, Navy  
Tiffany Shepherd, Navy  
John Arnett, Air Force  
John Haddix, Army  
Trish Cutler, Army  
Diane Walsh, Marine Corps  
Michael Wright, Navy  
Tammy Conkle, Navy

**Overview of Meeting Topics and Discussion**

- MBTA Course Participation (Introduction & Interaction with DoD PIF Regarding Bird Issues in DoD)
- Update/Discussion on State of the DoD PIF
- DoD PIF Steering Committee Representative Updates
- DoD PIF Steering Committee Working Group Updates
- Implementing the DoD PIF Strategic Plan
- Bird Conservation Metrics that Support the Mission
- How Do We Measure Success of DoD PIF?
- Better Attention to Bird Conservation/Mission Support in INRMPs
- DoD PIF Representatives' Concerns, Support, and Actions
- DoD PIF Resources (website, fact sheets, etc.)
- Hot Topics in DoD (Incidental Take, Others?)
- New NMFWA Bird WG

- DoD Bird Monitoring Strategy Update
- DoD PIF Representatives' Responsibilities for Upcoming Year

### Representative Updates

- Tim Burr- Assisted with logistics of the meeting. All were in appreciation of his efforts
- Jeff Bolsinger – Assisting with GWWA DNA study on Fort Drum
- Greg Fleming – Habitat manipulation on 35 acres for DoD Species of Concern (focus on Prairie Warbler)
- Dave McNaughton - acting as new Representative for NMFWA Bird Conservation WG; whooping cranes and habitat restoration on DoD lands (possible funding available)
- John Joyce - Suggested reaching out to all installations to let them know DoD PIF is available to assist them
- Bob Schallmann - Working on coastal Burrowing Owls; seabirds and acoustics with Navy; Education/Outreach activities; IMBD; sits in on Bird Education and Awareness in Communities (BEAC) conference calls
- Tiffany Shepherd - Interacts with installations in her area of responsibility with Burrowing Owls; conducts outreach with bird walks and annual beach clean-up; San Diego Zoo outreach with children; Snowy Plover symbolic fencing project; raptor management near California Least Tern colonies (monitoring and impacts assessment)
- John Arnett - Active with PIF Western Working Group; Bendire's and LeConte's Thrasher monitoring; BASH report review for MCAS Yuma and Yuma Int'l Airport; impacts of overflights on eagles
- John Haddix - Attended Alaska Boreal Birds Conference; DoD PIF Representative to Boreal Birds PIF; NW Boreal Birds Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) with USFWS; Olive-sided Flycatcher project (habitat use) - getting interest from Canada Department of National Defence and Columbia (Chris Leach from Army Environmental Command is supporting effort)
- Alan Schultz - Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCWO); Longleaf Alliance and connection to Gopher Tortoise, RCWO, Bachman's Sparrow, and Northern Bobwhite; Working with Jeff Walters on habitat modeling in hardwood/pine mix
- Joe Hautzenroder - Working on how to address migratory birds in NEPA - environmental planners need better education. NEPA documents will be what permits us to have future Incidental Take
- Trish Cutler - White Sands Missile Range migratory bird monitoring; eagles and Incidental Take (high density in mountain ranges); possible nest abandonment by eagles due to bombing missions; mitigation of eagle take is 10 power pole retrofits, but if abandonment does occur then ~ 80 power pole retrofits
- Diane Walsh - Working with windmills at Barstow (NEPA issues); funding 4-season migratory bird surveys
- Michael Wright - active in south Atlantic LCC; Northeast and Southeast PIF meetings reassuring them that DoD PIF is still active; push for Legacy projects that include DoD Species of Concern; helped review MBTA course agenda; Chaired NMFWA BASH Working Group; Reviews migratory bird projects within her region.
- Tammy Conkle - Working on timing of restrictions for Northern Long-eared Bat; worked with Eric Kershner and Lesley Kordella (USFWS) on coordination

The Steering Committee (SC) addressed the current status of Representatives to determine if any changes were necessary.

- Lucas Cooksey- AEC has requested to join as a Representative
- John Doss (possible new Representative - see Alan Schultz)
- John DeLuca (Marine Corps – see Greg Fleming)
- Michelle Richards (Michigan; was on maternity leave last year)
- Fort McCoy (Representative unsure, but contacted Rich last year)
- Paul Block – Navy, possible Representative to replace Matt Klope
- Jay Brazenka – Minnesota Guard Reserve Base
- Roger Payton – Fort Carson (for CO, WY, MT?)
- Cindy Kunz- NAVFAC (John Haddix can assist)
- Charles Baun – Idaho
- Jeff Mach (Oregon Guard; active with Burrowing Owls)
- Bob Schallmann - can take additional responsibility as Regional Rep (if needed)
- Tom Alexa - Langley AFB, VA
- Brian Milbachler – suggested by Julie Jeter (he is USFWS, so we would need to discuss how that might work)
- Jay Rubinoff - Keep as NG Rep
- Ryan Orndorf - left Marine Corps and now is lead for REPI; Joe Hautzenroder suggested integrating REPI and Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program personnel into DoD PIF

#### **DoD PIF Working Group Updates**

- **Renewable Energy Working Group** - focus on wind, solar, and other alternative energy issues, as well as Avian Protection Plans (specifically for power lines)
  - *Trish Cutler now new Chair with assistance from Chuck Carroll*
- **Monitoring Working Group** - focused on assisting Fischer with the DoD Avian Monitoring Roadmap
  - *Haddix, Burr, Shepherd, Bradshaw, Arnett, Fleming, Wright*
  - “Bird-Cast” is great online tool for monitoring migration forecast
  - Fischer working on “Monitoring Roadmap” for DoD. Awaiting population estimates from Ed Laurent (Legacy effort)
- **INRMP Update Working Group** - focused on improving avian input to DoD INRMP's and developing a good template.
  - *Shepherd, Carroll, Schallmann, Conkle*
  - Conkle and Fischer working with Navy and conducting workshops regionally with USFWS to support improved INRMPs.
  - Need to explore these workshops with other Services. Incidental Take may be the hook for buy-in.
  - Conkle - we need a good INRMP development checklist and template (checklist more important).
  - Fleming - add tree-trimming language to INRMPs.
  - Conkle - add contracting language to INRMP template.
  - New USFWS IPaC system proving useful for NEPA analyses. Input project footprint as a polygon and system provides list of federal threatened and endangered species as

well as birds of conservation concern. Input type of activity and system will provide a list of Conservation Measures for that activity.

- **DoD Mission-sensitive Priority Species Working Group** - tasked with reviewing and making modifications to our 60+/- focal species. The SC needs to stay on top of species that may potentially impact the future DoD mission.
  - *Fleming, Haddix, Bolsinger, Rubinoff*
  - Fischer needs to work on updating the list to remove listed species (Red Knot; Streaked Horned Lark)
  - Group discussed another round of updates, but decided this was not necessary. WG will review list, however, to see if any minor revisions are necessary.
- **NEPA Template Working Group** - tasked with working with Joe to develop a NEPA template that would assist DoD with avian input to EAs, etc.
  - *Haddix, Fleming, Jeter*
  - Hautzenroder needs to work with Eric Kershner (USFWS). Perhaps Hautzenroder and Fleming can meet with Eric to discuss.
  - Fleming is working on a template for Ft. Belvoir.
- **Invasive Species Working Group**
  - Chaired by Dana Bradshaw (not present, so no update)
- **Annual Report Working Group** - tasked with helping Fischer develop a thorough annual report of DoDPIF accomplishments
  - *Schultz, Shepherd, Arnett*
  - Committee will be working by end of summer to create an annual report with a due date end of calendar year.
  - Representatives to send “good news” information to WG members by 30 September.
  - Hautzenroder wants to move away from quantitative metrics and use more “good news” stories.
  - Fischer will continue to work on developing “metrics” from natural resources related work on installations and how those support the mission.
  - WG to seek out who is publishing research on military lands and highlight that in report.
  - Need photos of DoD PIF SC work (e.g., rooftop at NAS Jacksonville) to include in report.
- **Education/Outreach Working Group** – is requesting all available information on IMBD activities on installations
  - *Schallmann is Chair*
  - Provide Shallmann a list of DoD PIF Educational Materials, who has what.
  - What Bird Related Outreach have we accomplished? Send Shallmann an updated list.
  - Shallmann to work on sending out regular messages to DoD PIF with intriguing factoids that may inspire action amongst installations and partners. Examples...these installations are all in the same region and have this issue; these installations are along this flyway one is the breeding ground and ones and importing winter stopover, etc. for the same species; these installations are doing these bird related outreach events; etc.
- **NMFWA Liaison**
  - *John Haddix is chair.*

- Haddix working with NMFWA leadership to provide cross-cutting information.

**Mission-support Metrics:** Establish a set of metrics that show how DoD PIF has (and continues to) support the mission. The group voted in the affirmative to develop a data call memo to staff through OSD to the Services requesting examples of how natural resources efforts on installations directly support the military mission. We need case histories and success stories. (ACTION: Rich Fischer)

- Dave McNaughton has a literature list of publications resulting from work on DoD lands
- The SC had the idea of possibly promoting a *Natural Selections* article highlighting an installation conducting work that provides mission support

### **OSD Natural Resources Webinars**

- Rich Fischer asked each Representative to provide one idea for future webinars. He suggested a webinar with USFWS that promotes new online tools (e.g., IPaC).
- Rich Fischer agreed to check with Booz Allen Hamilton to see if we now have capability to record webinars for those unable to attend.

### **AKN and DoD Data**

- Request OSD provide update on status of AKN involvement by DoD.
- We need to ensure our 700K+ records are ported over to the AKN.
- See if Peter Boice will promote with the CBM Plan as the hook.
- Dave McNaughton agreed to assist with current data sets and acquiring metadata.
- Marine Corps (Diane Walsh) already provides data to the AKN.
- Rich Fischer will work with Katie Koch (USFWS) as well as call Leo Salas to determine costs, if any, of porting data to AKN.

### **DoD PIF Website**

- Currently getting support on as-needed basis from Chris Eberly.
- Booz Allen Hamilton can help as needed.
- John Arnett agreed to help learn the ins/outs of website and make changes as needed.

### **2016 DoD PIF Meeting**

- SC felt best option was to hold 2016 meeting in conjunction with the August Migratory Birds Training Course in Seattle.
- First week of August is preferred.
- Rich Fischer to work with USFWS on course dates and determine if that will work for SC.
- Best to have DoD PIF SC present at latter half of last day, similar to what we did at NAS Jacksonville. Value added here.

### **Notes & Follow-Up Actions (from Michael Wright)**

- Site Visit at NAS Jacksonville to look at and provide INRMP guidance with regards to Nesting Tern Issues on Roof-tops. Roofs need to be replaced. There are BASH issues. DoD PIF SC wants them to put together a white-paper and journal submission regarding rotary aircraft BASH strikes. This is a hole in the BASH data that if documented would help the missions to support funding at non-airfield facilities that have BASH concerns. Approaches NAS Jacksonville should consider include increased roof pitch, non-gravel,

robot disturbance, etc. NAS Jacksonville showed us a “mitigation” site effort. It does not appear to be ideal for the birds, but it will create marginal suitable habitat on a former landfill.

- DoD PIF Meeting Update & SC Representative Reminder Email to be sent to Representative Installation POCs. Alan Schultz is going to draft a version for the group to send out. “Do you have MBTA, ESA, Bald and Golden Eagle Act, etc. bird concerns/ issues? This Group is here to help.”
- New Overall DoD GIS Instruction on the streets.
- Birds of North America Online. Rich Fischer has multiple access codes still available
- Legacy Projects:
  - Pre-Proposal vs Proposal reviews by DoD PIF. Pre-proposal review is not a ranking system, but an Ok/Not Ok/General Comment. Proposal reviews are ranking and a detailed review.
  - Outreach as to what bird project needs exist that may be suitable for Legacy Projects.
- Spreadsheet for tracking DoD PIF SC Related Consultations and Actions and Good News Stories. Tiffany Shepherd is developing and will send out.
- Energy Working Group Discussion:
  - Fort Drum Biomass Plant (wood chips for energy)
  - Algae Ponds (closed vs open systems)
  - Solar
  - Wind
  - Geo-thermal
- Utility Lines & Avian Protection Plans Tree Cutting Bands to support MBTA.
- Friends of the Whooping Crane (see Dave McNaughton): wants to do a project in partnership with DoD installations and would like a list of installations that would be interested in creating habitat to support this species.
- Dave McNaughton – compiling an eBird white paper on how to use eBird on DoD lands. May be good to feature in *Natural Selections*.
- Legacy Review - group would like to start reviewing Legacy pre-proposals again. Tim Burr suggested querying bases for their input on priorities. DoD PIF can help by identifying regional and national needs and provide to Legacy. Possibly look at projects in INRMP’s that are not being funded.