



Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference Update

October 2004

Since the Western Hemisphere Migratory Bird Conference took place in October, 2003, in Termas de Puyehue, Chile, there has been a considerable amount of activity following-up on the success and excitement of the Conference. Please find below an update on efforts that have taken place to continue this initiative.

Sincerely,

Herb Raffaele

Chair of the Interim Steering Committee

Interim Steering Committee Meeting

The Interim Steering Committee (ISC) created at the Chile conference met for the first time on August 10-13, 2004, to follow-up on charges tasked to it in Chile. The meeting took place in Sarapiquí, Costa Rica, and was hosted by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Ministry of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica and the Secretariat to the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Marine Turtles. WWF-Central America office made all logistical arrangements, with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. All 12 members of the ISC participated in the meeting.

The main outcome of the meeting was a draft document describing the vision, mission, guiding principles, objectives, Steering Committee structure, membership, and other elements of the initiative.

Based upon guidance from the Chile conference, the initiative will include all migratory species, covering taxa as diverse as birds, marine turtles, marine and terrestrial mammals, fishes and invertebrates. A name for the initiative that better reflects the broad nature of the mission and goals has not yet been decided upon. Suggestions are welcome.

The Western Hemisphere Migratory Species draft document addresses how the effort seeks to contribute towards the conservation of the Western Hemisphere's migratory species by strengthening cooperation among nations, international agreements and civil society, and by expanding constituencies and political support. All entities that support the vision, mission and objectives of this initiative would be invited to be partners in its implementation.

Before the end of 2004, the draft document will be presented to the environment ministers of nations in the Hemisphere for their consideration. Subsequently, the document will be circulated to all Chile conference participants and other interested entities with a call for support of this initiative.

Tool Matrix

At the Chile conference, country representatives identified the top wildlife conservation priorities for their nations. The Tool Matrix is a document designed to provide information on available assistance and existing gaps in addressing these conservation needs. The document continues to be expanded with input from NGOs, agencies and private entities. It is also being restructured into a more user-friendly step-down format. We encourage you to continue to submit conservation tools and to update information. Submissions can be sent to Marina Ratchford at Marina_Ratchford@fws.gov.

Website

The WHMSC website is currently posted at <http://international.fws.gov/>. Click on Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference Homepage for an English version or Conferencia del Hemisferio Occidental para Especies Migratorias for a Spanish version. The website contains background information about the initiative, the Tool Matrix, and a vision for the future of this effort. Additionally, Chile conference proceedings are available on the website in English, Spanish and French. In the near future, we will post a power point presentation that can be downloaded and used to explain this initiative. We are currently exploring ways to make the WHMSC website independent from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website.

Comments and suggestions are welcome.

Staff Notes

Marina Ratchford will now be the primary staff contact for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's involvement in the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference initiative. Jeff Flocken will continue to be involved in this effort, however, Ratchford will handle most WHMSC communications and coordination from this point forward.

Interim Steering Committee member Melanie Steinkamp, formerly of Wetlands International, has taken a position with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Atlantic Coast Joint Venture initiative. The non-government organizations on the ISC selected Charles Duncan of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network as her replacement.

Next Plenary Conference

A subcommittee of the ISC has been created to discuss possible themes, dates, locations, and funding sources for the next WHMSC plenary meeting. If you have particular suggestions or comments, please contact me at Herb_Raffaele@fws.gov.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Division of International Conservation
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 730
Arlington, VA 22203
703/358-1754
703/358-2849 fax
internationalconservation@fws.gov
international.fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov
Fall 2004

