

# Opening Remarks<sup>1</sup>

Ellie M. Cohen<sup>2</sup>

Welcome to the Third International Partners in Flight Conference! On behalf of everyone at PRBO, we are honored to be your local hosts for this historic event that brings together all of you—esteemed representatives from all the major bird conservation initiatives, from all over the Western Hemisphere and beyond!

PRBO Conservation Science was founded as Point Reyes Bird Observatory in 1965 with a half-time biologist working on the point of Point Reyes National Seashore. Today we have 55 staff biologists and another 50 seasonal biologists working throughout California and the West, from Central America to Alaska.

As all of you know, birds can be excellent indicators of ecosystem function and key to wise stewardship. Working throughout the West, our 55 staff scientists and more than 50 seasonal biologists study birds and ecosystems to protect and enhance biodiversity.

PRBO is actively engaged in all the major bird conservation initiatives—for songbirds, shorebirds, waterbirds and waterfowl—on a regional and national scale. We study and work to protect individual threatened and endangered species. We also work to keep common birds common, as the Partners in Flight maxim goes! We evaluate the health of marine, wetlands and terrestrial habitats and ecosystems; and from this information, we provide management and restoration recommendations to hundreds of government agencies, nonprofits and private interests.

Our guiding philosophy for successful conservation is based on three key strategies:

1. **Partnerships.** My belief is that there should be no competitors when it comes to conserving biodiversity. We must work together because we are exponentially more effective when we do. Policy makers and funders applaud this approach as well!
2. **Ecosystem level, multi-species approach.** While PRBO conducts research and protects endangered and threatened species, we also focus on suites of species to give us more insights into how an entire

ecosystem is functioning. We investigate not only the target habitat type, but also adjacent habitats that factor into successful productivity and survival of birds and other wildlife. We also evaluate multiple species and vegetation on a landscape level, vastly increasing our conservation effectiveness.

3. **Ongoing, standardized scientific monitoring and feedback.** Or what we at PRBO call Adaptive Conservation Planning. The concept of adaptive management is often given lip service but rarely put into practice. Our field experience shows that ongoing scientific monitoring with a direct and regular feedback loop to habitat and wildlife managers is critical to conservation success—as many of you attending this conference can confirm! It must be based on sound science and the approach must be standardized so we can compare across sites, states and even continents to most effectively evaluate our findings and implement conservation measures.

Our vision at PRBO is that bird conservation science should be guiding habitat restoration and management everywhere. I am not referring only to bird banding or mist netting but ongoing population studies on productivity, survival and dispersal as well as vegetation studies and landscape level analyses that help ensure the most effective conservation.

We at PRBO have found that applying bird conservation science on an ecosystem scale translates into what I like to call: **getting the most biodiversity bang for every conservation buck invested!**

We are all here together today—the duckheads (one of my colleagues told me it was OK to say that!), the LBJs, and the shorebird, seabird and other waterbird folks! The time has come for us all to work together as the theme of this conference states – Bird Conservation, Implementation and *Integration*. Working together we will exponentially increase our effectiveness and our chances for conservation success.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge Logistics Chair Sandy Scoggin, Logistics Co-Chair Missy Wipf, Terrestrial Program Geoff Geupel and all the PRBO staff who have done such an outstanding job organizing this wonderful conference. Thanks to you all!

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<sup>2</sup>Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 4990 Shoreline Highway, Stinson Beach, CA 94970.