

strategy. They have also hired a full-time coordinator to oversee implementation of this plan. One of the habitat management projects with direct benefit to neotropical migrants is restoration and management of sensitive riparian habitats in the southwest. This includes planting native trees, fencing riparian wetlands, evaluating and redesigning grazing systems, and providing artificial nest structures.

The Department of Defense is also an active participant in natural resources conservation. With stewardship responsibility for over 25 million acres of land, conservation and management of natural resources is a high priority. With several installations participating in such projects as Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship, the military continues to make significant contributions to research and monitoring efforts for neotropical migrants.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is well known for its role in improving and maintaining environmental quality. As an active member agency of *Partners in Flight*, EPA has dedicated a significant amount of funding to information and education efforts. In the months to come, EPA, in cooperation with other partners, will be working to develop outreach materials concerning impacts of various land uses on neotropical migrants for distribution to land use planners and developers.

Those are but a few of the many activities that governmental partners are undertaking. Although our agency missions may differ, our concern for and commitment to this resource is a common bond. Neotropical migratory bird conservation offers all of us the opportunity to address the needs of a declining resource.

Management of neotropical migrants brings us together this week. How do we manage them? Where do we start? What are our priorities? These questions and more will be addressed in the days to come, and many more will be asked. As we continue to work together, I think you will find that our diversity as agencies and individuals is our greatest strength. Today, conservation of migratory birds is, and will continue to be, a complicated and challenging mission. The international and hemispheric dimension of *Partners in Flight* offers an opportunity for cooperative, international conservation on a scale seldom seen. There are many questions to answer and much work to be done. Collectively, we have the expertise, the personnel and the motivation to answer questions and meet challenges offered this week and in weeks to come.

## Nongovernment Organization Perspective

Stanley E. Senner<sup>1</sup>

More than 20 nongovernmental organizations have signed a memorandum of understanding committing them to participate in *Partners in Flight*. Several more organizations will be signing the memorandum in the near future. Others may never sign the agreement but are contributing substantially to the program.

*Partners in Flight* was the brainchild of Amos Eno at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Amos, Peter Stangel, and the other foundation staff, deserve enormous credit for the enterprise they launched. Although the program is innovative, the concept underlying it is simple: The problems confronting migratory birds today--to say nothing of the environment in general--are so complex and are of such broad scale that no single agency or organization operating on its own can address them successfully.

Cooperation and partnerships are required if significant and lasting results are to be achieved. Indeed Congress recognized this fact in its 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (P.L. 100-653), which directs the Secretary of the Interior to undertake research and conservation activities to

benefit migratory nongame birds "in coordination with other Federal, State, international and private organizations..." *Partners in Flight* is exactly that--a cooperative enterprise among Federal, State, international, and private organizations.

There are many different types of participants in *Partners in Flight*: governmental and nongovernmental, state and federal, corporate and environmental, regulatory and military, and regional, national, and international. Different participants bring different mandates and perspectives, and there are many issues that divide us. One need only mention the spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), for example, to bring those differences to the surface.

Through *Partners in Flight* we have the chance to rise above the issues that divide us and apply our collective resources and expertise on problems for situations that are not yet highly polarized. This is not to say that there are no crises and difficult decisions in the conservation and management of neotropical migratory birds. But for the most part there is time--albeit not a lot of time--to be preventative rather than only reactive in our approach.

With that brief perspective, I offer comments on five issues to stimulate your thinking during the course of this meeting:

<sup>1</sup>National Audubon Society and International Council for Bird Preservation-US Section, 4150 Darley Avenue, Suite 5, Boulder, Colorado 80303.

## KEEP COMMON BIRDS COMMON

The fundamental goal of *Partners in Flight* is to maintain and restore bird populations; we should strive for no less. Putting it another way, "how can we keep common birds common?"

Sometimes there is no choice but to focus on those species that are rare and endangered. There may be a tendency, however, to place too much weight on rarity in determining priorities for conservation and management. Traditionally, except for species that were hunted or endangered, no one but ornithologists and birdwatchers paid attention to the still-common birds (e.g., Senner 1986, 1988).

We know that abundance per se is no safeguard against extinction. The cases of the passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*), Carolina parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*), and Eskimo curlew (*Numenius borealis*) are illustrative. We also know that waiting until a species is a "basket case" may mean that the necessary recovery efforts are controversial and costly. The California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) is a case in point. Unfortunately, we also know that last-ditch rescue attempts are often unsuccessful, as was true for the now extinct dusky seaside sparrow (*Fringilla maritima nigrescens*).

I worked for a number of years at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania. In 1978, Hawk Mountain recorded 21,488 broad-winged hawks (*Buteo platypterus*) migrating overhead in a single day. This past year, 1991, only 5,854 were recorded during the entire season (Goodrich 1992). Unfortunately, the 1991 season was not an anomaly: it has been more than a decade since Hawk Mountain had a really good broadwing flight. The point is that we want to preserve this phenomenon of abundance. If the broadwing population drops so far that Hawk Mountain records only one thousand or so broadwings in season, then we already will have lost the battle, even though the species may not be considered endangered or even rare.

## ACHIEVE RESULTS ON THE GROUND

If we are to keep common birds common, *Partners in Flight* must achieve on-the-ground benefits for bird populations. Achieving such results is its true measure of success. We can monitor and study birds, and we can inform and educate the public about conservation needs, but these actions are only means to an end. The goal is to maintain and restore bird populations, and we now know enough about the status and requirements of most species to take beneficial actions, especially to manage and protect their habitats.

## ESTABLISH PROGRAM-WIDE PRIORITIES

The Federal Interagency-Nongovernmental Organization-State joint committee recognizes the importance of achieving on-the-ground results for neotropical migrants. Through a newly-adopted Charter and Implementation Plan, the joint committee has agreed to work with the regional and technical working groups to identify a list of national priority projects annually for *Partners in Flight*. We then will work with participating agencies and organizations to obtain the commitments, funds, or other resources needed to carry them out. This process should result in the implementation of more projects, and, secondarily, will give us a scorecard with which to evaluate our progress each year.

## INCORPORATE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The thrust of this national training workshop is management in North America, and this is appropriate. Yet, no matter how much we achieve here in North America, our efforts may come to naught if problems on the wintering grounds are responsible for a species' decline. All of us then must strive to broaden our thinking--and share our resources--beyond this continent. If *Partners in Flight* is to be successful, we must achieve on-the-ground results, not only in North America, but also in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## VARIED ROLES FOR NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Lastly, regarding the role of nongovernmental organizations, our roles are as diverse as are our organizations. Among participating entities, including industry, there is tremendous expertise in ornithology and ecology, education, forest management, public policy, habitat protection and management, and "grassroots" organizing. Further, our experience and expertise exist at regional, national, and international levels. In the case of the National Audubon Society, we believe that the most important contribution we can make to *Partners in Flight* is to encourage the full participation of our 518 chapters at the local, state, and regional levels. Not incidentally, those chapters include eight groups in Central and South America.

In closing, I am excited about *Partners in Flight*. Having spent nearly 20 years in the business of conserving migratory birds, I never have seen a higher level of activity among governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations than I have seen since this program was launched. Collectively, you will find that we--nongovernmental organizations--are eager to roll up our sleeves to identify and share in the burden of implementing projects that will benefit neotropical migrants.

That is why I am here, and I look forward to meeting and working with many of you during the course of this week and beyond.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Linda Leddy, Manomet Bird Observatory, for reading an earlier draft of these remarks.

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# Prospects for Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation in Canada

J.S. Wendt<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

The plan for conservation of Neotropical Migratory Birds - *Partners in Flight* - appeals to many Canadians. The birds themselves are loved for their beauty, their song, their mysterious migration, and their faithful return each spring. They are valued as members of healthy ecosystems, especially when they gorge themselves on caterpillars. Canadians recognize that the conservation of migratory birds should be coordinated internationally. Countries do not own the birds, but only provide accommodation for some steps of a long journey.

Today I will discuss topics that I think are important for neotropical migratory birds in Canada. I will start with some observations on what it would mean to expand *Partners in Flight* outside the United States. I will review the Canadian Wildlife Service forest bird work, and work by others. I will talk about the Canadian forest industry, and what is being done to move it towards sustainability.

Is Canada participating in *Partners in Flight*? Although it sounds as though a yes or no answer would be appropriate, really our first response should be to ensure that the asker and the answerer understand the question in the same way. For a question such as "Am I dreaming?" the answer is not important

until we agree, at least somewhat, on the symptoms that identify this psychological state. The question about Canadian involvement in *Partners in Flight* also needs further definition because, as yet, this initiative has no agreed shape or context outside the United States. Therefore, I propose a list of 6 symptoms that would be evidence of meaningful involvement by Canada.

### SYMPTOMS OF COOPERATION IN PARTNERS IN FLIGHT

#### 1. Setting International Objectives for the Conservation of Neotropical Migratory Birds

The Canadian Wildlife Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are responsible for ensuring that their countries observe the *Migratory Birds Convention*. The *Convention* states that these birds should not be hunted. But they have no greater plan for the conservation of nongame birds; they don't even use the same lists of birds protected under the *Convention*. As a first step, Canada and the U.S. should try harder to develop cooperative recovery efforts for threatened and endangered species. Beyond this, they should work on a common vision for all nongame birds. They should try to make an explicit statement

<sup>1</sup>J.S. Wendt, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H3 819-953-1422.