

NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEED GRANT

Abstract

Summary of Progress:

We initiated the implementation of the BCR 30+ / USFWS Region 5 tidal marsh bird inventory and monitoring program using the 2011 field season as the foundation for what we plan as a long-term program. We have integrated the sampling frame as well as the field sampling protocols with state and federal partners such that all the data from VA – ME is based on the same probabilistic sampling frame and uses the same field protocol. This will provide the first comprehensive and standardized tidal marsh bird data set throughout USFWS Region 5 that will be used to assess effects of sea-level rise on tidal marsh birds. We continue to work closely with our partners to collaborate on this effort.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEED GRANT QUARTERLY REPORT

Grant Number: 2010-03

Grant Title: *"Identification of Tidal Marsh Bird Focal Areas in BCR 30"*

Grant Receipt: 15 January 2011, University of Delaware

Grant Contact Name: W. Gregory Shriver

Report #- 2012 1st Qtr

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes.

Regional Conservation Need Addressed: RCN Topic 4: Identification of Regional Focal Areas and Corridors for the Conservation of Species of Great Conservation Need in the Northeast

Progress Achieved: (For each Goal/Objective, list Planned and Actual Accomplishments)

- 1) Identify regional population centers for tidal marsh birds within BCR 30 from New Jersey to Virginia,
 - >> We've continued to QA/QC'd all the tidal marsh bird, vegetation, and spatial data from the 2011 field season and have revised field maps and completed logistical planning in preparation for the 2012 field season. We have hired and conducted training sessions for field crew members that will be collecting data during the 2012 field season.
- 2) combine these survey results with existing surveys for the northern states in BCR 30 (New York – Maine) to identify tidal marsh bird focal areas and produce population estimates for all bird species found in the high tidal marsh (including a global population estimate for saltmarsh sparrow),
 - >> We continue to work in partnership with the University of Maine and University of Connecticut to coordinate surveys, data collections, field tech. training, protocol development, and data entry for all sampling locations from VA - ME. We hold weekly conference calls, we met in Connecticut for our annual meeting for 5 – 6 Jan, 2012 where we provide updates and plan for the upcoming season.
- 3) provide all states in BCR 30 with a detailed description of their regional responsibility for tidal marsh bird species,
 - >> We submitted our first annual report to all state partners and the USFWS. We are continuing to communicate with state partners as we develop a decision support tool to assist in tidal marsh conservation planning.
- 4) identify the most critical areas for the long-term preservation of the tidal marsh bird community within each state, and
 - >> We continue to work with state and NGO partners to identify where the data from this project can inform coastal adaptation plans. Specifically, we are collaborating with

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and their partners to identify specific areas around the refuge where marsh migration may occur.

5) relate the regional focal areas to past management actions.

>> We continue to acquire management information from survey sites.

Summary of Progress: (Provide a paragraph describing progress, work to come, and timelines)
We have completed our first field season of sampling and we have completed the planning for the 2012 field season. This includes working with state and federal partners to ensure that we are all using the same protocols, developing standard operating procedures, integrating the sampling frame into state and federal monitoring programs, and coordinating field efforts to secure boats, boat training, housing, and field technicians. We have presented our preliminary findings to the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference April 2012, The Delaware Environmental Institute, NH Fish and Game Commission, Maryland Ornithological Society, and the Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources (among others).

Difficulties Encountered: We have finalized SOPs (standard operating procedures) that clearly outline how to access the points within each hexagon (boat launch to use, tides to follow, tidal creeks with deep bottoms, etc.) making access to these points more efficient. We are also generating SOPs for all aspects of SHARP data collection that will be posted on the SHAPR website (www.tidalmarshbirds.org). Major challenges include finding qualified people that can operate boats and trailers as well as identify birds and follow the sampling protocols.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter: For Q2 2012 we conduct the 2012 field sampling season that will include all the avian and vegetation surveys conducted in 2011 with the addition of 1) phonological monitoring from VA – ME, 2) the addition of an openness measure at each site, and 3) use RTK GPS to estimate the elevation of as many sites as possible. We will initiate field sampling in VA on 15 April 2012 for the second season of tidal marsh bird sampling.

Expected End Date: 15 January 2015

Costs:

Funds Expended to Previous to this Report: \$37,715.55

Amount of RCN Funds Requested within this Report: \$280.51

Total Approved Budgeted RCN Funds: \$76,301.00

Are you within the approved budget plan? Yes

Are you within approved budget categories? No, Supplies are overspent.

Signature:



Date: 5/16/2012