

# **NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEED GRANT**

## **Abstract**

### Summary of Progress:

We designed, organized, and implemented the first field season of the BCR 30 / USFWS Region 5 tidal marsh bird surveys. We were invited to participate on the steering committee of the North American Marsh Bird Conservation and Management workshop held in Mobile, AL 13 – 15 December, 2011. The purpose of the meeting was to organize the conservation needs of secretive marsh birds and explicitly articulate the conservation decisions faced by the community of secretive marsh bird species conservationists and habitat managers in North America. Breakout groups were asked to explore where and how monitoring activities should inform these decisions, building upon a decade-old effort to develop a standardized protocol, design and data management system. We were invited to give a presentation on SHARP and we chaired two breakout groups. The products of the meeting will include a business plan that provides a detailed prospectus for the needs agreed to be the most immediate and urgent for marsh bird conservation. We have also submitted an abstract for the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference April 2012.

# 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 #- 2011 4th 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 collated and QA/QC’d all the tidal marsh bird, vegetation, and spatial data from the 2011 field season. We’ve revised field maps and initiated logistical planning in preparation for the 2012 field season. We have met with conservation planners and sea-level rise modelers to make progress on integrating the avian data with quantitative conservation planning and sea-level rise models.
- 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 1,347 sampling locations from VA - ME. We hold weekly conference calls and planned our annual meeting for 5 – 6 Jan, 2012.
- 3) provide all states in BCR 30 with a detailed description of their regional responsibility for tidal marsh bird species,
  - >> We have completed first field season of tidal marsh bird survey data collection that will be used to inform and meet this objective. 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 designed, organized, and implemented the first field season of the BCR 30 / USFWS Region 5 tidal marsh bird surveys. This included hiring a graduate student to oversee the survey effort, hiring and training field survey technicians, working in partnership with co-collaborators from SHARP, drafting field protocols, and implementing the survey. From Oct – Dec 2011 we are organizing and QA/QCing the data from both the survey effort and the demographic studies. We were invited to participate on the steering committee of the North American Marsh Bird Conservation and Management workshop held in Mobile, AL 13 – 15 December, 2011. The purpose of the meeting was to organize the conservation needs of secretive marshbirds and explicitly articulate the conservation decisions faced by the community of secretive marshbird species conservationists and habitat managers in North America. Breakout groups were asked to explore where and how monitoring activities should inform these decisions, building upon a decade-old effort to develop a standardized protocol, design and data management system. We were invited to give a presentation on SHARP and we chaired two breakout groups. The products of the meeting will include a business plan that provides a detailed prospectus for the needs agreed to be the most immediate and urgent for marsh bird conservation. We have also submitted an abstract for the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference April 2012.

Difficulties Encountered: We are finalizing SOPs (standard operating procedures) that will clearly outline how to access the points within each hexagon (boat launch to use, tides to follow, tidal creeks with deep bottoms, etc.) so in the future it will be easier to access these points. We are also generating SOPs for all aspects of SHARP data collection that will be posted on the SHARP website ([www.tidalmarshbirds.org](http://www.tidalmarshbirds.org)).

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter: For Q1 2012 we will continue to organize and summarize the data we collected during the 2011 field season. We will be preparing for the 2012 field season by identifying potential housing for the field crews, submitting permit applications to conduct surveys on different lands, advertising for field crews, and maintaining contact with partners. 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: \$37,583.75

Amount of RCN Funds Requested within this Report: \$131.80

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:

*Susan M Bleckel*

Date:

*1/23/12*