

NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEED GRANT QUARTERLY REPORT

Grant Number: 2007-04

Grant Title: Development of avian indicators and measures for monitoring threats and effectiveness of conservation actions in the Northeast

Grant Recipient: American Bird Conservancy

Grant Contact Name: Dan Lambert

Report #- 2 (for July 1 to September 30, 2008)

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes

Regional Conservation Need Addressed: Development of Regional Indicators and Measures

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

The following activities were completed as planned:

Objective 1. To develop regionally coordinated survey designs and monitoring protocols for three indicator groups: mountain birds, grassland birds, and tidal marsh birds.

Mountain Birds: Earlier this year, the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) developed and field-tested a sampling design, protocols and standard operating procedures for high-elevation songbirds at over 400 points in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Canadian partners piloted the same methods at approximately 100 stations in Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. During the third quarter, VCE synthesized comments on the pilot program from field observers, institutional partners, and independent reviewers. Three collaborating statisticians analyzed pilot data to refine the count methods and determine sample size requirements based on desired levels of statistical power and precision. Early indications are that the data collected in 2008 are of very high quality, with several density estimation methods yielding consistent values and low measures of variance. Recommendations from the statisticians will be used to finalize the survey design and protocol during the remainder of the year.

Grassland Birds: During the second quarter, Audubon New York, New Jersey Audubon Society, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection piloted a standardized grassland bird protocol at over 220 sites in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Since the end of June, Audubon New York completed a second round of visits to 60 sites in New York, while New Jersey Audubon entered and submitted that state's data to the Population and Habitat Assessment Branch of the US Fish and Wildlife Service for analysis. Results will be used to improve the efficiency and precision of the field protocol and develop a unified sampling strategy across the focal region.

Tidal Marsh Birds: During the first two quarters of 2008, Greg Shriver at the University of Delaware selected 200 survey locations in Delaware Bay from the BCR 30 tidal marsh bird sample frame, which is comprised of estuarine emergent habitat along the New England / mid-Atlantic coast. At each location, a field technician determined if it was an appropriate sample site (i.e. tidal marsh habitat) and if so, conducted a standardized count using the North American Marsh Bird Monitoring Protocol. Of the 200 locations, 116 were within appropriate habitat and were visited 3 times between 1 June and 15 August 2008. All data have been digitized. During the final quarter of this year, Dr. Shriver will produce estimates of count variability for focal marsh species that can be used to refine sample sizes given specific monitoring objectives.

Objective 2. To incorporate methods to investigate the region's most significant threats and the effectiveness of management and conservation actions

Mountain Birds: The draft Mountain Birdwatch Protocol and Standard Operating Procedures developed in the spring of 2008 incorporate a number of covariates that are thought to cover all the major threats to mountain songbirds, such as mercury contamination, forest management, red squirrel predation, and climate-induced changes in habitat. The pilot surveys conducted in June 2008 included a cone count and a count of red squirrels, addressing the major source of predation of mountain songbird nestlings and eggs. Protocols for measuring habitat were piloted at a high-elevation study site in July 2008. The efficiency of various methods for collecting the same habitat measures were tested at this time.

Grassland Birds: Surveys in all three states were conducted on grasslands under various management regimes, including public and private properties managed for their value to grassland birds. This approach will enable partnering institutions to evaluate whether properties enrolled in landowner / habitat incentive programs are effective at slowing grassland bird declines.

Tidal Marsh Birds: Dr. Shriver attended the recent NECBM workshop and chaired the marsh bird breakout group. This group outlined priority management actions within 7 sub-regions of tidal marshes in BCR 30 to be used in the estimation of sample sizes and stratification within each sub-region.

Objective 3. To identify, expand, and/or build data management systems for each of the indicator groups in order to facilitate aggregation and analysis of data at desired spatial scales.

Mountain Birds: During this quarter, data collected during the first phase of Mountain Birdwatch (2000-2007) were made available for download from the Northeast Avian Data Center (<http://akn.nebirdmonitor.org>), along with project metadata. Also, a database was developed to house the 2008 pilot data for the program's second phase. The appropriate tables, queries and forms were created to organize the information and facilitate data entry. A number of specific queries were created to provide relevant information to statisticians who are analyzing the pilot data using occupancy, time-of-detection, and distance sampling methods.

Grassland Birds: A common database has not yet been constructed for New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut grassland surveys, although most fields within the three separate database will align easily due to a common count protocol.

Tidal Marsh Birds: As part of a collaboration with the USFWS Salt Marsh Integrity Monitoring Protocol, Dr. Shriver worked with the US Geological Survey to adapt the Marsh Bird Monitoring Database presently used by National Wildlife Refuges. Adaptations to the database allow the data to be maintained for all detected species, and adds the ability to define distance bands for estimating detection rates for focal marsh species.

Objective 4. To provide coordination services for implementing key elements of “A Framework for Coordinated Bird Monitoring in the Northeast” and “The Northeast Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework”

We drafted and circulated for public comment a comprehensive guide to monitoring birds for conservation, entitled “The Northeast Bird Monitoring Handbook: 10 Steps to Successful Bird Conservation through Improved Monitoring”. This document uses a Peregrine Falcon case study to demonstrate the essential elements of successful bird monitoring and conservation programs. A review of the handbook by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Migratory Bird Coordinator described it as “excellent” and “just what NABCI had in mind for regional products” when it published the national guidance document, “Opportunities for Improving Avian Monitoring”.

We also: organized a three-day coordinated bird monitoring workshop in Cape May, NJ, which was attended by 65 representatives of state, federal, and non-governmental organizations; participated in discussions to advance “The Northeast Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework” through new funding sources; prepared and submitted two proposals to sustain the Northeast Bird Monitoring Partnership; and reported on our progress to the Northeast Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee.

Difficulties Encountered:

Mountain Birds: Despite considerable forethought in designing an appropriate pilot database, complex queries had to be developed to organize the data for analysis by partnering statisticians. While this took some additional time to set up, the knowledge gained will be helpful in designing the final database for Mountain Birdwatch. While not obstacles to our progress, observer feedback on the pilot protocols suggested some areas for improvement, such as clearer rationale for revising the program, more straightforward instructions, and simpler data forms.

Grassland Birds: Although the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection has completed its testing of 2008 pilot protocols, its legal / contracts office has yet to sign the paperwork that formalizes the grassland bird collaboration. It is possible that the grassland bird deliverables will incorporate Connecticut’s input, but at no cost to American Bird Conservancy, nor by extension, the Northeast Regional Conservation Needs Grant Program.

Tidal Marsh Birds: No difficulties were encountered, however the University of Delaware anticipates the need for an organization (or organizations) to provide long-term coordination services to support tidal marsh bird monitoring in BCR 30.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

Objective 1. To develop regionally coordinated survey designs and monitoring protocols for three indicator groups: mountain birds, grassland birds, and tidal marsh birds.

Planned Accomplishments:

1. To produce a detailed Protocol and Standard Operating Procedures for each of the indicator groups, including clear conservation and monitoring objectives, sampling designs, and data management and analysis methods.

Objective 2. To incorporate methods to investigate the region's most significant threats and the effectiveness of management and conservation actions

1. To identify and address threats and other management issues in conservation and monitoring objectives and associated field procedures.

Objective 3. To identify, expand, and/or build data management systems for each of the indicator groups in order to facilitate aggregation and analysis of data at desired spatial scales

1. For each of the indicator groups, map unified data fields to the Avian Knowledge Network and serve project data and metadata through the Northeast Avian Data Center (NADC).
2. To promote use of the data archiving, discovery, exploration, and exchange tools available through NADC.

Objective 4. To provide coordination services for implementing key elements of "A Framework for Coordinated Bird Monitoring in the Northeast" and "The Northeast Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework"

1. To revise, design, print, and circulate "The Northeast bird Monitoring Handbook".
2. To support efforts to implement "The Northeast Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework".
3. To prepare and submit funding proposals for integrating and implementing the aforementioned frameworks.
4. To report progress to a variety of audiences, including the the USFWS Multistate Conservation Grant Program, the USFWS Nongame Bird Coordinators, and the Bird Conservation Alliance.

Costs:

Are you within the approved budget plan? Yes

Are you within approved budget categories? Yes

Signature: _____

Merrie S. Morrison

Date: _____

10/6/08

NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEEDS GRANT EXPENDITURE REPORTING FORM

Grant Number: 2007-04

Grant Title: Development of avian indicators and measures for monitoring threats and effectiveness of conservation actions in the Northeast

Grant Recipient: American Bird Conservancy

Grant Contact Name: Dan Lambert

Reporting Period for Costs Claimed On This Voucher: July 1 to September 30, 2008

A. List Total Eligible Cost Summary For This Reporting Period Only:

NE RCN GRANT			
Time Period			
	RCN FUNDS	NON-FEDERAL MATCH	TOTAL
<u>Personal Service Cost</u>			
Salaries and/or Wages	\$4551.51	\$15196.87	\$19748.38
Fringe Benefits	\$1579.84	\$680	\$2259.84
Indirect Costs (17.7%)	\$731.92	\$3162.24	\$3894.16
<u>Non-personal Service Cost</u>			
Travel	\$ 205.90	\$ 1850.28	\$2056.18
Equipment			
Supplies & Materials			
Contractual Services			
Total	\$7069.17	\$20889.39	\$27958.56

B. List Cumulative Total Eligible Costs Claimed From The Beginning of Agreement Up To And Including Those Listed Above:

Total Life-to-Date Expenses	\$18,238.17
Less Previous Payments Processed	\$1,006
Total Amount Due Grantee Now:	\$17,232.17

**NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEEDS GRANT
PERSONAL SERVICES SUMMARY
GRANTEE AND 3RD PARTY MATCH**

Grant Number: 2007-04

Grant Title: Development of avian indicators and measures for monitoring threats and effectiveness of conservation actions in the Northeast

Grant Recipient: American Bird Conservancy

Grant Contact Name: Dan Lambert

Reporting Period for Costs Claimed On This Voucher: March 5 to September 30, 2008

NE RCN GRANT					
Date(s)	Name, Affiliation, Title	Hourly Rate	Task	Hours Claimed	Total Cost
July 1 – September 30	Julie Hart, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Mountain Birdwatch Coordinator	\$16.83	Designing database, coordinating protocol review, field survey	190.1	\$3199.53
August 8	Kent McFarland, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Conservation Biologist	\$22.12	Field survey	7	\$154.84
August 22	Chris Rimmer, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Director	\$24.52	Field survey	2	\$49.04
June 1 – 30, 2008	VCE volunteer match	\$21	Field surveys	405.6	\$8518.07
July 1 – September 30, 2008	Nellie Tsipoura, New Jersey Audubon Society, Volunteer Coordinator	\$17.50	Volunteer coordination and map and protocol preparation	55	\$962.50
May 1 – July 31, 2008	NJAS volunteer match	\$21	Field surveys	222.8	\$4678.80
March – June 2008	Greg Shriver, Professor of Ecology, University of Delaware	\$37.52	Organization, hiring, training	4.7	\$176
March – June 2008	Greg Shriver, Professor of Ecology, University of Delaware (in-kind match)	\$37.52	Organization, hiring, training	53.3	\$2000

Note: University of Delaware time represents first and second quarter activities that were not accounted for in the previous report. Figures for the third quarter will not be available until late October.

**NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEEDS GRANT
CERTIFICATION OF
GRANTEE AND 3RD PARTY MATCH**

Grant Number: 2007 - 04

Grant Title: Development of avian indicators and measures for monitoring threats and effectiveness of conservation actions

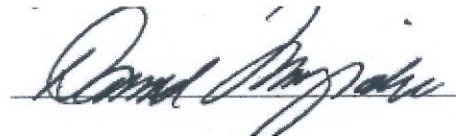
Grant Recipient: American Bird Conservancy

Grant Contact Name: Dan Lambert

I hereby certify that daily time and activity records for each individual detailing the specific hours devoted solely to this project which are distinguishable from work done on other projects during the same time frame, maintained in accordance with all applicable federal, state and general municipal accounting practices and procedures are available in our files for inspection.



Julie Hart for Vermont Center for Ecostudies



David Mizrahi for New Jersey Audubon Society

Signature on file

Greg Shriver for the University of Delaware