

NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEED GRANT QUARTERLY AND FINAL 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 #- 3 (for Oct 1 to December 31, 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.

Planned Accomplishments:

1. To produce a detailed protocol and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for each of the indicator groups, including clear conservation and monitoring objectives, sampling designs, and data management and analysis methods.

Actual Accomplishments:

1. Produced protocols and standard operating procedures for each of the three indicator groups, including elements described above plus plans for survey enhancement and expansion. Solicited peer review of each protocol at workshop presentations and by circulation for written comments. Conducted pilot surveys for grassland birds (a single visit to 160 locations in CT and NJ and two visits to 60 locations in NY), tidal marsh birds (three visits to 116 locations DE, MD, NJ), and mountain birds (a single visit to 400 locations in ME, NB, NH, NS, NY, QC, and VT). Integrated feedback from reviewers and from field observers into an update of each protocol (attached as separate files).

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

Planned Accomplishments:

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

Actual Accomplishments:

1. Completed and developing protocols incorporate techniques to measure covariates that are considered potential regulators of the target populations. For mountain birds these include: mercury exposure, acidification / calcium availability, forest management regime, predation risk from red squirrels, and climate. For grassland birds: conservation status, habitat type, habitat structure, and changes in these attributes. For tidal marsh birds: fire, grid ditching, invasive species, sea level rise, contaminants, impoundment management, salt hay harvest, and development.

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.

Planned Accomplishments:

1. For each of the indicator groups, produce a unified database with data fields compatible with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Avian Knowledge Network (AKN).

Actual Accomplishments:

1. Produced a unified and AKN-compatible database for each indicator group, containing 2008 pilot data. Provided data to the AKN to be uploaded, archived, visualized and exchanged through the Northeast Avian Data Center (<http://akn.nebirdmonitor.org>). Databases are provided as separate attachments.

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".

Planned Accomplishments:

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.

Actual Accomplishments:

1. Revised, designed, and printed "The Northeast bird Monitoring Handbook: Ten Steps to Successful Bird Conservation through Improved Monitoring" (provided as a separate attachment). Circulation of hard copies has begun at small meetings, to be followed in late January by a major mailing to Northeast wildlife and natural resource agencies and to governmental and non-governmental participants in the Northeast Coordinated Bird Monitoring Partnership.

2. Supported efforts to implement "The Northeast Monitoring and Performance Reporting Framework" by applying for and being conditionally awarded a second RCN grant to implement bird-related components of the framework. This will involve the production of a status assessment for framework indicators and further development of regionally coordinated protocols for select populations.
3. In addition to successful proposal described above, prepared and submitted funding proposals to the Doris Duke Foundation and the Sarah K. de Coizart 10th Charitable Trust. The former was denied and the latter is pending.
4. Reported progress at annual meetings of the Bird Conservation Alliance and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Nongame Bird Coordinators. A final report to the FWS Multistate Conservation Grant Program has been completed and will be submitted upon completion of financial accounting.

Difficulties Encountered:

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection was unable to accept a subcontract under this grant agreement, restricting their role in the development of grassland bird protocols. Nevertheless, state biologists from Connecticut participated in preliminary protocol and provided GIS and 2008 count data to the regional initiative. Half of the funds budgeted for this purpose (\$3,500) were used to fund printing of "The Northeast Bird Monitoring Handbook".

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

Complete financial reporting and certify project completion.

Costs:

Are you within the approved budget plan? Yes

Are you within approved budget categories? Yes

Signature: Hacy Santra

Date: Jan 15, 2009