

# **Boreal Partners in Flight / Alaska Raptor Group**

## **2014 Annual Meeting Minutes**

**9 December, 2014, Juneau, AK**



E-mail listserve: Contact Hilary Cooke (hcooke@wcs.org) to be added to the BPIF listserve, which provides periodic announcements on topics related to BPIF and other relevant landbird issues in Alaska and northwestern Canada.

Visit the Alaska Landbird Resource Information System, the official website of Boreal Partners in Flight: <http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/bpif/index.php>

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## Introduction

The 23rd annual meeting of Boreal Partners in Flight was held on 9 December 2014 in Juneau, Alaska, in conjunction with the Alaska Bird Conference. This year's meeting was attended by over 50 individuals representing a variety of state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and universities —members appeared in person, or attended remotely from across Alaska and boreal Canada. Given the scientific focus of the Alaska Bird Conference, this year's meeting primarily concentrated on BPIF business and focus group discussions.

In summary, we:

- (1) Discussed expanded membership in Canada and a searchable membership database.
- (2) Learned about a Metadata Research Database developed by the Alaska Raptor Group.
- (3) Engaged in focus group sessions to address recovery plans for select raptor species and discuss the new State Wildlife Action Plan.
- (4) Received updates on: Alaska Landbird Conservation Plan, Citizen Science efforts related to tree swallows, and survey and monitoring efforts for landbirds.
- (5) Identified five action items for the upcoming year, summarized in the “Action Plan for 2015.”

This report contains the minutes from the meeting, brief notes on topical discussions, and recommended actions for 2015. Unless noted, Co-Chairs are responsible for the completion of action items.

We offer our thanks to attendees for their participation, and extend an invitation to all who are interested in the conservation and research of northern landbird populations to join Boreal Partners in Flight (contact Gwen Baluss).

Julie Hagelin

Co-chair (2013–2015)

21 Sept 2015

## **Leadership of Boreal Partners in Flight**

### Executive Committee:

#### **Gwen Baluss – Chair**

Term: Nov 2014 – Dec 2016

U.S. Forest Service, Tongass National Forest

8510 Mendenhall Loop Road, Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 789-6222 or (907) 500-2771; E-mail: [gbaluss@gmail.com](mailto:gbaluss@gmail.com)

**Brian Logan** stepped down in September 10, 2015 due to new responsibilities as the USFS National Wildlife Program leader in Washington, DC.

#### **Julie Hagelin – Co-Chair**

Term - until next election 2015

Threatened, Endangered and Diversity Program

Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game

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Fairbanks, AK 99701

Phone: (907) 459-7239; Email: [julie.hagelin@alaska.gov](mailto:julie.hagelin@alaska.gov)

#### **Jim Johnson – USFWS Landbird Coordinator**

Term: ongoing

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Migratory Bird Management

1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503

Phone: (907) 786-3423; E-mail: [jim\\_a\\_johnson@fws.gov](mailto:jim_a_johnson@fws.gov)

#### **Colleen Handel – USGS Landbird Researcher**

Term: ongoing

U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Science Center

4210 University Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone: (907) 786-7181; Email: cmhandel@usgs.gov

**John Shook – Alaska Raptor Group Chair**

ABR, Inc. -- Environmental Research and Services

PO Box 80410

Fairbanks, AK 99708

Phone: (907) 465-6777 x 129; Email: jshook@abrinc.com

Term: Dec 2014– Oct 2016

**John Haddix – Elected Member**

Term: Nov 2013 – Nov 2015

Directorate of Public Works

ATTN: IMFW-PWE, 1060 Gaffney Road, #4500, Fort Wainright, AK 99703

Phone: (907) 361-4213; E-mail: john.a.haddix.civ@mail.mil

**Caroline Van Hemert – Elected Member**

Term: Nov 2013 – Nov 2015

U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Science Center

4210 University Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone: (907) 786-7181; Email: cvanhemert@usgs.gov

**Hilary Cooke – Elected Member**

Term: Dec 2015 – Nov 2017

Wildlife Conservation Society Canada (WCS Canada)

2B-508 Hanson Street

Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada Y1A-1Z1

Phone: (867) 393-2447; E-mail: hcooke@wcs.org

**Vacant –Elected Member (Secretary)**

### **BCR Coordinators (2014–2016):**

BCR 1: Jim Johnson (jim\_a\_johnson@fws.gov) and Steve Matsuoka (smatsuoka@usgs.gov)

BCR 2: Kristine Sowl (kristine\_sowl@fws.gov)

BCR 3: Travis Booms (travis.booms@alaska.gov)

BCR 4: Julie Hagelin (julie.hagelin@alaska.gov)

BCR 5: Melissa Cady (melissa\_cady@fws.gov)

### **Standing Committees (formed in 2012, ongoing)**

Education: Tricia Blake (tricia.blake@aksongbird.org), Lynn Fuller (lynn\_fuller@pcjv.org)

Management: Cheryl Carrothers (ccarrothers@fs.fed.us)

Monitoring: Colleen Handel (cmhandel@usgs.gov), Steve Matsuoka (smatsuoka@usgs.gov)

## **Action Plan for 2015**

### **Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative**

- **Action 1:** BPIF should apprise Rick of any specific ideas germane to IMBI that pertain to conservation of migratory Arctic landbirds.

### **Increasing Connections**

- **Action 2:** Hilary Cooke will continue conversation with smaller group to identify “next steps” with newly expanded membership. What is the best way to move forward across boreal north America to develop strategies, maintain active members and collaborations?
- **Action 3:** BPIF will create and share (with permission) a membership database with information to help identify potential connections/collaborators amongst membership.

### **MetaData Database (Alaska Raptor Group)**

- **Action 4:** Rick Lanctot, Luke DeCicco, and Julie Hagelin will work with Chris Barger to devise a possible means of applying online data entry as a means of submitting an annual project report for our respective bird groups (Alaska Shorebird Group, Boreal Partners in Flight). An update will be provided next year.

### **Alaska Landbird Conservation Plan**

- **Action 5:** Colleen Handel needs help from BPIF to (1) find funding for printing the Landbird Conservation plan and (2) know how many copies to print.

## Aerial Insectivores

- **Action 6:** Audrey Taylor recommended those currently involved in swallow efforts establish some overarching data goals.

## BPIF Business

- **Action 7:** BPIF elections for 2015:
  - Elect co-Chair
  - Elect two (of three) Executive Committee member
  - Appoint a Secretary.
  - Elect BCR Coordinators.

## Minutes from 2014 Juneau Meeting:

### **Update on the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative – Rick Lanctot**

Rick is on the steering committee for the Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative (IMBI). This effort is run through Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) and involves the Arctic Council—U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will be chair the Council this year. IMBI addresses species from four flyways (East Asian, American, Circumpolar and African). Conservation priorities for migratory species in the U.S. can often be driven by habitat needs or other issues germane to the lower 48 states, etc. Are there specific needs we have in AK? E.g. Migratory stopover sites, etc? Currently the “floating layers” of planning for IMBI are not really connected (LCC’s, flyway council, PCJVs, etc).

### **Recommended Actions:**

- **Action:** BPIF should apprise Rick of any specific ideas germane to IMBI that pertain to conservation of migratory Arctic landbirds.

### **Increasing Connections – Hilary Cooke**

Alaska Partners In Flight was founded in 1991, but in 1994 changed to Boreal Partners in Flight to emphasize connectivity across boreal. The 2002 meeting held in Whitehorse and subsequent discussions in 2013 have raised interest in increasing connectivity with Canada.

Discussions with Canadian partners in 2014 were well-received and have recruited members from multiple locations, including Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, BC, Yukon, Manitoba, etc. New membership includes 5 different NGO’s and 5 academic institutions, and expands BPIF membership by ~30% (currently membership stands at ~120 members).

### **Recommended Actions:**

- **Action:** Hilary Cooke will continue conversation with smaller group to identify “next steps” with newly expanded membership. What is the best way to move forward across boreal north America to develop strategies, maintain active members and collaborations?
- **Action :** BPIF will create and share a membership database to help us identify potential collaborators amongst membership.

### **Alaska Raptor Group Overview of Activities and Elections – T. Booms**

Laura Phillips is developing a website for ARG. They have created a metadata dataset for work involving Alaskan raptors. Steve Lewis is creating STOOPS action plan for select species. The group is trying to expand membership beyond Alaska, which may involve a name change.

#### **ARG Elections:**

Chair—John Shook: All in Favor

Secretary—Laura Phillips: All in favor

Steering committee members at large (meet 2-4x per year via videoconference):

Chris Barger, Jim Johnson, Brian Logan: All in favor

### **Alaska Raptor Metadata Database – C. Barger**

ARG was tasked last year with providing BPIF an update of its database’s strengths and weaknesses. The goal is to see whether it could be applied to BPIF research reports in the future. The current ARG system aims to capture historical and ongoing raptor work. A link to the site can be found here: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildlifediversity.raptors>

Currently there is discussion of who will ultimately host the ARG website—ADFG and USGS both have potential to do so. The website works well, and provides a standardized method for data entry. There are some “issues” that can be improved upon (e.g. does not accept multiple study areas, needs better instructions, etc). Access to input data is important to catch errors.

#### **Recommended Actions:**

- **Action :** Rick Lanctot, Julie Hagelin and Luke DeCicco will work with Chris Barger to devise a possible means of applying online data entry as a means of submitting an annual project report for our respective bird groups (Alaska Shorebird Group, Boreal Partners in Flight). An update will be provided next year

### **Raptor Stoops (Species Action Plans) – S. Lewis**

The current Management Plan for Alaskan Raptors was published in 2000 and is dated. The goal is to develop an action plan for each species in Alaska (or a larger area). This would be used as a

vehicle to update the current plan for Alaskan raptors. Items discussed in Steve's presentation included:

Format: What is most appropriate/effective way to communicate the need for action(s)?  
Geographic scale: Place-based vs. species based  
Identification of information needs and specific actions for conserving species

Membership broke-out into expert groups to examine species templates.

**Recommended Actions:** None. Information was given back to Steve to consider in future management plan revision efforts.

### **Alaska Landbird Conservation Plan– C. Handel**

The Alaska Landbird Conservation Plan v. 2.0 has now been peer reviewed and ready to go to a publisher!

#### **Recommended Actions:**

- **Action :** Colleen Handel needs help from BPIF to (1) find funding for printing the Landbird Conservation plan and (2) know how many copies to print.

### **Alaska Species Wildlife Action Plan– M. Kirchhoff**

State of Alaska Wildlife Diversity Program must renew the State's Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) every 10 years. The plan enables Alaska to obtain Federal Aid funds which can be used toward wildlife conservation priorities. The plan considers many different species, not just birds. Matt is revising the State's plan (due in fall 2015), and proposed a ranking system for species of conservation need.

Matt plans to use three criteria to rank bird species in terms of conservation need: Population size, Trends and Threats. Birds often have the best, long-term survey data available to estimate population size or trend. There was some group discussion of whether these criteria capture all bird species well (e.g. What about shorebird stopover sites?). We broke into 5 groups to identify threats of various bird groups.

**Recommended Actions:** None. Information was given back to Matt for SWAP revision efforts.

### **Updates on 2014 Action Items–**

#### **Aerial Insectivores— A. Harding-Scurr, A. Taylor**

*A. Harding-Scurr:* Alaska Songbird Institute is now up and running with two long-term projects. One involves aerial insectivores (Tree Swallow monitoring), and the other is the long-term banding station at Creamer's Field Migratory Refuge. ASI is looking for graduate students to get involved for analysis. ASI is submitting a grant to increase swallow efforts in other areas of the state.

*A. Taylor:* Update on statewide tree swallow efforts since 2013. David Winkler has reduced funding, but is seeking additional funds. USFWS (Steve Matsuoka/Jim Johnson) put 150 swallow boxes. No Violet Green Swallows nested. Tree swallows had 35% occupancy rate. A UAA undergrad is tackling monitoring as an honors project. Julie Hagelin mentioned published data for the lower 48 could be a good resource/comparison.

### **Recommended Action:**

- **Action:** Audrey Taylor recommended those involved in tree swallow efforts establish some overarching data goals.

### **Survey and Monitoring / BPIF website— C. Handel**

USFWS is considering adopting a common monitoring protocol across their refuges. ALMS would be a fit. Recent work by Courtney Amundson incorporates distance and time sampling to estimate detection rate for different species.

BPIF Website is currently hosted by USGS. USGS is in the process of changing over to a data-driven site, so edits to BPIF information have been slow until the new system is in place.

**Recommended Action:** None.

### **BPIF Business— J. Hagelin**

#### **Elections:**

**Co-Chair:** Gwen Baluss nominated— All in favor

**3<sup>rd</sup> Executive Committee member:** Hilary Cooke— All in favor

**Secretary** – no nominees

**BCR Coordinators:** All in favor (nominee list provided in agenda).

BCR1: Jim Johnson, Steve Matsuoka

BCR2: Kristine Sowl

BCR3: Travis Booms

BCR4: Julie Hagelin

BCR5: Melissa Cady

**Standing Committees:** All in favor of continuing to keep the following:  
 Education: Tricia Blake, Lynn Fuller  
 Management: Cheryl Carrothers  
 Monitoring: Colleen Handel, Steve Matsuoka

**Recommended Action:**

- **Action:** BPIF Elections in 2015 should:
  - Elect co-Chair
  - Elect two (of three) Executive Committee members
  - Appoint a Secretary.

**Appendix 1. Meeting agenda**

<p><b>Agenda for          Boreal Partners in Flight and          Alaska Raptor Group          9 December 2014          Juneau, AK</b></p>		
<p><b>Please read:</b> Where: Centennial Hall, Egan room, (101 Egan Dr. Juneau, AK)          Time: 1:30–5:15 (AKST)          Beverages and snacks will be provided.</p>		
<p><i>Agenda topics:</i></p>		
<b>1:30–1:55</b>	<p><b>Welcome, Overview &amp; Introductions</b></p>	All
<b>1:55–2:05</b>	<p><b>Increasing Connections (<i>Action Items 11-12</i>)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Canadian members &amp; opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b><u>*Please take 2mins to join BPIF’s searchable membership directory!*</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BPIF">https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BPIF</a></p>	Hilary Cooke, WCS Canada
<b>2:05–3:00</b>	<p><b>Alaska Raptor Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of 2014 Activities and Elections</li> <li>• ARG Metadata Database (2:10-2:20)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b><i>BPIF Discussion (Action Item 7):</i></b> Can we adapt ARG’s online system to suit BPIF’s annual project report? (2:20-2:30)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b><i>Raptor Stoops</i></b> (Species Action Plans: 2:30-3:00)</li> </ul>	Travis Booms, ADFG Chris Barger, ADFG

	<b>All BPIF membership invited</b>	Steve Lewis, USFWS
<b>3:00–3:15</b>	<i>Break</i>	
<b>3:15–3:30</b>	<b>Alaska Landbird Plan v. 2.0</b>	Colleen Handel, USGS
<b>3:30–4:15</b>	<b>State Wildlife Action Plan Revision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview (3:30-3:45)</li> <li>• Break-out groups (3:45-4:15)</li> </ul>	Matt Kirchhoff, ADFG
<b>4:15–4:30</b>	<i>Break</i>	
	<b>Updates on 2013 BPIF Action Items</b>	
<b>4:30–4:45</b>	<i>Aerial Insectivores (Action Items 1-3)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen Science + recent swallow efforts in AK</li> <li>• Alaska Songbird Institute (ASI) update</li> </ul>	Audrey Taylor, UAA April Harding- Scurr, ASI
<b>4:45–4:55</b>	<i>Survey and Monitoring (Action Items 4-6, 9)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALMS Peer review &amp; Participation</li> <li>• BPIF Website</li> </ul>	Colleen Handel USGS
<b>4:50–5:00</b>	<i>Other BPIF business (Action 8)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BPIF Elections: BCR coordinators, 3<sup>rd</sup> Exec. committee seat, secretary, new co-chair</li> </ul>	All
<b>5:00–5:15</b>	Closing remarks	
<b>6:30-8:30p</b>	<b>ABC Welcome Reception</b> Where: Baranof Hotel, Gastineau Suite, 9 <sup>th</sup> Floor Appetizers and complimentary drink provided to registered ABC attendees.	

**Notes for BPIF ELECTIONS:**

**Executive Committee** (2 positions need filling):

1. Elect new co-chair (term ends Dec. 2016)
  - Nominee: Gwen Baluss, Tongass National Forest
  - Julie Hagelin’s term is ending, and Brian Logan is co-chair through Dec. 2015.
2. Fill vacancy for 3<sup>rd</sup> “member at-large” seat (term ends Dec. 2016):
  - Nominee: Hilary Cooke, WCS Canada

Overview of Executive committee positions (n = 8):

- Three “members at-large”
  - John Haddix (term ends Dec. 2015)
  - Caroline van Hemert (term ends Dec. 2015)

- **vacant**
- Five “designated” positions:
  - 2 BPIF co-chairs (Julie Hagelin, Brian Logan)
  - ARG Chair: Travis Booms
  - USFWS Landbird Coordinator: Steve Matsuoka
  - USGS landbird researcher: Colleen Handel

**3. Appoint a secretary to help co-chairs take meeting minutes.**

**BCR Coordinators nominated for 2-yr term** (through 2016):

BCR1: Jim Johnson, Steve Matsuoka; BCR2: Kristine Sowl; BCR3: Travis Booms

BCR4: Julie Hagelin; BCR5: Melissa Cady

**Continuing “standing committees”** (formed in 2012, ongoing):

Education: Tricia Blake, Lynn Fuller

Management: Cheryl Carrothers

Monitoring: Colleen Handel, Steve Matsuoka

## Appendix 2. Meeting Attendees (includes dial-up participants)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Email</b>
Melissa Cady	USFS	melissa_cady@fws.gov
Colleen Handel	USGS	colleen_handel@usgs.gov
Caroline Van Hemert	USGS	cvanhemert@usgs.gov
Scott Harris	Sitka Conservation Society	scott@sitkawild.org
Stacia Backensto	NPS	stacia_backensto@nps.gov
Deb Nigro	BLM	dnigro@blm.gov
Dave Mossup	Yukon College	dmossup@yukoncollege.yk.ca
Cheryl Carrothers	USFS	ccarrothers@fs.fed.gov
Susan Savage	USFWS	susan_savage@fws.gov
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John Haddix	Department of Defense	john.a.haddix.civ@mail.mil
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Jenny Bryant	USFS	
Brad Scott	USFS	