

Report on the 2007 CMMN-RCSM National Meeting Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation, Slave Lake, Alberta, 11-14 October 2007

Prepared by Audrey Heagy, Tara Crewe Jon McCracken Bird Studies Canada

A CD containing a compilation of the presentations, reports, and other documents presented at this meeting accompanies these notes. Copies of the CD are available by contacting ahagy@bsc-eoc.org.

1. Participants

A total of [twenty people](#) traveled from across Canada to Slave Lake, Alberta to participate in the sixth national meeting of the Canadian Migration Monitoring Network – Réseau canadien de surveillance des migrations (CMMN-RCSM). A list of participants, their station affiliation(s), and contact information is included as Table 1.

Attendance was down from previous meetings since the Environment Canada budget freeze prevented any CWS-SCF staff from attending the meeting and there was no CWS-SCF support available to subsidize travel by station representatives.

Table 1. CMMN-RCSM MEETING 2007 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Affiliation(s)	Email
Emilie Berthiaume	Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory	emilieberthiaume@explos-nature.qc.ca
Patti Campsall	Observatory	executive.director@borealbirdcentre.ca
Doug Collister	Calgary Bird Banding Society	collistr@telus.net
Tara Crewe	Bird Studies Canada	tcrewe@bsc-eoc.org
Heidi den Haan	Delta Marsh Bird Observatory	hdenhaan@cc.UManitoba.ca
Marcel Gahbauer	McGill Bird Observatory	marcel@migrationresearch.org
Graeme Gibson	Pelee Island Bird Observatory	graeme.gibson@pibo.ca
Audrey Heagy	Bird Studies Canada	ahagy@bsc-eoc.org
Marie-Anne Hudson	McGill Bird Observatory	marie-anne.hudson@mcgill.ca
David Hussell	Steering Committee Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory	david.hussell@ontario.ca
Richard Krikun	Observatory	BIC@Islbo.org
Vi Lambie	Mackenzie Nature Observatory	jlambie@telus.net
John Lambie	Mackenzie Nature Observatory	jlambie@telus.net
Jon McCracken	Bird Studies Canada	jmccracken@bsc-eoc.org
Ted Murphy-Kelly	Albert Creek	plus@northwestel.net
Lisa Priestley	Beaverhill Bird Observatory	lisa@beaverhillbirds.com
Claire Sanders	Pelee Island Bird Observatory	claire.sanders@pibo.ca
Jim Smith	Haldimand Bird Observatory	benavis@sympatico.ca
Bill Taylor	Calgary Bird Banding Society	durham825@shaw.ca
Rob Weaver	Mackenzie Nature Observatory	weaver00@telus.net

2. Station Reports

Thirteen stations provided short (10 to 15 minute) updates on the status of their station. Copies of the presentation and/or written reports are available on the CMMN-RCSM 2007 Meeting Compilation CD.

Station	Presented by	See file(s) on CD:
Lesser Slave Lake Bird Observatory	Richard Krikun	LSLBO.pdf
Albert Creek Station	Ted Murphy-Kelly	AlbertCreek&TeslinLake.pdf
Teslin Lake Station	Ted Murphy-Kelly	
Mackenzie Nature Observatory	Vi Lambie	MNO.pdf
Inglewood Bird Sanctuary	Bill Taylor	CBBS Inglewood.pdf
Beaverhill Bird Observatory	Lisa Priestley	BBO20yr_Report.pdf
Delta Marsh Bird Observatory	Heidi den Haan	DMBO.pdf
Thunder Cape Bird Observatory	Jon McCracken	LPBO&TCBO.pdf
Long Point Bird Observatory	Jon McCracken	
Pelee Island Bird Observatory	Graeme Gibson & Claire Sanders	PIBO.pdf ; PIBO_InfoSheet.pdf
Haldimand Bird Observatory	Jim Smith	HBO.pdf
McGill Bird Observatory	Marie-Anne Hudson	MBO.pdf
Observatoire d'oiseaux de Tadoussac	Emilie Berthiaume	OOT.pdf

3. Station Technical Reports

Topic	Presented by	See file(s) on CD:
Canada Warbler Research at LSLBO (part of station report)	Richard Krikun	LSLBO.pdf
Update on Stopover Site Fidelity Research at Inglewood Bird Sanctuary	Doug Collister	CBBS_StopoverSiteFidelity.pdf
Should detectability be included in hawk count population trend analyses?	Emilie Berthiaume	Berthiaume_visualcounts.pdf
CBBS's Costa Rica Isotope Project	Doug Collister	CBBS_CostaRica_project.pdf

4. CMMN-RCSM Technical Report Preview and Data Quality Session

a. NMBCA project (Jon McCracken)

In 2007/08, Bird Studies Canada received funding under the U.S. Neotropical Migratory Birds Conservation Act (NMBCA) for a CMMN-RCSM project that included network-wide sampling of tail feathers from 20 species for analysis of hydrogen isotope ratios to help delineate migration “catchment areas”. A second component of the NMBCA project is the preparation of a major technical report on the CMMN-RCSM, highlighting population trends in neotropical migrants monitored at CMMN-RCSM stations. A shorter, less technical version of this report will also be produced.

In spring 2007, network stations collected more than 6000 feather samples. Additional samples are being collected at some 20 stations this fall. Analysis of a selection of the spring samples will be carried out soon. Analysis of a selection of the fall 2007 samples will be done after fall sampling is complete.

A preliminary version of the technical report, with the 2005 trend data, was circulated as information to meeting participants. The Steering Committee is currently reviewing this prototype document and providing input to BSC. A draft of the full technical report, including the 2006 data, will be available for review by the stations early in 2008.

b. CMMN-RCSM Trend Analyses and Technical Report Preview (Tara Crewe)

Tara Crewe, who is the person at BSC responsible for archiving the Estimated Total data submitted by the stations (ca. 25 stations), and for trend analyses for stations with 5 or more years of consistent data (15 stations as of 2005), made a presentation covering various aspects of the migration monitoring trend analyses (see [BSC Trends.pdf](#)).

Bird Studies Canada is preparing a major technical report on the CMMN-RCSM trend analyses, as part of the NMBCA project deliverables. Tara will be re-running the analyses to include 2006 data shortly. We are being conservative in determining which species to include in the analyses presented in this report to ensure a high quality, credible product.

Action: Bird Studies Canada (Tara lead) will circulate a draft of the technical report document by March 2008 (hopefully sooner) to all stations for review.

Action: BSC (Audrey lead) to coordinate getting current information from all stations for producing a CD of all station protocols, for updating the station directory and station pages on CMMN-RCSM website, and for the station information section of the technical report.

c. CMMN-RCSM Data Quality Discussion (Tara Crewe & Doug Collister)

The trend presentation was followed by a discussion led by Tara and Doug covering various factors that affect data quality and which species to include/exclude from the population trend analyses. Points raised in this discussion included:

- Interest in comparing the effect of count method on population trends. For example, visual migration counts versus banding data at OOT.
- Regarding the data quality/quantity colour coding system, the current sample size cut-off (minimum of 10 individuals on 5 days) is arbitrary. Also the confidence interval on the trend is not reflected in the colour coding system.
- Why do we need to exclude species where a large portion of the counts include resident/local individuals? The goal of migration monitoring is to monitor population trends over a broad geographic area and local effects would overwhelm the broader signal. The MAPS program and other types of breeding season surveys are designed to monitor local populations, whereas migration monitoring is designed to monitor transients.
- How to exclude local birds? Known stopovers (KS or PKS) – use these numbers (if reported) to remove local birds and other stopovers before analysis. Could do MAPS banding or point counts during breeding season to determine local individuals, resident population. Could have stations report estimated number of breeding territories for each species within the count area. You can also graph your data to see the extent to which a particular species shows a large peak in the number of individuals detected during spring or fall, which indicates a strong migration signal. A small peak in migration during spring or fall likely indicates that most of the bird “traffic” during a particular season is local in nature.
- The analysis method currently being used is not appropriate for analysing rare species with many zero observation days. Other analysis methods may be more appropriate, but these haven’t been tested with CMMN data.
- Stations need to think about what the best data set is for tracking migrants at their station. E.g., use a single method such as banding, or combine methods as an Estimated Total.
- Visual migration counts are ideal where there is a flow of migrants in one direction past a point.
- Importance of standardization to reduce the “noise” as much as possible. Avoid change in protocols, but if you do make a change, then need to consider how that change impacts the data. There are various ways of dealing with changes in protocol that make the data easier to analyze. It is important to run proposed changes by the steering committee to get input from others on how those changes might affect the data, and how those effects can be minimized.
- Irruptive species and partial migrants – BSC will analyze these species if requested, but results will be presented differently (e.g. population indices only, without generating a trend line) and/or treated separately in reports, etc. With irruptive species, migration monitoring does not monitor the whole population. May need to use a different analysis method if individuals are rarely detected in non-irruptive years. BSC will use one

defined set of irruptive species for the whole network rather than assign them on a station by station basis.

- For the technical report, it will be important to be conservative when deciding what species to include/exclude.

Action: BSC (Tara lead) will prepare a short document outlining important factors regarding which species to include in trend analyses.

5. Extracurricular Activities

On Friday evening, Frank Fraser, the Heritage Appreciation Team Leader with Alberta Parks, gave an interesting presentation highlighting the strategic location of Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park and the Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation in the heart of the threatened boreal ecosystem.

Richard Krikun, the LSLBO BIC, operated the owl monitoring nets on Friday and Saturday evenings, catching 3 and 1 Northern Saw-whet Owls, respectively. This gave the die-hard owlers a chance to compare notes. Richard also took the group on a tour of the LSLBO count area and banding facility.

Patti Campsall led a tour of the Boreal Centre facility, pointing out many of the novel environmentally-friendly features including composting toilets, geothermal heating/cooling system, and use of recycled waste products for siding and floors.

Patti also put on an impromptu session to show some of the education programs and materials developed by LSLBO and the BCBC related to birds and banding. LSLBO/BCBC has generously agreed to share electronic versions of the education materials with other CMMN-RCSM station (see [LSLBO Education folder](#) on the CD).

6. Steering Committee Report 2006-2007

a. Report

David Hussell reviewed the progress made by the Steering Committee over the past 2 years (see [Steering Committee Report.pdf](#)). Notable accomplishments include:

- Steering Committee Terms of Reference established (see [TermofReference.doc](#))
- The committee held a total of 15 teleconferences plus a face-to-face meeting in Calgary in November 2007.
- Five Steering Committee News Updates were emailed to the member stations.
- French name approved : Réseau canadien de surveillance des migrations (RCSM)
- Established criteria for Provisional Members and reviewed and approved three provisional members: Pelee Island, McGill and Tommy Thompson Park.
 - Established procedures for election of Station Representatives and appointment of BSC and CWS representatives (see [CMMN-RCSM Election Procedures.doc](#))
 - Set three short-term targets of:

1. Interim report with CMMN trends for all stations with 5+ years of data by October 2007
2. Additional feather isotope work to clarify summer origins of select species.
3. Major report on the CMMN-RCSM to increase exposure, and enhance visibility and credibility of the network and the stations by October 2008.
 - Developed Mission Statement and Vision (see [CMMN-RCSM Mission & Vision.doc](#)).

b. CMMN-RCSM Membership

Jon McCracken led a discussion of the proposed new membership criteria and Memo of Understanding (MOU) document (see [Cmmndraft agreement v4.pdf](#)). Points covered included:

- The original agreements between the stations and BSC lapsed after 5 years and have all expired.
- The new draft criteria are intended to be less rigorous and more inclusive, with a broader focus on migration rather than specifically on trends.
- The new agreement is being structured as a Memo of Understanding with the station, BSC, and the Steering Committee as signatories.

Discussion on the draft MOU document:

Appendix 1, part 2, re: permitting.

- In addition to meeting NABC standards, stations should be encouraged to seek Animal Care Committee (ACC) approval (required by stations associated with universities)
- Re: valid banding permit. Should a Station banding permit (rather than a personal Master permit) be required or recommended?

Action: Steering Committee (Charles lead) to seek advice from Bird Banding Office on issue of whether CMMN-RCSM stations should be encouraged to have a station banding permit versus either station or personal master permit acceptable.

MOU Station Clause a): Site visit re: protocol review – Visits will be arranged in advance (not unannounced), preferably when stations are operating.

Clause e): Other designated – could include LAMNA if designated.

Issue: what about intellectual property of the data?:

- acknowledge CWS and other funders as appropriate
- acknowledge stations/BSC, etc., as appropriate

MOU Member section: Do we need to add clause to ensure a continued level of effort (for data collection??). No –this is built in to 5-year review and the option to terminate MOU if necessary.

MOU Member Clause c) - minimum of five years, add phrase re: “ensuring adequate coverage”

Appendix 4 h): Vegetation description. No set rules.

Add a recommendation re: recording individual nets.

Issue: How will this be implemented? Do stations need to submit current protocols?

- Suggested that could tie in the initial review of existing stations with the compilation of information on station history, protocols, etc. needed as part of the report development.

Other Membership Categories?

- No criteria for “Associates” have yet been proposed.
- Provisional category will be sustained for now.

Action: Membership sub-committee (Jon lead) to take input from stations into consideration in revising the draft membership criteria and MOU, and in developing implementation procedures.

7. Collaboration Session

Audrey Heagy presented a powerpoint on [Collaboration](#) that was prepared by Brenda Dale, who modified a presentation she had seen at a NAWMP meeting. Brenda thought this would be useful for discussion at this meeting, particularly to determine if differing expectations existed among the network collaborators.

The presentation was followed by a general discussion on some of the points raised in the presentation, especially with respect to sharing information, power, decision-making, etc.

a. Birdathon Sponsors: Stations would like to be able to thank people who sponsor Baillie Birdathoners raising money for their station.

Discussion:

- BSC is able to provide stations with the names and contact information for people doing a Birdathon on behalf of the station (contact Audrey for more information), but BSC can not share the names of the individual sponsors due to privacy laws.

Recommendation: Station can contact supporting Birdathoners and use them as an intermediary for sending thanks to actual donors.

b. Various issues regarding station protocol changes

i. Which decisions on changes to protocol must be run by the Steering Committee?

- Any change that could affect the ET data or its components over the long-term is of concern.

Recommendation: Stations are strongly encouraged to run future changes by the Steering Committee to get advice on how those changes might affect any analyses being done.

ii. How to document changes in protocol?

- When submitting data to BSC, stations could send in current protocol with any changes noted (or state in email no changes have been made).
- BSC could distribute a simple questionnaire for stations to fill out annually when they submit data

Recommendation: Not resolved.

iii. Whom to contact on Committee about protocol changes?

- Need to clarify whom to contact with regards to different types of questions.

Recommendation: If in doubt as to whom to contact, ask Audrey, Jon, or Chair(s) of steering committee, who will re-direct questions if necessary.

iv. Stations would like to be able to share and compare protocols

- Can BSC share protocols with other stations? Yes.
- Encourage input from other stations through list-serve.
- Could make protocols available online through the BSC webpage, along with station descriptions.
- Could create members only (password protected) section to website with protocols and other CMMN-RCSM documents (e.g., Steering Committee documents).

Recommendations:

- Stations to document any significant changes to their protocol annually (as part of their annual reporting).
- Stations are encouraged to contact Steering Committee (via Audrey, Jon or Chair) in advance of implementing future field protocol changes.
- Stations are encouraged to provide BSC with a current electronic version of their protocol (if the new membership criteria will be applied to existing members, then there will be a requirement that current protocols be submitted as information and/or for review by the Steering Committee).
- BSC to keep record of protocols and protocol changes, as provided by stations.
- BSC to provide stations with guidance on how to report protocol changes.
- BSC to investigate possibility of adding a 'members only' section to the CMMN-RCSM website.

c. Communications with stations

- Stations like getting current updates from Steering Committee

Recommendations

- Steering Committee to continue to circulate updates 2 or 3 times a year
- Stations responsible for letting Audrey know the names of contact person(s) for distribution list for these updates.

d. Power Sharing/Decision-Making Processes

Discussion

- Steering Committee: doesn't take votes except to accept meeting minutes. Work is done by consensus.
- Network operates on voluntary basis with agreed upon common goals. Cannot vote to "make" BSC/CWS/Stations do something,
- Station reps on the steering committee are representing all stations, not just their own station.
- Expectation that station members and rest of committee are communicating with members of all stations.
- Number of station reps on Steering Committee was increased from 3 to 4 for better balance and to ensure there are enough representatives from across the country and that all stations should be fairly represented and informed

e. Expectations of CWS

- Suggestion that CWS should provide same support to all regions
- Situation is different in each region.
- The possibility of sending a letter to CWS/EC from CMMN-RCSM stations and/or BSC re: reduced funding and other recent restrictions within EC was discussed but not pursued. BSC has posted a position statement on this issue on its website.

No recommendations.

f. Expectations of BSC

- How are BSC regional staff (currently in Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic, BC/YK, and soon in Prairies) involved with the migration monitoring network? Few direct contacts.
- Need to increase communication between BSC regional staff, CWS and CMMN stations.
- Perhaps stations could be more directly involved in other BSC surveys/programs.

Recommendation

BSC to clarify how regional staff members can be involved in the CMMN-RCSM (e.g. do regional BSC staff have the capacity/qualifications to conduct "formal" site visits to stations?).

8. CMMN-RCSM Goals Session

The purpose of this session was to have all meeting participants provide input on the current goals of the CMMN-RCSM using the Mission Statement prepared by the Steering Committee as a starting point. The process used was to give each participant 3 post-it

notes and have them write one goal on each note, and then divide into three break-out groups to work on coming up with a consolidated set of goals (~ 5 goals per group). Each break-out group presented their list of goals to the whole group, and these were then consolidated into 7 goals. Participants were then each given 4 dots so they could vote for the 4 goals they considered to be most important in the short-term. The results of this process were then reviewed on Sunday morning.

The 7 overall goals are listed here (in **bold**) in order of number of votes, with the break-out group goals (in *italics*), and the individual goals expressed independently by each person. Group builds are presented at the end of this document.

1. Increase scientific output and profile (19 votes)

- *Produce thorough, good science and circulate widely through presentations at conferences, reports, scientific publications, etc., thereby raising awareness of species trends and related conservation needs*
- *Regular updating and reporting of status and trends of all species monitored at all CMMN stations.*
- Increase scientific profile of CMMN (to increase use in conservation, other research)
- Communicate results within scientific and public forums/ raising awareness of trends and related conservation needs
- Be visible at annual meetings like SCO, AOU (presentations, etc.)
- Coordination of ‘products’ from the network, so that it is easily received by those furthering bird studies
- To be recognized nationally and internationally as a credible source of information
- To produce reports, etc. that ‘proves’ the network is doing valuable work, and that stations can give to funders to increase their resources.
- Provide legitimacy to member stations and supporting member stations with regards to fundraising and emphasize that the work stations are doing is part of a larger whole.
- To become a cohesive working unit that is identifiable as such, the ‘CMMN’, for the greater good.
- To produce quality information on populations of northern-breeding landbirds.
- To produce an initial report on trends that is respected and referred to by the conservation community, including regulators.
- Regular (minimum biennial) updating of trends of numbers of migrants at all CMMN stations with 5+ years of acceptable data.
- Identify a nation-wide strategy for species monitoring
- To undertake collaborative research on bird migration in Canada.
- To focus on monitoring migrant birds and other scientific projects.
- To monitor landbirds and work together on research projects.

2. Increase impact of CMMN monitoring results on conservation planning (16 votes)

- *Increase impact of CMMN monitoring results on conservation planning*
- *Go the next step – application and conservation*
- *Bringing CMMN data to the next step through the application of results to conservation initiatives (land management decisions, recovery plans, etc)*
- Identify species in decline, establish ways to assess cause of decline, determine action to combat decline, assess results
- Promote effective use of CMMN data to influence land management decisions on our landscape
- Start identifying species of concern through trends and consider use in recovery plans or more intensive monitoring projects
- Develop adequate scientific output (trends, interpretation, productivity, survivorship) to achieve conservation.
- Promote bird conservation through collaborative efforts, i.e., strength in numbers.
- Network goals: coordinating the collection of standardized counts of migrants, with an emphasis on priority species for monitoring
- Highlight habitat needed for migrating birds. Work with partners to conserve suitable stopover sites.
- Effective communication of results of trend analyses to influence conservation planning.

Group builds:

- Get involved in PIF, politicians, state of bird reporting (e.g. in Ontario).

3. Facilitate communication and exchange of information among/with stations (12 votes)

- *Use website to ensure communication, coordination (staffing), sharing volunteers.*
- *Facilitate communications and sharing of expertise and knowledge among stations*
- Support consistent and accurate collection and analysis of data
- Facilitate funding accessibility for member stations (i.e., maintain list of foundations, graphs on website for funders to see)
- Increase communication and data sharing for projects that help us understand northern bird ecology (easy)
- Facilitate standardization through communication (protocols, equipment, software, staffing).
- Act as a knowledge-sharing hub and communication facilitator between member stations.
- Greater help for stations with regard to scientific and protocol design for better data collection (visits, etc.)
- Encourage stations to share experience and successes
- Maintain communication among stations, focusing on opportunities that benefit the CMMN

4. Strengthen the Network of Stations/ Increase Effectiveness (11 votes)

- *Create a geographically representative network of stable and secure CMMN stations*
- *Guidance for location of future stations*
- *Collaborative research on bird migration and increased coverage across Canada= more effective network*
- Current data analysis and trends
- To maintain current migration trends of all member stations across Canada.
- Adequate coverage; across Canada.
- Develop adequate resources to sustain the network,
- Increase the number of active, full-member stations in CMMN, and increase quality of monitoring programs
- A **geographically representative** network of **stable** migration stations participating collaboratively in research and monitoring.
- Strengthen financial and tenure security of member stations.
- Assess coverage of existing network. Determine where additional stations are needed (if at all).

Group builds:

- Create second tier in Boreal forest?

5. Strengthen financial capacity of the CMMN-RCSM (7 votes)

- *Strengthen financial security of BSC support for CMMN-RCSM*
- *Develop capacity for dedicated personnel (long-term goal).*
- Define the responsibility of personnel needed to administer CMMN-RCSM. Decide method of designating and financing such personnel. Proceed to employ such personnel.
- Develop shared fund-raising

6. Increase training capacity across the network (7 votes)

- *Provide training and knowledge-sharing opportunities*
- *Increase training capacity across the network*
- Knowledge: ongoing training of banders through workshops and on-site visits
- Help with training of staff & volunteers to help at stations (CWS input, materials, workshops, support)
- To provide training opportunities and to share knowledge gained.
- To provide training for people wanting to participate in bird monitoring techniques.

7. Public Education/Awareness (4 votes)

- *Increase public awareness and understanding of the network and its activities*
- *Public education re: Migration Monitoring Network activities*

- *Promote regional conservation initiatives and outreach*
- *Increase public awareness re: CMMN, migration, birds of concern*
- Public understanding: Put forth CMMN in the public awareness
- Highlight CMMN work and profile of stations
- Educate about CMMN research programs, migration, and birds of concern
- Employ data to educate public about value of migration monitoring. Fund such education. Assess results of education
- Be a complementary partner with regional initiatives concerning bird studies, i.e., work with industries, wildlife organizations, other land users.
- Increase public profile of network (to support stations, increase funding opportunities)

Group builds:

- Advertise CMMN meeting in BSC latest news
- Media release of meetings
- Production of glossy public report for distribution
- Will help support stations, perhaps increase funding opportunities
- Public education/awareness is a goal that can be accomplished by the individual stations and therefore does not need to be a high priority for the network.

Additional Group Builds

- Audrey pointed out that in consolidating goals there is some overlap and also potential that some goals could be split further, e.g., collaborative research is included with population monitoring under Goal 1.
- David Hussell sees four strategic goals; the first two (1 and 2) are science and conservation goals, the second two (4 and 7) are institutional goals that relate to strengthening the network stations and BSC's role in the network, respectively. He suggested that the other goals (3, 6 and 7) – facilitating communications, improving training opportunities, and public education) will follow from pursuing the four strategic goals.
- Bill Taylor suggested that we invite minister of environment (whoever is most influential in that department) to next meeting, as an effort to increase profile on conservation decisions.
- Need to get more involved in Partners in Flight, etc. Identify which species are not adequately monitored by other programs, which of those are being monitored by CMMN. Problem of determining which BCR planning region species trends are from, though isotopes will help define catchment areas.
- Need to get data used by decision makers, planners.

ACTION: The Steering Committee will consider this input from meeting participants, along with the preliminary list of goals they developed at the November 2006 Steering Committee meeting, to establish goals, objectives and a work plan for CMMN-RCSM.

9. Network Projects and Opportunities

a. Feather Isotope Projects

As background to the ongoing CMMN-RCSM feather collecting work for the NMBCA project, David Hussell delivered a presentation on the use of feather isotopes that had been prepared by Keith Hobson (see [Hobson Isotopes.pdf](#)). David also presented some additional slides (see [Hussell Isotopes.pdf](#)) showing results from an earlier CMMN feather isotope project that had been published in Avian Conservation and Ecology (<http://www.ace-eco.org/vol1/iss2/art4/> see [ACE-ECO 2006 Dunn et al Isotope paper.pdf](#) on CD).

Doug Collister made a presentation on the results of CBBS's isotope project which involved analysing samples from numerous species captured on migration at Inglewood in fall 2004 (see [CBBS Isotope.pdf](#)).

b. Avian Knowledge Network Discussion

Jon McCracken led a discussion about the opportunity for CMMN-RCSM stations to house their data, including effort data, banding data, observation data and ETs, within the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN) using BSC as the portal for submitting these data. A document outlining this opportunity had been circulated to meeting participants in advance of the meeting (see [BSC AKN.pdf](#)).

Anticipated benefits of providing data include: secure data archiving; easier for stations to access and view their own data sets; other researchers will be aware that your data exists and how they can access it; and servicing data requests will be simplified. Concerns about control of data are addressed by setting appropriate controls on data availability (stations can totally restrict access to others or provide open access, or various options between these extremes).

Outcome: There was general consensus that it is important that CMMN-RCSM data are used more widely, provided that appropriate controls are in place to ensure data are not being misused (e.g. inappropriate analytical methods).

Action: BSC (Denis Lepage) to follow up with each station to determine if they want to participate and what restrictions they want to implement.

c. News from the Bird Banding Office

Audrey presented some information provided by Lesley Howes and Louise Laurin of the Bird Banding Office and led a discussion on CMMN involvement in the North American Banding Council's efforts to establish standards for bird banding and bander training.

Reporting bands: Bird band encounters can be reported on the web at www.reportband.gov. If you report bands this way you get immediate feedback on

banding data (if it has been scheduled and processed), email confirmation that your report was received, and the option of printing a certification of appreciation. Plans are underway to make reporting by banders easier. Hopefully this website will increase encounter reporting from outside of North America.

Western Hemisphere Bird Banding Network (WHBBN): this group was established to improve coordination of banding schemes in the Western Hemisphere (outside of Canada, United States and Mexico). Workshops have been held at Veracruz Mexico in October 2006 and Puerto Rico in July 2007. A third workshop is planned for February 2008 in conjunction with the Partners in Flight conference in Texas.

Wild Bird Training Module for Researchers: CWS and the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) have developed a new training module for investigators who use wild birds in research and monitoring in Canada. This module can be used by instructors as part of Animal Care training or viewed by individuals to meet their Animal Care Committee (ACC) requirements. The module will be available as a Powerpoint presentation on the CCAC website: www.ccac.ca.

BANDIT: There was considerable interest in the proposed BANDIT workshop but it had to be cancelled since Louise Laurin was not able to travel to the meeting. BANDIT can be downloaded from the web, or is available on CD from the banding office. The Banding Office provided a few copies for this meeting.

Only a few of the meeting participants are currently using the new BANDIT software. The general recommendation is to wait for the next version, which will include some user-defined fields, before making the switch. Also, be sure to review the material on the US Banding Office website before starting to use BANDIT, especially before importing data, as there are many tips on how to make this process easier.

www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/resources/bandit/index.html. Louise Laurin, louise.laurin@ec.gc.ca is the contact person for Canadian banders for help with BANDIT.

Discussion:

- At least one CMMN-RCSM station has been having difficulty in getting banding permits for new staff. The Banding Office appears to be applying new criteria (minimum number of birds banded, spring and fall, different stations) that may be too restrictive.
- Rocky Point Bird Observatory had a system for direct (real-time) entry of banding data. Also Manomet and Helgoland examples).
- BSC has set up daily log sheets for LPBO so that DET data can be scanned electronically. Could set this up for other stations on a contract basis.

Action: Steering Committee to get information from banding office on the current requirements for banding permits

Action: Audrey to find out more about stations that are currently doing on-site data entry and share findings with stations.

d. CMMN and North American Banding Council (NABC)

Audrey, as Chair of the NABC Outreach Committee, is looking for input from the stations on why they aren't more actively involved as NABC Trainers.

NABC Website: www.nabanding.net Includes a section on bander resources with links to resources on the web (e.g., McGill Bird Observatory photo age/sex pages).

NABC Manuals: A show of hands indicated that stations are using the NABC bander training manuals. Copies of the CD with five of the manuals (Banders' Study Guide, Instructor's Guide, Passerine, Hummingbird, and Raptor manuals) were available at the meeting. Additional copies of these manuals, as well as the newer manuals on shorebirds and waterfowl banding, are available from the Bird Banding Office (contact Lesley or Louise). Stations are strongly encouraged to provide copies of the relevant manuals to their trainees and volunteers.

NABC Certification: NABC has established a certification process for Banders and Trainers. The Passerine and Hummingbird certification procedures have been up and running for many years now but at present there are only 9 certified trainers in all of Canada (including 2 waterfowl trainers), and only 84 trainers in North America (64 passerine trainers). Many CMMN banders were initially grandfathered as NABC Trainers but failed to renew as Trainers after the 5 year period.

Discussion:

- Too few trainers in Canada to be signed off.
- Need to have training sessions to increase number of certified trainers.
- Standards may be too high, it scares people away from taking the test.
- Too many "trick questions" or poorly worded questions on the written exam (especially given high pass mark).
- High cost (time and money) involved in taking the field session, hard for stations to justify using their limited resources for this purpose given uncertainty as to outcome (high failure rate) and also lack of tangible benefits to being certified,.
- Beneficial to CMMN member stations to have a certified trainer? YES.
- No disagreement with concept of standards. Benefit of standardized banding across nation, and benefit to individual to move around.
- Need better geographic distribution, so don't have to travel long distances to training sessions.
- Bander training is a higher priority need than certification.

Outcome: Audrey will present this feedback at the next NABC meeting (being held in conjunction with EBBA conference at Erie, Pennsylvania in April 2008).

10. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS: Challenges of Running a Station

a. First Nations: how to have them participate in some way (Ted)

- Other stations don't have experience in dealing with First Nations.

b. Recruiting and Retaining People

- Burn out from training people, who then move on.
- Possibility of tapping into technical school programs for students to be trained by stations (e.g. Ecotech programs through CEGEP in Montreal).
- Training: young people often look at what future opportunities there are for them if they get banding training. Expanding the network presents opportunities for these people to take on a new station or continue to another station where someone might be moving on.
- Use graduate research projects to get students on board to help.
- Encourage birders to come out and train. Attract semi-retired birders. Some birders might not agree with banding.

c. New Stations, Completing the Network:

- Some new pilot stations:
 - Ausable Bird Observatory, in southern Ontario on Lake Huron in Pinery Provincial Park
 - Tatlayoko Lake, in south-central British Columbia, being operated by the Nature Conservancy of Canada.
- Some existing stations that could be included in the Network
 - Holiday Beach, in southern Ontario on Lake Erie near Windsor: does raptor counts, passerine visual migration counts, raptor banding, and some passerine banding.
 - Timiskaming Banding Group, on Ontario/Quebec border: non-standard passerine and owl banding.
- Some existing stations facing continuity issues:
 - Gros Morne, Newfoundland, station closed when the bander moved
 - Selkirk station in Ontario (part of Haldimand Bird Observatory) closed when the bander died
 - Rocky Point, British Columbia moving due to site tenure issues
 - Last Mountain, Saskatchewan: Al Smith retiring soon; future status of station uncertain?
- Areas of the country with real gaps: e.g., Cypress Hills on Saskatchewan/Manitoba border.
- What is meant by "completing" the Network? David does not know. His vision is to establish a second tier of stations north of current stations, in the boreal forest along some of the big lakes. Use LSLBO as example: do migration monitoring and in the summer do MAPS and other breeding bird surveys. LSLBO had been approached about doing work in Wood Buffalo Park. Existing stations could do pilot work to the north (rather than winter projects in South America).
- Challenge of expansion: need a lot of support, so that individual stations stay alive and don't spread themselves too thin trying to open other stations.

d. Fundraising

LPBO Experience

- Diversify: make sure not all eggs in one basket.
- Do not count on any particular funder over the long-term.
- BSC: items for resale, membership, birdathon, endowment fund, etc.
- LPBO: accommodation fees, on site sale items (be cautious of small items... worth the time? Benefit of marketing), on site donations, birdathon (primary fundraiser: \$10-12,000 last year), corporate sponsorship for specific projects, small grants from various foundations (Shell, TD Friends of Environment).

Endowment Funds:

- Forever!
- LPBO Endowment Fund currently pays for half of expenses each year. Generating 10-14%/year. Managed as a 50/50 endowment with 50% of income going back into fund and 50% available for operations.
- AOU has endowment that pays 40% of expenses; Hawk Migration Monitoring of North America (HMMNA) has established a framework for their endowment (David Hussell helped with this) but no money in it as of yet;
- To establish an endowment need strong membership and board, and buy-in of supporters.
- Make it difficult for board to “raid” the money (e.g. require $\frac{3}{4}$ majority on decisions to take money out);
- Can start with lump sum or get Life Members and use their membership fee to create an endowment fund. Could have rich board members kick in \$5-10,000 and ask others to match that amount; Life Memberships go into endowments; Bequests as large source of endowment (living legacy); Campaigns often cost more than they bring in.
- If raising money for capital building, always ask for 25% more to put into endowment that will be used to run the building;
- Need the framework even major donors/bequests aren't lined up.

Recommendation: Stations considering setting up an endowment are encouraged to contact David Hussell who has experience setting up endowments and can provide models.

Birdathon:

- David asked if 60% of first \$2,000 raised is enough? BBO is ok with it (saves them the paperwork of administering Birdathon).
- BBO: brings a live (rehab) bird to malls and office buildings in Edmonton and asks for donations/pledges: success with little effort.
- Make sure your unrestricted funding goes toward your mission.

Proposal Writing:

- Jon provided a tip sheet on how **not** to write a proposal ([see Proposal Hints 2007 pdf](#)).
- Letters of support are often very important. BSC (Jon McCracken) can provide letters of support to network stations.

'Adopt a Bird' type programs:

- LSLBO has certificates (similar to LPBO's) and is trying on-site bird adoptions. Easy money once you get it going
- McGill: Adopt a net: \$100 gets you a sign at the net lane (also done at Alaska Bird Observatory)
- WPBO: Sponsor Volunteer for a Day, etc (see their website).

Corporate Fund-raising:

- McGill: corporate fundraising has raised a small amount in the past three years; *would like advice on how to go about it.*
- Audrey said that other stations tried to get corporate funding with very little success.
- Patti: Easier to get money for equipment and material than salaries.
- LSLBO: forestry; guaranteed \$20,000/year for research, long-term agreement; contract work for BBS, owls, etc.
- Industry funding is cyclical.
- Pelee in partnership with NCC, doing consulting, joint proposals (NCC buys land, PIBO monitors), which gets a two-way street going

Project funding:

- Additional work, fixed term
- Potential for mission drift

Student Work Programs:

- Environmental Youth Corp (EYC) program. Minimum time period of about 6 months. Easy (ca. 5 minute) application process. Age limit under 30.
- Science Horizons: Targets recent graduates under the age of 30. Need someone at Environment Canada backing you.
- Summer Youth Employment Programs. BBO has used these.

e. Habitat Management

- General rule is to manage habitat at your sites, especially near net lanes, as best you can with the goal of keeping it stable over the long-term. Ability to do this varies considerably from station to station. Habitat monitoring (including photographic history) provides a benchmark for maintaining habitat (or for showing change if you can't manage habitat).

f. Habitat Monitoring

Two questions to consider

- ***How to collect data***; and ***What will we do with it?***
- David: in terms of analysing population trends, purpose of monitoring habitat is to see how it was, and manage for how it looked. He does not think population trends can be “corrected” for changes in habitat at the station.

Photographs:

- Frequency?: every year/every second year?.
- MNO: takes pictures 3 times/year to show changes within the season.
- What to do with them??
- Aerial photos are also very informative.

Guidelines for Collecting Qualitative or Quantitative Data

- Preferable if everyone does something similar?
- Wendy Easton has had CWS staff collect vegetation data at stations in BC.
- LPBO has collected quantitative data twice, overdue for another round (more than 5 years)
- LSLBO, BBO, CBBS all do veg monitoring for MAPS program. Visual assessment, e.g. % tree cover. Subjective. Compare to previous year’s map and note any changes, takes about half a day per year at LSLBO.

What to do with the habitat data?

- Stations could make prediction of which species are being affected by changes in habitat around the station and particular net lanes (e.g. high water at MNO relates to higher waterthrush numbers) and then test the predictions.
- Stations could send in synopsis of habitat change and pictures of net lanes/station as a whole every year (with data) or every five years (with updated protocols). This could help with interpreting trends (local effects versus actual population change)?
- Don’t just fixate on trends; habitat assessments have a lot of other values (e.g.. for looking at changes in quality of stop-over sites).

Action: BSC (Tara lead) to draft some guidelines to stations as to when and how to provide photos and other habitat information to BSC.

g. Guidelines for Station Update Presentations

Agreed that it would be better to provide guidelines for station updates (written and powerpoint presentations) so that they are consistent and cover key points. Things to include/discuss could include:

- photos
- facilities
- how you meet the membership criteria

- progress since last meeting
- funding
- staffing
- specialist spp. (top ten)
- other programs (monitoring, research, education, other)
- banding totals – in context of previous years

Action: BSC (Audrey lead) to draft guidelines for station update presentations for consideration by the Steering Committee. Target: Implement guidelines for 2009 meeting.

11. Meeting Evaluation and Wrap Up

a. Approved Motions

CMMN-RCSM 2007 conference participants vote a thank you to Patti, her staff and volunteers for hosting such an excellent meeting and congrats on a great building.

Unanimous approval.

Action: Audrey to send a note of appreciation to Bob Deacon and June Markwart by Thursday after the meeting (Patti had board meeting on the Friday following the CMMN meeting).

Participants endorse, support and are very pleased with the work of the Steering Committee and look forward with great pleasure to further work by them. Great job!

Unanimous approval.

b. Meeting Assessment

General

- Extended (3 days) format is good.
- Having meeting at a station is important.
- Timing of this meeting was a problem for some stations, due to conflict with operating season.
- Cost is a concern for future meetings: cost of getting to the location , as well as the cost of food/accommodations once at the location.
- Travel is easier if the meeting is in a central location
- Timing: some stations are operating from ca 1 April to mid-June and mid-July though mid-November. Windows when all or most stations are not operating migration program: 15 June-15 July and early/mid November through end of March.
- Location – what is too far for you to go? People willing to travel farther if at an “exotic” location.

Action: BSC (Audrey) to do a follow up survey to poll the stations that didn't come to determine main factors in their decision – time, cost, interest?

How to share experience with your organization? How to get more people to come to future meetings?

- Lose momentum/interest during 2 years between meetings.
- Bird Watch Canada articles could be used to maintain interest (e.g. do another issue similar to Winter 2007/08 issue which featured CMMN cooperative projects)
- Make more use of the CMMN listserve.

Action: BSC (Audrey) to distribute CMMN listserve subscription info and also to get this information posted on CMMN-RCSM website. Stations to use it!

Program

- 15 minutes for station reports good. Or could consider guideline of 10 minutes for established stations, 15 minutes for new stations (but be flexible if stations want more time -- can arrange this in advance).

Recommendation: For future meetings, get ALL stations to contribute a written report and PPT before the meeting, even if they aren't attending. Distribute a more detailed program to everyone in advance (if possible).

- ~ 20 minutes good guidelines for the technical reports
- Include an after dinner presentation on local interest topic (no heavy programming in evening). There was a suggestion to invite Environment Minister (or other relevant member of parliament) to speak.
- Include a field trip to the station (even if not operating), need minimum of 1 hour at the station.
- Include a session to report on CMMN results/progress.
- Get crossover with other relevant programs/people: e.g., Western Boreal Initiative, Partners in Flight (PIF) as key audiences, mutual exchange of info
- At future meetings should report on progress towards the goals (as identified at this meeting and refined by Steering Committee), review future goals, and could vote/prioritize on future direction. Could include workshop on objectives/actions at next meeting.

Recommendation: For future meetings, get Steering Committee to prepare a written report and PPT. Distribute update and/or report prior to the meeting.

Action: Hussell to prepare and circulate a Steering Committee report following this meeting (could include with CD but also circulate as separate email).

Recommendation: For future meetings, get CWS to prepare a written report(s) and PPT on their work for the Network (even if they don't attend). Distribute report prior to the meeting.

- Collaboration session at this meeting was a useful exercise, but only necessary to repeat if there is a conflict
- Roundtable discussions: useful; ensure appropriate seating configuration (square or U so everyone facing each other); discuss specific topics; set time limit for each topic.
- For future meetings include a cooperative projects brainstorming session (could put ideas for collaborative projects on the web to advertise possibilities).
- Try and piggyback a Bander Workshop (specimens and photos ok, don't need live birds) with the meeting. Could ask NABC or other group to sponsor bringing in a trainer?
- Could include a demonstration of on-site data entry and/or a demonstration of BSC's optical character recognition software used for scanning data.

c. Possible Venues for next meeting in 2009 (or future venues)

- Delta Marsh – firm offer (central, excellent facilities, close to airport)
- McGill –conditional offer, if in July would mean student accommodation available. Depends on status of Marie-Anne Hudson.
- Tadoussac – possible? 3 h from Quebec City, currently no WestJet service to Quebec City. Accommodation and meeting room in Bergeronnes; plan field trip to the station.
- Pelee Island – thinking about it for the future ... accommodations are an issue.

Action: Steering Committee to decide on venue and date for next meeting by spring 2008. Stations to let Steering Committee know if they are willing to host the 2009 meeting.

d. Summary of Action Items

Bird Studies Canada (Tara lead) will circulate a draft of the technical report document by March 2008 (hopefully sooner) to all stations for review.

BSC (Audrey) to coordinate getting current information from all stations for producing a CD of all station protocols, for updating the station directory and station pages on CMMN-RCSM website, and for the station information section of the technical report.

BSC (Tara lead) will prepare a short document outlining important factors regarding which species to include in trend analyses.

Steering Committee (Charles lead) to seek advice from Bird Banding Office on issue of whether CMMN-RCSM stations should be encouraged to have a station banding permit versus either station or personal master permit acceptable.

Membership sub-committee (Jon lead) to take input from stations into consideration in revising the draft membership criteria and MOU, and in developing implementation procedures.

The Steering Committee will consider this input from meeting participants, along with the preliminary list of goals they developed at the November 2006 Steering Committee meeting, to establish goals, objectives and a work plan for CMMN-RCSM.

BSC (Denis Lepage) to follow up with each station to determine if they want to participate and what restrictions they want to implement.

Steering Committee to get information from banding office on the current requirements for banding permits

BSC (Audrey) to find out more about stations that are currently doing on-site data entry and share findings with stations.

BSC (Tara lead) to draft some guidelines to stations as to when and how to provide photos and other habitat information to BSC.

BSC (Audrey lead) to draft guidelines for station update presentations for consideration by the Steering Committee. Target: Implement guidelines for 2009 meeting.

Audrey to send a note of appreciation to Bob Deacon and June Markwart by Thursday after the meeting (Patti had board meeting on the Friday following the CMMN meeting).

BSC (Audrey) to do a follow up survey to poll the stations that didn't come to determine main factors in their decision – time, cost, interest?

BSC (Audrey) to distribute CMMN listserv subscription info and also to get this information posted on CMMN-RCSM website. Stations to use it!

Steering Committee (David lead) to prepare and circulate a Steering Committee report following this meeting (could include with CD but also circulate as separate email).

Steering Committee to decide on venue and date for next meeting by spring 2008.
Stations to let Steering Committee know if they are willing to host the 2009 meeting.

Additional Action Items identified/clarified during meeting evaluation session:

BSC (Tara lead) to work on setting guidelines on what additional info (e.g., photos, changes to protocol) stations should send with their annual data submission

Audrey to contact Tatlayoko and Vaseaux Lake stations in BC re: applying for provisional membership in the CMMN-RCSM.

David to contact Holiday Beach (and other HMANA stations that monitor passerines) re: getting more involved with CMMN-RCSM.

BSC (Audrey lead) to circulate meeting notes and Steering Committee report by email.

Audrey to prepare a compilation CD of all meeting materials including presentations, LSLBO education materials, Jon's proposal writing tip sheet, Steering Committee documents, group photos, BBO 20 yr report, PIBO information report, etc. Distribute copy of CD to all participants and non-participating stations.