

CMMN-RCSM Steering Committee Interim Report – December 2012

A bit over one year has passed since the last full meeting of CMMN-RCSM at Naramata. During that period, the Steering Committee has held 7 teleconferences (Dec 16, Feb 10, Apr 5, May 16, Jul 27, Oct 9, Dec 3), and has advanced a number of items identified as priorities by participants in the discussion at Naramata. This brief report highlights progress to date, and plans for the coming year.

Steering Committee composition:

The Steering Committee comprises CWS representatives (Alaine Camfield, Bruno Drolet, Marie-Anne Hudson), BSC representatives (Audrey Heagy, Stu Mackenzie, Jon McCracken), and member station representatives (Yousif Attia, Ted Cheskey, Marcel Gahbauer, Ann Nightingale). Yousif was appointed to the committee in September 2012 to fill the vacancy left by Bill Taylor, who stepped down in summer. The co-chairs for 2011-2013 are Marcel Gahbauer and Marie-Anne Hudson.

Strategic Plan:

Early in 2012, the Steering Committee proposed updates to the mission and vision statements, as part of the new 2012-2015 Strategic Plan, which summarizes the structure of CMMN-RCSM and outlines the goals compiled at the Naramata meeting. The plan was also translated into French, and both versions were circulated to all member stations for review and approval.

Membership:

Tatlayoko Lake Bird Observatory was sent details on becoming a full member and is currently preparing an application. Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station in Toronto and Greenlaw Mountain Hawk Watch in New Brunswick have recently submitted applications for full membership, which are currently under review by the Steering Committee. Delta Marsh Bird Observatory is looking for a new site after losing its traditional location to flooding.

Communications:

All participants in the Naramata meeting were added to the cmmnlist e-mail group, as were others who requested access throughout the year. The listserv has been used for discussion more this year than in the past, with 95 messages posted to date in 2012, compared to 28 in 2011 and 15 in 2010; hopefully the trend toward increasing communication will continue.

The focus of the Steering Committee's July meeting was to address web content for CMMN-RCSM, including NatureCounts and parts of the BSC website. The committee concluded that a public overview of CMMN-RCSM should be available through the BSC website (requiring an update that will provide an easier overview of all member stations and provide direct links to their individual sites for current details), while network resources will be posted at NatureCounts (with plans to improve folder structure for easier navigation). This work will continue over winter.

The minutes of the Steering Committee teleconferences have been circulated regularly (always following approval of the previous meeting's minutes by committee members). Other items that have been distributed via e-mail include Erica Dunn's document on standardizing migration counts, the season summary report templates, and the station self-evaluation checklist.

Station management:

Eight member stations have completed and submitted the self-evaluation checklist. All member stations are encouraged to do so annually to ensure consistency with protocols (especially when personnel differ from year to year), and to document any changes that may be occurring and cannot be avoided. The checklist is available at NatureCounts; completed forms are being compiled by Ann (motmot@shaw.ca).

Trend analysis:

A technical committee led by Jon McCracken is working to review the process for flagging reliability of station-specific trends. Denis Lepage has improved the CMMN graphs on NatureCounts.

Isotope project:

The report discussed at the Naramata meeting had at that time been looked at by the Technical Review Committee. Their review highlighted some areas that warranted reanalysis, and this is still ongoing, due to the high volume of isotope research projects being worked on by Environment Canada.

Publications:

A two-page article (*The Canadian Migration Monitoring Network – taking the pulse of Canada’s migratory birds*) was featured in the June 2012 issue of *Picoides*, the bulletin of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists / Société des Ornithologistes du Canada. A brief follow-up article summarizing highlights of the fall 2012 season at member stations across Canada was included in the November 2012 issue. Also, a poster (*CMMN-RCSM: Advancing migratory bird research across Canada*) was presented at the North American Ornithological Conference in Vancouver in August, attended by over 1400 participants.

International working group:

A small working group (Ted, Marcel, Stu) has held preliminary discussions to identify key objectives for integrating international initiatives with CMMN-RCSM, which include identifying opportunities for member stations and individuals to contribute to migration monitoring elsewhere, especially Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. In late November, Marcel visited several potential sites in southern Mexico (with Doug Collister, on behalf of the Calgary Bird Banding Society); further discussion will follow.

Next national meeting:

Long Point Bird Observatory has offered to host the next national meeting in November 2013 (tentatively November 1-4). This date means that for the first time, the meeting will be held past the end of the fall monitoring season for almost all stations – yet at the same time, there will still be some migration ongoing at Long Point. We hope that this will lead to representation from a record number of member stations. More details will follow in the coming months.

Feedback and suggestions are always welcome – please send any comments to Steering Committee co-chairs Marcel Gahbauer (marcel@migrationresearch.org) and Marie-Anne Hudson (marie-anne.hudson@ec.gc.ca), or to any of the member station representatives.