

Conservation Application Workshop Summary

APPLICATION OF SHOREBIRD POPULATION AND HABITAT DATA TO INFORM SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION IN NORTHWEST MEXICO

Workshop Leaders:

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The Migratory Shorebird Project (www.migratoryshorebirdproject.org), the international expansion of the Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey (www.prbo.org/pfss), is a coordinated, international, multi-partner research and monitoring network throughout the Pacific Coast of the Americas. This hypothesis-driven project is evaluating limiting factors for shorebirds in order to provide necessary information to guide conservation actions. To date, more than 50 organizations in 11 countries are participating in the Migratory Shorebird Project, applying standardized survey protocols, and centralizing data through the California Avian Data Center (CADC). Since 2011, Grupo Aves del Noreste in Mexico has been a lead partner of the Migratory Shorebird Project. In northwestern Mexico, surveys have been completed annually at 20 coastal estuary sites including 11 protected areas.

On October 4, 2014 we hosted a “conservation application” workshop in La Paz, Mexico bringing together researchers, conservation practitioners, and habitat managers from throughout northwestern Mexico (Baja peninsula and the mainland). In particular, we focused the workshop towards protected area managers who work for Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP) at sites where the Migratory Shorebird Project is conducting surveys. We discussed how to use data collected by the Migratory Shorebird Project to evaluate the most important locations for shorebirds at protected areas, and how these data could be made most useful for guiding management and conservation planning. Our workshop had 25 participants including 11 from CONANP. Several potential collaborations and follow-up action items were identified, including:

- CONANP participants felt the data summary resources provided by the Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey and Migratory Shorebird Project (www.prbo.org/pfss/exploredata and www.prbo.org/pfss/datamap) could be useful when issuing technical decisions. However, many of the attendees need their supervisor’s approval to use Migratory Shorebird Project data and applications in this regard. CONANP participants also indicated that having Migratory Shorebird Project data published in a peer-reviewed journal is preferable to only having the data summaries available online.
 - **Action:** Initiate follow-up with three regional managers from CONANP to share findings from the workshop and get higher level feedback.

- **Action:** Publish paper(s) on the Migratory Shorebird Project design and framework as well as initial findings.
- SEMARNAT hosts Sistema de Información Geográfica para la Evaluación del Impacto Ambiental (SIGEIA; <http://www.semarnat.gob.mx/sigeia>). This GIS database can be accessed via internet at: (<http://mapas.semarnat.gob.mx/SIGEIA5e5PUBLICO/BOS/Bos.php>). It is used by CONANP as part of their decision-making process by bringing together many pieces of data; shorebird data are just one piece considered. One option for collaboration and for Migratory Shorebird Project data to influence actions is for Migratory Shorebird Project products (e.g. species distribution maps, maps of conservation prioritization areas) to be included in SIGEIA. This would ensure buy-in at a high level.
 - **Action:** Complete development of species distribution and conservation priority area maps for US with potential extension to Mexico. Present products to CONANP and SEMARNAT and assess whether they can be included in SIGEIA and subsequently decision-making processes.
- The need to link the Migratory Shorebird Project to Mexican national conservation plans like the “Strategy for the Conservation and Management of Shorebirds and their Habitats in Mexico” was identified. The Technical Subcommittee for Shorebird Conservation in Mexico was instrumental in serving as a consultant for SEMARNAT in developing this national strategy. If this subcommittee were reactivated it could help promote, and directly apply data from, the Migratory Shorebird Project.
 - **Action:** Develop talking points on how the Migratory Shorebird Project supports important needs identified in the Strategy for the Conservation and Management of Shorebirds and their Habitats in Mexico.

We have shared the workshop findings with workshop participants and will be following up on action items over the next year in an effort to raise the profile of the Migratory Shorebird Project and the value of its data. We will be developing species distribution maps and conservation prioritization maps for the Pacific Coast of the United States and hope to extend those to Mexico, pending availability of needed coastal land cover data sets, and publish our findings. We feel that these peer-reviewed published data products would be an ideal approach to integrate the Migratory Shorebird Project with decision making in Mexico’s protected areas.