**PIF Meeting Notes 2/3/2021**

Introductions:

**Elisabeth Ammon and Kevin DesRoberts** co-coordinators of PIF

**Christa Weise**

* Deputy Project Leader, Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex; Ash Meadows Wildlife Refuge

**Jen Ballard**

* Monitoring Coordinator, Great Basin Bird Observatory
* Updates on Nevada Bird Count and IMBCR program- two programs working with the Forest Service and BLM.
* In future meetings, can go through how to access some of the end-products of these surveys.

**Johnathan Garrison**

* USFWS, Stillwater Wildlife Refuge
* No updates at this time

**Bethany Chagnon**

* FWS, Stillwater Wildlife Refuge
* Working on raptor surveys with NDOW
* Planning to hire a biotech for shorebird banding
* Working on coordinating White Pelican monitoring on Anaho Island

**Renee Aldrich**

* Nevada Land Trust
* No updates at this time

**Kelly Douglas**

* FWS. Southern Nevada field office

**Ali Chaney**

* Nevada Division of Natural Heritage
* Updates on shorebird and waterbird ranks
* Updated 233 species of passerine birds
* Still working on gamebirds and 4 passerines; this year, finishing waterbird/shorebird ranks – on hold, trying to get more data

**Jessica Zehr**

* FWS, Las Vegas
* Working with listed birds

**Tim Theisen**

* Acting Branch Chief for BLM
* Updated group on personnel changes- will provide a list for the group

**Jason Eckberg**

* Biologist with SNWA
* Presenting on Las Vegas Wash and Warm Springs, threatened and endangered bird surveys

**Michael West**

* Wildlife Diversity Biologist with NDOW, Tonopah
* Initiating work with Pinyon Jays in treatment areas

**Camille Brooks**

* Wildlife Biologist for BLM field office

**Jeri Sjoberg**

* Retired USFWS, now board member for GBBO

**Gretchen Baker**

* Ecologist for Great Basin National Park
* Updates on Christmas Bird Count

**Mark Enders**

* NDOW
* Yellow-billed Cuckoo work in Southern NV, interested in finding permitted individuals in Northern Nevada- evidence suggests Yellow-billed Cuckoos are possibly breeding in Northern NV

**Jane Bardolf**

* Biologist, Ruby Lake NWR
* Update on new wildlife specialist hire from Hawaii

**Susan Abele**

* FWS, Reno
* Updates on private lands program
* New Field Supervisor in Reno- Mark Jackson

**William Kutowsy**

* USFWS partner’s program, Elko County

**Carl Lunderstadt**

* Refuge Manager, Stillwater NWR

**Heather Beeler**

* FWS
* 19 January were two appeals to Trump administration rule changes to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; the Biden administration has requested a hold on these court cases while they can review those changes

**David Syzdek**

* ENV Bio SNWA
* Presenting on Warm Springs Natural Area, 30 sensitive species

**Cheryl Mandich**

* USFWS, Partners Program, Winnemucca

**Anna Johnson and Olivia Baez**

* Nellis AFB, NAFB/NTTR
* Working on banding Burrowing Owls, GOEA nest monitoring, point counts with NBC protocols, winter raptor surveys, and call-playback surveys with thrashers and owls
* Working with Joe Barnes, NDOW, re 2021 field season
* Discussion to coordinate with GBBO, share Pinyon Jay data with GBBO and NDOW, and potential for thrasher work

**Beth Sabin**

* USBR, Southern NV + AZ
* Working on finishing habitat restoration – will be 6000ac when done; all land has now been secured.
* USGS- looking into Bell’s Vireos in habitat restoration areas, looking for Least Bell’s Vireos
* Yellow-billed Cuckoos moving into conservation areas, now looking into adaptive management – they like the younger restoration sites, so looking at how to keep the YBCU as the sites get older

**Evan Myers**

* Wildlife Biologist, BLM Southern NV

**John Hiatt**

* Conservation chair, Red Rock Audubon Las Vegas

**Christiana Manville**

* FWS partner’s program

**Lauren Harter**

* GBBO
* Bendire’s and Leconte’s Thrasher surveys, training starting in March with surveys April-June

**Kristen Szabo**

* Nevada Division of Natural Heritage

**Corey Lange**

* BLM, Pahrump and Red Rock

**Kelly Colegrove**

* Project Coordinator, Great Basin Bird Observatory
* Update on Pinyon Jay Citizen Science Project, collecting presence/absence data on Survey123 app
* Visit gbbo.org/citizen-science for more information

**Great Basin Bird Observatory notes on working groups-**

* Active in the Western Working Group of PIF
* 3 Active working groups; Pinyon Jay, Desert Thrasher, MOTUS; potential new working group on Rosy-finches
* Pinyon Jay Conservation Strategy is now available, <https://partnersinflight.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Conservation-Strategy-for-Pinyon-Jay_Version-1_February-2020_LowRes.pdf>
* Desert Thrasher working group is wanting to start a conservation strategy document – led by USFWS, New Mexico

**Presenters:**

(presentation slides will be made available after the meeting)

**David Syzdek/Jason Eckberg (SNWA)- WSNA and Wash Updates:**

* Restoration work at the Las Vegas Wash, increasing avian richness and abundance over project period, as weirs installed, and open water/wetland vegetation increase.
* Goal is to increase ecological function
* Exciting find at WSNA- Ridgeway Rail was found as an incidental sighting during dace surveys. Large increase in territorial Southwestern Willow Flycatchers at WSNA in recent years, following 2010 fire.

**Gretchen Baker: Birds of Great Basin National Park**

* 2020 was a record year for the Christmas Bird Count with 20 participants and 62 species recorded
* Hoping to hold another BioBlitz, possibly bird themed
* Breeding bird surveys, monitoring two transects (one montane riparian, one montane shrub) partially burned by the 2016 Strawberry Creek fire, which burned 4500 ac. Riparian transect with increased detections of Broad-tailed Hummingbirds, likely related to huge wildflower seeding post-fire.

**Timothy Theisen- BLM Program Update:**

* Update on management changes- will provide official list and share email list with Elisabeth Ammon and Kelly Colegrove

**Susan Abele/Christiana Manville- FWS partners program update**

* Strategic plan for Great Basin and Mojave Desert landscape targets
  + Springs/Riparian
  + Pollinators/monarchs
  + Flood-irrigated meadows/urban and agriculture/desert scrub
* How can PIF help? –
  + Share interested private land owners contacts
  + Share project ideas for private lands
  + Help with monitoring (partners program cannot fund monitoring)
  + The FWS partner’s program is looking for partners for funding resources

**Patrick Donnelly (IMWJV) Research Scientist**

* Recent work on desert wetlands, particularly 26 closed basins in western North America, and how these terminal lakes have changed 1984-1999, 2000-2018.
  + Intermountain west (NV/OR/UT+) 27% overall lake surface area decline; monsoonal wetlands 13% overall lake surface decline
  + Presented on a number of projects in wetlands of the intermountain west, highlighting student lead projects on White-faced Ibis (21/29 colonies in Nevada with wetland loss since 2000) and Cinnamon Teal (fall stopover locations are increasingly in smaller and more isolated wetland sites)
* Need to increase awareness of accelerating wetland loss in arid-land ecosystems, since traditional measure of wetland loss is of physical loss of wetlands vs drying.

**David Stone, Moapa WMA MAPS Banding Station Updates:**

* Only MAPS station in Nevada; 7 mist nets spread across refuge, 136 acres
* Thanks to Jeanne Tinsman for help getting banding started
* Interested in banding outside of the breeding season, needs volunteers

**2/4/2021**

**Most of the round robin intros were “nothing new since yesterday”**

**Derek Hall - DOD**

* Deployed transmitters on 7 Burrowing Owls
* 3 migrated to Baja, 3 to Southern California, 1 remained onsite. 2 owls returned, with 1 returning within a mile of prior burrow.

**Rema Sadak, U.S. Forest Service Regional Ecologist for Intermountain Area**

* Nevada work includes IMBCR work in Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest and USFS point counts on targeted grazing

**Heather Beeler**

* Update on MBTA- incidental take. New administration has put rule back out for public comment instead of going into effect on 8 February.

**Jenni Jeffers, NDOW**

* Partnered with National Audubon to summarize/analyze 34 years of shorebird data at Lahontan Valley – will be changing up protocol for future to collect more habitat etc variables

**Joe Barnes, NDOW**

* Presented various NDOW Project Updates including the Wildlife Action Plan
* Northern Goshawk work: breeding investigation of 20 territories, in 2017 transmitters were added to territory holding adult Goshawks. No additional funding has been identified for new transmitters.
* Winter Raptor survey effort: 70 routes for entire state, most are on driving roads. Updates: recent work to establish length, methods are now standardized. 2019 put out paper looking at state patterns/trends and habitat use
* Want regionwide survey effort on shorebirds, hoping for a 3-year project, both spring and fall. Opportunities for collaboration.
* Project WAfLS:
  + Randomly-selectied, spatially-balanced survey grids with 5 min point counts every 800m along roads, from 100 to 10 min prior to civil twilight
  + Montana with highest occupancy rates, approx. double that of Nevada
  + Multi-scale occupancy modeling
  + Big expected declines in occupancy over 70 year time horizon, using conservative climate change scenarios across West (average future viability declined 59%, good habitat declined 75%)
  + no discernable decrease in Short-eared Owl (SEOW) density over the past 5 years in the west. Confirmed wide annual fluctuation in local SEOW occupancy (e.g site colonization).
  + Next steps for project: Idaho continuing efforts partnering with NRCS to investigate impacts of agricultural practices on SEOW occupancy and nesting. Efforts to deploy 11-13 transmitters in all 8 western states to investigate small-scale habitat use and movements.
* Email Joe Barnes with any territorial/nesting SEOW information
* Ferruginous Hawks (inhouse project): Statewide monitoring 2018-2020, focal areas in White Pine and Elko Counties. Looking into differences in study areas that may affect detections- seasonal precipitation, winter temperatures, survey effort, observer experience.
  + Newark and Long Valley, 2017- resent, FEHA mostly in PJ/SG ecotone and PJ stringers
  + Statewide average 80.3 % annual territory occupancy, 51.6% annual breeding success, 1.0 fledged young/breeding attempt
  + Long-term site fidelity – 83% of historic territories in 2018 had occupied nests within 500m of historical nests
* Golden Eagle presentation (ran out of time, but will be made available to the group)
* Nevada Wildlife Action Plan: each state is required to have an update every 10 years. The goal is to keep common species common. Plan now available on NDOW’s website.
  + Survey of what would like to see out of update: robust species distribution models, defined conservation areas, and web-enabled

**Kevin DesRoberts, Motus Wildlife Tracking System Presentation**

* MOTUS working group began in PIF Western Working Group in 2018. Effort to get MOTUS stations installed throughout the state
* Hybrid MOTUS systems are being installed in Nevada refuges, Lotek nanotags and cell-tracking technology
* Currently in Phase 1 (2019-2021 – though COVID has pushed this back), with initiating a network for short-term landbird and shorebird monitoring, with several priority species, aiming for basic information including arrival/departure, overwinter survival, stopover duration, and more
* Phase 2 will spatial gaps, with long-term planning, aiming to answer questions of migratory connectivity, timing, and climate.

**Motus Discussion**

* Elisabeth Ammon mentioned plans to use this for fine-grained territory mapping/habitat use for Pinyon Jays in central Nevada
* Susan Abele mentioned she has a partner on the NW side of the Monitor Range, who has Pinyon Jays, and may be interested in having a setup
* Folks interested in being on a Motus committee: Tom Dietsch/Heather Beeler, Carla Wise, Pete Schmidt and Jane Bardolf at Ruby Lake
* Putting in 500 stations at a ranch in Montana
* Range – if have a 30+ foot antenna, can be 10 miles, line-of-sight; small OMNI antennas range only 3-4 miles

**Rob Vinson, Pahranagat Banding and Updates Presentation**

* Banding to help determine migration routes, especially for locally-important species like Cinnamon Teals; harvest; mortality rates; productin/survival rates; set bag limits
* 2020 1800 bands, dominant species include Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal
* Cinnamon Teal and Ruddy Duck banded at Pahranagat ended up at Mexico City
* Migrating Cinnamon Teals are using the same flight corridor through Nevada as Sandhill Cranes
* Wants to expand MOTUS at the refuge for shorebirds, rails and phalaropes

**Banding Discussion**

* Suggested talking with Sonoran Joint Venture to develop partners in Mexico to encourage band returns

**Further discussion**

* Jessica Zehr: FWS permitting process now entirely online
* Elisabeth mentioned several areas where Nevada Partners in Flight can collaborate
  + Pinyon Jay Survey123 application to collect Pinyon Jay information, particularly for those foraging/roosting/caching/nesting (vs. flying over)
  + We lost Ken Voget in 2020, who was so important to Refuges and banding in Nevada
  + Trying to recruit banders, to develop more banders within the State
  + Possibility to collaborate and develop bioblitzes, to gather large amounts of data from volunteers
  + Wildlife Action Plan
  + Possibly develop a banding committee – Rob Vinson would be interested in serving on it
* Ali Chaney: hopefully this year will complete the shorebird ranks, which will help the Wildlife Action Plan process.

**Action Items:**

* Create contact list for NV PIF (GBBO)
* Follow up on collaboration opportunities, particularly those for the 2021 field season
* Follow up on banding committee
* Wildlife Action Plan assistance by all bird/mgmt experts
* Shorebird/waterbird rankings
* Pinyon Jay and other citizen science projects